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## **WILL FILIPINOS EVER BECOME PHILOSOPHERS? REFLECTIONS ON PHILOSOPHIZING IN AN AGE OF POSTCOLONIAL CHALLENGES**

**Rhoderick John S. Abellanosa<sup>1</sup>**

Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu

**Abstract.** Working within the framework of post-colonial critique, this paper engages scholars who have written about Filipino philosophy. Without siding with either those who believe that there is an essential Filipino philosophy or those who say otherwise, the article argues that the Filipino philosophy question is an issue that is as unsettled as (the) Filipino identity. The problem however is such only insofar as Filipinos refuse to settle the fact that their colonial experience frustrates any attempt or endeavor to find the essential Filipino. This point of view should not be used as an argument against Filipino philosophy because, precisely, Filipino philosophy is the progressive attempt to understand the Filipino and his world, his lifeworld and systems, by interrogating the colonial experience and its constructs about the colonized, i.e., the Filipinos. Thus, Filipino philosophy is a resistance to the pervading notion that philosophy is exclusively Western such that those who live outside or if not unconnected to the privileged geography are nothing but mere subscribers to the privileged knowledge.

**Keywords:** Filipino philosophy, postcolonialism, *loob*, *meron*, colonial experience

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In recent years, after decades of publications, discussions and debates on Filipino philosophy, I think the question “Is there a Filipino philosophy?” or “What comprises it?” must shift to “Why (do) we still ask these questions so much so that they reflect a kind of suspicion or disbelief in our capacity ‘to do’ philosophy as a people?” This is what I seek to tackle in this paper mainly in three strokes: (1) a brief review of those who have written on or about Filipino philosophy; (2) presentation of the common objections to Filipino philosophy; and (3) the reasons why we still ask the same questions about Filipino philosophy.

### **Discourses in Filipino Philosophy**

Although many have already been written about Filipino philosophy and the attempts to philosophize in Filipino, it would still be necessary, at least as a take-off point, to review the different perspectives and/or positions on the subject matter. Since Emerita Quito (1983) wrote about the state of philosophy in the Philippines, a lot has changed in the way philosophizing is done in the country. Academics (like Gripaldo and Demeterio) provide us with a classification of the philosophical views and writings of Filipino thinkers or philosophers. Others (like Ramon Reyes and Leonardo Mercado) identify the sources of Filipino thought.<sup>2</sup>

In this light (and in keeping with the above mentioned objectives) I review some representative thoughts of Filipino philosophy without intending to further categorize or re-categorize those who have been identified as part of the canon.<sup>3</sup>

The scholars who have engaged in the Filipino philosophy question, at least those who may be identified as protagonists, are classifiable in terms of either their unifying theme/focus or approach. Here, I take the liberty of grouping them into those who have engaged in the *loob* discourse and those who believe that doing philosophy properly means doing it in

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Filipino/Tagalog. This classification of the protagonists of Filipino philosophy matches the main arguments raised by those (as will be seen much later) who critique or object to the term or idea of Filipino philosophy.

A third grouping that seeks to synthesize the Filipino philosophy question with its problems and criticisms is also presented as part of this paper's first segment. Apparently they are also protagonists of Filipino philosophy whose writings deserve attention which is not to say that they are not without objectionable points.

#### *The Loob Discourse*

Among those who belong to this group are academics or teachers in philosophy (and even theology) who believe that Filipino thought can be developed by going back to the core of the Filipino. Belonging to this group are the likes of Leonardo Mercado, Dionisio Miranda, Albert Alejo and if we may include (even though he is a theologian by professional classification) Jose de Mesa. As we do not have space for an extensive, not to say exhaustive, discussion of all or each of their ideas, it would be minimally sufficient to describe their scholarship as an attempt to seek for what is "essential" in Filipino thought. After all if philosophy is about thinking, then of paramount importance which philosophers in the Philippines should answer is the question, what is our vital or essential thought?

Thus, for the *loob* scholars (if we may call them), culture is the locus of thinking and to discover "Filipino thought" it must be searched in the vast field of Filipino culture. Language becomes an important source of data for the philosopher who now acts as an exegete of culture. Leonardo Mercado, for example, explores the word *loob* as a term that may best describe Filipino selfhood.<sup>4</sup> Employing metalinguistic analysis on the term *loob* (and its Visayan and Ilocano equivalents, *buot* and *nakem* respectively) Mercado, in my reading, argues that there

are not only similarities in meaning but also a common philosophical outlook among Filipinos. It is, according to one commentator, both holistic and interior in that it means not just emotional and rational submission. The way I see it, Mercado's *loob* is a Filipino's conceptualization of an inner sanctuary in man where both intellect and will operate in harmony determinative of the human person's balanced or healthy intellectual and moral disposition.<sup>5</sup>

Another local scholar who has, at some point, devoted his studies to *loob* is Dionisio Miranda who believes that popular Filipino thought (not Filipino thought as such) is more oriented towards existential philosophical forms rather than metaphysics. It is for this reason that he employs cultural exegesis in order to uncover the layers of meanings that have hidden a people's interiority. The title of his work says it all, "*loob* [is] the Filipino within"; this is a preliminary attempt to investigate a pre-theological moral anthropology. Although his discussions are well loaded with philosophy, Miranda's professional training as a moral theologian basically explains the trajectory of his investigation. He has nonetheless contributed to the discourse on *loob* referring to it as essentially a "local or spatial interior", eventually as a "symbolic interior" and more particularly as a "human interior".<sup>6</sup>

*Loob*, therefore, for Miranda is a psycho-moral reality that lies at the core of the self or the individual (*sarili* – the self that is subject of his own consciousness) who is, no more than conceptually, two-dimensional: psychological personality (*katauhan*) and moral character (*pagkatao*).<sup>7</sup> Psychological personality synthesizes *malay, dama, ugali, isip, bait* and *kalooban*. They characterize the free and conscious subject. In the same way moral character synthesizes *malay, dama, ugali, isip, bait* and *kalooban* of a free and conscious moral subject. Miranda explains it well, "the total meaning of *loob*, or the Filipino within, is to be found, neither in *katauhan* (psychological

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personality) alone /nor in *pagkatao* (moral character) alone, but in both together.”

Tentatively for this part, then, the efforts to do a Filipino philosophy have converged some scholars in the theme of *loob*. In this sense, culture becomes the locus of philosophical analysis and reflection. Conversely, doing philosophy necessarily involves culture albeit anthropological. We do not have space for the other scholars like Jose de Mesa and Albert Alejo who eventually contributed to the “*loob* discourse”. Quentin Terrenal (1984) also wrote an essay on “*utang na loob*” proposing an interpretation of it in the light of Immanuel Kant’s notion of duty. In fact it would be interesting to trace the genealogy of the discourse in relation to other writers, like Prospero Covar and Reynaldo Ileto, on the topic who are not philosophers professionally.<sup>8</sup>

Devoting a section on *loob* in this essay, non-exhaustive as it may be, provides a background for a later presentation of one of the critics of Filipino philosophy, Raymun Festin. Let’s suspend any elaboration of Festin’s ideas; for now we continue with the other protagonists of Filipino philosophy.

#### *Pamilosopiya sa Filipino (Philosophizing in Filipino)*

Certain Filipino scholars in philosophy went beyond the mere conceptual study of Filipino philosophy. Notable among those who belong to this group is Florentino Timbreza who believes that there is a Filipino philosophy, thus:

it is not too much to say (or claim) that the Filipinos have their own *Weltanschauung* and unified philosophy in life that expresses their own national-thought. The latter is composed of mythology, poetry, epics, songs, beliefs, riddles, rituals, attitudes, folk-dance, folksayings and proverbs. It can be seen that these are not simply the regional stories and indigenous behavior; rather, they are important

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reflections and perspectives based on observation and experience. That is why the Filipino has its own unique philosophy about its own complicated condition of human life.<sup>9</sup>

He defines philosophy as a world view (*pandaigdigang pananaw*) that comes from man's experience, and on this basis, he qualifies the existence of a Filipino philosophy. For him, if we limit philosophy to a content (*tanging nilalaman ng pilosopiya*) then apparently there can be no Filipino philosophy because the objects of philosophizing are universal and not regional or national, more so not parochial (i.e. a priori concepts). But if philosophy, as a world view, is about the shape of the (Filipino) mind (*hugis ng pag-iisip*) then there is a philosophy that is distinctly Filipino.<sup>10</sup>

This early, a meticulous critic or reader can immediately spot the Achilles' heel of Timbreza's view, that is, the problem of regionalism. Within the layer of Filipino philosophy itself, the universal-particular problematic and distinction can trickle down from the Filipino philosophy question to, say for example, a Cebuano or Boholano or even Mamasapano philosophy question (i.e., their existence also as properly distinct local philosophies). Be that as it may, Timbreza argues his points, similar to that of Mercado, by identifying and constructing what can be a universal spirit among Filipinos using their expressions, dialects, ethnic practices, and the various forms of local wisdom. As one commentator of Timbreza says: "[I]ike Mercado, Timbreza's argument on the nature of Filipino philosophy is based on how some Filipinos are able to enact a kind of wisdom or sagely practice in everyday life."<sup>11</sup>

Another scholar known for doing philosophy using the local language is Roque Ferriols. In recent years, this Jesuit has been more known for his philosophy of *meron* or "*pagmemeron*."<sup>12</sup> This part of the paper does not intend to focus or elaborate this term coined by Ferriols. What is more important is to understand

that underlying all his contributions to Filipino thought/philosophy is his view on the importance of philosophizing in one's language (i.e. read, thought, or taught). At the risk of oversimplification we have to say this early that for Ferriols the kind of language that one uses in doing philosophy is so important that it determines whether you are doing genuine philosophy or not. In his own words:

When I try to philosophize in Pilipino, it is with intent to live and to help awaken other people into living. Each language is a way of being alive that is irreducible. Yes, the things languages do, overlap and, if one just wants to do things with words, he can learn to reduce one manipulation to another. There are those who spend their lives producing vast linguistic networks of mutually reducible manipulations. But he who has touched the heart of a language, even if only for a split second, knows that it is an irreducible way of being alive. Each language has unrepeatable potentials for seeing and feeling, its very own genius, its own nuance.<sup>13</sup>

This perspective comes from his conviction that philosophy is not just an academic discipline to study but an act or life that must be lived (or done). *Sapagkat ang pilosopiya ay ginagawa* is his response to those who think that philosophy is plainly unnecessary.<sup>14</sup> That philosophy is lived and done – explains why for Ferriols the “Filipino philosophy question is pointless”:

Frequently I am asked: are you making a Filipino philosophy? Or is it possible that there is a Filipino philosophy? These questions are a waste of time. For the one who philosophizes searches for the truth. And he will use any means to find the truth. If his concern is am I a Filipino? Or Chinese? Or Indian? Or what? Then, this person is not philosophizing. It appears that he is

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like a man who endlessly looks himself in the mirror,  
worried as to whether he is a Filipino or not.<sup>15</sup>

The profundity of philosophy lies in its being lived—this conviction is most profoundly expressed in Ferriols' coinage of the term *meron* which according to one seminarian (to whom Ferriols gave his affirmation of what for him is a correct interpretation of his philosophy) “is not a translation” but “a speaking about one's experience.”<sup>16</sup>

Here we can, once more, tentatively conclude that the issue of Filipino philosophy can also be understood from the perspective of language. Our two representative thinkers, Timbreza and Ferriols, have demonstrated in their works that language is not only a medium of communication but also a vehicle that can bring the philosopher closer to his object or subject of philosophizing. There are considerable differences however in their approaches. Timbreza claims that there is a distinct Filipino philosophy in terms not of content but of perspective, which he calls the shape of (the Filipino) mind (*hugis ng kaisipang Filipino*). Ferriols however prefers to philosophize in Tagalog (most often mentioned as Pilipino) even without entertaining the Filipino philosophy question. For him the question is pointless; what is more important is to understand philosophy through the language that gives more meaning to us. Thus, when some of his students and colleagues in the department of philosophy in Ateneo de Manila call him “father of Filipino philosophy” it is not really because he has given “the” answer to the problem but because he lives a life teaching philosophy in Pilipino (although this basically means Tagalog) and for the Filipinos.

Both positions are not without problems, specifically Ferriols' view. In a country where language is a source of division rather than unity, how can there be fusion of horizons in the way we do philosophy? One of Ferriols' ardent followers says that Pilipino or Tagalog are not the only media to do philosophy in the



Philippines and therefore Cebuanos may also philosophize in Cebuano, etc.<sup>17</sup> While this is apparently beautiful to imagine nonetheless this suggestion, in reality, would only end up in several practical problems.<sup>18</sup> A similar case in the field of history, Zeus Salazar's *pantayong pananaw* can be mentioned briefly at this point if only to broaden our discussion on the use of the national language or the vernacular in philosophizing. Salazar argues that the use of Pilipino (or Filipino) in teaching disciplines, history for that matter, is part of the national struggle to promote democracy that would bring about unity in the country.<sup>19</sup> We know however that it would not be long after the heightening of Salazar's and thus *Pantayong Pananaw's* popularity that criticisms against it started to develop. One commentator called Salazar's kind of post-colonial discourse as obstinate and labeled it as less popular (or even less successful) compared to other discourses in the same species such as Gayatri Spivak's subaltern post-colonialism.<sup>20</sup>

### **Figuring Filipino Philosophy**

The increasing number of literature on Filipino philosophy unavoidably increased the number of interpretations, some of which overlapped or conflicted with each other. Categorizations were needed and among them, at least, two contemporary writers have gained recognition for their efforts to offer a synthetic analysis of Filipino philosophy.

In an attempt to address the Filipino philosophy question, Rolando Gripaldo (2000) identified three senses: (1) traditional, (2) cultural and (3) national. He believes that the traditional approach to Filipino philosophy is most important because it has been used by historians of philosophy since the time of the Greeks. By traditional approach he means studying "individual philosophers" and the body of works or writings they have accumulated.<sup>21</sup>

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In keeping with his preferred approach, Gripaldo believes that the first philosophers in the Philippines were the Reformists (e.g. Jose Rizal), who in one way or another were influenced by the Enlightenment ideas of Europe.<sup>22</sup> Among those he identifies in addition to Rizal (reformist) are Bonifacio and Jacinto (revolutionaries). Furthermore, Quezon and Laurel are political philosophers during what he calls the American and Japanese Colonial interludes. Gripaldo adds a few more to his canon of Filipino philosophers like Renato Constantino, a nationalist of the post-colonial period. Close to the contemporary times, he argues that some Filipino philosophers have transcended the colonial hangover such as Restituto Esquivel Embuscado, whom he calls an artist-philosopher (i.e. a dissectionist), Cirilo Bautista a poetical theorist, Ceniza a metaphysician, and Gripaldo himself, a circumstantialist.<sup>23</sup>

Gripaldo's intentions may be noble or good but the world of Filipino philosophy he has constructed seems unacknowledged. Some of the persons he has identified as philosophers have remained unknown if not unrecognized by the professional philosophical circles in the Philippines. Gripaldo acts like a postulator of a questionable candidate for sainthood who constructs facts in order to produce his desired interpretation. His position can be easily understood if viewed as an opposition to Mercado and Timbreza. He criticizes the likes of Mercado who keep on searching for the essential Filipino, which does not exist. But like Mercado, Gripaldo also puts bits and pieces to come up with his desired interpretation of the reality. For example, while Embuscado and Bautista did exist as persons but in the Philippine philosophical academia they are not known or acknowledged as philosophers. Ceniza may be a respected professor of philosophy but I am not sure if Ceniza himself claimed the title that Gripaldo accords him.

Gripaldo does make sense when he says that philosophy started in the Philippines during its period of Enlightenment

through political thinkers like Jose Rizal. However, there are methodological limitations in his arguments, specifically his presentation of historical data. Apparently, Gripaldo is simplistic and does not go deeper in his claim that Filipino philosophy was indeed shaped by the political Enlightenment in the archipelago. One cannot avoid but judge his analysis as faint compared to what Cebuano social historian Resil Mojares has accomplished in his *Brains of the Nation*.

Another academic who has tried to synthesize the many writings and views on Filipino philosophy is F.P.A. Demeterio. Like Gripaldo, he has a background not only in philosophy but also in Philippines Studies, which explains his “critical-synthetic approach” to the issue.<sup>24</sup> His most updated research on Filipino philosophy is an unpublished write-up for a conference of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines.<sup>25</sup> In an earlier essay, the author identifies sixteen (16) different discourses of Filipino philosophy (see Table 1) based on the reflections of the most prominent philosophy scholars in the country.<sup>26</sup> When analyzing further the project that he started, Demeterio reduces the (16) discourse-categories to twelve (12) on the basis of which he identifies Filipino writers or scholars who may represent each of the category. This he accomplishes by initially culling names from Alfredo Co’s essay on the development of philosophy in the Philippines.<sup>27</sup> He supplements the list with names he HAS gathered from e-mail correspondence with key-informants representing the academic (philosophical) circles of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Finally, Google scholar was consulted for the citation index of the different scholars’ philosophical writings.

Demeterio’s latest essay is not concerned anymore with the question as to whether there is a Filipino philosophy or none. Apparently, his writing assumes that there is; in fact, the reason why four of the discourse-categories (such as philosophical works that expose foreign philosophical systems) are excluded

in his new classification is that they don't contribute much, if any, to the development of Filipino philosophy. Precisely, Demeterio's position on Filipino philosophy has already been elaborated in his other essays, and he has made it clear in this most recent writing that we should not give in to any defeatist view that would prevent us from doing philosophy on and for the country.

Both Demeterio and Gripaldo deserve credit for their efforts in figuring out Filipino philosophy. The former in particular employed a combination of methods in his essays to polish the rough edges in the Filipino philosophy discourse that are unavoidable products of discursive and conceptual overlaps and conflicts among writers. We thus close this segment of the discussion that presents those whom we call protagonists of Filipino philosophy, and now turn to two writers who have bravely put forward their critique of some of the abovementioned scholars.

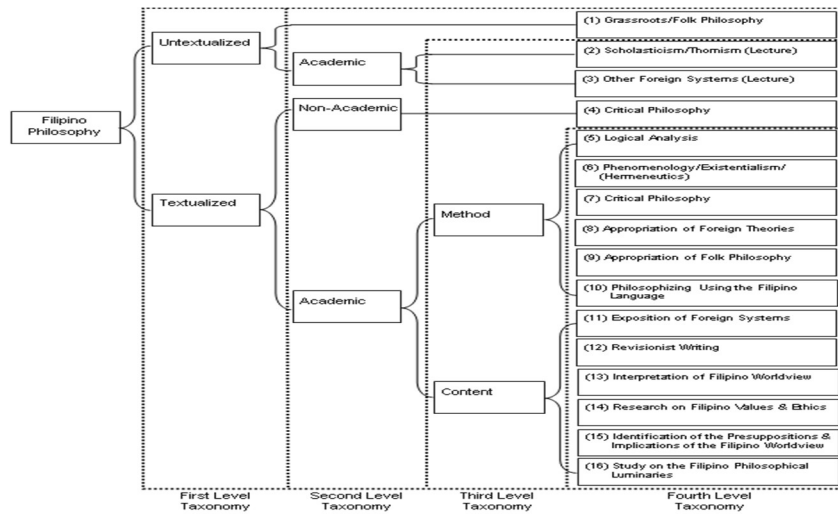


Table 1. *FPA Demeterio's Discourse Categories of Filipino Philosophy* (With acknowledgment to FPA Demeterio)

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## Objections to Filipino Philosophy

### *Who is the Filipino?*

On the opposite side of the discussion are thinkers who do not believe in the existence of Filipino philosophy or simply find it problematic. Perhaps, some academics and students in the discipline do find Filipino philosophy as a futile exercise or even an oxymoron; nevertheless two well-trained academics have articulated their critical view on the matter, characterized by pointed remarks and stinging criticisms of Filipino philosophy.

We begin with Alfredo Co of the University of Santo Tomas who is also acknowledged as the Philippines' leading Sinologist. Co's reaction is best expressed in an essay originally published in *Unitas* and republished in his *Festschrift*. An earlier essay published as a book chapter in *On Postmodernism* (co-authored with Romualdo Abulad) contains more or less the same facts and arguments. Although his critique of Filipino philosophy is more of an opinionated observation, nevertheless they are valid comments that deserve attention. In a candid remark, Co said that "I have profound respect for the hard work undertaken by my colleagues in philosophy, but I definitely disagree with what they refer to as Filipino philosophy."<sup>28</sup> He believes that despite the many course offerings in Filipino or the vernacular or regional languages, we "remain unable to define the Filipino mind."<sup>29</sup> Because Co does not launch a full-blown and systematic critique of Filipino philosophy (like Festin whose essay will be explored later) we have to carefully interpret his points and nuances.

In my view, Co primarily directs his objections (to a Filipino philosophy) to the approaches used by Mercado and Timbreza. He said that he has outgrown the desire to search for an "indigenous Filipino philosophy."<sup>30</sup> If I got Co correctly, what he has in mind are precisely the approaches to Filipino philosophy developed by his two colleagues, which he specifically mentions as examples in his critical essays. In his own words:

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After over twenty years of comparing Bisaya, Ilokano, Bicolano, Tagalog and Ilonggo, Leonardo Mercado, SVD, is still on the same level of comparing them but he has not established what can be categorically claimed as *the Filipino philosophy*.<sup>31</sup>

As for Timbreza, this is what Co has to say:

After also collecting hundreds of folkloric sayings from all over the county, [he] has yet to sum up what he can call Filipino philosophy. For many of these sayings are in fact influenced by Christian sayings, or even foreign sayings translated into native languages just of recent history.<sup>32</sup>

As regards those who teach philosophy in Filipino like Ferriols (in Tagalog) and Manuel Dy (in Bisaya), Co argues that teaching the discipline in Filipino is not the same with Filipino philosophy (and even Ferriols holds the same view).<sup>33</sup>

A deeper reason for his position is linked to his concept of the Filipino. The idea of a Filipino philosophy, Co says, comes with the idea of a Filipino, who for him is like the Philippines which is just a “Spanish creation” that became more technically defined by the constitution.<sup>34</sup> If ever there is any, Filipino philosophy “must only be a product of the philosophical writings of the past 400 years.” There is no pre-colonial or pre-Hispanic colonization philosophy in the Philippines. “We lacked a developed *Weltanschauung* – something that is basic for a developed culture.” He further believes that we did not have the fundamental building blocks of philosophy, i.e., the domains of systematic philosophy.<sup>35</sup>

Co’s assertions *cum critique* may balance the excesses of those who claim that there is an essentialized Filipino philosophy that is traceable to the country’s pre-colonial life. His arguments, however, especially when it touches matters of history and culture, are not without problems. His interpretations are sweeping and apparently devoid of nuanced information from

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history and anthropology. This for me is the problem when a philosopher who is basically oriented to abstract thinking makes assertions that would end up counterfactual. It is one thing to critique Filipino philosophy from a philosophical point of view, it is an entirely different thing to critique the same by arguing on the basis of sweeping statements about history and culture.

For example, while the term Filipino was historically a Spanish creation, the Filipino nationalist identity was given spirit and thus crystalized by the intelligentsia, i.e., the Filipinos of the pre-revolution Enlightenment. A review of recent Philippine historical scholarship evidences that Filipino identity is not merely accidental but a claim that ended up in a struggle, and that therefore it would be an error, whether intentional or inadvertent, to say that the Filipino is *merely* a Spanish creation like the name Philippines and that Filipinos were initially and eventually unconscious users of such title.<sup>36</sup>

While it is understandable though that Co cannot avoid but touch on matters of history and culture, nonetheless any critic, a philosopher for that matter, must be methodologically careful, if not meticulous, when speaking on matters that are outside the sphere of his specialization. It is on this note that we are, finally, led to the last scholar whose view on Filipino philosophy is given focus in this paper, Raymun Festin.

#### *Filipino Philosophy from the Viewpoint of Analytic Philosophy*

In his passionate crusade to critique Dionisio Miranda's notion of *loob* Raymun Festin (who is a confrere of Miranda in the Divine Word religious congregation) ended up shifting his target to Filipino philosophy. The flaws he sees in Miranda's discourse on *loob* are linked to a passion typical among some Filipino philosophy [including theology] protagonists, which he likens to a Freudian fixation, to "philosophize or theologize in a distinctly Filipino way."<sup>37</sup>

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This part of the discussion concentrates on Festin's critique of Filipino philosophy; thus I won't delve anymore into his critique of Miranda's notion of *loob* unless otherwise here warranted for elucidation. Before proceeding to my exploration of Festin's critique of Filipino philosophy, I would like to note that his critical-analysis of Miranda has many valid points. It is an example of a solid philosophical critique of a variant of a Filipino philosophy. Be that as it may, I would like to engage him in terms of the general observations he has put forward, i.e., in the second part of his critique of Miranda.

In a way, Festin is not really different from Co who pounds on the semantic problem of the term Filipino. Speaking in a more scholarly, fashion however, he believes that "there is no pure Filipino blood and mind and heart." Filipino identity, according to our critic, is the upshot of cultural amalgamation, the result of racial admixture, and the product of historical evolution and experience. He further adds: "Given the Philippine History of colonial rule and cultural syncretism, it is most difficult, if not impossible, to define the identity and character of the Filipino. The question "Who is the Filipino?" is a question that [it] is elusive to answer as it is perhaps almost pointless to raise."<sup>38</sup>

Unleashing more criticisms, Festin sharply remarks that raising the question "is there a Filipino philosophy?" comes from insecurity. This remark seems to target a number of scholars, diverse their approaches may be, with a nationalist discourse on philosophy. Not missed in the allusions are Mercado, Timbreza and even those who wrote textbooks (in Logic and Ethics) for Filipinos.<sup>39</sup> Festin has something against shaping or creating a Filipino philosophy that seeks to contrast or make distinct the way philosophy is done in the Philippines or by Filipinos from that of the west. In his very description of Filipino philosophy scholars or writers: "they have always the Western ghost in mind while trying to think and philosophize in a uniquely Filipino fashion".<sup>40</sup> The problem with any attempt to abandon Western thought or



its influence is that it is basically inescapable. Using Miranda as an example, Festin points out that no matter what, the so-called Filipino philosophy would always bear a foreign stamp whether in terms of language or methodology.

His challenge to Miranda is practically addressed also to other Filipino philosophers, not to be conscious in “craving to philosophize/theologize against the backdrop of Western thought.” A conscious Filipino philosophy is in a way making sure that our way of thinking would bear the stamp “made in the Philippines.” This, for Festin, is a distraction as well as a hindrance in producing genuine philosophy.<sup>41</sup> In this light, local scholars should not hesitate to borrow western concepts, after all “no group can lay claim to purity and originality in philosophical thinking.”<sup>42</sup> This remark *cum critique*, if taken positively, would increase a notch higher than the current scholarship in Filipino philosophy. The critiques can improve rather than destroy Filipino scholarship in philosophy. The sound arguments against the excesses in methods and interpretations as a consequence of the excitement to shape an essential Filipino thought polish the rough edges of a still developing scholarship. However, some comments on Festin’s remarks would also be imperative.

I grant that, as mentioned earlier, his criticism of Miranda’s *loob* (including other scholars engaged in the discourse) has merits considering where he comes from, i.e., analytic philosophy. However, a number of his comments lack basis and are perhaps unnecessary, and this could be due to the lack of calibration in his passionate criticism (of Miranda). For instance, just because some academics in the Philippines have gone too much in their projects to construct a Filipino philosophy does not mean that “Filipino philosophers” (and theologians) should do philosophy (or theology) “forgetting themselves being Filipinos.” Neither is there anything wrong when Filipinos feel the obligation to philosophize as Filipinos. And neither is it also

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wrong to “justify” implicitly or “explicitly” their works against “the standards of the West.” After all, if philosophy is by and large “hermeneutics” – thus all philosophies as interpretations of this world are historically constituted. Should Filipinos not consider their colonial experience under western powers – in their philosophizing? Should Filipinos deliberately put in brackets if not self-impose “interest-restrains” on their philosophical discourses on the pretext that they “should extricate themselves from the Freudian fixation that hampers their work and warp their vision of things?”

Near the end of his essay, Festin says that Filipino thinkers should “also come to grips with the relevant issues which have direct existential bearing on the lives of people who long and look for prophets and philosophers to guide them” (Festin n.d., 33).<sup>43</sup> But precisely, Filipino philosophy emerged as a response of Filipino academics (i.e. philosophers) to the nationalist challenge, which arguably encompasses the many segments constituting the country’s life: political, economic, cultural and even religious.

Festin has failed to acknowledge that philosophy is not just a matter of language because it also springs from our *prejudices* part of which are our experiences as persons and as a country. Although these prejudices may be purified but to simply insist that we do philosophy that is purified from the prejudices closely intertwined with our historicity is not only being *theoretically puritan* but also *existentially and culturally insensitive and unrealistic*. It was the Greeks, from whom we largely owe Western philosophy that we learned the universally held truth that “the unexamined life is not worth living.” This statement has been repeatedly connected to a similar saying which is “know thy self.” And if this is what philosophy ultimately is all about reflected and re-echoed time and again in the statements of St. Augustine and Heidegger and Sartre, what hinders us therefore to philosophize in order to examine our lives and experiences as

a people? Why the worry of inferiority and self-seclusion whenever there is an attempt to develop discourses we can truly call our own?

While I do not completely agree with those who forcibly impress on us that there exists an “essential” if not “the substantive Filipino mind” more so one that is traceable to the pre-colonial era of our nation, however neither should we side with those who argue (or are prejudicial at the onset) that there is no Filipino philosophy or that it is ridiculous to talk about the development of philosophy in the Philippines.<sup>44</sup>

### **Polishing the Rough Edges**

Given the various positions or views on Filipino philosophy, it is essential to keep in mind the nuances; hence, a few points are imperative, at this juncture, for further clarification.

1. While philosophy both as a discipline and habit of thought should in the end transcend geographic or cultural bias, it cannot be absolutely free from what we may call “historical situated-ness.”
2. Although philosophy (or doing philosophy) is basically or practically methodological, “it cannot be limited to (like science) “a question or matter of method.”
3. From the preceding premise, a philosophical thought necessarily springs from the ground where it is cultivated and speaks from the biases (or prejudices) of its historical situation. Philosophy as such is not ahistorical. There are universal (a priori) principles governing philosophy (like logic) but philosophy (as a discipline) and in its entirety does involve value judgments. We can only ask for example how can some political philosophies be neutral if “the political itself” is value laden? Is philosophy an immaculate body of knowledge that can claim freedom from bias? It does follow the rules of logic that may be understandable by all, but how and for whom this logic is applied precisely

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constitutes the very subjective dimension (of philosophy, any philosophy for that matter).

4. Corollary to the third (3) point: it is acknowledged that some people who are convinced of a certain kind of “purism” that philosophy is basically about the “first principles.” Nevertheless it is not unknown among philosophers that this is just one position among other positions and that in the end it is a not an uncontested position.

The foregoing points provides a partial synthesis of what has been discussed and at the same time serves as the springboard for the next discussion.

#### *The Geopolitics of Philosophy*

Immediately above, we ended with Festin’s critique of Filipino academics who are insecure and fixated in their philosophical scholarship. One can infer from his arguments that philosophy should not be reduced to a political discourse. He does not say this verbatim in his essay but considering his orientation in Analytic philosophy, it would not be without basis to interpret his contention that philosophy is a universal and not a regional more so a nationalist enterprise. In his own words:

Thus Plato, for example, conceived the notion of philosopher King in order to deal with the crisis of leadership that shook the Athenian politics and governance at the times. In other words, the prevailing political circumstances of the times urged him to philosophize. And when he addressed the question of politics philosophically, he was not thinking that he was contributing something to Greek philosophy. He was thinking of one thing and one thing only: doing philosophy.

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This contention however is, for me, not without problem. It is already beyond our capacity to access the original mind of the thinker, i.e., if “he was not thinking that he was contributing something to Greek philosophy.” But granting that Western philosophy developed as an “unconscious by-product of a particular historical process and development” it would not only be unfair but out of context to judge Filipino philosophy apart from the circumstances to which it responded, i.e., nationalism as a critique of colonial experience.<sup>45</sup> I will elaborate on this later but for now I must say that it is only by understanding this context why, reiterating what I said at the onset, we are still debating the Filipino philosophy question.

*Not Parochial but Geographically Situated*

Enrique Dussel in *Philosophy of Liberation* says that “unnoticed, philosophy was born in [this] political space” and it is a space that is real with parameters of economic systems exercised in tandem with military control.<sup>46</sup> Thus, philosophy, from the most absurd postmodernism to the most purist of analytic philosophy that claims universal objectivity, is philosophized not just within time and space in the Kantian sense of the term but in actual “geographic conditions” subject also to “temporal conditions.” This foregoing discussion on the geopolitics of philosophy is important because the question concerning Filipino philosophy is unavoidably linked to a geopolitical question (even before it becomes a philosophical question). This reminds us of what Marx tells us that “ideas” develop from its material condition and that the mode of production is determinative of the kind of consciousness that we have. Thus the question concerning Filipino philosophy (i.e. a question of its existence) is also a question of its production (Why, is there a need or a local philosophy when in fact philosophy is universal?) and of the capacity for production

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(Why, have Filipinos reached the same level as that of the Greeks in terms of philosophizing?).

The colonial experience of the orient, of which the Philippines was subjected close to four centuries, is a given datum which a Filipino philosopher or academic of whatever orientation should not disregard, if he is to make philosophy not only academically relevant but connected to the lives of the people. When philosophizing in the Philippines in a period of globalization, should we pretend to be unconscious of our enduring issues as a people (like identity formation) on the pretext that not doing so would be a form of insecurity?

Given our geopolitics, where we are and where we come from, it would not be surprising why up to this point there is really difficulty in closing the Filipino philosophy question. "Closing the question" means either smoothly proceeding with (because it has been completely accepted that there is a) Filipino philosophy or simply abandoning all the attempts to ask and clarify the matter.

The feeling of some that a Filipino philosophy is unnecessary and that therefore creating our own is useless or futile is for me an attempt to leave our issues as a nation (such as nationalism, identity, self-determination etc.) despite that they are recurrent (issues or questions). But sometimes, even from a psychological point of view, leaving might not necessarily mean moving on/forward but simply denying. For what some would call fixation (on the West, our colonial experience etc.) among Filipino philosophers, is for me an attempt to create therapeutic discourses aimed at mending crumpled pasts and recovering retrievable elements of our identity. Some scholars have gone beyond their limits and acted like cultural anthropologists or poets rather than philosophers, still others have fallen into the temptation of over-thinking and over-analyzing in their desire to penetrate the kernel of the Filipino mind. The bottom line

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however is that at least they tried to use philosophy for the reawakening of the people's spirit.

### **Colonial Experience**

Dussel correctly says that “ontology did not come from nowhere. It arose from a previous experience of domination over other persons.” Thus before the “ego cogito” there was the “ego conquiro.” Before the “I think” (of Descartes) there was the “I conquer”.<sup>47</sup> It is our being “conquered” and “dominated” first by the Spanish Crown and then by the Americans that make us subjects to the question “are Filipinos capable of creating their philosophy?” We can, at this point, additionally remark that even outside Philippine history philosophizing was not without political color. Here we can cite Dussel again who recalls the question of Fernandez de Oviedo, “[a]re the Amerindians human beings” thereby implicating “are they rational animals”?<sup>48</sup>

The colonial experience is pivotal if we were to truly and fruitfully develop Filipino philosophy. Part of our challenge is to philosophize in a way that we come into terms with ourselves, otherwise we would end up as mere subscribers or mimickers of Western thought.

The argument therefore that Filipinos should philosophize devoid of any nationalist bias or interest is insensitive to the fact that the quest for a Filipino philosophy was an unavoidable spirit of the age—at a time when Philippine universities and academics felt the need to answer the question.<sup>49</sup> After all, if philosophy is about “making life worth living by examining it” a Filipino academic cannot but at least ask (at one point in his life) as to whether what s/he is doing has any relevance to where he is and the kind of life he lives.

A simple recall of some historically notable circumstances in the 60s and 70s would help us understand the surge of Filipino philosophy. Resil Mojares' recollection of how scholarship in Philippines Studies (an admixture of history, political science,

anthropology and psychology among others) casts light on Filipino philosophy's case. Although Mojares, given his training, does not include philosophy's engagement with Nationalism in his essay, anyone familiar with the history of academic scholarship in the Philippines around that time knows very well that Filipino philosophy emerged from the same socio-political, economic and cultural context.

The 60s and 70s were decades mired by a widespread disillusionment with the state, the rise of anti-Americanism (against the background of the Vietnam War), the advance of Marxism (the Communist Party of the Philippines was founded in 1969) and the nationalist thrust of Marcos' presidency which lasted for twenty years. All of these combined produced, what Mojares calls, "a long seismic moment in Philippine intellectual life". It was thus around this period, our social historian recalls, that speaking English would become a sign of complicity and guilt. As the critic Bienvenido Lumbera (cited by Mojares in his essay) said in 1968, "[w]e are witnessing our last generation of writers in English."<sup>50</sup> Our very brief review of Philippine history explains that Filipino philosophy had a context, which should now make us understand why we had Ferriols, Timbreza, or even Zeus Salazar (in historiography).

### **Filipino Philosophy and the Continual Search for Enlightenment**

So what now should be the direction of Filipino philosophy? In my view things are far from over. The Philippines, like other former colonies, continues to be *an-other* in whatever location in the global landscape. This however is half the matter, the other half is that dominant discourses still belong to the creators of the discourse, and we remain to be beholden to their interests. Thus, while colonization is over, nevertheless its ramifications are pervasive; the structures it created deeply buried; and the scars of its wounds still show the trace. There remains a spectre of comparisons, to borrow Benedict Anderson's words, where



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despite the disintegration of colonies (and thus their liberation) “the world has become ever more tightly integrated into a single capitalist economy.”<sup>51</sup> Labor export, regional integrations, educational reforms that would meet internationalization standards – what are these? What kind of knowledge is developed by academics and students from underdeveloped and developing countries who are recipients of scholarships from North American and European institutions? Are these not the mutations of old colonial ideologies? Thus, Edward Said’s postcolonial critique makes a lot of sense, as what he says in his landmark work, *Orientalism*:

In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci had identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West.<sup>52</sup> (1979: 7).

Said’s words essentially capture the guiding spirit of postcolonial discourse, i.e., the struggle of peoples subjected to imperialism and colonization to think and write of and for themselves. It is a resistance against the “positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing the relative upper hand.”<sup>53</sup>

Filipino philosophy therefore in an age of widespread globalization (or even in the face of a temptation to just think local and act global) should recompose itself into a postcolonial discourse. What Said calls the “West’s upper hand” has remained strong and controlling. Those who continue to limitedly define philosophy as a discourse and discipline that linearly comes from Europe and North America are blind either by accident or intention to the deeply intertwined connection between the production of knowledge and the power that produced it, i.e.,

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Western philosophy and the Imperialism that brought it to the Philippines.<sup>54</sup> Here we are reminded of some words from Enrique Dussel:

Modern political philosophy originated in reflections on the problem of opening the European world to the Atlantic; in other words, it was a Spanish philosophy. As such it is neither Machiavelli nor Hobbes who initiates Modern political philosophy, but those thinkers who undertook the expansion of Europe toward a colonial world<sup>55</sup> (Dussel 2007, 3).

Those who are interested in Filipino philosophy should not forget the “historical situated-ness” of its development. The problem that I see with Filipino academics is that they understand philosophy as a Western import which was largely a contribution either by the Spaniards (Thomism, Scholasticism) or the Americans (Pragmatism). Precisely, we should not just interrogate the act of importation itself and the powers behind it but more importantly its legitimating spirit, i.e., the idea behind it.

### **Some Loose Ends**

At this point a few more questions about Filipino philosophy have yet to be answered. Perhaps we can focus on two more (clarifications). Foremost: does the Philippines have a distinct intellectual tradition? At the risk of oversimplification I would say yes. We may draw information from Resil Mojares who writes that: “the production of modern knowledge by Filipinos was determinative of the rise of nationalism. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Filipinos, increasingly, aware in their nationality, started to lay the local foundations of such disciplines as history, anthropology, linguistics, political science, sociology. Filipinos were engaged in cultural self-definition in the context of anti-colonial nation formation.”<sup>56</sup> One can discern from Mojares that it would not be accurate to say that the development of the

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Social Thought/Sciences in the Philippines for example started only with the opening of the different disciplinal areas in the state university (the University of the Philippines). Precisely, there was some kind of “social thought” and “political thought” that were shaped by the intellectual elites which in fact brought forth Filipino nationalism.

The nationalist intellectuals did not develop an ontology or an epistemology. Needless to elaborate it was not their concern to develop one as these were viewed through the prism of nascent nationalism as constructs of colonial discourse, thus the intellectual currency of the system they wished to overcome.

In proving his point that distinct intellectual life developed among the nationalist Filipinos, Mojares uses Pedro Paterno as an example who by the near end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century said that the “European observers were mistaken” in branding the way natives worshiped as “idolatry” when in fact it was (for Paterno) a kind of “proto Christianity.” From the viewpoint of contemporary Theology of Culture, Paterno predated what many missiologists would call inculturation. He was in no way less candid than Edward Said who believes that orientalism is nothing but the creation of “the Western upper-hand” in the formation of epistemic terrains. But this sneak peek into Paterno’s idea/s would only make more sense if further inquiry would be made about his background. He studied philosophy and theology in Salamanca, Spain and moved to the Universidad Central de Madrid where he earned a doctorate in civil law in 1880.

Still another example, T.H. Pardo de Tavera was no less passionate in advancing intellectual discourse about the nation. Around the same time as Paterno, Tavera was keen in his observance that racial inferiority is the result of political isolation. Invoking Renan, he argues that the nation is a product of the “will” and thus created by a group of men who live together. From Pardo we learn that even before the independence of the

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country, there was already an idea of a Filipino nation which he distinguished from a Filipino race. Pardo would argue that it would be an error to speak of a Filipino race because one does not exist. This does not mean however that there is no Filipino nation because as said above the latter is a “product of the will”. In this light, we can understand from Pardo that nationalism should be accomplished by living together and investing all efforts to establish or found a society, not through the unfurling of old flags that still bear the stamps of our tribes. To rephrase his statement as quoted by Mojares, we should reject the atavistic sentiments of divergence and instead adopt national methods of convergence which should maintain national solidarity and wipe out the elements of exclusivism and particularism.<sup>57</sup>

Like its older European counterparts, the Filipino nation was born from an enlightenment that is an awakening to the fact that a nation has to be established. Anderson was thus correct in saying that nationalism per se is not the awakening to consciousness but the very consciousness itself that impels people to form an imagined community.

I would like to respond therefore to those who attack Filipino philosophy by pounding on the idea of Filipino as a nationality, calling it undefined, merely a Spanish creation or a product of political imposition. Becoming a Filipino was a conscious choice of individuals who believed in the importance of a distinct identity. That there is no pure Filipino blood is beside the point; after all if bloodline is what we are talking about, we all come from either Adam and Eve or the hominids from where we evolved (just pick your conviction). It is not really about the blood but the will to live and move as one nation and how reason is (or was) instrumentalized to concretize a people’s will. Our memories just have to be refreshed time and again in order to be reminded of our identity.

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The second issue is about Filipino philosophy versus systematic philosophy. Are we suggesting here a kind of philosophical autism or a hermetic scholarship that does not care about the advances in metaphysics or analytic philosophy? Again at the risk of oversimplification, no. It is one thing to study philosophy as such; in fact I must say that this is a responsibility or better yet a commitment anyone taking up the discipline should not abandon. It is another thing to shape or at least clarify a people's identity or collective consciousness through constant or sustained reflection about who they are, their history and their values.

Succinctly put, the universal nature of philosophy should not prevent us from analyzing and reflecting our own lives, but our analysis and reflections about the Philippines should not also sever us from the fundamental and essential principles of philosophy otherwise we will end up merely doing anthropology or area studies. Scholarship and rigor are given regardless of whatever topic or thematic focus is preferred.

### **Conclusion**

In an essay which I wrote in 2012 in honor of distinguished historiographer Reynaldo Ileto, I said that “[p]hilosophy is important in the life of a nation. A people's reflections, critiques and analyses of themselves and their condition basically speak of the kind of persons that they are and the [kind of] country that they have.”<sup>58</sup> Our country's successes and failures ultimately reflect the extent and depth of our thinking. Filipino philosophy therefore or Doing philosophy in the Philippines is relevant only insofar as it contributes to, first, making us better persons, and, second, building us as a people, as a nation.

With the advent of ASEAN 2015 and the imminent implementation of the new educational paradigm, doing philosophy in the Philippines is certainly “challenged” essentially in terms of relevance and practicality of economic viability. These

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are the most interesting times of our lives, yet we should be consoled by the fact that the best philosophies in this planet if not all the philosophies in this world sprung and grew from the soil of humanity's confusions, pains, trials, and even failures.

I have quoted Mojares extensively and so I want to end with him: "there is a measure of bad faith in urging a country that has been colonized by foreign powers to "globalize" since by definition a nation colonized is globalized. The imperative lies in whether it is being globalized in ways that people are critically aware of, and in terms that they can effectively negotiate with or command." (Mojares 2014).

Building on the Filipino philosophy discourse established by a cadre of scholars, a 21<sup>st</sup> century Filipino scholar (a philosopher for that matter) cannot just abandon what has been started on the pretext of a globalized world and an educational system also globalized by the neoliberal market. It is true that the attempts of the earliest writers on Filipino philosophy are imperfect—very much subject to critique in many aspects such as method, content and even translation—but this is not peculiar to us.

The Filipino philosophy question becomes, once more, relevant in this moment of history where the danger of losing and forgetting ourselves has been packaged in the form of internationalization and regional integration. Hence we ask, are the questions "who am I" and "what am I here for" irrelevant vis-à-vis the questions what and how much must I produce? If we still believe that the former are of transcendental importance as they are fundamentally and ultimately the questions that lie at the core not only of philosophy but also of our humanity, then Filipino philosophers are again called to keep burning the flame that would enable us to find and touch what is innermost (in our) being.

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#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Currently the Faculty and Staff Development Officer of the Sacred Heart School–Ateneo de Cebu. His areas of interest (where he has mainly published) are political thought, politics and religion, and the political dimensions of poverty. His articles were published in the *Philippine Sociological Review* (2013), *Asian Horizons* (2013), *Asia Pacific Social Science Review* (2008, 2009), *Asian Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities* (2012), *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* (2011) and *Kritike* (2010) among others. His latest publication are two chapters in the book *A Conversation about Life: Points of View on Reproductive Health* (Claretians, 2014). In 2011, he was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship by the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore and researched on the relevance of Filipino historiographer Reynaldo Clemena Iletto to Filipino political thought – under the mentorship of Dr. Julius Bautista. Contact Details: rhoderickjohn\_abellanos@yahoo.com; rjohnabellanos@gmail.com.

<sup>2</sup> According to Ramon Reyes, Filipino thought emerged (first) by the near end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (rise of Filipino nationhood), (second) by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and (third) religion [Christianity]. Ramon Reyes, “Sources of Filipino Thought,” *Philippine Studies* 21, no. 4 (1973): 429–437.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed history about philosophy as a discipline in the Philippines the following references may be considered: Emerita Quito, *The State of Philosophy in the Philippines* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1983). The section on “Pilosophiyang Pilipino” (by F. Timbreza) is a good supplement to Quito’s monograph. Cf. Emerita Quito, R. Abulad, F. Timbreza and H. Reyes, *Ensayklopidiya ng Pilosopiya* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1993), 187-195. Additionally, Romualdo Abulad’s two unpublished essays are worth reading. Foremost is *Pilosopiyang Pinoy: Uso pa ba?* (2011) and then his paper delivered on the occasion of PAP’s Legacy Lectures (2012).

<sup>4</sup> Marella Ada Mancenido, “Filipino Philosophy according to Mercado and Timbreza: A Re-evaluation,” *Dalumat* 1, no. 1 (2010): 80-95. Methodologically Mercado (at least in most of his works) employs metalinguistic analysis. He assumes that language reflects the thought and somehow determines the outlook of its native speakers. See Leonardo Mercado. *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Manila: Divine World University Publications, 1976), 8. Commenting on this R. Pada says that “[t]he idea is that by looking at the linguistic practices in the Philippines, one will be able to form inferences on the distinct perspectives of reality and non-linguistic data” (p. 29). For the complete entry see Roland Theuas DS Pada, “The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy,” *Kritike* 8 (no. 1): 24-44.

<sup>5</sup> Again, Pada’s commentary on Mercado may be helpful: “The comparison is extensive and to some extent exhaustive given the context of learning the three highlighted languages. Mercado finds the common themes of debt of gratitude or *utang na loob* as a common observable behavioral trait among Filipinos; along this line of thought, Mercado further verifies the common theme of holistic unity in the idea of selfhood through the unitary use of *loob*, *buot*, and *nakem* as reference to the self from the three dialects mentioned” See Pada, “The Methodological Problems,” 30-31.

<sup>6</sup> Dionisio M. Miranda, *Loob: the Filipino within (A Preliminary Investigation into Pre-theological Moral Anthropology)* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1989), 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 26, & 45.

<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that the latter has been cited by both Miranda and Mercado, specifically his magnum opus *Pasyon and Revolution*. In his study of popular movements in the Philippines (1840-1910), Iletto observes that strong leadership in different popular and revolutions movements was just a reflection on the ruler’s “inner being” indicated by wealth and military victories. Our historiographer notes that this belief is not unique among

Filipinos in that the Javanese notion of power accumulation operates within the same perspectival frame. Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippine, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo Press, 1979) 24-25; 45.

<sup>9</sup> This is R. Pada's translation of what Timbreza himself says in *Pilosopiyang Pilipino*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> But does this Filipino mind which is not just "any Filipino's mind" an existing reality or merely an interpretation of a/the scholar? This is not just a question but a critique of Timbreza's methodology. A similar case in the issue of Filipino/Contextual Theology is Daniel Franklin Pilario's critique of Jose de Mesa's attempt to create a gestalt of Filipino theology from the data believed to be found in the local genius, i.e. lowland theology. In Pilario's words: [b]ut is there a cultural kernel to recover? Is it retrievable? Or is not the retrieved theme an invention of the cultural exegete? See Daniel Franklin Pilario, "The Craft of Contextual Theology: Towards a Conversation of Theological Method in the Philippine Context," *HAPAG I*, no. 1 (2004): 28.

<sup>11</sup> Pada, Roland Theuas DS. "The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy." *Kritike* 8, no. 1 (2014): 32. For a critique of Timbreza's method see R. Pada who says: "[u]nlike Mercado, who has painstakingly cited and documented the source of his ethnological data, Timbreza is unclear about how these folk-sayings were collected. One can surmise that since these folk-sayings are quite common in every regional dialect, the collection may have been taken from informal sources. But then again, such could have been remedied with at least a simple anthropological method of documenting the names of the sources, the dates and places from which this data have been gathered, and the nature of the sources to put them in a position of credibility." *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>12</sup> For a brief background of this see Remmon Barbaza. "Higher than the Original stands the Translations: Translating Heidegger into Filipino." *Kritika Kultura* (2013/2014): 245-246.

<sup>13</sup> Ferriols, *A Memoir of Six Years*, 339. The paragraph is quoted from the work essay of Franz Giuseppe F. Cortez, "On Filipino Philosophy The Linguistic Turn as a Political Act: Another Look at the Thoughts of Roque Ferriols," *Kritike* 8, no. 1 (June 2014): 45-77.

<sup>14</sup> R. Ferriols, *Pambungad sa Metapisika* (Quezon City: Bluebooks, 2014). The essay is the first chapter of Ferriols' book *Pambungad*. Essays on Ferriols that may provide informative commentaries: M.J. Calano, "Ang Pilosopiya at si Roque Ferriols" in *Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2015): 1-

20; R.A. Tolentino, “Biyaya and Meron, Biyaya ng Meron” in *Perspectives: 91-108*.

<sup>15</sup> My translation. In the original words of Ferriols: “*Madalas may nagtatanong: Mag-iimbento ka ba ng pilosopiyang Pilipino? O kaya: Maari bang magkaroon ng pilosopiyang Pilipino? Ang mga tanong na iyan ay pagaksaya ng panahon. Kung talagang nais ng isang taong mamilosopiya, ang hinahanap niya ay ang totoo na nagpapakita sa kanya. At gagamitin niya ang anomang makakatulong sa paghanap sa totoo. Kung ang pinagaabalahan niya’y Pilipino ba ako? o Intsik? o Indian? o kung ano? hindi na siya mamilosopiya. Lalabas siyang gaya ng taong tingin nang tingin sa salaming sa walang katapusang pagka-bagabag na baka hindi siya mukhang Pinoy.*” Ferriols, Pambungad sa Metapisika, as cited by Cortez, 48.

<sup>16</sup> Guidon 2014, 73.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Calano as interviewed by Cortez (2014): *Dapat maging malinaw na para kay Fr. Roque hindi naman nangangahulugan na Pilipino o wikang Tagalog lamang ang ating gagamitin sa ating pag-iisip. Para sa kanya, kung ikaw ay Cebuano gumamit ka ng Cebuano, kung ikaw ay Ilokano gumamit ka ng Ilokano, kung ikaw ay Bikolano gumamit ka ng Bikolano... Ang mahalaga lamang sa kanya ay wikang pagsasalubungan. Ibig sabihin na nakapag-uusap tayo sa wikang iyon at nagkakaunawaan.*

<sup>18</sup> One has to be realistic that nowadays most Filipinos of whatever region no longer speak their language in its purity, i.e., governed by the rules of grammar and syntax. A number of Cebuanos for example know little about the original Cebuano terms; many of the younger generation speak diluted Cebuano.

<sup>19</sup> Zeus Salazar, “Ang Pagtuturo ng Kasaysayan sa Pilipino.” Atoy Navarro, M.J. Rodriguez and V. Villan, eds., *Pantayong Pananaw: Ugat at Kabuluhan, Pambungad sa Pag-aaral ng Bagong Kasaysayan*, (Quezon City: Palimbagan ng Lahi, 2000), 33.

<sup>20</sup> See P. Reyes, “Fighting over a Nation: Theorizing a Philippine Historiography,” Workshop Paper in Mutating Postcolonial Cultural Modalities in Southeast Asia (2007). See also Lisandro Claudio, “Postcolonial Fissures and the Contingent Nation An Antinationalist Critique of Philippine Historiography,” *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 61, no. 1 (2013): 45–75.

<sup>21</sup> In one of his improved papers, Gripaldo writes: “The traditional approach is the genuine philosophical approach. It answers the question,

“What is your own philosophy?” It is the truly philosophical approach as traditionally used by historians of philosophy. It follows the Greek philosophical model. It enumerates Filipino individual philosophers and discusses their respective philosophical ideas” in *Philosophy: Past and Present* delivered during the 2012 PAP Conference.

<sup>22</sup> Rolando Gripaldo, *Filipino Philosophy: Traditional Approach* (Manila: De La Salle UP, 2009), 10.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-37.

<sup>24</sup> Rhoderick John S. Abellanosa, “Local Discourse, Identity and the Search for a Filipino Philosophy,” *Asian Perspectives in Arts and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2013): 41.

<sup>25</sup> FPA Demeterio, “Assessing the Developmental Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy.” This writer’s copy was e-mailed by Demeterio himself.

<sup>26</sup> FPA Demeterio, “Status of and Directions for ‘Filipino Philosophy’ in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo and Co.” *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (May 2013): 185-214.

<sup>27</sup> Alfredo P. Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines: Fifty Years Ago, Fifty Years from Now,” *Across the Philosophical Silk Road: A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 2009), 28-46.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>29</sup> What he says in *On Postmodernism* is more pointed; it is not just that the Filipino mind is undefined but (sadly) “we have not yet found it.” See Alfredo Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines: Fifty Years Ago and Fifty Years from Now.” R. Abulad and A. Co, *Two Filipino Thomasian Philosophers On Postmodernism* (Manila: UST Press), 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Co, *Festschrift*, 41. My emphasis. The same line can be found in his essay in the book *On Postmodernism*. Cf. 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 41, 11.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*



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<sup>36</sup> William Henry Scott, *Barangay, Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society*, 5th printing (Quezon City: Ateneo Press, 1994), 6ff; Also see Resil Mojares, *Brains of the Nation* (Quezon City: Ateneo Press, 2004). Another questionable point in Co's opinion is his usage of the term "developed culture" which he of course has not explained. Is he saying that current Philippine society does not have a developed culture? If so what is his definition of culture and what are his standards that would classify one culture as developed and another as otherwise. Anthropologists would say that cultural development is subjective. Even if we are to speak of pre-Hispanic culture, it would still be very contentious to claim that the people then did not have any developed culture. W.H. Scott's account of 16<sup>th</sup> century Philippine culture and society refutes Co's sweeping statements.

<sup>37</sup> Raymun J. Festin, "Buting Pinoy Twenty Years After: A Critical Essay" (unpublished essay), 30.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Others say that tracing the discursive origin of Filipino philosophy, its genealogy, so to speak, is valid but is properly not philosophy but basically a "sociology" of knowledge. This critique is challenging to respond to but practically not unobjectionable. Such a position can be debated in terms of what really constitutes philosophy thematically and methodologically.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>46</sup> Enrique Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Aquilino Martinez and C. Morkovsky (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1985), 2-3.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> A case in point of a Filipino scholar in philosophy who was inspired by the Filipinization movement in the 60s to do philosophy was Roque Ferriols. See R.A.B. Tolentino et al., "An Annotated Bibliography of Roque J. Ferriols, S.J.", 110.

<sup>50</sup> Bienvenido Lumbera, "Looking Back at the Future of Philippine Writing." *Graphic 4* (January 4, 1968).

<sup>51</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Spectre of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia, and the World* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1998), 59.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 7.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> I am appropriating here Reynaldo Ileto's notion of "nonlinear emplotment" which he uses to critique linear and developmentalist interpretations of political histories. Political development (in this case the development of thinking, i.e. philosophizing) does not happen in a fashion where the West thinks first and the Orient follows. See "Outlines of Nonlinear Employment of Philippine History," in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, Eds. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham and London: Duke UP, 1997).

<sup>55</sup> Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, 3.

<sup>56</sup> Mojares, *Brains of the Nations*, 471.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>58</sup> Abellanos, "Local Discourse, Identity, and the Search for a Filipino Philosophy," 35.