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**Text and Transformation:  
Refiguring Identity in Postcolonial Philippines**

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Organization and Leadership Program

With emphasis in

Pacific Leadership International Studies

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by  
R. Edmund Lacson

San Francisco  
May 2004

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This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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March 31, 2004

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Errors and omissions, I do not share with anyone. I alone am responsible for them.

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...if we really mean to reconstruct our society on firm foundations, then we must undertake a radical reform not only of our institutions but of our own ways of thinking and acting. Our revolution must be not only external but internal.

Apolinario Mabini

*True Decalogue*

Mahini Before Exile to Guam



## CHAPTER ONE

### Description of the Research

#### Introduction to Research Issue

Any Filipino who is asked the question “What is a Filipino?” will be hard-pressed to find a quick and ready answer. Much of how Filipinos think of themselves is usually based on notions that spring from an understanding of their historical and cultural development that is either inadequate or incomplete.

How Filipinos think of themselves, and who they think they are, is largely determined by what they read. For others, by what they are told by those who read what was written about them. Much of what is read by Filipinos about themselves was written by, or is based on what was written by their former colonizers. What eventually becomes apparent to an interested and discerning observer is that the various peoples and cultures that are present in the Philippines – Muslims, Christians, Tribal, Chinese, and *mestizos* in a variety of shades – are counterposed to each other. This brings into high relief the successful implementation of the divide-and-conquer tactic of the country’s colonizers that many historians automatically invoke whenever they respond to the question of why present-day Filipinos are disunited. But is this really the case? I find it worthwhile to inquire if the success of the divide-and-conquer tactic is inherent in the tactic itself. Or rather, the tactic was successfully employed in the colonization of the Philippines because of pre-existing conditions prior to Spanish contact.

That Filipino identity is refracted and unfocused is a given. There also appears to be a paucity of research that attempts to find the reasons why it is so. Such being the case, this research shall attempt to answer three related questions on Filipino identity:

1. Who are the Filipinos?
2. How do these various peoples of the Philippines identify themselves?
3. What are the factors that influence the way they see themselves?

Many people of present day Third World countries colonized by Spain, France, and Portugal are issues of miscegenation, referred to as *mestizo* in Spanish, or *métisse* in French. Ashcroft et al. (2002:136) say that these “terms ... semantically register the idea of a mixing of races and/or culture.” By extension, many of today’s Mexicans, Venezuelans, Colombians, and others in the Central and South American countries, or for that matter Filipinos would not be present were it not for Spanish miscegenation. While it is true that Spain was not the only European country responsible for such an outcome, I choose for this research to confine it only to this extent without bringing in the effects of the English, French, Dutch, German, Belgian, Italian and other European colonizing projects. Otherwise, it would take this research too far afield. Moreover, such an enterprise requires a totally separate research effort. In any case, it is instructive to note that nowadays, according to Ashcroft et al. (2002:136-37), *mestizo* and *métisse* reflect a view that –

**miscegenation** and interchange between the different cultural **diasporas** had produced new and powerful **synergistic** cultural forms, and that these cultural and racial exchanges might be the place where the most energized aspects of the new cultures reside [emphasis in the original].

The use of these terms has been largely confined in the Franco-Hispano areas of colonial influence, although the English have used the word “creole” instead, which finds its equivalent in the Spanish word *criollo*.

But European cultural, economic, and political infiltration seems to go much deeper than its genetic penetration of Filipino identity. And it seems that it is the American facet of European culture that has successfully permeated whatever “Filipino” may stand for today.

### Background of Research Issue

Niels Mulder (2000:vi) forced my attention back to the question of Filipino identity. Mulder writes,

[t]oo many foreigners have come to Philippine shores. Too long was the period of colonization. Too deeply penetrating were the elements of alien culture. Filipino being was subverted, and the time of *being* on their own has been so short. The time to discover themselves and to build a self-confident nation was, so far, simply not there, and all the time they feel—rightly or wrongly—to be surrounded by arrogant powers who think they know better.

To gain understanding of what is referred to as Filipino identity is to skip over the boundaries of official renditions of Philippine history, such that one reads in grade school or high school textbooks, and decline reliance on the grand narratives of the colonial powers extolling their civilizing influence on the hapless natives. From 1571 until 1898, the Spaniards were masters of this archipelago lying east of the Southeast Asian peninsula, and west of the vast Pacific Ocean. The Americans replaced the Spaniards as uninvited masters from 1898 to 1941. But at the start of World War II in the Pacific, Imperial Japan bumped the United States of America off the islands. The Japanese occupied the country until the return of the Americans at the conclusion of World War II in 1945.

After World War II, Filipinos saw the United States as their liberator from Japanese occupation. As Mulder (2000:136) says, “forgotten were the excesses of the

first decade of [American] occupation.” The massacre of 406 Filipino “insurgents” by American soldiers in Lonoy, Jagna, Bohol on Easter Sunday of March 1901 is one example of American excess ([www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/9782/events.htm](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/9782/events.htm)). But it must be pointed out that one Filipino traitor made this massacre possible.

Perpetuating this view of America as liberator of Filipinos was according to Mulder (2000:136) Philippine “colonial education.” In propagating this view, colonial education discouraged Filipinos from their desire for political sovereignty and independence. It inculcated in the Filipino mind a spurious notion that runs as follows: the return of the Americans to recover their Philippine colony after World War II was to set Filipinos free from the Japanese invaders, as the Americans previously set free the Filipinos from Spanish colonization in 1898. Thus America is presented as liberator twice of the Filipinos. The propagation of this view through the colonial education system “yielded the enduring gratefulness of the Filipinos, while [American] neocolonial intentions were kept hidden behind the ‘special relationships’ that were supposed to tie the two nations together,” Mulder (2000:136) concludes.

The Americans finally gave the Philippines its independence on July 4, 1946, but not before the US congress approved the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines granting US citizens the same rights of Philippine citizens in the exploitation of the country’s natural resources, among others. In the process, the United States of America also gained control free of charge, large tracts of real estate where Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Force Base were established. In these US military bases, extra-territoriality prevailed. In other words, within both bases, the laws of the United States prevailed, and Philippine laws were inutile. The sad truth is this: the Philippine independence of July 4,

1946 “was not the fruition of nationalism, [but the result of] an agreement between the government of the United States and members of the Philippine elite” (Mulder 2000:182).

I recall Dr. F. Landa Jocano’s lecture at the National Defense College of the Philippines sometime in June of 1981. He said that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, before the Spanish colonization of the islands, the Arab traders had great influence with the peoples of the islands, particularly Mindanao and Sulu. The Islamic influence was present even as far north as Luzon where the city now known as Manila is situated. A Muslim, Raja Soliman ruled Manila at that time. The language of influence was Arabic. The center of pilgrimage was Mecca. When the Spaniards came on the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, all these changed. Islam was replaced by the new religion of dominance, Roman Catholicism. The administrative language was Spanish. The center of political pilgrimage was Madrid. All these remained in place for about 333 years until the occupation of the islands by the United States of America in 1898. The religion of the new colonial masters was Protestantism. The administrative language was English. The center of political pilgrimage was Washington, D.C., that is, until the Japanese Imperial army replaced the American commonwealth government in the Philippines from 1941 to 1945. Between these World War II years, the language of administration was Nippongo. The center of political pilgrimage was Tokyo. In 1945, toward the conclusion of World War II, the Americans returned to a devastated country, with its capital Manila earning the dubious reputation of being the second most devastated city in the world after World War II (second only to Warsaw), courtesy of the US air force.

The Islamization of the islands was rather benign, much of which was through the effort of the Arab traders of that particular period. The conversion to Catholicism of the majority of the people by the Spaniards was at the very least traumatic, since Spain came to colonize and convert with the sword on the right hand, and the cross on the left. The United States pacified the islands using superior technology and firepower in a brutal military campaign under the command of veterans of the Indian wars in America. The Americans established an arguably benign democratic form of government in collusion with the traditional native elite families. The Japanese, on the other hand made no bones about their intention to form the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere based on their deeply held belief that Japanese culture is superior over other Asian cultures. Other Asian countries in the Co-Prosperity Sphere such as the Philippines were, according to Bill Grodon to “provide Japan with export markets for its manufactured goods and with land for its surplus population.” Perhaps this brief exposition can help shed light and chase away whatever may have obscured one’s understanding of Mulder’s earlier statement in relation to Filipinos and identity.

To group present-day peoples of the Philippines into ethno-linguistic categories will present rigidities that present self-imposed problems difficult to overcome. But we nevertheless need a way to trace the ethnic origins of the Philippine population without obstructing the actual interactions that occur among them. The boundaries that divide, if indeed they are boundaries rather than cultural signifiers, are porous. And so I choose to group the peoples into four “flavors”: *Lumad* Filipino, Moro Filipino, Indio Filipino, and Chino Filipino. I use the word *Lumad* to refer to all the indigenous tribal peoples of the country. In this manner, we are able to discern ethnic origin while still maintaining shared

nationality. Besides, mixing of flavors has been known to enhance the delectability of taste. The Filipino rice cake, *bibingka* topped with slices of salted red eggs, chased with hot chocolate mixed with creamy carabao's milk is what comes to mind. Or in the European culinary tradition, chocolate cake laced with puree of raspberry.

“After their conquests in Mesoamerica and South America, where vast empires could be secured by the strategic kidnap of godlike kings,” Laura Lee Junker (1999:73) reveals that “the sixteenth-century Spaniards were unprepared for the difficulties of securing widely scattered [Philippine] islands controlled by a dizzying array of continually battling chiefs who seemed to have no permanent political hierarchies and spoke mutually unintelligible languages.” Her study based on ethnohistorical analysis suggests that (1999:73) “in the Philippines ... low population densities relative to productive land, a high level of ecological heterogeneity, and geographically fragmented landscapes contributed to the development of political structures [where] power coalesced around the leaders of shifting alliance networks,” and not on political units based on permanent territories. Political ties were of personal nature that demanded constant reinforcement, materially and ideologically. With this understanding, it is no longer surprising why it took 300 years before the peoples of the Spanish Philippines came to an idea of connectedness, a sense of nationhood, inchoate though it may be. It was during this era that Jose Rizal made his entry into history.

Floro C. Quibuyen (1999:1) “invites the reader to recover a lost [Philippine] history and vision, to reread Rizal, rethink his project, and revision Philippine nationalism.” His purpose, among others, is to rectify the prevailing orthodoxy on Rizal and Philippine nationalism. He recognizes that indeed, the prevailing orthodoxy “rests on

fundamental theoretical, as well as historiographic errors.” Quibuyen (1999:1) finds that these errors “spring from an essentializing and dichotomizing mind-set” such as “Rizal versus Bonifacio, *ilustrados* versus masses, and Reform versus Revolution.” The orthodoxy Quibuyen (1999:2) challenges is not borne out “by the facts nor by Rizal’s writings, and indeed was belied by the testimonies of [Rizal’s] colleagues.” The 19<sup>th</sup> century Filipino nationalist project was Rizal’s project that became, as Quibuyen (1999:3) asserts “hegemonic ... in that it developed, in the Gramscian sense, into a national-popular will.” After Rizal’s martyrdom, his project became the hegemonic nationalist project that culminated in the [Philippine] Revolution of 1896, thanks to the effort of Andres Bonifacio and the Katipunan. This was the first anticolonial democratic revolution in Asia (Quibuyen 1999:3). But the American conquest of the Philippines deformed “the budding nationalist hegemony, thereby co-opting the anti-Spanish, anticolonial movement and transforming it into a pro-American ‘official nationalism’ -- but not without the wholehearted cooperation of the local elite” (Quibuyen 1999:3). Also, the appropriation of Rizal by the American colonial regime effectively stunted the sprouting nationalist hegemony on the cultural terrain. Moreover, Quibuyen (1999:4) says that –

[b]y 1946, when the postcolonial Philippine Republic began, the nineteenth-century nationalist project which was forged by Rizal and Bonifacio had become marginalized. The nation as civil society that Rizal had envisioned did not materialize. What emerged instead was the monstrosity of nation-statism, and a people cut off from the Spirit of 1896.

“This,” according to Quibuyen (1999:4), “is the history that [Filipinos] have forgotten.” And in this regard, he asks, “are we then condemned to define ourselves, our identity as

Filipinos, in terms of a past that was constructed for us by foreigners--from Retana to the Americans?"

Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) was a German philosopher and literary figure, and was central to the transition from the German Enlightenment to Romanticism (Audi 1999:377). Herder "conceived the nation as an organically evolving community of language and culture, not of blood ties" (Benner 1995:18. *Really existing nationalism: A post-communist view from Marx and Engels*. Cited in Quibuyen 1999:7). According to Quibuyen (1999:8), "humanity as a whole, a brotherly species of one blood is the only descent that makes sense to Herder." He shows the uncanny affinity of Rizal's ideas with Herder's ideas, such as "the notion that the integrity of all peoples and historical epochs have intrinsic value and must be respected; the stress on the influence of climatic and geographical factors, and historical circumstances on the development of cultures; the lifelong rejection of tyranny and the affirmation of human rights and all that fosters human freedom and dignity" (Quibuyen 1999:7).

#### Rizal's Vision of the Filipino Nation

The Rizalian vision of the Filipino nation was that of an ethical community, an inclusive nation without borders, not of a sovereign nation demarcated by a territory and protected by the armature of the state. The moral concept of Rizal's nation was grounded on the fundamental moral concept expressed in *Vox populi, vox Dei*. This has disappeared in the political discourse of today's Philippines, and what is usually invoked, per Quibuyen (1999:9), "is the American idea of the 'sovereign people', which does not have the same moral force of *Vox populi, vox Dei*." Neither does 'sovereign people,' (as

contained in *Vox imperium, vox populi*) lend itself to the same critical function as *Vox populi, vox Dei*.

Integral to Rizal's concept of the Filipino nation were the two apexes of the ethical and the cultural; and indeed culture is crucial in realizing the common good (Quibuyen 1999:171). Here, Rizal's affinity with Herder is again noted inasmuch as for the latter, "the key to opposing oppression lay precisely in the development of the national character" (Jan Primrose & Joe May 1991:172; cited in Quibuyen 1999:171). The Filipino nation as conceptualized by Rizal has three dimensions: cultural, historical, and ethical which, as Quibuyen (1999:171) points out, "come together beautifully in Rizal's notion of *el sentimiento nacional*."

#### Rizal's *El Sentimiento Nacional*

Three different but related meanings constitute Rizal's idea of national sentiment. As understood and presented by Quibuyen (1999:172),

[the] first is the sense in which "national" is contrasted with "individual." In this sense, "national" refers to the "common good" as against particular or individual interests ... selfish private interests ... that are detrimental to public welfare. It must be emphasized that the "national" does *not* refer to the interests of the "nation-state" which after all, may involve only the interests of a ruling clique, or ... of a [strongman] and his family.

The "national" in Rizal's usage is linked to notions of virtue, sacrifice and redemption, thus linking it to the ethical (Quibuyen 1999:173). In its more developed sense, national sentiment as conceptualized by Rizal signifies a collective mentality, which according to Quibuyen (1999:175), is characterized by a twofold will. The first is to resist evil. The second is to promote the common good. On these, an ethical community can be founded as "a civil society guided by the moral and intellectual leadership of its enlightened

sector” (Quibuyen 1999:175). Thus, one can conclude with Quibuyen (1999:175) that “Rizal’s concept of nation refers to a people with a ‘soul’ or ‘sentiment’ ... who because of their solidarity, sense of dignity and concern for justice, will not put up with any tyrant or despot.” But what is needed is “an enlightened group of intellectuals, the *ilustrados*, who can provide the moral and intellectual leadership, even at the risk of their lives, to set the example ... to galvanize the people into a national-popular movement towards a national community.” Per Rizal’s prescription, people have to take responsibility, be self-reliant, and exercise initiative without resorting to blaming “the colonizers for all the ills that plague them” (Quibuyen 1999:176). Here are Rizal’s own words saying –

[that the Filipino] may ... progress it is necessary that a revolutionary spirit ... should boil in his veins since progress necessarily requires change; it implies the overthrow of the sanctified past by the present, the victory of new ideas over the old accepted ones (Rizal 2000:261-62 [original 1890]).

Rizal (1992:329) wrote in his letter to his friend Fernando Canon on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 1889, “[all] honorable men of the world are compatriots, [and] a true Filipino is a good man, and ... a citizen of the world.”

Should today’s Filipinos redeem the promise of the 1896 revolution? It would be easy to imagine why Rizal would weep himself to death were he to see what has become of his beloved Philippines. Niels Mulder (2000:186) describes the Philippines today as a place where “[e]lite and [*masa*] live in two separated worlds.”

[The Philippines] ... two nations in one state. Between these two ... [is a] vast middle [class] of civil servants, of small ... business-people, and of professionals. Most ... appear to be content with their role [as] consumers. In the vast anonymous space they operate in, they exemplify the sociological idea as a place where everybody minds his own business, pursues [his] own interests. Society is a market. In the market, only money counts. (Mulder in *Filipino Images*, p. 186-87.)

It is unfortunate that in today's Philippines, the *ilustrados*--the enlightened group of intellectuals who can provide moral and intellectual leadership to the people, leaders who are willing to risk their lives, to set examples for the rest, to encourage the people toward the formation of a national community--are nowhere to be found. But there is still hope, perhaps.

Filipinos know who they were, and what they wanted to become as a people and as a nation before the Americans came. Filipinos know what happened and what became of them after the Americans occupied their country. They also know what became of their *ilustrado* leaders during the American and Japanese regimes, and how their leaders' self-interests affected the ordinary people, and by extension, the entire nation. The people can still recover the memory, the narratives that led to the glorious Filipino Spirit of 1896. From the recovery of their revolutionary tradition reinterpreted today and oriented toward the fulfillment of a better imagined future made possible by what they do today, perhaps the Spirit of 1896 may revive and reinvigorate the Filipinos into a project of self-redemption. But before all else, a detour must be made to reflect on, to recollect, to ask and evaluate answers to three beguilingly simple questions. Who am I? Who am I to you? Who are we to each other?

In seeking answers to the above questions, the critical hermeneutic participatory researcher engages the research participant in a conversation. The participant is invited to disclose his views on the topic of the conversation, in this case Filipino identity, by asking the participant if he thinks one is born a Filipino, or if he thinks one is taught to be a Filipino. Other questions on the same subject matter may be formulated and asked. But what is significant to remember about the role of questions in hermeneutic participatory

research is that questions are asked not to elicit accurate answers, but to start conversations.

### Significance of the Study

This study has significance in at least two levels: the national and the individual. By national I mean at the curriculum policy-making level of the Philippine Department of Education. In a sense, this study attempts to make a contribution to what Ma. Celeste T. Gonzalez's *A Political Hermeneutics of Curriculum Policy-Making at the National Level in the Philippines* (1991) can recover in terms of the "lost [Philippine] history and vision" (Quibuyen 1999:1). By individual I mean the Filipino who has been ensnared into thinking he is what in fact he is not. Many, if not most Filipinos educated in either public or private school system have been taught to accept as true the spurious information codified in history textbooks by authors of the various colonial governments. Unfortunately, there are also many Filipino writers and historians who replicate the erroneous information in what they write.

I do not consider it presumptuous to say that this study also has international significance. What Filipinos think and say of themselves is what non-Filipino writers will write about them. Whether in agreement or not is not of grave concern. What is of importance is that what Filipinos think of themselves is incorporated and on record in publications.

It is anticipated that this research will provide useful guidelines for curriculum development and education policies in relation to the teaching of Filipino history and culture in the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education.

Further reflection reminds me of the saying: you are who you think you are. In this regard, it seems that the different peoples who refer to themselves as Filipinos do not have a unified nor coherent notion of themselves. Narratives and literature about the Philippines show the various peoples of the country counterposed or in opposition with each other.

The Philippines enjoyed economic and political prominence in the 1950s among its Southeast Asian neighbors. But since then its economy has declined, its social and political institutions have weakened, and its fratricidal conflicts fuelled by unresolved social, economic, and cultural differences continue to exact a heavy drain on the energy and treasury of the country. Kunio Yoshihara (1999:1) observes that during the period 1952 to 1991, “the Thai per capita gross national product (GNP) – which in the beginning was half that of the Philippines – was more than double that of the [Philippines] by the end of the period.” The Muslim secessionist movement has strengthened. The communist insurgency continues unabated. It seems to me that absent the colonizers that unified them, the Filipinos now fight against each other instead.

This study will try to find out what brought this sad turn of events. It will attempt to find ways on how to stem the tide of a seemingly inexorable national dissolution. It hopes to find clues that may help find an orientation toward a sense of national purpose that all the peoples of the country can agree on.

#### Summary and Upcoming Text

Filipino identity is refracted and unfocused. This seems to be a contributory reason as to why the different peoples of the Philippines are in various levels and stages of conflict with each other. But there appears to be a paucity of material and research on

the problem. It is the intention of this research to discover reasons why Filipino identity is to this day a vague notion.

A background on the Philippines is provided in the following chapter. It will cover the peoples of the islands before Spanish contact, then span the 333-year Spanish colonial era, followed by the short but intense American colonial period that is briefly interrupted by the horrible occupation of the islands by the Japanese in World War II. Eventually landing in the present, it will then consider the country's postcolonial, postmodern condition.

Chapter Three reviews the literature that informs this study. Chapter Four describes the research process, and presents the theoretical background employed. It also presents the research participants, as well as discusses the research categories and questions, and describes methods used in collecting and analyzing data.

Chapter Five contains the synopses and analyses of the research conversations. The following Chapter Six is where hermeneutics, history, and issues from the research conversations are taken up. Deliberation on the findings, conclusions, and implications elicited by this research is found in Chapter Seven.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Background of the Country

#### Introduction

Philippine history, seen from the European angle is usually divided into three major periods of which the first is what is referred to as pre-Spanish contact. Not much is known about this period, and very little of what is known is found in Philippine history textbooks. However, present day Filipino and non-Filipino scholars—historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, sociologists, and others in the human sciences—are attempting to address this issue.

This chapter addresses four major intervals in Philippine history. First is the period prior to Spanish contact. Second is the Spanish colonization of the islands. Third is the American colonial period. Last is the Japanese occupation of the Philippines during World War II. Thereafter, it will look into how the country was affected by its experience of being colonized twice and its brief but brutal occupation by Japan in World War II, how it was brought into modernity, and where it now stands in this postcolonial, postmodern present.

“It is a fond adage of historians,” Scott (2000:11) writes, “that a people without a history is a people without a soul. So nation building Filipinos eagerly search for their roots.” Facts about the people of these islands prior to contact with Spain are meager. But available facts on record suggest “a vigorous and mobile population adjusting to every environment in the archipelago, creatively producing local variations in response to resources, opportunities and cultural contacts, able to trade and raid, feed and defend themselves” (Scott 2000:12). This notwithstanding, any Filipino today, a student for

example, faces a problem in search of his or her past. Scott (2000:1) observes that Philippine history “textbooks were all written in English by authors who used English translations as their sources.” In this regard, Scott reveals a primary cause for problems concerning Filipinos and their history.

A few years ago, Scott (2000:1) had the “opportunity to read a paper on the history of Philippine society by a Filipino student in Cornell University.” Scott noted that the author of the paper “referred to prehispanic social structures as ‘tribal’, citing Juan Plasencia’s 1589 ‘Customs of the Tagalogs’ as evidence.” The author from Cornell University wrote in his paper, “ ‘In Father Plasencia’s own words... [t]his tribal gathering is called in Tagalo (sic) a barangay” (Scott 2000:1). But Scott exposes that “these were not Father Plasencia’s own words.” Rather, “they were the words of Harvard historian Fredrick W. Morrison who provided this translation for Volume 7 of the monumental Blair & Robertson compendium, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*.” Scott (2000:1) elucidates:

Whether a Tagalog barangay was a tribal gathering or not, Father Plasencia did not say so. What he said was: “These [datus] were chiefs of but few people, as many as a hundred houses and even less than thirty; and this they call in Tagalog, barangay.”

Thus, Scott (2000:1) reveals that “the word ‘tribal’ was... supplied by an American history professor in 1903, not an eye-witness in 1589, and so reflects a 20<sup>th</sup>-century preconception of what 16<sup>th</sup>-century Philippine society was like.”

Scott goes on to cite many other instances of mistranslations and preconceptions that have found their way in Philippine history textbooks, and literature in general. His

example above is a clear example of one of the problems that face the Filipino people in search of their identity.

### Colonial Periods

#### Pre-Spanish Contact

“After their conquests in Mesoamerica and South America, where vast empires could be secured by the strategic kidnap of godlike kings,” Laura Lee Junker (1999:73) notes that “the sixteenth-century Spaniards were unprepared for the difficulties of securing widely scattered [Philippine] islands controlled by a dizzying array of continually battling chiefs who seemed to have no permanent political hierarchies and spoke mutually unintelligible languages.” Her study based on ethnohistorical analysis suggests that (1999:73) “in the Philippines ... low population densities relative to productive land, a high level of ecological heterogeneity, and geographically fragmented landscapes contributed to the development of political structures [where] power coalesced around the leaders of shifting alliance networks,” and not on political units based on permanent territories. Political ties were of personal nature that demanded constant reinforcement, materially and ideologically. The “widely scattered islands were [at that time] controlled by a dizzying array of continually battling chiefs who seemed to have no permanent political hierarchies and spoke mutually unintelligible languages” says Junker (1999:73).

Jocano (2001:2) forthrightly says, “much of what happened in the [prehistoric] past can only be partially known. Many important events that occurred in the lives of ancient Filipinos cannot be accounted for... [and]... perhaps, they never will be.” To go to this deep end of Philippine prehistory may at the moment be counterproductive, and may

lead us on a chase for a black cat in a lightless cave. Nevertheless, it is helpful to know that based on his extensive anthropological researches on Philippine prehistory, Jocano (2001:64) says with confidence that [ancient] Philippine institutions and traditions are far more complex than what has been suggested by earlier scholars.”

### Spanish Colonial Period

At the beginning of Spanish presence in the Philippines, Scott (2000:5) writes, “Manila was rapidly becoming, if it had not already become, the main *entrepôt* in the archipelago.” According to Scott (2000:6) Antonio Pigafetta, who would a few years later become the chronicler of Magellan’s expedition, found a sea vessel from the island of Luzon where Manila is located, loading sandalwood in Timor. This was in 1511 when the Portuguese took Malacca, ten years before Magellan made landfall in what is now Philippines. After the Portuguese occupied Malacca, “they appointed a wealthy Luzon businessman by the name of Regimo... who had migrated there as *temenggong* (governor) of the Muslim community,” according to Scott (2000:6). Regimo “attracted other Filipino businessmen to follow him.”

The colonization of the Philippine islands by the Spaniards commenced approximately 50 years after 16<sup>th</sup> of March in 1521, the day Magellan found himself in what we now know as the Philippines. According to de la Costa (1992:14), at the urging of Magellan, Humabun who was the Raja of the flourishing port of Cebu, converted to Catholicism and accepted vassalage under Charles who was king of Spain and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. From the arrival of Juan Lopez de Legaspi in Manila in 1571 and the enactment of a blood compact ritual between Soliman, the Raja of *Maynilad* (now Manila) and the Spaniard Legaspi, commenced the earnest colonization of the

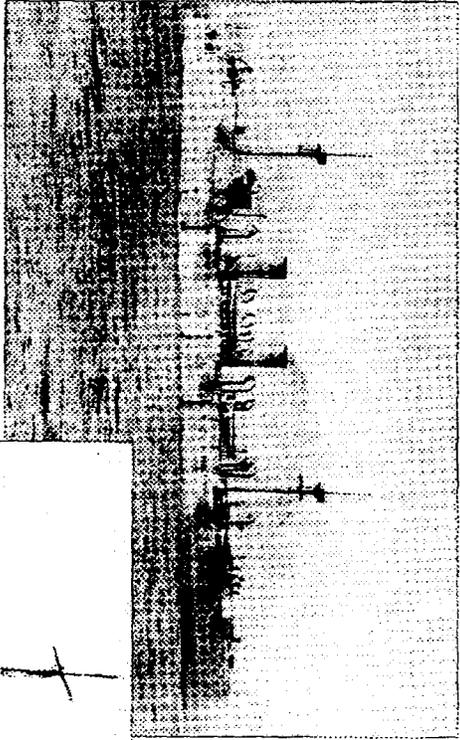
islands by Philip II of Spain. With the soldiers were the friars eager to win the natives over to Roman Catholicism.

In the course of 333 years, Spain was able to colonize much of the archipelago particularly the maritime and lowland areas. However, Spanish presence and control in the highlands of the Cordillera Mountains of Luzon, and the inland Muslim areas of Mindanao were at best tenuous, and only from time to time. These were the people who resisted foreign subjugation. Eventually they were referred to as “ethnic minorities,” Scott (1998:22) reports, “because their ancestors resisted assimilation into the Spanish and American empires and therefore retained more of the culture and customs of their *ethnos*, or “tribe,” than their colonized brothers who eventually came to outnumber them.” Scott (1998:22-3) continues:

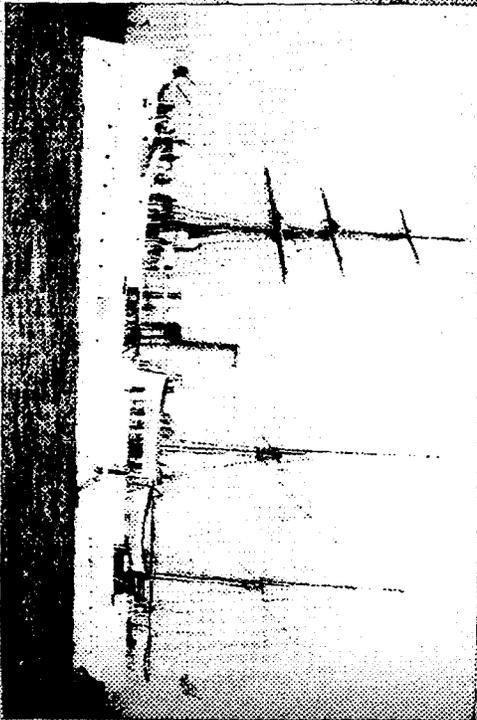
The great land masses of the archipelago never really came under Spanish control: as late as 1800 there were practically no Spanish outposts in terrain higher than 500 feet above sea level except in the Caraballo uplands of Nueva Vizcaya. As a matter of fact, except for the great central plain of Luzon, few Spaniards in 1800 resided more than 15 kilometers from the sea coast.

One finds many ironies in Philippine history. It was Spain who unintentionally brought this group of islands inhabited by different peoples speaking different languages together as a nation. It was Spain who introduced Filipino nationalists like Jose Rizal and Marcelo H. del Pilar to “aspirations for democracy and civil liberties” Sarkisyanz (1995:2) reveals, and not the United States of America. Moreover, Sarkisyanz (1995:2) adds, “the Philippine Revolution and Independence struggle did grow out of democratic and revolutionary traditions in Spain itself[.]” It was also Spain that brought the Philippines within the pale of European modernity.

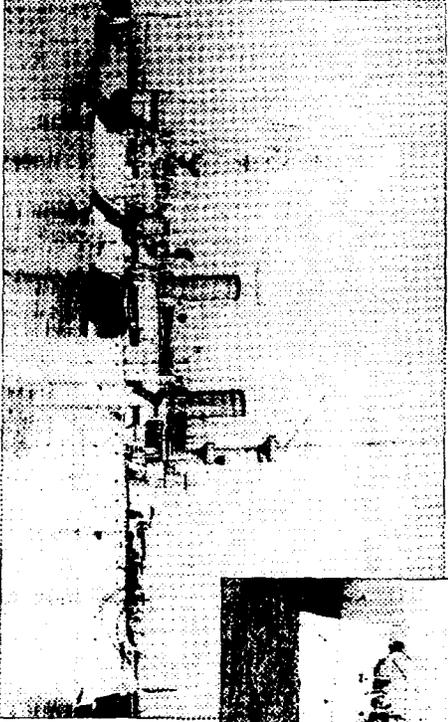
In November 1897, the Spanish colonial government and Aguinaldo's revolutionary army went into negotiation for cessation of hostilities. Reforms were discussed. Part of the agreement was for the Spanish government to institute reforms demanded by the Filipinos. In the meantime, Aguinaldo and forty of his group would be paid \$800,000. Of this amount, half was given as the insurgents went into exile in Hong Kong. The other half would be remitted to Aguinaldo and his group as soon as "a stipulated number of guns were surrendered" by the rebels (Miller 1982:35). "[T]he Pact failed because," as Majul (1996:118) reports, "...the Spanish government did not pay Aguinaldo and his men the full amount promised; neither did all the *katipuneros* surrender their arms as agreed in the Pact." "By March 1898," Miller (1982:35) reveals that "unorganized and scattered gunfights had again erupted throughout Luzon." Aguinaldo made contact in November 1897 with American officials in Hong Kong, specifically the American consul-general Rounceville Wildman. Miller (1982:35) notes that upon the arrival of Dewey's squadron in Hong Kong, "Commander Edward P. Wood, on Dewey's instructions, invited [Aguinaldo's representative Felipe] Agoncillo aboard the U.S.S. *Petrel* for serious negotiations. (On the following page are photographs of US Navy ships under Dewey's command.) Wood urged members of the junta to return to the Philippines as soon as possible in order to join and lead the incipient rebellion there [assuring]... American support in the event that the United States went to war with Spain, hinting that [war with Spain] was inevitable." Aguinaldo and his group were transported from Hong Kong to the Philippines by the US Navy aboard U.S.S. *McCulloch*. "Meanwhile," Miller (1982:36) discloses, "Aguinaldo gave Wildman \$115,000 with which to purchase arms for him."



The USS Baltimore (TC)



The USS Petrel, one of the participants in the Battle of Manila Bay (TC)



Dewey's Flagship, the USS Olympia (TC)

Transporting Aguinaldo and his men aboard a US man-of-war, according to Miller (1982:36) constitutes “a de facto alliance, or at the very least, recognition of his political claims.” Miller cites General T. M. Anderson’s clarification of the full diplomatic implications of the assistance given Aguinaldo and his group by Dewey and Wildman. After Anderson’s return from the Philippines, Miller (1982:37) reports that Anderson was quoted in the *North American Review* rhetorically asking, “If an incipient rebellion was already in progress, what could be inferred from the fact that Aguinaldo and thirteen banished Tagals were brought down on a naval vessel and landed at Cavite?”

#### American Colonial Period

The American *conquista* of the Philippines began in 1899. It was not benevolent, and the meaning of the word assimilation was lost in the killings of the natives. In plain language, the military subjugation of the Philippines was brutal, and John Hay’s “splendid little war” (Miller 1982:12) did not end as quickly, and as economically as the Americans expected. Miller (1982:94) cites General Arthur MacArthur’s concession to news reporter H. Irving Hancock:

When I first started in against these rebels, I believed that Aguinaldo’s troops represented only a faction. I did not like to believe that the whole population of Luzon—the native population that is—was opposed to us and our offers of aid and good government. But after having come this far, after having occupied several towns and cities in succession, and having been brought much into contact with both insurrectos and amigos, I have been reluctantly compelled to believe that the Filipino masses are loyal to Aguinaldo and the government which he heads.

This was published in the *Literary Digest* (19) in 1899. General Arthur MacArthur (father of General Douglas MacArthur who shall subsequently make an appearance in this study)

repeated these sentiments years later before the Lodge committee of the US Congress (Miller 1982:288n9).

Meanwhile, General William Shaftner explained to reporters in San Francisco, California that “it might be necessary to kill half the native population in order to bring ‘perfect justice’ to the surviving half” (Miller 1982:94). Close to General Shaftner’s heels is “outspoken veteran of Wounded Knee, Colonel Jacob Smith [who claimed that] because the [Filipino] natives were ‘worse than fighting Indians’, he had already adopted the appropriate tactics that he had learned fighting ‘savages’ in the American West” (Miller 1982:94-5). “The *New York Times*,” Miller (1982:95) points out “enthusiastically endorsed Smith’s lawlessness as ‘long overdue’.”

On August 23, 1901, 600 American teachers disembarked from the ocean transport *Thomas* in Manila (Salamanca 1989:193n4). This signaled the genuine inauguration of the American educational system in the Philippines. But as Salamanca (1989:66) writes:

The educational structure was of course not a novelty to the Filipinos. ... all the types of educational institutions introduced by the Americans had existed in the Philippines in one form or another before the American Occupation. ... [H]owever, the American educational program represented a decided and fundamental break with tradition. Its values were secular, not religious. Correspondingly, the methods, content, supervision, if not the entire personnel, of the educational establishment had to be changed to attain the secular objectives of education.

The notable exception among the teaching institutions established 94 years ago in 1910 was the Philippine General Hospital. Eventually, it became the teaching hospital of the College of Medicine of the University of the Philippines.

Around this time, English started to replace Spanish as the language of the cosmopolitan Filipinos. It became fashionable for them to become “modern” and “Americanized.” Hispanism went stale. A new Americanized generation of Filipinos began to emerge. “Peace time” was the phrase Filipinos used to refer to this period of American colonial governance prior to World War II.

On December 8, 1941 (Pacific Standard Time) Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. At 1300 hours, 10 December 1941 the two-company strong Tanaka detachment of the Japanese Imperial Army landed at Aparri, at the northern end of Luzon, unopposed (Connaughton 2001:180).

#### Japanese Occupation of the Philippines

Actually, the Japanese already staged a beachhead earlier at Batan island, north of Aparri, “ordered strikes... at Clark Air Field and Baguio, and launched attacks on Davao [province in Mindanao [on the] eighth of December 1941,” the day Pearl Harbor was attacked (Ikehata 1999:1). On that same day at 1130 [hours], Connaughton (2001:168) reports “all American aircraft in the Philippines, with the exception of one or two planes, were on the ground.” Connaughton (2001:168) continues his report:

The pilots of the 20<sup>th</sup> Pursuit...parked up neatly at the fuel lines at Clark to await the ground crew who were at lunch. Most of the fighter pilots headed for the Officers’ Club where the bomber pilots were having a quick drink before returning to their aircraft.

Such was the condition of preparedness at [1220 hours] of December 8, 1941 when the Japanese fighter planes and bombers destroyed the American airplanes and devastated Clark Air Force Base.

Quibuyen (2000:92) raises the fact that “prior to World War II, the Filipinos looked up to Japan as an ally, if not a source of inspiration.” In support of his contention,

Quibuyen (2000:96) relates that Rizal, on his way to the United States, dropped by Japan and stayed there from February 28 to April 15, 1888. He met by chance in Yokohama Feliciano Espino, a Filipino fugitive wanted by the Spanish authorities in the Philippines. And as Quibuyen (2000:96) points out, Japan at that time “was a haven for Filipino patriots escaping the wrath of the [Spanish] authorities in the Philippines.” Quibuyen (2000:99) quotes Filipino historian Gregorio Zaide who notes “ ‘Many Filipinos who had fled from Spanish persecution had been welcomed [in Japan] and given the full protection of the law’ .” “In the *Katipunan*’s eyes” Quibuyen (2000:99) avers, “Japan appeared brightly as the likely champion of Asian liberation from European oppression.” But at the advent of World War II in 1941 the attachment of the Filipinos to the United States “was so strong that the resistance to the Japanese was motivated not only by a racist hostility to the Japanese but also by an abiding devotion to Americans” (Quibuyen 2000:93-4). Perhaps, an explanation to this startling change of heart may be understood with what Dussel (2003:24) says:

The conquistador or the propagandist achieves his aim by force of arms or by violently imposing on the other... [his] civilization, or his religion, or by exalting his own cultural system. Educational domination is... a movement whereby the cultural boundaries of the father, the imperialist... extend so as to embrace the other (the son) within its self. ... Further, [domination] is projected into the personal and social ego, so that the son or the oppressed culture even begins to sing the praises of his oppressor[.]

It must be admitted that the United States of America was able to convert the Filipinos in quick time from adulators of the Mikado, to die-hard fans of Uncle Sam.

At the beginning of the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in World War II, Quibuyen (2000:94) recalls “the Japanese tried hard to win the Filipinos to their side... [but they found] their gesture of friendship rebuffed[.]” This rejection of friendship

did not sit well with the Japanese. It should be recalled that not too long ago, Filipinos sought Japan as their ally and protector. Small wonder then that during the Bataan Death March, Connaughton (2001:296) reports the “Japanese were particularly cruel to the Filipinos, whom they regarded as white men’s lackeys. In the first 6-7 weeks, more than... 16,000 Filipinos died at Camp O’Donnell.”

Ikehata (1999:18) acknowledges the “end of the Japanese occupation found the Philippines in a state of exhaustion, devastation and chaos. The country’s political institutions on every level were in a state of chaos, social unrest reigned, and the empty bellies of the citizenry became oblivious to what was right and wrong.” Moreover, what the Japanese occupation did went beyond increasing and strengthening the Filipinos dependency on the United States. “This dependency on the United States, which was enhanced by the Japanese occupation” Ikehata (1999:18-9) reveals, “extended beyond politics, the economy, and military assistance *to the very consciousness of the Filipino people* [italics mine].

#### America Redux

Ikehata (1999:18) recognizes that in “the collective memory of the Filipino people there was no doubt that the Japanese occupation marked their darkest period.” She goes on to acknowledge that the “Japanese occupation etched an indelible mark of cruelty on the Philippine daily life for three years and eight months.” No wonder, when Douglas Mac Arthur--ill prepared to defend the Philippines at the start of World War II in the Pacific theater—returned to the Philippines after Japan lost the war, he was hailed as victorious Caesar by the Filipinos.

Japan surrenders on September 2, 1945. Ten months and two days later, on July 4, 1946, the Philippines, exhausted, devastated, and in chaos is granted its political independence by the United States of America. But not before the Congress of the Commonwealth of the Philippines “was first confronted with acceptance of the Bell Trade Act passed by the United States congress,” Ikehata (1999:19) recalls. She notes that the Act established twenty-eight years of preferential duties, with the first eight years until 1954 as completely duty-free. Ikehata (1999:19) further bares a provision in the Act that grants “U.S. residents rights and privileges equal to those of Filipino citizens in exploiting natural resources and in owning and operating public utility projects.” This equal rights provision was a violation of the 1935 Philippine constitution. To make the Bell Trade Act legal, a constitutional amendment had to be passed. Ikehata (1999:19) comes to this realization:

The historical process within which the Bell Act was accepted by the Philippine Congress found a nationally independent Philippines far worse economically than it was at when the Philippine Independence (Tydings-McDuffie) Act passed (1934) and when the Philippine Constitution of 1935 was adopted. ... However, the thoroughly exhausted Filipino people had no choice but to accept the Bell Act, for in exchange, the U.S. Congress promised to implement the Philippine Rehabilitation Act that would provide \$620 million in aid.

In March of 1947 the United States secured an agreement with the Republic of the Philippines to establish and operate 23 U.S. military bases in its former colony for a period of 99 years. Among these were Clark Air Force Base in Angeles, Pampanga, and Subic U.S. Naval Base in Olongapo, Zambales.

## Colonial Discourse

Both Spain and the United States of America made full use of colonial discourse as an instrument of power. Ashcroft et al (2002:42) understand colonial discourse as “the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships.” Thus, it is “a system of statements...made about colonies and colonial peoples, about colonizing powers and about the relationship between these two.” Colonial discourse is the systematized “knowledge and beliefs about the world” wherein “acts of colonization takes place”(Ashcroft et al 2002:42). In ensuring its superior position over the colonized subjects, the colonizers create rules of inclusion and exclusions. These rules “operate on the assumption of the superiority of the colonizer’s culture, history, language, art, political structures, social conventions, and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be ‘raised up’ through colonial contact” (Ashcroft et al 2002:42). It is through such distinctions where the colonized, “whatever the nature of their social structures and cultural histories” might be, are represented “as ‘primitive’.” Naturally, the colonizers are represented as “civilized” (Ashcroft et al 2002:42-3). An apposite example of colonial discourse is found by tracing the genesis of the putative phrase “manifest destiny.” As researched by Zimmermann (2002:33) this phrase first came into use “in the 1840s [as] a quasi-theological justification of America’s continental expansion and of the Monroe Doctrine.” But it was John O’Sullivan who was the actual originator of the phrase “manifest destiny.” Sullivan wrote in 1839:

The far-reaching, boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is *destined to manifest* [emphasis added] to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High—the Sacred and the True.

For this blessed mission to the nations of the world, which are shut out from the life-giving light of truth, has America been chosen; and her high example shall smite unto death the tyranny of kings, hierarchs, and oligarchs, and carry the glad tidings of peace and good will where myriads now endure an existence scarcely more enviable than that of beasts of the field (Zimmermann 2002:33).

Zimmermann (2002:33) finds out that “O’Sullivan’s phrase ‘destined to manifest’ was rephrased ‘manifest destiny’. In its new form, it caught on as “a convenient catchword for American expansionists.” “The triumphal looseness of language” Zimmermann (2002:33) notes, “made the phrase doubly attractive; it could be applied to the whole world or any desired part of it.” Thus United States President William McKinley invoked manifest destiny in colonizing the Philippines in order to Christianize its inhabitants, the majority of whom were Roman Catholics, as one among other self-serving reasons. Thus the United States of America felt justified in leaping over its westernmost continental frontier, and onto islands in the Pacific Ocean. With this leap, manifest destiny embraces imperialism.

Colonizers tend to exclude three elements from colonial discourse. Ashcroft et al identifies them as “statements about the exploitation of the resources of the colonized, the political status accruing to colonizing powers, the importance to domestic politics (i.e. politics in the colonizer’s home country) of the development of an empire.” What colonial discourse does is “conceal these benefits in statements about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitive nature of other races [emphasis in the original], the barbaric depravity of colonized societies, and therefore the duty of the imperial power to reproduce itself in the colonial society, and to advance the civilization of the colony

through trade, administration, cultural and moral improvement” (Ashcroft et al 2002:43).

They (Ashcroft et al 2002:43) go on to declare:

Such is the power of colonial discourse that individual colonizing subjects are not often consciously aware of the duplicity of their position, for colonial discourse constructs the colonizing subject as much as the colonized. Statements that contradict the discourse cannot be made either without incurring punishment, or without making the individuals who make these statements appear eccentric and abnormal.

Indeed, colonial discourse is so powerful it has incalculably contaminated Filipino narratives and texts (understood in Derrida’s sense that, “‘text’ is not to be confused with the graphisms of a ‘book’” [Bernstein 1998:211]). Much of this contamination not only still exists, but also persists like mosquito larvae in stagnant water, abetted by incompletely revised public and private school curriculum, among many other channels of contamination.

#### From Imperialism and Colonialism

What then is the difference and relationship between “imperialism” and “colonialism?” Here, we seek succor from Edward Said (1994:9) who defines imperialism as “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory;” whereas colonialism, “which is almost always a consequence of imperialism is the implanting of settlements on distant territory.”

Expanding on how he understands these two concepts, Said (1994:9) writes:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of the classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like “inferior” or “subject races,” “subordinate peoples,” “dependency,” “expansion,” and “authority.” Out of the imperial experiences, notions

about culture were clarified, reinforced, criticized, or rejected.

Said's understanding of imperialism and colonialism provides a good background where the "scale and variety of colonial settlements generated by the expansion of European society after the Renaissance" period can be projected. This European post-Renaissance social expansion "shows why the term colonialism has been seen to be a distinctive form of the more general ideology of imperialism" (Ashcroft et al 2002:46). It was coterminous with the development of a modern capitalist system of economic exchange" [which] means that the colonies were established primarily "to provide raw materials...for the economies of the colonial powers[.]" Ashcroft et al (2002:46) also point out that "the relation between the colonizer and the colonized was locked into a rigid hierarchy of difference deeply resistant to fair and equitable exchanges, whether economic, cultural or social. [T]he ideology of race was also a crucial part of the construction and naturalization of an unequal form of intercultural relations."

With the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, colonialism in general did not disappear. True, all nations colonized by the Europeans are now independent. Nevertheless, colonialism "merely modified and developed into the **neo-colonialism** [emphasis in the original] of the post-independence period" (Ashcroft 2002:50).

### Neocolonialism

Neocolonialism as Spivak (2000:3) sees it is embodied by "the 'third world' as a displacement of the old colonies, as colonialism proper displaces itself into neocolonialism." As clarification, she says that neocolonialism to her means "the largely economic rather than the largely territorial enterprise of imperialism." Moreover, "The

difference between colonialism and imperialism, crucial to historians, is not of the last importance here” (Spivak 2000:3). To Spivak (2000:172) a source of the “dominant economic, political, and culturalist maneuvers [that emerged] in [the 20<sup>th</sup>] century after the uneven dissolution of the territorial empires” is neocolonialism.

Young (2002a:45) writes “Although the formerly colonized territories gradually had their political sovereignty returned to them, they nevertheless remained subject to the effective control of the major world powers, which constituted the same group as the former imperial powers.” In essence, Young (2002a:45) says that what this means is that an ex-colony whose political sovereignty has been returned by its colonizer, as in the case of the Philippines, nevertheless “remains in a situation of dependence on its former [master], and that the former [master continues] to act in a colonialist manner towards [the] formerly colonized [state].” Moreover, Young (2002a:45-6) adds:

In the neocolonial situation, the ruling class [is constituted] by [the native] elite that operates in complicity with the needs of international capital for its own benefit. Effective international (i.e. US) control is maintained by economic means, particularly access to capital and technology, together with the policing of world financial organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank..., or the International Monetary Fund.

If these controls were insufficient, military intervention is introduced in complicity with the local ruling elite. This is accomplished through the nation’s own army and police force. According to Young (2002a:46), this neocolonial situation implies that “national sovereignty is effectively a fiction, and that the system of apparently autonomous nation-states is in fact *the means through which international capital exercises imperialist control*” [italics added]. In this regard, Kearney (1995:71) presents the observations of Max Weber and later Jürgen Habermas demonstrating that “social systems tend to

legitimize themselves through an ideology that justifies their right to secure and retain power.”

### Modernity and the Postcolonial Present

Modernity was introduced to the Philippines through the auspices of colonialism. How then did this manner of introduction to modernity affect the development of the country’s political, social, and economic institutions? Modernity will be viewed here from the vista of Jürgen Habermas as enunciated in his *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vol. 1 & 2 (1984, 1987). Moreover, modernity will be assessed in the light of the colonial history of the Philippines; that its very existence in its present modern form came about as result of Spanish and American colonialism.

Patricia Huntington (2001:107) informs us of Enrique Dussel’s claim “that European modernity is born through a ‘particular myth of sacrificial violence’ that inaugurated ‘a process of concealment or misrecognition of the non-European’.” Dussel’s argument, according to Huntington, “dismantles the pervasive assumption that bolsters Europe’s conception of its modernity--namely, that violence lies outside and is anathema to the process of rationalization at the heart of the modern social contract.” Huntington (2001:107) brings out Dussel’s assertion that European modernity is traced to Spain, and it is through Spain where Europe placed itself at the center in two steps. The first was Spain’s reconquest of Andalusia by the former unleashing extreme sectarian violence against the Muslim’s who were then in control of the disputed area. That positioned Spain as “the only European power with the capacity of external territorial conquest”. Next, “the model for the colonization of the New World” was the violence unleashed in the last phases of the *reconquista*. “Through this genealogy,” Dussel per Huntington

(2001:107) “demonstrates that Europe made itself ‘the center of a *World History*’ only by eclipsing the fact that it constituted itself on the basis of a hidden irrational myth, a justification for genocidal violence.” Further, Huntington (2001:107-8) raises Dussel’s perception that “when we see the connection of Eurocentrism with the concomitant ‘fallacy of developmentalism’, it becomes apparent that Europe gives birth to modernity through sacrificial violence.” Also, Dussel views the fallacy of European developmentalism, according to Huntington (2001:108), “in thinking that the path of Europe’s modern development must be followed unilaterally by every other culture.

In the last two decades of Spanish rule in the Philippines, the colonizers created a countrywide public sphere dominated by political, administrative, and religious institutions. They created a "modern", world market-oriented economy, in conjunction with the economic activities of the colonial state (Mulder 2000:180). This “modern” creation should also be viewed against the background of the Spanish galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco that lasted for two and a half centuries, from 1565 to 1815, the period in European history that falls approximately between the naval battle of Lepanto and the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo (Legarda 1999:32). Nevertheless, the Philippines remained an agricultural economy (Mulder 2000:181).

During the American colonial era that effectively was in place in 1901, the country came to see "modernity" from the American perspective. The global perspectives this opened are still with the Filipinos of today. An active civil society arose in the Philippines, as a result of economic development and [American] education, well before it emerged in Indonesia and Thailand (Mulder 2000:190-1).

However complex and contentious the processes that animate the culture of the public world in the Philippines, the overall image it evokes is that of a market, a place to bargain and to earn a living that is kept at a safe distance from private concerns (Mulder 2000:190). Elite and masses live in two separated worlds, [like] two nations in one state. In the space between these two are the civil servants, small businesspeople, and professionals who comprise the middle class. In the urban space the middle class operate in, everyone minds his own business, pursues her own interests. Here, society is a market. In the market, only money counts (Mulder 2000:186-7).

Today's Filipinos come from the various lines of peoples who inhabited the islands of the archipelago, the very same peoples who have since 1571 been adapting, negotiating, resisting or surrendering to the coercion of two European colonizers, and one Asian imperialist. Again, by way of Huntington (2001:109), it seems appropriate here to recall Dussel who has come to the conclusion that the "realization of modernity ... lies [in] a process that will transcend modernity as such, a trans-modernity, in which both modernity and its negated alterity (the victims) co-realize themselves in a process of mutual creative fertilization."

Per Bronner (1994:301), "Habermas following Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann, asserts that modernization involves the generation of systems with increasingly complicated sub-systems whose reproduction depends upon their capacity to secure universalistic processes of adaptation against the 'lifeworld'." "If the lifeworld stands distinct from the instrumental logic of state and economic systems, however, it is not divorced from all integration mechanisms" Bronner (1994:301) continues. By translating "latently available structures of rationality" into social practice, new social

movements supplanted the proletarian “macro-subject” of history. Thus, these new social movements receive emancipatory definition in terms of their ability to assail the given systems logic through their attempts to redeem the solidarity and subjectivity anthropologically embedded in the lifeworld (Bonner 1984:301). Interrogating Habermas’s position, Bonner (1994:302) raises the question of how well these new movements succeed inasmuch as they employ in judging the cultural traditions and norms influencing their actions with the very concept of universalism that they oppose. Bonner further asserts that this is only logical since advanced industrial society, with its strategically defined economic and state institutions, provides the material foundations for regenerating the lifeworld. Nonetheless, Habermas (1984:342) claims that “only with the conceptual framework of communicative action can one gain a perspective from which the process of societal rationalization appears as contradictory from the start”. He continues to say that “the contradiction arises between ... a rationalization of everyday communication that is tied to the structures of intersubjectivity of the lifeworld, in which language counts as the genuine and irreplaceable medium of reaching understanding,” and “the growing complexity of subsystems of purposive-rational action, in which actions are coordinated through steering media such as money and power.” This, according to Habermas (1984:342) is what brings about the “competition ... between *principles of societal integration* ... and those de-linguistified steering media through which systems of success-oriented action are differentiated out.” And picking up from where we left off with Bronner (1994:302), he writes that “the ‘illegitimate’ extent to which these materials are employed ... is the extent to which anomie and ‘colonization of the lifeworld’ take place.”

All told, no matter what propaganda was rolled out by whichever colonizer to justify to themselves and to the rest of *their* world their forcible occupation of a foreign land, all of them wanted no more than a colony that they can use for their respective purposes. In short, the country now known as the Philippines and its native peoples were birthed into modernity. As soon as they were delivered into modernity, the people were raised, and the institutions were created in correspondence to what the colonizers required or demanded from the colony, and the colonized population.

The theory of modernity presented by Habermas (1987:403) permits recognition of the following:

1. In modern societies there is such an expansion of the scope of contingency for interaction loosed from normative contexts that the inner logic of communicative action “becomes practically true” in the deinstitutionalized forms of intercourse of the familial private sphere as well as in a public sphere stamped by the mass media. At the same time, ...
2. [T]he systemic imperatives of autonomous subsystems penetrate into the lifeworld and, through monetarization and bureaucratization, force an assimilation of communicative action to formally organized domains of action – even in areas where the action-coordinating mechanism of reaching understanding is functionally necessary.

Habermas (1984:295) places much faith in communicative action that uses all ways of thinking, language and discourse. He also counts as communicative action those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, and only illocutionary aims, with their mediating acts of communication.

Leon Wolff wrote about the time the U.S. Senate was to vote on whether to ratify the Treaty of Paris where Spain was to sell the Philippines, (yes, indeed, sell the Philippines after Spain lost the country to the native insurgents) to the United States. The vote was set for Monday, February 6, 1899. If the senate ratified it, the two erstwhile allies against Spain (the Philippine Revolutionary Government and the United States of America) would be at war with each other. The representative of the Philippines, Felipe Agoncillo was in Washington, vainly trying to convince the American government, the senate at least, not to ratify the Treaty of Paris. Agoncillo knew what would happen to his country if war broke out again. On January 5 of that year, ...

[Agoncillo] requested in writing an audience with the Secretary of State, John Hay. Mr. Hay did not reply. On January 24 he dispatched another note in which he pointed out that since a de facto state of war existed at Manila, some understanding ought to be reached quickly. Mr. Hay did not respond. [Agoncillo] then called for a press conference ... [where] most of the press turned against Agoncillo [calling him] a fraud ... [and it] was even suggested, for reasons not made clear, that he be arrested; and after addressing one last protest to the Secretary of State for transmission to the Senate (it was not transmitted), the frustrated Filipino entrained for Montreal on February 3 (Wolff 1991:212).

Wolff (1991:212) claims tongue-in-cheek that it was merely a coincidence that Agoncillo had to leave the United States that particular evening of February 3, 1899.

This bit of history in many ways confirms the insistence of the Philippines to participate in the discourses of the modern times. This bit of history also confirms that communicative action can be effective if the “actors” actually talk with each other. But the American government authorities would rather have Felipe Agoncillo arrested than talk to him. Here then, is a moral-ethical claim brought to the attention of the government of the United States of America by a representative of a people whose country (read as real estate) was recently purchased from an illegal occupant (Spain) for \$20 million.

Although this happened more than 100 years ago, my attention is led to this question asked sometime in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Dussel (1998:xxiii): How are new moral-ethical claims allowed to shatter and re-constitute perspectives that do not allow for them (examples: responsibility for the past, for the future generations, for nature, for the genetic integrity of species, etc)? Dussel's question leads me to form my own question. Is there any real possibility for a genuine conversation between the First World and the Third World?

### The Public Sphere

According to Bronner (1994:284), Habermas is "committed to reflexivity, the critique of reification, and the 'emancipation' of individuals from all forms of domination." "Habermas," Bonner (1994:286) continues, "was concerned with the dangers implicit in the commodification of communication ... under the liberal rule of law, and the possibilities of what [Habermas] later referred to as 'democratic will formation'." Bonner (1994:286) raises with Habermas a warning that "an altered public sphere might yet contest the march of instrumental reason through 'reorganization of social and political power under the mutual control of rival organizations committed to the public sphere in their internal structure as well as in their relations with the state and each other'." "But with the introduction of mass media and the generation of consensus from the top down rather than through the discursive engagement of participants," Bonner (1994:287) points out that "the same forms of instrumental reason exhibited in the state and the economy were increasingly defining the public sphere." Bonner (1994:287) also raises the possibility that "[i]ts mediating character was becoming lost

[and that] its ability to project systemic criticism was becoming rationalized, through the transformation of the public sphere into institutions buttressing the existing order.

With regards to mass media in the Philippines, Niels Mulder has been led him to conclude that it is indeed free, even licentious. But it is not independent. Ownership is largely with individual ruling families who use the media to fight their economic and political battles (Mulder 2000:37). What Mulder says of the Philippine press is largely true. But it is hyperbolic of Mulder (2000:35) to claim that "systematic violations of human and constitutional rights, open democratic debate, the real state of the political environment, all these and related issues do not make it to the pages." A less microscopic reading of Philippine newspapers will show that these issues are indeed taken up and published, not in the front pages, mind you, but in the inside pages or editorial columns. Filipinos are free to talk and discuss anything they wish to take up, in pairs or in large groups. They have freedom of speech, but perhaps, not the freedom to get published in the local newspapers and magazines. Mass media corporations in the Philippines are owned by vested interests, no different from the top ten corporations that own or control mass media in the United States of America. After all, "Coming to terms with 'distorted' forms of communication is thus possible only by positing an 'undistorted' mode of communication (Bronner 1994:289). The people of the Philippines, the people of the United States, and the people of the Netherlands are all free to write to the editors of their favorite newspaper or magazine, and hope that their missives are quoted in the *Letters to the Editor* section.

The autonomy of the individual consumer and the sovereignty of the individual citizen are, to be sure, only postulates of economic and political theory. But these fictions

express the fact that cultural patterns of demand and legitimation evince their own independent structures; they are tied to lifeworld contexts and cannot be taken over economically or politically as can abstract quantities of labor power and taxes (Habermas 1987:322).

### Politics

Habermas does not seem to think that politics is simply the mandate of the people. Politicians, ideally, are supposed to seek the balance between the interests of capital and their legitimation needs among the people and electorate. Government must also control the people, generate opinion for them, in addition to listening to them. With regards to Filipino politicians listening to the people, Raul Pertierra (1995:15-16) wrote that “in the Philippines, formal institutions such as political parties and national elections seldom express or represent the political will of their constituents” due to several factors. Foremost is the “inability of the Philippine state that is organizationally unable to successfully penetrate ... the routines of everyday life at the village level.” But my observations indicate, without belying Pertierra's observation that the state can penetrate the routines of everyday life even at the village level when they want or choose to. “The routines of the family, of work and the composition of alliance networks often lie outside the purview of the state” Pertierra elaborates (1995:15-16) and that “[t]he practical consciousness of many Filipinos is embedded in routines derived from notions of kinship, locality, and association generally outside the formal structures of the state.” Pertierra (1995:16) concludes, “this brings about a clash between a Filipino identity and a politics of praxis that seems to contradict or undermine it.” This routinization of everyday life, according to Pertierra (1995:17), “conflates these spheres of value, resulting in the

structure of kinship, locality, and association. This undifferentiated sphere of values permeates politics, culture, and practical life whose coherence must be maintained, thus making elections and the expression of popular will problematically related (Pertierra 1995:17).

Observers of the Philippines and its political scene have come to the conclusion that politics has become more profitable than business. It is also, in the Habermasian sense, a strategic exercise. Successful candidates for public office almost always resort to vote buying. In such a political environment, politics represents the political will of the [rich] and powerful (Pertierra 1995:17).

Communicative action of any sort presupposes a shared “lifeworld” (*Lebenswelt*), which is apodictic or preconceptual, and thus implies a certain degree of consensus. Reification or the “colonization of the lifeworld” will occur insofar as there is a diminishing ability to question the consensus achieved (Habermas 1994:294). It is apparent that in this case both the vote-buying politicians, and the vote-selling populace have reached a certain understanding on their respective conduct. What is clear here is the commodification and commercialization of the vote. Where there is consensus between the voters and politicians is in their agreement that the electoral vote is a commodity subject to the rules of a buy and trade transaction.

Money has the effect of turning patronage into a commodity. Vote buying generates political patronage as the candidates’ agents distribute money, thereby giving the impression of being in control of circulation. However, the treatment of votes as commodity in a market undercuts the moral and ethical bases of traditional patron-client

ties. True, money gives the politician an immediate political base, but it also enables the voters to switch to patrons who can pay more.

Both vote-buyers and vote-sellers practice on each other strategic action. The former provides a promise to uplift the socio-economic condition of the vote seller who already knows that based on past experience the promise is empty. In exchange, the politician offers cash for the latter's vote, which would, legalistically speaking, "legitimize" him in the political position he aspires to. The vote-seller, knowing that since time immemorial, nothing much has changed and much will remain the same, proceeds to engage in this dance of two scorpions in the hope that the voter would be allowed some space and time to conduct his daily life without undue interference by the government or government officials. Here is an example of a lifeworld--modern and infused with what Bernstein (1998:11) calls postmodern mood, at its most cynical.

Governments that function best are those that historically evolved with the involvement of the people governed, in a manner of speaking. The Philippine government as it stands today, is the current re-iteration of the form of government mandated by the Congress of the United States of America before granting independence to the Philippines in 1946. Though claimed to be republican, it is not the same as the First Philippine Republic declared by the Filipinos as sovereign and independent on June 12, 1898 through its President, Emilio Aguinaldo. The First Philippine Republic was terminated almost immediately after it declared its existence. Burying the remains of the First Philippine Republic deeper into the ground came about with the Filipino people's loss of their second war for independence to the Americans. After the capture of Aguinaldo in 1901, the United States of America with William Howard Taft as governor

of the new American colony, set up a civilian colonial government that picked up from where the Spaniards left off.

Bronner (1994:294) finds that “Habermas ... is aware of the manner in which Durkheim’s anomie is a product of the ‘disenchantment of the world’.” “The new ‘pathologies of the lifeworld’ fostered by instrumental rationality are subsequently only one aspect of modern society” (Bronner 1994:294).

It would seem that many Filipino leaders before the American occupation of the Philippines believed that the United States of America raised their hopes for an independent Filipino nation of their own. The Americans after all actually helped the Filipino revolutionaries overthrow their Spanish colonizers of more than 300 years. Almost immediately after the eviction of the Spanish colonial government from Philippine soil, the United States of America decided to replace the former overlords after the Filipino nation declared its independence on June 12, 1898. But it did not take long before the Filipinos bought the American line of *benevolent assimilation* and benign tutelage. Forty-two years after June 12, 1898, the Filipinos find themselves abandoned to the tender mercies of the Japanese Imperial Army from 1942 to 1945. Nevertheless, they were encouraged by an absent General to wage a savage guerilla war against the Japanese. These traumatic events strung one after another appear sufficient enough to bind all of the inhabitants of the Philippine archipelago in anomie. This anomie appears to have developed into the prevailing national mood.

#### Society: A View

Philippine society is basically structured along three economic levels composed of the elite who own most if not all of the nation’s capital, the educated professional and

small business owner middle class, and the lower class composed of peasants, laborers, and personal service providers like housemaids and family chauffeurs. These three groups have developed a well-choreographed protocol of interaction with each other. Much of it is based on the perpetuation of presumed (but accepted as) traditions or ethical constructs devised by the colonizers for the purpose of shackling the Filipinos from actions that may lead to change or renewal. These are no more than forms of repression that have always been present since the beginning of its history as *Philippines*. The elite, which we shall exemplify as an agricultural landowner of thousands of acres of sugarcane fields or CEO and major stockholder of large corporations, are supposed to be *pater familias* to his extended family, members of which would comprise of all those below him in his organizational hierarchy. It would be wrong to categorically say that this system never worked to the benefit of the population occupying middle and lower class berths. But it certainly has spawned a lot of sucking up, boot licking, and a host of other practices that end in a deadly dance of scorpions. Such is the structure of Philippine society, squarely based on patronage.

Patronage implies not simply the possession of resources but, more significantly, the means with which to stimulate the desire for and circulation of such resources. In a political context ruled by a factional rather than class-based opposition, patronage becomes the most important means for projecting power (Rafael 2000:138).

Rafael (2000:139) writes “the Japanese occupation [of the Philippines during World War II] had the effect of momentarily dislodging Filipino [elite] from their agricultural base of power, creating an opening for more militant resistance from peasant armies.” Elaborating further, Rafael (2000:139) is of the opinion that “the return of elite

collaborators to political and economic power at the end of the war, coupled with the harassment and repression of peasant and workers' groups is what pushed the newly independent nation to the edge of civil war in the form of the Huk Rebellion from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s." The flashpoint both in geopolitics of the cold war and the reconstruction of the Filipino oligarchy's hold on power was the Huk rebellion (Rafael 2000:139). With massive U.S. aid, and under the leadership of CIA-supported President Magsaysay, the rebellion was brutally quashed. Again citing Kerkvliet, Rafael (2000:139) argues that "the rebellion and its suppression further institutionalized the very same impersonal contacts and money-based relations among peasants, landlords, and their local agents that had fueled the [rebellion] in the first place."

Under the sponsorship of the Philippine state, which in turn was heavily dependent on the military and financial support of the United States, the material and moral matrices of traditional notions of patronage rapidly unraveled (Rafael 2000:139). Rafael (2000:251 n37) notes that this sense of national culture as a series of gifts coming from above is arguably a legacy of the history of colonialism informed by the ideology of what he calls "white love." Rafael further avers that there is nothing remotely "indigenous" about it. In this connection, Rafael proves that the practice of patronage that has long characterized contemporary Philippine politics—most recently under the rubric of cronyism—has never been a Filipino monopoly. Spanish and U.S. colonial offices were all appointive so that they were routinely obtained on the basis of patronage and, in at least the Spanish case, outright purchase. Hence, it is historically inaccurate, if not ethnocentric, on the part of an earlier generation of North American scholarship to cite the putatively regressive practices of patronage in Philippine politics as the source of

much corruption while conveniently forgetting that the overwhelming majority of office holders under the U.S. colonial state—from governor-general to ethnologist—owed their positions to powerful friends on top just as they used their positions to dispense favors and make friends among those below. For examples of positions in the U.S. colonial state that were received and granted through patronage, Rafael (2000:251 n37) directs the reader to see *The Pragmatic Empire: U.S. Anthropology and Colonial Politics in the Occupied Philippines, 1898-1916* (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1998) by Paul A. Kramer; and *Ilustrado Politics: The Response of the Filipino Educated Elite to American Colonial Rule, 1898-1907* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1989) by Michael Cullinane.

According to Habermas (1987:400), “A theory of society that does not close itself off *a priori* to this possibility of unlearning” should have the capability to be critical of “the preunderstanding that accrues to it from its own social setting.” In other words, it should be a society capable of self-criticism. “Processes of unlearning,” as Habermas (1987:400) points out, “can be gotten through a critique of deformations that are rooted in the selective exploitation of a potential for rationality and mutual understanding that was once available but is now buried.” Relating this to the issue at hand about the Philippines, Niels Mulder (2000:179) quotes the Philippine historian Teodoro Agoncillo as having said, “Self-deception is the worst tragedy of the Filipino as a people”. This brought me to a stop when I remembered Bronner’s (1994:296) quote of Habermas: “Discourses are islands in the sea of practice.” The ethical emphasis of Habermasian discourse on impartial procedures and universalized reciprocity is seen by Bronner (1994:296) “as offering a ‘regulative idea’ for dealing with concrete situations and criticizing

repression.” Bronner (1994:296) finds that Habermasian philosophy has a “post-metaphysical” character. This characteristic stems mainly from its willingness to employ an intersubjective framework, with the “lifeworld” as referent, in which norms are made and the search for truth generated (Bronner 1994:294). In Philippine society, what is generated is not a search for truth. Rather, some semblance of temporary accommodation calculated to give the semblance of truth or at least some semblance of goodwill towards the other as a theatrical backdrop is formed to dissimulate the strategic actions of the contending parties. This temporary accommodation is meant to give both sides time to adjust to a more advantageous position in anticipation of a change in their respective stances. And yet, in private conversations among friends, family, and associates, or for that matter in the columns of many Filipino opinion writers and commentators in the various Philippine print and broadcast media, there is relentless self-criticism. Often, these self-criticisms take on the metaphoric form of self-flagellation, like penitent sinners who on Good Fridays whip and beat their sins out of their flesh.

Philippine culture makers are historically members of the middle class. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were the *ilustrados* and the *pensionados* of the Spanish and American colonial governments, respectively. Today the culture makers are still the members of the middle class, but their composition has somewhat changed. Today’s Philippine middle class are the teachers, journalists, artists, labor leaders, politicians, clerics, civic activists, ideologues, academics, authors, [government] officials, business leaders, and even military men (Mulder 2000:183-4). But Madonna, Michael Jackson, Tom Cruise, George W. Bush, Colin Powell, and the Mexican TV actors and actresses whose soap operas have been dubbed into Tagalog should not be excluded. All of them

influence and affect Philippine culture, and as Mulder (2000:184) claims, “infuse their ideas into the cacophonous discourse carried on in the public world” that “influence and create public opinion.”

In the time leading up to the revolution against Spain, through various media such as books (rare as they come), posters on church walls, and even dissident theatre, well into the American occupation of the Philippines, public discourse was vibrantly alive. “Just as every hermeneutic understanding must refer to a given historical context,” as Bronner (1994:296) observes, “so must every moral position refer to a ‘shared ethos’.” Let us now take a look at an example of how one common experience helped form a bond among the native inhabitants of the Philippines in its early stage of national development. One such event was the killing of the three Filipino secular priests—Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora—at the behest of the Spanish friars, by the Spanish government authorities. These three Filipino secular priest, based on the trumped up charge of inciting the soldiers of the Cavite arsenal to mutiny (Schumacher 1998:25*passim*), with the use of the garrote were killed by strangulation. This event was crucial in the development of Jose Rizal’s life mission. He in turn determined the trajectory of Philippine history particularly during the Spanish era.

Rizal scholars from Jesuits like Raul J. Bonoan, to University of the Philippines professors ... Leopoldo Yabes and Cesar Majul traditionally claim that Rizal’s political ideas were derived primarily, if not exclusively, from the Enlightenment tradition (Quibuyen 1999:162-63.). Without denying that Rizal subscribed to the democratic ideal of the Enlightenment, (Quibuyen 1999:163) links Rizal with Johann Gottlieb Herder (1744-1803) as “the author who influenced [Rizal] most profoundly, as far as the study of

history and culture[.]” As Saiedi (1993:126) points out, besides advocating “the concept of the unity of culture, Herder advocates the thesis of the unity of humanity,” [ and that] “alternative cultural realities are natural realizations of diverse possibilities.” “None of these cultural forms,” as far as Herder was concerned, “should be considered as a superior form or as the end of the historical progress (Saiedi 1993:126). Relocating Rizal’s primary philosophical influence from the Kantian to the Herderian gives a clearer view and a sharper focus toward the understanding of Rizal’s thoughts and ideas with respect to his social and political ideals. In this regard, here is what Quibuyen (1999:164) has to say:

Rizal’s affinity with Herder’s ideas is uncanny: the notion that the integrity of all peoples and historical epochs have intrinsic value must be respected; the stress on the influence of climactic and geographic factors, and historical circumstances on the development of cultures; the lifelong rejection of tyranny and the affirmation of human rights and all that fosters human freedom and dignity.

Proceeding along with Quibuyen (1999:163) one finds that Rizal’s outlook was broader than the liberalism of his ... colleagues. He crossed the boundary of the Enlightenment and into the Romantic tradition with Herder. This notwithstanding, the Enlightenment, was nevertheless introduced to the Filipinos by way of the writings of the other prominent Filipino nationalists. Foremost among them are Marcelo H. del Pilar, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, Juan Luna, and others who along with Jose Rizal were students in the universities of Madrid, Paris, and Heidelberg in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As acted out in Philippine history, here is an exemplification of Dussel’s “realization of modernity ... a process that will transcend modernity as such, a trans-modernity, in which both modernity and its negated alterity (the victims) co-realize themselves in a

process of mutual creative fertilization”(Huntington in Wilkerson 2001:109). In a gist, the colonizers and the colonized bound together in co-dependency that still has to be definitively broken.

#### The Economy: A View

The economic and social base for realizing traditional patron-client ties as they had been conceived in the prewar era, however, had been eroding steadily since the 1930s. “As Benedict Kerkvliet has brilliantly shown,” says Rafael (2000:139) “the intensified penetration of capitalist modes of production into the countryside around Manila, a long process that had its roots in the late eighteenth century, resulted in intensifying the trends toward wage labor, mechanization, and absentee landlordism on the eve of World War II.

In today’s continuation of this “seemingly irresistible boom in development and unceasing expropriation of human labor by the forces of global capital ... cannot but incite the arbitrary displacement and destruction of peoples and places” (Rafael 2000:202). Abueva et al. (1998:61) say that until the late 1960s the Philippine economy was next only to that of Japan and Hong Kong in growth and vibrancy. But their next sentence begins the almost *de rigueur* attack on previous administrations, blaming all the present ills of the country on them, most especially on the Marcos dictatorship. Interestingly enough, this group made their economic forecast during the presidency of Fidel Ramos, who as everyone knows, was commanding general of the Philippine Constabulary when Marcos declared martial law in September of 1972. Nevertheless, Abueva and his associates are not lacking in candidness and honesty. They have boldly made the statement that “it is not expected that the access of the poor to basic social

services will substantially improve in the foreseeable future” (Abueva 1998:60). Moreover, “ the basic structure of the economy has not changed and overseas contract workers contribute a large portion of the foreign exchange earnings” (Abueva 1998:61). Foreign exchange remittances to the Philippines by overseas Filipino contract workers were estimated in 1995 to be about \$6 billion annually. In their 1998 opus, Abueva and his associates admit the fact that the basic structure of the [Philippine] economy has not changed and that Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) contribute a large portion of the foreign exchange earnings. Marx would weep at this extreme example of human labor commodified, and made use as means to earn foreign exchange by their own government. Emilio Jacinto, one of the luminaries in the Philippine revolution for independence from Spanish colonialism, must have already turned over many times in his grave. It was Jacinto (Gripaldo 2001:53) who said that it was the obligation of the leaders in government to secure the welfare of its citizens and “bring prosperity to the nation.” In this case, it is the Filipino overseas contract workers who look after the welfare of the Philippine government, at such great personal sacrifice for the OCWs and their families. But bravely, Abueva et al. (1998:62) forecast that by year “2010 [the Philippines’s] leading export will still be human resources although the regional growth centers will absorb part of the skilled and unskilled workers who would otherwise seek foreign employment”.

Filipino overseas contract workers (OCWs), rarely ever expect to remain permanently in their host country. OCWs can only exist as sheer labor power, as supplementary formations to the imagined communities of their bosses. This is so because, by the terms of their contract, as well as by virtue of their exclusion from the

linguistic and religious communities of their employers, they are forever consigned to positions of relative subservience and marginality (Rafael 2000:210).

Here is the Philippines and its people deeply involved in the modern world. Many of its citizens eke out a living through dehumanizing personal services or labor, millions of them in foreign countries, away from their families or loved ones. And much of the blame for this shameful condition can be placed, in a manner of speaking, right over the heads of the economic and political ruling class of the Philippines.

#### Postcolonial Present

“Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries it conquered,” writes Loomba (2001:3). “[I]t restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between [colonized] and colonial countries.” This, among other reasons, is why according to Loomba and Young (2001:7; 2001a:57), the term “postcolonial” has been the subject of protracted and as Young would have it, “sometimes ingenious discussion.”

But what is of particular relevance to this study is that a country like the Philippines, for example, “may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time (Loomba 2001:7). In addition, Loomba (2001:19) claims “Postcoloniality... is articulated alongside other economic, social, cultural and historical factors.” In practice, postcoloniality works and functions very differently in diverse parts of the world. She finds “the word ‘postcolonial’ useful in indicating a general process with some shared features across the globe, but if uprooted from specific

locations... cannot be meaningfully investigated.” And if uprooted from its site, the term “postcoloniality” can effectively veil the linkages of domination that it seeks to expose. “Postcolonialism” Loomba (2001:18) counsels, “is a word that is useful only if [used] with caution and qualifications.”

“More radically,” Young (2001a:57) writes, “*postcolonialism*... names a theoretical and political position which embodies an active concept of intervention within such oppressive circumstances.” In postcolonialism, Young finds that “the epistemological cultural innovations of the postcolonial moment” combined with “a political critique of the conditions of postcoloniality.” “In that sense,” Young (2001a:57) points out that the *post* in the term “postcolonialism or postcolonial critique, marks the historical moment of the theorized introduction of new tricontinental forms and strategies of critical analysis and practice.” Young (2001a:4) uses the term *tricontinental* in place of the term *Third World*. He finds the term Third World disadvantaged by sustained criticism. “Identification with it has been perceived as anti-Marxist” since Marxist states as they were, composed the *Second World*. Moreover, the term “Third” as a notion has come to take on “a negative aura in a hierarchical relation to the first and the second worlds. Young (2001a:4), following Kofi Buenor Hadjor (1993) finds that the term has gradually become “associated with poverty, debt, famine and conflict.”

Having clarified what Young means by tricontinental, we hear him say that “both Europe and the decolonized countries still try to come to terms with the long, violent history of colonialism, which symbolically began over five hundred years ago, in 1492. Having said that, Young (2001a:4) elucidates:

The postcolonial does not privilege the colonial. It is concerned with colonial history only to the extent that that his-

tory has determined the configurations and power structures of the present, to the extent that much of the world still lives in the violent disruptions of its wake, and to the extent that the anti-colonial liberation movements remain the source and inspiration of politics.

He goes on to expand his observation noting that if nineteenth century colonial history in particular “was the history of the imperial appropriation of the world, the history of the twentieth century has witnessed the peoples of the world taking power and control back for themselves.” Young (2001a:4) emerges with the conclusion that the product of that dialectical process is postcolonial theory.

Postcolonialism is the wellspring from where the flow of postcolonial critique originates. It is on forces of oppression and coercive domination that operate in the contemporary world where postcolonial critique focuses. What defines the terrain of postcolonial critique are the politics of anti-colonialism and neocolonialism, race, gender, nationalisms, class and ethnicities. Young (2001a:11) discloses “Interest in oppression of the past will always be guided by the relation of that history to the present,” which determines the intellectual commitment of postcolonial theory. This commitment, Young (2001a:11) claims, “will always be to seek to develop new forms of engaged theoretical work that contributes to the creation of dynamic ideological and social transformation. Its object, as defined by Cabral\* (1969), is the pursuit of liberation after the achievement of political independence.”

### Postmodernity

Ashcroft (2001:140) finds that “linking all post-colonial analysis to postmodern theory” is erroneous. He (2001:29;140) suggests that “postmodernism and post-

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\* Cabral, Amilcar (1969) *Revolution in Guinea: An African People's Struggle*. London, Stage 1.

colonialism can both be seen to be discursive elaborations of postmodernity.” He grounds this particular assertion on his understanding of the interrelationship between Enlightenment humanism and European imperialism. To Ashcroft (2001:140), Enlightenment humanism ( the target of postmodernism) and European imperialism (the target of post-colonial transformation) are both strategic, and interconnected, features of modernity. But he avers that “this is very different from saying that post-colonialism and postmodernism are one and the same thing” (2001:140). Each of the two is a very different elaboration of postmodernity, and only the post-colonial, according to Ashcroft (2001:140) challenges the essential Eurocentrism of modernity itself. Elaborating further, Ashcroft (2001:140) writes:

While one replaces the human individual with the discursive notion of a subject, the other emphasizes the material context and worldliness of cultural texts. While one operates within Eurocentrism, the other undermines it. While one finds itself drawn into the unproductive possibilities of the play of the sign, the other emphasizes the political function of signification. While one emphasizes the existence of reality effects, the other emphasizes the urgent material consequences of those effects.

This conflation must be addressed from the point of view of “post-colonial futures,” Ashcroft (2001:140) advises “because the political nature of the transformations of colonial culture by post-colonial societies runs the risk of being lumped into the universalizing and Eurocentric discourse of postmodernism.” Texts can be read in terms of both discourses, Ashcroft confirms, but he insists that it is necessary to “recognize the politically and culturally transformative dynamic of post-colonial writing,” which to his thinking is “perhaps *the* distinguishing feature of the future which post-colonial discourse creates.”

“During the past decade—in virtually every area of cultural life,” Bernstein (1998:199) recalls that “there has been an explosion of discourses about ‘modernity’ and ‘postmodernity.’” He finds these discourses “heady... because they are signs of a prevailing mood” (like Heidegger’s *Stimmung*) “which is amorphous, elusive, protean... difficult to pin down and to characterize.” Bernstein (1998:199) feels “there is a prevailing sense that something is happening that radically calls into question entrenched ways of thinking, acting and feeling.” He has also observed that “the terms ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ are not only vague, ambiguous and slippery, [but] they have been used in conflicting and... contradictory ways” (Bernstein 1998:200). Bernstein (1998:225) attempts to clear the foggy meaning of the two terms by reading Habermas and Derrida “as an *allegory* of the ‘modern/postmodern’ condition” without attempting to “reconcile their differences.” His “rationale for examining [Habermas’s and Derrida’s] texts is because, more rigorously and thoroughly than many others... they *show* the tangled intertwined strands of the modern/postmodern’ *Stimmung* (Bernstein 1998:225). Borrowing a metaphor from Theodor Adorno who borrowed it from Walter Benjamin, Bernstein (1998:201,225) claims that *together*, Habermas and Derrida provide

... a force-field that constitutes “the dynamic, transmutational structure of a complex phenomenon”—the phenomenon [Bernstein]... labeled “modernity/postmodernity.” *Together* they form a new constellation—a “juxtaposed rather than an integrated cluster of changing elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle.”

The space created by the “gaps, fissures, and ruptures”(Bernstein 1998:225) in the Habermas and Derrida entanglement, is the platform where we invite Richard Kearney (1988:251) to respond to the question he raised: What has become of the concept of

imagination in the postmodern era? The answer to the question seems pertinent to this study since it tends to show imagination as an enabling factor in the attempt to refigure identity in postcolonial Philippines.

Wherever one may be, a person today is always surrounded by images. These images come by way of TV commercials, magazine advertisements, billboards, neon signs, and others that have the ability to subliminally insinuate their presence. "Western culture is becoming increasingly a Civilization of Image," Kearney (1988:1) confirms. And as Western culture goes, so does Filipino culture, for there is an unsevered umbilical cord that connects the Philippines to the United States of America. Through this umbilical cord flow much of what Filipinos use to construct their idea of self, their concept of identity, and their relationship to the rest of the world. There is no attempt here to suggest that the Philippines is totally dependent on the USA. But it would be an error to even consider the possibility that the USA has no less than a great influence on the Philippines and its people. Having established the asymmetric coupling of the two, we now return to Kearney (1988:2) who observes "The contemporary eye is no longer innocent. What we see is almost invariably informed by prefabricated images." Almost everything we see emanates from prefabricated sources. Unlike in former times, the image we see today "*precedes* the reality it is supposed to represent. [R]eality has become a pale reflection of the image. The real and the imaginary have become almost impossible to distinguish" (Kearney 1988:2).

The impending death of imagination is "clearly a postmodern obsession."

Kearney (1988:3) continues:

Postmodernism undermines the modernist belief in the image as an authentic expression. The typical postmodern image

is one which displays its own artificiality, its own pseudo-status, its own representational depthlessness.

Having listened to Kearney thus far, one cannot escape from making a connection between the propensity of the Filipino people for voting into high elected government positions, and the country's office of the President movie stars and TV personalities. One may find it easy to convince oneself to go into shock upon realizing that the Philippines (in a manner of speaking) as recently as two years ago deposed Joseph Ejercito Estrada, a former action movie star, from the presidency for plunder and corruption. Now, in the forthcoming presidential election this year of 2004, surveys show that Fernando Poe, Jr., another action movie star, and *compadre* of Estrada, very likely will be voted as the next President of the Philippines. In the movies they made, Estrada and Poe, Jr. always played the role of the heroes that fight for justice and the poor, downtrodden people. At this point in time, in real life, Estrada is still in detention. He is accused of crimes, one of which—plunder—carries with it the death sentence under Philippine laws.

It seems that Filipinos today live in the postmodernist milieu. They seem to dance “on the grave of modern idealism,” and are “far removed from the Sartrean cult of the self-creating consciousness (*pour soi*) as from the romantic cult of the transcendental *Einbildungskraft* (Kearney 1988:5). “As tradition had it, no more is it a question of images representing some transcendent reality, for the very notion of such as reality has been unmasked as an illusionist effect,” says Kearney (1988:4-6). “[T]he mirror of the postmodern paradigm reflects neither the outer world of nature nor the inner world of subjectivity; it reflects only itself—a mirror within a mirror within a mirror...”

There has been a shift from “an age of production to one of reproduction” courtesy of “the technological image” (Kearney 1988:4). According to Kearney

(1988:291) one can say that postmodernism returns us to “Plato’s cave of imitations, but with this crucial difference.” The cave “is no longer the inner world of mimetic images which imitates the outer world of truth, but the contrary.” And this “amounts to saying that the whole Platonic hierarchy of the imaginary and the real is finally dissolved into parody.”

#### Past Present, Narrative, Future Present

“The collapse of narrative coherence is expressed at two basic levels [of] the *breakdown of the signifying chain* and the *breakdown of temporality* (Kearney 1988:313). He claims that this “collapse of coherent signification means the loss of the narrative ability to order the past, present and future of a sentence, or more generally of a text.” It also results in “the loss of our ability to unify the past, present and future of our own psychic or biographical experience.” We stare at “a ‘schizophrenic fragmentation’ of narrative” which leads us to “the typically postmodern phenomenon of a discontinuous present divorced from both historical time and human subjectivity” (Kearney 1988:313). In the face of all these Kearney (1988:314) raises this question: Can we legitimately speak of the end of narrative in any absolute or schismatic fashion? Kearney ushers us to Paul Ricoeur for a response to this question.

#### Postcolonial Postmodern Philippines

The Philippines by and large is still in a neocolonial politico-economic relationship with the United States. The country is in a postmodern mood. This mood is staining its growing postcolonial self-awareness. All these make for rough sailing. For the ship to survive the voyage would require a leadership and citizenry united in, and as, a community of ethics animated by sentiment akin to the Spirit of 1896. To find what is

required to reach safe harbor, a number of nips and tacks must be made. The country's citizens, (and its leaders no doubt) will need the same education Rizal prescribed before he would endorse an armed revolution against Spain.

Moreover, much if not all of what he wrote in *El Filibusterismo* is acutely applicable in today's Philippines. Appropriate to the present discussion, Rizal (1997:318) wrote, speaking through his character Padre Florentino:

You have believed that what crime and iniquity have defiled and deformed, another crime and another iniquity can purify and redeem. Wrong!... [I]f our country is ever to be free, it will not be through vice and crime, it will not be so by corrupting its sons, deceiving some and bribing others[.] Redemption presupposes virtue, virtue sacrifice, and sacrifice love!

#### Summary and Upcoming Text

During the last two decades of their rule, the Spanish colonial government created a world market-oriented economy that thrust the Philippines to modernity. In the process, a countrywide public sphere dominated by political, administrative, and religious institutions was created. It was also around that time the native population began to see themselves as one people sharing a common colonial history.

The people of the Philippines came to see modernity through American spectacles after the U.S. colonial government was effectively in place in 1901. Much of the residue of the American influence is still evident. Contemporary Philippine society is a market where only money counts. This market orientation is pervasive and deeply entrenched. Many observers have commented on how politics in the Philippines today has become more profitable than business.

The structure of Philippine society is squarely based on patronage. This patronage has been used by critics, both foreign and local, to characterize contemporary Philippine

politics. But patronage has never been a monopoly of Filipinos. Both Spanish and U.S. colonial offices were routinely obtained on the basis of patronage. The Filipinos learned well from their colonial masters.

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Philippine culture makers have been the middle class people, but today their composition has somewhat changed. From the *ilustrados* and *pensionados* of the Spanish and American colonial governments, today's middle class are the teachers, journalists, labor leaders, academics, government officials, and others. Madonna, Michael Jackson, Tom Cruise, George W. Bush and the Mexican TV actors and actresses whose soap operas have been dubbed into Tagalog should also be included among the culture makers in the Philippines.

Until the late 1960s the Philippine economy was next only to Japan and Hong Kong in terms of growth and vibrancy. Today, it is a bottom dweller among the Asian economies, and a large portion of the Philippine foreign exchange earnings is directly attributable to the earnings of Filipino overseas contract workers.

Mass media in the Philippines are indeed free, but they are not independent. Mass media in the Philippines are owned by vested interests, no different from the way mass media in the United States are owned, controlled, and used by their owners.

The following chapter is a review of literature that informs this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Review of Literature

[I]t is precisely because stories proceed from stories in such a manner that historical communities are ultimately responsible for the formation and re-formation of their own identity. One cannot remain constant over the passage of historical time – and therefore remain faithful to one’s promises and covenants – unless one has some minimal remembrance of where one comes from, and of how one came to be what one is. In this sense, identity is memory. As Hegel put it, *das Wesen ist das Gewesene*. ‘What is is what it has become.’ Or more simply, the past is always present.

(from *On Stories*. Richard Kearney 2002:80-1)

### Introduction

This chapter covers literature that touch on the origins of the country, and probes into the problems that urgently demand solutions, not merely gratuitous attention. It will also attempt to illustrate how Filipino identity first evolved during the Spanish era, then change direction under the American regime, eventually reaching a state of near dissipation as observed today. Moreover, this chapter will also present how ideas and concepts from philosophical, critical, and diacritical hermeneutics, coupled with Habermasian and Foucaultian theories will be employed in service of this research on Filipino identity.

This research intends to find and remove the shrouds that conceal, the mirrors that deflect, and the cataracts that obstruct the eyes of the people of the Philippines in their search for a unifying identity. Citing Filipino writers O. D. Corpuz and Nick Joaquin, As cited earlier, Niels Mulder (2000:99) writes that “the Americans succeeded in substituting the roots in the [Spanish] past [with] pleasant prehistoric speculation” thus converting Spain into “an anathema[.]” Reprising Mulder (2000:136), he points out, “colonial

education presented Americans as liberators and did not stimulate the [Filipinos'] will to be free." This colonial miseducation as Renato Constantino (1966) would write yielded what Mulder (2000:136) describes as "the enduring gratefulness of the Filipinos" to the United States of America. "There is no denying," continues Mulder (2000a:159) "that Philippine society ... suffers from a historical affliction called colonial mentality, and though it is fashionable to blame Spanish and clerical oppression as being the root cause, it may more accurately be argued that the Americans were at fault."

Viewed superficially from outside, today's Filipinos are seen as one group of people. This belies the fact that a Filipino, more often than not, will think of himself or herself first as an Ilokano, Sugbuanon, Tagalog, Tausug, Maranao, Maguindanao, Kapampangan, Bicolano, Badjao, Hiligaynon, Pangasinan, Waray, Samal, or any of the many other ethno-linguistic groups within the multicultural, multiethnic, and highly hybridized population before thinking of oneself as a Filipino. In a way, one can perhaps conjecture that there is no Filipino, but there are Filipinos. Thus, to explore the area of Filipino identity is to embark on an exciting, exhilarating, and expansive research expedition that can at times become exhausting, exasperating, and perhaps even, if one can excuse the hyperbole – exsanguinating. But one can always choose to be foolhardy, just like the Polynesians of yore who, according to Jared Diamond (1999:336) "populated the most remote islands of the Pacific and were the greatest seafarers among Neolithic peoples." They dared, perhaps because they were a courageous people, or perhaps foolhardy. But sail they did, trusting their fate to wind and wave. In their oceanic loitering, they discovered tiny islands hidden in the vast expanse of what we now call the Pacific Ocean. At that time, the seeds that germinated and birthed Columbus and

Magellan in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were still buried under thousands of years of waiting.

From here the development of the Philippines shall be traced, first as a pre-Hispanic geographical entity composed of islands populated by a diverse group of peoples, but already in economic and political relationships with other nationalities and peoples such as the Chinese and the Arabs. Subsequently, there begin initial interactions of local chieftains with the batch of Spaniards that arrived, led by Juan Lopez de Legaspi. Three hundred years later, these diverse groups of island people find common cause and shared experience, a sense of nationhood, if you will, under Spanish colonization. Then some of them actively attempt to unite these diverse people into one nation. They pursue the quest for a common identity. Invested with a common identity, they proceed to bring into the world, borrowing Benedict Anderson's phrase, their imagined community. These people of this newly emerging nation struggle for their independence first with reason. Reason failing to sway the Spanish colonizers, these people who now call themselves Filipinos rise in armed struggle at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. And just a few months later as the 19<sup>th</sup> century turns to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these Filipino patriots had to fight another war, this time against the United States of America.

#### Origin of the Country

The first leg of this expedition towards an understanding of Filipino identity begins with an overview of the origin of the country, which is known today as the Philippines, sweepingly, if not appositely referred to by David Joel Steinberg (2000:xiii) as "a singular and plural noun." More explicitly, the eminent Filipino writer N.V.M. Gonzalez (2001) writes that –

[o]ne of the chief sources of error in understanding Filipino life and culture is the belief that it is a singular country. We are in fact a country of many nations and a nation of many cultures.

Instead of adhering to the commonly held belief that the Philippine Islands were populated by migrations from Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula, I present instead an alternative to this orthodoxy. Jared Diamond (1999:342) cites archaeological and linguistic evidence that the migration that populated the Philippines and Indonesia originated from the South China coast, then moving to Taiwan as the first stage of expansion, thereafter to the Philippines and Indonesia as the second stage. Horacio de la Costa (1992/1965:1-13) provides a closer look at the socio-political structure of the pre-Hispanic inhabitants of the islands who at that time were organized into *barangays* and had chiefs called *datos*. Complementing de la Costa's work is that of Laura Lee Junker (1999:viii) who pulled together "the archeological and ethno-historical evidence ... [which] contribute to broader anthropological theory on how chiefdoms [headed by *datos*] are structured and evolve." In locating a primordial grounding for Muslim Filipinos in today's broader cosmopolitan and Christo-centric Philippine society, Julkipli M. Wadi (1998:15) provides us with a rather surprising, if not mind boggling remark made in 1989 by "the sixteenth-generation grandson of the 'East King of Sulu' in Kaifeng, Henan Province in China [who claims that their] 'ancestors are Moros of the Philippines.' "

#### Colonization, Resistance, and Nationhood

After this point comes the colonization of the islands by the Spaniards approximately 50 years after 16<sup>th</sup> of March in 1521, the day Magellan found himself in what we now know as the Philippines. According to de la Costa (1992:14), at the urging

of Magellan, Humabun who was the Raja of the flourishing port of Cebu, converted to Catholicism and accepted vassalage under Charles who was king of Spain and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. From the arrival of Juan Lopez de Legaspi in Manila in 1571 and the enactment of a blood compact ritual between Soliman, the Raja of *Maynilad* (now Manila) and the Spaniard Legaspi, commenced the earnest colonization of the islands by Philip II of Spain.

Spanish colonial rule effectively ended in 1898 when Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed the First Philippine Republic on June 12 of that year in Kawit, Cavite. Between 1521 and 1898, it was the Spanish colonial rule experienced in common by the inhabitants of the archipelago that laid the groundwork for a sense of nationhood. The natives of the islands were then referred to by the Spaniards as *indios* in general, or *Yndios Luzones* (Luzon Indians) as written by Pedro de Unamuno in 1587, *chinos de luzon*, if they were Chinese or looked like Chinese, and were living anywhere in Luzon or in Manila, which is on the island of Luzon. The source of information regarding Pedro de Unamuno is the essay "Filipinos in Unamuno's California Expedition of 1587" by Eloisa Gomez Borah (1995/1996:175-83). Only Spaniards born in the Philippine colony were referred to as Filipinos. But with the public garroting of three native Catholic priests Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora at the instigation of the Spanish friars on February 17, 1872, native Filipino intellectuals according to Austin Coates (1992:29) "passed into a mood of disillusion which...proved to be fertile soil for the propagandists who were to arise." The propagandists were the Filipinos who were in Madrid as university students, and were agitating for social and political reforms in the Philippines. In Austin Coates's *Rizal--Filipino Nationalist & Patriot* (1992), we find a well-informed

discussion of Jose Rizal's contribution to the appropriation of the appellation Filipino by the natives, and the development of the Filipino identity as appropriated. More is learned about the development of the Filipino identity during the Spanish colonial period from John N. Schumacher (1996). In his essays, he delves into the first stirrings of Filipino national awareness and investigates how the people their attempts to form themselves into a Filipino nation. Schumacher points to the quest of the secular Filipino priests for equality with the Spanish friars within the Philippine Catholic hierarchy as the starting point of the Filipino sense of nationhood.

In the nationalist crucible were many other native catalysts and reagents that helped shape and flesh out, or at least adumbrate the Filipino identity during the Spanish colonial period. In addition to Coates's work (1992) cited above, we would be remiss not to look directly at Jose Rizal's writings, more notably his two novels *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891), plus his various essays and collected correspondences. Rizal wrote his two novels in Spanish. We shall refer to these in their original titles, but we shall use the translations by Charles E. Derbyshire which are *The Reign of Greed (Noli Me Tangere)* and *The Social Cancer (El Filibusterismo)*. (On the following page is a photograph of Jose Rizal.)

There are also the post-Rizalian discourses of Apolinario Mabini as gleaned from Cesar Adib Majul (1970). In it, we find Mabini's thoughts inscribed, forming ethical ground. According to Majul (1996:52) Mabini saw the revolution comprising an internal and external aspect. The external aspect of the revolution was the actual armed struggle against Spanish rule. The internal aspect that Mabini referred to, as acutely understood by Majul (1996:52) signified that the people had to change ... their attitudes, their ways of



**José Rizal**

**The last studio portrait, Madrid 1890, aged 29.**

thinking and their behavior towards each other and their social institutions” radically.

Majul (1974:19) gives the reader an introduction to the ideas of Jose Rizal, Emilio Jacinto and Apolinario Mabini on man and society. Majul (1974:ix) also analyzes the contents of the ideas that the three “Revolutionary Fathers utilized to make the Filipinos more of a community with increasingly definite ideals and commitments.”

Emilio Jacinto was another revolutionary whose social and ethical ideas were in harmony with those of Mabini. Jacinto, as presented by Gripaldo (2001:101) believes that “man’s relationship with his fellowmen [should emanate from] such virtues as kindness, spending one’s life for a [worthy] cause, defending the oppressed and fighting the oppressor [and] being true to one’s word[.]”

Appreciation of the development of Mabini’s and Jacinto’s thoughts will be incomplete if Jose Rizal’s philosophy and the influence of the political and literary ideas at play during the Republican period of 19<sup>th</sup> century Spain on his are not understood. Philosophy professor at the University of the Philippines Ricardo R. Pascual (1962) does commendable work illuminating Rizal’s philosophical grounding. Pascual’s own philosophical grounding is reputedly rooted in scientific positivism, which brings me to a rather amusing anecdote about Pascual. A friend who currently teaches at the same University of the Philippines where Pascual taught philosophy told this to me. But a word of caution -- the anecdote about the good professor has many versions, and the slant of each version naturally depends on who is relating the story. But as this version goes, one of his students who was a member of the Student Catholic Action asked the professor who many thought harbored atheistic convictions, what it would take for him to believe

in God. To which the professor was heard to reply, “When you can place God in a test tube.”

Manuel Sarkisyanz (1995) is helpful by way of his essays in identifying the continental philosophical, social, and political ideas that influenced Rizal’s philosophical concepts. Sarkisyanz (1995:2) makes a bold claim that “though one Spain had brought to the Philippines monastic power and repression, another Spain had taught it aspirations for democracy and civil liberties.” He makes the further claim that the Philippine Revolution against Spain for independence “did grow out of democratic and revolutionary traditions in Spain itself.” In addition, he shows that “the Spain of 1812 had been the first – indeed the only – Colonial empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to at least proclaim its ‘native subjects’ as citizens with equal civic rights within its democracy.” According to Sarkisyanz, this was “far ahead of any of the ... [colonial] powers [at that time] in giving its ‘indios’ the right to vote.” Indeed, Sarkisyanz (1995:5) gives evidence that Rizal was the victim of “a more than century-long struggle between Spain and Spain ... the struggle between the forces of democracy and those of counter-revolution ... that [ragged] in Spain from 1814 to 1939.” This was the bloody conflict that began to heal “only in the Spain of the 1980’s.”

The Spanish-American War of 1898 has an enormous influence on the Philippines and its people. It saw the passing of the archipelago’s colonial control from the old veteran colonizer, Spain, to that of the *nouveau* colonizer, the United States of America. It is during this period when Mabini’s social, ethical, and political ideas were further honed and refined. These are discussed by Majul (1996) in *Mabini and the Philippine Revolution*. Upon Mabini’s learning of the start of the Spanish-American hostilities over

Cuba in 1898, Majul (1996:121) writes that “Mabini had no doubts that the United States had ambitions to dominate the Philippines.”

The Filipino frame of mind in 1898 seems to have encouraged the notion that the United States was an ally and supporter in the emerging nation’s fight for independence against Spain. But shortly after Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed Philippine independence on June 12, 1898, the United States of America confronted the newly proclaimed nation with its armed might. By early 1899, the war for Philippine independence against the USA erupted. This war was referred to as an insurrection by the US government since the United States of America has purchased the country from Spain for \$20,000,000. This led the American industrialist Andrew Carnegie to offer buying the Philippines from the United States in order to give the islands their independence. In this regard, Carnegie (2002:18) said, “I would gladly pay twenty millions today to restore [the United States of America] to its first principles.” At the conclusion of the war (as referred to by the Filipinos) or insurrection (as referred to by the Americans) in 1903, the United States emerged victorious, at the expense of 230,000 people dead, 225,000 of them Filipinos. To put it in another way, 98 percent of the dead were the people who were fighting for their independence for the second time in less than a year against a second colonizer. Leon Wolff (1991) tells this sorry story: how the United States purchased and pacified the Philippines. James Blount (1913) who was an officer in the military contingent that occupied the Philippines tells a similar story. He later became a judge in the American colonial government that ruled the vanquished Filipinos.

Howard K. Beale (1962) provides another look at the American colonization of the Philippines. Adding fresh insight to this is Warren Zimmermann (2002) and Max

Boot (2002). Providing counterpoint to Beale, Zimmermann, and Boot is Floro C. Quibuyen (1999).

### Colonialism and Identity

Historians from the orthodox perspective attempt to define from documentary material, among others, unities, totalities, series. They look for linear continuity. But the understanding of the development of Filipino identity may be brought to higher relief if we were to look, not in the linear development of Philippine history, but in its Foucaultian discontinuities. Hence, the need to put to use ideas and notions of Michel Foucault. We shall attempt to understand the development of today's refracted Filipino identity within the context of Philippine history, primarily through the *philosophical hermeneutics* of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975), the *critical hermeneutics* of Paul Ricoeur (1981), and the *diacritical hermeneutics* of Richard Kearney (2003), after which, perhaps in an attempt to refigure it, find assistance from Jürgen Habermas (1979) by way of his *theory of communicative action*.

But before all these, it is important to come to a common understanding of the Filipino experience of back-to-back colonization, the first by an Old World colonialist, and the second, a former English colony turned neocolonialist masquerading as liberator.

Any attempt to forge a new cultural identity, for it to be alive and dynamic, must be grounded in a thorough understanding of the double-colonization as experienced in the Philippines. This brings us face to face with the thoughts and insights of the "colonized" that "conscienticized", not just the victims, but also some of the agents of colonization on the evil, and depravity of their enterprise, the perverted issue of European enlightenment. These are Jose Rizal (1861-1896), Aime Cesaire (1912 - ), Albert Memmi (1920 - ),

Franz Fanon (1925-1961), among others. It is they who brought their peoples into the respective realms of their own imagined communities. At this juncture, Benedict Anderson brings further understanding on the origins of nations, and why the colonized people were willing to die for an “imagined community” free from domination and slavery imposed by the Europeans of the pre- and post-Enlightenment periods. E. J. Hobsbawm provides additional lively discourse on the origins of *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1992). Finally, in 1964 Jean-Paul Sartre (2001:30) unleashes his condemnation of colonialism in any form when, referring to neocolonialist of his time, he writes that “[n]eocolonists think that there are some good colonists and some very wicked ones, and that it is the fault of the latter that the situation of the colonies has deteriorated.” Sartre (2001:32) concludes by declaring that “[i]t is not true that there are some good *colons* [colonizers] and others who are wicked. There are *colons* [colonizers] and that is it.”

Robert Young (2001/1990:vi) claims that “the field of literary and cultural theory has ... been determined by a preoccupation with ‘the political’ and that [w]ithin this arena one of the most vigorous debates has concerned the relation of ‘theory to history’.” Theory, as suggested by one persuasively popular view, “suggests that theory neglects history” and that insofar as primacy is attached to the political, one should “reject theory’s ‘textuality’ for history and ‘the real’.” Young (2001:vi) attempts to counter the argument by questioning history. “Where” he asks “is this history so confidently invoked?” Young claims that history “has never succeeded in achieving a ‘concrete’ existence outside theory ... ready to be invoked against it.” What provides Young (2001:vii) his point of departure is the “argument between theory and history in the realm

of literary and cultural theory in Britain ... in terms of [the] debate between Marxism and poststructuralism.” Young constructs his analysis on poststructuralism, which he views as the “Anglo-American response to recent French Marxist and post-Marxist theory.” In 1995 Young (2002/1995:xi), writes “a book that traces the emergence of desire in history, its genealogy and its disavowal in the history of racialized thought” articulated by culture as produced by “an emergent capitalist European society.” But as he shows, culture carries within itself antagonistic forms of inner dissonance. (Young 2002:xii). With Young, we shall attempt to find the place of hybridity, *mestizo*-ness, if you will, in Filipino society and culture.

Bill Ashcroft et al. provide “an essential key to understanding the issues that characterize post-colonialism” through *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (2000). In it they explain what post-colonialism is, and where one encounters it. Ania Loomba gives access to the historical dimensions and theoretical concepts related to colonial and postcolonial discourse. Leela Gandhi (1998:viii) informs that “the intellectual history of postcolonial theory [which] is marked by a dialectic between Marxism ... and poststructural/postmodernism.” Here Gandhi links up with what Young wrote in 1990, (quoted above) on the “argument between theory and history in the realm of literary and cultural theory in Britain ... in terms of [the] debate between Marxism and poststructuralism.” (2001:vii). Robert J. C. Young (2002a) comes back to contribute his analysis of the evolution of colonial control and its shift to neocolonialism. Neocolonialism according to Young (2002a:45) “denotes a continuing economic hegemony [and] the postcolonial state remains [dependent] on its former masters [who] continue to act in a colonialist manner towards formerly colonized states.” In this case, as

pointed out by Young (2002a:45) there was merely “a change in form rather than substance.” Young cites Gramsci (1971) who views the shift as merely a change “from a society controlled by military force to one that no longer required such physical force because the hegemony of the ruling class [has been] sufficiently established at a cultural, ideological, economic and political level for it to operate by means of prestige and active consent.” This was, and is indeed still the case with the Philippines 57 years after it was “given” its independence by the United States on the fourth of July in 1946. In a neocolonial situation as exemplified by the Philippines today, Young (2002a:45) observes that “the ruling class constitute an elite that operates in complicity with the needs of international capital for [the ruling class’s] benefit.”

By now, the reader will have noticed the difference on how “post-colonialism” and “postcolonialism” are written. Ashcroft writes it with a hyphen, Loomba does not. Gandhi (1998) is most considerate to her readers by providing an explanation, thus an understanding of the difference between the hyphenated “post-colonialism” and the unhyphenated “postcolonialism.” About this, she writes:

Whereas some critics invoke the hyphenated form “post-colonialism” as a decisive temporal marker of the decolonising process, others fiercely query the implied chronological separation between colonialism and its aftermath—on the grounds that the postcolonial condition is inaugurated with the onset rather than the end of colonial occupation. Accordingly, it is argued that the unbroken term “postcolonialism” is more sensitive to the long history of colonial consequences (Gandhi 1998:3).

Furthermore, Gandhi (1998:1) connects and elucidates on Gayatri Spivak’s 1985 “challenge to the race and class blindness of the Western academy, asking ‘Can the subaltern speak?’ ” Spivak’s subaltern as understood by Leela Gandhi (1998:1) “meant the oppressed subject, the members of Antonio Gramsci’s ‘subaltern classes’ ... or more

generally those 'of inferior rank'." Adding a forward trajectory while developing further these dimensions and concepts, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1999:ix-x) "charts [the] progress [of her thinking] from colonial discourse studies to transnational cultural studies."

"Postcolonial studies" Gandhi observes (1998:3) "has emerged both as a meeting point and a battleground for a variety of disciplines and theories." Indeed as Gandhi claims, postcolonial studies has "enabled a complex interdisciplinary dialogue" or perhaps, as observed on occasions, a shouting match in written form, what with the "uneasy incorporation of mutually antagonistic theories – such as Marxism and poststructuralism" in the dialogues. In these Babelian dialogues, one can expect to meet not only the predictable likes of Césaire, Benedict, Dussel, Fanon, Foucault, Hobsbawm, Lacan, Lyotard, Memmi, Said, Sartre. One can predictably encounter others like Apel, Habermas, and Ricoeur who, whether they intended to participate or not, find themselves invoked at the very least, if not involved, in postcolonial studies. It is Enrique Dussel (1998:viii) who brings in "his old professor from Sorbonne" Paul Ricoeur, and Hans-Otto Apel into this particular discourse. In the process, Dussel takes along Apel's predecessor at the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas. Dussel (1985) also finds rich ground to grow and develop his theories in the colonial and postcolonial experiences of Third World countries in general, Latin American countries in particular.

Ricoeur responds to Dussel's use of critical hermeneutics in relation to liberation philosophy and insists "on the heterogeneity of the histories of liberation ... that these experiences are diverse ... perhaps even incommunicable" and that he "would rather situate this discussion in which [he is] implicated too directly against a background [of]

Western thematics ... of a historical experience of liberation (Dussel 1998:206).” If Ricoeur at this instance declines engagement in Dussel’s liberation philosophy, it is relevant to note that in an interview with another of his illustrious students, Charles E. Reagan, Ricoeur admits that in his “previous works, there is very little about ethics and politics” (in Reagan 1998:114). Elaborating further, Ricoeur (in Reagan 1998:114) says that he takes as the threshold of the moral problem not only the “speculative problem of action and passion but also the problem of victimization--the whole story of this cruel century, the twentieth century--and all of the suffering imposed on the Third World by the rich, affluent countries, by colonialism.” Fitting almost snugly into the embrace of postcolonial theory, Ricoeur in a conversation with Reagan (1998:114) discovers the presence of “a history of victims that keeps accompanying or reduplicating the history of victors.”

Karl-Otto Apel (2000:69) elaborates on an answer to the question (which is also the title of his essay,) *Can “Liberation Ethics” be assimilated under “Discourse Ethics”?* The point of departure for Apel’s essay occurred to him (2000:69) “during the first encounter between discourse ethics and the ethics of liberation in November 1989 in Freiburg.” After Apel’s presentation entitled “Discourse Ethics [a]s an Ethics of Responsibility,” Enrique Dussel “wryly remarked that ... 75 percent of the inhabitant of this earth ... the poor of the Third World—have so far not been able to participate in all discourses, including those that concern them” (in Apel 2000:69). Apel saw this as a well-directed challenge if not a central objection to the starting point of discourse ethics, but Apel felt that what Dussel said was true. Apel (2000:69) did not consider Dussel’s remark as an “objection to the grounding principle of discourse ethics” but saw it instead

as “a particularly illuminating example of the necessity of the distinction between part A and part B of discourse ethics.” In his essay, Apel (2000:92) reaches the conclusion that the concern of the ethics of liberation may be considered “as a current dimension of application of discourse ethics, primarily its part B.”

Adding more coal to the hearth is Hans Schelkshorn (2000). Schelkshorn (2000:97-8) considers his essay “a contribution to [the] dialogue that has been going on recently between Karl-Otto Apel and Enrique Dussel” where he starts by first looking at “the different contexts of discourse and liberation ethics.” Schelkshorn (2000:112) concludes that “Dussel’s philosophy of liberation intends, just as Apel also attempts, to ‘inspire the practice of men by a dialogical constitution of sense’, with the difference that now it is inspired through the liberating action of the oppressed.”

What then is philosophy of liberation? Dussel says that:

*To think of everything in the light of the provocative word of the people—the poor, the castrated woman, the child, the culturally dominated youth, the aged person discarded by the consumer society—shouldering infinite responsibility and I the presence of the Infinite; that is liberation philosophy.*  
(Enrique Dussel. 1985. New York: Orbis Books. *Philosophy of Liberation*, p. 178, para. 5.9.5.1.)

#### Persistence of Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping

Recently, I chanced upon two copies of *Tulay*, a Tagalog word which, when translated into English means bridge. Its publishers, World News Publication at 549 T. Pinpin street located in the Santa Cruz district of Manila describes *Tulay* as written on its title page (vol. 1, No. 2 October 1987) “a literary journal,” and “accepts contribution in Pilipino or English written by Chinese Filipinos.” The first was Volume 1, No. 2 published October 1987, where I found the essay “Ang Larawan ng Tsino sa Panitikang

Pilipino” (Portrait of the Chinese in Filipino Literature) by Joaquin Sy on page 64. Sy, a Chinese Filipino, reviews the novels and short stories of Macario Pineda, Andres Cristobal Cruz, Alejandro Abadilla, Elpidio Kapulong, Rogelio L. Ordonez, Librado A. Azares, Dominador Mirasol, Wilfredo P. Virtusio, Edgardo M. Reyes, Ricardo Lee, Miguel C. Arguelles, Celso Al Carunungan, Dennis Bravo, Fanny Garcia, and Ave Perez Jacob. Perhaps, with the exception of Ricardo Lee, all the novels and short stories read by Joaquin Sy are all written by--if I may be allowed to borrow from Salah Jubair (1999)--Indio Filipinos. Sy finds that in summary, the Chinese as portrayed in the novels and short stories he read are portrayed as despicable creatures. Since this review was published sixteen years ago in 1987, I wagered with myself that these ignominious sentiments harbored by Indio Filipino writers must have by now, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, somehow diminished if not dissipated. So I searched for *Tulay* in the worldwide web, and found that it was within the site of Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc. (<http://www.kaisa.ph/tulay/default.html>). Kaisa is an NGO established on August 28, 1987. One of its goals is to promote “the integration of the Chinese Filipinos into the mainstream of Philippine society.” I went to the Forum section where the cyberpublic (and I would think the Filipino cyberpublic in particular) is invited to share thoughts, ideas, suggestions. I looked forward to reading kudos, and congratulatory messages, words of encouragement at the very least, but what I found posted were vile, despicable, degrading, dehumanizing remarks aimed at Chinese Filipinos. Reading them left me devastated, and at the edge of despair. But I salute the members of Kaisa for their strength of character, their bravery and moral courage to let stand the unbelievably

savage and barbaric verbal defilement made by other Filipinos, for all to see and take measure of the abuse Chinese Filipinos have to bear and withstand *in their own country*.

The second copy of *Tulay* that I chanced upon was Vol. 1, No. 4 published August 1988. We meet again Joaquin Sy with his translation into Tagalog of Dr. Antonio S. Tan's "Ang mga Mestisong Tsino at ang Pagkabuo ng Kabansaang Pilipino" (The Mestizo Chinese and the Formation of the Filipino Nation). Here Dr. Tan excavates from Filipino history a rightful claim for today's Chino Filipinos. Tan (1988:68) asserts that "the Chinese mestizo was an important member of 19th century Filipino society. They played a major role in the development of the Filipino middle class of that period, in the demand for [colonial governmental] reforms, the revolution of 1898 and the formation of what we now call the Filipino nation." This translation by Joaquin Sy reads in Tagalog as follows:

*Ang mestisong Tsino ay mahalagang elemento ng lipunang Pilipino noong ika-19 siglo. Nagkaroon sila ng mahalagang papel sa pagkabuo ng panggitnang-uring Pilipino, sa paggigiit sa mga reporma, sa rebolusyon ng 1898, at sa pagkabuo ng tinatawag ngayong kabansaang Pilipino.*

The Chinese Filipinos have taken it upon themselves to participate, and not just be "bystanders in the task of [building] the Filipino nation." But what about the Moro Filipinos? What painful tragedy the Moro problem has become. I refer to it as an elision - - as *the problem*. To refer to it other than as the problem, to describe it in meticulous detail, the act of inscribing the narrative touches on a feeling that to me is almost unbearable to experience. What literature, narrative, text has sprung from the Moro problem? From the excesses of self-defeating acts of violence, both government and separatists have harvested nothing but death and destruction. The problem seems to have taken the form, the act of killing an ancestor.

Reading Salah Jubair (1999) will leave an open mind without doubt that the Philippines is a country of many nations. But more importantly, one comes to realize that the Philippines is indeed suffering from another social cancer that is ravaging the country, sparing neither *Lumad*, Moslem, nor Christian. The pathology of this social cancer is rooted in pre-*reconquista* Spain (circa 711 CE), when the Moors of North Africa ruled much of Al-Andalus in the Iberian peninsula, and the Christians were unorganized in the Cantabrian mountains. But as the cancer vaulted over millennia, it transformed and manifested itself into what may be referred to in a very understated manner as today's Moro problem. This is not a disease that is easy to cure, not a tumor easily extirpated.

Despite dire foreboding on the prognosis of the disease from other quarters, Nasser A. Marohomsalic (1995) finds a path that may lead out of this sociopolitical thicket. He finds hope in the transformation of the institution of Philippine government from a centralized to a federal form. Yet situated deeper in every person involved in the situation whether Muslim or Christian, Marohomsalic (1995:327) suggests that "Christianity and Islam share common ideological intersections [where] the basis for a social organization that does not distinguish one from the other in terms of religious affiliation [may be found]."

Coming from the side of comparative and constitutional law, Soliman M. Santos, Jr. (2001:161) shows that "new constitutional arrangements are necessary... and possible as part of a... solution to the complex Moro/Muslim/Mindanao Problem, in particular for the constitutional accommodation of a Moro Islamic system in the Philippines." In addition, many essays that contribute toward a solution to the Mindanao problem are

found in the book edited by Florangel Rosario-Braid (2002). One of them is the essay by Luis Q. Lacar (2001:16) where he writes that –

... in the ancient past we held common cultural values and practices which were obliterated by the onslaught of colonialism and imperialism. *Religion was used as the most effective instrument in obliterating these common roots.* (Italics added.)

Lacar (2001:16) believes that the peoples of the Philippines have remained more alike rather than different despite the somewhat successful effort of the Spanish and American colonizers in molding the colonized into their images. Herein lies one example of the vexed legacy of two opposing sociopolitical ideologies inserted in an incipient Filipino identity that double-colonization prevented from developing unfettered by imperialist designs.

#### Gathering Scattered Pieces, Illuminating Traces

Traces of history, monuments, traditions, documents, artifacts, and narratives of the many different (and in a sense, similar) peoples that inhabit the Philippine islands exist. Perhaps with help from Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas, and Kearney, the scattered pieces can be gathered as the traces are illuminated. Presenting other ways of inscribing or of writing the experiences of the people who shared two colonial experiences might help uncover clues that can assist in constituting their identity. If as Ricoeur (1990:247) postulates, they take up “narratives that become for them their actual history,” perhaps the goal is realizable.

Admittedly, the great majority of the present population is composed of the westernized Catholic Filipinos. But it is precisely because of this that care must be exercised to prevent the possibility of a tyranny of the majority. Many of the problems of the Philippines are rooted in its history that houses the conflicting values, knowledge,

traditions, and prejudices held by the different peoples that inhabit the country. The way out of the nettlesome problems of Filipino society at large can be solved if only the people -- whether Christian, Muslim, pagan, Indo-Malayan, Chinese -- exerted effort to know and understand each other.

But what is understanding? Gadamer (2004:9)says:

Understanding, whatever else it may mean, does not entail that one agrees with whatever or whomever one “understands.” Such a meetings of the minds in understanding would be utopian. Understanding means that I am able to weigh and consider fairly *what the other person thinks!* (Italics in the original.) One recognizes that the other person could be right in what he or she says or actually wants to say.

Hans-Georg Gadamer (1977:xvi) explains that understanding remains essentially a mediation or translation of past meaning into the present situation. As David E. Linge points out, the emphasis is on the fundamental continuity of history as a medium encompassing every such subjective act and the objects it apprehends (1977:xvi). Gadamer (2000:276) reminds that “history does not belong to us” but that “we belong to it.” “The self-awareness of the individual” Gadamer (2000:276-77) continues, “is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. *That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being*” (italics in the original). And since Filipinos come from, and hold on to many different traditions, often conflicting with those held by other Filipinos of flavor different from the mainstream, it becomes imperative to understand that, per Gadamer (2000:280-1) the “real force of morals ... is based on tradition” and that “tradition has a justification that lies beyond rational grounding and in large measure determines our institutions and

attitudes.” But before temporarily taking leave from Gadamer (2000:281), he reminds that –

... in tradition there is always an element of freedom and of history itself. Even the most genuine and pure tradition does not persist because of the inertia of what once existed. It needs to be affirmed, embraced, cultivated. It is, essentially, preservation, and it is active in all historical change.

And as Paul Ricoeur (1990:207) says, “[e]ven the idea of tradition – which already includes a genuine tension between the perspective of the past and that of the present ... does not give rise to thought ... unless it is by way of the intentionality of a history to be made that refers back to it.” In short, we create our future through a detour into our past from where we bring into the present the actions we need to perform in order to bring about the possible world we want to live in tomorrow.

“The fragile offshoot issuing from the union of history and fiction” according to Ricoeur (1990:246), “is the assignment to an individual or a community of a specific identity that we can call their narrative identity.” Ricoeur (1990:246) takes “identity” in the sense of a practical category where to state the identity of an individual, or for that matter a community, is to answer the question, “Who did this?” “Who is the agent, the author?” Ricoeur says that first of all, we have to name someone, designated with a proper name. But Ricoeur continues to ask questions on what the basis for the permanence of this proper name is, and what justifies taking the subject of an action, so designated by his, her, or its proper name, as the same throughout a life that stretches from birth to death. Ricoeur says that the answer has to be narrative. Therefore:

To answer the question “Who?” as Hannah Arendt has so forcefully put it, is to tell the story of a life. The story told tells about the action of the “who.” And the identity of this “who” therefore itself must be a narrative identity. Without the recourse to narration, the problem of

personal identity would in fact be condemned to an antinomy with no solution (Ricoeur 1990:246).

It is Ricoeur's (1994/1992:140) opinion that "[t]he genuine nature of narrative identity discloses itself only in the dialectic of selfhood and sameness."

Richard Kearney (2002:80) points out that "historical communities are ultimately responsible for the formation and re-formation of their own identity." "Unless one has some minimal remembrance of where one comes from, and how one came to be what one is," Kearney (2002:81) understands that a person "cannot remain constant over the passage of historical time and remain faithful to ones promises and covenants." Promises and covenants should be understood as the potentials to be realized, as the proposed realization of one's utmost human possibilities in synchronicity with others within one's "imagined community." The imagined community (which is Benedict Anderson's phrase) is "a narrative construction to be reinvented and reconstructed again and again" (Kearney 2002:81). "Whenever a nation forgets its own narrative origins it becomes dangerous" Kearney warns. "Self-oblivion," he continues, "is the disease of a community that takes itself for granted."

Most of the Philippine stories were written by the colonizers, and were effectively transmitted through the colonial system of education that remained in effect even after July 4, 1946. Indeed, many Filipinos have come to believe and rely on their stories as constructed by the colonizers. Sadly, if contrary to their colonizer's versions, many Filipinos still think that stories they tell of themselves to themselves are probably false.

One can perhaps conjecture that there is no Filipino, but there are Filipinos. In retrospect, the *philosophical hermeneutics* of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975), the *critical hermeneutics* of Paul Ricoeur (1981), and the *diacritical hermeneutics* of Richard

Kearney (2003) might be able to assist in determining how today's Filipino identity came to such a refracted condition. It is also possible that the *theory of communicative action* of Jürgen Habermas (1979) can assist in refiguring Filipino identity.

Earlier in Philippine history, during the Spanish colonial period, many native-born people of the Philippines contributed toward the adumbration of the Filipino identity. There were the priests—Pelaez, followed by Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora. Then came Jose Rizal and his fellow nationalists. Continental philosophical, social, and political ideas influenced the thinking of Rizal and his associates. There was also Apolinario Mabini whose thoughts formed part of the ethical ground of the revolution against Spain, and the subsequent resistance to American occupation and colonization. Another revolutionary whose social and ethical ideas were in harmony with Mabini's ideas was Emilio Jacinto. These men were the more noteworthy of the natives who, after about 300 hundred years found common cause, shared experience, and a sense of nationhood, notwithstanding the pervasiveness of Spanish obscurantism in the day-to-day life of the natives of that period.

#### Summary and Upcoming Text

This chapter presented literature on the origins of the country, and the development of Filipino identity during the Spanish era. It was also noted in this chapter the change of direction that the development of Filipino identity took under the American regime, until it reached its present state of near dissipation as observed today. In, this chapter ideas and concepts from philosophical, critical, and diacritical hermeneutics coupled with Habermasian and Foucaultian theories were discussed in the hope of finding

them employable in hastening the development of a strong and clearly focused Filipino identity.

This chapter saw the passing of the archipelago's colonial control from Spain, to the *nouveau* colonizer, the United States of America. Literature reviewed show that the colonization of the Philippines by the United States of America greatly influenced the extinguishing of the enflaming Filipino identity and the dampening of the desire to become a country of self-sufficient peoples in concord with each other.

The upcoming chapter will describe the research process used in this study. It will discuss the categories that will be employed in the analysis of the research data, and also the theoretical background that will inform this study. The research participants will be introduced in the following chapter. The research questions asked the participants will be revealed. Data collection and analysis will also be taken up.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Description of the Research Process

#### Introduction

Following is a discussion of the theoretical background that informs this research. The three categories employed in the analysis of research data are discussed, after an overview of the theory that nourishes the three categories. That the research questions are more like conversation starters, and function in many instances as segues, will be found to be apparent. Moreover, this chapter discusses my entrée to the research participants who were chosen for their experience and ability as observers of Filipino society.

To research on “Who is a Filipino?” or for that matter, “What is a Filipino?” is to engage in conversations. “Already in oral conversation,” Ricoeur (1976:73-4) writes, “the transfer into a foreign psychic life finds support in the sameness of the shared sphere of meaning. The dialectic of explanation and understanding has already begun.” These conversations generate text “that allows us to carry out the integrative act of reading, interpreting, and critiquing our understandings” (Herda 1999:86). “Interpretation as the dialectic of explanation and understanding or comprehension,” Ricoeur (1976:74) points out, “may then be traced back to the initial stages of interpretive behavior already at work in conversation.” It is by way of conversations that this research attempts to clear paths for Filipinos to come to new understandings of their multivocal identity.

To restate the present work, it is an attempt to refigure Filipino identity. This refiguration will be attempted by taking a detour into the historical past in the hope of finding sites where forgotten traces and monuments of history lie entombed and sedimented. It is with optimism that an excavation deep into this level will bring for the

Filipino people fresh and new understandings of who they are. From their restored platform, they can aspire to bring down the ceiling that prevents them from rising above the present practice of repudiating each other along racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic lines.

### Theoretical Background

To speak is to realize an event, but this event immediately disappears. Nevertheless, a sentence may be re-identified as the same on subsequent occasions through its inscription as text (Ricoeur 1998a:11). A text is any discourse fixed in writing (Ricoeur 1998a:145). “To say that discourse is an event is to say,” according to Ricoeur (1998a:133) “that discourse is realized temporally and in the present, whereas the system of language is virtual and outside of time.” Thus, in searching for the answer to “What is a Filipino?” is “to create the text in field-based hermeneutic research where the conversations among the researcher and participants are transcribed” (Herda 1999:87-8). “The moment we fix our discourse in writing,” Herda (1999:87) says that “we distance ourselves from the text” because the text’s meaning “is rendered autonomous from the researcher who created it, the original situation in which the conversation took place, and the original persons for whom the text was written.” What is then appropriated from the text is what Ricoeur calls a proposed world. This world is *in front of the text* (Ricoeur 1998a:143). “By ‘appropriation’,” Ricoeur (1991:118) understands “that the interpretation of a text culminates in the self-interpretation of a subject who thenceforth understands himself better, understands himself differently, or simply begins to understand himself.”

Ricoeur (1974:4) says “if a text can have several meanings, for example a historical meaning and a spiritual meaning, we must appeal to a notion of signification that is much more complex than the system of so-called univocal signs required by the logic of argumentation (1974:4).” Moreover, Ricoeur (1974:4) points out that “the very work of interpretation reveals a profound intention.” This Ricoeurian intention is the overcoming of “distance and cultural differences and of matching the reader to a text which has become foreign, thereby incorporating its meaning into the present comprehension a man is able to have of himself” (Ricoeur 1974:4).

In Ricoeur’s hermeneutics, “[s]ymbol and interpretation [are] correlative concepts” in that “there is interpretation wherever there is multiple meaning, and it is in interpretation that the plurality of meanings is made manifest” (1974:13). Kearny (1998:154) understands Ricoeur’s “hermeneutic task of recovering language in its symbolic fullness [as] a singularly modern one.” Kearney (1998:154) reasons that “It is precisely because language has become so formalized, transparent and technical in the contemporary era that the need is all the greater to rediscover language’s inventive powers of symbolization.”

Ricoeur (1984:46) discloses that mimesis functions “as a connection [that] establishes precisely the status of the metaphorical transposition of the practical field by the *muthos*” (or emplotment [1984:31]). Reference to the first side of poetic composition has to be preserved in the meaning of the term mimesis. Ricoeur (1984:46) calls this reference *mimesis*<sub>1</sub>, keenly indicating the necessity to differentiate it from both *mimesis*<sub>2</sub>, and *mimesis*<sub>3</sub>. *Mimesis*<sub>2</sub> is the pivot point, the mimesis of creation. Moreover, mimesis as a mimetic activity, “does not reach its intended term through the dynamism of the poetic

text alone,” reminds Ricoeur (1984:46), for it “also requires a spectator or reader.” It is at this juncture where Ricoeur (1984:46) illuminates “another side of poetic composition” which he calls *mimesis*<sub>3</sub>. “By so framing the leap of imagination with the two operations that constitute the two sides of [*mimesis*<sub>2</sub> which is] the *mimesis* of invention,” Ricoeur (1984:46) hopes to show that the mimetic activity “draws its intelligibility from its mediating function, which leads us from one side of the text to the other through the power of refiguration.”

Analysis of research data will be made by way of three categories derived from Ricoeur’s threefold *mimesis*. The first category is *mimesis*<sub>1</sub> (*M*<sub>1</sub>), the figuration, the reflection on, and remembering of the past. The second category is *mimesis*<sub>2</sub> (*M*<sub>2</sub>), the configuration, the emplotment of narrative. The last is *mimesis*<sub>3</sub> (*M*<sub>3</sub>), the refiguration, the imagining of an alternative world. However, in the discussion of the three categories, we shall start with *mimesis*<sub>1</sub>, move to *mimesis*<sub>3</sub>, and conclude with *mimesis*<sub>2</sub>.

#### *Mimesis*<sub>1</sub> – Figuration, Reflection on, and Remembering of the Past

“Whatever the innovative force of poetic composition within the field of our temporal experience may be,” Ricoeur (1984:54) apprises us of his understanding that in the mimetic process “the composition of the plot is grounded in a preunderstanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character.” Following Ricoeur’s lead, we attempt to figure, reflect on, and remember the historical past of the Filipino.

Rizal, Mabini, and Jacinto spoke of halcyon days before the advent of Spanish colonization. But Laura Lee Junker (1999:73) says, the “widely scattered islands were [at that time] controlled by a dizzying array of continually battling chiefs who seemed to

have no permanent political hierarchies and spoke mutually unintelligible languages.” Jocano (2001/1998:2) forthrightly says, “much of what happened in the [prehistoric] past can only be partially known. Many important events that occurred in the lives of ancient Filipinos cannot be accounted for... [and]... perhaps, they never will be.” To go to this deep end of Philippine prehistory may at the moment be counterproductive, and may lead us on a chase for a black cat in a lightless cave. Nevertheless, it is helpful to know that based on his extensive anthropological researches on Philippine prehistory, Jocano (2001/1998:64) says with confidence that [ancient] Philippine institutions and traditions are far more complex than what has been suggested by earlier scholars.”

Of this we can be certain, 19<sup>th</sup> century Filipinos had a greater sense of common history and identity made more apparent by their sufferance under Spanish rule. Moreover, the articulators of Filipino nationalism had a clear understanding of what made an ideal Filipino society, and individual. They also had distinct and clear ideas about ethics as applied in day-to-day living. This is the past that found its apotheosis in the fervor of the Spirit of 1896. Perhaps, if we reflect upon it, the Spirit of 1896 might like a mirror, redirect light and illumine the blurred feature of the Filipino portrait.

Filipinos of today may find it rejuvenating to reconnect with this past even if it was just a dream of what might have been. Thus reconnected to the dream left in suspension, frozen in mid-motion, they can reactivate it. The dream reactivated can throw light toward a darkening future. If with the light from this dream we are able to dissolve the darkness that has obscured the history we never left, we still are part of, and will forever remain in, then perhaps we can imagine and refigure a Philippines true to our

heart's desire. Once refigured, once re-imagined, we can revivify the dream, re-emplotted toward its true orientation.

### Mimesis<sub>3</sub> .. Refiguration, and the Imagining of an Alternate World

From figuration, reflection on, and remembering of the past, we skip to mimesis<sub>3</sub>, where an alternate future closer to the heart of the Filipino people will be envisioned. We shall find the adumbration of this future in the text of conversations with the research participants. Here, I feel an urge to wager that the alternate future that will emerge from the text of conversations will reflect in today's idiom what Rizal, Mabini, and Jacinto had in mind. Just so that we can establish a benchmark, let us return to Rizal and *La Liga Filipina*.

Rizal's goals in establishing *La Liga Filipina* seem to be as relevant today (if not more so) as they were in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From Rizal's political and historical writings, Quibuyen (1999:23) cites the league's five aims which are to unite the whole Archipelago into one compact, vigorous, and homogenous body; mutual protection in... case of trouble and need; defense against every violence and injustice; development of education, agriculture and commerce; and the study and implementation of reforms. These same sentiments were taken up and restated by Mabini, and Jacinto, among others.

“What is communicated [in mimesis<sub>3</sub>]... is beyond the sense of a work, the world it projects and [what] constitutes its horizon,” says Ricoeur (1984:77). “In this sense,” Ricoeur (1984:77) continues, “the listeners or readers receive it according to their own capacity, which itself is defined by a situation that is both limited and open to the world's horizon.” Mimesis<sub>3</sub>, as Ricoeur (1984:77) suggests is “the intersection of the world of the text and that of the listener or reader.” This new world is what emerges through mimesis<sub>3</sub>.

Ricoeur (1984:53) acknowledges that the “highlighting of the dynamic of emplotment is... the key to the problem of the relation between time and narrative.” What we are following through the threefold mimesis is “the destiny of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the mediation of a configured time” (Ricoeur 1984:54). As an elaboration on refigured time or mimesis<sub>3</sub>, Kearney (1998:149) states that “hermeneutics is not confined to the *objective* structural analysis of text, nor to the *subjective* existential analysis of the authors of texts; its primary concern is with the *worlds* which these authors and texts open up.” Moreover, the projection of new worlds provides us with projects of action. Kearney (1998:149) points to a promise that “[t]he possible worlds of imagination can be made real by action.”

#### Mimesis<sub>2</sub> .. Configuration, and Emplotment of the Narrative

Ricoeur (1984:52-3) takes as his “guideline for exploring the mediation between time and narrative his earlier articulation that...time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence.” This articulation is “already partially illustrated...between the three moments of mimesis” (Ricoeur 1984:53). The pivot of the analysis is mimesis<sub>2</sub>, which according to Ricoeur (1984 53) “opens up the world of the plot and institutes...the literariness of the work[.]” The very meaning of emplotment’s configuring operation results from the intermediary position of mimesis<sub>2</sub>, which is between mimesis<sub>1</sub> and mimesis<sub>3</sub>. These latter two “constitute the two sides... of mimesis<sub>2</sub> (Ricoeur 1984:53).” Thus, Ricoeur (1984 53) proposes to show that “mimesis<sub>2</sub> draws its intelligibility from its faculty of mediation, which is to conduct us from one side of the text to the other, transfiguring the one side into the other through its power of

configuration.” The reconstruction of the set of operations by which a work lifts itself above the opaque depths of living, acting, and suffering, to be given by an author to readers who receive it and thereby change their acting is the task of hermeneutics (Ricoeur 1984:53). Moreover, the reconstruction of “the arc of operations by which practical experience provides itself with works, authors, and readers” is the concern of hermeneutics (Ricoeur 1984:53). It is evident that what characterizes mimesis<sub>2</sub> is its mediating function.

To make the possible worlds of imagination made real will need more than just a curricular revision in public and private education. Everyone, Filipinos all have a role particularly the creative artists, writers, audiovisual media producers and directors, government officials and personnel, military officers and enlisted men, businessmen and clergy of all religions. Kearney (2001) contends that God will only come and bring His kingdom on earth if men will do their part to prepare and make earth suitable for Him. Taking inspiration from Kearney, Filipinos can compose their *own* Philippines, and assume their rightful place among societies of the world if they do their part in healing Filipino society. Ricoeur gives the key that can unlock the good healing graces from incarceration, and come out to heal Philippine society. The key is for every Filipino to see *oneself as another* (Ricoeur 1994).

The critical hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur is what primarily informs this research. Adding depth to theory undergirding this research, Ricoeur (1974:4) reveals that “hermeneutics involves the general problem of comprehension ... [and] no noteworthy interpretation has been formulated which does not borrow from the modes of comprehension available to a given epoch: myth allegory, metaphor, analogy, etc.” He

also understands the analysis of language to be confined “within the semantics of the shown-yet-concealed, within the semantics of multivocal expressions (Ricoeur 1974:12).” Subsequently, Ricoeur (1974:12-13) defines “ ‘symbol’ as any structure of signification in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates, in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary, and figurative and which can be apprehended only through the first.” “This circumscription of expressions with a double meaning,” according to Ricoeur, “properly constitutes the hermeneutic field.” This leads us to interpretation, which to Ricoeur (1974:13) is “the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning.”

The focus of this research is on what truly interests this researcher, evidenced by his willingness to take another stance that may yield a proposed world. Following Herda (1999:93), this researcher assumes the obligation to reveal a potential world, that of the participants and his, as disclosed by the study.

### Entrée

Half of my conversation partners were people I have known for decades. Friends and former colleagues introduced me to those whom I did not know, but wanted to invite as formal participants in conversations. My research conversation partners were writers and journalists, professionals, professors and students in higher education. All together, they reflected the four Filipino cultural flavors of *Lumad*, Moro, Indio, and Chino.

It was at the University of the Philippines campus where I met with the four students I had previously arranged to have conversations with. I conversed *in seriatim* with Khalim Tangilag and Joanna Faith H. Villanueva at the Bahay ng Alumni building

(Alumni house), and with Eunessa Baterina and Maharlika Alonto at the Ilang-Ilang dormitory. Both Alumni house and dormitory were on campus.

### Research Participants

For this study, I invited ten research participants who I believe to be reflective people. They are aware of what is happening in the Philippines. They are observant individuals. It is accurate to say that, in one way or another, all of them participate actively in the making of their country's history. Except for the University of the Philippines (UP) students, the age of my research participants ranged from the mid-forties to the mid-seventies. All four UP students are around 21 years old. However, it must be noted that they do not necessarily reflect the thinking of the common people.

Khalim Buking Tangilag is a BA Philosophy student. She is the Chairperson of the UP Anido, an organization of University of the Philippines students from the Cordillera administrative region. Tangilag is a Bontoc Kankanai.

Joanna Faith H. Villanueva is a BA Journalism student. She is president of the UP Chinese Student Association.

Eunessa Apiado Baterina is a BA Industrial Engineering student, and is president of UP BANNUAR, an association of UP industrial engineering students. She is an Ilocano from San Fernando City, La Union.

Maharlika S. Alonto is a BA Business Administration student. She is president of the UP Muslim Students Association.

Josefina Padilla-Rufino received my visit at her office in Makati City. She is Chief Executive Officer of Health Maintenance, Inc. a pioneer in Philippine health insurance.

Dr. Perla Rizalina M. Tayko and I met one Friday morning at the Christian Friendship House on Leon Guinto St. Dr. Tayko practices OD. She has clients in the Philippines, South and Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe.

Frankie Sionil Jose was at his private office on the third floor of his Solidaridad bookshop on Padre Faura St. in Ermita, Manila immediately after my meeting with Dr. Tayko. Sionil Jose began his career as a journalist, then went on to being the most prolific Filipino novelist in English. His novels have been translated and published into no less than ten different languages. He is also a publisher, and owns a bookshop frequented by the local intelligentsia, political radicals, and artists.

Arnold M. Azurin and I met on a Saturday afternoon. Not too long ago, he was an intrepid newsman, who has since joined the Center for Integrative and Development Studies at the University of the Philippines as a Resident Fellow. He received his Ph.B. from the University of Santo Tomas. His book *Reinventing the Filipino Sense of Being & Becoming* is the current best seller at the University of the Philippines bookstore.

Conrad de Quiros welcomed me to his home on a Sunday afternoon. He began writing professionally in 1971, and has since then authored three books. De Quiros has been writing a regular column "There's the Rub" for the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* since 1991. His column is reputed to have a loyal following.

Dr. Maria Celeste T. Gonzalez is head of Curriculum Development at the Department of Education of Ateneo de Manila University. She graduated with the degree Doctor of Education from the University of San Francisco in 1991. (The following page is a chart of the research participants.

### Chart of Research Participants

Name	Occupation	Age Range
Maharlika S. Alonto	UP Business Administration student. President, UP Muslim Students Association.	18-25
Eunessa A. Baterina	UP Industrial Engineering student. President, UP BANNUAR, an association of I.E. students.	18-25
Khalim Baking Tangilag	UP Philosophy student. Chair, UP ANIDO, an association of students from the Cordillera Admin. Region.	18-25
Joanna F. Hui Villanueva	UP Journalism student. President, UP Chinese Student Association.	18-25
Arnold M. Azurin	Resident Fellow, UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies.	45-55
Dr. Ma. Celeste Gonzalez	Head, Curriculum Development, Dept. of Education, Ateneo de Manila University.	45-55
F. Sionil Jose	Novelist, journalist, publisher, Bookstore owner.	70-80
Conrad de Quiros	Editorial & opinion columnist, <i>Philippine Daily Inquirer</i> . Author.	45-55
Josefina Padilla-Rufino	CEO of a health insurance corporation.	55-65
Dr. Perla R. M. Tayko	Organization Development practitioner. Director of Doctoral Program. Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand.	55-65

## Research Categories and Questions

The three categories for this research were mimesis<sub>1</sub>, mimesis<sub>2</sub>, and mimesis<sub>3</sub>. With each category was one primary conversation guide that initiated the discussion. In order to conform to the sequencing in Chapter Four and Chapter Six of this study, the mimetic functions will be presented below starting with mimesis<sub>1</sub>, followed by mimesis<sub>3</sub>, and finally mimesis<sub>2</sub>. The primary conversation guides were framed as questions to encourage from response the research participants.

1. Mimesis<sub>1</sub> is an act of figuration. It is a reflection on history; a remembering of the past, an evocation of memories swathed with nepenthe. It is also an act of connecting and engaging in conversation with one's forbears.

Question: Who were we before the Spaniards colonized these islands?

2. Mimesis<sub>3</sub> is the imagining of an alternate world, the world the research participant would rather live in instead of where one is presently domiciled. It is an act of refiguration, a creative action.

Question: Who should we be? What kind of person should a Filipino become?

3. Mimesis<sub>2</sub> is the emplotment, the design, and the map that guides the movement, the transfer from the world at hand toward the world desired. It is the leap of imagination that attempts to vault over the bar that separates "what is" from "what ought to be." It is the active configuration that dynamically links "what was" to "what will be."

Question: What should one do to become the person one ought to be?

The questions asked in this study were naïve in their simplicity. They were meant to start a conversation rather than elicit a correct answer because in hermeneutic research it is through the conversation where the answers are disclosed. The questions I asked dwelt only on Filipino identity as presented above. However, in the course of the various conversations, the questions took form in various permutations such as: Who is a Filipino? What makes you a Filipino? Who do you consider to be Filipinos? Does one “learn” to be a Filipino? Is there one Filipino identity, or are there various Filipino identities?

“Although the research stance that promotes conversations about vital issues is a necessary condition for critical hermeneutic participatory research” Herda (1999: 41) reminds that “it is not a sufficient condition.” The researcher must understand the nature of interpretation, language and social being before he or she can engage in research that uses language, conversation and understanding ... [to] create context where alternatives to specific social ... problems can be discussed (Herda 1999: 41).

### Journals

Ever since I attended my first class in the Organization & Leadership doctoral program with emphasis in Pacific Leadership International Studies the summer of 2000, my thoughts have always been on how the Philippines could benefit from what I shall learn. In the spring of 2001, I heard that it would be helpful if we kept a journal of our thoughts on our dissertation topic, assuming we already had one. A particular dissertation topic at that time, I had none. But I had a general idea on what the dissertation will be about – the Philippines. Herda (1999:98) writes that a “personal log or journal... is the life-source of the data process for in it goes the hopes, fears, questions, ideas, humor,

observations, and comments of the researcher.” Ever since then, I kept two journals. One was in a hard-covered 8” X 5½” spiral notebook, and the other was a small, green softbound stitched 3½” X 4½” pocket-size notebook. I kept the spiral notebook on the shelf above the headboard of my bed. The smaller one I took with me wherever I went. I made my first entry on August 10, 2001 in the larger notebook that reads somewhat cryptically, as follows:

RP [Republic of the Philippines]. Unknowable, almost. A people seemingly confused about themselves, living confusing lives of conflicts and confrontations without hope of resolution or reform. But the individual charm, the inherent brilliance of individual Filipinos shine like pins of light peeping through the tiny spaces of a woven smoke-stained Ifugao wicker basket made into a table lamp that hides within a 50-watt incandescent bulb.

Soon after making the entry, I knew I was born in love with the “imagined community” of my birth. Paraphrasing and borrowing from Herda (1999: 100), [my] research project should be focused on what is of interest to [me] ... because the structure of the world to which [I] belong is shaped by [my] interests and [my] history”. My research journals contain many other entries from books, publications, journals, and people who have something to say about the Philippines and the various people who live in the archipelago. Examples of my journal entries are in Appendix 3.

#### Data Collection and Analysis

I collected data from the transcribed conversations I had with my conversation partners. These conversations were tape recorded, and transcribed, some within the day, while others later. In addition to using a tape recorder (with another ready as back up), I also jotted down relevant observations I chanced upon during the conversations. I made every effort to personally transcribe the taped conversations, because experience has

taught me that it is during transcription that I was able to pick up additional insights and clues missed during the actual conversations.

Data analysis in participatory hermeneutic research is a creative and imaginative act where the researcher appropriates a proposed world from the text (Herda 1999: 98). And as Ricoeur says (1998a: 53) “ the text must be unfolded ... towards its imminent sense and towards the world which it opens up and discloses.”

Herda (1999: 98-9) provides guidelines in setting the stage for analysis. The first is to fix the discourse by personally transcribing the taped conversation. This makes good sense. Based on my previous research experience, in the process of transcribing the conversation to text, I found myself gaining deeper understanding of what my conversation partner was saying to me, thus enriching my analysis of the data. Moreover, as I transcribed the conversation, I was able to pull out significant statements, develop themes, and place them within categories. In that phase of the creative flow, I was able to substantiate the themes and other important ideas with quotes from the conversation transcripts, or with observational data as well as data from my log. After I examined the themes, I was able to determine with better clarity what they meant in light of the theoretical framework of critical hermeneutics. In transcribing the conversations, I discovered in the process some points that needed further elaboration or clarification. I made quick, direct, and natural reentry into the spirit of the first conversation with the participant by using the transcribed text. Listening again to the taped conversation also proved very helpful.

Sometimes, it becomes necessary to have a second round of conversation with research partners. In my case, where I found it necessary, I spoke with them by telephone

and sent them copies of the transcription of our conversations. They in turn sent them back to me with their corrections or emendations.

After all the above, I then set a context for the written discussion. In developing the text, I found it advisable to group themes and sub-themes within each category in light of the theory and the problem at hand. Subsequently, I did the following three actions. First, discussed the research problem at a theoretical level, thus implementing a further practical use for critical hermeneutics. Second, extracted implications from the written discussion that provided insight and new direction for the issue or problem under investigation. Third, brought out those aspects of the study that merited further study.

At conclusion, examples of learning experiences and fusions of horizon that took place during the research process on the part of the participant(s) are given. Finally, a disclosure on how the study related to me in terms of what I learned from the research and what role the study played in my life is made.

#### Research Focus

The research project focused on what is of interest to the researcher “not only because of a personal proclivity toward an issue but also because the structure of the world to which we belong is shaped by our interests and our history” (Herda 1999: 100). “These in turn are the basis of the interpretation of our texts.”

Our interpretations are shaped by our prejudgments that in turn are molded by our past experiences and current concerns. But what is of greater importance to me is that by focusing my research on my personal interest, I am able to widen my knowledge and deepen my understanding of the subject matter, by putting at risk the assumptions that I currently hold.

### Research Timeline

The participatory hermeneutic research for this dissertation was carried out for more than ten months. It started in mid-September of 2002 with a pilot conversation research project. In the pilot project, Filipino students at the University of San Francisco who were then enrolled in both undergraduate and graduate courses participated. The actual participatory hermeneutic research concluded August 28, 2003. All of the conversations were held in the Metropolitan Manila area, which include Quezon City, and Makati City.

### Background of Researcher

The paternal side of my mother's family has always had an abiding interest in a country called the Philippines and love for its peoples. This interest began when the natives of the islands were still in liminality about the concept of nationhood, and were in the process of appropriating the appellation Filipino for them. Before its appropriation, the people referred to as Filipinos were the Iberian Spaniards who were born in the Philippines, and the native inhabitants of the country were collectively and generally referred to as *indios*.

My mother's paternal grandfather, Tiburcio Hilario was born on August 11, 1856. Hilario, according to Rafaelita H. Soriano (1991: 10), was "the brains of the revolutionary movement" [against the Spanish colonial government] in [the] Pampanga [province of the Philippines]. He was 40 years old when the 1896 revolution for independence from Spain broke out. This is the soil where my being sprouted. This, in a sense, is my Heideggerian *thrownness*.

Heidegger's thrownness, according to Inwood (2000:218) "is a central feature of DASEIN [emphasis in the original]. Dasein is thrown into its There (*Da*).” Inwood also understands thrownness to be “closely connected to ‘facticity’, a word that precedes [thrownness] both in [Being and Time] and in earlier lectures[.]” Inwood (2000:219) clarifies that “thrownness is not a fact that is over and done with, like details of one’s ancestry which one can discover by research. It is a constant accompaniment of Dasein’s existence.” On the other hand, Polt (1999:65) discloses that “attunement is our way of finding ourselves thrust into the world” and that one’s “attunement discloses ones thrownness.” Polt (1999:64) acknowledges using the word attunement as translation for Heidegger’s term *Befindlichkeit* which “designates our moods as ways of *finding ourselves in the world*.” “Having an attunement thus involves having a past,” Polt (1999:65) avers, “for I always find myself *already* attuned to the world in a certain way.” And as Heidegger (1962:236) says, “To Being-in-the-world... belongs the fact that it has been delivered over to itself—that it has in each case already been thrown *into a world*.”

I was born in Manila to a polyglot family that spoke in Spanish, English, Kapampangan, Hiligaynon, and Tagalog. My education came from the Jesuits at the Ateneo de Manila (grade school and MBA), the secular and privately owned Far Eastern University (high school and Bachelor of Arts in English Literature), and the government-run National Defense College of the Philippines (Master in National Security Administration). A few months after my graduation from the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP), I was called to active duty, and subsequently appointed Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil-Military Operations (F-7) of the Naval Defense Forces (Philippine Navy). I held the rank of Commander.

It was during my schooling at NDCP when I began to truly understand the intractable peace and order problems of the country, much of which was brought to my attention by my Muslim Filipino classmates on one hand, and those who were officers of the (then) Philippine Constabulary (PC) on the other hand. My classmates who were PC officers gave me deep insight into their tactical operations against the New People's Army (NPA) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). All of what they told me I confirmed during the course of my duties as F-7 which required me to travel and visit places where Philippine Navy ships were based or patrolled, from the Batanes Islands in the north, to the southernmost islands of Mindanao. And my interest in the Philippines abides.

October 7 (my mother's birthday) in 2001, the sociocultural, political, and economic malaise that plagues the Philippines was in the back of my mind like a low-grade headache. I wrote in my journal that it would benefit Filipinos today to reconnect themselves with their illustrious forebears like Rizal, Mabini, and Ricarte. I remembered reading something by Heidegger that triggered the sparkling of this thought. Every Filipino, if they wish to redeem the promise of their 1896 Revolution, should stay "in dialogue with his forebears, and perhaps even more and in a more hidden manner with those who will come after him (Heidegger 1971: 31)."

#### Summary and Upcoming Text

This chapter related a description of the research process. It presented the theoretical background that undergirds the study. In addition to the expositions on the researcher's entrée to research participants, researcher's journal, research focus and timeline, a discussion of data collection and analysis was also made in this chapter. The

research categories, coupled with the research questions that served as primary conversation guides for each research category were also presented in this chapter.

The synopses of conversations with the research participants will be found in following chapter. Primary analyses of these conversations will also be undertaken in the succeeding pages.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Synopses and Analyses of Conversations

#### Introduction

I had conversations with four college students of the University of the Philippines (UP), and six long-time observers of, and commentators on Filipino society. I found all of the conversations not only interesting, but also fruitful and instructive for me. They provided crucial background that raised in high relief some sources, and causes of present Filipino identity problems. It is my hope that the synopses of these conversations will provide the reader the requisite information for his/her own evaluation of my observations.

#### Khalim Buking Tangilag

Tangilag began our conversation by telling me that “a friend told her that the search for Filipino identity might be better served if one were to look at our tribal societies that have not yet been corrupted by western values.” “But then I asked my friend,” Tangilag continued, “what about us who come from the mountains who study at the University of the Philippines? Since attending university, we adapted to urban values, and to an urban lifestyle that we do not find in our tribal areas? How do we now define ourselves given that we are Filipinos, but still with very strong tribal affiliations?” “Ultimately my friend and I simply reached the conclusion that we are lost,” Tangilag conceded. “We are very lost. How do we confront our identity as a generation of Filipinos who still are tribally affiliated, who have inherited a lot of burden from the past, and who are further saddled with the prejudices of today’s Filipino society?”

“Students from the Cordilleras like myself who come to study here at the University of the Philippines, tend to be out of touch with what is happening in our region,” she confided. But what I found surprising is that even in this university setting, Tangilag has been subjected to a lot of discriminatory comments. Some UP students have been brutally ill mannered towards her as a tribal Filipino. She told me of the derisive comments thrown at her, such as “Ah, so you are an Igorot! How come you look like that? You are not supposed to look like that. You are supposed to be dark skinned!” Tangilag is light-skinned. “I even get asked very absurd questions like, ‘So you still live in tree houses?’”

Tangilag’s narrative discloses the sad realization that even now, at the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, lowland Christianized Filipinos still harbor pejorative sentiments toward our tribal brothers and sisters. This, despite Rizal’s acknowledgement that the Igorots were his compatriots, people of this race with whom he shares the same blood that race in their veins (Quibuyen 1999:95). As it happened, in 1887 a Philippine Exposition was held in Madrid where the tribal people of the Philippines were placed on display for public viewing along with the native flora and fauna. Before the opening of the exposition Rizal, in anguish on the forthcoming inhuman display of Igorot Filipinos, wrote from Geneva on June 6, 1887 to his Austrian friend Ferdinand:

My poor compatriots who will be exhibited are already in Madrid for some time. Some newspapers are mocking them, but others, like *El Liberal*... says that it is not consistent with human dignity to be exhibited side by side with animals and plants. I have done everything possible to prevent the carrying out of this degradation of men of my race, but I have not succeeded. Now one woman died of pneumonia.

...And they say that all have come unwillingly, deceived and forced.

When I think of this iniquity, I exclaim: I am glad I am

leaving Europe! ...

May you fare well, my best friend, and rejoice and be grateful that you are only a Filipino at heart and not in blood (Rizal 1992:96-7).

And as fate would have it, even before the opening of the exhibition, an Igorot Filipino woman who was part of the menagerie for display caught pneumonia and died (Quibuyen 1999:93).

Seventeen years later, they were again on display. This time Igorot Filipinos were in the St. Louis 1904 World's Fair (The Louisiana Purchase Exposition). Jim Zwick (2003) writes,

In 1904, few Americans had ever seen a Filipino. The display [Igorot Filipinos] at St. Louis was very influential in establishing racial stereotypes that Filipinos and Filipino Americans had to endure for many decades.

... Despite opposition to displays of Filipinos as "primitive peoples" by both Filipinos and American anti-imperialists, the popularity of the Philippine Reservation at St. Louis made such exhibits a standard part of every major exposition held in the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century.

Moreover, Zwick (1996) reveals the story of a present [Igorot Filipino] grandson whose grandfather was brought and displayed at the 1904 St. Louis World Fair. A brother to this grandfather "is said to have fought [both]...in the Philippine Revolution against Spain and...[died at] the beginning of the Philippine American War in February 1899. Zwick also mentions poignant accounts of the travails of the Filipino Igorots "who froze in a box car while being transported to the fair, and of others who died during the fair and whose bodies were immediately taken away." Zwick notes poignantly that the Igorots performed rites of mourning absent the bodies of their dead before Caucasian fair-goers who were oblivious to the significance of the rituals.

From Zwick's writings, two questions are derived: What is it like to be a human displayed in a foreign land as part of the flora and fauna of your country? What are the consequences of having been displayed as the "other?"

She has long known many if not most ethnic groups in the Philippines want to separate from the center. "Even we of the Bontoc Kankanaï tribe in the Cordilleras, for years we have been patiently appealing to national government for autonomy, but we were not granted autonomy anyway." She then asked the following questions: What is it that motivates the people of our region or other regions to separate from the center, the national capital region (NCR)? What is it that we have that the NCR or center does not have?" To these questions she offered the response that "perhaps we want to keep the natural resources to ourselves. But more than this, perhaps it is because we are being governed from a center that is out of touch with our concerns." She expressed disappointment in a central government that does not appreciate, much less uphold their tribal traditions and culture. "The vision of the governing center, if indeed it has one," she stated "is irrelevant to the realities of our tribal life." I also gathered that as far as she was concerned, this present government is but a reproduction of the old colonial system. The difference is that now it is an internal colonial system dominated and run by members of the local elite, an internal colonial system perpetrated on the rest of the people, tribal people like Khalim Tangilag.

Tangilag told me that she becomes depressed when she hears about the successes of the other ASEAN countries. "What is it that we can do so we too can develop economically, so we do not remain merely as source of raw material for first world countries?" she asked. She thought that perhaps developing local science and technology

that makes use of available natural resources would be an option. She found it troubling that too many Filipinos have to leave the country just to find work, and that this has caused the disintegration of families. In her particular case, to sever her tribal connections and work abroad for an indeterminate length of time is not even an option. Nevertheless, she worries about the paucity of career options available to her. Tangilag posits that the poor condition of the Philippine economy, unable to absorb its available manpower, influences how Filipinos view themselves.

Religion sometimes gets in the way of national development, like the way it does on the current Reproductive Bill debate going on in the Philippine Congress. She claims that the Catholic Church is against it because the church advances the notion that contraceptives encourage immoral sex. "Everything to them is immoral, and a woman should be thankful that God continually gives her children," Tangilag opines. "Fine, if one has the economic resources to take care of the children." I found that one of her biggest disappointments in the Catholic Church was in the church's prohibition of the use of contraceptives, without giving any alternative to help alleviate the problem of those poor women with already too many children except the impractical and unreliable rhythm method. She also found the Catholic Church a highly politicized organization with a powerful and extensive network that is able to reach even the smallest barangays in the archipelago. Tangilag revealed her fear of the power of the Catholic Church when she said "I find it scary that the Catholic Church can easily propagate its kind of thinking."

Tangilag went on to tell me that the University of the Philippines philosophy department had been attempting to develop a Filipino philosophy that would move the people as a nation towards global competitiveness. But what had been preventing its

achievement, among other reasons, are the country's underdeveloped economy and malfunctioning political institutions. What arises from Tangilag is an understanding that a Filipino philosophy is still, as Shakespeare's Hamlet soliloquized, a "consummation devoutly wished."

One can surmise that the absence of a Filipino philosophy is one of the causes that discourage the development of a national sentiment Rizal expressed as *El sentimiento nacional*. He was convinced that the lack of a commonly shared national sentiment would forestall the emergence of a unified Filipino nation.

#### Summation

Tangilag's experiences disclose that even the so-called educated lowland Filipinos still wallow in their muddy delusion that they are superior to tribal Filipinos. Autochthonous and assimilated upland tribal Filipinos like Tangilag fear the socially and politically powerful Catholic Church they see as unsympathetic to their existential needs. She also finds the Catholic Church dismissive of their reproductive rights allowed by their tribal ethics which is independent of, and not subsumable under the Catholic Church's stand on contraception. Her revelations also expose the tenuous and brittle ties that barely connect the Philippine government and the *Lumad* people of the country. As a senior college student of philosophy, she finds it unsettling that at this point, a Filipino philosophy has yet to break ground.

Joanna Faith H. Villanueva

Joanna Faith Hui Villanueva is the current President of the University of the Philippines Chinese Student Association. "I'm half Chinese," she told me. "My Mom is Malaysian, but of Chinese ethnicity, a 'pure' Chinese. My Dad is not even 'pure' [Indo-

Malayan] Filipino. His father was a Spaniard from Madrid. What I find intriguing is that my Dad and his brothers look Japanese. So in moments of levity, we children ask him to honestly declare whether he is or is not a Filipino.”

At the outset of our conversation, Villanueva candidly admitted, “It is very hard to answer the question, What is a Filipino?” She claimed that first of all Filipinos are regionalistic. She illustrated what "regionalistic" meant to her by describing what happens when students from all over the Philippines gather at the University of the Philippines. Students would present and identify themselves based on their ethno-linguistic origins. A student from the Bicol region would introduce himself as a Bicolano. Another from one of the Visayas islands would refer to herself as Visayan or Bisaya, and then further refine her regional identity by invoking her linguistic ipseity as an Ilonggo were she from the Visayan province of Iloilo. Or a Cebuano, if from the Visayan island of Cebu. Or a Waray, if she were from the island of Samar. Villanueva commented that generally Filipinos tend to group along ethno-linguistic circles. She clearly saw the pride that exuded from the students when they invoked their regional identities. “They are so proud of where they come from,” she recalled.

Villanueva told me that “we, the members of the UP Chinese Student Organization are all half Chinese, and half Filipino. We have accepted as a given our being part Filipino, but we nevertheless divide along what Chinese language we speak. In other words, those of us who speak Cantonese would claim that we are different from those of us who speak Fookien, that the Cantonese culture is different from the Fookien culture. Our Filipino mentality persists in segmenting and classifying us into defined and differentiated groups.” Villanueva noted too that the people of the Philippines always

establish regional identity boundaries to mark their distinctiveness, their different-ness from others.

On the other hand, Villanueva claimed that in a foreign country, say Japan, she found it very easy to recognize a Filipino even if the person were speaking Nippongo, and looked Japanese. She could not grasp at, nor point out to any one concrete thing that allowed her to pick out a Filipino in a gathering of people who had similar physical features and who spoke in the same language. “I don’t think it’s a physical characteristic,” Villanueva opined. “I think it’s more traits or mannerisms (*ugali*). It’s the way they talk to people, the way they act, which subtly conveys their outlook in life: the desire to always succeed. Also, Filipinos are always on the look out for greener pastures.”

I told Villanueva that it was my understanding that Rizal wanted to build a Filipino nation based on ethical principles we all share and practice. I asked her what she thought of the notion of employing the ethical principles of justice and the common good (Quibuyen 1999: 171) as primary underpinning of the Filipino national community. She conceded that the notion has good possibilities. But I gathered from her elaboration that to develop a tract of fundamental ethics acceptable to all Filipinos would be problematic considering the heterogeneity of the social and cultural threads that have interwoven as the fabric of modern Philippine society. Although the majority of the Filipinos are Roman Catholics, what must be taken into consideration too is that a substantial minority is Muslim, without forgetting that there are also non-Catholic Christians, and those who practice non-Christian religions other than Islam.

I conveyed to Villanueva my observation that at the University of the Philippines as I am sure is also the case in other educational institutions of the country, there is an

abundance of regional and ethnic organizations that celebrate their uniqueness and distinctiveness. However, I told her that I have yet to find one school organization whose objective is to unite the diverse groups of Filipinos in the student body. She thought that this was worth looking into.

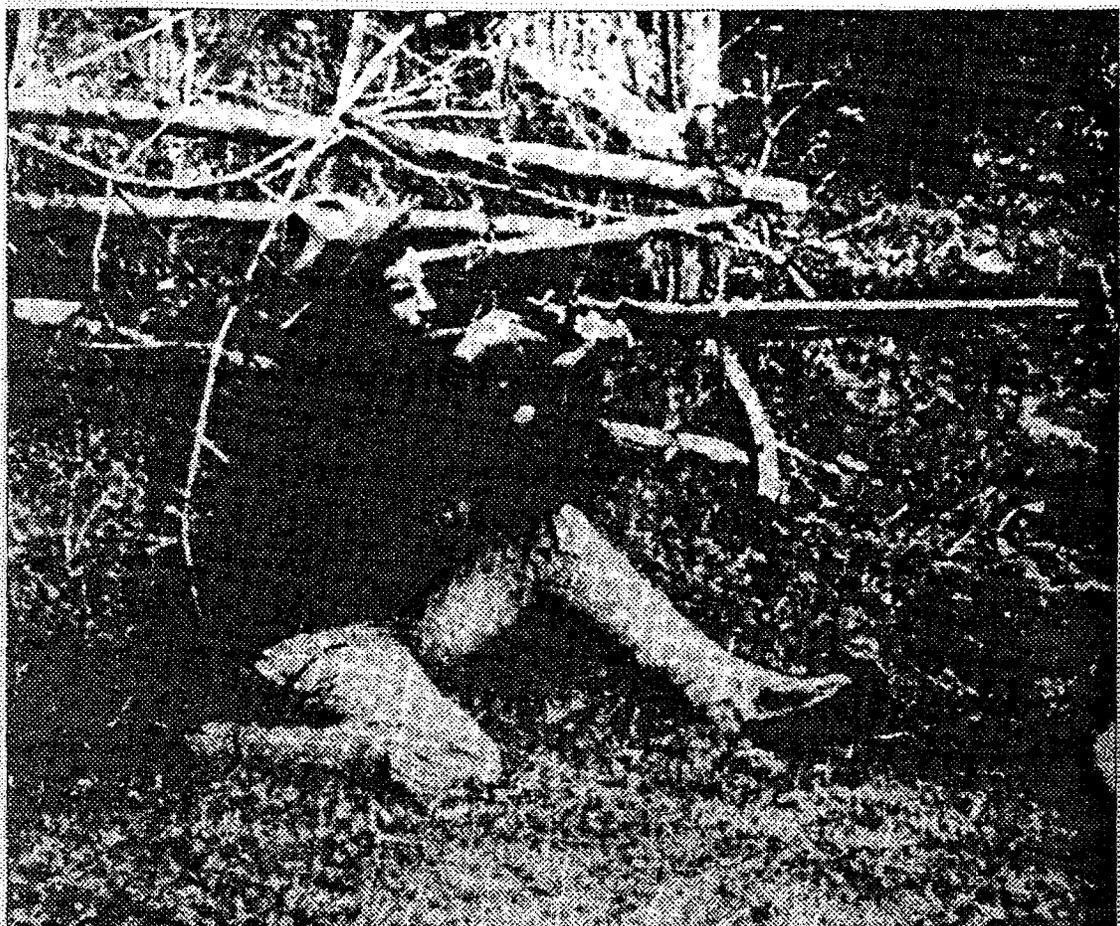
Why is there an absence of school organizations for the unification of the ethnically and culturally diverse student body? To this she responded and said that “my feeling is that our system of education, our culture does not give due importance to the questions: As Filipino, what do I stand for? What is my role in the development of this nation?” “We have become parochial,” Villanueva noted. “We do not care about the greater Philippines. We have become too concerned with our respective small groups of people.”

During her Philippine History class a week before our conversation, she told me that their professor asked the class to point out landmarks that memorialized battles Filipinos fought against the Spanish colonizers. And indeed she and her classmates were able to point out many. But when asked a similar question, this time for examples of Filipino armed resistance against the American occupation of the Philippines before the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not one of them could point out to any. All that they could come up with was Philippine-American Friendship Day. “Perhaps,” Villanueva surmised “it is because the Americans came and projected the image of their being our saviors from Spanish tyranny. They also established an educational system that obviously supported their colonial agenda. And then we inevitably come to the realization that the Americans too massacred a lot of Filipinos. They too oppressed the Filipinos, as did the Spaniards.

Philippine-American Friendship day is commemorated in the Philippines, and its embassy and consulates in the United States every fourth day of July. As president of the Philippines, Diosdado Macapagal signed Republic Act No. 4166 on August 4, 1964 declaring June 12 as Philippine Independence Day, instead of July 4, the day the United States *gave* the Philippines its independence in 1946. It was on June 12, 1898 when General Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Filipinos in Kawit, Cavite a few months before the commencement of the Philippine-American war for Philippine independence. (See photograph of Pvt. Willie Grayson on the following page.)

The United States granted Independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946 barely 10 months after the country's devastation by the Japanese, and the leveling of the city of Manila by aerial bombardment, courtesy of the United States Air Force. Soon after the rape of Manila by retreating Japanese soldiers, the aerial bombardment commenced. Lest this is misconstrued as an ungrateful statement, let me hasten to add that the US air force bombed the city of Manila for the highly regarded purpose of hastening the retreat of the Japanese Imperial Army already in flight.

Drawing wisdom from the Chinese part of her being, Villanueva remembered a Chinese saying which she traced to the time of Confucius, that before one can move forward, that person must first look back. But Villanueva felt that Filipinos find the act of remembering their history an exercise too painful to engage in. Fifty years of skillfully disguised American self-interest heaped on more than three hundred years of Spanish despotism, followed by four brutal years of Japanese occupation in World War II effectively severed the link Filipinos had to the ideals of their 1896 revolution. What joy is there in remembering hundreds of inglorious years of subjugation and brutalization by



Private Willie Grayson of the Nebraska Volunteers demonstrating how he fired the first shot of the Filipino-American War at San Juan Bridge on February 4, 1899. (TC)

foreigners, and in complicity with members of the local elite? If this is all that one can remember, why bother to remember at all?

On a more plaintive note, Villanueva expressed her opinion that the only reason why Spain and the United States of America colonized the Philippines, contrary to what they said was their real purpose, was “for their own benefit. Not for the benefit of the natives, not for the benefit of the people of the colonized country.”

#### Summation

Filipino students at the University of the Philippines are very regionalistic. And so are the students in other institutions of learning in the cosmopolitan areas. All of these students are proud of their regional origins. But they have yet to learn to use this pride as platforms to stand on and reach out in the spirit of solidarity towards their fellow Filipinos from other regions and together weave the tapestry of Filipino identity. Villanueva observes that curriculum in Philippine education does not give space nor importance to the teaching civics. Philippine history is taught uncritically. The American colonial period is still presented within the constrictive myth of unquestionable American benevolence. Villanueva also believes that Filipinos find the experience of remembering their history too tragic and painful to recall.

One wonders how someone like Villanueva would reconcile her progeny with what Amy Chua (2003:1) says:

For the Chinese, luck is a moral attribute, and a lucky person would never be murdered. Like having a birth defect, or marrying a Filipino, being murdered is shameful.

As she has established earlier, Villanueva’s mother is Chinese from Malaysia, and her father is a Filipino.

Eunessa A. Baterina

In my conversation with Eunessa A. Baterina, I had the opportunity to relate to her a story of a Filipino who chanced upon another in Hawaii a few years ago. As the story goes, the former asked the latter if he was a Filipino. The latter replied that he was an Ilocano, and not a Filipino. To this Baterina said that perhaps the man from Hawaii might have been wary of identifying himself as a Filipino because of the many unsavory connotations that have attached to the appellation Filipino. Baterina said that people, especially foreigners, think of Filipinos as lowly people because they hire themselves out to do “menial jobs, or are people who live as illegal aliens in first world countries, and worst of all, because many Filipino women have been known to be prostitutes.” After the foregoing response, one could be tempted to think that admitting to being Filipino could either be an act of bravery or self-deprecation. Nevertheless, Baterina unhesitatingly considers herself a Filipino in general and an Ilocano in particular. She was born in San Fernando City, La Union, one of the provinces that comprise the Ilocos region. She is president of UP BANNUAR, an association of students at the University of the Philippines enrolled in industrial engineering.

Baterina said that the teaching of Filipino literature in the undergraduate level does not encourage students to analyze critically what they read. She also told me that unless one enrolled in specific subjects on contemporary Filipino literature, a student would not get acquainted with them if he or she were simply to take a general undergraduate course at the university. But an undergraduate student will certainly find herself enrolled in courses on contemporary American literature with no effort on her part at all. She also felt that a more inspired teaching of Filipino literature would enrich the

students' understanding of their own identity as Filipinos. It also could greatly hasten the development of a Filipino national identity.

#### Summation

Many Filipinos do not own up to being Filipinos. Bateria traces this behavior to what she believes to be the many negative connotations attached to Filipino.

There is more of American literature that Filipino students encounter in Philippine schools and universities than Filipino literature. The teaching of more Filipino literature in schools, in Bateria's opinion will help in the healthy development of a national identity.

#### Maharlika S. Alonto

Maharlika S. Alonto identifies herself as a Muslim Filipino. Her father is a Muslim from Marawi City in Lanao, but her mother is a non-Muslim Ilongga from Bacolod City in Negros Occidental. Although she practices Islam, Alonto had the good fortune of growing up in two socio-religious contexts. She spent equal time growing up in the predominantly Muslim Marawi City with her paternal family, and went to school in nearby Iligan City. Iligan City is a very cosmopolitan area where Muslim and Christian Filipinos mingle easily with each other. She told me that her father raised her to live life according to the Islamic tradition minus the confining restrictions of religious fundamentalism. She learned of, and lived an Islamic life under the guidance of her paternal family, but was socialized in the cosmopolitan world. This was so because Alonto went to private educational institutions for her elementary grades and high school. In the Philippines, private schools provide higher standard of education in the grade and high school levels than the public schools. This carries over to the college and

postgraduate levels with the exceptions of the University of the Philippines system and a few other state universities. Having a more or less balanced exposure to the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds in the Philippines without being ensnared by the fanatical fundamentalists of either of the religious divide, Alonto felt that she was capable of elucidating on the conflict between the Muslim minority and the Catholic majority.

“When I was a child, many of my cousins from Marawi would ask me if I was a Filipino, I would always answer yes,” Alonto told me. “But they would always tell me, ‘No, you are a Moro.’” In this regard, Alonto said that all along she understood a Moro to be a Muslim Filipino. But most of her Muslim cousins would not hear of it. Her cousins’ resistance to identifying with the larger Filipino nation was because they lived in a very economically depressed area. In that particular area, and others similar to it, the people there “live in a very tight cultural context [where everything is] based on being Muslim and being Maranao.” Moreover, her cousins have a constant awareness of the fact that the Philippines is very Catholic, and the central government has neglected them in more ways than one. There are still many areas where electric power and water supplies are absent. Alonto felt that the public schools are sub-standard, where books used are practically falling apart. The Filipino history taught to students do not include the story of the Moros who unceasingly resisted colonization by Spain and the United States of America. School superintendents and supervisors, Alonto claims, do not care about the welfare of the students. All that they seem to concern themselves about are their perks and privileges. Amid dilapidated classrooms, they would build comfortable air conditioned offices instead of purchasing school supplies. Hence, Muslim families would rather send their children to a *madrassa* where their children would at least learn the

Qur'an and the Arabic language. Moreover, should their children excel in their studies, and master the Arabic language, they could earn a scholarship to one of the Islamic centers in Saudi Arabia and rise above the abject poverty where they are mired in.

Alonto informed me that she had relatives, like his uncle Abulkair who were formerly members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). In discussing the Moro issues with her brother, she said that the secession issue has been reduced to issues of money, politics, and power. She then interjected that nobody says anything about public service anymore. Ultimately, if the secession movement succeeds, Alonto poses the question "Who will lead us?" If a Maranao would lead, the Tausugs would object. If a Tausug would lead the Maranaos and Maguindanaos would object, etc. In other words, the different Moro tribes in Mindanao are as splintered as the *Lumad* tribes in the Cordilleras where they still have their occasional tribal wars, as intimated to me by Tangilag in an earlier conversation.

Among Catholic Filipinos, one would hear them say that the Moros cannot be trusted. Alonto on the other hand tells me that the Moros would say that the Catholic Christians cannot be trusted (*hindi mapagkakatiwalaan*). And yet, according to Alonto, Islam has taught that Christians are also people of the book and members of the family of Abraham, and that Muslims have to live with them in unity.

Alonto was raised and lived as a Muslim. She went to study in private schools among Christians. This gave her the chance to get to know her Catholic classmates in the same manner that her Catholic classmates got to know their Muslim classmates. And from what she told me, her Catholic friends were even very protective of her. Whenever they would be in a social gathering, her Catholic classmates would make sure that the

food served to Alonto was free of pork and alcohol. They made sure that everything served her was *halal*. This has encouraged me to presume that public education can certainly play a major role in ameliorating conflict among the various peoples in the Philippines.

#### Summation

The absence of opportunities and spaces where Muslim and Christian Filipinos can safely socialize is a major obstacle toward bridging the divide between these culturally distinct groups of countrymen. Elementary public schools could provide such space. But as Alonto describes it, these public schools are so badly managed or administered, textbooks and teaching materials ill supplied that Muslim families would rather send their children, particularly the males to *madrassa*. She also contends that the Moro secessionist movement has been reduced to issues of money, politics, and power. There also exist flagrant conflicts that stem from tribalism, and political loyalties among the Filipino Islamic peoples.

#### Josefina Padilla-Rufino

Josefina Padilla-Rufino comes from a very prominent political family. Her father was Ambrosia Padilla, a legal luminary, and a member of the Philippine senate who also served as Senate president. Her mother, Lily de las Alas was one of the stars of Manila society, renowned for her graciousness and beauty. Josie, as friends called her, had always led a very sheltered life. Married and comfortably settled, I found it hard to believe that she was in the front row of the protest march in Makati against the Marcos regime on August 16, 1982. Nevertheless, indeed she was there, and have since that time been an advocate for social justice and ethics in the practice of business and politics.

Today, she heads a major health insurance organization in the Philippines, and it was at her office where we had our conversation in an early August afternoon

Padilla-Rufino is one among many Filipinos who still hopes that Filipino as a national language can truly be developed to unite the various ethno-linguistic groups that comprise the people of the Philippines. Although she traces her linguistics roots to the Tagalog province of Batangas, Padilla-Rufino thinks that teaching schoolchildren the stilted formalistic Tagalog language is impractical, and would not succeed in becoming a vehicle for national unity. She recalls that as a child, she enjoyed reading *Liwayway* and *Pilipino Komiks*, a weekly magazine and comic book both written in what many referred to as conversational Tagalog, the kind spoken in the urban centers like Manila. This was, and still is the *lingua franca* of not just the urban masses, but just about anybody who would want to communicate—say a person who speaks Cebuano, and would like to communicate with one who speaks Ibanag, would attempt to make the contact in conversational Tagalog.

Even mere casual observation would show why schoolchildren, as Padilla-Rufino has noticed from her own children, resented being taught what I refer to as formal Tagalog, what with its risible verbal concatenations such as *salumpuwit*. A person without any background on the Tagalog language can catch the humor impregnating the word *salumpuwit*, thus: *salo*, a verb, means to catch; *puwit*, a noun, refers to the *gluteus maximus*, posterior, or butt. In other words, a *salumpuwit* is a butt-catcher. In conversational Tagalog, people would merely say *silya* when referring to a chair, a linguistic appropriation from the Spanish word for chair, which is *silla*. Between *silya*

and salumpuwit, to many the choice is obvious. As to formal Tagalog words that refer to undergarments, I respectfully decline to even consider going there.

Padilla-Rufino also told me about a recent hearing of the Feliciano Commission on the mutiny staged in Makati City, Philippines on July 27, 2003. In that hearing, the mutineers, and their leaders Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes and Army Capt. Milo Maestrecampo were ordered to testify in the English language. In other words, they were not allowed to speak in their own national language. She voiced out her query that “while [the mutineers] should not be forced to speak in Tagalog, why then were they all forced to speak in English?” Some of the soldiers who were more comfortable in Tagalog, and who originally testified in that language were admonished to testify in English. This incident clearly exposed the dearth, if not absence of any sense of national identity on the part of the government commissioners. With Philippine government officials like these, it is improbable that a Philippine national language as a vehicle for national unity will develop any time soon. Not when officials and agents of the Philippine government itself would mandate the use of the language of a former colonizer as the medium through which they discuss national issues of justice.

The Philippines does not have zoning laws as their former North American governors have in their home country. But this was no excuse for what happened a few months ago. Padilla-Rufino told me there was an old church in Batangas built during the Spanish era. This church was set on a spacious real estate, fronting the municipal hall, as most towns established during the Spanish colonial era were laid out. The present parish priest, for reasons known only to him, leased a piece of the church property to a McDonald franchisee. Before long, there stood within the churchyard this golden arch of

~~McDonald~~ staring eye-to-eye at the crucifix atop the dome of a centuries-old ~~Catholic~~ church, a vivid example of what happens when good judgment falls prey to the glitter of gold. Perhaps this can simply be blamed on the unrelenting hegemonic takeover of post-modernism.

Padilla-Rufino remarked that in her opinion the last remaining historical monuments from Spanish Philippines are the churches. Prior to the time when Golden Arches leased spaces within churchyards, she recalled that the Philippines “also passed through a stage when parish priests sold not only antique statues and images of the saints domiciled in their churches to collectors, but also sacred vessels of silver and gold. Many of these merchant priests also did away with the ancient stones that walled their churches and replaced them with bricks or concrete hollow blocks, perhaps driven by a desire to modernize. Perhaps this would have been the appropriate time to remind these parish priests of Pius X’s condemnation of modernism in his 1907 *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. This modernization run amok, (or is it greed unfettered?) was abetted by financial well-heeled so-called antique collectors. Leading the pack was Imelda Marcos.

Politicians too were as insensitive to the value of historical and cultural relics and monuments. The present mayor of the city of Manila Lito Atienza, against conservators’ opposition tore down the Jai-Alai building, the only remaining example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century art deco architecture in the Philippines. “A new spanking modern building will replace it,” Padilla-Rufino confirms.

“You know,” she called my attention, “what unify Filipinos for the moment are national issues, corruption for example. Corruption cuts through all social classes from north to south of the country, and we are all concerned.” I asked her if she felt that now

would be the right time to rekindle the discourse on the Rizalian concept of the nation as a moral community, a national community founded on ethical principles of justice and the common good (Quibuyen 1999:162,171). “Yes,” she responded, “because if we are to unite our unity should be based on common values. We’ve got to get together on what we consider to be good, and moral, and ethical.” She then returned the conversation to the young military officers who, together with their followers staged the July 17, 2003 mutiny.

“What bothers me,” Padilla-Rufino revealed “is that the terms agreed upon between the government representative and the mutineers for the latter’s surrender were not followed. First of all, the principals of the mutiny, the five young officers and the government representative Ambassador Roy Cimatu who himself was a former military officer have agreed on the terms of the mutineers’ surrender. First, the five officers will be brought before a military court martial, and only a military court martial. Second, all the 300 enlisted men will be allowed to return to barracks with no charges filed against the enlisted personnel. But the government did not fulfill their part of the bargain. Charges were filed against the mutineers not only in the military court of justice, but also in the civil courts.” “But that is not all.” She then proceeded to tell me about a woman who agreed to step up as a witness and expose corruption in a certain government agency. This young woman was told to go the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) of the Philippine Justice Department and formally make her statement to the NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco This she did, and present at this event was the President of the Philippines Gloria M. Arroyo. This young woman was made to understand that after making her formal report to the NBI Director, she would be praised for performing her

civic duties, and presented to the President for commendation before a bevy of broadcast and print media representatives. But what happened was this “whistle blower” ended up being presented by the NBI Director to Philippine President Arroyo as one of the suspects. “What bothers me is that even after the whole thing has been sorted out, after NBI Director Wycoco has come to realize the blunder he committed, he did not even apologize to the young woman he wronged. It bothers me that the Director of the NBI could not admit that he made a mistake, and it bothers me that the President of the Philippines did not have the grace to apologize for the injustice done to the young woman.” Here, Padilla-Rufino asserted her belief that a public leader is a servant of the people. She also observed that many of the Filipino political leaders are not only arrogant. They exercise power abusively. Worse still, Padilla-Rufino said that by their actions or inactions, Philippine political and government leaders send the message to the people that they, the leaders of the country, do not really want to change anything. “So do not try to be a whistle blower. Do not try to expose government corruption.” In short, the government and political leaders--leave them alone, in their corruption. And the people--leave them in their misery.

#### Summation

The official development of a national language has been at best halting because of national language authorities who aspire towards a certain linguistic conservatism nourished mainly by the Tagalog language. Nevertheless, a national *lingua franca* develops with much aid from broadcast/print media, and the movies.

Filipinos in general, inclusive of parish priests and high government officials have neither regard nor understanding for the need to preserve historical traces and

monuments. City mayors would just as soon demolish and replace an architectural landmark. Parish priests would just as soon yield to the postmodern commodification—rent out a good portion of the churchyard to a hamburger franchisee.

She laments that many national leaders do not live up to the promises they make, and Padilla-Rufino is not referring to campaign promises, but to contractual covenants that are of public knowledge. She deplores the arrogance of national leaders who are too proud to admit error even if that error was committed “live on national TV” at the expense of an upright citizen. Padilla-Rufino believes that if Filipinos are to ever unite, their unity should be based on common values, on what they all consider and commonly accept as good, moral, and ethical.

Perla Rizalina M. Tayko

Pearl Tayko told me that she came across a phrase describing Filipinos as *inventive sociables* (Rosen et al: 2000:324). She understood an inventive sociable person to mean one who can “easily connect, can easily adapt, can easily flex, and can easily function” in another culture. She cites the experiences of Filipinos who worked in the American naval base in Subic Bay at Olongapo, Zambales, and the Clark airbase in Angeles City, Pampanga. Whenever these Filipinos were inside the American bases, they easily adapted and observed the rules much like the Americans do. But once they were outside of the bases, they reverted to behaving according to local norms. By this, I understood her to mean that a Filipino can easily adapt to, and function in another (non-Filipino) culture. This brought to my mind other questions. Does this show the Filipino as a social chameleon? That the Filipinos’ facile behavioral adaptation to another culture is merely a coping or survival mechanism while in a social environment hostile to the alien,

and that the alien remains *alien* in the foreign environment because the behavioral change is merely temporary, a for-the-meantime phenomenon? Is this ability of the Filipino to be an inventive sociable honed through constant practice in an attempt to be on the good side of their colonial masters, be they Spaniards, Anglo-Americans, or Japanese?

Tayko concurs with the eminent psychologist Jaime Bulatao, S.J. that Filipinos are also caught in what the latter refers to as “split-level Christianity.” It is obvious that she refers here to the lowland Christianized Filipinos, and not the Muslim and *Lumad* brothers and sisters. These lowland Christianized Filipinos have not been able to reconcile the contradiction of their innate spirituality and their materialism. Reframed, this divide lends credence to the suspicion that the Catholic Filipino is not only disconnected from Filipino history, but misunderstands if not *mis*-practices his or her religion. Tayko confided to me her suspicion that perhaps many Catholic Filipinos misunderstand, and therefore misuse the sacrament of confession. A person who regularly does whatever it takes, even if the means were sinful, to make money from Monday to Friday, go to confession on Saturday, then receive Holy Communion during Sunday mass is not deserving of absolution from his sin. Absolution of one’s sin, if I recall correctly, is preconditioned on the person being truly sorry for having committed the sin. Moreover, the person shall sincerely attempt to amend his life, and stop committing the same sin. The Church Fathers, in all probability did not see the sacrament of confession as a spiritual prophylactic procedure for the benefit of incorrigible habitual sinners.

Unveiled by Bulatao, this is the split-level Christianity that afflicts Filipinos, which Tayko and many others decry. This is an example that illustrates Tayko’s

contention that many Filipinos, majority of whom are Roman Catholics, have not been able to reconcile the contradiction between the practice of their religion, and the satisfaction of their materialistic desires.

In Tayko's assessment, no Filipino national leader has yet been successful in reconciling the Filipino existential experience with Filipino history. No one, not Roxas, not Magsaysay, not Marcos, not Aquino. Not even today's Arroyo who, according to Tayko's standard has not truly practiced leadership. Neither has Arroyo been able to reconcile the *what is* of the present Filipino existential experience with the *what was* of Filipino history. Always, the great divide between what the *masa* understood as the purpose of the Philippine Revolution of 1896--which was for equality and the improvement of the living condition of the Filipinos--versus class-based self-interest, has always loomed large and unbreachable since the country's colonization by the United States of America.

"We are an archipelagic nation," Tayko continued. "We are islands that have to connect with the other islands, all 7,000 plus of them. We have been unmindful of the fact that our archipelagic nation is connected by water. Our Navy and Coast Guard are undeveloped. And so is our maritime industry. Our children are not even taught how to swim competently despite the fact that it is water that connects us. Water is what unites our archipelagic nation. It does not divide us. And yet, our policies and our national plans do not give these matters due importance.

When asked if she was in agreement with the notion that the Filipino nation should be grounded, structured, and developed as an ethical community, Tayko responded, "Yes, absolutely, I agree with that." "Water," she proceeded "being the

element that connects the Philippine islands, should symbolically be seen as the ethics that connect us. By ethics I mean the upholding and practice of what we commonly accept as good, and the abstention from doing what we commonly regard as evil. An ethics applicable not just to the great mass of common people, but also applicable to the elite class.” Tayko clarifies further that when she says ethics, she means the ability of a person or a leader to be able to say forthrightly “what is good for me is good for everyone else. What is good for me is good for the entire nation. Thus, this ethnically diverse nation shall move towards ethical unity.” After a pause, she said that “if this can be articulated in our school curriculum, we can be rid of our old way, unethical and self-destructive.” I asked her what she meant by “old way.” In response, she used the example of an employee who looks at his job only as a job and nothing else. So if his boss were to tell him to do something that is not ethical, something illegal like padding an expense voucher, the employee will do as directed. As far as the employee is concerned, although he knows that what he is being asked to do is wrong, he will do it nevertheless because he is just following orders. The employee, according to Tayko “rationalizes his action with the thought that although he is not in agreement with what his boss asks him to do, he complies because he was given an order by his boss.” “Moreover,” Tayko continues, “the employee believes that he is merely protecting his and his family’s livelihood.” In other words, thinking ethically but acting unethically does not an ethical person make. There should be no dichotomy between intention and action.

#### *Summation*

Tayko finds the majority of the Filipinos who are the lowland Christianized population caught in what Bulatao refers to as “split-level Christianity.” The Filipino

present is disconnected from Filipino history. No Filipino national leader has succeeded in reconciling the Filipino existential experience with Filipino history. There is always in the background the bifurcated understanding of the purpose of the Philippine Revolution of 1896. To the *masa*, the revolution was waged for equality and the improvement of the living conditions of the people. To the *ilustrados*, they co-opted the revolution of the Filipino *madla* (commoner) to serve their upper class-based interests.

Although the Philippines is a nation of more than 7,000 islands, she faults government and policy makers for being “unmindful of the fact that [the] nation is connected by water,” resulting in an underdeveloped navy and maritime industry. Water is what unites the Filipino nation. She agrees that the Filipino nation should be grounded, structured, and developed as an ethical community, saying, “Ethics is the water that should connect us.”

#### F. Sionil Jose

I first met Frankie Sionil Jose in the early 1960s. At that time, he was editor of the Saturday Mirror magazine, a weekend supplement of the daily Manila afternoon paper, the Daily Mirror. Through the many years since then, I have had many memorable conversations with him. I went to visit him at his bookstore. I asked Sionil Jose why the articulation of Rizal’s ideals seem to have taken a different turn after Aguinaldo, having had Bonifacio, the *Supremo* of the 1896 Revolution against Spain executed, took over the fight for independence. Sionil Jose began his response saying that Aguinaldo and most of the members of his immediate group from the province of Cavite were property owners. They belonged to the native elite. They were landowners. Bonifacio, although he was a *mestizo* and was not a plebeian as claimed by some historians was really for the *masa*.

“Under Bonifacio, one of the programs of the *Katipunan* once the revolution succeeded was to initiate agrarian reform,” says Sionil Jose. “Aguinaldo and his Cavite *Katipuneros*,” Sionil Jose continues, “did not want that because they were themselves landlords. One must remember that even in those times, landlordism was already rampant. The rift between Bonifacio and Aguinaldo was not just about leadership. It was also about ideology. As I have been saying, had the Philippine revolution succeeded, had the Americans not occupied the Philippines, there would have been a civil war between the *masa* and the Aguinaldo regime within ten years. But on the other hand, Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil believed that civil war would have happened within a year’s time.”

“But there are no ifs in history,” observes Sionil Jose. “The Americans came. They also did not institute land reform because they had to [govern and] work with the elites for their own reasons.” After a pause, he looked at me and said, “I have been waiting for a revolution for so long, and I don’t see it coming.”

Since the arrival of the Spaniards, property owners have taken various forms – from that of the Spanish *encomenderos* and friar landowners, to that of the mestizo and native *hacenderos*. These landlords in various guises have long lived comfortably on the sufferance of the peasants, *kasama*, and *sakadas*. Much of what has fueled the many peasant rebellions throughout Philippine history has been social reforms in the agrarian sector of society. After suffering centuries of abuse in one form or another, those who toil and till the land tend to despair for any improvement in their lot. People who have lost all hope and in despair have nothing to lose but a life of anguish and pain. The revolution that Sionil Jose has long been waiting for does not necessarily have to come by way of violence and warfare, as they in fact have been violent. The question is this: can

revolutionary change in the Philippines during these first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century come about without violence? Excepting the Filipino elite, are the rest of the people of the country doomed to look for a better life as overseas contract workers in a foreign country?

Sionil Jose intimated to me that in March 2003, he was with a group of academics from the University of the Philippines. Many of them were former political activists, socialists, and communists. He told me that one of his complaints directed at these people is this: "If leaning on the Americans is bad, is leaning on the Chinese good? Why...lean on Mao?" "Did you think that if the communists won, it would be different?" Sionil Jose queried. "No, you will be just like these [present-day] leaders." Sionil Jose may or may not have been aware of this, but in the second half of the 1980s, the Maoist doctrine exhibited one of its fatal flaws when the Communist Part of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) purged their membership of suspected deep penetration agents (DPAs). Here is part of what Robert Francis Garcia (1999: vii) wrote:

Throughout the mid-1980s, the CPP [Communist Party of the Philippines] leadership conducted a series of executions in Southern Tagalog, Mindanao, the Cordilleras, and even Manila and other urban centers in an attempt to ferret out and eliminate suspected military agents who had successfully infiltrated the movement. The purges came at the most unusual and ironic of times for they were launched when the political situation was clearly in favor of the revolution.

I am reminded of someone who cautioned against the wholehearted acceptance of foreign social theories without first understanding them thoroughly, and making certain that they can be appropriated locally. I find that there is a very close relationship between an imported foreign ideology that would flourish in a country like the Philippines and what

was said earlier in this study about governments. Successful governments are those that historically evolved with the involvement of the people governed. The present structure of the Philippine government in spite of having gone through a number of changes is still the same colonial relic constructed by the United States of America to effectively govern the Philippines as a colony

This seeming reliance on imported social theories without due interpretation before application in the Gadamerian sense—is there a possibility that this is what happened to the CPP-NPA? Is the CPP-NPA the true heir to the unfinished revolution of 1896? Do Filipinos of today still have the ability for some “original” thinking? Original thinking, not in the prototypical *ur*-sense, but in terms of development of theoretical concept-contents inspired by, and grounded in local existential realities. Like the *La Liga Filipina*, short-lived and ill fated though it was. Like the *Katipunan*. Like the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*.

Sionil Jose decries the absence of a Filipino national vision. “There is no vision,” he said, “because there’s also no sense of nation. There’s no sense of nation because there’s no sense of identity.” He paused for a few seconds as though attempting to decelerate his speeding thoughts then began to talk as though in reverie. He said, “When you talk about identity, it’s not something that you can divorce or detach from industry. They are interconnected. And these g...d d...d politicians, they cannot understand that!” He saw this correlation between identity and economic development from his observation of the South Korean economic development. He told me that he knew “Korea in 1953 when it was devastated.” “You know, in those days,” he reminisced, “those mountains all the way from Seoul to Pusan, there was not a tree. The mountains were bare. All you saw

were rocks. Today, all those mountains are covered with trees, and there is not a bare spot on them.” Then I recalled, Sionil Jose told me earlier that the Philippines should have continued to develop its maritime industry. In the mid 1950s, when he was with the Manila Times, he spoke with the incumbent President of the Philippines Elpidio Quirino, attempting to convince the country’s chief executive to develop the maritime industry of the Philippines. Sionil Jose reminded the President that the country has a seafaring tradition; that the best ocean sailing ships—the galleons of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century—were built in the shipyards of Cavite, Pangasinan, and Bicol. And because the hulls of the Philippine manufactured galleons were made of molávè, a local hardwood so strong and sturdy, the canon balls of the British buccaneers would bounce off, leaving the galleons undamaged. Sionil Jose told me that President Quirino agreed with him, and said, “Yes, Sionil, we really have to have a shipping industry.” Then almost in a whisper, “Nothing happened,” Sionil Jose said. Today, there is hardly a cargo vessel, or a cruise ship that does not have a Filipino hand on board.

What Filipinos must realize with regards to the South Korean economic success story is that, as Ekbladh (2004:19) says “the success would not have been possible without immense effort by the South Korean people themselves. Their talents and fierce work ethic were the glue that held everything together.” In a speech Sionil Jose delivered before a gathering of preferred clients of a private Philippine bank sometime September of 2002, he said “after the Korean War in 1953,” South Korea was battered, “but look at Korea now.” In his speech, Sionil Jose bluntly says “We are poor because our people are lazy. I pass by a slum area every morning [and I see] dozens of adults do nothing but idle,

gossip and drink.” And if what he sees everyday is what poor Filipinos do daily, then indeed the Filipino “culture of poverty” as Sionil Jose claims “is self-perpetuating.”

One can say that by implication one’s identity is derived from one’s job or work. The majority of the Filipinos see themselves as poor jobless people. And until the practice of what Sionil Jose refers to as the culture of poverty is bled out of their day-to-day existence, economic progress is not in their future.

#### Summation

The present socio-economic problems of the Philippines find their historical roots in Spanish colonialism. Sionil Jose informs that one of the programs of the Katipunan under Bonifacio was to initiate agrarian reform once the revolution succeeded. Aguinaldo who took over the leadership of the revolution after he had Bonifacio executed was himself a landlord, as were his Cavite *Katipuneros*.

Sionil Jose does not see much difference between the present group of people that run the government from those who still fight for their communist cause. He seems to think that whatever ideology they espouse will still be infected by the corruption and corruptive practices woven in Filipino culture.

Arnold M. Azurin

Azurin and I met the night before in a favorite Friday night watering hole of campus residents where, at that particular evening, a jazz quartet composed of university College of Music professors were performing. But he and I, in the company of mutual friends were at that time more interested in listening to the music and visiting with friends, rather than have a conversation on Filipino identity. So we decided to meet the next day at an enchanting restaurant tucked away in a quiet corner of the vast campus of

the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. Almost straightaway, Arnold told me that in one of his essays in his book *Reinventing the Filipino*, he immediately made known his opposition to the “very particular meaning of Filipino” espoused by “the generation of scholars and intellectuals ahead of us,” particularly by Sionil Jose and Renato Constantino. Azurin claims, “they have a very particular meaning of Filipino.” Sionil Jose, Constantino and others, according to Azurin, locate Filipino society in the coastal, cosmopolitan areas. Azurin understands that as far as this particular view of “Filipino society is concerned, [a Filipino is educated in the Western sense] so that if you have not gone to matriculated education up to college,” you will be referred to as “a Mangyan if you are from Mindoro,” or “an Igorot if you are from the Cordillera mountains.” But if the person from the Cordilleras were a lawyer, then he would no longer be referred to as an Igorot. He will be addressed with the honorific title of “Attorney.” His being from “the Igorot land is erased by the fact that he has been Filipinized, homogenized by the western Christian orientation of the universities, and that he also speaks English.” “Small wonder, [Carlos P.] Romulo could tell his foreign audience that the Igorots were not Filipinos, when asked in the sixties about the [Igorot] highlanders’ tradition of feasting on dog meat” (Azurin 1995:76). Corollary to Romulo’s aspersion directed at Igorots, Azurin (1995:77) cites that “even Ilocano-born novelist F. Sionil Jose, in his novel *Poon* could put words into the mouth of Don Jacinto, a friend of Apolinario Mabini, as he sent off a courier to sneak through the American lines and bring a note to General Aguinaldo then hiding in some Cordillera ridges: ‘Eustaquio, you are no longer Ilokano. You are Filipino.’” Elucidating further Azurin (1995:77) wrote:

A closer reading of [Sionil Jose’s] novel would show that the author’s reference point in using the term *Filipino* is patriotism, but pray tell, is

this antithetical to being an *Ilokano*? It has been exactly and painfully this erasure of ethnicity, whether upland or lowland, in order to become a full-fledged *Filipino* or a nationalist that has made such colonial-vintage sense of nationhood quite callously chauvinistic because it is anti-cultural, and thus rife for the label of “internal colonialism.”

During our mid-afternoon conversation, Azurin had occasion to return to what Romulo said, and meant when the latter declared that Igorots were not Filipinos.

“Romulo meant,” Azurin told me “that the Igorots were not Filipinos in that they were not lowland, Christian, English-speaking, university graduates. And it is really the mindset of Romulo’s generation, and Romulo’s generation were American educated.”

The intention for the development of a Filipino national language was to bring about a linguistic bonding among the various ethnic groups that populate the Philippines. To an extent, this was accomplished by the Indonesians and Malaysians with their *Bahasa*, to such an extent that almost all Indonesians from whatever ethnic group they may come from, and similarly the Malaysians, can communicate with each other in *Bahasa*. Moreover, Indonesians and Malaysians communicate with each other also in *Bahasa*. Unfortunately for the Philippines, the development of the Filipino language, instead of going full gallop is reined in almost to a crawl because the group entrusted with the development of the Filipino national language are primarily Tagalogs. “In other words,” Azurin charged during our conversation that these group “appointed themselves as the keepers of the gate of purity” of the national language which is Tagalog language-based because they are Tagalogs.” Azurin clearly said “What I am saying is that the development of Filipino as the national language has been hamstrung by the Tagalog [cultural] Mafia [because] they wanted to keep it their own preserve [thus] they also have more access to cultural funds and cultural projects.” Azurin further decries the Tagalog

[cultural] Mafia's "appropriation of nationhood and nationhood by the *Tagalistas*. This is what defeats the development of a *lingua franca* that would have been our [linguistic] bonding, a language open to all of us."

"I am not anti-Tagalog," Azurin averred, "and we will always have gatekeepers because we are a nation, and a nation will always have bureaucracies... for health, for education, for culture." "Not only do we need enlightened gatekeepers, but we must have light at the gate itself, for without light at the gate, those of us outside the bureaucracy will not see what the bureaucrats, nor know what they are up to. *In nuce*, what Azurin said is that the true development of a Filipino national language can be one of the sources of the bonding of the Filipinos. But it has to be allowed to develop unhampered by the local cultural mafia.

The existence of a cultural Mafia notwithstanding, Azurin told me that when he was in Bangkok weeks before our August 23 afternoon conversation, "I got so angry when I learned from *The Inquirer* on the internet that the President [Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo] has handed down a presidential directive making English the medium of instruction in general." It was only a day before when I heard the same sentiment on the same subject matter voiced in despair by Pearl Tayko, and it would be only a matter of three days when Celeste Gonzalez would echo the same dispiritedly.

As far as the Moro secessionist movement is concerned, Azurin labels it as "demonic pretensions." He does not question the right of the Bangsa Moro people in using *Bangsa Moro* towards self empowerment, especially in the context of the historical relationship of the center of government towards the peripheries, towards the regional." What he questions are the Bangsa Moro leaders. Azurin claims that many Muslim

Filipinos hold high Philippine government positions, but as soon as one is fired, say for corruption, immediately they again become members of the dissident secessionist movement. These particular Muslim Filipinos straddle the political fence. But Azurin is quick to add that he is only referring to a number of very manipulative Muslim Filipinos.

#### Summation

Azurin believes that a Filipino national language can bring about a linguistic bonding among the multi-lingual people of the Philippines. He accuses the Tagalog cultural mafia for “defeating the development of a lingua franca” that would have promoted more quickly the linguistic bonding of the Filipinos.

With regard to the Muslim secessionist movement, Azurin believes that the personal interest of a handful of very manipulative Muslim Filipino political leaders is what fuels it.

#### Conrad de Quiros

Conrad de Quiros observed that Filipinos in general make an effort to evade the recollection of their painful historical past. His personal experience as a student has led him to believe that a mythical version of the past was employed to supplant Philippine history. Mythical as fictionalized half-truths in support of an American colonial agenda, which he thinks is much of what is taught as Philippine history even as late as today. “I say that from experience,” he said.

Born in 1951, Conrad grew up in Naga City 234 miles south of Manila. In what he referred to as his growing up years, he recalled those to be the time when much of what he saw in the local cinema houses were Hollywood-produced World War II movies where the Americans were always heroic, always victorious. His exposure to these

movies, among other American media of information and entertainment, is what formed his understanding of America and Americans relative to his understanding of Philippines and Filipinos. “When I was in grade school, we were never taught [Philippine] history,” de Quiros recalled. “Nonetheless a teacher told us that there was once a war waged by the Americans against the Filipinos.” Continuing his narration, de Quiros said:

We were incredulous, and would not believe the teacher, much less believe that such a war between the Americans and Filipinos could even happen. In discussions and conversations among classmates, we came to conclude that yes, it was possible that such a war could have happened, but it must have been the fault of the Filipinos that such a war was waged! We had that fundamental belief in the goodness of the United States, the goodness of the Americans made indelible in our minds. This is what made it difficult for us to believe that there could have been a war between the Filipinos and Americans. And if such a war did happen, it must have been the fault of the Filipinos.

“Much of this attitude,” de Quiros lamented “was propped up by our parents’ and elders’ own attitudes and beliefs about Americans. Years after the end of World War II, my parents still kept on talking about the so-called liberation of the Philippines from the Japanese as though it was a moment of Parousial significance. Filipinos equated Douglas MacArthur’s return to the Philippines to no less than what Moses did in leading his people out of the wilderness. On the other hand, if one looked at what really happened dispassionately MacArthur retreated from the Japanese, and the Americans who were left behind, soldiers and civilians alike, were protected, sheltered, and hidden from the Japanese by Filipinos, at the risk of forfeiting their own lives. Moreover, countless Filipinos actually gave up their lives and assets during those war years building a potent pro-American guerilla movement against the Japanese.” Filipinos who were caught by the *kempeitai* (Japanese military police), some even merely suspected of assisting Americans were executed.

On the evening of March 11, 1942 General Douglas MacArthur fled to Australia with his family and staff. This was before the defeat of the American forces in the Philippines. The fall of the Filipino-American forces in the Bataan Peninsula and the surrender of the island-fortress Corregidor in Manila Bay by Brig. Gen. Jonathan Wainright on May 7, 1942 sealed this American defeat. For three years thereafter, the Philippines suffered a most brutal occupation by the Japanese Imperial Army that buttressed a civilian government led by the same Filipino politicians earlier tutored in governance by their now absent American colonizers. This time, these Filipino politicians were under the tutelage and watchful eye of the Rising Sun.

Unlike people from other Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Korea, de Quiros laments that Filipinos have not developed, or perhaps to a lesser degree of culpability have lost the sense for their past, the capability for historical recollection. He cites the Korean furor a few years ago over the Japanese attempt to ameliorate the historical rendition of the brutality of their colonization of Korea in the history books used in Japanese schools. De Quiros compares it to the absence of any such reaction to the many distortions devised and imbedded in Philippine history by previous colonial governments through their ideologically skewed educational policies, historical falsifications that still populate Filipino narratives. In reference to recent Philippine history in World War II, F. Sionil Jose (2001:319) notes, "For thousands of Filipinos today, the grim memories of the Japanese Occupation are now quite forgotten... because many of us don't value the past as other peoples in our part of the world do."

Have the Filipinos truly lost the sense for their past, forfeited their capability for historical recollection? Alternatively, have they been victimized by a successful gambit

that occluded, then hid their history, and quickly replaced by one that speeded up their transformation into ideal colonial subjects? “From the other end,” de Quiros opined, “colonial rulers would want the memory of the conquered people’s past, the past that resisted conquest and colonization, the past that fought for freedom and self-governance to be forgotten.” “Otherwise” de Quiros concluded, “the colonizers can’t rule peacefully.” De Quiros reminded me that a decade after 1910 which was marked by the ascendancy of American control of the Philippines and its people, there was a systematic effort to erase from the memory of the Filipinos their revolutionary past when they fought for freedom and independence from Spain. Reckoned from 1910, this revolution was a very recent Filipino historical milestone, barely fifteen years from the start of the 1896 revolution led by Andres Bonifacio against Spain, and barely three years from 1898, the year the United States seized the nation aborning, and stopped the completion of its birth. *Pace* Quibuyen, the United States aborted the birth of the Filipino nation in 1898. These ten years enumerated from 1910 were aptly referred to by many, Teodoro Agoncillo the Filipino historian among them as the era of suppressed nationalism. This systematic suppression of Filipino nationalism by the US colonial government was marked by a number of prohibitions, two of them being the prohibition of the display of the Filipino flag, and the prohibition and censoring of any mention of the revolution against Spain in any manner or media.

#### Summation

Filipinos do not seem to care much about their history especially when compared with the people of South Korea. De Quiros recalls, as mentioned above that the South Koreans strongly objected to the Japanese attempt to rewrite and ameliorate the narrative

on the brutal Japanese occupation of Korea in Japanese schoolbooks. Filipino history was a subject never taught to de Quiros when he was in grade school. Much of what passed as history particularly of the American colonial period has been mythicized. This was so because, as de Quiros explained, the American neocolonizers who established the present Philippine school system wanted “the memory of the conquered [Filipino] people’s past, the past that resisted conquest and colonization, the past that fought for freedom and self governance to be forgotten.” The Americans without question succeeded in winning the hearts and minds of the Filipinos.

Ma. Celeste T. Gonzalez

Ma. Celeste T. Gonzalez (1991: 135) wrote that:

Due to the crisis the Philippines as a nation is going through there were issues... identified... that curriculum should address. [C]urriculum [should] focus on (1) the Filipino’s own history and how it has affected him, (2) the improvement of basic and scientific skills within the Filipino’s cultural environment, and (3) developing the Filipino’s intellectual, creative, and productive talents.

In my conversation with Dr. Gonzalez in her office at the Ateneo de Manila University, I asked her if anything has been done to address the curriculum issues she brought up in her 1991 dissertation, particularly the issue on Filipino history and on how history has affected the Filipino. It was only sometime in 1999 Gonzalez said, when, as Secretary of Education, Raul Roco “undertook a major curriculum design, revamp[ed]... the whole curriculum, and... [called] it the ‘Revised Basic Education Curriculum of 2002’.” Roco was appointed Secretary of Education by Gloria M. Arroyo after she replaced Joseph Ejercito Estrada as Philippine President. Gonzalez informed me that in his effort to revise the basic curriculum in Philippine education, Roco succeeded in securing involvement across Philippine society. This project received input

from both the private and public sectors of society, from educators, economists, businessmen, and others.

More students are enrolled in the public school system than there are in the private school system. Gonzalez pointed out that ninety percent of grade school children, and sixty percent of high school students are in the public school system. These figures indicate that only ten percent of the graders, and forty percent of the high school students are enrolled in mostly Department of Education accredited private educational institutions.

One of the main functions of the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines, she explains, is to “[take] care of the basic education curriculum.” What the minimum in terms of curriculum requirements that a public school should address is defined by DepEd. “Public schools,” she continues, “are mandated to follow the curriculum as mandated by DepEd.” But private schools not only follow the minimum, but also extend beyond what DepEd prescribes. Most DepEd accredited private schools are known to provide a higher standard of education than public schools. This discrepancy is traceable to a number of causes. Two of these are the misallocation of DepEd budget to inappropriately prioritized projects, and the neglect of the well-being and continuing training and education of public school teachers in all levels of the educational ladder. Perhaps the exceptions to these are the state universities such as the University of the Philippines.

Elaborating on the curriculum revamp, Gonzalez opined that “the intention [was] not really for [the development of] Filipino identity but... to have a curriculum... more meaningful and relevant and practical [particularly] to the Filipino student... [enrolled] in

a public school.” She said “there has been strong effort [in developing school subjects] in Filipino and in the *Araling Panlipunan*, which is Social Studies.” She quickly updated me with the information that presently *Araling Panlipunan* (or Social Studies) is now referred to as *Makabayan* (which loosely translates into English as “for nation” or more appositely as *pro patria* in Latin). In *Makabayan* subjects, Gonzalez testified that there has been marked improvement in placing more Filipino stories, Filipino themes, and values into the curriculum. Gonzalez also told me that *Makabayan* subjects now “acknowledge the fact that there is that [Islamic] culture among us.” The center of Islamic culture in the Philippines is in Mindanao, the second largest Philippine island. It is also the most troubled region of the Philippines beset by an armed secessionist movement. Unlike the majority of the population of the Philippines who converted to Roman Catholicism under Spanish colonial sponsorship, the original people of the island of Mindanao have remained faithful to Islam.

There are two Ateneo schools in Mindanao, Ateneo de Davao and Ateneo de Zamboanga, plus an Ateneo sister university in Cagayan de Oro named Xavier University. The Jesuits in the Philippines run these three educational institutions. The Jesuits, the teachers, and the students of those three centers of education, according to Gonzalez, have been in the forefront of any political activity that takes place in their respective communities. One of the goals of these three Catholic schools in Mindanao is to develop a sense of community between Muslims and Catholic Christians based on the principles of acceptance and respect of each other as they are. Gonzalez points out that in these three Jesuit universities, “they have a good number, not too many, but a sizeable number of Muslim students.” In those schools, the Muslim students have their own

prayer room, and the school cafeterias are mindful of making sure that the Muslim students are served only *halal* food.

*Araling Panlipunan*, which has been recast as *Makabayan* is, according to Gonzalez, also referred to as *Sibika* (Civics). Current Social Studies textbooks, Gonzalez claims, now give a picture of the diversity of Filipino culture. And indeed, there are also the Ilokanos, the Kapampangans, the Bikolanos, the Kankanais, the Tagalogs, the Cebuanos, the Tausugs, the Maranaos, plus many other ethno-linguistic groups who share Filipino as their common political identity. Any one of them can be either a Muslim, Catholic Christian, Buddhist, Protestant Christian, Iglesia ni Kristo, *espiritista*, or animist, etc. “There is really no one Filipino culture,” Gonzalez concludes.

From my own experience as a student in the Philippines, I see a marked difference between the curriculum of my elementary, high school, and undergraduate days, and that of the present curriculum described by Gonzalez. All of the curricular changes that Gonzalez described presuppose a substantive divestiture of embedded narratives that insidiously propagate the supremacy of the colonizers and their culture over the Filipinos from the minds of the policy makers. By necessity, this is a work that will long be in progress. This requires the Ricoeurian detour into the grounds of mimesis<sub>1</sub>, into a sustained archaeology of Philippine history and historiography. Moreover, these changes made also presuppose among those involved in today’s redesign or retrofit of Philippine education curriculum a shared vision of the desired future. This venture into the domain of mimesis<sub>3</sub> is another *longue durée* work-in-progress. For whatever is projected from the domain of mimesis<sub>3</sub> toward a desired alternative future

must be calibrated with what has been excavated and brought to surface from the grounds of mimesis<sub>1</sub>.

There is a myth among Filipinos according to Gonzalez (1991:145) “that education is the only solution to the country’s social, economic, and political problems and that education is the antecedent of individual and social advancement.” But more considered analysis will reveal that education is not a silver bullet that can put to rest all the problems of the Philippines. However, it can make a fundamental contribution toward the hoped for realization of Filipino not only as a nationally accepted political identity, but Filipino as an ethical being, representative of what can be universally regarded as an enlightened human. Toward this incarnation, much is still to be done, but transformation has begun.

One can say that the curriculum revision currently being undertaken by all parties involved has gone so far, so good. But Gonzalez, who has been directly involved in the revision of the basic curriculum laments that they are “always bogged down by the political situation.” Problems and obstacles are “brought about by economics and politics.” Gonzalez observed that every time the Secretary of Education, or the commissioners in the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) are replaced, so do the policy directions. However, she is quick to contend that in some instances and specific initiatives, the quality of education in the Philippines ‘has seen some improvement.’ Foundational to these improvements is the dedication and commitment of the public school teachers to their vocation. Of these public school teachers, Gonzalez who is with the Ateneo de Manila School of Social Sciences has this to say: “I really admire them.” She also told me that they who are in the economically better off private school system

do not have the same sense of commitment or service of the public school teachers. Those who are in the private school system, Gonzalez admits “are pretty OK.” They have all the resources public school teachers can only dream of. “I wish that some of my colleagues would see this,” she said. When asked what or who causes the problems that prevent the improvement of the Philippine education system and curriculum, Gonzalez points her finger at politics and the politicians. Nevertheless, Gonzalez is encouraged by the strong involvement of the Philippine private schools and business sector contributing toward the improvement of the education system and the basic curriculum. She singles out some private schools, business corporations, private foundations, and even some government agencies in substantially investing not just time, and effort, but also money. Gonzalez told me that this was unheard of 1987, the year she left to pursue her doctoral studies at the University of San Francisco.

At present, Gonzalez chairs a project that helps public school teachers complete a Master of Arts in Education in fourteen month. This program requires that the public school teachers enrolled in the program are full time students, and during this fourteen-month period, the government pays their monthly salaries. The school, in this case Ateneo de Manila University, waves the school tuition and fees.

Another similar scholarship program specifically for public school teachers is presently undertaken with the Public Education Division of the DepEd. But this particular MA in Education program is not a crash program like the one previously described. This program takes in around five teachers every school year. As in the previous program, Ateneo de Manila waives the tuition and school fees, and their salaries of the enrolled public school teachers continue to be paid by government. In this particular program

there are teacher-training initiatives conducted every semester, where people from the different divisions of the Ateneo de Manila University conduct teacher training in their subject areas of specialization. Gonzalez revealed to me that this is where corporations contribute funds to pay for faculty honoraria and teaching materials.

There is a third project that Gonzalez mentioned. What is remarkable is that the idea for this particular project came from college level students of the Ateneo de Manila University. It started in the summer of 2001. With the backing of the University, the students set up a “virtual” school where they had a principal, an academic coordinator, a registrar, plus other school personnel. They invited into this virtual school the public school students in Quezon City where Ateneo is located, and students in nearby Marikina to “enroll” for a summer program in the Sciences, English, and Mathematics.

The public school students invited to the summer program were in the junior and senior high school level. During these Philippine summer months of April and May, the Ateneo college students ran the virtual school. In addition to receiving additional instructions in the three subjects, the public high school youths were given a dress rehearsal, so to speak, of applying for college. The participants were taken on field trips, and were practiced on how to take entrance tests for admission to college. As Gonzalez describe it, the public school students were also tutored on how to take a college entrance test. After these preparatory activities, the program participants were administered a simulated college entrance test. They were then sent a letter of acceptance, after which the students “accepted” for college, together with their parents were given an orientation just like real life freshmen and their parents would undergo were they actually accepted as undergraduate students at a real university.

The Ateneo students who conceived, designed, and implemented this program also solicited and received funds from corporations. These funds were used to finance the operation, provide transportation and food allowance to the program participants from the public schools. Program participants who would actually graduate from high school and would take a real college entrance test were given five hundred pesos toward payment of the fee. The University of the Philippines, De La Salle University, and other similar top ranking educational institutions in the Philippines require this fee before allowing anyone to take their respective entrance exams. Very few public high school students would have the ready resource for this amount of money.

In the year 2003, the Ateneo college students took a step further in their program. They have secured funding from the Ford Foundation, and have asked other schools and universities like Miriam, San Beda, De La Salle, University of Santo Tomas, and others to grant scholarships to these public school high school graduates who passed their entrance exams. To those participants who are granted scholarships, financial allowances are given them for food, books, and transportation. Funding for this part of the projects is from the Ford Foundation. This then is what the Ateneo college students have established since 2001. They call it *Alay ni Ignacio* in Filipino, which translates as Ignatius' Offering in English.

Gonzalez believes that many other schools, in one form or another are doing something like the projects she described to me. The other Ateneos in Davao, Zamboanga, and Cagayan de Oro are doing their own similar initiatives too, helping their own immediate communities.

These are very commendable programs. But an example of politics and politicians intruding into a project such as this and causing problems, I was told by other sources that the Master of Arts program for public school teachers was suspended by then DepEd Secretary Raul Roco. Fortunately, it was not long after that Dr. Edilberto de Jesus who quickly restored the program replaced Roco. Roco is a politician, while de Jesus is an educator who was president of the Far Eastern University before his appointment as Secretary of the Department of Education.

Several studies show that the loyalty and concern of the Filipino is family centered, if not clan or kin centered. There are good things attributable to this, as there are a number of ethical, social, and economic distortions this has caused. But there is a glimmer of hope in widening the narrow, and deepening the shallow concern of the Filipino outside of his immediate *kinship network*. This term according to McCoy (2002:10) “describes the political role of family. [The kinship network is] “a working coalition drawn from a larger group related by blood, marriage, and ritual.” Perhaps the establishment by the more socially and economically privileged Ateneo de Manila college students in the summer of 2001 of a virtual school for the purpose of preparing and helping the less privileged and less prepared public high school students in Quezon City and Marikina enter college level education is, as many well intentioned programs go in the Philippines, a mere flash-in-the-pan. But two summers later in 2003, the project is still going strong, and has received financial support from members of the Philippine private business sector and the Ford Foundation. In any case, where attention should be drawn is toward the actual breaching of the wall that separates the rich from the poor students. The Ateneo college students, in an act of Ricoeurian solicitude for the faceless

other moved into action and, perhaps unknowingly, placed their ethical intention in a trajectory aimed at the Aristotelian “‘good life’ with and for others, in just institutions” (Ricoeur 1992:172). For indeed, what good is freedom, how can democracy be truly practiced, unless the Filipinos in general gain the necessary education to know, understand, and practice the duties and obligations of citizenship in a society, not just democratic in name, but in practice? Students of the Ateneo de Manila must know, *ought* to know if still they do not, that it was their co-alumnus Jose Rizal who said that without education, Filipinos would not know what to do to better their lives even if they lived in freedom. It is in the action of the Ateneo students during the summer of 2001 when, after more than 100 years, they reconnected and resumed conversation with their preeminent forbear, Jose Rizal. Perhaps their project can contribute toward the realization of what Rizal started before he was gunned down in Manila, December 30, 1896 at 7:03 AM.

Schools are very important towards the development of the people and their society. Speaking through his character the *alcalde* (town mayor), Rizal (1996:229) professed “the school is the basis of society, the school is the book in which is written the future of the nations! Show us the schools of a people and we will show you what that people are.”

Going back to my conversation with Gonzalez, she says “we cannot rely on others anymore.” By “rely on others” I understand her to mean other countries like the United States of America and the reliance of the Philippine government on the foreign aid the former colonizers dole out. “We [Filipinos] have to help ourselves.”

Summation

Gonzalez reminds that in the modification of the basic education curriculum, the Philippines cannot and should not rely on financial aid from other countries. Such financial grants have been directed towards other countries like Cambodia. Moreover, this is a Filipino problem that requires a Filipino solution. To receive and accept financial aid from another country is to accept the strings attached to it.

#### Gleanings from Conversations

To preclude the possibility of any misunderstanding, and for brevity's sake, this researcher has taken the liberty of using three phrases of convenience. The phrase "Filipinos present" is used to refer to people of the country born after the establishment of the American colonial government, or to those who at that time transferred their allegiance from the First Philippine Republic to the North American colonizers. On the other hand, the phrase "Filipinos past" refers to those who fought for Filipino independence against Spain in 1896, and against the United States of America 1899. "Filipinos future" refers to those who will yet have to narrate themselves into existence.

Filipinos present are disconnected from history of Filipinos past. Tayko, de Quiros, and Alonto observe it to be so. This observation is what inspires Gonzalez in working towards the modification of the basic education curriculum. If Filipinos present are to have a clear understanding of *who* they are, they have to reconnect to Filipinos past. One way of making this reconnection is through the school textbooks that shall come from the imperatives that the modified basic education curriculum will demand. These school textbooks are where present students can engage in continuing discourse with the textual narratives of their history. But only if teachers reorient their notion of what their responsibility is. Gonzalez (1991:28) writes, "Given the current situation in

Philippine education, it is the responsibility of Filipino educators to promote education for nationalism and social transformation.”

Education alone cannot carry the burden and responsibility of refiguring identity in postcolonial Philippines. But it is the river where Filipinos present can navigate, connect and converse with Filipinos past in search of the passage toward their desired future.

Filipinos are not successful in locating and finding themselves within a wider national identity. They still define their identity according to their regional or ethno-linguistic origins. It is also disappointing to find out that the more cosmopolitanized Filipinos assume a superior attitude over *Lumad* Filipinos. This was clearly illustrated by Khalim Tangilag’s unfortunate experience with co-students at the University of the Philippines.

The development and propagation of a national language is necessary to bind linguistically the multi-lingual people of the Philippines. Absent this, it would be difficult to refigure the country as an ethical community. It would also inhibit the development of a Filipino philosophy.

There is no evidence of certainty that the fear of one Bontoc Kankanai young woman is reflective of what most *Lumad* Filipinos feel towards the power of the Catholic Church. But it can be surmised that notwithstanding the separation of church and state, she feels that the Church maintains great influence on the workings of the state. If such were the case, she wonders whether the religious and cultural minorities of the Philippines can, in the long run, thrive.

In my conversations with Maharlika Alonto and Arnold Azurin, they question the motivations of some Muslim Filipino leaders who advocate secession from the Philippines. Both find that some Muslim Filipino leaders also practice politics for personal gain and privilege, as do their fellow Christian Filipino politicians. Alonto's narration made it evident to me that many Muslim Filipinos refuse to identify themselves as Filipinos. Rather, they identify themselves by their religion and by their tribe. Muslims in the Philippines equate being Filipino to being Christian.

Muslim Filipinos seem to find many Christian Filipinos, whether Catholics or Protestants, unsympathetic to their plight. They find the national government, populated mostly by Catholics, neglectful of their social, economic, and educational needs. Christian Filipinos, the Catholics in particular, may find Raymond Helmick's life among Muslims instructive. Helmick has come to realize that the Maronites and the Catholic Christians in Lebanon who have lived all their lives as neighbors to Muslims in their country have not asked themselves the question "How can a Catholic respond, in faith, to the faith of Muslims?" Neither have the Catholics who live with Muslim neighbors in Mindanao, and well they should ask themselves the same question. "I recognized," Helmick (2000:220) discloses "that God, who reveals himself, can require of me that I remain faithful to his revelation as it is transmitted to me through Christian tradition." Still in his contemplation Helmick finds that he cannot demand of God that God reveal himself only through Helmick's Christian tradition. For Helmick has earlier realized that God remains free, and can reveal himself as he chooses. Rounding out his contemplation, Helmick (2000:220) confesses that

...as I see the piety and the life of faith of the Muslim community—imperfect, of course, like my own—I find

myself bound, even in faithfulness to God as he reveals himself in my own tradition, to recognize him at work in the faith of Muslims.

His declaration he asserts is “no derogation of [our] Christian faith, but actually springs from it” (2000:220). The Maronites and Catholic Christians of Lebanon, just like the Catholic Christians in Mindanao who live as neighbors to Muslims have historically rejected the claim of Muslims that they too are “people of the book” and that “the traditional [Christian] response has been mostly war.” To Helmick these Christians “had failed to recognize a sister faith” (2000:220).

As Gonzalez revealed earlier, public school textbooks now acknowledge the cultural diversity of the peoples of the Philippines. This acknowledgement is a mimetic detour toward the figuration, the reflection on, the remembering of the past (mimesis<sub>1</sub>). It re-illuminates a problematized non-Catholic past kept hidden, held secret for so long by converts to a faith brought by aliens who lost their way on their journey to somewhere else. It leads to freedom from distorted piety and a doubtful manner of upholding faith. This acknowledgement of the “other” (as mimesis<sub>1</sub>) is what opens the other mimetic threshold that is oriented toward the refiguration, the imagining of a better future (mimesis<sub>3</sub>). All these we can see much more clearly if we shift our gaze to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century city of Seville in the Iberian peninsula. It is not without irony that what existed 800 years ago in Iberia can perhaps inspire all the peoples of present-day Mindanao-- regardless of their religious, cultural, or ethnic differences—to come together and create a society of peace, hospitality, and economic progress.

During the *Reconquista* period of Iberian history, Ferdinand III of Castile took the Moslem city of Seville in 1248. It was a city delightfully filled with orange trees, the

fragrance of citrus blossoms lingering in the air. Ferdinand III, who died a few years later in 1252, was the first of many generations of Castilian monarch who would prefer Seville to all other cities in his realm. His son Alfonso built for his father Ferdinand III a tomb to sit in the Great Almohad Mosque of Seville. At this time, the Great Mosque had been reconsecrated as the splendid cathedral of the new Castilian capital (Menocal 2002:47). Reconsecration at this instance does not, and should not presume a previous act of desecration. This act of reconsecration is better understood as a hallowed rededication of an edifice for the worship of the one true God in another tradition. For the rest of his life since he took Seville, Ferdinand of Castile said his daily prayers in the reconsecrated Great Mosque. But this vignette does not end here. Upon the death of Ferdinand III, Alfonso had his father's funerary monument "inscribed in the three respectable old languages of the old land—Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin—as well as in the upstart vernacular, Castilian" (Menocal 2002:200). Note that Castilian was at that time considered to be just an upstart vernacular, not yet the language of *conquistadors*.

Inasmuch as Spain has had a great influence on the people of the Philippines, it is best for Filipinos to know that "the policy and practice of the Castilian monarchs had not been to destroy the monuments of the Islamic past... [for] the Islamic past of these Christians was a bed to build on, to be layered, continued, reinterpreted" (Menocal 2002:236). Catholic Christian Filipino culture is packed with traditions received directly from the Spanish colonizers of the archipelago. "Tradition," says Paul Ricoeur (1996:8) "means transmission of things said, of beliefs professed, or norms accepted, etc." He goes on to say "such a transmission is a living one only if tradition continues to form a

partnership with innovation.” Elaborating further, Ricoeur (1996:8) continues to explain that:

Tradition represents the aspect of debt which concerns the past and reminds us that nothing comes from nothing. A tradition remains living...only if it continues to be held in an unbroken process of reinterpretation. It is at this point that the reappraisal of narratives of the past and the plural reading of the founding events come into effect.

Since tradition and innovation are in partnership, Ricoeur (1996:8) explains that in the process of innovation, “an important aspect of the rereading and the reappraisal of transmitted traditions consists in discerning past promises which have not been kept.” It is the “liberation of this unfulfilled future of the past [which] is the major benefit that...can be expected from the crossing of memories and the exchange of narratives.”

This acknowledgement in Philippine school textbooks of the presence of a vibrant Islamic minority in the Philippines, and in an attitude of respect toward the Islamic faith can bode well for the country’s future.

#### Summary and Upcoming Text

This chapter found the absent celebration of national identity by Filipinos antithetical to their prideful acknowledgement of their ethnolinguistic origins. Their enthusiastic assertion of tribal roots exhibits a seeming reluctance in appropriating Filipino as national identity.

The research partners who are also students at UP say that what was taught them as Philippine history still carry much colonial misrepresentations. Underlying all of what has been said by all the research participants is the absence of a national vision, the prevalence of corruption in Philippine institutions, and the abundance of self-serving leaders.

In the following, effort will be exerted to seek deeper understanding of the causes of the seemingly ineradicable problems that have confronted the country since the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The knots that have tied the country and its people to their dismal condition must be unraveled. It is hoped that the exercise conducted in the following chapter will contribute to the discovery of clues to solutions of the country's intractable problems. These are problems born out of the lack of a strong unifying sense of shared identity, the slack social cohesion emanating from an absence of ethics upheld and practiced by all, the disinterest of many in learning, teaching or researching their own history. Solutions to these problems that have long nettled Filipino society ought to be found. The next chapter endeavor to show how this hope may be realized.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Hermeneutics, History, and Issues from Conversations

#### Introduction

“The task of hermeneutics,” Ricoeur (1984a:25) says, “is to charter the unexplored resources of the to-be-said on the basis of the already-said. Imagination never resides in the unsaid.” This was exactly what Rizal began to do in December of 1889 at the British museum in London. On his way to Europe aboard ship, Rizal heard a conversation of four Spaniards; Messrs. Barco, Morlan, Pardo, Buil, and others...talked much about the government in the Philippines. On that evening Rizal wrote in his diary what he discovered from the conversation: all Spaniards, friars, and lay officials alike were consumed with the desire to suck the blood out of the Indio (Quibuyen 1999:128). Notwithstanding the fact that Rizal had graduate studies to complete in a foreign land and a medical career to train for, he devoted a large part of his time, not to mention his family’s precarious financial resources, to combat and rectify the calumny and lies that colonial spin doctors---such as Sinibaldo de Mas and Gaspar de San Agustin—were manufacturing for the sake of empire (Quibuyen 1999:129-30).

Rizal tried to rectify with historical scholarship the myths perpetrated by the Spanish colonizers, which the latter used as rationale for their colonizing venture. “Not content with the myth of the lazy native,” Quibuyen (1999: 131) points out that the apologists for empire “now concocted a second accusation: the ingratitude of Filipinos to Mother Spain, to whom [the Filipinos] owed so much.” Even Fr. Pablo Pastells, Superior of the Jesuits in the Philippines wrote on December 8, 1892 to Rizal who was already exiled in Dapitan in Mindanao island that “separatism among Filipinos, especially if an

attempt to carry it out is made, constitute a most ugly mark of incalculable ingratitude” (Bonoan 1996:158).

Quibuyen (1999:132) writes that “According to the colonial apologists... [w]ere it not for Spain, the natives would have remained barbaric, engaged in incessant warfare, defenseless against the despotism of their local chieftains, and even subjected to slavery and other degradations, from which they were rescued by the *conquistadores* and the friars.” What was needed at that time to counteract these calumnies was “massive scholarly research into the country’s precolonial past and the 300-year record of Spanish colonialism (Quibuyen 1999:133). Rizal forged ahead to do exactly this.

Rizal read practically all relevant historical accounts of the conquest and the early years of Spanish colonial rule, Quibuyen (1999:123) claims. This resulted in “a corpus of historical and sociopolitical tracts” that would include “Rizal’s new edition of Dr. Antonio de Morga’s 1609 *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* [which Rizal annotated].” In addition were Rizal’s two seminal essays, which were *Filipinas dentro de cien años* (The Philippines a century hence) and *Sobre la indolencia de los Filipinos* (The indolence of the Filipinos). These “became the basis for a national view of history, which Bonifacio... would disseminate through the revolutionary Katipunan (Quibuyen 1999:123).

Initiating the project of writing a Philippine history, Rizal began with his annotation of Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (Events in the Philippine Islands). Quibuyen’s analysis shows that Rizal’s historical project consisted of two phases. The first phase was an assessment of the 300 years of Spanish rule on the basis of an ‘archaeological excavation’ of the Philippines’ precolonial past. He attempted to

reconstruct a pre-Spanish Philippine society and culture. He would then use this precolonial past as basis for the evaluation of Spanish governance. The second was the construction of a national view of Philippine history and culture. From September to December of 1889, Rizal was at the British museum in London researching and writing on his project (Quibuyen 1999:136-7). Rizal's annotation of *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* was his effort to restore what Morga had distorted and falsified. For as Ricoeur (1985:71) points out "the past [which in this case is Morga's narrative] can be neutralized in other ways than simply by being narrated; for example, by being commented upon." This Rizal did by annotating Morga's colonizing narrative.

Rizal's historical research had a threefold agenda, which ninety-five years later, ties in very closely with Ricoeur's threefold mimesis. These are—

(1) to awaken in the Filipinos "a consciousness of our past, now erased from memory"; (2) to correct "what has been distorted and falsified" concerning the Filipinos; and (3) "to better judge the present and assess our movement in three centuries" (Quibuyen 1999:137).

Viewing this through the lens of the threefold mimesis, we find Rizal's attempt to awaken in the Filipinos "a consciousness of our past, now erased from memory" as Ricoeur's  $M_1$ , the figuration, reflection on, and remembering of the past.

### The Mimetic Functions

#### Figuration, Reflection on, and Remembering of the Past ( $M_1$ )

"There is no doubt," Thompson (1998:17) maintains "that history claims to offer a true representation of past events[.]" He goes on to say that by "recognising the values of the past...through their differences from the present, history opens up the real towards the possible." In this regard, Kearney (1995:81) evokes Ricoeur who "urges us to

rediscover tradition as an ongoing history, thereby reanimating its still unaccomplished potentialities.”

### Reflection and Remembering

Ricoeur (1991:117) agrees with Nelson Goodman’s thesis in the first chapter of *Languages of Art* (1976) that “symbolic systems ‘make’ and ‘remake’ the world, and that our aesthetical grasping of the world is a militant understanding that ‘reorganizes the world in terms of works and works in terms of world’.” In this regard, Goodman (1999:241) says:

...aesthetic experience is dynamic rather than static. It involves making delicate discriminations and discerning subtle relationships, identifying symbol systems and characters within these systems and what these characters denote and exemplify, interpreting works and reorganizing the world in terms of works and works in terms of the world.

Also, Ricoeur (1998a:294) reveals that “*We belong to history before telling stories or writing history*” (italics in the original). “The word ‘history’,” he explains “preserves...the rich ambiguity of designating both the course of recounted events and the narrative that we construct. For they belong together.” What Ricoeur refers to as the history that is recounted comes from Gadamer’s *Wirkungsgeschichte* of historicity itself. Stated in another way, what is recounted belongs to the “effective history” (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of the things that have happened (Ricoeur 1998a:294).

Elucidating further on *Wirkungsgeschichte* Scheibler (2000:148) submits that Gadamer thematizes “not only the character of historical time but its fundamental connection to the historicity of human existence.” She understands Gadamer to say that in examining the connectedness of human beings to the past, “one must conceive continuity in terms of its relation to discontinuity, by asking the question of how tradition

can contain both continuity and discontinuity” (Scheibler 2000:149). “However,” Scheibler (2000:148) clarifies “the notion of continuity must be conceived with a concept Gadamer takes from Kierkegaard, [which is] the notion of the ‘moment’ (*Augenblick*) of existence.” It is through the notion of the moment of existence that the dialectical relationship of continuity and discontinuity is comprehended. A disruption of the continuum is made possible by a function of the situated moment of existence. It is this moment that is “capable of taking a stand and constructing a relation to the temporal flow of history” that makes a disruption possible. “It is through...an act of choice,” Scheibler (2000:149) avers “that something is endowed with value by the human mind and assumes the ‘truth’ of remembered reality (*errinerte Wirklichkeit*).” Scheibler (2000:157n79) cites (and translates) Gadamer saying:

We are always already standing in the middle of history. We ourselves are not just a link in this continuously forward-rolling chain, to use an expression of Herder’s. Rather, in every moment we stand faced with a possibility, to understand ourselves through what approaches us out of this past, and which yet comes towards us. I call this “historically effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*).”

“Gadamer’s ‘historically effected consciousness’ that knows itself to be affected by history is” according to Grondin (2003:289) “a reflexive and eminently critical consciousness...[that] is most authentically realized in being open to the new experiences that can get us beyond the limits of our present horizons.”

“Thus,” Thompson writes (in Ricoeur 1998a:17) “the ambiguity of the word ‘history’...is no accident: retelling the text of the past is part of the reality of the present—part, as Gadamer would say, of the ‘effective-historical consciousness’.”

What Filipinos read about themselves no matter if erroneous is how they think of themselves. Until and unless challenged, how Filipinos are considered and regarded in history textbooks is what is embossed in the minds of Filipino students. Only when the past is remembered and reflected upon can there be a corrective restatement of a dubious text. The space that figuration, reflection on, and remembering of the past creates is where an otherwise dead tradition can be reinterpreted, made legitimate, and revived.

### Memory, Identity, and the Other

Listen again to Conrad de Quiros' recollection on August 24, 2003. "When I was in grade school, we were never taught [Philippine] history. Nonetheless a teacher told us that there was once a war waged by the Americans against the Filipinos. We... would not believe... that such a war between the Americans and Filipinos could even happen. In... conversations among classmates, we came to conclude that... such a war could have happened, but it must have been the fault of the Filipinos... We had that fundamental belief in the goodness of the United States, the goodness of the Americans made indelible in our minds."

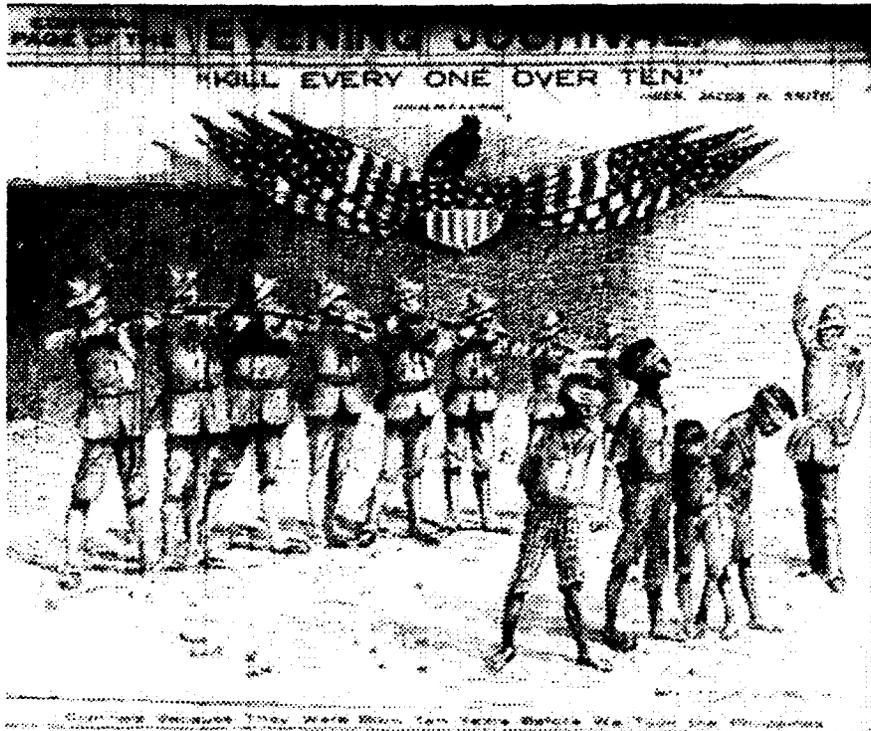
Three months earlier, in May 2003 Bilal El-Amine and Brian Campbell who are editors of the bimonthly Seattle, WA magazine *Left Turn* published an essay entitled "Birth of an Empire: The Philippines-American War." El-Amine and Campbell (2003:26-7) claim that in schools across the United States of America—

The Philippine war is cursorily taught in American schools and scarcely discussed publicly, especially now as US armed forces prepare to retrace their own bloody footprints on the southern island of [Mindanao.] In 1906, 900 defenseless Muslim men, women and children died trapped in the crater of an extinct volcano as American forces under the command of Major-General Leonard Wood bombarded them from offshore gunships.

This was one of the most notorious massacres executed by the American military on unarmed civilians in the Philippines. Theodore Roosevelt was then the President of the United States of America. On record is his commendation sent to Leonard Wood:

I congratulate you and the officers and men of your command upon the brilliant feat of arms wherein you and they so well upheld the honor of the American flag (El-Amine & Campbell 2003:26).

On the island of Luzon within the same time line, “Torture of suspected insurrecto sympathizers, especially [the application of] the notorious ‘water cure’, appears to have been common.” Meanwhile, on the island of Samar, the “popular belief among the Americans serving in the Philippines that native males were born with bolos in their hands” carried over (Miller 1982:220). Marine Maj. “Tony” Waller demanded of the then newly minted Brigadier General Jacob Smith “to know the limit of age to respect”, which boils down to this: to be considered an enemy combatant, how old should a male Filipino be? Smith’s response to Waller was forthright and unequivocal. “Ten years and older. I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn, the more you kill and burn the better it will please me” (Miller 1982:220). (Refer to editorial cartoon on the following page.)



Why is it that many history books used in Philippine elementary and high schools are mute on these events? And why are these books energetic in fostering (if I may borrow de Quiros' words) the "fundamental belief in the goodness of the United States, the goodness of the Americans?" As Mulder (2000:179) observed, why is it that many Filipinos and their political leaders are more concerned on how they look to Washington, DC than to themselves? On this, Richard Kearney (1999:26) has this to say:

Historical communities are constituted by the stories they recount to themselves and to others. Hence the importance of the rectifications that contemporary historians bring to the historical accounts of their predecessors. This is as true of the revisionist controversies in Irish history (the Famine, 1916, 1969) as it is of the French debates on the meaning of the French Revolution, or the German *Historiestreit* on the Second World War. It is also true of the classic case of biblical Israel--an historical spiritual community formed on the basis of foundational narratives (especially the books of Genesis and Exodus) which successive generations recount and reinterpret. This explains why Judaism is the 'culture of the book' *par excellence*. Moreover, it is precisely because stories proceed from stories in this manner that historical communities are ultimately responsible for the formation and reformation of their own identities.

Identity is memory. Most of what people remember is what they read about themselves, what they are taught in school, or told about. In Kearney's thinking, the historical community has the ethical responsibility for the formation and reformation of its narrative identity. Paraphrasing Kearney, Filipinos cannot remain constant over the passage of historical time and remain faithful to their promises and covenants unless they retain some minimal remembrance of where they come from, of how they came to be what they are. "Each nation, state or *societas* discovers that it is at heart an 'imagined community'... a narrative construction to be reinvented and reconstructed again and again" (Kearney 1999:26). Such a discovery obviates the possibility of assuming that

one's collective identity goes without saying, and prevents taking oneself literally (Kearney 1999:26). The space where the possibility for a nation's transformation lies is in its narrative resources. It is where a nation can imagine itself otherwise (Kearney 1999:26).

"Memory," Ricoeur (1999:5) reveals "constitutes a knowledge of past events, or of the pastness of events. In that sense, it is committed to truth, even if it is not a truthful relationship to the past; that is, precisely because it has a truth-claim, memory can be accused of being unfaithful to this claim." How then is it possible to speak of an ethics of memory? Ricoeur discloses that this becomes possible "because memory has two kinds of relation to the past." The first is a relation of *knowledge*. The second is a relation of *action*. To Ricoeur (1999:5), "remembering is a way of *doing* things, not only with words, but with our minds." We exercise our memory whenever we recall or recollect. This exercise of memory is a kind of action, and because it is so, "we can talk of the use of memory, which in turn permits us to speak of the abuses of memory," says Ricoeur. But "once we begin to reflect on this connection between use and abuse of memory," Ricoeur (1999:5) apprises that "ethical problems arise." He is of the understanding that he can bring up the problem of the ethics of memory by approaching it as a kind of action. Prior to doing this, Ricoeur (1999:6) first analyzes a framework of thought that allows him to place ethics within a broader context where he considers three levels in his practical approach. First is the *pathological-therapeutic* level. The second is the *pragmatic* level. Third is the properly *ethical-political* approach to the act of memory.

It is on the pathological-therapeutic level where the abuses of memory, what Ricoeur calls "the wounds and scars of memory" are rooted in. Restating Ricoeur

(1999:5), “We have a good example in the present state of [the Philippines]: in some places we could say that there is too much memory, but in other places not enough. Likewise, there is sometimes not enough forgetting, and at other times too much forgetting.” How can these misuses be spliced on the capacity to memorize?

In supporting his claim concerning the pathological-therapeutic level, Ricoeur (1999:6) evokes two of Sigmund Freud’s essays from 1914 belonging to the collection *Metaphysical*. “Remembering, Repetition, and Working Through (*Durcharbeiten*)” is the title of the first essay. Ricoeur narrates that the essay starts with “an incident or an accident in the progression of the psychoanalytic cure, when the patient keeps repeating the symptoms and is barred from any progress towards recollection, or towards the reconstruction of an acceptable and understandable past.” The first stage, the pathological-therapeutic level is thus linked to “the problems of resistance and repression in psychoanalysis” Ricoeur (1999:6) claims. At the beginning of the essay, the patient keeps on repeating the symptoms instead of remembering. This orients Ricoeur toward the understanding that the continual repetition of the symptoms is the obstacle to the analysand’s remembering. Ricoeur points out that at this stage of the essay, “Freud says that both the doctor and the [analysand] must...be patient concerning the symptoms, which in turn allows them to be reconciled with the impossibility of going directly to the truth—if there is any truth concerning the past.” But what seems more important is the understanding that “the patient has to accept his illness in order to anticipate a time when he could be reconciled with his own past.” This indeed is very sage advice. The patient is already undergoing psychoanalysis. But were the patient a nation, and were the nation the

Philippines, can it be said that the patient has already acknowledged the necessity to undergo psychoanalysis?

Recall my conversations with Joanna Villanueva. She said Filipinos find the act of remembering their history an exercise too painful to engage in. For those who do not know, and wonder why, first there was this 333 years of Spanish despotism that ushered in the Philippine Revolution of 1896. Then came the North Americans in three phases. The first phase was the brutal, technologically efficient subjugation of the Filipinos by the perpetrators of the genocide of the American Indians. The second phase was the establishment of a US colonial civilian government complemented by an educational system that effectively erased the Filipino peoples' link to their fundamental social and political ideals. The third phase was the escape of Gen. Douglas MacArthur to Australia, leaving the people of the Philippines and a few gallant American soldiers to wage four bloody years of guerilla warfare against the merciless Japanese Imperial army in World War II. (See photograph of MacArthur and his staff on the following page.)



The fourteen officers and one sergeant who left Bataan and Corregidor on PT boats with General MacArthur, family and amah, March 11, 1942. The Bataan Gang. Clockwise from 12:00: Major General Sutherland, Brigadier General George, Brigadier General Willoughby, Brigadier General Marquat, Captain McMicking, Master Sergeant Rogers, Lieutenant Colonel Diller, Lieutenant Colonel Wilson, Major Mochouse (a doctor brought specially from Bataan), Lieutenant Colonel Huff, Lieutenant Colonel Sherr, Brigadier General Casey, Brigadier General Strivers, Major General Akin. (*MacArthur Memorial Archives*)

The Philippines did not have a quarrel with Japan. The Philippines got dragged into it by default because she was a colony of the USA. Knowing these, is there truth to what Joanna Villanueva told me—that Filipinos find the act of remembering their history an exercise too painful to engage in? Do Filipinos today merely repeat recalling the “symptoms,” disabled from truly remembering their true historical past? Is it truly painful to remember, and to acknowledge that never since the coming of the Spaniards have the people of the Philippines succeeded in completing any project of national significance, save perhaps for the recent EDSA exercises staged in the capital region? Is it truly painful for Filipinos to remember that unlike its neighbor Indonesia who succeeded in driving away their Dutch colonizers, unlike Thailand who was never occupied by any western power, unlike Vietnam who defeated their French colonizers in Dien Bien Phu, and thwarted the might of the US armed forces in 1975, the Philippines was “granted” its independence?

The second of Freud’s essay that Ricoeur evokes is “Mourning and Melancholia.” In this essay Freud makes known his struggle to distinguish mourning from melancholia, and where he also takes up the “work” of mourning. In evoking this second essay, Ricoeur attempts to bring together the two expressions of “the work of memory” and “the work of mourning.” Ricoeur (1999:7) finds it “quite possible that the work of memory is a kind of mourning, and also that mourning is a painful exercise in memory.”

Ricoeur (1999:7) considers mourning as an act of reconciliation with the loss of an object of love. Invoking Freud, he alleges that an object of love may be a person, or an abstraction such as [motherland] (*inang bayan* in Filipino), or an ideal such as freedom (*kalayaan* in Filipino). What one reconciles with in mourning is the loss, and not the

object lost. And what is preserved in mourning is the sense of one's self. On the other hand, it is the sense of one's self that is lost in melancholia. "This is so," Ricoeur (1999:7) says "because in melancholia there is a despair and a longing to be reconciled with the loved object which is lost without the hope of reconciliation." Here Ricoeur summons Freud's commentary on mourning where the latter says that "the task of the 'patient' is to renounce all the ties which linked him with the object of love, or to break off all the ties that connect the conscious and the unconscious to [the] lost object." Consequently, Ricoeur (1999:7) comes to the understanding that "mourning protects the [patient] from the trend towards melancholia when there is what [Freud] calls 'the interiorisation of the object of love', which becomes a part of the soul." Ricoeur (1999:7) makes the claim here that it is this essay that permits him "to bring together the two expressions: work of memory and work of mourning, work of memory versus repetition, work of memory versus melancholia." Thus accomplished Ricoeur returns to his examples from the political sphere that he spoke of in terms of an excess of memory in some places and a lack of memory in others. These two—an excess of memory in some places and a lack in others—are in a sense on the same side of repetition and melancholia. In concluding this particular meditation, Ricoeur (1999:7) says—

Hence, mourning and "working through" are to be brought together in the fight for the acceptability of memories: memories have not only to be understandable, they have to be acceptable, and it is this acceptability which is at stake in the work of memory and mourning. Both are types of reconciliation.

From here Ricoeur moves on to a second level he characterizes as "pragmatic" because it is on this level where there is *praxis* of memory. It is also on this second level where Ricoeur finds abuses of memory to be more conspicuous. "[M]emory is subject to abuses

because of its links to the problem of identity,” Ricoeur (1999:7) emphasizes. “In fact, the diseases of memory are basically diseases of identity.” And why is this so? Ricoeur (1999:8) responds “because identity, whether personal or collective, is always only presumed, claimed, reclaimed; and because the question which is behind the problematics of identity is ‘*who* am I?’” But the answers given to the question “*who* am I?” tend to respond to the question of *what* we are.

The answers to the “*who* am I?” that are conscripted to respond to “*what* are we?” are inappropriate and fragile because there is first the need “to face the difficulty of preserving identity through time,” says Ricoeur. The first problem Ricoeur (1999:8) raises is “how to preserve my identity through time[.]” He explains that it is a problem raised through both narrative and memory because we always oscillate between two models of identity: the *idem* identity and the *ipse* identity. Ricoeur (1994:3, 116; 1999:8) takes *idem* identity synonymous to sameness that remains permanent in time “in spite of the course of time and in spite of the change of events around me and within me.” “What I call my ‘character’ is [an]... example of this type of identity or this level of sameness” (1999:8). Ricoeur (1994:119) understands character as “the set of distinctive marks which permit the reidentification of a human individual as being the same.” “Character,” Ricoeur (1994:121, 128) points out “designates the set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognized. [It] is the self under the appearances of sameness. Shifting his stance, Ricoeur (1999:8) tells of a need for a kind of flexibility, or a kind of dual identity, the model of which, for him would be the promise, i.e. the capacity to keep one’s word. He insists that this “is not the same as remaining inflexible or unchanged through time, [but rather] a way of dealing with change, not denying it.” Ricoeur designates this as *ipse*

identity. Here, Ricoeur tags the difficulty of dealing with changes through time as one reason why identity is so fragile.

I propose that the Filipino *idem* identity is still linked, though tenuously, to what inspired the development of Rizalian ethics. Perhaps it would be more productive if the Filipino *idem* identity is seen as still connected to Rizal's ethics instead. These are what he enunciated in his essays addressed to his fellow Filipinos and in his letters to his friends. The constitution of *La Liga Filipina* also contains his ethical ideas presented as guides to personal conduct of the members of the association. These are the same ideas that inspired Bonifacio to lead as a Filipino patriot an incipient national revolution against an unjust Spain. These are the same ideas that found resonance in the minds of Mabini and Jacinto. These two were the same men who elaborated on Rizal's ethics: Mabini with his "True Decalogue," and Jacinto with his "Light and Darkness."

It would not be surprising if Rizal's thoughts as embodied in his writings can be employed to address problems that have beset Filipino society since his time. But these can happen only if Filipinos who would attempt such a project would do so with an abiding awareness of the distorting effects of colonial mentality that afflicts contemporary Filipinos.

The *self* that Ricoeur invokes in the question "*who* am I?" is a mediated self, according to van den Hengel (2002:83). This self is "constituted...in an unending process whereby the self encounters explanations of the self in the human and social sciences and all the disciplines and narratives that analyze and present the variations of the human self." "This dialectic of explanation and understanding," says van den Hengel (2002:83) "is complemented by a dialectic...of the self as *idem* (human identity as being the same)

and the self as *ipse* (human identity as not-yet, as ipseity or the 'kept word')." This *ipseity* of Ricoeur is "a self that is not yet but that becomes" (van den Hengel 2002:84).

The second problem to be faced is the problem of *the other*. Ricoeur (1999:8) argues that otherness "is met, first, as a threat to myself." He illustrates this by pointing out to people who "feel threatened by...other people who live according to standards of life which conflict with their own standards. Humiliations, real or imaginary, are linked to this threat, when this threat is felt as a wound which leaves scars." In responding to threats, whether real or imagined, that come from the other, one tends to exclude, reject, or expel the other.

The experience of Khalim Tangilag in relation to her lowlander classmates at UP related earlier is an apt illustration of what Ricoeur informs about the problem of *the other*. It is apparent from actions of Tangilag's lowlander schoolmates toward her that they felt threatened, or perhaps in this case, and for reasons known only to them, felt superior to Tangilag. They saw Tangilag as one who lives her life according to standards in conflict with their own. But for them to belittle Tangilag by verbally slapping her with a decidedly demeaning question, "So you still live in tree houses?" is an act of bottomless arrogance where these UP lowlander students have sunk. Their insult disguised as a question also reveals the depth of their ignorance and ill will.

In explicating the difficulty of preserving one's identity through time, and of preserving one's selfhood in face of the other, Ricoeur adds a third component--the violence that is a permanent element of human relationships and interactions. Ricoeur (1999:8) then invites us to

...recall that most events to do with the founding of any community are acts and events of violence. [C]ollective identity is rooted in found-

ing events which are violent events. In a sense, collective memory is a kind of storage of such violent blows, wounds and scars.

Besides the violence visited upon the people of the Philippines by three foreign others, there is the knowledge perhaps suppressed in the Filipino collective memory, that they were unsuccessful in attempts to fashion their nation according to their hearts' desire. For ultimately, in 1946 they were left with a political institution pre-fabricated for them by the self-styled benevolent colonizers, and their willing native elite subalterns.

### Refiguration, and the Imagining of an Alternate World (M<sub>3</sub>)

Before embarking on the refiguration and the imagining of an alternate world, it is prudent to listen to Kearney (1995:81) who cautions that “the project of the future cancels itself out as soon as it loses its foothold in the ‘field of experience’ (past and present), for it thereby finds itself incapable of formulating a path towards its ideal.” Reminding us of Ricoeur’s advice that “our dreams must remain determinate (and therefore finite) if they are to become historically realizable,” Kearney (1995:81) further discloses another of Ricoeur’s counsel that “we bring [the alternate world] closer to the present by means of intermediary projects within the scope of social action...to prevent the future from dissolving into fantasy.”

### The First Spark

The first spark of the Spirit of 1896 flashed with the organization of the Filipino clergy by Father Pedro Pelaez and Father Mariano Gomez advocating for equality between the Filipino priests and the Spanish friars (Schumacher 1998:8*passim*). The spark caught fire with the killing of the three Filipino secular priests—Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora—by the Spanish authorities based on the trumped

up charge of inciting the soldiers of the Cavite arsenal to mutiny (Schumacher 1998:25*passim*). (See following page sketches of Burgos, Gomez, and Zamora.)

Rizal's 1890 essay *The Philippines a Century Hence* stoked the fire. In this essay Rizal (2000a:141) wrote:

The brutalization of the Malayan Filipinos has been shown to be impossible. Despite the black plague of friars in whose hands is the education of the youth, who waste miserable years... despite all the pulpits, confessionals, books, novenae that inculcate hatred of all knowledge... despite all that system, organized, perfected, and followed with tenacity by those who wish to keep the Islands in holy ignorance; there are Filipino writers, free thinkers, historiographers, chemists, physicians, artists, jurists, etc. Enlightenment is spreading and its persecution encourages it.

In this essay, he also expressed his belief that "the advancement and moral progress of the Philippines is inevitable; it is fated" (Rizal 2000a:143). The vision of the Spirit of 1896 was also clearly articulated in the constitution of Rizal's *La Liga Filipina*. This same vision also found expression soon after in the thoughts of Apolinario Mabini and Emilio Jacinto. Both men were both sympathetic to Rizal's vision of a Filipino nation. In the constitution of *La Liga Filipina*, Rizal (2000a:309) wrote five purposes of the organization: 1) To unite the whole Archipelago into one compact, vigorous, and homogenous body. 2) Mutual protection in every case of trouble and need. 3) Defense against every violence and injustice. 4) Development of education, agriculture, and commerce. 5) Study and implementation of reforms.



**Jose Burgos**



**Mariano Gomes**



**Jacinto Zamora**

One can almost fearlessly claim that the aims of *La Liga Filipina*, were the league able to survive and flourish, could have contributed to the early development of a Filipino philosophy, and the formation of Filipino ethics.

### The Spirit of 1896

The Spirit of 1896 was the native-born Filipino people's desire for a better life, and vision of a better world. It came to form with the souls of the three martyred Filipino secular priests—Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora—who were inspired by the example of Fr. Pedro Pelaez. Ironically, Pelaez “was of Spanish blood... born and educated in the Philippines” (Schumacher 1998:7). It was he who sought equality for Filipino priests in the Catholic hierarchy of the Philippines, which at that time was dominated by Spanish friar orders. Pelaez saw clearly “The continued campaign to deprive the Filipino clergy... of their parishes, [was because of] political and racial prejudice” (Schumacher 1998:9).

The Spirit of 1896 was nurtured and blossomed under the care of Rizal and his compatriots. It found physical expression with the outbreak of the armed revolution under the leadership of Andres Bonifacio in 1896.

But pre-dating all these were the numerous marginalized and almost forgotten small revolts of the common people against Spanish tyranny led by Dagohoy, Tamblot, Diego Silang, and many others. Too long have they been held in thrall. The native people's desire to reclaim their humanity, regain their dignity, and restore unto themselves their self-respect is what animated the Spirit of 1896.

Thus, they set out to refine their thoughts and aspirations, and shape them into a coherent expression until all their other compatriots could also see their own thoughts and

aspirations embodied in it. There were more than a few who articulated these dreams. More than a few translated and narrated these dreams and visions for others that they may all together share in the expectation of the rising of their very own eastern star.

### What is Ideology?

“Ideology,” writes Kearney (1995:70) “expresses a social group’s need for a communal set of images whereby it can represent itself to itself and to others.” He finds ideology to be an “essential aspect of the social imaginary, which enables any particular society to identify itself.” A society attempts to align itself with “a stable, predictable, and repeatable order of meanings” by invoking “a tradition of mythic idealizations.” Kearney (1995: 70, 224n8) links with Mircea Eliade’s thoughts in *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries* (1968) in asserting that ideology “seeks to redeem society from the crisis of the present by justifying actions in terms of some sanctified past, some sacred beginning.”

“Ideology” as Dussel (1985:167) claims “is the ensemble of semiotic expressions that justify or conceal domination; when they are methodical, they justify it more completely. The ideological function in its essence is the relationship of the sign or signifier as justification of a dominating praxis.” In his “Ricoeur as Social Philosopher,” Joseph Bien (1996:301) writes that Ricoeur in moving away from what he “considers [ideology’s] domination and conflict”...turns to Max Weber’s conditions of social integration and social relationships as a more positive starting. “It is at such a level that ideology receives its primary function which is to say the necessity for any social group to make its own image (Bien 1996:301). Nevertheless, “Ricoeur’s second concept of ideology stresses the notion of domination. Any social group has not only the mass of citizens but some form of governing elite which has the need to employ force” (Bien

1996:302). But a legitimized authority is necessary in order to employ force. "It is here," Bien continues " that...ideology serves in an interpretive manner in supporting the claims of the hierarchical aspect of the social order and in shoring up the belief of the citizens." It is at this point where Bien brings in Ricoeur's notion of "over-value" situated between belief and claim. This "over-value" on the claim to legitimate authority and besides having an already interpretive role, ideology now also acts as justification for this overvalue. Bien (1996:302) concludes:

But just because it serves both roles "is why we cannot start with a merely negative or pejorative conception of ideology. We have rather to concern ourselves with a superimposition of functions which makes of ideology an overdetermined concept."

#### Rizal's Demands for Reform, Ideology and Concept of Social Ethics

Rizal and his compatriots listed six demands for reform from the Spanish crown. The first was the restoration of the representation of the Philippines in the Spanish Cortes which was gained twice in 1812 and 1837. The second was the secularization of parishes. This would transfer the administration of the parishes from the Spanish friars--who would return to their convents inasmuch as that was part of their religious vows--to Filipino or Spanish secular priests. Third was the extension and improvement of primary education. Fourth was the establishment and propagation of vocational education. Fifth was to reform all the branches of government. And finally, the equal division of government posts between Filipinos and Spaniards (Alzona 1992:ix-xi; Coates 1992:244n1).

Rizal scholars from Jesuit Raul J. Bonoan, to University of the Philippines professors Leopoldo Yabes and Cesar Majul traditionally claim that Rizal's political ideas were derived primarily, if not exclusively, from the Enlightenment tradition (Quibuyen 1999: 165). Without denying that Rizal subscribed to the democratic ideal of

the Enlightenment, Quibuyen (1999: 165) links Rizal with Johann Gottlieb Herder (1744-1803) as “the author who influenced [Rizal] most profoundly, as far as the study of history and culture[.]” As Saiedi (1993: 126) points out, besides advocating “the concept of the unity of culture, Herder advocates the thesis of the unity of humanity,”[ and that] “alternative cultural realities are natural realizations of diverse possibilities.” “None of these cultural forms,” as far as Herder was concerned, “should be considered as a superior form or as the end of the historical progress (Saiedi 1993: 126). Relocating Rizal’s primary philosophical influence from the Kantian to the Herderian might give a clearer view and a sharper focus toward the understanding of Rizal’s thoughts and ideas with respect to his social and political ideals. In this regard, here is what Quibuyen (1999: 164) has to say:

Rizal’s affinity with Herder’s ideas is uncanny: the notion that the integrity of all peoples and historical epochs have intrinsic value must be respected; the stress on the influence of climactic and geographic factors, and historical circumstances on the development of cultures; the lifelong rejection of tyranny and the affirmation of human rights and all that fosters human freedom and dignity.

Proceeding along with Quibuyen (1999: 163) one finds that Rizal’s outlook was broader than the liberalism of his ... colleagues. He crossed the boundary of the Enlightenment and into the Romantic tradition with Herder. This notwithstanding, the Enlightenment was nevertheless introduced to the Filipinos by way of the writings of the other prominent Filipino nationalists. Foremost among them are Marcelo H. del Pilar, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, Juan Luna, and others who along with Jose Rizal were students in the universities of Madrid, Paris, and Heidelberg in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As acted out in Philippine history, here is an exemplification of Dussel’s “realization of

modernity ... a process that will transcend modernity as such, a trans-modernity, in which both modernity and its negated alterity (the victims) co-realize themselves in a process of mutual creative fertilization”(Huntington 2001: 109). In a gist, the colonizers and the colonized bound together in co-dependency that still has to be definitively broken.

As insinuated by Huntington’s remark above, there is much truth in the observation that the colonizers and the colonized are bound together in co-dependency. This co-dependency has yet to be definitively broken. On the other hand, there are human acts that once committed cannot be undone. As Kearney (2002:81) says, “the past is always present.” Colonization and wartime occupation of the Philippines by foreign powers have connected us to Spain, the United States of America, and Japan for all eternity. There is no way that this can ever be erased or abrogated. Rather, what should be looked into is how a country that has been bled of its resources by foreigners and their local subalterns, can rise above the ruins, and rebuild itself into a nation that can stand equal to those who earlier came to plunder. For a formerly colonized, to be able to stand on its own feet in a dynamic co-dependence with others is to redeem its dignity and self-respect.

But to get to this point requires change. One necessary step is for the abandonment of what Sionil Jose identified as the culture of poverty. And this would require the inculcation of an attitude of hope, and a disposition for self-renewal by way of *Bildung*, the education of the public.

There is a gap in this discussion that asks for a closer examination of the relationship between the *Aufklärung* and Romanticism. A certain uneasiness infuses the

prevalent notion that consider “the birth of German romanticism at the end of the eighteenth century as the death of the *Aufklärung*” (Beiser 1996:317). It has been a common supposition that romanticism was the reaction contra *Aufklärung*. After examining secondary literature he finds three reasons why romanticism supposedly broke from Enlightenment. Beiser (1996:317) notes that—

First, [romanticism] attempted to replace the rationalism of the *Aufklärung* with aestheticism... the romantics gave primacy to the imagination and intuition of art. Hence romanticism is often accused of “antirationalism.” Second, romanticism criticized the “individualism” of the *Aufklärung* and advocated instead an ideal of community... [w]hile the *Aufklärer* tended to see society only as an instrument... to protect the rights of the individual[.] Third, romanticism was an essentially conservative ideology, breaking with the liberal values of the [Enlightenment], such as the separation of church and state, religious tolerance, and freedom of the individual.

“But, like so many generalizations on the history of ideas,” Beiser (1996:318) finds “this commonplace view... a very misleading oversimplification.” He finds romanticism to have undergone many phases and transformations. Although critics of the Enlightenment, the romantics were nevertheless disciples of the *Aufklärung*.

Borrowing the typology of Paul Kluckhohn (1996:327n5), Beiser (1996:318) divides German romanticism into three periods: *Frühromantik*, from 1797 to 1802; *Hochromantik*, to 1815; and *Spätromantik*, to 1830. These changes in romanticism also altered and changed its relationship with the Enlightenment. Whereas the romantics were accused of being hostile to some of the values of the *Aufklärung*—the romantics became more conservative, collectivist, and antirationalist—this was evident mostly during the *Spätromantik* period. Moreover, the romantic antiphon to the Enlightenment exhibits ambivalence, marked by subtlety and complexity.

Beiser (1996:318) declares “the young romantics never put themselves in self-conscious opposition against the *Aufklärung* as a whole.” Although they criticized some aspects of the Enlightenment rather strongly, they nevertheless were “loyal to two of the most fundamental ideals of the *Aufklärung*: radical criticism and *Bildung*, the education of the public. Beiser (1996:319) goes on to say:

The challenge facing the young romantics in the 1790s was... to achieve *Bildung* without compromising the rights of radical criticism. In attempting to resolve this problem... the romantics not only rescued the *Aufklärung*, they also transformed it.

Beiser reaches the conclusion that it would be more accurate to regard early romanticism as the transformation of the Enlightenment, rather than its opposition.

It is in *Bildung* where Rizal conclusively connects with German romanticism. One of his main objectives was the education of the Filipinos. Rizal, in his *Manifesto to some Filipinos* written on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 1896 protests that he has given “proofs as one who most want liberties for [his] country. ... But [he] laid down as a prerequisite the education of the people in order that by means of such instruction, and by hard work, they may acquire a personality of their own and so become worthy of such liberties” (de la Costa 1992:206; Rizal 2000b:348). “On many different occasions and in many different ways,” de la Costa (1992:201) avers that [Rizal] “tried to bring home the point that ‘there would be no tyrants if there were no slaves’.” Within the time bracketed by his return to the Philippines in 1892 from his second trip to Europe, and his subsequent arrest and exile by the Spanish colonial authorities as a political undesirable, Rizal, according to de la Costa (1992: 201) “tried to get his countryman to begin what he conceived to be a long period of self-training and self-discipline.” In other words, if Filipinos desire the privileges of freedom, Rizal believed that they had to learn how to bear the

responsibilities of freedom. It was Rizal's desire for the Filipinos to understand "the concept of the nation as a community...constituted by two complementary perspectives, both nonracial and antistatist" (Quibuyen 1999:162). Explaining further, Quibuyen (1999:162) notes that "[o]ne stressed the cultural dimension—the nation as a historically constituted community of language and culture" which rests on "the principle of cultural nationalism" associated with Johann Gottfried Herder. "The other emphasized the ethical dimension—the nation as a moral community in which members were bound by a commitment to a common good [which] can be traced as far back as the Judeo-Christian tradition and Greek political thought."

To critique is not to denigrate, but to acknowledge the need for something better. To critique is to open space for an alternative to something unsatisfactory. To say that what the Filipino public requires is radical criticism and *Bildung* is to acknowledge a need for a better way of educating the same Filipino public. It is *Bildung* that Rizal ventured to introduce through his school and community activities during his exile in Dapitan. There exists in the Philippines today the unequal delivery of education to the people. This educational inequality is exemplified by the difference between the private and public school systems, academically and financially.

A great majority of school age children in the Philippines are educated through a public school system hampered by various obstacles and difficulties. While students in private schools receive what can be considered quality education, those in the public schools do not. Thus the bifurcated education system of the Philippines produces two kinds of publics: the first is a large group of young people whose education can stand some upgrading, and the second is a small group of young people who receive high

quality education from expensive private schools. This asymmetry in the education of these two groups clearly illustrates the difficulties a public school educated job applicant faces when competing with another who is educated in a private school. But it is in this bleak state of educational affairs where we see a bright possibility. This possibility is the multiplication of the *Alay ni Ignacio* project of the students from the Ateneo de Manila University. Perhaps the project can be replicated, better yet improved upon, by other privileged groups of students in exclusive private schools.

“The primary aim of the *La Liga* was,” according to Majul (1996:92) “to lay down the foundation for the eventual construction of a *community* that was to be both national and Filipino in character.” Majul understands this to mean, “the native inhabitants of the Philippines, by the end of the nineteenth century, were intended to be integrated by a new and definite ideology.” The importance and significance of *La Liga* can be better understood and appreciated if viewed against the background of the existing Spanish colonial and religious administration. What Rizal was attempting to do through his *La Liga* was to form a parallel community, using “an alternative form of integration” (Majul 1996:94). It was intended to exist as a distinctly Filipino national community where members looked at and saw each other as Filipinos, not as subjects of Spain, and not as fellow Christians. *La Liga* sought to compete in the same space with the existing Spanish colony and Christian community. “As a *competitive* community,” Majul (1996:94) saw “the community envisioned by the *Liga* [as] both *corrective* and *instructive*.” “[B]ut membership in the Filipino national community made it entirely irrelevant whether a Filipino was a Christian or not” Majul (1996:95) claims. “What

made a Filipino a member of the national community was not his religion...but his commitment to the secular aims of the *Liga*.”

Rizal, before completing his annotation of Morga’s 1609 *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* in 1889 had without doubt been thinking, and had adumbrated plans on how he could contribute to the redemption of the Philippine society of his era. As noted earlier, at that time Rizal’s *Filipinas* was under the grip of the Spanish religious orders in tandem with a colonial government. The social hierarchy of that period relegated *indios* like Rizal at the bottom of the ladder. Immediately above the social ladder were the *mestizos*. Two steps higher were the pure blooded Spaniards who were born in the Philippines, referred to as Filipinos by their born-in-Spain compatriots. On top of the heap were the pure blooded Spaniards born in the Iberian peninsula, the *peninsulares*. But what Rizal and his subjugated nation faced were nothing new, either as a world historical event, or as an exercise of Spanish imperial colonization. Much of the same has happened many years earlier in what we now refer to as Latin America. At the start of the Philippine revolution against Spain in 1896, Spain’s empire in Latin America has already dissolved, and all that was left was Cuba and Puerto Rico, both islands covetously eyed by the relatively new nation, the United States of America. To better understand and appreciate the struggle Rizal and his fellow travelers waged for their country’s freedom, one must listen to Enrique Dussel as he speaks of the prefatory phase and the actual colonial conquest of Latin America. Dussel (1995:12) specifies:

The birthdate of modernity is 1492, even though its gestation, like that of the fetus, required a period of intrauterine growth. Whereas modernity gestated in the free, creative medieval European cities, it came to birth in Europe’s confrontation with the Other. By controlling, conquering, and violating the Other, Europe defined itself as discoverer, conquistador, and colonizer of an alter-

ity likewise constitutive of modernity. ...Modernity dawned in 1492 and with it the myth of a special kind of sacrificial violence which eventually eclipsed whatever was non-European.

Drawing inspiration from Kantian Enlightenment, “Hegel (1770-1831),” according to Dussel (1995:20) “portrays world history (*Weltgeschichte*) as the self-realization of God, as a theodicy of reason and of liberty (*Freiheit*), and as a process of Enlightenment[.]” He goes on to explain that the concept of development (*Entwicklung*) in Hegel’s ontology...unfolds according to a linear dialectic and has a direction that Dussel (1995:20, 149n7) believes to be purely ideological. Supporting his contention, Dussel cites from Hegel’s *Samtliche Werke*, Appendix 2; p.197 in the English translation. It is there where Hegel writes that “[u]niversal history goes from East to West. Europe is absolutely the *end of universal history*. Asia is the beginning.” Dussel (1995:20) understands this alleged East-West movement as clearly precluding “Latin America and Africa from world history and characterizes Asia as essentially confined to a state of immaturity and childhood (*Kindheit*).” One can add the Philippines (such as it was then) in Hegel’s preclusion of Latin America and Africa from world history inasmuch as the Asia Hegel refers to would go no further southeast than China.

In any event, “while modernity is undoubtedly a European occurrence,” Dussel (1995:9-10) indicates that “it also originates in a dialectical relation with non-Europe. Modernity appears when Europe organizes the initial world-system and places itself at the center of world history over against a periphery equally constitutive of modernity.”

Dussel contends that “[m]odernity is a world phenomenon, commencing with the *simultaneous* constitution of Spain with reference to its periphery, Amerindia, including the Caribbean, Mexico, and Peru”—until finally the Philippines in 1571. Diego

Velázquez appointed Hernán Cortés in charge of the conquest of Yucatan, and by 1521 had already conquered Mexico, the year Magellan lost his way and found himself in what we now refer to as the Philippines. Spain held on to Mexico until 1821, fifty years before Jose Rizal was born. By that time Spain has lost its colonies in South America. All that was left of the Spanish empire was Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

In 1872, the Spanish authorities in the Philippines, with the acquiescence if not encouragement of the Spanish Catholic clergy executed the three Filipino priests mentioned earlier, Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora. This horrible event happened fifty-one years after Spain lost Mexico. It was only around this time that the idea of nationhood began to buzz in the minds of the Filipino natives. Rizal was then eleven years old. By this time, the Spanish colonizers have grown inured to the plight and pleas of colonized natives, having experienced both gaining and losing their South American colonies, Mexico, and some Caribbean islands. Verily, the Spanish empire was on its last leg, and



it took the United States of America little effort to cut the remaining leg at the knee in 1898 when the latter forcibly occupied the Philippines.

“Before the rest of Europe,” Dussel (1995:17) reminds, Spain “at the end of the fifteenth century... was the only European power with the capacity for external territorial conquest. At the same time, Latin America also rediscovered its own *place* in the history of modernity as the *first periphery* of modern Europe... [enduring] the effects of global modernization later to be felt in [the Philippines].” And it was the Spanish warrior who, after occupying a geographical territory “proceeded to control the bodies of the inhabitants, since they needed to be *pacified*” (Dussel 1995:38).

Born out of the distortions of the Enlightenment, it was European arrogance directed towards the *indio* Filipino Other, articulated in the Spanish manner, that was determinedly opposed to the arguments Rizal advanced in demanding relief for his people from abuses committed by the Spanish religious orders and colonial government officials. Schumacher notes (1996:113) “that for all the attraction that European scientific and technological progress held for him, and his personal nostalgia for the world of German scholarship, it was not only retrograde and corrupt Spanish colonialism that [Rizal] abhorred, but it was *Europe’ sense of racial superiority that he likewise rejected* (emphasis mine).”

#### Redemption in Dapitan, Betrayal in Manila

The Spanish authorities exiled Rizal in 1892 for four years in Dapitan, a town in the Zamboanga peninsula on the island of Mindanao. Dapitan had only two colonial institutions at that time: the police, which was headed by a Spanish commandant, and the church, which was administered by a Jesuit, priest (Quibuyen 1999:311). “There was no

medical doctor for the whole town, no primary schoolhouse, no park, no streetlights, no irrigation system. The townsfolk were either farmers or fishermen, left to their own devices without any assistance from the colonial regime. Nevertheless the townsfolk were required to pay taxes, go to confession, attend mass every Sunday, and hand in their weekly offerings to the church. All these were to change upon his arrival. Quibuyen (1999:311) reports that Rizal

...built a one-doctor hospital, where he provided the community with low-cost, as well as free, medical and surgical care. ... He stimulated business activity by forming a cooperative and engaging in farming and the export of copra, hemp, and other agricultural products to Manila. ... In addition he built a schoolhouse where he gave free education to the community's brightest boys and young men in exchange for their services in his projects.

Rizal's four years of "exile in Dapitan mark almost to the day the four years of the Katipunan's development, from its inception to revolution," notes Coates (1992:243). It is acknowledged that Bonifacio was inspired to establish the Katipunan by Rizal and the short-lived *La Liga Filipina*. But Rizal, as he promised the Spanish authorities, kept his thoughts about the revolution to himself during his exile. His views about it have not changed. Rizal has earlier disclosed to his compatriots that it would take time to prepare and organize a revolution. But neither has his aim changed: liberation from Spain. During the last year of his exile in Dapitan, revolution broke out (Coates 1992:244, 283). "To the Spaniards he had given his word, to the Katipunan his advice, and [Rizal] could only hope they would take it."

#### Imagination and Potential for Action

Thompson (in Ricoeur 1981:16) says, "There is no doubt that history claims to offer a true representation of past events." He then links up with Ricoeur's assertion that,

“just as *mimesis* endows fiction with a referential relation to the real world of action, so too history has an imaginary aspect” (italics in the original).

Ricoeur (1981:295) avers that “[t]he ‘true’ histories of the past uncover the buried potentialities of the present.” And borrowing Benedetto Croce’s notion that there is only a history of the present, Ricoeur upholds it with a renovation: there is only a history of *the potentialities of the present*” (italics mine). It is in the potentialities of a history of the present where imagination becomes generative.

Kearney (1988:18) argues that “the philosophical concept of imagination only fully came into its own in the modern era.” He claims that “imagination most centrally assumed a ‘local habitation and a name’ during this modern period.” He clarifies that his “conception of imagination is based on a flexible hermeneutic which construes history as an open-ended drama of narratives” (Kearney 1988:19).

It is in the postmodern where the Philippines—both country and people—now finds itself temporally situated. It is in *postmodernity* where Filipinos should find the “occasion to reflect upon the inner breakdown of modernity... and explore the causes of [their] contemporary dislocation.” Postmodernism understood “as a task of critical remembrance... would seek to re-read and re-write [Philippine] modernity from the point of view of its inherent end: an end involved in the modern project from the outset, albeit forgotten in its perpetual rush forward, its blinding obsession with the Onward March of History” (Kearney 1988:26).

Postmodernism refuses to be a mere afterword to modernity, for as Kearney (1988:27) explains, postmodernism “assumes the task of investigating the crisis and the trauma at the very heart of modernity.” The postmodern imperative that faces Filipinos is

for them “to envision the end of modernity as a possibility of rebeginning.” These are nourished by the present understanding of postmodern “as a testament to the fact that the end of modernity is an integral mutation within its development”(Kearney 1988:27), much like early Romanticism was to the Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*). As Beiser suggests (1996:319) “It would be more accurate to regard [early Romanticism] as [the] transformation [of *Aufklärung*] rather than its antithesis.”

But why this concatenation of postmodernism and romanticism? Perhaps it would profit us to search for what can be learned from Rizal’s experiences when he was in Europe. In developing his concept of the Filipino nation, Rizal received inspiration from both the Kantian Enlightenment and as re-articulated by the early Romantics. This would explain Quibuyen’s (1999:163) assertion that “Rizal’s outlook was broader than the liberalism of his *ilustrado* colleagues. Rizal went beyond the [Kantian] Enlightenment tradition while remaining rooted in the ethical values of Catholicism.”

#### Nineteenth Century and Twenty-First Century Problems

Of the five reforms demanded from the Spanish colonial government by Rizal and his associates, two have remained implacable, and still bedevil the Philippines. One is the improvement of primary education. And the other is the reform of all the branches of government.

On the improvement of primary education in the Philippines, we reprise Alonto and Gonzalez. Alonto reported that the public school system in Mindanao is really as bad as the decrepit school facilities. The books provided the schoolchildren are without covers, and look like scrap paper sewn together. Gonzalez on the other hand said that there has been some improvement in the Philippine educational system. And she finds the

public school teachers no less than admirable. “I have seen the effort and commitment public school teachers invest in their vocation. I really admire them,” Gonzalez admits. “We who are in the private education sector, we don’t even have the same sense of commitment that the public school teachers invest in their work.” Sadly, the government pays the public school teachers much less than what private school teachers are paid.

Padilla-Rufino is very disappointed with many of the high government officials. One former Secretary of Justice was reported to have received bribe money, and deposited it in a Swiss bank. Since the Swiss government learned of it to be ill-gotten wealth, they made the knowledge of the deposit of the bribe money public, and the Ex-Justice Secretary was charged in court for bribery and corruption. Now no one talks about it anymore. It is old news swept under the rug.

Moreover, there are those from the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). Padilla-Rufino told me that she has heard a lot of people say, “we just want to be able to do the right thing. But the system prevents us from doing the right thing.” Take the payment of business taxes as an example. Someone I know wanted to pay the correct amount. But an agent of the BIR comes anyway and they look at their books and of course, the agent finds a discrepancy. Whether the assessment of the agent is correct or not, you cannot argue. The agent proposes to reduce the tax payable, but in exchange, the tax payer has to come across and meet the BIR agent’s “fee.” Indeed, rampant corruption, and absolute disregard of ethical norms among Philippine political and business leaders has long been a major problem.

Given our human resources, natural resources, our geographical realities, and our political alliances, this question comes to mind: What kind of people should we become

so that we can build the country that we desire? Or are Filipinos the way they are because they do not know, and neither are they in agreement as to what kind of a nation they should build?

### Configuration, and Emplotment of the Narrative (M<sub>2</sub>)

Recalling Ricoeur's counsel evoked by Kearney (1995:81) that "we bring [the alternate world] closer to the present by means of intermediary projects within the scope of social action...to prevent the future from dissolving into fantasy," one finds that the intermediary projects are what make up mimesis<sub>2</sub>--the emplotment, the bridge, the movement from mimesis<sub>1</sub> to mimesis<sub>3</sub>. Emplotment is what "brings together factors as heterogeneous as agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, unexpected results" (Ricoeur 1984:65).

To Ricoeur (1984:46) mimesis<sub>2</sub> is "the mimesis of creation." It is also the key that "opens the kingdom of the *as if*" (Ricoeur 1984:64).

### Narrative Identity

"We tell stories," Ricoeur (1984:75) informs "because in the last analysis human lives need and merit being narrated. This remark takes on its full force when we refer to the necessity *to save the history of the defeated and the lost* [italics mine]. The whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative."

Upon the recognition that "one's identity is fundamentally narrative in character," Kearney (1999:26) divulges that what one discovers are "an ineradicable openness and indeterminacy at the root of one's collective memory. This is why, at least in principle, the tendency of a nation towards [distorted] nationalism can be resisted by its own narrative resources to imagine itself otherwise—either through its own eyes or those of

others.” “Narrative memory is never innocent,” and Kearney (1999:27) calls for “critical caution. Narrative memory is a battlefield of ongoing conflicts of interpretations and competing meanings, and can easily lead to false consciousness and ideological closures.” This distorting power underscores “the need for a hermeneutic of critical suspicion as practiced by Ricoeur or Habermas” (Kearney 1999:27). “Those who think they can dispense with historical memory by fiat will ultimately be dispensed with by it.” Having been forewarned, let us embark on a voyage to better survey the field of narrative identity.

Ricoeur (1990:247) claims that “the connection between self-constancy and narrative identity confirms one of [his] oldest convictions... that the self of self-knowledge is not the egotistical and narcissistic ego whose hypocrisy and naiveté the hermeneutics of suspicion have denounced.” Rather, “it is the fruit of an examined life... [a]nd an examined life is... one purged, one clarified by the cathartic effects of the narratives... conveyed by... culture.” Moreover, “[t]he notion of narrative identity also indicates its fruitfulness in that it can be applied to a community as well as to an individual... [inasmuch as both] are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history (Ricoeur 1990:247).

Ricoeur (1990:248) confirms “a circular relation between ‘character’... of a person [or] of a people and the narratives that shape and express this character which illustrates... the circle” in his description of the threefold mimesis. Ricoeur (1984:71-2) faces frontally “the suspicion of a vicious circle which the transversal from mimesis<sub>1</sub> to mimesis<sub>3</sub> across mimesis<sub>2</sub> must give rise to, [where] the end point leads back to the starting point or, worse, the end point seems anticipated in the starting point.” He admits

the indisputability of the analysis as circular, but refutes the viciousness of its circularity. Ricoeur (1984:72) “would rather speak of an endless spiral that would carry the meditation past the same point a number of times, but at different altitudes.” This brings us to the determination that “narrative identity is the poetic resolution of the hermeneutic circle (Ricoeur 1990:248). Kearney’s understanding of poetics might prove useful in better understanding the poetic resolution of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic circle.

“Poetics... includes the threefold function of cultivating (*colere*), constructing (*aedificare*), and letting dwell by unfolding something into the fullness of being (*producere*),” says Kearney (1995:xiii). At the same time, Kearney suggests that “[p]oetic license... extends over every significant expression of productive imagination where significance is accorded a sense beyond the immediately graspable and calculable.

Linda Fisher (1997:209) interprets the hermeneutic circle as “fundamentally, a dialectical and reflexive principle wherein two terms come into relation with one another, but not merely in an alternating, seesaw reciprocity, but in a progressive, mutually informing activity; the sense of circularity coming from the continual deepening and developing of the relation in what is often described as a spiraling movement.” Resuming her explanation, Fisher (1997:210) says “Ricoeur’s various formulations of hermeneutic circularity acknowledge and build on this fundamental continuity in the conceptual structure of the circle, at once identifying the essential character common to all versions, while also laying out a progressive taxonomy of formulations moving from least complex... to more complex[.]”

Ricoeur (1990:248) returns, “to indicate the limits of the solution that the notion of narrative identity brings to the initial aporetics of temporality.” Whereas “the

constitution of narrative identity...[illustrates] in a useful way the interplay of history and narrative in the refiguration of a time that is itself indivisibly phenomenological time... it also includes, in turn, an internal limitation that bears witness to the first inadequacy of the answer narration brings to the question posed by the aporetics of temporality.” First of all, “narrative identity is not a stable and seamless identity because it is always possible to compose several plots on the subject of the same incident, [as] it is always possible to weave different, even opposed, plots about our lives,” Ricoeur (1990:248) explains. And secondly, Ricoeur (1990:249) reveals that “narrative identity does not exhaust the question of the self-constancy of a subject, whether this be a particular individual or a community of individuals.” His analysis of the act of reading leads him to say that “the practice of narrative lies in a thought experiment by means of which we try to inhabit worlds foreign to us.” Ricoeur (1990:249) goes on to say:

In this sense, narrative exercises the imagination more than the will, even though it remains a category of action. It is true that this opposition between imagination and will applies mostly to that moment of reading we called the moment of stasis. But we added that reading also includes a moment of impetus... when reading becomes a provocation to be and to act differently. However, this impetus is transformed into action only through a decision whereby a person says: Here I stand!

Except through this decisive moment that makes ethical responsibility the highest factor in self-constancy, Ricoeur (1990:249) concludes “narrative identity is not equivalent to true self-constancy.” In this regard, he (1990:249) goes on to show “that the theory of narrative can always oppose to ethics’ claim to be the sole judge of the constitution of subjectivity would be to recall that narrativity is not denuded of every normative, evaluative, or prescriptive dimension.” This is so because the narrator, according to Ricoeur (1990:249) “imposes on the reader a vision of the world that is never ethically

neutral” thus drawing the reader into making “a new evaluation of the world and of the reader as well.”

Morny Joy (1997:xxvi) understands that “[n]arrative identity is not just a psychological construct, but a composite of detailed memory and present re-evaluation. Narratives of whatever nature (of victory or of defeat) furnish the building blocks by which we construct a sense of identity. The debt is not just to the past, but to ourselves,” [and I would add, to our successors]. Let us return to the problem of the continual repetition of the symptoms as obstacle to remembering that we touched upon earlier. In this regard, Joy (1997:xxiv) points out that “Ricoeur believes a narrative form of identity can rescue us from our contemporary dilemmas as defined by the postmodern impasse between repetition and indeterminacy.”

In his foreword to *Paul Ricoeur and Narrative*, David Pellauer (1997:xvi) notes that “through the stories we tell and retell, that we read and reread, we also discover and convey what [Ricoeur] calls a ‘narrative identity’, an identity that may refer to communities as well as to individual subjects. [N]arrative identity is not only related to who we are and what we do. [Narrative identity] has a complex temporality... [and] may best be characterized as a kind of concordant discordance.” Expanding on this, David Rasmussen (1996:165) notes “One of Ricoeur’s most brilliant insight is to reconceive this dialectic of concordance and discordance on a higher level as the dialectic between sameness [*idem*] and selfhood [*ipse*] thematized as a set of ‘imaginative variations’ entertained by the narrative.” To Rasmussen (1996:165) “This is the very point of narrative. Narrative does not seek to conceal this dialectic but rather it seeks out the contradictions.”

Ricoeur (1996:6) confirms that “narrative identity is not that of an immutable substance or of a fixed structure, but rather the mobile identity issuing from the combination of the concordance of the story, taken as a structured totality, and the discordance imposed by the encountered events.” An important corollary to this is that “it is possible to revise a recounted story which takes account of other events, or even which organizes the recounted events differently.” “Inasmuch as ‘[t]he identity of a group, culture, people, or nation, is not that of an immutable substance...but...rather, of a recounted story,” Ricoeur (1996:7) contends that there are “possibilities of revising every story which has been handed down and of carving out a place for several stories directed towards the same past.” What really prevents cultures from allowing themselves to be recounted differently,” Ricoeur asserts “is the influence exercised over the collective memory by what we term the ‘founding events’, the repeated commemoration and celebration [that] tend to freeze the history of each cultural group into an identity which is not only immutable but also deliberately and systematically incommunicable.”

Borrowing from David Pellauer, in short, the stories we tell and retell, that we read and reread of ourselves and of each other constitutes our narrative identity either as an individual, or as a group, culture, people or nation. From this understanding “emerges a model of memory exchange whose ethical import is easy to grasp,” says Ricoeur (1996:6-7). It also takes us to a further step which is “that of taking responsibility, in imagination and in sympathy, for the story of the other, through the life narratives which concern that other.”

## Interrogation and Emplotment

In annotating Morga's *Sucesos*, in writing his essays *The Philippines a Century Hence*, and *The Indolence of the Filipinos*, in his *Message to the Young Women of Malolos*, and in composing the constitution of *Liga Filipina*, Rizal interrogated Empire and questioned its authority. Thus he initiated resistance activity operating "within the fractures and fissures opened up in [colonial] discourse, interpolating that discourse for its own ends, appropriating its technologies for self-empowerment, and ultimately transforming it" (Ashcroft 2001:114). Thus he gave one example of how to break down the walls of his people's penitential colonization. But in preparing the Filipinos for the joys of freedom, he was insistent on their education. As far as Rizal was concerned, the Filipino people must move towards forming themselves into a national community of ethics. They must know and understand that the enjoyment of the gift of freedom is accompanied by responsibilities that must be respected. To be ignorant of these responsibilities is to transform freedom into disorder, free men into felons. But as fate would have it, and as Rizal (2000a:161) warned, "Perhaps the great American republic with interests in the Pacific and without a share in the partition of Africa may one day think of acquiring possessions beyond the seas. It is not impossible, for example is contagious, greed and ambition being the vices of the strong[.]"

And indeed, the United States of America intervened in the flow of Philippine destiny. The Filipino masses, instead of being educated on the responsibilities of freedom, instead of being encouraged to form themselves into a national community of ethics were taught and trained to fit into America's own image. Lamentably, the Filipino leadership elite, (perhaps due to their misunderstanding of American intentions?), bailed

out of their participation in the development of the Filipino nation inspired by the Spirit of 1896. Instead, they joined forces with the Americans in the governance and control of the Filipino people. Before long, realizing his symbolic power, the Americans appropriated Jose Rizal, reinterpreting and transforming him into a symbol of submission to Empire and colonization. And from that point on, as has been said many times, the rest is history.

To evoke the memory of an obstinate, hardheaded Filipino patriot who remained to his last breath irreconcilable to American sovereignty over his beloved country is appropriate here. General Artemio Ricarte is this man. He fought both armies of Spain and of the United States of America for Philippine independence. To his dying day, Ricarte refused to surrender and accept American sovereignty. Instead of surrendering to the USA, he chose to live in exile in Japan. Sturtevant (1976:196) acknowledges Ricarte's "loyalty to the 'spirit of '96'." But as Quibuyen (2000:106) realizes, "events overtook Ricarte during the [American] Commonwealth administration after 1935. The complete weaning away of the Filipinos from their nationalist past and their absorption into an 'official nationalism' that looked up to America as the model to emulate" [has begun]. If the people of the Philippines today sincerely desire to bring to reality a nation they can be proud of, they must rekindle in their hearts and minds the Spirit of 1896. Only they—not Rizal, not Bonifacio, not Mabini, not del Pilar, not Ricarte—the Filipinos of this century, can re-appropriate that national spirit and set it once again on fire. Perhaps, with a new Spirit of 1896 alit and alive within them, the Philippines and *all* her people might still attain their yet unrealized potentials.

### Summary and Upcoming Text

That much of Philippine history taught in both public and private schools at this late date is still permeated with distortions embedded by the previous colonial government is imponderable. In this regard, the hermeneutics of Ricoeur and Kearney show means by which these embedded distortions can be pried loose, releasing the Filipino mind from the powerful grip of colonial mentality.

Moreover, the rise of an active civil society can be encouraged through the education of the Philippine public. This kind of education does not necessarily have to take the shape and format of formal education. As a matter of fact, anyone can teach by letting their lives speak to others. They can teach by example.

Coming up are the findings this research extracted. The conclusions reached are derived from these findings. Implications that might affect both the short, and long run of the future Filipino society are drawn from the conclusions formed.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Findings, Implications, and Conclusions

#### Introduction

The Philippines is in a state of tension. The country's politicians today are no different from the squabbling *datus* of pre-Hispanic contact—raiding, feasting, trading with each other, as Laura Lee Junker (1999) and William Henry Scott (1982, 1992, 1994) discovered in their researches. Present day Filipino politicians are more concerned about their constituencies and their political alliances as were the *datus* concerned with their barangays and their alliances with other *datus* like them. But at that time, the *datus* only had their barangays to concern them. The *datus*' primary concern for their barangay is understandable for they had yet neither concept nor vision of a Philippine nation. But today's Filipino politicians do not have that excuse. Today's politicians, with a nation to unite, and a state to govern, seem to continue to place the welfare of their constituencies before the welfare of the nation, much as the *datus* of yore were more concerned about their barangays.

#### Findings

These are four primary findings revealed in the data analysis: First, Filipinos have a propensity to splinter into competing groups. Second, there appears to be a culture of poverty among those who are economically deprived. Third, there is a noticeable absence of credible political leaders. Fourth, people of influence have a propensity toward historical despoliation.

The findings are followed by a discussion of implications. Therefore, the following four findings may contribute to a revised vision of who the Filipino is.

## 1. Propensity to Splinter

As seen earlier, Filipinos still identify themselves based on their ethnolinguistic or regional roots: Kalinga, Apayao, Ilocano, Manobo, Tagalog, Cebuano, Maranao, among many more. Many of the people in Mindanao who follow the Islamic faith do not consider themselves as Filipinos as revealed by Salah Jubair (1999) because to them Filipinos are the natives who were conquered by the Spaniards and converted to the Catholicism of their Spanish conquerors. The Islamic people of Mindanao, they contend, were never really conquered by the Spaniards, and they have remained faithful to Islam. In the cosmopolitan areas, Chinese, and Filipinos of Chinese heritage do not necessarily consider the Malay Filipinos as their cultural or economic equals. And many non-Filipinos on the other hand reciprocate the Chinese attitude of superiority with hatred and enmity as described earlier in this study. These attitudes began to calcify from the late 1600s when the Spaniards, with the enthusiastic support of Bishop Salazar, established quarters for the Chinese tradesmen just outside the walled city of Manila. But Governor Gomez Perez Dasmariñas, according to de la Costa (1992:36) “did not share Bishop Salazar’s enthusiasm. [Dasmariñas] claimed that the Chinese were ruining the native textile industry by unfair competition, and violating international law by refusing the Spaniards reciprocal trading rights in their homeland.” Five hundred years later, Amy Chua (2003:3) has this to say:

My family is part of the Philippines’ tiny but entrepreneurial, economically powerful Chinese minority. Just 1 percent of the population, Chinese Filipinos control as much as 60 percent of the private economy, including the country’s four major airlines and almost all of the country’s banks, hotels, shopping malls, and major conglomerates.

Was Governor Dasmariñas prescient? Were the Chinese in the Philippines able to gain a headlock on the country's economy mainly due to unfair competition as Dasmariñas claimed in the late 1600s?

In this study, it was stated earlier that the various peoples of the country—Muslim Filipino, Lumad Filipino, Chino Filipino, and Indio Filipino, are counterposed or in opposition with each other. This divisiveness in Filipino society is reflected in the composition of the association of students at the University of the Philippines. There is an organization of students from the northern mountain tribes. Another, an organization of Chinese Filipino students. Also, of Muslim Filipinos. Plus many other regional organizations. But there is not one organization at UP whose purpose is to unite and strengthen bonding among the various different flavors of Filipino students enrolled in the university. Not one to envision a nation united.

On the political front, there is the long running insurgency of the communists demanding for socioeconomic reforms. Alongside is the Muslim secessionist movement in Mindanao. Not to be forgotten is the autonomy that the people of the Cordilleras have been petitioning the Philippine government for, as mentioned by Tangilag in the course of our conversation. There are too many political, social, economic, and religious issues that pull the people apart, with no genuine effort from anyone to bring about unity. I suggest that to ask if there is a crisis of leadership in the Philippines may be naïve because the general populace uninhibitedly expresses cynicism toward politicians and the election process.

## 2. Culture of Poverty

Sionil Jose finds that the lack of a Filipino national vision rides on the absence of a sense of nation. And this sense of nation is declared absent by an obfuscated sense of identity. Identity, to Sionil Jose is connected to industry. The South Korean economic development is what brought Sionil Jose to the conclusion that there is a correlation between identity and economic/industrial development. He also believes that Philippine should have developed its maritime industry. There is also an implicit connection between identity and work. As it has been recounted many times, people who retire from their jobs after thirty-five years find themselves adrift, lacking any sense or purpose, or identity. To many people their work is their identity.

In Sionil Jose's speech we cited earlier, he spoke of the impoverished men who live in the slum area where he passes by every morning "who do nothing but idle, gossip and drink." And if this is what a young child of poor parents sees everyday, he cannot rightfully be expected to behave differently from his elders. The child will grow up a poor man, according to the example set by the impoverished men Sionil Jose pointed out "who do nothing [everyday] but idle, gossip and drink." Unless the poor Filipino people change their daily routine, the Filipino "culture of poverty" as Sionil Jose calls it, will go on in perpetuity" because by implication one's identity is derived from one's job or work. And until the practice of the culture of poverty is bled out of the poor people's day-to-day existence, economic progress is not in their future.

## 3. Incredible Absence of Credible Leaders

Herein lies a discouraging thought: the social and political systems and institutions in the Philippines make it extremely difficult for leaders to emerge outside of

the elite class. Filipino political leaders since the end of the American era have risen only from the elite class. If not from the elite, one would need a very strong and influential patron in order to rise and occupy the Philippine presidency. Ramon Magsaysay and the CIA would be a good example.

It would be wrong to say that there are never any good political candidates who are capable of providing honest-to-goodness service to people and nation. But the people of the Philippines have shown many times that they would rather have movie stars perform the roles of their nations leaders in real life rather than in the movies. The last movie star president was deposed by a popular uprising just a few years ago. On May 2004, the people of the Philippines seem poised once again to vote another movie star into the presidency of the Philippines. Was Rizal correct when he said some 108 years ago that the people of the Philippines must have the right education to participate in the design of their government, and in the election of their leaders?

As mentioned earlier, de Quiros recalled during our conversation that Filipinos equated Douglas MacArthur's return to the Philippines after World War II to no less than what Moses did in leading his people out of the wilderness. But the dismal defense of the islands against the Japanese appears to land squarely on Mac Arthur's feet. In this regard, Carlson (1995:35) has this to say:

Throughout the 1930s [MacArthur's] ... reports about Philippine defense capabilities [sharply contradicted that] of his adviser and assistant, Major Dwight Eisenhower, who believed that the general's reports were "far too optimistic" and likely to "build up illusions that could prove to be dangerous in the future."

Unfortunately for the Filipinos and Americans who were in the Philippines at the start of World War II, "Eisenhower was correct" (Carlson 1995:35).

MacArthur's dismal performance from the bombing of Pearl Harbor "until Wainright's surrender a few months later" notwithstanding, "MacArthur was built up as a hero... due to President Roosevelt's need to win public support for the war effort" (Carlson 1995:35). Carlson goes on to say that "in spite of the fact that 'Dugout Doug' had never performed bravely in combat, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor." But how did such a travesty happen? As Carlson (1995:50n18) discovers from the Harold L. Ickes Papers at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division in Washington, D.C., the answer is as follows:

In Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes' Diary, Monday, March 30, 1942, Ickes tells of a discussion in the Oval Office in which Roosevelt wanted MacArthur to get the Congressional Medal of Honor in order to boost civilian support for the war. Ickes said that when the President was told that MacArthur had "never performed bravely in battle... [but rather] hid in Corregidor," Roosevelt's response was, "Make up an incident then."

As Conrad de Quiros previously noted, many distortions were devised and imbedded in Philippine history by previous colonial governments through their ideologically skewed... policies, supplying historical falsifications that still populate Filipino narratives. A mythical version of the past was employed to supplant Philippine history, de Quiros claimed earlier. Mythical as fictionalized half-truths in support of American colonial agenda. If de Quiros is correct, then indeed myth is what is taught as Philippine history even as late as today.

After World War II, before the granting of political independence to a devastated Philippines, Jasper Bell, chairman of the House Committee on Insular Affairs was preparing for the passage of H.R. 4185. This bill, in addition to free trade and quotas stipulated that "American citizens and industries would have equal rights with Filipinos

to “develop and exploit” natural resources in the Philippines (Carlson 1995:108). Senator Millard Tydings was critical of H.R. 4185 asserting that the “whole philosophy is to keep the Philippines economically even though we have lost them politically” (Carlson 1995:111). Carlson further contends that “in making this accusation Tydings was [also] referring... to [Philippine Islands] High Commissioner Paul McNutt... favoring a longer period of Commonwealth status” for the Philippines.

Meanwhile, after the passage of the Bell’s Philippine Trade bill on April 5, 1945 Filipino politicians Roxas and Osmeña were both campaigning for the presidency of the forthcoming independent Philippine republic. In their campaign speeches neither “Roxas nor Osmeña addressed the issue of agrarian unrest or any other fundamental social, political, or economic malady, [but]...in this environment Bell’s trade bill, while in reality appealing to both men, became an easy and safe target for criticism” (Carlson 1995:126). These two Filipino politicians knew that by attacking the trade bill because of its granting Americans equal rights with Filipinos to “develop and exploit” natural resources in the Philippines, they could rally the general Filipino electorate to their side. In fact, Osmeña criticized “the ‘parity clause’ as ‘unAmerican’, and as ‘going against Philippine Sovereignty’,” Carlson (1995:127) writes. Meanwhile, High Commissioner Paul McNutt “left Washington to confront the Filipino candidates [Roxas and Osmeña] personally” (Carlson 1995:128). “Soon after meeting both *Roxas and Osmeña*, McNutt was able to confidently report...that *both candidates supported the trade bill* and that *their use of the issue in the election had been ‘artificial campaign rhetoric’*” (italics added).

As far back as 1945 and even much earlier, what Padilla-Rufino said still stands: by their actions or inactions, Philippine political and government leaders...do not really want to change anything. Both from conversation and literature, one can see that the concept of leadership for the Philippines needs a sharper focus influenced by the Ricoeurian moral imperative of oneself as another.

#### Propensity toward Historical Despoliation

Whatever traces or monuments to genuine Philippine history remain, Filipinos seem determined to despoil, if not erase. Recall what Padilla-Rufino narrated earlier about an old church in Batangas built during the Spanish era, set on a spacious real estate, fronting the municipal hall. But for reasons known only to him, the parish priest leased a piece of the church property to a McDonald franchisee where now stands within the churchyard this icon to billions of hamburgers sold worldwide—the golden arch.

Some of the last remaining historical monuments from Spanish Philippines are the churches. Earlier, Padilla-Rufino remarked that in her opinion recalled that there was a time during the Marcos era when parish priests sold not only antique statues and images of the saints domiciled in their churches to collectors, but also sacred vessels of silver and gold. Then there is the Mayor of Manila who approved razing to ground the only remaining art deco building in the old capital city.

#### Conclusions

Based on the findings presented above, the following three conclusions were arrived at.

1. Weak sense of national identity.

There is no cohesion of the various peoples from the different ethnic and cultural groups that inhabit the many islands of the Philippines. There seem to be truth in what has been previously raised: the various peoples of this country repudiate each other along cultural, religious, economic, social, ethnic, or economic lines. Or for whatever plausible reason might be insinuated at the moment.

## 2. Dissociation and disconnection from history.

Anything that happened before the Marcos dictatorship does not seem to have any relevance to Filipinos today. Even the much-publicized centennial celebration of the declaration of Philippine Independence on June 12, 1998 was considered by many as a dud. The only event of note that came from the centennial celebration, one cynic was heard to remark was the investigation of the Chairman of the Commission for the centennial celebration by a Senate body for malfeasance and malversation related to funds earmarked for the memorial celebrations.

Then of course there are the parish priests that rent out part of their centuries old churchyards to McDonald franchisees. Parish priests that sell antique religious statues made of ivory in exchange for cash and a Virgin Mary cast in brittle plaster.

## 3. Colonial mentality.

Filipinos still suffer from a bad case of colonial mentality. Without doubt, even local movies and movie stars ape American movie productions and performers. Rambo is a good example. So are the earlier cowboy movies of Clint Eastwood who has moved to producing and directing movies more substantial than his popular spaghetti cowboy movies.

Even American franchise fast food such as KFC, McDonalds, TGI Friday's is popular and well patronized. But in this regard perhaps there is hope. JolliBee Burgers are now operating here in the San Francisco Bay Area, and Andok's Lechon Manok (Andok's Roasted Chicken) is holding on to its turf in its Philippine home grounds.

The sad news is that dusky complexioned Filipina girls still dream of being white skinned as evidenced by giant billboards that tout skin whitening compounds. The young men emulate the sartorial style of rappers and hip-hoppers. Till now, many Filipinos of the World War II generation are still unshakably convinced that Gen. Douglas MacArthur was a hero worthy of their personal veneration.

### Implications

The following four implications were derived from the findings arrived at based on the conclusions educed through the analysis of data drawn from conversations and literature. Some of these implications are the reasons why politicians, government officials, and business barons obfuscate and manipulate media news content. Presumably, they resort to this type of chicanery in order to protect what they refer to as their reputation. But the manipulation of news euphemistically referred to as PR (public relations) is nothing but normal practice in Philippine politics especially if their private activities camouflaged by their official government functions are in direct conflict with public interest. Thus Filipino politicians and PR practitioners have invested another level of meaning to the dubious practice of public relations.

#### 1. History and Education Curriculum

There is insufficient emphasis in teaching de-colonialized Philippine history, as claimed by Villanueva, Baterina, and de Quiros. There is more American literature taught

at her collegiate level than Filipino literature, Bateria avers. Alonto's experiences reveal that elementary public schools, particularly those located in the rural peripheries where most cultural minorities reside, are so lacking of books and school supplies. Instead of functioning as spaces for acquainting students with each other, and encouraging the learning and understanding of different cultures, these decrepit structures stand as symbols of government's neglect of public education. Education in the Philippines, Gonzalez (1991:28) reveals has an "...elitist character and orientation...[because] only the affluent are able to get into the best schools because of their ability to pay."

To reconnect Filipinos, particularly public school students to their history, first, the basic education curriculum must be modified. Such modification must reflect the existence of the many cultures in the Philippines, including the vibrant presence of Islamic and *Lumad* cultures. Educators and curriculum experts in both private and public school sectors left to their own initiatives are able to make the necessary modifications. What slows down, or blocks their effort are politicians who intervene to promote their own political agenda that have nothing to do with improving the education of the students.

## 2. Leadership and Conflict of Interest

Present political leaders continue to mimic the post-Bonifacio *ilustrado* style of leadership. This style of leadership is characterized by a disregard for the fulfillment of promises made to the people, lack of candor, and the subsumption of national needs under class-based self-interests. In this regard, let us return Sionil Jose's assertion in conversation with him that the "rift between Bonifacio and Aguinaldo was...about ideology." Sionil Jose contends that under Bonifacio, land reform was to be initiated soon

after the success of the revolution. But “Aguinaldo and his Cavite *Katipuneros* did not want that,” according to Sionil Jose “because they were themselves landlords [and land owners].” This is a clear illustration of how Filipino political leaders subordinate national welfare to their class-based self-interests.

Cory Cojuangco-Aquino, much revered by the western press, has in all fairness tried her best to keep national government during her term as president free of corruption. There is no difficulty for anyone to acknowledge her good intention. But during her term of office, when it came to the implementation of the much needed land reform program, she saw to it her family-owned agricultural estate was exempted from reform. This has been reported and published by various Philippine news media, and has now passed into the realm of public knowledge.

Examples of political leaders whose actions contradict or contravene their sworn duties abound. These examples range from the Spanish colonial era to the present. During the Spanish colonial period, the Spanish friars were also operatives of the colonial government. Such being the case, the friars should not be exempt from scrutiny, should a research be made on this subject.

### 3. Current Attempts at Emplotment

More than a century has passed since Rizal articulated to the Spanish crown the Filipino demands for reform. Sadly, despite the flow of more than a hundred years, and the passing of the Philippines from three hands--Spanish, to American, to Japanese, and then back to American--two of Rizal’s demands for reform still cry out for attention. These are the third and fifth demands for reform. The third is the extension and improvement of primary education. In my conversation with Maharlika Alonto, she

spoke of the dismal condition of public primary schools in Lanao. She spoke of textbooks that looked more like pages of paper clipped together and ready to fall apart shared by two or more schoolchildren. She also told of long delays in the payment of salaries to underpaid schoolteachers. It is indeed a shame that the present Philippine nation-state has not been able to eradicate such inequities. Would it take another one hundred years before the children of the Philippines are provided quality education they deserve? How many more years would have to pass before public school teachers are paid decent wages?

The fifth was the reform of government. Translated into today's idiom, this would refer to a radical reduction, if not the total eradication of corruption in government. It is interesting to note that the same religious order that educated Rizal is now in the process developing a program that might help reduce the practice of corruption in the Philippines. The *World Press Review* of October 2003 featured an article written by Alfred A. Araya, Jr. of CyberDyaryo, a Manila, Philippines online publication. In speaking before an audience composed of "representatives from academia, civil society, government, and business," Albert Alejo, S.J. reminded his audience "on how corruption has become a way of life for most Filipinos, and the pressing need to do something about it[.]" The Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs (ACSPPA) organized this kick off that launched the new book, *Ehem! A Manual for Deepening Involvement in Combating Corruption*. "Ehem" is the sound (Filipinos at least think) one makes when clearing one's throat. Araya, Jr. (2003:38) writes that—

The concept of "ehem," according to the manual, "is a gentle but powerful hum to caution and to make one's presence known, which brings forth some sense of embarrassment among those who will commit corruption.

Araya reveals that the manual is a follow-up effort to the research on corruption in the country that was sponsored by the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus. The research was published last year (2002) under the title *Cross-Sectoral Study of Corruption in the Philippines*.

The executive director of ACSPPA, Jose Magadia, S.J. noted that “many-anticorruption activities are concentrated on checking government and monitoring power holders, whether it means developing whistle-blowers, or conducting investigative reports or lifestyle checks. These life-style checks are what Padilla-Rufino talked about in my conversation with her on August 20, 2003. Araya writes that according to Magadia, “the manual is more geared toward change in the mindsets of ordinary people who appear to have become tolerant, if not downright supportive of corruption.”

Returning to Alejo’s opening remarks, he mentioned that “Filipinos have a high threshold for pain and suffering, a high tolerance for corruption, and a short forgiving memory when it comes to history,” adding that “the general response to the anti-corruption movement is cynicism[.]” But Alejo is convinced that Filipinos can do something to control the rampant practice of corruption in the Philippines. The manual’s “end goal is to make people realize they have to become intolerant of corruption.”

#### 4. Youth and Leaders

Whether done with full awareness or not, the present political leaders of the Philippines are shaping the future for the youth of the country. But towards what kind of future? The youth, particularly the students seem to have dropped out from involvement in the shaping of their future. They seem to have withdrawn their concern for their country’s general development, and given permission to all the country’s present leaders

to do as they please. Filipino students and all of the youth of the country should take up the role of guardians of the nation, and their own future.

To redirect the country's race toward a destructive end, my younger conversation partner Joanna Villanueva told me that she has been advised to first kill everyone in the Philippines over 50 years old before anything else. Whether the adviser was being facetious or serious is undetermined. It is indeed a tragedy of recent history that such a crime against humanity actually happened in Cambodia. Without intending to be facetious, she felt that such an act of evil, besides being too horrible to contemplate, could turn out to be too messy in its execution. I proposed that perhaps, Filipino students and youth in general can establish a program with one main purpose: to hold all elected officials, government bureaucrats, police and military officers accountable for what they say, and what they promise the Filipino people. Just make sure they stay honest. As simple as this project may sound, there is genuine life-threatening danger in confronting the dishonesty and mendacity of government officials. The Filipino youth, should they take this challenge, must be prepared to face the forces of violence controlled by the government. In other words, they must have the courage their predecessors exhibited during height of the Marcos dictatorship. They might have to face the guns of the soldiers and policemen under their fathers' and mothers' command. Whatever action they may take to encourage government officials to honor their words of promise, they must be non-violent. No lasting peace was ever born out of violence. Filipino youth must keep in mind there is always the possibility that those who command the government's forces of violence—parents, relatives, and friends—may choose to give the order for the soldiers to shoot. Those who shall follow such an order may themselves be parents, relatives, or

friends to the youth they shall shoot. Some of the young people may die, giving up their lives like the thirty-five year old First Filipino did at 7:03 AM on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1896 at the Luneta in Manila. Or the Filipino youth of today can choose to do nothing and follow the example of the majority of their country's leadership.

Through Padre Florentino, Rizal (1997:321) asks:

Where are the youth who will generously pour out their blood to wash away so much shame, so much crime, so much abomination?

But why risk health and life to urge those who lead the country to make good on their promises? Because “there is an *ethic of the word*, that... entails the fundamental moral duty that people be responsible for what they say,” reminds Ricoeur (1984a:32). “A society which no longer possesses subjects ethically responsible for their words is a society which no longer possesses citizens.” Ricoeur takes time to recall here that in the city of Prague, Czechoslovakia during the early 1980s, “the primary question [was] the integrity and truthfulness of language.” And so it is today, in Manila and all over the Philippines. For the Philippines today, this question of “integrity and truthfulness of action becomes a moral and political act of resistance in a system based on lies and perversion” (Ricoeur 1984a:32).

Although it has been touched upon tangentially by my conversation partners, what this research has made very obvious is something left unstated, and unasked. No one—whether politician, businessperson, academician, writer, student, or professional has asked the hard question: What kind of a society do we want to be?

Filipinos must imagine and present an alternate vision of their nation. They must give their answers to the question: What kind of a society do we want to be? Unless these

answers are debated, discussed, and brought into a national discourse, Filipino society will forever spin like a whirlpool. To step out of the whirling circle, a better world than what the Philippines presently is must be imagined. Only Filipinos can do this job if they truly want a nation of their own. A nation they can truly be proud of.

### Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

#### Introduction

As anticipated before this research was begun, this study brought to surface more questions than there are readily available answers. The previously discussed findings, implications, and conclusions have led me to three research topics of relevance. Their relevance lies not only to the study of Filipino identity, but also to the development of Filipino identity in this postcolonial period.

#### Suggested Topics for Future Research

Recommended for future research are the following:

1. Research to identify spurious information presented as historical fact.

This study shows that the colonizers' rationalizations and propaganda for their conquest have occupied space in Philippine history, posing as historical facts. As David Pellauer (1997:xvi) said earlier, "the stories we tell and retell, that we read and reread" of ourselves and of each other constitute our narrative identity either as an individual, or as a group, culture, people or nation. Research to identify spurious information that pose as historical facts is imperative. Unless false heroes are unmasked, gratuitous colonial gestures of generosity understood as acts of political manipulation, many Filipinos will never come to terms with what Jean-Paul Sartre (2001:32) said: It is not true that there are some good *colons* [colonizers] and others who are wicked. There are *colons* and that

is it. Such a research might help in extirpating colonial mentality that has rooted deeply in the Filipino psyche. As Schumacher (1996:117) finds:

So complete was [the] American appropriation of the Propagandists' reconstruction of the Filipino past that post-independence historiography in its own reconstruction of that past and search for national identity has tended to underplay or ignore, paradoxically, both the period Rizal saw as the destruction of Filipino culture, and the work of Rizal himself—the former as a Spanish period, the latter as an American view.

2. Research on how a more egalitarian democracy can take root in the Philippines.

Another question that should be researched is this: How can a more egalitarian form of democracy take root in the Philippines? Although the government of the Philippines has been described as a republican democracy, critics contend that democracy in the Philippines is a democracy of the elite. The disenfranchised poor make up the vast majority of the electorate whose sole function is to “validate” the election into office of politicians from the elite class. Moreover, vote buying, violence and death often mar these elections.

3. Why is there an incredible lack of credible national leaders?

Finally, why is there an incredible lack of credible national leaders in the Philippines? Not since Jose Abad Santos was executed by the Japanese in World War II for refusing to collaborate with them has there been a Filipino national leader quite like him. Alejandro Camiling (<http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~camiling/bio/jsantos.htm>) writes:

[At the outbreak of World War II] Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos chose to remain in the Philippines as caretaker of the national government administration in the Philippines. The Japanese Military Command repeatedly approached him to make him pledge allegiance to Japan and to the Japanese flag but he did not swear in. A Japanese colonel and his troops overtook him in Lanao and he was told that he would be shot...if he would not swear allegiance to the Japanese flag. He did not comply[.] [T]he Japanese...executed [him] on May 2, 1942 in Malabang, Lanao del

Sur in Mindanao. Before he was shot...he [told]...his young son..."Do not cry...show to these [Japanese]...that you are brave. It is an honor to die for one's country. Not everybody has that chance."

There may have been Presidents of the Philippine Republic who served with honor. But examples do not easily come to mind. There was Marcos who established a dictatorship. He was accused of having his political rival murdered. And in the very recent past, there was Estrada who was booted out of office for "plunder," and was replaced by the Vice-President who practically swore she would not run for election to the presidency. But she changed her mind, and is now a candidate for the Presidency of the Philippines this coming election in May 2004.

Why is it that not since May 2, 1942, has a Filipino national leader of ethical and moral quality emerged? A research to find the answer to this question is well worth the funding it will require.

If the clutter of colonial cant is eliminated from Philippine history, if a way is found for democracy to be truly practiced with the genuine participation of the citizens, and the answer to why national leaders who emerged in post-independence Philippines have at best led the country to tread water, Filipino society will have reason for optimism. Perhaps the people will, from the answers found by the three recommended researches, find their reasons, and courage to change.

### Reflections

It is my hope that this study offers a text upon which we might reflect. Rosen (2000:314) referring to Filipinos as "inventive sociables" strongly draws my attention. The phrase sounds felicitous, and perhaps was genuinely intended as a compliment. Rosen has successfully coined a phrase that lends itself to multiple interpretations. As

Ricoeur says, words are plurivocal, and the phrase “inventive sociables” draws me toward the subjects of shame and self-esteem.

It was Dr. Pearl Tayko who introduced me to Rosen and his phrase. Tayko, whose eyes are less jaundiced than mine, understands the phrase to mean or refer to a person who can “easily connect, can easily adapt, can easily flex, and can easily function” in another culture. But what caused Filipinos to evolve as “inventive sociables?” Has this to do with the Philippines and its dubious distinction of having been “both a Spanish and American colony and the only predominantly Catholic country in Asia” as Rosen (2000:325) notes?

The Filipino people fought two wars to gain freedom and independence. The first was against Spain that commenced in 1896. With the assistance of the United States in 1898, the Filipinos successfully overthrew the Spanish colonial government. The Filipino victory against the Spaniards was a Pyrrhic victory. As we have seen earlier, only a few months would pass before the Filipinos would fight their second war for independence. This time it would be against the United States of America, their erstwhile “allies” against Spain. In other words, what the Filipinos thought they won was taken away by the North Americans who helped them win their first war of liberation. Their second war, the Filipinos eventually lost after years of killing and dying. They paid a very steep price in terms of Filipinos killed, their economy devastated. Having adapted to a history of defeat, Filipinos since then have been “trying to rebuild [their]... self-esteem after years of internalized self-doubt, *hiya*, or loss of self-esteem,” Rosen (2000:326) writes. One is tempted to think it was “after years of internalized self-doubt, *hiya*, or loss of self-

esteem” that Filipinos began to master the art of functioning as “inventive sociables.” Perhaps, it was then that they learned the art of survival under conditions of patronage.

Someday one hopes Filipinos shall as one people win something of national significance. A victory they will as one people all share and equally own. One hopes they shall see themselves as their own people, no matter whether “other Asians see Filipinos as very ‘Westernized’,” while “Americans and Europeans... see them as very Asian” (Rosen 2000:325).

Some of the young people of the Philippines are concerned about the country’s drift towards a dire future; many are unconcerned. Some of the country’s political leaders do what they can to improve the wellbeing of the citizens; many do not care. Some of the business leaders of the Philippines would like to honestly profit from their businesses; many do not care how they turn a profit. Some government officers and employees would like to be good public servants and provide service to the people; many would not move without being bribed. Unless the many are converted by, and move over to the side of the few, the Philippines will continue to drift aimlessly, in company of other basket cases, held as living examples of national failure. But there are ways to set things right. All that is required is the will and the corresponding action of the critical mass. But is there a critical mass with the will and desire to act, to redirect the nation toward redemption?

Perhaps there will be Filipinos at some future time, soon one hopes, who shall narrate the national struggle they waged to rid the country of corruption—the one national struggle of national significance that they achieved on their own. Without having asked for aid from some foreign agency. Without allowing interference from outside interest groups. Only Filipinos of all flavors, ethnicities, cultures, and religions

participated. For they have come to realize that only Filipinos as individuals and as a people can rid their country of its malignant cancer: corruption. Only they can win or lose this struggle.

If this struggle is waged and eventually won then Filipinos would have finally written one story they would all be proud to tell and retell, read and reread, write and rewrite about. It would be their story that would keep reminding themselves and each other to be ever mindful of their moral health, and adhere to their norms of ethics. Then, and only then can they claim to have rid themselves the malevolent legacy of multiple foreign occupations. By rewriting their story, they transformed themselves into a people united in a community of ethics. At long last, they are free. They are their own people.

The last word in this study I give to Quibuyen (1999:274) who says:

If the Filipino nation today is to be revitalized, a new story needs to be told. This new narrative, however, must remember the past—the Revolution that never was, and the nation that could have been—and begin from that forgotten decade, with all its pain and shame and unfulfilled dreams.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1

R. Edmund Lacson  
P.O. Box 883954  
San Francisco, CA 94188-3954

(Date)

Dear (Participant),

I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. My research focus is on how Filipinos understand who they are, and whether there is a need for them to refigure their identity in the postcolonial context. Through conversation, we shall both attempt to find out how Filipinos from all sectors of society view themselves as individuals, how they relate to each other, and how they relate individually and collectively to the rest of the world.

Our conversation will be tape recorded and transcribed. Following that, I shall give you the transcription for changes that you may want to make. We may both agree to schedule a second meeting where we can clarify important points that may have come up during our first conversation. Should we find this necessary, our subsequent conversation will also be tape recorded, transcribed, and returned to you for your review and/or correction. I will also use your name and data in my dissertation, and other subsequent publications.

If you agree to volunteer as a participant, I will contact you two weeks before my anticipated visit to the Philippines on the third quarter of this year 2003. Our conversation will take approximately two hours. Enclosed is a copy of the Consent to be a Research Participant Form, which I would like to request you to fill out and return to me.

If you would like to contact me before you decide on whether to participate or not, please email me at [redlacson@usa.com](mailto:redlacson@usa.com) or call me at (415) 864-6774.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

R. Edmund Lacson

*REPORT ON FIELD-TESTED QUESTIONS AND INITIAL ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA*

I Introduction

The paternal side of my mother's family has always had an abiding interest in a country called the Philippines (*Las Islas Filipinas* as it was called at that time), and love for its peoples. This interest began when the natives of the islands were still in liminality about the concept of nationhood, and were in the process of appropriating the appellation Filipino for them. Before its appropriation, the people referred to as Filipinos were the Iberian Spaniards who were born in the Philippines, and the native inhabitants of the country were collectively referred to as *indios*.

On August 11, 1856, Tiburcio Hilario was born. He was my mother's paternal grandfather. Hilario, according to Rafaelita H. Soriano, was "the brains of the revolutionary movement [against the Spanish colonial government] in [the] Pampanga [province of the Philippines] (1991: 10). This is the loam where my being sank roots. This, in a sense, is my *throwness*.

The vision and the promise of the Philippine revolution – the first ever revolution for independence from its colonizers by any country in Southeast Asia has been forgotten by many if not most of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Filipinos. The vision and its promise are both buried under sediments of subsequent cynical and brutal subjugations by other countries.

One was Anglo-Saxon, the other Asian. The first approached as a friend, but quite quickly unmasked, revealed itself as another self-indulgent colonizer. The other was forthright in its exercise of brutality. But why did the Filipinos shut their eyes from the vision of their Revolution in 1896? Why did they renounce their obligation to fulfill the promise of the Philippine revolution?

Today, more than 146 years after Tiburcio Hilario's birth, this same Philippines is in deadly distress. Their officials and guardians shamefully compromise the country's political institutions. Its economy is geared towards the personal benefit of the business owners, with the people and the country taking second dib. The practice of Philippine politics is corrupt and corrupting. The ongoing and unabated internecine violence perpetuated by the Philippine government, the Islamic secessionist movements, and the New People's Army continues to no foreseeable end. Should the youth of the country even dare to hope for a better Philippines at some turn in the future? What should they do to illuminate once again, and then refigure the vision of their forefathers? How can they help redeem the promise of their revolution long held hostage? Who holds this promise hostage?

The promise of the Philippine Revolution in 1896 was not just for an independent country, free of foreign tyrants. The promise was for a Philippines that is politically free, economically healthy, with all of her people at peace and in friendship with each other, and the rest of humankind. For this is the future Philippines that Jose Rizal envisioned, for which he died a martyr's death dealt by a Spanish firing squad on December 30, 1896. He was the first modern political leader to preach non-violence as a way to freedom in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as two of his spiritual descendants, Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther

King, Jr. would in the 20th century (1971: vii). It is indeed strange to discover that in the Philippines where Rizal is revered as national hero, “schoolbooks ... never place Rizal in the intellectual and historical perspective he deserves,” says Mulder. “[T]hese texts shy away from his historical importance as the first Asian nationalist to expose the debasing nature of colonialism, both for the colonized and the colonizer. Rizal is truly the predecessor of the long row of Asian anti-imperialists stretching from Sun Yat Sen to Gandhi, Sukarno, Tagore, and Nehru – he who reasoned out his anticolonial argument in good humanist fashion” (Mulder 2000: 100).

Today’s Filipino youth, some of whom I have had conversations with recently, must still in this 21<sup>st</sup> century grapple with the same problems that Rizal grappled with in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: how to create a nation out of a [diverse] people; how to reform a broken culture and a bankrupt economy; how to combat an entrenched power structure; and whether violence is justified for these ends.<sup>1</sup>

## II The conversation partners

In this report, my conversations on the political and economic situation in the Philippines were with three Filipino students at USF. I chose these three young people because they are from the socio-economic class where traditionally, political and industrial leaders come from. The participation of a Muslim Filipino in these conversations was crucial because of the many socio-economic, and peace and order problems in the Muslim areas in the Philippines. A successful resolution of the conflict in Muslim Philippines eliminates a major impediment to the social, economic, and political development of the country.

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<sup>1</sup> From back flap of jacket. Reines, Bernard *A People’s Hero: Rizal of the Philippines*, 1971. New York & Washington: Praeger Publishers.

I chose these three as my conversation partners because all of them are citizens of the Philippines. All of them will return to the Philippines after they complete their studies here. My first conversation partner is a Muslim Filipino (Tariq) who is completing a master's degree in economics. The second is a young woman (Norma) enrolled in the Asia Pacific master's degree program. The third is (Arturo) a Christian Filipino completing his MBA. My first round of conversation with my three partners was held at the MCISS conference room at USF. I had a subsequent conversation with my Muslim Filipino partner in a coffee shop at the Serramonte shopping mall a week later.

My field project is an attempt to find what the upcoming generation of Filipinos thinks about the *political* and *economic* situation in the Philippines, and what they would do to improve it. My questions to generate a conversation were the following:

1. If you were in a position of power, what would you change or add to improve the political situation in the Philippines?
2. If you were in a position of power, what would you change or add to improve the economic situation in the Philippines?
3. What do you think are the reasons why the Philippines is in such a sorry situation?

### III Theory for data analysis

The theory that informs my data analysis borrows liberally from Paul Ricoeur and Richard Kearney, particularly in dealing with politics, education, and identity.

Paul Ricoeur declares that his philosophy is a philosophical anthropology, linked tightly to the problem of action. He presents three ways of speaking about action. First,

action can be described. Its description is the function of the human sciences and that of the Anglo-American theory of action. Second, action can be told, which makes it the function of narrative. Lastly, action may be prescribed, which makes it the connection between the three modes of discourse of action: describe, narrate, and prescribe (1998: 118).

The third way of speaking about action may be linked to the current condition of the Philippines. The country has an urgent need to reconstruct a political theory on a sound ethical basis. Following Ricoeur, 'there is one basic concept which makes the transition from ethics to politics, and that is the problem of justice (1998: 118). This problem of justice is found in the space that divide the rich and political powerful few from the country's tens of millions of impoverished citizens.

Ethics, as developed in Ricoeur's thinking is the completion of the theory of action, from the description through narration to prescription (1998: 119). Ethics is a paradigmatic function of narratives in relation to any projects or real horizon of actions. Narrative not only adds to the description of action. It also provides models for prescriptives (1998: 119). To narrate action is to provide paradigms for action.

Kearney also brings to our attention the existence of the crucial difference between the "little narratives" of the vanquished and the "Grand Narratives" of the victors. Moralists of narrative memory, he says, sometimes fail to appreciate fully that reminiscence of suffering has just as much need to be *felt* as commemoration of glory (2002: 61).

#### IV Synthesis of the data

Norma, my female conversation partner who is enrolled in the Asia Pacific

program at USF finds agreement with the other two when she states that politicians are bent towards the accumulation of power, towards personal gain, rather than the betterment of society. Tariq, my Muslim Filipino conversation partner amplifies this with his claim that most of the people who go into politics do so in order to personally gain from their government position. Tariq observes that aspiring politicians “make friends with everybody ... gain everyone’s favor, and work from there.”

All three conversation partners were unanimous in their admission that corruption is prevalent in the practice of politics, and that corruption is deeply entrenched in the political system and institutions of the country. They are unanimous in their belief that the people who run for political office do so “for their personal gain, and not for the betterment of the country and the people.”

Philippine politics as parsed by Niels Mulder is less about good governance, and more about personal benefits. Politics operates as any other business. It is about deals and counter deals. Politics in the Philippines is a market (2000: 186). A common phenomenon of Philippine politics is the expectation that candidates buy votes and return special favors to supporters and patrons (1995:17). This is one specific example that illustrates the absence of ethics in the practice of politics in the Philippines. It also supports an observation cited earlier that Philippine politics is a transactional practice – a business transaction, no more, no less.

Both vote-buyers and vote-sellers practice on each other strategic action. The former provides a promise to uplift the socio-economic condition of the vote seller who already knows that based on past experience the promise is empty. In exchange, the politician offers cash for the latter's vote, which would, legalistically speaking,

“legitimize” him in the political position he aspires to. The vote-seller, knowing that since time immemorial, nothing much has changed and much will remain the same, proceeds to engage in this dance of two scorpions in the hope that the voter would be allowed some space and time to conduct his daily life without undue interference by the government or government officials. Here is an example of a lifeworld, modern and at its most cynical.

Money had the effect of turning patronage into a commodity. The extremely common practice of buying votes recreated the sense and sensation of patronage as wealthy men (and a few women) distributed money through their agents, thereby giving the impression of being in control of circulation. Yet the treatment of votes, like patronage, as commodities undercut the moral and ethical bases of traditional patron-client ties as well. While money made it possible to have instant access to a mass of anonymous clients, it also enabled such clients to switch patrons readily in order to evade their influence (2000: 140-1).

At this particular instance the process of societal rationalization appears contradictory from the start. Habermas says that the contradiction arises between, on the one hand, a rationalization of everyday communication that is tied to the structures of intersubjectivity of the lifeworld, in which language counts as the genuine and irreplaceable medium of reaching understanding, and on the other hand, the growing complexity of subsystems of purposive-rational action, in which actions are coordinated through steering media such as money and power. Thus, there is a competition ... between *principles of societal integration* ... and those de-linguistified steering media through which systems of success-oriented action are differentiated out (1984: 342).

Communicative action of any sort presupposes a shared 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*), which is apodictic or preconceptual, and thus implies a certain degree of consensus. Reification or the 'colonization of the lifeworld' will occur insofar as there is a diminishing ability to question the consensus achieved (1994: 294). It is apparent that in this case both the vote-buying politicians and the vote-selling populace have reached a certain understanding on their respective conduct. What is clear here is the commodification and commercialization of the vote. Where there is consensus between the voters and politicians is in their agreement that the electoral vote is a commodity subject to the rules of a buy and trade transaction.

Education seems to be a favorite "cure" for minimizing corruption. Education is also seen as a fundamental ingredient to the development of a sustainable economy. Tariq is of the belief that "before we can develop economically, we need to get a better quality of education. There is an uneven distribution of quality education. We have to have good education even in the rural areas as well. That is where a lot of the problems begin, because those people who are not educated ... they don't even want to bother with what's going on outside your small little town. So they don't really care." However, Norma holds the opinion that the Philippine government is not even able to provide a [good] basic [elementary] education for its citizens. Arturo is a bit more cautious. He says that "to weed out corruption from politics is a very daunting task." He does not think that there is a short-term solution to the problem of political corruption, and hedges on education as a specific solution to the problem of political corruption by saying that "education can only do so much."

Arturo approaches the political and economic problems of the Philippines quite differently from Tariq and Norma. He actually takes a step away from confronting the Philippine political and economic bugaboos. This is what he has to say: “Maybe, one way to start ... we should have a history by us... and of us. Maybe we could start there because if we don’t have identity, what a Filipino is... I guess, we really won’t be going anywhere. The only way to go is first, for us to know who we are, and then we could start doing things from that point on.”

Apropos to Arturo’s dip at Filipino identity, Niels Mulder makes this succinct observation that most educated Filipinos have very little feel for history, for questions of continuity and identity. Moreover, Mulder presents evidence that what Philippine schools plant in the minds of the students is that “history leads to confusion, and the great national happenings are safely on the other side of the watershed event of the American invasion. Then the [American] colonial masters established order, progress and regularity that got lost during independence. Then too, the past lost its relevance for the present (2000: 186).” The miseducation of the Filipino (borrowing the phrase from Renato Constantino) propagated by the Philippine government through the public school system is clearly evident here.

All three – Tariq, Norma, and Arturo believe without any room for doubt that politics in the Philippines is corrupt, its economy is barely sustainable, and public education as provided for by the government is inadequate. No ethics, no moral compass, and mis-educated -- what then has “identity” have to do with all these?

Ricoeur said that the route along which, by constructing the story of our life, we elaborate an identity ... is completely a narrative kind. This narrative understanding

is Ricoeur's basis for an ethical life (1998: 113). Ricoeur also places "violence" at the origin of politics and morality, and that Ricoeur looks at it from the point of view of the victim rather than the point of view of the agent (1998: 113). He confirms that this rather novel way of approaching the problems of ethics and politics is linked to a broader concern of his – the place of suffering in human experience indubitably encountered in stories, in history, in narrative of all kind . Human suffering is what provides Ricoeur access to the problems of ethics "by saying that by my action I entertain a process of victimization which keeps going on through history." Ricoeur proceeds to say that there is a basic asymmetry in action "because agents have not only agents in front of them but patients, or *pace* Alan Gewirth, 'recipients of my actions'(1998: 113)."

The source of the ethical problem to Ricoeur is that "we have to redress this asymmetrical relationship of the agent and the patient" where the whole problem of justice finds its starting point." This is so because justice, to Ricoeur, is concerned with the kinds of institutions or structured action that attempt to remedy the basic asymmetry in action by saying that there is a basic equality between men (1998: 113). But as Ricoeur sees it, "this equality is permanently denied by the fact that someone exerts power over someone else (1998: 114)."

The relationship between action and passion, or agent and patient is what Ricoeur takes as the threshold of the moral problem (1998: 114). Clearly, in the Philippines, this is the relationship between the dominant elite who comprise no more than ten percent of Filipinos and the 59 million suffering "others." Elaborating further, Ricoeur says that it is the relationship between action and passion, agent and patient that he takes as the threshold of the moral problem. Not only is it this speculative problem of action and

passion, he presses on, but also the problem of victimization – the whole story of this cruel century, the twentieth century – and all of the suffering imposed on the Third World by the rich, affluent countries, by colonialism (1998: 114).

Evidently, as shown in many occasions too numerous to list here, Filipino overlords are supported by, and connected to the politically and economically powerful individuals and institutions of the First World countries. Here we find the worldwide interlinking of agents in partnership for the strategic control of the teeming masses.

#### V Analysis of discussion

It is accurate to describe Philippine politics today as devoid of any ethics. There is no discourse in Philippine politics. Rather, Philippine politics is a transactional practice. Only members of the elite – the rich, the powerful, or entertainment celebrities, ever get elected to government offices. They are voted into office by a mostly under-educated and impoverished electorate.

All of my three conversation partners are in agreement that Filipino politicians are bent towards the accumulation of power and personal gain, rather than the betterment of society. Violence also has its place in Philippine politics. If the political business cannot be transacted amicably by the protagonists, then chances are that they will settle it through other means, often through violence.

Raul Pertierra writes that in the Philippines, formal institutions such as political parties and national elections seldom express or represent the political will of their constituents. This brings about a clash between a Filipino identity and a politics of praxis that seems to contradict or undermine it (1995: 16). Hence, the development of a society divided between a small group of rich and politically powerful class and a very large

underclass. Between these two is an ongoing tension that has pulled the country apart and contributed to the retardation of the country's development.

All three find that education can be a vehicle to better the intellectual capabilities of the "ordinary" Filipinos. But then, as Arturo opines, education can only do so much. A peek at the current state of Philippine social studies can delineate a sharper contour of what students are taught in public schools. In this regard, Mulder writes that Philippine social studies textbooks during the American colonial era were "low on nationalism and United States-centric, in which the Filipinos forever appeared as the passive receivers of blessings foreigners brought." But forty-four years after the end of the American colonial governance of the Philippines, to Mulder's amazement in 1990, the curriculum content still depicted Filipinos as perennially on the receiving end (2000: 72-3).

How then can today's Filipinos rid themselves of their post-colonial *malaise*? Starting from Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, Kearney writes that the analyst seeks to help sufferers by encouraging them to de-program their old histories, to divest themselves of the habitual plot-lines which have determined their behavior up to now, and to re-open their life-stories to the gift of unpredictability, to surprise, to grace. Such rewriting, according to Kearney is what ultimately releases the pain and paralysis of repetition compulsion (2002: 45). Following this, he proposes what he calls (after Ricoeur) the "hermeneutic" hypothesis, which is the view that "the retelling of the past is an interweaving of past events with present readings of those events in the light of [the] continuing existential story. This approach requires that narrative works for ... the present as well as being as true as possible to the ... past" (2002: 46).

The curricular deficiencies of Philippine education contribute greatly to the Filipino crisis of identity. Philippine history textbooks, as Mulder found out, do not, or at best only rarely picture Filipinos as active agents of their own history (2000: 98). Filipinos can become full agents of their history only if, following Richard Kearney, they succeed in transforming their haphazard happenings into story, thus making their story *memorable* over time (2002: 3). A mimetic function is what both historical and fictional narratives have in common. Mimesis is essentially tied to mythos taken as the transformative plotting of scattered events into a new paradigm, referred to by Paul Ricoeur as the “synthesis of the heterogeneous.” It is narrative that can offer Filipinos of today a newly imagined way of being in the world (2002: 12).

One cannot remain constant over the passage of historical time, writes Kearney, ... unless one has some minimal remembrance of where one comes from, and how one came to be what one is. And Kearney finds that along with every culture’s sense of *constancy* over time is an attendant imperative of *innovation*. Then, borrowing Benedict Anderson’s phrase, he brings his reader to the realization that each nation is at heart an “imagined community.” Each nation comes to a discovery that it is narrative construction to be reinvented and reconstructed again and again.

The problem as Kearney sees it is not that each society constructs itself as a story. Rather, it forgets that it has done so. A nation that forgets its own narrative origins becomes dangerous (2002: 81). In this regard, the Philippine stories (for there is more than one story of the Philippines) were mainly written by her colonizers, or by local historians who rely mainly on what was written about them by the historians of their

colonizers. And many Filipinos have come to believe *their* story as narrated by their conquerors.

Stories proceed from stories in such a manner that historical communities are ultimately responsible for the formation and re-formation of their own identity, writes Kearney (2002: 80-1). Given that the Philippine system of education propagates spurious narratives about them, it should not be surprising to anyone that Filipinos find it impossible to find, and much less refigure it. Borrowing from Ricoeur, here is an unnervingly accurate instance where the history of the victims of colonialism keep reduplicating the history of the colonizing victors (1998: 114). And so, the Filipinos continue to colonize themselves absent a colonizer. But how can such a thing happen? Bill Ashcroft writes that history, the powerful instrument used in Europe's construction of world reality, not only records 'the past' but outlines a trajectory which takes in the future. Nowhere, he says is the teleology of historical method more determining and coercive than in the ideology of imperial history, for such history locks the 'post-colony' into a future determined by the civilizing mission of empire (2001: 129).

As I see it, the opening toward a solution lies in what Arturo, one of my conversation partners said: Maybe we could start there ... if we don't have identity, what a Filipino is... I guess, we really won't be going anywhere. The only way to go is first, for us to know who we are, and then we could start doing things from that point on." This seemingly naïve insight brings the discussion to the critical examination of what is being taught in school to Filipinos about the Filipinos. The solution indicated lie in the reformulation of the fundamental education policy of the nation, in particular, the curriculum contents of their historical and social studies texts. Admittedly, this is not a

short-term solution, but there is no available quick fix to years of political corruption and economic decline. In this respect, there is something that can be learned by those who are confronted by this seemingly intractable problem from the military strategist B. H.

Liddell-Hart. In 1954, he wrote that –

The most consistently successful commanders, when faced by an enemy in a position that was strong naturally or materially, have hardly ever tackled it in a direct way. And when under pressure of circumstances, they have risked a direct attack, the result has commonly been to blot their record with failure<sup>2</sup>.

This is where the Filipino version of Mao Tse Tung's long march to Yen-an begins. As they trod the here and now, picking up traces to their authentic past, may they find their bright future in the answers to the most important questions they will ever of themselves ask: Who are we? What am I among us?

## VI Summary

My conversations with my three partners were focused on the political institutions and the practice of politics in the Philippines, and the state of the country's economy. No one had anything good to say about either, and it would seem that all three have heard all of the elected leaders of their country promise to solve the political and economic ills of the nation, and all the promises have burst like soap bubbles. In other words, they have run out of any direct solution to the political and economic problems of the Philippines.

The only way out of the thicket of political corruption and economic decline seem to lie in the answer to the question, "Who are we Filipinos?"

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<sup>2</sup> Liddell-Hart, B. H. *Strategy: The Indirect Approach*. 1954. New York: Frederick Praeger.

Perhaps, as Filipinos begin a sincere attempt to solve the riddle of their identity, they may during their quest, find the courage to be confident with what they discover, and know that only they in relationship with “others”, can determine who and what they truly are.

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Appendix 3

**Journal Excerpts**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Entry</u>
August 10, 2001	RP [Republic of the Philippines]. Unknowable, almost. A people seemingly confused about themselves, living confusing lives of conflicts and confrontations without hope of resolution or reform. But the individual charm, the inherent brilliance of individual Filipinos shine like pins of light peeping through the tiny spaces of a woven smoke-stained Ifugao wicker basket made into a table lamp that hides within a 50-watt incandescent bulb.
August 16, 2001	<p>Is there not one industrialized country, any one member of the G8, whose success did not rest on the deaths of people from countries they exploited and colonized? Is there not one great civilization throughout human history that was built through goodwill, and not through war, not through the subjugation of another country and its people?</p> <p>The Philippines...will it survive as a nation, as a "people?" Everything that is happening in all levels of its society seem to suggest diremption, a tearing apart, a violent separation.</p> <p>The revolutionaries of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had a unifying vision. Today's leaders seem to see no further than their bank accounts.</p>
September 2, 2001	<p>Possible dissertation topics:</p> <p>*Nation in crisis:</p> <p>Identity, Unity, and Leadership in the Philippines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. How do Filipinos see themselves as individuals (identity)?</li><li>2. How do Filipinos see themselves as a people (unity)?</li><li>3. What kind of national leaders did the country produce from 1946 to present?</li></ol> <p>*(Alternate Title) Islands in Collision: Identity, National Unity, and Leadership in the Philippines.</p>
February 6, 2002	Mulder observes that (Philippine) history shows that "events" happen to the Filipinos, and that the people are always on the receiving end. Is it because, as a people, whatever they started, e.g. Revolution against Spain, War vs. USA have resulted in failure? Have the people lost the will to envision an identity of who they

want to become as a people? Is it because the Filipinos failed to redeem their revolutionary promise, the promise they made and gave each other that they shall free themselves from foreign domination?

Part of the Philippine National Anthem reads: Aming ligaya na pag may mangaapi, ang *mamatay* ng dahil sa iyo? (We shall gladly die fighting those who maltreat you.) But the Filipinos ended up receiving their independence as a grant courtesy of the USA.

It should not surprise anyone to hear the student activists during the Marcos era change just one word of the anthem, and that one word made a world of difference. Instead of singing *ang mamatay* (to die), they sang *ang pumatay* (to kill). Changing that one word turned the meaning of the last line of the national anthem from “We shall gladly *die* fighting those who maltreat you” to “We shall gladly *kill* those who maltreat you.”

- January 4, 2003 One of the obstacles that separate Filipinos from their history, their immediate past, their genealogical antecedents, is the Spanish language. Having consciously, and knowingly repudiated most of what is Spanish, in particular the use of the Spanish language even by the minority elite ante... Filipinos lost the ability to directly access the matrix of their being. (Refer to “The death of the concept of Latin, as Nietzsche suggested...” in Distrust Quotations in Latin by Peter Goodrich, p. 209-10 in Critical Inquiry Vol. 29, No. 2 Winter 2003.)  
As Goodrich writes: What is needed now is not a revival of Latin [or Spanish] but an understanding of the anthropology and philology of transmission.”
- June 3, 2003 The USA bequeathed a form of government that did not emanate from the imagination of the people but from the colonizers, and handed it to their native subalterns, the country’s elite.
- October 8, 2003 What one decides to remember is important. But what I find more important is how one allows what is (remembered) memorialized to affect him.
- December 17, 2003 How did Catholicism influence and affect the development of the identity of the Filipino?
- December 23, 2003 Filipino weakness: Beguiled by the *guapo ngunit bobo*, turned off by the *pangit kahit na marunong at matalino*. (Beguiled by the handsome but stupid, turned off by the ugly but smart and knowledgeable.)

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO  
Dissertation Abstract

Text and Transformation:  
Refiguring Identity in Postcolonial Philippines

I Research Issue

Filipinos come from different linguistic and cultural traditions. They assert *ethnolinguistic origins over national identity*.

This research attempts to identify causes that discourage development of a strong Filipino national identity. It also searches for approaches that encourage its cultivation.

II Research Approach

This study relied on literature, and analyses of data gathered from conversations with research partners. Three questions were used as guidelines: 1) Who are the Filipinos? 2) How do they identify themselves? 3) What factors influence the way they see themselves?

To research on “Who is a Filipino?” or “What is a Filipino?” in a bid to refigure Filipino identity is to engage in conversations. Employing participatory research as developed by Herda (1999), and carried out in the critical hermeneutic tradition of Ricoeur (1984, 1985, 1990) this research attempts by way of conversations to clear paths for Filipinos to come to new understandings of their multivocal identity.

### III Research Recommendations

What appears to encourage Filipinos in identifying themselves according to regional origins rather than national identity is their disconnectedness from their national history. Another disincentive to the development of a strong Filipino national identity is the arrogance of cosmopolitanized Filipinos toward their tribal and Islamic brethren. To this day, the various peoples of the country are a *mélange* of uplanders, lowlanders, and sea dwellers. Some still live in tribal societies; most are “modernized” while many live between these two poles.

The recovery of the narrative of Philippine history from colonial appropriation through a return to, a study of, and the re-interpretation of the thoughts of the forebears of the modern Filipino people in congruence with existing postmodern and postcolonial realities might help strengthen national identity. Here, Ricoeur’s three-fold mimesis and critical hermeneutics can be gainfully employed.

Reconnected to the primordial thought of those who originally imagined the Filipino community, today’s Filipinos can indeed refigure a national identity. One oriented toward an honorable and prosperous future.



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