FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY AND POSTMODERNITY

Raymundo R. Pavo
University of the Philippines Mindanao
Davao City

Abstract. Postmodernity, with its stress on freedom and creativity, is a vantage point that can dispose Filipino thinkers to philosophically formulate, construct and develop thought systems. This liberating milieu can be reckoned as a fertile occasion where Filipinos can explore the conditions of possibilities that grant a philosophical status to thoughts, statements or constructions that either come from or pertain to the Filipino mind. Such that when we use the concept Filipino Philosophy, we are well-conscious of these two interrelated points – The Identity and Referential Nature of the concept Filipino, and the connotation/intension of the term Philosophy. Is it Filipino? Is it philosophical? These are the questions that have guided the ruminations in this philosophical treatise. And as an initial insight to such questions, we propose a vantage point that can address the identity and referential nature of the term Filipino in a Filipino Philosophy and the philosophical substance of its claim. This perspective, we shall argue, may be construed by a social-scientist-philosopher.[1] As a social scientist, this thinker is mindful of the descriptions or characteristics that may be regarded as telling of the Filipino milieu. As a philosopher, this thinker makes it his task to regress – to speculate on the logical assumptions or presuppositions that regulate activities that are suggested and verified by the social scientist.[2]

Key Words: Filipino Philosophy, Postmodernity, Progressive Philosophy, Social Science, Regressive Thinking

Introduction

The concept Filipino Philosophy has gravitated many Filipino thinkers to participate in processes or explorations that seek to comprehend its meaning.[3] Professors of philosophy in universities, for instance, have been informed of its emerging presence. To date, only scanty efforts were made to outline the possible content of a philosophy subject in Filipino Philosophy.[4] This phenomenon, when reckoned, seems to suggest two things: there is an existing hesitation among university professors to deal with the identity concept of being a Filipino, and philosophy teachers anticipate that they are not ready to face the complexities in this expected query: What is the meaning of the term philosophy in the concept of a Filipino Philosophy?

With these two tracks of thinking, the present article hopes to demonstrate the need of having a vantage point that can possibly meet and uphold the demands that come from the referential connotation of the term Filipino and the intension of the word philosophy. This perspective, as we shall later demonstrate, may be accomplished by a Filipino thinker who asks and reflects like a social scientist-philosopher. This bridging of two disciplines cannot happen instantaneously. However, we take the cudgels to begin in this reflection on what it means to socially construe the concept of being Filipino while remaining equally mindful that what one is proposing is philosophic.

With this insight, the present article, therefore, looks into the conditions of possibility where the social science lens and philosophical vantage points can interface. In this way, the attempt to lay down the cards that are at stake when one talks of a Filipino Philosophy is continued and hopefully nourished. This is a response to our perceived need of having a group of Filipino thinkers who can provide sufficient content to the term Filipino and who is convinced that their work belongs to philosophy.

A Postmodernist Strand: A Presupposition

In Postmodernity, we have witnessed the privileging of the language of particulars. This is most seen in the growing appeal of situational perspectives and transitory vantage points. Since flux and cracks have occupied the forefront of discussions, thinking in the post-modern milieu can be analogous to make-shifts – temporary shelters to live by, nurture and defend. This transitory character of thinking, in our opinion, is a logical consequence of the primacy of the particulars. When the individual's voice is given so much meaning and power, we are somewhat allowed to imagine that the kind and degree of philosophizing today are directly proportional to the number of individuals who wish to engage or are engaged in philosophical thinking. This cliché seems apt to describe the possibilities of philosophical thinking today – the sky is the limit. Perhaps, this is one promise that Nietzsche has foreseen in his attempt to unlock the doors of differences/Equivocity and banish the hold of Univocity/sameness in the platform of philosophizing.[5] After all, things and ideas do not appear all-too-human when thinking functions in the midst of the unfamiliar.[6] With this milieu in philosophy, the privileging of particulars may not be entirely surprising after all. Since the postmodern effect is to make ourselves disposed to the dialectic between the familiar and unfamiliar, the unfolding milieu can actually serve as an opportune occasion for the systematic articulation of particular philosophies.

Some Apprehensions with Postmodernity

By invoking our own specificities, we propose that post-modernism can also be reckoned as a location for the discussion of a particular philosophy that can be called our own – Filipino. This is an important presupposition that present article holds.[7] But there are some hesitations in proposing that a Filipino Philosophy is to be discussed within the ambit of the Postmodern Milieu. Let us look into these apprehensions.[8]

Part of the initial hesitation is the free for all attitude that the Postmodern mindset carries. This apprehension is actually expected since it is part of the spectacle of the modernist thought which many thinkers today still consider meaningful. Should the notion of a Filipino philosophy follow certain standards of thought? Not discounting the possible limitations that standards bring, we are of the opinion that there is still a need to have a logical and organized way of presenting thoughts. Otherwise, we might all be content with aphorisms. Can we effectively communicate each other's thoughts if we solely use the language of aphorisms? Here, we are already introduced to the conflict of having a laissez-fair approach to thinking and to thinking logically. What ideal should be followed in pursuing a Filipino Philosophy?

Since we need to start somewhere, how can we begin discussing the concept of a Filipino philosophy without becoming too obliged to follow the logical format that structures provide and without becoming too pressed to ride the winds of change that post-modernity blows? Our present ruminations tell us that we can still make use of the modernist stress on structure and organization. Under the postmodern stance, such a point need not be construed as nonsensical, since we can always assert that postmodernism still confers value on conditions that remain meaningful for a specific group of people. The hold of meaning, to the say the least, is a condition that even the postmodern milieu maintains and lives by.[9] Thus, to make amends with these two seemingly conflicting positions, we have decided to begin with a classification system that has tried to organize the different faces of Filipino philosophy. This is a stance that comes from an individual who has undergone a classical training in philosophy – Gripaldo's.[10] After which, we shall try to be post-modern by looking into the strengths and weakness of each classificatory label in the hope that we can introduce a fourth category – the social scientist-philosopher approach.[11]

Significance of the Classification

The reason for choosing Gripaldo's classificatory style is conditioned by the logic and comprehensiveness with which his distinction provides on the differences between traditional philosophy and a philosophy construed from the cultural lens. This difference, as we shall later argue, provides an entry point in raising these other two questions that are interrelated to the question on the meaning of philosophy in a Filipino Philosophy: (1)When does a position/statement participate as a species in the traditional-philosophical genus?; (2) When does a social science/cultural construction become philosophical?[12]

Why do we need to face and own such questions? To understand the significance of the foregoing questions, let us look into the questions' two-fold assumptions. One presupposition is: not all statements can be considered philosophical. If such is not the case, then there might be no need to write a paper on philosophy, since anything can be a member of its fold. Philosophy will be reduced to pure sameness or difference which does not really help in our attempt to better understand its claims.[13] One might be tempted to let go of classifications, but it may all lead to nonsensical confusion. As a consequence of this presupposition, there is a need to identify the conditions that allow us to say that a stance can be considered philosophical. Thus, when we say that a position is a species of the genus Filipino Philosophy, we have clarified the meaning of the term philosophy in such a category.

The other assumption is that not all social science facts can join the bandwagon of philosophy. For a socially construed fact to be philosophical, the article proposes that it must traverse these three stages of abstraction – establish the sufficiency of the issue, tease out of concepts, and ruminate on the universal nature of such concepts. This is a line of thinking that we shall try to elucidate and defend as we discuss the transition from social science facts to philosophical ideas.

<div align="center">

Approaches to Philosophy

</div>

Using Gripaldo's ruminations, we can demarcate the concept of a Filipino Philosophy in three ways: National, Traditional, Cultural.[14] Let us look into the meaning of these labels.

National/Citizenship Approach and Filipino Philosophy

The National category, Gripaldo holds, refers to any philosophical stance done by a Filipino. As a Filipino citizen, his philosophical contributions can already be considered part and parcel of the Filipino

Philosophy concept.[15] The question whether or not the proposed perspective reflects the culture or life ways of Filipinos is not the main concern. It may be the case that their positions will eventually reveal the life-world of certain communities[16] but such an outcome is not a priority. Consequently, this category has the propensity to beef up every Filipino's capacity to contribute to the archeology of a Filipino philosophy. This is because any interested Filipino is empowered, invited and encouraged to philosophically reflect on the uniqueness of their thinking ways.

The aforementioned category, however, prompts us to question and challenge its main effect – to automatically classify a contribution made by a Filipino philosophical. This seems to be anti-thetical to what philosophy stands for. In this respect, we propose that there should be an inch of hesitation in considering citizenship as a sufficient condition of philosophizing. Logically, citizenship and philosophizing are unrelated terms. It is true that the citizen category allows for greater participation amongst Filipinos in construing a Filipino Philosophy. However, the question whether a stance is philosophical or not must not be discussed within the purview of citizenship. The question on the nature and meaning of philosophy deserves a different platform. We can even propose that the meaning of philosophy should act or function as a conceptual filter of contributions made by Filipinos. Until Filipino thinkers have decided on what to include and exclude in the term philosophy, the question whether a contribution is philosophical or not will be sidelined and placed at the margins.[17] What is Philosophy? This question can help us provide a philosophical foundation to a Filipino Philosophy.

The foregoing challenge is a task that we have initially tried to address when we presented in a published article a philosophic treatment of thinking. 'What is thinking?' is the classical question that we tried to own in the article. In our initial analysis, we proposed that thinking is to be regarded as an interplay of these three species: Regressive (Philosophic), Progressive (Scientific) and Digressive (Artistic).[18] This discourse on thinking may be regarded as a possible start in our attempt to contribute a philosophical ground to Filipino Philosophy. We have owned the question and continue in our attempt to substantiate philosophy's meaning. With the proposed categories, we hope to provide a separate article for each of thinking species. In so doing, we can deepen our reflection on possible nodal points on what it means to think.[19]

And with the initial reflection on thinking, we have proposed meaning as a conceptual filter that can be used in assessing a contribution in a Filipino Philosophy as philosophical. This is a big change from the habit of

using the conceptual frameworks and theories of known thinkers, and of not attempting to substantiate the conceptual categories that we discover. As Gripaldo notes, "it is best not to stop at just being a scholar, but to become a philosopher himself or herself."[20] This stress on the philosophic side, however, means that we have only filled up one side of the coin. The other side still needs some serious reflection and attention. Thus, the possible controversy that rests with our initial contribution is its weakness in confronting the demand carried in the term Filipino in a Filipino Philosophy. Is it enough to say that a position is philosophic? Is it also Filipino? The latter question is another aspect that the Citizenship Category must also be willing to look into.[21]

The Traditionalist and Filipino Philosophy

The traditional category, Gripaldo opines, refers to students of philosophy who have inherited philosophical problems from the thinkers they have decided to specialize in.[22] The main constraint for this kind of philosophical training, he notes, is the influence of the studied philosopher's concepts on the biases of the student.[23] This source of worry is grounded, since a classical training in philosophy usually involves these three levels:

(1) Given the long years of studying Kant, for example, the consciousness of the student is eventually formed by Kant's philosophical positions. In this classical training philosophical study, the first five years of research are usually devoted to comprehension and reconstruction of the thoughts and principles of Kant. In the process, the expectation is to master how Kant developed his ideas and elucidate the claims of his arguments. With this training, the worry of Gripaldo is justified. Can the student get out of the shadows and caves made and carved by Kant's positions?

(2) Moreover, the scholars of Kant have different interpretations. There are conflicting camps and traditions. For example, if one reads Kant by first going through the Critique of Pure Reason, followed by the Critique of Practical Reason and the Critique of Judgment, Kant's philosophy will appear highly rigid and formalistic. But if Kant is read starting with the Critique of Judgment and followed by the other two books, his philosophy will appear more attuned to the elements of surprise and uncertainty.[24] With these two divergent approaches to Kant's philosophy, a student who attempts to specialize in Kant has to anticipate such a complexity. This context simply furthers the initial worry – Can the student escape Kant's philosophic biases and propositions?

(3) But after zooming into Kant's philosophy, the next challenge is to be originary – to distinguish a position which is different from Kant's. Is

this possible? Usually, this separation and eventual autonomy takes years of painstaking work. The initial step normally includes the discovery of some cracks and holes. When this phase begins, the student of Kant changes his intellectual gears. From an expert of thought reconstruction, he morphs into a critical student eager to magnify where Kant's philosophy possibly failed. A mistake or error in Kant's seemingly flawless system is a prized possession. Since the student is already critical of the possible weakness in Kant's philosophy, there is an emerging question that this student needs to face: What is the vantage point that allows me to see these limitations in Kant's philosophy? Such a question is crucial because the student occasions an opportunity for intellectual independence and autonomy. However, can the student of Kant succeed in his quest for possible liberation?

The third phase is actually tougher when compared to the process of reconstruction. Because in becoming his own, the student has to confront his own intellection and comprehension of philosophy. He has to challenge himself to come up with and polish his own philosophical vantage point. In this way, the student of philosophy understands his more important role in philosophical discussions – he has to be a philosopher. He needs to graduate from being a student of philosophy to becoming his own philosopher. Thus, if this emerging thinker reads an article that simply evaluates and assesses the strengths and limitations of the position of others, the immediate question that he thinks of is: What is the vantage point used in such an evaluation? Did the author of such an article reflect on the meaning of his position and substantiate its points? If there is none, then the author of such an article is still yet to comprehend what philosophizing entails.

The challenge, therefore, in the experience of a Traditional philosophy is not to end as defenders of the position of other thinkers. To simply mouth and invoke the names of famous intellectuals will not suffice. Also, there is no short-cut in the process of finding one's own autonomy. In point of fact, slavery to a position of another philosopher has its blessings. Comprehending what his arguments amount to may be regarded as a fertile landscape where one can be freed from the biases conditioned by the studied claims. Though Schopenhauer considers traditional students of philosophy not genuine philosophers[25] (since for him, authentic philosophy should emerge from the milieu or the society where the individual lives while the context that books provide are subsidiary to the events and relations that do take place in real life situations), the traditional way of philosophizing is still formidable given that this is the location wherein one can be conceptually originary. This is a route where the universal capacity of

thinking or reason can still perform. In the words of Gripaldo, he mentions three ways or options in becoming a genuine philosopher: "(1) we can innovate (from Kantian to neo-Kantian), (2) we can reject an old philosophical thought and create a new path to philosophizing, and (3) we an review old philosophical questions and offer a new insight or philosophical reflection."[26]

We can mention here Professor William Desmond of Leuven University who reinvented the notion of being through these four species of being: Univocity, Equivocity, Dialectic and The Metaxu (The In-Between).[27] These senses of being have been thought of and assessed only after studying Hegel for almost twenty years. Thus, he inherited this problem on the nature of Dialectic through the books and scholars of Hegel. By concocting the notion of The Metaxu, he has found ways to show the limitations of the Dialectic Sense of being and has put forward this idea – to better appreciate and cognise how being operates, we need to zoom into the points where the senses, ideas and constructs overlap. The stress on the nature of an interface proved to be helpful in explaining how the different senses, impressions and ideas of being coalesce? Did he simply invent such a thought? It was only after studying Hegel for more than two decades that he made contact with a fresh start in philosophizing – his own. In connection to this story, we should also be reminded that Aristotle stayed in Plato's Academy for 18 years. Such a stretch should have equipped him with the insights on how to overcome Plato's weaknesses and put forward his own. Now, Professor Desmond is considered as the philosopher of Ireland.

With such a background, we are of the strong opinion that the traditional approach to philosophy still has a role to play in the continuous carving of a Filipino Philosophy. In point of fact, this can be a route wherein Filipinos can invent conceptual categories which can hopefully be substantiated and defended. In time, such categories may gain recognition here and elsewhere and put the Philippines on the map in the production of knowledge. Looking through the experience of Professor Desmond and Aristotle, we claim that the change from being a student to a philosopher may take some time. But in due course, who knows we will have Filipino thinkers who will gain international recognition as a reputable philosopher and establish his mark in the domain of philosophy. If such a person will be recognized, will his philosophy be classified as Filipino? Will he be aptly called a Filipino Philosopher? We propose that he deserves such a title. For inspiring the Filipinos to construct ideas and not simply repeat and revere the constructs formulated by foreign thinkers, he has worked hard for such

recognition. Because with his achievement, he has reminded us that Filipinos can think universally and be at the forefront in the production of knowledge. Hence, there might be no need to strictly limit the concept of a Filipino Philosophy to the activities that reveal the culture of Filipinos. It may even be a delimitation to what Filipinos can possibly contribute in the ever expanding discourse in philosophy.

Since the traditional approach to philosophy has its strong points, we actually find ourselves at the crossroads. Should we still give weight to the term Filipino in a Filipino Philosophy? Or, should we allow ourselves to anticipate the future universally appealing philosophic constructs that can put the Filipino mind at the forefront of philosophic thinking? Another question is: Should we first direct our concern on establishing various meanings of philosophy before tinkering its Filipino side?

Cultural/Social Science and Filipino Philosophy

The social science approach is a route that has greatly influenced current discussions on Filipino philosophy. In the present list of Filipino Thinkers, many of them are social scientists who have made studies in various parts of the Philippines. For Gripaldo, this approach is an activity of philosophical extraction from culture. He mentions Leonardo Mercado (1974, 1994), Florentino Timbreza (1982), Virgilio Enriquez (1988) and F. Landa Jocano (1997) as examples of Filipino writers who apply the cultural approach in the construction of a Filipino Philosophy.[28] Since the cultural approach makes use of the social sciences, their researches have disposed them to meet and reflect on the different aspects in the life-ways of Filipinos. These experiences have fueled their confidence to construct various images of the Filipino. If the question on the meaning of the concept Filipino is raised, they invoke and tap the particular encounters gained in the course of their immersion and the concepts they brewed and discovered in the process of rumination.[29]

Today, the unfolding of various particular truths is a cherished approach in the production of knowledge. This is probably the reason why many social scientists have punctuated the need to have a thick description of the life-ways of various Filipino communities. Such descriptions are esteemed since they do not only depict communal activities. The narratives, symbols and meanings that regulate the life of certain groups of people are also saved from possible extinction. Since this is the process of reasoning that many social scientists follow, it can be logically expected that they will have this demand - the concept of a Filipino philosophy has to be in continuum with the life-world of the Filipino people. The growing presence

of social scientists in the discussions on philosophy is also confirmed by the rising number of known social-scientist-philosophers in the post-modern scene.[30] This is a big contrast to the dominance of mathematician-philosophers in modernity.[31] If in modern times the thinkers moved from mathematics to philosophy, today, many social scientists move from their respective fields to philosophy. This unique phenomenon simply solidifies humanity's current love affair with the content that particulars can offer.

The difficulty, however, with the cultural approach is the transition from descriptive to normative valuations, a point that Gripaldo has explored when he mentions the difference between descriptive analysis and philosophical analysis.[32] Whereas the former is engaged in piecemeal analysis, the latter's concern for the 'ought' discourse must be zoomed into and not abandoned. In a later section of this article, we shall take up Gripaldo's point and deepen it in our discussion on the interplay between the particular and universal. Although he mentions the need for the holistic eye, we felt that there is a further need to substantiate the kind of interface between the particular and the universal which the social-scientist philosopher's gaze can look upon.

Filipino Thinkers: In Broad Strokes[33]

In Mindanao, for instance, many of the proponents of Filipino philosophy are at the same time social scientists. We have Alejo,[34] Gaspar[35] and Gatmaytan.[36] These thinkers have been immersed and exposed to the rudiments of social science and have been at the forefront in the discussions on issues of Mindanao. Hence, if one proceeds in the discourse on the possibility of a Mindanaon philosophy, the mentioned thinkers can be consulted. Their immersion and passion to be with the communities in Mindanao are telling of the wealth of insights that they possess on the life-world of a Mindanaon.

In Luzon, one has to include the thinking of Ferriols[37] and Salazar[38]--with the former focusing on the phenomenon of 'Meron,' 'Loob' and Filipino spirituality, while the latter pronounced and specified the conditions of possibility of a 'Pantayong Pananaw'. These concepts are complex and have been seriously ruminated upon. More importantly, their commitment to have a critical gaze at their own positions tells us that they have tried to carefully substantiate their thoughts. In so doing, they have disposed us to trust the insights and arguments that their works propose. Consequently, the possible criticisms that their positions can provide are worthy of attention, since they have explored a vantage point where we can glean and look into. Hence, their phenomenological reflections on the

experiences of Filipinos are grounded, since such interpretations emanate from a ruminated perspective.

In Visayas, we have at the forefront the continued strengthening of the collection of Cebuano Literature and History housed in the University of San Carlos. Researchers like Alburo[39] have spearheaded attempts to make an account of narratives and histories of various towns, cities and communities in the province of Cebu. This massive effort to collate and study the particular stories of Cebuanos reminds us of the capacity of local experts to contribute in discussions on the concept of being a Filipino. We can already anticipate unfolding complexities when particular accounts are stretched and expected to say something about universally oriented topics. In the case of Cebuano literature and history, for instance, it can carve an image reflective of the mindset of a Cebuano. But if we were to extrapolate and provide an image of a Filipino, the content that can be conferred to the Filipino concept might always be temporary and subject to change. This is the logical sequence when one goes through the process of abstractive thinking.

With the on-going research activities in the three main islands of the country, one can easily sense the Post-Modern trend: scholars see the wisdom in concentrating on the particularities of the stories, rituals, relations and activities that abound in various localities. This is even reinforced with the term Filipino being an identity and referential concept. To whom does it apply? What is its content? These are perennial questions emerging in many identity and referential concepts. However, it might be of help to be reminded of the epistemological assumption when dealing with the concept Filipino – either one attempts to know the abstract essence, or one acknowledges that there can never be a Filipino essence. What we can provide are always estimations on what and who a Filipino is. If the latter presupposition is held, we can expect the rise of particular philosophies. But when the former is expected, the production of knowledge will always have problems dealing with the content of universally oriented thoughts. These are two epistemological assumptions that the discussion of a Filipino Philosophy presently concurs.

Between Particulars and Universals

The social science approach is certainly informative. But its love-affair with the particulars can also pose as possible constraint to universal meaning. With the social scientists stress and attention to detail, how will such a habit of thinking deal with discussions on universality?

In the discourse on Filipino Philosophy, we underscore the need for a philosophic attention to universals. Romantic as it may sound, the search for the conditions of possibility of the universal must be carried on. Universality, when logically considered, will always act as the other side of particularity.[40] Without the universal eye, we may be reduced and trapped to the images and representations that particularities impress upon our consciousness. And in the absence of particularity, the universal will be emptied of its possible content. There is something in the particular truths which the universal truth depends upon. If this dialectic is dismissed, the term philosophy is just a name used for reasons that are left unexplored. Just like Kant's Logic, the quality of a universal cannot be experienced. It is something thought of. This is an idea that we can all derive from Kant's discussion on the Twelve Categories of Understanding. In the category of quantity, he cites the universal as one of its members. The presence of the universal in such a list signals the role and place of the universals in thinking. Why do we have concepts of the universals? What are they here for? Can we simply banish the universal given the post-modern love affair with the particulars?

In our reflection, the universal and particular, as logical constructs, reinforce each other's meanings. A person can only appreciate what particularity means because he also has an idea of the universal. Being the domain of concepts, the universal functions as a film against which particular truths can be impressed.[41] The Universal and the Particular can even be construed as regulative ideals to each other's truth and meaning.

Now, if we apply these insights to the concept of a Filipino philosophy, the recognition of the regulative role of both concepts – particular and universal, must imply that the process of gaining a particular truth must not be reduced to a myopic gaze. In gaining this particular truth, the Filipino thinker must try to ruminate on the relation between particular and universal truths. For instance, if a social scientist discovers and can ascertain the life-way of a specific indigenous group, he can elevate the discussion by raising this query: How does such a particular point of view stand in connection to the notion of a Mindanaon? There has to be an attempt to elevate the level of discussion. Next, the thinker must also look into the process that his mind followed. Such a process might function as a route where we can tease out a Filipino way of doing abstraction. In other words, his mind must address the concerns arising from this three-fold line of reasoning: (1) Establish the sufficiency of particular contents, (2) Anticipate unique habits of thinking, which can provide new conceptual

categories, and (3) Explore the nature and logical structure (or assumptions) of such a concept.

Such is a privilege of the social science approach to Filipino Philosophy. When this opportunity is seized, we can expect that the archeology of a Filipino Philosophy does not only consist of particular truths solely engaged in a thick description of life-ways. Constructs or paradigms are also made available which can become objects of fascination and investigation. Thus, the social science approach needs to battle its way out through three stages for it to be philosophical. And when these three stages are successfully traversed, we can now raise these queries: What is the specific gain when we have reached the third stage of thinking? What can we expect to achieve in reflecting on the nature of perceived concepts? What do we do with such thoughts? These questions bring us to the fore of philosophic discussions.

Philosophy: A Hermeneutical Key

The question on the nature of philosophy needs to be addressed. In it absence, we previously mentioned that we might be calling a position part of the concept Filipino philosophy without first examining and understanding the meaning that the term philosophy brings. In our study of philosophy, we have discovered that the philosopher's point of view on the meaning of philosophy can be considered a hermeneutical key in deciphering what his philosophy stands for. In Nietzsche's terminology, for example, he opines that philosophy is the study of prejudices.[42] If you take a closer look at his over-all philosophical system, it can be readily observed that his project deals with the deconstruction of thinking biases and habits. If Nietzsche upholds a very critical eye on all structures and constructions, such a stress can be expected given his firm understanding on the meaning and role of philosophy.

Hegel's notion of philosophy is another example. For him, philosophical thinking is compared to a mirror like reflection on the nature of the Absolute.[43] This is the noble task that Hegel confers to philosophy. Since this meaning promotes philosophy as a self-reflexive study, he finds in philosophy a way through which a philosopher can have a mirror like experience with the Absolute. Hegel's position on the nature of philosophy, when one is introduced to it, signals his expectation on the kind and level of understanding that man's consciousness could reach. With the capacity to reason, man must strive to have an intimate experience with the Absolute through the self-reflective capacity of philosophical thinking. Comparatively, Plato also looks at philosophy as the window to the world

of forms.[44] This is a stance that Plato proposes given that the World of Forms is the real world. It is philosophy's task to have a dialogue with the eternal World of Ideas/Forms.

Since every mature philosopher proposes his own conception of philosophy, it is our hope that the proponents of Filipino philosophy will also contemplate on its possible meanings. This implies that is not enough to discuss whether or not a perspective is fit of the term Filipino. The discourse should also assess if the statement can fall within the fold of philosophy. In the present analysis of the thinkers who are currently involved in strengthening the conceptualization of a Filipino Philosophy, we are of the opinion that the ruminations on the meaning of philosophy have taken a back seat. The present set of discourse has yet to include the question on philosophy's meaning. This is an area that hopefully can be seriously also be looked into.

Building on the classical way of studying philosophy, it is our fear that the term philosophy will be loosely used. Philosophy, as a historical concept, has its own narratives. It has a growing method, expanding language and emerging terminologies. As a study, it maintains its uniqueness which is initially comprehended and appreciated by someone who reads and writes on philosophy. If a Filipino philosophy is desired, Filipino thinkers must be ready to own this query: What is Philosophy in the context of a Filipino Philosophy?

Traditional and Cultural/Social Science Approaches: Enmeshed
In a post-modern milieu, we suggest that there is a fourth group or category of thinkers who can make the overlap between social science and philosophy possible. This category can be welcomed as an ideal, since it is prepared to own the challenges that are hinged in both disciplines. As a social scientist-philosopher, the task is to be prepared to engage in the following: immerse in the life-ways of Filipinos, tease out conceptual categories, and as a philosopher, thinking must proceed in such a way that we discuss the logical structure and nature of such concepts. In this process, it must be the thinker's concern to clarify his notion of a philosophy. Otherwise, the propositions that this thinker will propose may not be a philosophical rumination. Thus, when the social scientist-philosopher has patiently and successfully traversed these levels and trains of thought, we can expect this thinker to look into the nature of social science and the meaning of philosophy. What is a Social Science? What is a Philosophy? What is the Filipino notion of a social science? What is the Filipino notion of philosophy? These are some of the questions that the

social scientist-philosopher is ready to face. These questions are raised, since they all remind us of a constitutive aspect of philosophical thinking – self-critical and self-reflective.[45] This is the discomfort that the social scientist-philosopher willing owns.

The new brand of thinker, therefore, finds it necessary to be immersed in the problems, issues and achievements of Filipinos. At the same time, he also recognizes the relevance of challenging his mind to substantiate the content of the concepts to articulate a conceptual frame. In broad strokes, the social scientist-philosopher considers himself as the location of this interplay between the particular and the universal. This is his new found place for a Filipino philosophy. Here is an example that can possibly demonstrate how the social scientist-philosopher thinks:

The sufficient and reliable experience with some indigenous people can be an entry point for the conception of an Indigenous Logic.[46] To do this project, the social scientist needs to acquire an informed familiarity on how an Indigenous group thinks. When this is accomplished, concepts can possibly unravel. These conceptual nodes can later act as indicators of the epistemic assumptions. If the perceived assumptions are different from the known biases in epistemology, the social scientist has a hint. A platform for a Filipino philosophy is occasioned. With this unfolding, the social scientist-philosopher is made ready to make further ruminations on the meaning of such a node. This is where a conceptual framework of an Indigenous Logic can emerge. And while the social scientist maintains his being self-critical, thinking makes use of the familiar world of an Indigenous community. He can thus, look back at the experiences with the Indigenous group and see if the experiences can confirm the condition of possibility assumed by the construed frameworks.[47]

Conclusion

The post-modern milieu, being an inclusivist platform, is the perfect occasion for the interfacing of disciplines, methods and approaches. With this set-up, post-modernity presents itself as an opportune time for the clarification of a Filipino Philosophy. As disciplines are empowered to be what they want to become, we can also suggest that the possibilities in the process of thinking of a Filipino Philosophy should also be unleashed. In this article, we have proposed one. The enmeshing of social science and philosophy. With the social scientist-philosopher, we have with us a kind of thinking that attempts to provide an instance of the overlap between the two objects of fascination: the universal and the particular. To be faithful to the identity term of being a Filipino, the social science must be listened to.

And to be fair in using the word philosophy, the meaning of philosophy must be thought of and construed. Who is a Filipino? What is Philosophy? These are some of the pertinent questions that a social scientist-philosopher experience in reflecting on what a Filipino Philosophy can be. But without discounting the possible contributions from the individual traditional and cultural/social science approaches to Filipino philosophy, we have introduced the concept of a social science-philosopher who may serve as an ideal for some who are looking into the possibility of becoming involved in strengthening a philosophy that we can call our own. In underscoring this stance, we are able to stress the need for disciplines to interface. To these ends, we hope that we have contributed an idea in the on-going discussion on what a Filipino philosophy has been, is presently engaged in and can become.

Bibliography

Collingwood, Robin George. *An Essay on Philosophical Method. Oxford*: Clarendon Press, 1933.

_____. *The Idea of History*. London: Oxford University Press, 1993.

_____. *An Essay on Metaphysics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Desmond, William. *Being and the Between*. Albany: SUNY press, 1995.

Gripaldo, Rolando. The Making of a Filipino Philosopher. *Phavisminda Journal* 7 (2008).

_____. *The Philosophical Landscape*. 2009. Manila: Philippine National Research Society, 2004. Available from http://mysite.dlsu.edu.ph/faculty/gripaldor/publications_articles.asp. 8 December 2009.

Lechte, John. *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers: From Structuralism to Postmodernity*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Lyotard, Jean Francois. *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979.

Mautner, Thomas. *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy*. Penguin, 2005.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All-too-Human*. Penguin Classics, 2004.

_____. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Gateway Editions, 1996.

Pavo, Raymundo. Categories of Thinking: Regressive, Progressive and Digressive Thinking. *Phavisminda Journal* 8 (2009).

Plato. *The Republic*. Penguin Classics, 2007.

Velez, Amosa. Filipino Philosophy: Why Not? Reflections on Filipino Philosophy of Time. *Phavisminda Journal* 7 (2008).

Endnotes

1 Raymundo R. Pavo, "Categories of Thinking," in *PHAVISMINDA Journal* Vol. 8 (May, 2009): 89-103. The social scientist-philosopher is an offshoot of our notion of progressive thinking. This kind of thinking is progressive for this main reason: the thinker does not consider logical thought assumptions as the main object of his study. His research places special interest on how to demonstrate and explain the operative causal principles of the empirical and social world. The scientist-philosopher, however, has a unique relation with philosophic thinking. Aside from understanding the world and its relation to man, he is also aware of the role of logical assumptions in the process of progressive thinking. In this way, the social scientist-philosopher values his science and crucial the need to be philosophic.

2 Ibid., 89-95. Regressive Thinking is the habit of thinking which we consider philosophic. In broad strokes, this method involves three stages: first, one must choose an idea in his thinking horizon which he plans to reflect on; second, the thinker shall try to articulate to himself how he understands such a thought. This second stage is uniquely traversed by looking into the idea's concomitant opposition; now, the third stage stands for the effort to tease out or identify a possible assumption that makes the meaning of the idea possible. In this way, the presupposition shall be assessed making it as an object of investigation.

3 The particular-and-difference oriented mindsets are clear effects of the influence of the Post-Modern trend. This, in Lyotard's point of view, is an expression of the present incredulity towards meta-narratives. Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 7. In mind, we can also compare this shift to Michelle Foucault's attempts to go beyond the Structuralist tradition, to distance himself from the Post-Structuralists and to the Post-Modern association. These efforts to negate trends of classifying thinkers to a single fold is a reflection of the level of power and depth of meaning conferred to individuality and reflexivity which are all linked to the trend in Postmodernity.

4 Some scanty attempts were made by some philosophy professors in the Philippines. Amosa Velez, for one, delineated the probable topics that can be included in a subject on Filipino Philosophy. See her discussion in "Filipino Philosophy: Why Not? Reflections on Filipino Philosophy of Time,' *PHAVISMINDA Journal* 7 (May 2008): 30. Gripaldo also investigates the possible subject-matter of a Filipino Philosophy. He ruminates on this interesting query: What does the theme – "Doing Philosophy in the Philippine Context" - signify? Rolando Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher," in *PHAVISMINDA Journal* 7 (May 2008): 5.

[5] Equivocity and Univocity are logical terminologies. One can find these words used in Aristotelian Logic. But in recent philosophical researches, we find these terms explored in William Desmond's *Being and the Between*. In such a text, equivocity breathes the air of uncertainty and difference, while univocity stands for the modernist trend of reducing ideas using one vantage point – hence, we use the word sameness. William Desmond, *Being and the Between*, SUNY series in Philosophy (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995).

[6] Nietzsche, in his book, *Human, All-Too-Human* appropriately uses the phrase 'all-too-human' to refer to the world of a human being as ordinary, and in many cases, already becoming an all too familiar and boring domain. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* (Penguin Classics, 2004), 320.

[7] Presupposition, in this regard, is understood within the purview of a historical science. This is in contrast to the modernist attempt to present a stainless constellation of assumptions similar to the project of modern mathematics. Robin George Collingwood, *An Essay on Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 76-77.

[8] These are the kinds of hesitation that we can ascribe to postmodernity. Being a relativistic sphere, it has downplayed the possibility of constructing a stance or system. In this paper, however, we look at postmodernity as the perfect occasion wherein we can formulate and attend to our specific philosophies. The question on whether or not contributions will become a system may actually be beneficial to countries or communities that are still beginning to explore their own respective philosophical positions.

[9] It is the rise of meanings in contrast to one meaning that has proliferated in the postmodern milieu. This stress on a de-capitalized meaning is another version of the rise of particular philosophies.

[10] Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher,", 1-15. Gripaldo's article has provided us with a way to classify the different ways of doing Filipino philosophy. His distinction, to be more exact, between the traditional approach and the cultural approach has helped me infer that philosophy shall be construed differently when gleaned from the cultural/social science route and from the classical training in philosophy.

[11] The capacity of the post-modern milieu being a fertile occasion of construction is also acknowledged by Gripaldo. In his article, "Is There a Filipino Philosophy?", he hopes that in the Post-Modern time, philosophy can also robustly unfold. Gripaldo, "Is There a Filipino Philosophy?," in The Philosophical Landscape (Manila: Philippine National Research Society, 2004), p. 229. Available

from http://mysite.dlsu.edu.ph/faculty/gripaldor/publications_articles.asp. 8 December 2009.

[12] These stages have been formed through my conversation with Professor Arve Banez, a Social Science teacher of the University of the Philippines Mindanao, who has been truly helpful in making me see how a philosopher can start to trek the path of the Social Scientist. The possibility of this transition has been solidified in our trip to a cove in Malalag , Davao del Sur, wherein the presence of 40 huge cargo vessels that have docked and decided to stay for a year continuously create a wave of change in the life-ways of local communities and nearby cities.

[13] This notion is appropriated from Robin George Collingwood's discourse in *An Essay on Philosophical Method*. In an encapsulated form, Collingwood holds that sameness refers to a one-unified block of thought, while difference stands for completely unrelated units. Both terms and contexts do not provide any possibility of thinking. This is the reason why Collingwood proposes that thinking is always an interplay between sameness and difference. Robin George Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method* (London: Clarendon University Press, 1933).

[14] Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher," 1

[15] Ibid., Gripaldo, 7.

[16] The concern for "...philosophical underpinnings or presuppositions of a people's culture as culled from the languages, folksongs, folk literature, folk sayings, and so on." according to Gripaldo is the approach of Leonardo Mercado and Florentino Timbreza to Filipino Philosophy. This cultural approach, however, is not the only approach to a Filipino Philosophy. Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher," 3.

[17] The requirement to know when a term is applicable or not applicable takes inspiration from Collingwood's principle of concrete affirmation. This principle states that if one wants to be clear with what one is affirming, one must also look into what one is denying. Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, 109.

[18] Pavo, "Categories of Thinking: Regressive, Progressive and Digressive Thinking," 89-103.

[19] A nodal point is a chosen and verified position. It is comparable to a question which stands as a guide or a light in a philosophical investigation. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1993), 318-320.

[20] Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher,' 6.

<hr>

[21] Ibid., 7. Although Gripaldo notes that philosophizing is not simply tangential philosophical reflections but also substantial, which could cause effects in the philosophical world, we are of the opinion that this statement should not be taken to mean as if saying that the referential worth of the term Filipino in a Filipino philosophy falls out of the substantial or more important domain. In developing a Filipino philosophy, the definition of the term Filipino should neither be considered a constraint nor totally abandoned. In a word, the Filipino philosopher must also consider it his task using the categories or systems he has developed to reflect on the thinking ways of the Filipinos.

[22] Ibid., 1.

[23] Ibid., 3-5. Gripaldo strongly states that no Filipino philosopher have graduated to become a genuine philosopher. Many students or teachers of philosophy end up becoming Kantian, Heideggerian, etc. There is an absence of innovation. Imitation dominates all forms of thought construction and reconstruction.

[24] This is an insight that I borrowed from our discussions in Leuven University, Belgium. In one of our classes in Philosophy of Art, Professor Hermann Parret made such a remark. He also invited a scholar on Kant who willingly expressed and supported the contention. The presence of this scholar made me realize that there can be a variety of interpretations on a philosopher's stance. The possibility of having conflicting thoughts can even appear daunting at times.

[25] This is an interesting distinction which Schopenhauer provides in *The World as Will and Representation.* In his attempt to make philosophy as grounded as possible, he magnifies his dislike for castle-like abstractions which can have no content at all. With this criticism, of course, we are reminded of his strong dislike to Hegel's highly speculative endeavors.

[26] Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher," 4.

[27] I have taken four subjects under Professor Desmond's tutelage, namely, Metaphysics, Ethics, Philosophy of God and Philosophy of Religion. Within such a time-frame, I have recognized the promise of having your own philosophical system, since it is through such a lens that one can reinterpret many, if not all, classical problems and questions in philosophy.

[28] Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher," 8.

[29] In my stay in the Social Science Department of The University of the Philippines Mindanao, I have been introduced to a number of social scientists who have thought of and pondered on the questions and content of a Filipino philosophy. As a teacher in Logic, my notion of inductive reasoning has often served as the entry point of my attempt to understand their tools, methods and manner of reasoning. While seeing how social scientists figure out and address social and anthropological concerns, it affirmed my impression that their proposed truth aims at possibilities and probabilities. Such truths, in point of fact, change through time, since man and his milieu – being the objects of their investigation, keep on changing.

[30] In the book, *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers: From Structuralism to Post-Modernity*, John Lechte identifies and includes these thinkers: Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva, Bakhtin, etc. These philosophers belong to a variety of disciplines like the social sciences and humanities and later engaged themselves in the enterprise of philosophy. John Lechte, Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers: From Structuralism to Post-Modernity (London: Routledge, 1994).

[31] Modernity and Mathematics are almost synonymous terms. We can find in Modernity mathematicians who eventually became philosophers. For instance, the Father of Modern Philosophy – Rene Descartes, is known in mathematics for his insight on the Cartesian Plane which is said to be crucial in the discovery of Calculus.

[32] Gripaldo, "The Making of a Filipino Philosopher," 8.

[33] The thinkers that we will mention in this list have philosophical ruminations that deserve careful study and attention. With this realization, this section is simply an attempt to provide a bird's eye view on what these Filipino thinkers are known for. This list, however, have inspired and challenged us to make an individual assessment of their thoughts and reflections on the possible meaning of a Filipino philosophy, which we will articulate in another article.

[34] Fr. Albert Alejo, S.J., with his book, '*Tao po Tuloy*,' stands as a philosophical discourse on the discussion on the concept of Loob (the term Loob may refer to the inner being/sensibility in every person). But an interesting fact in the treatment of such a concept is the primacy given on the usage of the Filipino/Tagalog Language. Loob, being a Tagalog term perhaps implies the need to have philosophical expositions in the national language. Presently, Fr. Alejo is the head of the Mindanao Studies stationed in the Ateneo de Davao University. As an Anthropologist, he has the social science skills to delve into the issues of the Mindanaons. And being classically trained in philosophy, he is also disposed to

look into the thought and logical assumptions of the observed and verified phenomena.

[35] Br. Karl Gaspar, CssR., is a familiar face in Mindanaoan centered discussions. As a member of the Redemptorist Mission Team for decades, he has lived practically long years of his life with the different communities in Mindanao. This personal and passionate participation in the lives of the Mindanaoans has been expressed in his books and writings. As a highly informed and keen Sociologist, he has been a witness of the changing terrain in Mindanao. Currently, he is with the Redemptorist Community in Iligan City, Philippines, sharing his time and expertise to Iligan and adjacent cities.

[36] Atty. Gus Gatmaytan, is an expert when it comes to issues pertaining to ancestral domain. Being at the forefront of discussions on the nature of the IPRA (Indigenous People's Rights Act), he is a known lawyer in Mindanao who has devoted his time and expertise to such concerns. As of this moment, Sir Gatmaytan is pursuing a PhD Studies in Anthropology in London, United Kingdom with a Ford Scholarship.

[37] Fr. Roque Ferriols' discussion on the meaning and nature of 'Meron' (this maybe translated as 'something' or being' is a classic. It is a pioneering work that has continued to steer some of the important directions in Filipino philosophy. With his stress on spirituality and theology, he has found ways to ruminate on the sanctity of the 'Loob' in Filipinos' life-world. Personally, his work is an inspiration. It has made me realize that it is possible to substantiate the content of a concept by way of a phenomenological approach that is not too tied to the social science tools of investigation. Moreover, Fr. Ferriols' works and lectures are always in Filipino/Tagalog which springs from his strong stance that philosophical reflection is at its best when one makes use of his own language. This is an invitation that I hope I can respond to in another article.

[38] Dr. Zeus Salazar is a known name and figure in the University of the Philippines Diliman and in the Philippines. His positions center on the need to redirect the course of Filipino representation by first privileging the concepts and discourse that emerge from the Filipino milieu prior to the Western-based paradigms or interpretations. Moreover, his notion of an 'inert masses' is a highly interesting point for analysis which is reflective of the sought after and aspired resurgence of nationalist pride and consciousness. An interesting and critical study on Salazar's Pantayong Pananaw is made by Ramon Guillermo. A recent review of his work can be accessed through this link: http://kyotoreview.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/issue/issue2/article_247.html. In this review, I can identify three kinds of epistemological biases which can be later explored. These leanings are as follows:

Static epistemology (Essentialism), Pragmatic Epistemology (Strategic Essentialism), and Evolutionary Epistemology (Dynamic essentialism).

[39] Professor Erlinda Alburo, with her team, sustained and developed such interest in local history. Like Salazar, many of Alburo's works are in Cebuano (a language used in Visayas and even in Mindanao, Philippines). This just punctuates the desire to preserve and protect the Cebuano Narratives. Such that when one mentions Philippine Studies in Visayas, one needs to coalesce with Professor Alburo's expertise and passion for Cebuano studies.

[40] This notion is made possible through our reflection on Foucault's concept of analytic finitude. In his discussion on the birth of man, he opines that man is both 'founded and founding'. This means that man is both the known and the knower. One can see this in this link: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/foucault/#3. Accessed, December 8, 2009. By highlighting man in such a manner, we figured that man is an interplay of being a particular and universal.

[41] This line of reasoning is borrowed from Professor Arve Banez. The analogy of providing a film against which concepts can be arranged and classified has made me better realize the distinction between concepts that can function as a genus and concepts that can be regarded as thought species.

[42] Mautner, Thomas, *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* (Penguin, 2005), p. 418. Nietzsche's meaning of philosophy may be cited as a reason for the rise of perspectivism. This brand of thought believes that there are no absolutes in ethics and metaphysics.

[43] Nietzsche, meanwhile, criticizes such an understanding of philosophy. He says that "Words are but symbols for the relations of things to one another and to us; nowhere do they touch upon absolute truth.". Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, (Gateway Editions, 1996), § 11.

[44] This notion is appropriated from Plato's discussion on the nature of the sun (as the world of forms) and the shadows in the cave (as the world of senses). Plato in Allegory of the Cave, The Republic, Book VII (514a–520a).

[45] The introspective approach of philosophy can be owned by the cultural/social science approach. The social scientist must always be willing to ask what does the term social science amount to? The social scientist can even pressure himself to raise this query: Is there a notion of a Filipino Objectivity? In our reflection, this is a question which when owned can hopefully continuously dispose the social scientist to regress and inquire on the meaning and veracity of his

thought assumptions. Using Regressive Thinking, the social scientist can think like a philosopher. Pavo, "Categories of Thinking: Regressive, Progressive and Digressive Thinking," p. 90. Collingwood also underscores philosophy's need to re-examine its assumptions. Collingwood, *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, 173-174. His discourse, however, has to be reckoned within his notion of philosophy's proper method – a scale of overlapping forms.

[46] For this possible project, the meaning of the term logic shall not be confined to its modernist formalistic leaning. What we have in mind is a kind of Logic that serves as on occasion of an overlap of fun, dance and rigid thinking. Logic, in this regard, is comparable to the Classical Greek conception of Logos.

[47] This is a direction that I plan to explore and accomplish with some of my social scientist friends. Since I am yet to learn the methods of doing social science research, I look forward to the possibility of being actively involved in a social science endeavor which should be a perfect occasion to begin learning the social science tools and ways. Construing an Indigenous Logic will hopefully become a reality.