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Filipino Cultural Traits

Claro R. Ceniza Lectures

Edited by
Rolando M. Gripaldo

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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Introduction

Rolando M. Gripaldo

The term “philosophical analysis” as used in contemporary philosophy, particularly by John Hospers (1968, 1990) and Andresito Acuña (1992), refers to the method of logical analysis in the analytic philosophical tradition. But as used in this collection of essays, philosophical analysis is employed as a generic term to cover all types of analysis: phenomenological, logical, conceptual, and so on. “Conceptual” and other forms of analysis, even including hermeneutical analysis, are either analytically phenomenological or logical in nature.

In the debate between Hubert Dreyfus (2000), a Heideggerian phenomenologist, and John Searle (1999a, 1999b), a logical analyst, it appears that analysis, broadly speaking, has two components: phenomenological and logical. Searle contends that phenomenology is only a first step while logical analysis is the important second step for one to complete a meaningful holistic but critical research work. A researcher who stops only at phenomenology will find his research work significantly incomplete.

All the works in this collection emphasize one or the other analytic framework while assuming or presupposing the other framework. The first four articles (I-IV), for example, stress the phenomenological analytic method, but in the process, unknowingly perhaps and without acknowledging it, extend the analytic framework to what is known as logical analysis. Rudolf Carnap (1955) defines logical analysis as the clarification of the meanings of the language used by science and the ordinary man. Bertrand Russell (1945) examines the logical structures of language such as “The king of France is bald,” and the structural components of scientific terms such as mind and matter. Searle (1992, 1995) extends the use of logical analysis not only to language but also to social reality and the concept of mind or consciousness. In the process, he assumes a presupposed phenomenological background. The last six articles stress the method of logical analysis. The volume, in other words, is divided into two parts: Part I (Chaps. I-IV) and Part II (Chaps. V-X).

A research team of ten faculty members of the DLSU Philosophy Department decided to join hands and use their expertise in attempting to clarify the meanings of Filipino cultural traits or values. Each one is free to use his/her own method of analysis, and is free to define his/her own terms. For example, one may define “cultural value,” “cultural trait,” and so forth in his/her own way of perceiving things. In view of this, the team leader/editor does not attempt to define “value” or “trait” in a monolithic general fashion, and simply allows each team member to make clear his/her own terms.

The results of one’s analysis are his/her own responsibility. The reader is not expected to agree with the author or authors, but is rather invited to reflect on these philosophical sojourns and make his/her own judgment. He might even find the researchers disagreeing with each other or with some other authors. But that will be the reader’s own concern.

As early as 1934, William Graham Sumner, a pioneer in sociology, published the book *Folkways* which started a cultural study of the different conceptions by primitive and modern cultures of money, measures of time, moral values, labor, and the like. His main concern is on the *understanding* of culture as a significant aspect of social life.

In the Philippines, Leonardo Mercado, SVD, an anthropologist, started a study of capturing the Filipino cultural worldview on the basis of metalinguistic analyses of certain Filipino terms

like *loob/buot/nakem* and *nuno/apohan/poon*, among others, from the three major Filipino languages; namely, Tagalog, Visayan, and Ilokano. His book, *Elements of Filipino philosophy* (1974), is the first attempt to systematically extract the philosophical underpinnings of this worldview, and he concluded that it is basically nondualistic. By nondualism, he means that “the Filipino wants to harmonize the object and the subject, while at the same time, holding both as distinct.” The Filipino does not only desire harmony with himself and with his/her fellowmen, but also with nature. Moreover, the Filipino looks at the sacred and profane in a nondichotomous way, that is to say, a desire to be in “harmony with God through the spirits and his [or her] departed ancestors.”

Florentino Timbreza, a cultural philosopher, is another Filipino thinker who extracted systematically the cultural worldview of the Filipinos on the basis of life experiences. He contends in his book, *Pilosopiyang Pilipino* (1982), that the life experiences of peoples are the basis of their worldview, which in turn constitutes their philosophy. Philosophy, in other words, is constituted by the “significance of the world to man.” The sources of this philosophy of life experience are found in proverbs, folksayings, folktales, and the like. Examples from Filipino proverbs are: “Life is impermanent,” “life is similar to a wheel,” “there is no debt that is not paid,” “philosophy of the moment,” “the punctual goes ahead of the diligent,” and so on.

The list of Filipino values/traits in the present collection is certainly not exhaustive, and the findings are largely preliminary. Perhaps in the near future other authors will use these findings as jumping boards for further insightful analysis. Perhaps, likewise, in the near future a research team of ten from the DLSU Philosophy Department will embark on a similar project that will examine phenomenologically or logically or both another set of ten Filipino cultural traits or values.

These researches were delivered in a series of lectures called the Claro R. Ceniza Lectures, held on 12 December 2001 until 27 March 2002 in various venues of De La Salle University, Manila. The late Ceniza (2001) was a neo-Parmenidean (see Gripaldo 2004) who tried to reconcile Parmenides (change is unreal) and Heraclitus (change is real).

The present volume is a modest contribution to such future research endeavors, and the editor hopes it will pave the way to Filipino cultural enlightenment.

In summary, here are the abstracts of each article:

Chapter I, by Jaime P. Guevara, “Pakikipagkapwa,” seeks to clarify the meaning of the fundamental Filipino value, *Pakikipagkapwa*, in the light of Levinas, Buber, and Mark Johnson. *Pakikipagkapwa* is shown to be a “concern for the other” based not on sameness but on equality. It is thus to be distinguished from *pakikisama* (“social acceptance”).

Chapter II, by Emil V. Tabbada, “A phenomenology of the Tagalog notions of *hiya* and *dangal*,” uses a mix of Husserlian and Gadamerian method to better understand the relation of *hiya* (“ought-to-be-ashamed”) to *dangal* (“honor”). Tabbada reveals *hiya* to be a manifestation of “damaged *dangal*.” Throughout, Tabbada carefully weighs these values in terms of Filipino language-use, other Filipino value-words, and circumstantial variation. The pioneer work of Constantino, Mercado, and other Filipino scholars is explained and appreciated.

Chapter III, by Joseph Anthony Narciso Z. Tiangco, “Understanding the Filipino philosophy of resiliency: *Katatagang-loob* and its phenomenological considerations,” studies *katatagang-loob* (“resiliency”) both from a semantic and metalinguistic point-of-view. Tiangco analyzes semantic through a meticulous examination of Filipino sayings and proverbs; he examines the metalinguistic by way of a phenomenology of “being Filipino,” the latter understood as an identity shaped by power and revolution in the face of foreign oppression.

Chapter IV, by Celestino A. Gianan, “*Katahimikan sa kapayapaan: A Filipino cultural phenomenon and cultural value,*” reverses the commonly accepted Filipino paradigm, “Where there is *katahimikan* (loose Engl. trans., ‘peace of mind’), there is *kapayapaan* (loose Engl. trans., ‘socio-political peace’),” arguing that “Where there is socio-political peace, there is peace of mind” is a paradigm more conducive to real “national progress.” Gianan argues that *katahimikan* implies “the freedom to be what one wishes” and that the political and social problems of the Philippines can only be solved if Filipinos in their consciousness operate according to a true commitment to better themselves and society.

Chapter V, by Francis Dancel, “*Utang na loob: A philosophical analysis,*” arbitrates the many concatenated meanings of *utang na loob* (literally, “interior dept,” more interpretatively, “debt of good will”), a pervasive Filipino value which in fact is untranslatable into English. According to Dancel, *utang na loob* can inspire a good Filipino to heroic virtue but can be perverted by an unethical Filipino so as to break and control others. Dancel argues the reform of Filipino society much depends on the wholesome function of *utang na loob*.

Chapter VI, by Natividad Dominique G. Manuat, “Contextualizing the Filipino values of *pagkalinga, pag-aaruga, pakialam*, and the feminist ethics of care,” examines the several Filipino value-terms for “care.” Manuat reviews the Feminist Ethics of Care as defined by foreign feminists, and compares it with the Filipino ideal and practice. She enumerates with great subtlety the many forms of care prescribed by the native Filipino tradition; she points out that the terms for “care” in the Filipino languages are non-gendered, though in fact sometimes Filipinas must carry a disproportionate share of care-responsibilities. Manuat censures the exploitation of Filipinas as overseas workers, and reminds Filipinos and foreigners alike that care should also involve justice.

Chapter VII, by Florentino T. Timbreza, “The Filipino value of nonviolence,” describes the Filipino tradition’s commitment to *kawalang-karahasan*, nonviolence, by analysis of Filipino metaphors and parables. Timbreza cites Filipino history, recounts the great “People Power” revolution of 1986, and demonstrates that traditional Filipino nonviolence approximates the New Testament ideal to a greater extent than European Christianity has.

Chapter VIII, by Dante Luis P. Leoncini, “A conceptual analysis of *pakikisama*,” systematically discusses *pakikisama* (social acceptance, “getting along well with others”), probing its authentic meaning(s) as revealed by etymology and comparative word-use. Leoncini takes great care to respect the amphibolous character of *pakikisama*, which makes of it a trait functioning in relation both to other values and to situation.

Chapter IX, by Raj Mansukhani, “*Pakikiramdam: A critical analysis,*” outlines “ten plus one” interrelated senses of *pakikiramdam*, a Filipino concept/trait which is conventionally translated into English as “empathy,” a translation which—as Mansukhani shows at length—does not at all adequately serve it. Mansukhani shows how *pakikiramdam* in several of its senses requires a delicate sensitivity to nonverbal cues from others. *Pakikiramdam* can have negative consequences, especially in dealing with Westerners, because it may encourage conformity and lack of candor. At its best, *pakikiramdam* nurtures compassion, flexibility, and intuition.

Chapter X, by Rolando M. Gripaldo, “*Bahala na: A philosophical analysis,*” takes *Bahala na* in its “primary sense” to mean “to leave one’s life—or anything—in the care of God.” Gripaldo dissects the etymology and language-uses of *Bahala na*, and also shows how it compares to (and also contrasts with) the various Western definitions of “determinism,” the history of which he

reviews in detail. Gripaldo discusses with attentive nuance how *Bahala na* can be invoked both irresponsibly and responsibly.¹

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Part I

Phenomenological Analysis

Chapter I

Pakikipagkapwa

Jaime P. Guevara

Introduction

This paper will establish the Filipino value, *pakikipagkapwa*, as the fundamental ethical relation between the self and the other. The paper shows that by its very nature, *pakikipagkapwa* develops and promotes moral imagination. This notion is established by clarifying the terms related to this Filipino value, namely, “shared identity,” “equality,” and “being-with-others,” in the light of the existential thoughts of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. The paper proceeds to relate *pakikipagkapwa* and moral imagination by evaluating Richard Rorty’s position on literature and Mark Johnson’s notion of moral imagination in the light of *pakikipagkapwa*.

Virgilio Enriquez

In his pioneering work on *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, Virgilio Enriquez (1994) argues that *pakikipagkapwa* is not to be identified or confused with *pakikisama* since the latter is not a value. He writes:

In spite of the fact that western psychology looms large in psychological work in the Philippines, especially in western-oriented universities, the full use of Filipino has led to the identification of the value *pakikipagkapwa* which is surely more important than *pakikisama*. The *barkada* (peer group) would not be happy with the *walang pakisama* but the Philippine society at large cannot accept the *walang kapwa tao*. *Pakikipagkapwa* is both a *paninindigan* (conviction) and a value.... *Pakikisama* is a form of *pakikipagkapwa* but not the other way around. (Enriquez 1977)

He goes on to say that “*Pakikipagkapwa*...means accepting and dealing with the other person as an equal....” By this, Enriquez means a regard for “the dignity and being of others.” Elsewhere, he writes: “...that one should not underestimate the Filipino with supposed values such as *pakikisama* when more accurately, it is *pakikipagkapwa* that moves him.”

Related to *pakikipagkapwa*, *kapwa* is the “unity of the self and others. In other words, *kapwa* is a recognition of shared identity. Enriquez explains that:

A person starts having a *kapwa* not so much because of a recognition of a status given him by others but more so because of his awareness of shared identity. The *ako* (ego) and the *iba-sa-akin* (others) are one and the same in *kapwa* psychology: “Hindi ako iba sa aking kapwa” (I am no different from others). Once *ako* starts thinking of himself as different from *kapwa*, the self, in effect, denies the status of *kapwa* to the other.

The Need for Philosophical Justification

Much as *pakikipagkapwa* and *kapwa* are described by these terms, Enriquez does not tell us of their meanings. If *pakikipagkapwa* stands for “being-with-others” or being concerned about others, how sure are we that we are truly concerned about the other? We may appear to be concerned about the other, but in truth, we act in such a way only because we can see ourselves reaping benefits from doing so.

In another instance, when we say that the self and the other are united in “shared identity,” are we implying that the other is like the self? Now, if that’s how we understand the term “shared identity,” are we not treating the other from the perspective of the self? Is the other, then, merely a reflection of the self—the ego? If that were to be the case, is the other not being deprived of his otherness, that is, as being essentially different from what and how the self is?

Furthermore, does “shared identity” imply that both the self and the other lose their individuality, like a drop of water uniting with the ocean? Does *pakikipagkapwa* require that both the other and the self suppress their individualities or differences in the name of being one with each other? Or, does it imply, on the other hand, an overcoming of one’s egocentricity? If so, what is the difference between individuality and ego?

Perhaps, Enriquez can help in understanding the Filipino perspective of individuality and egotism. He argues that Filipinos do not believe that a human individual exists alone. Socially, culturally and psychologically, the Filipino individual is always in relation to the other, to his *barkada*, his family, and other people around him. He stands not against them, but rather with them. The best term to describe this relation is “being-with-others.” However, nowhere does Enriquez imply that the Filipino has no sense of individuality. Indeed, he experiences himself as an individual. But if the Filipino finds himself always in relation to the other, how can his sense of individuality survive? To be sure, he does not perceive himself as a Cartesian individual who cherishes his autonomy and independence from the world, as the other. But, it appears that in order to have any sense of individuality, one must stand against the world. It seems that “shared identity” and “being equal with the other” do not promote individuality. In any case, there are no conceptual means to distinguish individuality from the ego.

To maintain the meaningfulness of these terms, it is necessary to recognize the autonomy of both the self and the other as well as the essential differences that exist between the two. The reason for that is simple. If the other is no different from the self, how can we even speak of the other? How can we even speak meaningfully of respect? Why should we even try to reach outward towards the other? It is on the basis that the other is essentially different from the self that these terms derive their meaning and significance.

The following discussion on existential thought focuses on the ideas of Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Buber which can help illuminate the meanings of the term *pakikipagkapwa*.

Emmanuel Levinas

Levinas’s ideas relate well to the discussion of the nature of *pakikipagkapwa* in dissociating the meaning of “shared identity” from the “unity of similarities.” This paper first exposes Levinas’s description of the self and its ways in the world. It shows that the self, by its nature, is narcissistic and ego-centered in its dealings with the world. As such, it is full of itself. It never loses its individuality. The discussion then points out the necessary distinction between the self and the other. The distinction is deemed necessary for the self to be able to question its ways, and for the other to be regarded as essentially different from the self.

According to Levinas, the self orders the world. It organizes the world from its perspective. For example, when I say that I understand the world, I have succeeded in shaping the world so that it becomes intelligible to me. In another case, when I am hungry, and the pain is becoming increasingly unbearable, I seek a way to be relieved of this pain. I, then, appropriate the cow in such a way that I can chew and swallow it. Naturally, I cannot eat the cow in its original shape. Hence, by killing it, cutting it, slicing it, cooking it, and then eating it, I succeed in appropriating it for myself. In both cases, the self is said to have done violence to the otherness of the other. The cow, in its otherness, is not originally intended for the self. It was not meant to be eaten. Yet, the self appropriates the cow as something to be eaten. In other words, to appropriate the otherness of the other for the sole benefit of the self, the self violates the other. This is a necessary aspect of the life of the self for it to remain in existence. The self feeds on the other in order to be an autonomous entity.

Since the self appropriates the other for its sake, it knows no perspective other than its own. And for that reason, the self lacks the power to transcend its perspective. In effect, the self cannot question itself; nor, can it become a question to itself. To be sure, it can and does question the choices of means by which he appropriates the world, especially when the means fail to serve the self's purpose. However, the self is oblivious to his moral treatment towards the other.

The other exists on its own terms. Otherwise, it would not be called an other. If the other were not to exist on its own terms, then "he" would only be a mere extension or a reflection of the self. But, for the self to be what it is, to be distinguished from the other, it requires the other to exist independently of the self. In appropriation, the self depends on the other in order to become independent, autonomous, and distinct from the other.

Levinas provides us with another insight into why the other and the self do not lose their distinction. In the encounter which Levinas calls the epiphany of the Face, the other as other catches the self off guard before it is able to appropriate the other. Like the sudden appearance of a poor child tapping at one's car window, the other "surprises" the self who momentarily loses its grip on itself. In this face to face encounter the self experiences guilt. He experiences guilt, not for being what he is, but for having been irresponsible in the way he exercises his freedom towards the other. The face of the other pleads the self to not kill him, to spare him from being appropriated by the self. The self, in that instance, experiences his "unethical" treatment of the other. It is only the other who, in his otherness, can question the existence of the self.

As a result of this encounter, the self is confronted with two decisions: he may or may not bring himself to be responsible for the other. He may choose to keep himself open in the face of the other. Or, he may choose to kill it, that is, to appropriate it. If he so chooses to remain open to the other as other, then a relation is established. It must be noted that this relation is not easy to maintain. At any time the self can take the path to being irresponsible towards the other. On the other hand, if he decides to take responsibility for the other, he cannot hope to know the other—for the other in his otherness is essentially different from the self. For Levinas, the other is infinitely irreducible. This is why the relationship between the two is not about a unity of similarities. Rather, Levinas describes the relationship as one of asymmetry. Since, there is no essential similarity, but only an essential difference between the self and the other, the other cannot be said to be like the self and vice versa. The other is merely different.

In the Levinasian context, "shared identity" is not to be taken as the dissolution of differences or the unity of similarity. For Levinas, there is nothing "shared" between the self and the other. The notion of "shared identity" does not fit in his philosophy.

Yet, Filipinos do experience “shared identity.” So far, we have shown what “shared identity” is not. Its positive meaning is yet to be determined. We now look into Martin Buber’s philosophy for the possible meaning of “shared identity.”

Martin Buber

Martin Buber basically agrees with Levinas in that the other is irreducible to any categories of thought set up by the ego. Buber recognizes the other’s way to authentic existence as essentially different from the self. The other, insists Buber, is not an object of observation or rational contemplation which reduces the entirety of the other to being an “it” or object. The only way to treat the other as other is for the self to be stirred by the life of the other.

Although Buber may not have viewed the relationship between the self and the other as an asymmetrical relationship as Levinas does, he recognizes a relation of Genuine Dialogue wherein both the self and the other, while acknowledging their differences—hence, their uniqueness—assist each other in the unfolding of their potentialities.

“Shared Identity,” “Equality,” and “Respect for the Other”

What Levinas and Buber tell us about the terms of *pakikipagkapwa* is that the other with whom the self stands in “shared identity” and, as “an equal,” is not to be understood as being like the self. Both the self and the other are infinitely different in essence. And it is within the context of the essential difference that we come to understand “shared identity” as sharing in the same universal experiences of commitment, love, suffering, sacrifices, to name a few. In other words, the self and the other understand each other because they have similar universal experiences; and also because such concrete experiences of love, suffering, and the like, cannot be grasped in their entirety on the grounds that both the self and the other encounter them in their own different ways.

The term “equality” refers to the fact that both the self and the other are not to “totalize” or “reduce” each other to anything that would deny their essential differences. As an “infinity” they are equal. Thus, I recognize the other as an other because he, “like me,” resists definition. “Equality” then is not about “sameness.” Consider the opposite view of identifying “equality” with “sameness.” If, by “equality” everything is the same in every aspect there will be no need, for example, to speak of respect or democracy. But in that reality, there will be no uniqueness, and everything can be replaced by anything since everything is the same, and no one thing will be missed since anything can replace it. What is “sameness”? What does it entail? Let’s take bolts as an example of “sameness.”

Bolts of one type are the same. They are mass-produced. If one bolt is found to be defective, another bolt can easily take its place. The former bolt will not be missed. Now, we don’t talk of equality and associate it with sameness. Equality is not about sameness or being the same (or, being exactly alike). Viktor Frankl (1965) once wrote that we individualize ourselves by becoming more conscious of being different. “To be equals, to be different,” said he, and therefore none of us can be replaced. *Pakikisama* is about sameness, not about “equality.”

Collectivism shuns individuality, discourages individual differences, and promotes sameness. Its motto: “Everyone is the same. No one is to be different from the group.” And, as mentioned earlier, it is the same with *pakikisama* which tolerates no one who attempts at being different from the pack. Whereas, *pakikipagkapwa* entails respect for, and the recognition of, the other as being

different from the pack, from oneself, in *pakikipagkapwa*, we are the “same” by virtue of being different.

***Pakikipagkapwa* and Moral Imagination**

Because *pakikipagkapwa* demands that the other be treated in his otherness, one cannot comply with Kant’s ethics. In the traditional Western ethics, Reason is perceived as the sole judge that dictates the morality of actions. The best representative of this sort of ethical thinking is Immanuel Kant. In his book *Critique of practical reason*, Kant contends that the universal moral principles reside in every rational being. Reason discovers these moral principles without the help of emotions. These moral principles are not determined by circumstances or by weighing one’s decision on the possible consequences. Since these universal moral principles are innate in every rational being and are highly valued, Kant sees to it that everyone is bound by one’s duty to treat each other as an end rather than as a means. For instance, when the situation calls upon a person to be honest, he must be honest, not because it is beneficial to the self or the consequences call for such an act. On the contrary, one must tell the truth simply because it is one’s moral duty.

Kant demands that every human being be treated as an end. This may sound as if Kant were concerned for the other. Closer examination reveals his real intentions. Kant upholds the absolute status of rational ethical principles. In other words, Kant treats man as an end because he is their bearer. This goes against the grain of *pakikipagkapwa* for this value requires that the other is treated as he is, and not for what is contained in him. For what is contained in him does not fully grasp what the other is in his otherness. The ethical principles do not constitute his otherness whose nature is and will remain to be unknown to the knower.

Kant’s ethics, in effect, denies the fundamental relationship between the self and the other. In emphasizing Reason, which is only one of the faculties of a human being, Kant suppresses the other. More importantly, he silences the whole being of the other into submission to the dictates of Reason. Whereas, for Buber and Levinas, the whole nature of morality arises from and is constituted by the fundamental relation between the self and the other whose relation is concrete and unique.

Due to Kant’s line of reasoning, his ethics lacks the empathy which *pakikipagkapwa* promotes and develops to a high degree. By being open (receptive) to the otherness of the other, one is morally imaginative. I am not insinuating that one places one’s self in the shoes of, or acquires the knowledge of, the otherness of the other. Moral imagination fosters sensitivity to the otherness of the other. This would not be possible had the self distanced itself from the other by turning the other into an object of observation or contemplation.

The term “moral imagination” was first coined by Mark Johnson. From his study of moral imagination, Johnson sets the purpose of ethics. He (1993: 199) writes:

...of developing moral imagination...it sees our primary task as less a matter of learning to apply moral laws and more a task of refining our perception of character and situations and of developing empathetic imagination to take up the part of others.

On the importance of moral imagination, he (1993: 199) has this to say:

...it can't tell us what to do in given situations, but neither could traditional Moral law theories. Rather, it gives the kind of general guidance that comes from enhanced moral understanding and self-knowledge.

And, on empathetic imagination, he (1993: 199) continues:

...unless we can put ourselves in the place of another, unless we can enlarge our own experience through an imaginative encounter with the experience of others, unless we can let our own values and ideals be called into question from various points of view, we cannot be morally sensitive.

According to Johnson, moral or empathetic imagination allows one to take up the place of the other. He (1993: 199) expresses this sentiment in this way:

This "taking up the place of another" is an act of imaginative experience and dramatic rehearsal of the sort described by Nussbaum and Eldridge in their accounts of narrative moral explorations. It is perhaps the most important imaginative explorations we can perform. It is not sufficient merely to manipulate a cool, detached "objective" reason toward the situation of the others. We must, instead, go out toward people to inhabit their worlds, not just by rational calculations, but also in imagination, feeling and expression.

Reflecting in this way involves an imaginative rationality through which we can participate empathetically in another's experience: suffering, pain, humiliation, and frustrations, as well as their joy, fulfillment, plans, and hopes.

Another American philosopher who may as well have been interested in moral imagination is Richard Rorty. Rorty believes that literature, not religion or philosophy, is the most effective means for gaining self-knowledge, that is, for enlarging the self's notion of itself. Reading novels invites one to live out (or to relive) the life of the character, imagining what it's like to feel and to act like someone else other than one's self. It is by way of literature, not of philosophy or religion, that egocentrism is overcome. Reading novels keeps the human individual in touch not only with life but also with his self.

While I agree with them that philosophy, especially ethics, has been plagued by egocentrism which has lured the self away from thinking of the welfare of the other, and instead concerns itself with how it ought to live, I do think that Rorty and Johnson failed to overcome egocentrism. Just because reading novels enlarges the self's notion of itself by identifying himself with the character, it doesn't really mean that the individual overcomes egocentrism. For example, I may be influenced by the life of Michael Jordan, but that does not mean I have left my egotistical ways. I merely enlarge my domain by incorporating the different views that I have derived from reading novels and of a character whose life, beliefs, and values are different from those of mine. Truly, they are different from mine. Nevertheless, the point is that I have made them mine. I have not once stepped out of the confines of my egocentricity.

What Rorty and Johnson lack is a basis on which to make moral imagination possible. Johnson, for his part, is unaware of such a basis. This is because Johnson believes that moral imagination is "the primary means by which social relations are constituted." On the contrary, it is the fundamental relatedness between the self and the other that makes moral imagination possible. Without this fundamental relatedness, the self would still be locked up in its egocentricity.

Conclusion

Existential thought illuminates the meaning of *pakikipagkapwa*. The fundamental ethical relation reveals the meaning of “being-with-others,” “equality,” and “shared identity.” We see the meaning of otherness in this value, in that it is essentially different from the self. We see that equality is not to be taken to mean that the other is like the self, for that will still be egotistical. Shared identity does not entail the dissolution of the individuality of the two parties involved in *pakikipagkapwa*.

We have also shown that moral imagination must be grounded in the fundamental ethical relation which enables it, promotes it, and develops it. Existential thought provides a ground for Rorty’s and Johnson’s ideas.

Pakikipagkapwa overcomes egocentrism and reaches to the other in his otherness. His empathy is grounded in his ability to imagine what it would be like to be in the other’s shoes. There are no ethical universal principles preceding social relations. Social relations for the Filipino are ethical relations. It is within the social relations, in the light of the *kapwa* of the other that the Filipino bases his ethical decisions. Although there are no universal principles independent of concrete situations with the other, there nevertheless are universal human experiences such as happiness, joy, suffering, love, commitment, a sense of justice and injustice, and the like. If the Filipinos were egotists, it would not be possible for them to empathize. It also would not be possible for them to imagine what it’s like to be in the other’s situations.

Pakikipagkapwa transcends egotism in a radical way. I say “radical” because it requires the self to let go of his egotism and to be touched by the otherness of the other. It does not mean that the self has fully grasped or is capable of grasping the experience of the other. If that were so, this would just be perceiving the other in the light of his self. What is understood is the universal experience that all human beings share. What cannot be grasped is the concrete expression of the universal experience that the other goes through. Because the other is not the self and the self is not the other, the concrete expression of the universal experience of the other cannot wholly be understood by the self. This, then, is the meaning of *pakikipagkapwa*. This is why *pakikipagkapwa* is not *pakikisama*.

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Chapter II

A Phenomenology of the Tagalog Notions of *Hiya* and *Dangal*

Emil V. Tabbada

One of the problems that confront a phenomenology of values is the fact that culture is never static. The changes that take place in culture may be twofold: through cultural osmosis, or forms of colonization, on one hand, and through intercourse with the world culture on the other. Either way, the phenomenologist's dilemma is how to show the value as it truly is. The most viable solution would be to study the pre-theoretical lives of the participants in the observed culture. Thus, a phenomenology of values must address first the various theories that have been used to elucidate a value and question the assumptions that have been made, which is constitutive of the suspension and bracketing processes that Husserl suggested. Then, with the theoretical biases detected and temporarily suspended, the observer is free to experience the value from common sense experience, or from the perspective of the ordinary, day-to-day practices of the participants.

Some of the theoretical assumptions detected by the author are taken from the behaviorist, nationalist, and axiological models for interpreting the value-experience. The behaviorist model focuses on the application of the basic stimulus-response pattern for behavior. The nationalist model insists on the racial character of values. Hence making it exclusive to the participants in a specific culture. Finally, the axiological model presupposes that values occupy the realm of the "ought." With these presumptions detected and suspended, the starting point for a phenomenology of values is set.

Within the ordinary usage of *hiya*, it has been noted that the word itself cannot be understood as meaningful if it functions as a noun. An elaboration on the use of affixation is necessary to arrive at various meanings that fit into specific contexts. With this in mind, the author arrives at a basic understanding of *hiya* as "being-ashamed-of-and-for-something," which is constitutive of its objective and subjective aspects. This "something" is the source of ambivalence: what is it that one ought to be ashamed of? This ambivalence is rooted in the word's seeming groundlessness, which means that in order to be considered as an imperative the proper grounding for *hiya* must be understood.

The author proposes that the proper grounding for *hiya* would be *dangal* or honor. The reason for feeling ashamed is primarily the diminishing of one's honor, either externally as caused by another person, or internally if caused by one's own doing. The gravity of *paglalapastangan* or dishonor not only shows that it is the vilest of all acts, but it also shows that its counterpart, *karangalan*, is the highest value.

The Problem Contextualized

The first true problem that confronts us is this: Is a phenomenology of values possible? A phenomenology of values, when attempted in a setting where the cultural world has been modified

and re-modified by different forms of colonization¹ and cultural intercourse,² may not arrive at all at its desired objective of isolating the pure experience of such values. First, the attempt may be reduced to a mere cultural anthropology or an archeology of cultural experiences, where the experience isolated becomes a mere artifact that is not considered meaningful by contemporaries. Secondly, the departure from the contemporary setting may result in an isolated experience, still attached to the various forms of preconceptions arising from continuous modifications as an effect of the circumstances of history. In the attempt, therefore, doubts can be raised as to whether the effort has actually arrived at a clear understanding of the pure experience of the value in question.

This particular phenomenology, thus, will not assure the reader that a clear understanding of the value, as a result of endless bracketings and reductions, may be reached. It may instead be construed as a limited and modified form of phenomenology which will not aspire to finally uncover the meaning of the value but as a participative attempt to enrich the contemporary notion of value-experience by using portions of the past to unleash the inner core of the value and a projection of the future to precipitate the possible meanings that may arise out of the value-experience. How then is this made possible? Unleashing the past may not be successful at all since the past itself has been covered up by ambiguities arising from the continuous modifications that resulted from colonization and cultural intercourse. The projection of the future also falls short of its promise since it may be perceived as a form of assumption as to what the value-experience is. Yet, as Gadamer suggests, “by sharing, by our participating in things we are participating, we enrich them; they do not become smaller, but larger.”³ This phenomenology thus aims to participate with the various contextualizations made-present-at-hand by a culture that has been more or less modified by its historical condition and its projective efforts in the future.

The value-experience itself should be made manifest within the various contexts from which they derive their meaning. The proper response to this challenge, then, is a phenomenology that does not revert to the ossification of experiences in concepts or terms of a specific language but rather focuses on the various meanings derived from the way the terms are contextualized in a statement. The primary concerns are the value-experiences of *hiya* and *dangal*, which this attempt considers as intimately connected experiences, each giving meaning to the other but not limiting the other at the same time. From this perspective, several inquiries may be induced: What is the nature of *hiya* and *dangal*? What is the underlying relation between *hiya* and *dangal*? What are the conditions that make possible the holding of these experiences as values? From what experiences do we depart in attempting to understand these values as values?

With regard to the nature of these values, it becomes imperative to inquire on the various crystallizations in forms of actual human conditions from which these values are seen to be set in motion. The attempt to understand the nature of these values is not the same as founding a metaphysical grounding but is rather something that is rooted in basic human experiences that make these values possible. The relation, then, is not something metaphysical but humanistic, and

¹ Colonization here refers to the historical subjugation of a culture, both by force and pacification, as with the Spanish conquest and the American era of assimilation, including the Japanese occupation. An external force thus causes the cultural change whether through violent or peaceful means.

² Cultural intercourse is far from being external in nature. Here the recipient culture rather causes the cultural change through assimilation of various cultural traits of the host culture.

³ (1984: 64) Gadamer (1984: 58-61, 64) tries to disclose the hermeneutic aspect of Husserl’s phenomenology over and against the foundationalist view of providing the “apodictic evidence of self-consciousness.” In place of the foundational tendencies of transcendental phenomenology, Gadamer suggests that we use participation as a central notion of phenomenology.

it shows the human response to the conditions set forth both by the natural and the cultural worlds. The relation is precisely a relation-to and in-relation-to something other than the one responding, which is in this case the human being or the self. The self's response is in itself an experience of, an active reaction to, or a relation with the Other which may perhaps unfold as the moral dimension of the experience.

Methodological Considerations

The transcendental tendencies of Husserlian phenomenology has to be relinquished in favor of more grassroots-oriented approaches because of the problematic aspects of transcendental phenomenology. The notion of the struggling self, transcending the cultural and historical conditions by which it was constituted, seems nearly impossible. Caputo⁴ voices out his concerns over the implications of the notion of a transcendental ego as leading to the classic problem of dualism where we are asked to believe “in two selves: one situated in the world and the other, its transcendental double” or the precursor to a transcendental consciousness of the world. The situated self, or the self that is constituted by the world, is limited by the spatio-temporal constitution of human existence. To experience the world is to experience it in a limited perspective, either historically or geographically, or both, so that the perspective itself becomes the point of departure for any real experience of the world. This is perhaps what Gadamer means when he wrote, “we are interpreting in seeing, hearing, receiving”⁵ and this is precisely what Husserl refuses in his transcendental notion of the ego having a pure consciousness of the world. The impossibility of literally “moving out” of one's limited perspective so that a transcendent perspective may be arrived at renders that the basic phenomenological experience can only be adopted when one interprets the world in its pure givenness, which of course Husserl rejects and “held that all interpretation is a secondary act.”⁶ The limited perspective is what is really adopted in this paper—a perspective from within the limitedness of the existence of *Dasein*, who among other things is incarnate and temporal.

To understand the Filipino experience of *dangal* and *hiya* is to experience them on the grassroots level, or from the common-sense understanding of the value-experience, not from a transcendent and pure standpoint. The transcendent perspective may be an ideal way of encountering such values but it relinquishes the notion of a value that is anchored to the world, or of a value that is meaningful only when perceived from its worldly context. This position is not entirely new since it was already proposed by Schutz who believes that “the foundation for understanding the world as it is experienced by the common-sense individual is the natural standpoint.”⁷ The practical world—the world that sociologists cling to—was to be the starting point of phenomenological investigations. Berger and Luckmann⁸ also see the natural world, or the world constituted by common-sense understanding, as the starting point for any attempt to understand any consciousness of the world. The world is inhabited by real people with real perceptions of what reality is, as opposed to the “scientific or philosophical or even mythological” understanding of the world.⁹ The transcendent attitude, therefore, may fall into a perspective that

⁴ (1987: 57)

⁵ (1984: 59)

⁶ (Gadamer 1984: 60).

⁷ (Douglas 1980: 122).

⁸ (1966)

⁹ (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 15)

is detached from the pre-theoretical lives of common-sense individuals who are living real lives in contrast to the theoretical lives that are understood by the abstraction of the social sciences. The return to the grassroots level means to understand the value-experience from the core perspective, from its rootedness in the world, as manifested by the meanings derived from the various contexts from which the value is experienced.¹⁰

Yet, we are not concerned here with mere terms or concepts that are crystallizations of a particular experience. The terms *dangal* and *hiya* must then be understood from the context by which they are actually understood in the limited, natural worlds of the participants in the experience. Thus, there is a need to examine these value-experiences from the contexts by which they are held meaningful by the very participants who in turn give meaning to these value experiences. From here, the methodological consideration must take as its starting point the real, contextual, and commonsensical interpretations of the value-experiences of *hiya* and *dangal*. Discursive elements in the values, which come in the form of actual, meaningful statements, cannot be understood *in isolation from* the contexts by which they derive their meaning. These contexts, as we shall see, are largely derived from the concrete experiences by which they were painstakingly taken so that contexts are interpreted *in relation to* the actual experiences by which they get their meaning.

This paper, however, will follow some of the basic phenomenological considerations. Husserl clearly expresses the critical attitude when he wrote, “In these studies we stand bodily aloof from all theories, and by ‘theories’ we here mean anticipatory ideas of every kind.”¹¹ The behaviorist model, for instance, is already anticipating that values, or even the act of valuing, are basic responses to stimuli, reducing then the value-experience into the more abstract stimulus-response model. The nationalistic paradigm tries to correct the behaviorist model by delineating from occidental narratives in favor of local narratives and discourses so that an authentically local perspective may be adopted. But this can only be accepted if one assumes that the values themselves have a racial¹² character, which, of course, becomes less understandable from an extra-racial perspective. The axiological perspective too, unfortunately, must be scrutinized as it assumes that values occupy the realm of the ought and that contemporary axiological attempts to elucidate the values in question tend to isolate these vis-a-vis the concrete, real-life experiences which contextualize them.

The critique, as Husserl himself proposes, is not a form of *letting go* but rather a suspension of judgments based on the theories in question: “The thesis is *put out of action*, bracketed, it passes off into the modified status of a *bracketed thesis*, and the judgment simpliciter into *bracketed judgment*.”¹³ Thus, the suspension of judgments consists in temporarily disregarding the notion of these values being behavioral, racial, or axiological. The behaviorist, nationalist, and axiological models will be discussed briefly so as to clarify how the value is in a way modified. However, the suspension of the axiological paradigm does pose a problem since at the beginning this paper has already assumed that *hiya* and *dangal* are values, more specifically value-experiences. If we understand axiology as the general study of values then we may have less difficulty accepting the suspension itself. We may as well suspend the notion of an isolated, objectified value as the object

¹⁰ Hence, the term value-experience refers to concrete experiences of holding-of-great-importance an experience that is more or less meaningful to the agent. The value becomes a basis for concrete actions and yet they are themselves derived from concrete actions.

¹¹ (1931: 73)

¹² I am adopting the basic definition of nation as a group of people from the same race.

¹³ (1931: 77)

of study. Or we may even begin to investigate the values in question from the perspective of these being other-than-values.

After suspending temporarily the main themes that may cloud our understanding of these values, the next task would be shedding-to-light the primordial contexts by which these values are given meaning. Hopefully, we may proceed to understand these value-experiences based on concrete, real-life experiences that contextualize them. But we may still ask: when and where does the contextualization take place? To put into context simply means to see something as linked (*texere* as plaited or braided) to another so that interdependence arises. The interdependence is nothing more than the possibility from which meanings can arise. But what then is linked with the word that gives meaning to it?

I propose that the meaning of the word be derived from the situations that arise out of the invocation of the word. The situation and the word are intricately linked, *com-texere*, or plaited together so that each gives meaning to the other, just as a specific thread attains its color from the combination of threads that are of different colors. To isolate the situation from the word is to put out of context the word itself,⁶ as *hiya* and *dangal* are put out of context when they are perceived as isolated entities. But to see the word as contextualized by the situation is to see the word in action, in its actuality or in the way it was used. This perhaps is what Heidegger (1962: 306) means by phenomenology as *apophanesthai ta phainomena*, or “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.” Here we are admonished to see the phenomenon as it shows itself without the formal constructs that are mere abstractions of what is really seen. Understanding the value-experience simply means viewing from a perspective that lets them play out their Beings—to stand under is to be powerless over and against the movement of the thing being seen. In addition to this basic attitude, Heidegger adds that “to have a science of phenomena means to grasp its objects in such a way that everything about them which is up for discussion must be treated by exhibiting it directly and demonstrating it directly.”¹⁴ Thus, every possible context must be considered in the phenomenology of value-experiences qua experiences. This does not necessarily imply definitions or even analysis, but rather implies that these value-experiences must be seen from different meaning experiences or interpretations. Contextual phenomena, then, include everything that relates to the object in question: the mood, the purpose, and the feeling, and other related experiences that may shed light on the Being of the value in question.

Limitations of the Phenomenological Attempt

The attempt to disclose the meaning of *hiya* and *dangal*, as the title suggests, is limited to the Tagalog language. The main reason why I view such limitation to be necessary is that the richness of the various Philippine dialects requires a standpoint that is more or less immersed in a particular language. A full disclosure of what is hidden must begin with a standpoint that may encounter the givenness of the thing-that-is-hidden, or the object to be disclosed. The immersion in the standpoint of a specific language requires years of living-in-the-dialect, if not being born into the language itself, so that the dialect becomes part of the person occupying the standpoint, or perhaps the language becomes the standpoint itself. The contextual analysis of values, in this sense, can only be achieved if the one who analyzes the manifold concepts can actually grasp the context of concepts through intuition. The variety itself demands a limitation in the sense that it is almost humanly impossible to be immersed in different languages in one’s lifetime. Even if for example

¹⁴ (1962: 307)

one has mastered Ilocano as a Northern language, the north itself bears various languages besides Ilocano: Ibanag, Kankanai, Igorot, Ivatan, Ifugao, Ilongot, Gaddang, and other variations wherein a slight change of intonation can even result in a disastrous miscontextualization. The participative significance of limiting itself consists in encouraging various intellectuals who have been immersed in a dialect to intuitively grasp a value on the contexts used within the language.

Main Themes in Filipino Social Theory and Axiology

Behaviorism: Lynch and Social Psychology. Frank Lynch can be considered as the pioneer in social theorizing in the local sphere and is credited for initiating a series of discussion on so-called Filipino values. He is also a proponent of the behaviorist model, spurned in the times when the sciences were used in social theorizing, paving the way for the rise of social positivism. Lynch's preliminary investigation is positivistic—the most observable characteristics are considered in defining a trait as a value. This is made more explicit in his endorsement of William's fourfold test, which consists in measuring the extensiveness, duration, intensity, and prestige of a value (or the perceived value), the variables heavily relying on the tangible aspects of the investigation.¹⁵ His investigation has led to the discovery of the theory of Smooth Interpersonal Relations (SIR), a meta-concept that will dominate much of the local social psychology scene, and is a value in itself. However, in his preliminary investigation, Lynch singles out social acceptance as “a thematic, or ultimate, goal” over and against the SIR “which is an intermediate goal.”¹⁶ Why the latter dominates local social theorizing is not clearly explained; perhaps the SIR strikes most anthropologists and social psychologists as a social theory and an encompassing concept. The SIR's character of being more of a socio-theoretical concept, rather than a value, opens up possibilities for positivistic and behaviorist researches modeled after the SIR. The multitudes of the SIR's application to field researches are documented by Church, along with the critique and counter-critique offered for the theory.¹⁷

Hiya as a trait appears in Lynch's preliminary investigation in relation to SIR as the model for understanding Filipino behavior. Lynch, after citing various contexts by which the word *hiya* appears, defines the experience as the “uncomfortable feeling that accompanies awareness of being in a socially unacceptable position, or performing a socially unacceptable action.”¹⁸ Of course, *hiya* is readily translated as shame, which is an accurate translation, but is reduced to a feeling, or a behavioral response to various social situations. Thus, two basic assumptions are arrived at in Lynch's investigations. First, because the SIR pervades the social mechanics of the Filipinos, its maintenance becomes imperative, and *hiya* becomes a “universal social sanction”¹⁹ that maintains the SIR. Second, because *hiya* is seen as a sanction in the form of an intrinsic behavioral response, it cannot be considered a value as it is subordinated to the greater notion of the SIR. *Dangal*, on

¹⁵ (Lynch 1968: 4)

¹⁶ (1968: 15-16)

¹⁷ (1986: 29-48)

¹⁸ Heidegger defines phenomenology by investigating the various ways Greek language gives meaning to *phenomenon* and *logos*, which of course means more than mere *science of phenomena*. His investigations yield the meaning of *phenomenon* as “the showing-itself-in-itself” (300) as against appearance or any other mode of the object showing itself. *Logos* as discourse (apophansis), when applied to phenomena itself leads to the notion of *apophainesthai*, literally meaning “lets us see something from the very thing which the discourse is about” (303). Cf. Heidegger (1962: 296-306).

¹⁹ (Lynch 1968: 17)

the other hand, does not appear at all in Lynch's investigation although he makes mention of *amor propio*, or self-esteem, which he describes as "an emotional high-tension wire that girds the individual's dearest self, protecting from disparagement or question the qualities he most jealously guards as his own best claim to other's respect and esteem."²⁰ Self-esteem too is not regarded as a value but rather a social sanction that is internally induced so as to protect the SIR. Significant researches on the Filipino social world based on the behaviorist model yield practically the same results. Eggan defines shame as "the basic sanction (*hiya* in Tagalog)" and "is concerned with the concept of social esteem"²¹ which he blames for the lack of social direction in Filipinos. Guthrie defines shame as "a feeling of inferiority, embarrassment, shyness, and of alienation which is experienced as acutely distressing."²² The main theme for the behaviorist model is the isolation of the response from the stimuli, and in this case, the isolation of *hiya* and *amor propio* from the SIR, only to be related once the isolated experiences are described empirically. The disclosure of the relation yields the insight that the SIR is the pivotal concept, and the primary context, by which we understand the notions of *hiya* and *amor propio*. It will be unthinkable then to disclose the meaning of both traits without referring to the basic theme that pervades them, reducing these traits then into sub-concepts under the auspices of the SIR.

Nationalism: Constantino's Rebellion and Enriquez's Revolution. The sudden surge of nationalism, or what I prefer to call *race consciousness* started with Constantino's fascination with Recto and the Nationalista Party. Considering the situation during his time, one cannot help but be astonished by the way Constantino perceives the state of the nation as being a virtual puppet to foreign powers (of course, he is referring to the United States). Constantino struggles to emancipate the history of the Filipino people from the Western perspective that focuses more on the lives of social *elitistas* and that accentuates the benevolence of the second-wave colonizers. The lack of a national consciousness in history results in the lack of direction for present and future policies—the lack is manifested in the dependence of the government on the policies of the United States at that time. Constantino then sees a cure in the form of a nationalist rewriting of history:

As it is, we habitually analyze Philippine society in the light of colonial myths and foreign concepts and values and act on the basis of assumptions and premises that only reveal our lack of understanding of the rich experiences contained in our history of struggles for freedom...By projecting the people's aspirations, a people's history can give us the proper perspective that will enable us to formulate the correct policies for the future, liberated from outmoded concepts based on colonial values and serving only the needs of foreign powers.²³

The nationalist dream, therefore, is made implicit in Constantino's rewriting of history, fashioned out so that it becomes the history of the masses. It is the same inertia that has probably driven Enriquez to rewrite Filipino psychology and which has led to the establishment of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*. Enriquez's theme of a Filipino psychology parallels Constantino's Filipinization of history in significant ways. Aside from stressing the need for a national consciousness by conceptualizing an indigenous psychology,²⁴ the assertion made was "that the

²⁰ (Lynch 1968: 17).

²¹ (1971: 13)

²² (1971: 62)

²³ (1975: 7-8)

²⁴ (Enriquez 1994: 1-2),

history of psychology has to be rewritten indeed as to reflect the different bodies of knowledge, formal or informal, found in Asia and the different cultures of the world.”

The tendency to point out the domination of, and consequently the need to rewrite, Western historical accounts, both in Constantino and Enriquez, is by no means accidental. There is in fact a need to rewrite the histories of disciplines from the nationalist perspective since the extra local order fails to capture the cosmogonic reference of a nation, thereby inhibiting the development of a national consciousness. The cosmogonic accounts of a nation must first be developed from the grassroots level, which is the masses, in order to arrive at an authentic theory that can capture the grounding of a social system. This grounding, however, transcends mere kinship levels into the national (racial) level, leading to the notion of a national consciousness. How then should this *going beyond* the kinship level, or even the regional, linguistic level, be implemented as an implication of the aim to build up a national consciousness?

In writing the history of the people, Constantino’s primary goal demands that history itself be written in a language other than the foreign language. Constantino²⁵ sees the connection between the miseducation of the Filipino and the persistence of English as a medium of instruction; miseducation refers to the education for a colonial consciousness. Of course, this assumption leads to another problematic, and more often uncertain, assumption: the adoption of a national language. But what particular language will be adopted? The language problem is important for Constantino, too important that he pushed for an all out support for the Institute of National Language in its aim to formalize a national language, Filipino, which is based largely on Tagalog.²⁶ It is along these lines that Enriquez formulates the foundations for *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, although implicitly stated, when he himself singles out *pakikipagkapwa* as *paninindigan*, and proceeds to expound on the concept and the meaning of *kapwa*.²⁷ In fact, the Metro Manila local language and the Filipino language are synonymous to Pilipino, the earlier national language itself, which is largely Tagalog-based when Enriquez relates the concepts such as *ako*, *iba sa akin*, and the experience of *hindi iba sa akin* in “*Hindi ako iba sa aking kapwa*.”²⁸ The idea is to isolate that word which best signifies a true value, as for instance in arguing that the violation or the absence of *pakikipagkapwa* registers “shock and disbelief,” signifying that the word itself is of utmost importance.²⁹ The thematic framework, or the primary method, therefore in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is the definition of local, Tagalog concepts or words which may be isolated as a value among other sub-values, a feat that Lynch tries to do. However, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*’s choice of concepts, approach, and disclosure is more sublime for it is done under the banner of nationalism. And it is precisely this that distinguishes Enriquez’s psychology, and which may also categorize it as Constantinian in its aims, from other forms of psychology: it practically aims to Filipinize psychology. The nationalist sublimation of psychological concepts still persists in defining concepts in isolation as seen in a brief outline of Enriquez’s hierarchy of values,³⁰ placing the *kapwa* as the core value.

The sublimation of the positivist traits into nationalist values has resulted in the emergence of concepts, which are held as core values, and the relinquishing of the SIR in favor of *Pakikipagkapwa*. Enriquez³¹ has virtually trans-valuated *hiya*, along with *amor proprio* or self-

²⁵ (1971: 54-65)

²⁶ (1971: 61)

²⁷ (Enriquez 1986: 9-15)

²⁸ (Enriquez 1986: 12).

²⁹ (Enriquez 1986: 15).

³⁰ (1996: [table III] 52)

³¹ (1996: 48)

esteem into *dangal*, which is approximately translated into its English quasi-equivalent, dignity. Furthermore, he describes *dangal* as an “intrinsic quality of a person or sector that allows him/them to shine despite the grime of their appearance, environment or status in life” and *hiya*, as consequence, is deemed superficial.³²

Enriquez³³ does not disregard *hiya* as having no moral significance at all: in fact, he connects it to the value of *Karangalan* as the “loob aspect of *hiya*.” But he does categorize *hiya* as a surface value, an “accommodative value” that is directly related to an opposite “confrontative value,” and finally, *bahala na* is identified as the confrontative value as against *hiya*.³⁴ Thus, we may have the provisional disclosure of *hiya* as a manifestation of an inner-value, *dangal*, which of course is a manifestation of a core value, *pakikipagkapwa*, made possible by the *pakikiramdam* as a pivotal value and as antecedent for the manifestation of superficial values. Is it possible then to see these values as intricately linked or are they to be treated as distinct values that are experienced on an epochal basis? With the model given, it seems remote, for instance, to value both *hiya* and *bahala na* at the same time if these are interpreted as dialectically opposed superficial values, or value manifestations. And it is questionable whether these surface values can be regarded as values at all since they have been characterized as surface/superficial values, or at best, value-manifestations, which make them less of a value. *Pakikipagkapwa* is the true value, replacing the SIR, and has been elevated to the status of a theory—an all-encompassing value subordinating other lesser values and at the same time giving meaning to these values.

Axiology: Filipino Philosophy and Sakop Philosophy

While the foundations of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* and the *Kapwa* theory are being laid, a theory was being sketched at the Graduate School of the University of Santo Tomas. This theory, unlike its contemporaries, was written in philosophical language and primarily intended as a dissertation. Mercado’s graduate work has been published and is heralded as one of the pioneering works in Filipino philosophy. At the onset of his work, Mercado poses the question: “Is there a Filipino philosophy?”³⁵ which yields another problem of “how to explicitate and formalize this philosophy.” The problem formulated implies that Filipino philosophy is to be derived from the people’s worldview, a formalization of an informal worldview and an explicitation of an implicit philosophy. Just how can the formalization of the informal, or the explication of the implicit, be made without, as much as possible, altering its originality or violating its givennes? Mercado’s two-pronged approach consists in “a metalinguistic analysis”³⁶ that will derive philosophical

³² (Enriquez 1996: 48) 7. In his so called Filipinization of personality theory, Enriquez (1996: 63) singles out *Pakikiramdam* (“feeling for another,” a kind of emotional a-priori) as “the pivotal aspect of *Kapwa*.” *Pakikiramdam*, as it turns out, “is necessarily tied to the operation of all Filipino surface values” (64) including *hiya*.

³³ (1996: 67)

³⁴ (Enriquez 1996: 66-67).

³⁵ (1974: 3-4)

³⁶ (1974: 8-12) Mercado (1974: 9) uses the watered-down version of Mathiot’s analysis of language. He explains the method as follows: “The method begins with the linguistic aspect under consideration, moves to its underlying concept and content with the aid of one or several linguistic aspects until it arrives at the content and theme of the language.” We now understand that Mercado’s approach relies on an abstraction of the underlying concept that gives meaning to the word itself, if we are to interpret “moving to its underlying concept” as an abstraction of the essence of the word, giving it the character of being phenomenological. However, “underlying concept” can also mean the structure that gives the word its

concepts from the local language by arriving at its content and theme, and a “phenomenology of behavior” that will establish a pattern common to most Filipinos. The metalinguistic approach aims to accomplish the task of formalizing informal worldviews that are then bolstered by phenomenological evidence. As against Enriquez’s sublimation, Mercado’s metalinguistic approach provides themes by which a categorization of words is made possible.³⁷ This thematization will then constitute the underlying structures of language, as for example Mercado’s division of *loob* / *buot* / *nakem* into intellectual, volitional, emotional, and ethical themes, including miscellaneous themes. The thematization opens up the possibility of finally contextualizing words without isolating their meaning from other words under the same theme. However, the repetitive aspect of thematization, as we shall see, still leads to an underlying assumption, another theory, or what Mercado coins as the *Sakop*.

The preliminary investigation of the *Sakop* begins with, as Mercado proposes, the metalinguistic analysis of pronouns used in interpersonal relations. From the inductive point of view, the notion of the *Sakop* will only emerge after the preliminary investigations so that we cannot simply assume that Mercado has in fact assumed the *Sakop* to be the core value in interpersonal relationships. The assumption is that for the reader who reads the book for the first time, starting from the first page down to the last, the *Sakop* is not-yet, a concept yet to be drawn out from the preliminary investigations. This attitude will at least best describe the phenomenological attitude. The analysis reveals three main points, which we have understood earlier as themes: “(1) a hierarchic view of society wherein authority plays a role; (2) that sexual difference is not so much stressed as ranking by seniority; and (3) that the “we” or the interpersonal collectivity prevails over the I.”³⁸ The phenomenology of behavior more or less reveals a thematization of themes into one theme or concept, and the prevalent theme that contextualizes the other two would be the third (interpersonalism), the other two being mere consequences of the main theme. Thus, the basic philosophical tendency in the Filipino social world is that of interpersonalism and the primacy of the collective (*Sakop*) over the self which also leads to the basic desire “to live in harmony with one’s fellowman.”³⁹ Again, *hiya* and *dangal*, from the perspective given, arises from the need to maintain the harmony within the collective so that a breach leads to shame, or even guilt, while the success of the individual brings honor to the *Sakop*.⁴⁰ From the perspective of the *Sakop*, which is also a value and a theory, the values *hiya* and *dangal* are interpreted as having an interpersonal or social dimension, dismissing the conflict that goes on within the social world.

The dismissal of the conflict perspective in the *Sakop*, imbued with the tendency to value the collective over and against the individual, leads to the complex notion of a social system struggling to maintain a state of equilibrium among its members. The impending dis-equilibrium will be addressed by the *Sakop* as a social pathology and will be corrected by the members themselves through the sub-values of *hiya* and *dangal*. But conflicts should rarely exist on such social systems as values are actually designed to automatically check against any forms of disequilibriums, or

content: we can include linguistic symbols, syntax, context, context, definitions (denotative or connotative), etc. If this were the case then we can also interpret Mercado’s work as structuralist. Mercado dismisses the structuralist model, quoting Greenberg, as he relinquishes phonetics in favor of “semantics and structures.” Still, the notion of a structure that pervades language is a structuralist interpretation of language itself.

³⁷ (1974: [table 1-5] 54-64)

³⁸ (Mercado 1974: 92-93).

³⁹ (Mercado 1974: 100-103).

⁴⁰ (Mercado 1974: 49)

threats that are either real or virtual. These conflicts, of course, are perceived to be caused by delinquent members or even the physical environment itself, and because it is already assumed that the natural tendency is to bond rather than to disintegrate, it seems that conflict has been branded as something that is extra-natural. Furthermore, the *Sakop*, being a manifestation of the desire of its members to maintain harmony, is continuously protected by the members themselves as the basic tendency for individuals within the social system. This means that the *Sakop* primarily is a system that checks against the threat of dis-equilibrium, internal or external, through the subvalues it defines. The manner by which the *Sakop* is described is the same description Parsons made of social systems, which is of course a functionalist perspective.⁴¹ Does this mean that the *Sakop* theory has the makings of an Oriental functional theory? If this is the case, then the Filipino social system does move towards stabilizing itself, maintaining its state of equilibrium, and eventually preserving its well-being as an organism⁴² through the efforts of its members who, as much as possible, are inhibited from initializing a disequilibrium, which is consequently made possible by subvalues.

The Manifestations of *Hiya* and *Dangal*: Context and Meaning

The Noun, Affixations, and Verb Focus. The word *hiya* taken purely may be translated into “shame.” This is how the word is treated as a value by Lynch,⁴³ as a surface value by Enriquez,⁴⁴ and as behavior by Mercado⁴⁵ where he also relates it with guilt. The problem, however, is that the word itself, when used in conversation, is seldom used in its pure form. The utterance “*Hiya ako*,” where *ako* is a personal pronoun denoting the first person “I,” may yield the translation “I am ashamed,” but our Tagalog formulation of the statement is clumsily constructed. The statement, however, is often used by a person humorously when trying to emulate a child (as if a child constructed the sentence). It appears in its pure form, or as a noun, when one objectively refers to

⁴¹ (1951) Parsons (1951: 216-220) describes the social system as a self-maintaining system having four basic functions of which he assigns the acronym AGIL: *Adaptation* refers to the basic function of the social system to utilize the physical environment for the sake of the survival of its members; *Goal-Attainment* refers to the direction of individual actions for the maintenance of the system; *Integration* refers to the coordinating function of the system so that it functions as a whole, making sure that each sub-part plays its role; and *Latency* refers to the motivating factors which make the individual move for the sake of the social system.

It is this last function, Latency, which I see as a parallelism of the *Sakop*: an encompassing motivation that moves members to contribute to the well being of the social system. It was also implicit in Parson’s account of the social system that the system itself, through the auspices of its members driven by consensus, that conflict within the system is constantly checked through the general functional imperatives of the social system.

⁴² Interestingly, Mercado (1974: 100-101) uses the analogy of the Body to refer to the social system: “The political *Sakop* uses metaphors drawn from the human body. In Occidental Mindoro, Agpalo notes that the congressman is called *kinatawan* (as one who embodies), the mayor and governor are called *pangulo* (head), the sub-leader as *kanang-kamay* (right-hand), and the personnel are the *mga galamay* (fingers)...” The body as a social metaphor is classical and perhaps universal. Already St. Paul uses it in his comparison of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ (I Cor. 12, 11 ff). But the foregoing data suggests that the *Sakop* as a body is more than just a metaphor but living reality for the Filipino.

⁴³ (1986)

⁴⁴ (1994)

⁴⁵ (1979: 99)

the feeling of shame. The subjective aspect of the word has an entirely different form and usage. Here are some of the most common statements where *hiya* appears as a noun (L = Literally; I = Idiomatically).

For the first statement, the construction is still unconventional because the most common formulation would be “*Huwag kang mahihiya*” or “(Please) Do not be ashamed.” This formulation is more acceptable because it is perceived as a request, while the first is perceived more as a command. The second statement’s indication of the presence of shame is commonly formulated as “*Mahiyain siya*,” literally meaning “he/she is habitually timid.” The formulation of the second statement is commonly perceived as a sarcastic remark for a person who actually does not have shame. Both statements that appear on the table are not common statements, rather they are *special statements* used for very specific circumstances. Their difference with the normal formulation lies with the complex system of affixation applied to words to change their meaning. The affixation system, in fact, distinguishes the Philippine languages from English.⁴⁶ Enriquez sees the affixation system as a “very important aspect of the Filipino language which should not be glossed over by root-word oriented analysts of Philippine values.”⁴⁷ And it is precisely in its affixed form that values are understood, not by its seemingly lifeless root word. The affixation puts the word into action, or contextualizes the word for actual usage, so that the meaning of the word is usually understood in its affixed form.

The investigation of the rootword *hiya* reveals that it is not used commonly in its pure form, hence, it is also not commonly understood as a rootword-value. “*Pagiging mahiyain*” sounds more as a value compared to its rootword *hiya*. The prefix *ma-* gives the word a distinction, or an entirely different context—an activating context—which is of course absent in its rootword. In addition to the system of affixation, another peculiarity in Philippine dialects is that of the sentence structure. The statement pronoun comes next to the verb/predicate. The second is formally constructed, or seldom used in everyday conversations, and is used more in classrooms where formal Filipino language is taught. At this point we construe that the verb is the usual emphasis in Tagalog as against the English emphasis on the subject. This analysis is made by Llamzon, an analysis considered well by Mercado⁴⁸ in his metalinguistic analysis of Filipino thought. The Tagalog language has also various focuses on verbs in addition to its complex web of affixations. Whereas Mercado⁴⁹ concludes the analysis by asserting his main thesis that the distinction between Filipino thought and Western thought is that the former tends to be “non-linear” and “holistic,” it will suffice for us to accept for now that the Tagalog language focuses more on activity, on actions, rather than on names or identifications. Perhaps, this peculiarity explains why the pure, noun-form

⁴⁶ Barton (1930: 40) has an interesting insight on the affixation system of the Ifugao languages: “The Ifugaos overwork the preterite prefix-in. Instead of babai, woman, they often say binabai, ‘womaned’ or ‘was-made-a-woman.’ Perhaps I was wrong in thinking that there was a deeper sense of ‘happened-by-incident-of-fate-to-be-a-woman’; they might, I suppose, go so far and be biologically correct. They use the infix a great deal in names, and changed mine from ‘Balton,’ as they pronounced it, to ‘Bintalton,’ Was-made-Balton.” Elsewhere, we are told of the name of Barton’s principal informant as “Was-made-lonesome” (126) implying that the same system of affixation was used in the original, untranslated Ifugao name.

Here, the system of affixation alters the word as it is inserted in the middle of the word. Several strategies for affixation may come in the form of repeating the first syllable, inserting a prefix or suffix, or both, or even inserting all three affixation forms, thereby altering the meaning of the word in a more fundamental sense.

⁴⁷ (1994: 67)

⁴⁸ (1974: 73-78)

⁴⁹ (1974: 75, 79)

of the word *hiya* is taken out of context when used in a statement. Verb-centeredness, along with the context that will be disclosed by an understanding of the affixation system, will reveal an interesting notion of *hiya* as well as other values.

A Disclosure of the Various Meanings of Hiya. There is a basic function in language in the form of verbs that also describe the tenses, or the temporal aspect of the action: of past, present and future acts of *hiya*. Basic alterations in the affixation of the word changes the tenses by which the words are understood temporally (see the figure on next page).

All three cases apply to the first, second, and third person pronouns (*ako, ikaw / ka, siya / sila*) respectively. Aside from the tenses, the affixation gives the impression of experiencing “*hiya*” from the subject’s point of view so that the statement “*nahihya ako*” means “I am ashamed.” All of the forms of *hiya* are normally placed at the beginning of the statement, especially in everyday conversations. Can we say that the Tagalog language places less emphasis on the subject merely because it is placed at the end of the statement? We cannot discount the fact that the affixation itself, which alters the meaning of the word, and ultimately of the statement, is applied primarily to verbs. Verbs do play an important function in Tagalog, and sometimes this emphasis is eminent in statements that do not have subjects at all. For instance, when translating “It is raining” to Tagalog, the result would be a simple “*Umuulan.*” The root word is *ulan* or rain and the “*m*” is inserted to denote an activity while the repetition of “*u*” denotes a present activity. In this case, one word completely describes a real state of nature, that of raining, and a slight change of affixation will ultimately change the description. At this point, it would be sufficient to surmise that the verb plays a primal role by virtue of its dominance over the noun in terms of emphasis and affixability.

The system of affixation, besides determining the tense, or the temporal aspect, also determines the ‘source’ of the verb. The examples given, for instance, apply to cases wherein the action emanates from the subject of the statement, so that these verbs have an ‘internal’ source, or are manifested by the subject. The examples demonstrate the ‘external’ mode of the word (see figure on next page).

The root word of the external-source word now becomes *hiyain*, the addition of the infix *in* signifies the externality of the verb, which may be understood as “was/is/will be shamed.” *Hiya* in its non-affixed form is not considered a true verb as, for example, *kain* [eat] that is more active by-itself. The Tagalogs have a special term for verbs, *pandiwa*, which usually include pure “activity words.” The non-affixed form of *hiya*, as we have discovered, is considered a noun that may then operate as a subject, a function better known as *pangngalan*. But in everyday, average conversations, *hiya* is not usually used as a noun but is understood more as an adjective or *pang-uri*.⁵⁰ If taken as a verb or as an adjective, it denotes either an action or a description—an act or a quality—depending upon the context.

⁵⁰ *Pang-uri* is usually (and rather hastily) translated as “adjective” but a close examination of the term indicates two intricate words that have separate meanings and then combine to give an entirely new meaning. The prefix *pang-* is usually placed in nouns to indicate utility or the mode of use. An example would be *pangluto*, which literally means “used-for-cooking” (*pang* + *luto*). *Uri* more or less translates to “kind” or “category.” Thus, the closest translation we could have of *pang-uri* is “used-to-categorize.” *Pangngalan*, in the same sense, means “used-to-name.”

Pandiwa, on the other hand, is unique in that it somehow eludes the regular translation to its English equivalent “verb,” Sagalongos (1968: 559) defines *diwa* as (1) spirit, (2) idea, and (3) sense. A combination with the prefix *pang-* (which automatically transforms to *pan* or *pam* to facilitate better pronunciation) will

***Hiya* as Being-Ashamed**

The investigation of the system of affixation and of its linguistic function discloses a primary notion of *hiya* as a state-of-being, or even a mode-of-being. But unlike the traditional, metaphysical understanding of “being,” *hiya* is also limited to its temporal aspect in tenses as modified by the affixation system. This means that there is no such thing as a permanent, nay even transcendent experience of *hiya* but that it is ultimately something that is temporal and transient. The unconventionality of its noun form suggests that *hiya* is not a permanent state-of-being, as nouns frequently operate, but reveals instead that it is understood in its verb / adjective, act / quality form that is closely related to a temporary-state-of-being. Furthermore, compared to other adjectives, it alone can be understood in its active form, revealing then its active aspect. For example, an ordinary adjective such as *laki* or size becomes *malaki* or large and is purely descriptive in function. *Mahiyain*, on the other hand, signals an activity and a description at the same time. And it is precisely in this context that *hiya* gets its meaning—as an active-descriptive word denoting a temporary-state-of-being-ashamed.

Hiya as value comes in the form of an imperative: “*Mahiya ka naman.*” This asks or requests a person to be ashamed, or even “*mahiya ka!*” as a demand for shame. The notion of *hiya* as value, therefore, if we define the parameters of values as belonging to the realm of the ought, or that-which-one-ought-to-become, discloses the meaning “ought-to-be-ashamed.” But why should one ought to be ashamed or even want to be ashamed? The question reveals that the notion of *hiya* as value should be reconsidered because of its vagueness. It would be too presumptuous, for instance, to say that Filipinos, because they value shame, strive to be constantly ashamed or even want to be ashamed. Ought-to-be-ashamed as an imperative, thus, requires further grounding, as disclosing that-which-one-ought-to-be-ashamed-of. And this is precisely why I believe Quito is on the right track when she says *hiya* is an ambivalent value containing positive and negative aspects:

(*Hiya* is) [n]egative because it arrests, or inhibits one’s action. The trait reduces one to smallness or to what Nietzsche calls the “morality of the slaves,” this congealing the Filipino soul and emasculating him, making him timid, meek and weak. Positive, because, it contributes to peace of mind and lack of stress in not even trying to achieve.⁵¹

The ambivalence of *hiya*, however, does not purely rest on its benefits or even on its ugly consequences but rather on its eminent groundlessness. Why should one be ashamed in the first place? What is it that calls one to be ashamed? The phenomenon of *hiya*, or being ashamed, harbors hidden assumptions that need to be brought out: first, being ashamed is being-ashamed-of-something, which constitutes its objective aspect; second, it reveals being-ashamed-for-something,

yield the following meanings: (1) used to give meaning to..., (2) used to give the idea of..., (3) used to give sense to... Gramatologists will surely pick out the third meaning because of its exactness compared to the first two, which of course are more problematic. Yet, the question is: what is it in the verb that it is able to give sense? The manifold context of *pandiwa* is beyond our scope. But based on the three meanings given, it is not that strange that Tagalogs prefer *pandiwa* over *panggalaw* (*galaw* literally means movement or action). When a word is transformed into a *pandiwa*, it animates as a spirit (or gives spirit to the symbolized object), it gives an idea of something, and it makes sense of something. The lack of formal structures in Tagalog permits us, for one, to consider an adjective as a verb and vice versa.

⁵¹ (1988:43)

which constitutes its subjective aspect. The phenomenon itself is always understood purely in its objective, or external, aspect as if an act or a situation (insults, mistakes, shortcomings) causes its being felt. But never has the subjective, or internal, aspect been carefully examined or even considered. Yet, the phenomenon of being ashamed is not a compartmentalized, epochal, event that happens automatically to a person, as if the person first experiences the external then proceeds to the internal experience. It always comes spontaneously and the two aspects are intricately linked, *comtexere*, so that the experience is best described as being-ashamed-of-and-for-something. The disclosure of the internal, *loob* aspect of *hiya* leads us to the revelation of its grounding, the being-ashamed-for-something, which ultimately leads us to a manifestation of the inner-self.

A Disclosure of the Contexts of *Dangal*

Unlike *hiya* which is normally understood in its affixed form, *dangal* operates primarily as a noun in Tagalog, or that it actually names something. Affixing it would alter it into an adjective, as in *marangal*, the prefix *may-*⁵² closely referring to the presence of something, and in this case the presence of *dangal*. It can also appear in its abstract form, *karangalan*, and the *ka-an* affixation gives it its abstract character. The disclosure of *dangal* here will proceed from its descriptive (adjective) form with the prefix *ma-*, then to its abstract form with the affix *ka-an*, and then to its noun form.

In its descriptive form, *dangal*, in the ordinary sense, is used to describe the state-of-having *dangal*. *May-* signals the presence, or even the abundance of *dangal*, which then constitutes the twofold context of *dangal*. But how are we to distinguish between the two forms of presence? In the first case, *dangal* as present may mean that there is a moment when it is not present at all (privative), or that it is always there (permanence). It may also signal that *dangal* can also be made present. The concrete example is that of *pinangaralan* which means “someone-bestowing-dangal-on-someone.” The addition of the prefix *pa-* implies externality and the infix—*in*—implies bestowal or being made as such. After the bestowal of *dangal* comes *pagiging marangal* (*dangal* being present) or simply *marangal*. In the second case, *dangal* signifies more than the mere presence of something but rather the abundance of something.

The lack of a Tagalog word for “being” is one of the concerns of Filipino intellectuals, especially in the field of metaphysics, so that various terms are suggested as a counterpart for the metaphysical word “being.” Mercado⁵³ suggests that because Filipinos are more concerned with becoming, the metaphysical counterpart should be *kapagiginghan*, taken from the rootword *maging* or “to become.” An earlier study⁵⁴ of the *ka-an* affixation is perhaps the basis for such a

⁵² The prefix *may-* is one of the unusual prefixes in terms of function and meaning. In some cases, the [y] is removed to facilitate easier pronunciation but does not alter the meaning of the prefix. However, the meaning of the prefix itself is somewhat blurred. First, it can be used to signal the presence of something. *Maypilas*, for instance, means the presence of tear in clothing (*pilas*). Some historians believe that the City of Manila was named so because of the presence of *nilad*, a particular form of river-plant, thus the original Tagalog name was *Maynilad* (the presence of river-plants). Second, it may signal the abundance of something in something, especially when used in adjectives. *Maganda*, for instance, may be translated as the presence of beauty (*ganda*) in the first sense but it may also mean the abundance of beauty. Thus, if *may-* is applied to *dangal* in the first sense, then it may mean the presence-of-*dangal*; while the second sense would yield the meaning “the-abundance-of-dangal.”

⁵³ (1994: 98)

⁵⁴ (Mercado 1974: 77)

proposal, which suggests that aside from expressing the abstract form, the affixation also indicates: (1) the superlative, (2) companionship, reciprocity, simultaneity of action, (3) collectivity, (4) state, attitude, feeling, quality, or possession of something, and (5) possibility. Mercado⁵⁵ concludes that Filipino languages are imprecise precisely because the Filipino's view of himself is "holistic," concrete thinking (as against abstract thinking), and non-dualism. Can these contexts for the *ka-an* affixation apply to *dangal* as *karangalan*? The first, an indication of superlatives, may not be plausible since the common superlative form of *dangal* is *pinakamarangal* (*pinaka* signaling superlativity), which literally means "the most *marangal*." The second form may be possible enough if the suffix is dropped, giving then the word *karangal* (fellow *marangal*). The collective context is totally out of the question since it would be more correct to say *mararangal* (all-who-are-*marangal*). The fourth category in Mercado's study is a problematic category since it contains five distinct modes, but the closest among them is that of "a state of being" combined with possession of something, giving us then the translation "a-state-of-having-*dangal*." The fifth context is also plausible since the stress of the pronunciation is made on the last syllable, so that *karangalan* pronounced as *karanga—lan* may mean "the possibility of having *dangal*," but it also means an external bestowal of *dangal*, i.e., "*Nagalak siya nang siya'y binigyan ng karangalan*" (She was happy when she was given honor). This, in fact, further indicates that *dangal* as possibility is a bestowed possibility, or that the actualization is the giving-of-*dangal*. But the possibility-of-having-*dangal* as something that has an external source is better expressed in the word *pararangalan*, which is a future tense of *parangalan*, indicating that someone-will-bestow-*dangal*. *Karangalan*, then, in the fifth sense, is understood as the actualization of what was once possible. What the *ka-an* affixation has disclosed so far is that *dangal* as *karangalan* is better understood as a state-of-having-*dangal*. Even when stressing the last syllable, *karangalan* is understood as has-been-given-*dangal*, which means that the person to whom *dangal* is bestowed has already actualized the state-of-having-*dangal*.

In its noun form, *dangal* is not a specific entity, not a "thing," but represents a sublime notion of one's personhood or *pagkatao*. Synonymous to *dangal* is *puri*, which is also held as something very valuable. Perhaps, Enriquez⁵⁶ is correct in saying that to measure the worth of a value, one must understand the shock and disbelief of people who hold on to the value when it is disregarded, violated, or even omitted. Thus, when a person is "without *kapwa*," we remark that he is totally inhuman in apathy. If this is the case, what does it mean when we say that a person is without *dangal* or *walang dangal*? What would be the implications of the violation of one's *dangal*? In the rape of a woman, for instance, the Tagalogs will usually use the euphemism *winasak ang puri* (literally means "destroyed one's dignity") instead of outwardly saying she was raped (*ginahasa*). Falsely accusing a person is also an example of a dastardly act, and the euphemism would be *siniraan ng dangal* (literally means "damaged or tainted one's honor"). In both cases, *dangal* has never been absent in the first place but is assumed to be already present. The system of affixation applied to *dangal*, in this case, does not merely signify what is made present but points at what is already there.

When one intends to reprimand a person that she is without *dangal*, one simply says *hindi marangal*, the affixed form modified by a negation (*hindi* meaning "not") which signifies the absence-of-*dangal*. What then is the meaning of *marangal* in *hindi marangal*? It can be interpreted, first, as the absence-of-*dangal* or, secondly, the absence-of-the-abundance-of-*dangal* (or the lack-of-*dangal*). Since the prefix *may-*, as what has been pointed out above, may indicate

⁵⁵ (1974: 78)

⁵⁶ (1986: 15)

both presence and abundance, the two meanings are plausible enough to understand *dangal*. If, finally, *dangal* is to be interpreted as a value, then it signals that which ought to be present (or abundant). The presence, in this case, indicates the minimum and the abundance, the maximum. The value of *karangalan* then is understood as *dangal-that-ought-to-be-present*.

Dangal and Puri: Purity and Gloriousness

Dangal and *puri* are used interchangeably in *Tagalog*; they are, in fact synonyms. The closest translation that we have, so far, is that of honor or dignity. But an examination of the meaning of *puri* used in a specific way discloses a significant concept that will finally shed light on the meaning of *dangal*, as it is understood in *Tagalog*. When the Spaniards came to colonize the country, one of their primary goals was to proselytize so that friar-missionaries were sent to accomplish the task. Of course, the prayers used were in Latin and the natives were forced to learn this language specifically for liturgical purposes. Other than that, Latin remained to be nothing more than a language of worship. One of the most intriguing translations of prayers is that of the *Gloria*, which is usually sung on Sundays. *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is translated as *Papuri sa Diyos sa Kaitaasan*.⁵⁷ Glory, then, is perceived to be the equivalent of the word *puri*. *Papurihan*, for instance, would translate to “to give honor” or “to give praise.” *Purihin* also means giving praise to someone. The active mode (or *pandiwa*) of *puri* is *pinupuri*, the present tense, which also uses the infix *-in-* to signal an external source. This externality likewise applies to the past and future tenses. Does this mean that *puri* is related to *dangal* in its externality? Is it actually a manifestation of *dangal*? Enriquez⁵⁸ suggests that *puri* is an external manifestation of *dangal*, or that it is what others perceive when a person possesses *karangalan*. From this perspective, the external manifestation then is what is evaluated by others and this evaluation is somewhat ceremonially bestowed upon the person who has exhibited acts of honor. However, more than being bestowed, *puri* for the *Tagalogs*, especially in its noun-form, is something that is present-in-the-person. That is why when one deplores a dastardly act done by others, one may say “*sinira ang puri ko*” or that *puri* was damaged. In this sense, *puri* loses its external nature and becomes something internal or innate.

Another possible translation for *puri* would be “pure,” taken from its Latin equivalent *purus*. This may explain why virginity is always associated with *puri*; a violation of chastity would mean the damaging of one’s *puri*. The *Tagalogs* do have a quasi-equivalent for purity in *puro*, which I believe would be closer in meaning than *puri*. When a person’s purity is violated, however, what is commonly used is *puri*, so that in cases of rape the euphemism that applies is “*winasak ang puri*,” which consequently is a very deplorable act in *Tagalog* culture. Kalaw⁵⁹ discusses briefly the value of chastity among *Filipino* women. Of course, at present where the cultural revolution is slowly seeping into *Tagalog* culture, chastity becomes less valued. Perhaps Kalaw is discussing the common belief during his time where, compared to the present, the culture of the *Tagalogs* was conservative in nature. His (1951: 23) description of the ideal, prototypical *Filipino* woman is that person who possesses “prudence, bashfulness, modesty, and simplicity.” Furthermore, Kalaw (1951: 47) notes a peculiarity in rape cases among *Filipinos*, and its relation to the inherited belief on chastity:

⁵⁷ “Glory to God in the Highest.”

⁵⁸ (1994: 48)

⁵⁹ (1951: 23-48)

Our criminologists state that the bad nature of some of our men take advantage of this inherited belief to abuse, sometimes by force, our young girls, especially the beautiful or rich, or those from the better class, in the hope that, their object once achieved, a marriage between them necessarily has to take place.

Puri taken as purity takes on an entirely internal aspect wherein the external act damages the internal in forms of dastardly acts such as rape. In its internal aspect, *puri* takes on a meaning that goes beyond social evaluation, or that of self-valuation, so that it must have been present-before-hand.

When related to *dangal*, *puri* takes on a context that combines both notions of gloriousness and purity, internal and external, and more often, the internal element is more valued than that of the external. Enriquez⁶⁰ gives the same insight when he defines the internal aspect of *dangal* as “the inner strength of a person that allows him to face the rich and the mighty with confidence and resolve.” To the Tagalogs, *dangal* is something that cannot be measured by wealth, fame, or power, but it is ever-present in an individual. To what degree the presence is maintained cannot be measured at all. And it is an imperative that a person possesses the basic *dangal* of being human. This will be understood better when we explore the other side of *dangal*, or its deplorable other side, which is *lapastangan*.

A Historical Memoir: Jacinto’s Insights as an Appeal to Honor

Recently, Gripaldo has written an interesting disclosure of Emilio Jacinto’s insights on the Philippine Revolution.⁶¹ In Jacinto’s manifesto (*Pahayag [Agosto 1897]*), he admonishes the Filipinos to rise up in arms (Gripaldo 2001: 132):

¡Mangagsipanandata kayo mararangal na puso mangagsipanandata kayo! ¡Siana ang manga pagtitiis!

[Arm yourselves of noble hearts. Arm yourselves. Drive away patient toleration of sufferings.]⁶²

The call to arms by Jacinto admonishes those of noble hearts or anyone who loves freedom. This is in the face of any hardships that must be endured as the price of this freedom. This example clearly veers away from the typical shy Filipino who values *hiya* above others. This also shows that there is something more valuable than mere acceptance (as highlighted in Lynch’s investigation), which is freedom. Jacinto’s call to arms gives us a glimpse of the violent Filipino, or of a person who has to draw the line between being friendly and being assertive. In this case, the noble thing to do was to fight it off rather than tolerate sufferings.

A characteristic of *dangal* that Jacinto elucidates in his *Liwanag at dilim* (Light and darkness) is founded on the equality of all humans in their humanity:

Ang lahat ng tawo’y magkakapantay sapagkat iisa ang pagkatawo ng lahat.

⁶⁰ (1994: 48)

⁶¹ (1997: 140-163) *Pagmamahal* roughly translates to “the act of loving” while *pagmumura* translates to “the act of defaming.” Love then has its intrinsic opposite, defamation, which ultimately gives us the notion of valuing and de-valuing.

⁶² (Gripaldo 2001: 38)

[All humans are equal for there is only one humanity.]⁶³

Perhaps, Jacinto is trying to convince the people that the Spanish could be conquered through valor and nobility. Yet, this may also complement his manifesto, or call to arms, by simply suggesting a basic humanity that is ever-present in every person. This humanity, then, is to be defended against any form of domination, whether through peaceful or violent means. But what then is this basic humanity that is present and that must be defended? Jacinto's insight on freedom helps shed light to this question:

Ang kalayaan ng tawo ay katuirang tinaglay na talaga ng pagkatao, na umisip at gumawa ng anumang ibigun kung ito'y di nalalaban sa katuirang iba.

Ayon sa wastong bait, ang katuirang ito ay siyang ikinaiba ng tawo sa lahat ng nilalang, Ang hayop ay sinusupil at nilulubiran sapagkat di nakatatantu ng matuid at di matuid, di nakakaabut ng dakila at magandang gawa. Liban sa tawo lamang ang makapagsasabi ng ibig ko't di ko ibig kaya ayon sa bagay na kanyang inibig o inibig siya'y magiging dapat sa tawag na mabuti o masama, sa parusa o palo.

[Human freedom is a rational endowment that was bestowed upon humanity to think and do whatever one wills if this does not conflict with the same endowments of others.

Common sense would reveal that this endowment is what distinguishes humans from other creatures. An animal is captured and tied-up because it does not understand what is right and what is wrong, is not capable of noble and gracious deeds. Only humans can express what one wills or not so that, in accordance to what one has willed, one is entitled to being judged as right or wrong, to punishment or pain.]⁶⁴

Dakila may be translated as “great” so that *dakilang gawa* means “great deeds.” Yet, greatness, or *kadakilaan* is also known to be intimately related to nobility or *karangalan*. But what is more evident in Jacinto's proclamation is his stress for the essential differences between humans and animals, or between what it takes to be a human being and what it means to be a mere animal. It is, I believe, the distinction between humans and animals, between a free human being and a slave, that constitutes the foundation for Jacinto's insights on, and ultimately his justification for, the Revolution. The Spaniards, through their abuses, have reduced the natives into mere animality, or an animal state of existence, and the gap between the master and the slave is deceptively immense. This deceptive, immense gap is what Jacinto tries to scrutinize and criticize—truth reveals that all humans are equal in nobility for they have the right to freedom. Furthermore, this coincides with Bonifacio's revolutionary insights where he believes that the Spaniards did more than just colonize and dominate the country. For Bonifacio, the Spaniards did not only dominate but betrayed the Filipinos by breaching the contract of blood they had with the colony's former fathers.⁶⁵ In both these revolutionary insights against slavery and treachery, what is truly aimed at is the restoration of the nobility of the human being against the abuses of another human being. Slavery takes away the innate right of a human to be human by taking away freedom; treachery takes away the trust that has taken place between two races promising to make each of their lives

⁶³ (Gripaldo 2001: 119)

⁶⁴ (Gripaldo 2001: 117)

⁶⁵ (Gripaldo 2000: 44).

better through mutual understanding. Thus, the moral justification of the revolution is to take back what is taken away (freedom and understanding), or to return to its place what has been lost. This *taking-away* would be better understood within the context of the Tagalog notion of *paglalapastangan*.

Paglalapastangan and Pagmumura: A Damaging of Dangal

The direct opposite of *parangalan*, the external aspect of *dangal*, is *lapastanganin*, or roughly “to defame.” Defamatory words are called *mura*, which also include insults, curses, and dirty language. The act of defaming the other person through one’s word, thus, is called *pagmumura*. What is it in *pagmumura* that causes *paglalapastangan* (the act of defaming)? *Mura* is frequently used to point at objects that are cheap. Products bought at the lowest price are *mura*, while the highest priced ones are *mahal* or expensive. Hornedo phenomenologically treats the experience of *pagmamahal* and *pagmumura*⁶⁶ wherein both notions are seen as diametrically opposing terms. He goes beyond the economic aspect of *mura* and proceeds to give a more essential notion of defamation as de-valuing a person. He defines *pagmumura* as “the demeaning of someone whether by language or by deed, as there is slander by word and by deed.” The most significant insight he has is that of demeaning as *pagmumura*.⁶⁷ To demean the other person through words is to disregard the other’s humanity by demoting it into its animal level. *Pagmumura* then is an act that demeans the other person to mere animality. But *pagmumura* is not merely confined to words but more often are exhibited in deeds.

The Tagalogs consider slander by words as *pagmumura* while slander by deeds is better known as *paglalapastangan*. Parents often encounter children who are disobedient, in the extreme sense, and call the act of defiance as *paglalapastangan*. The term also applies to the desecration of sacred objects, such as cemeteries or places of worship. In some cases, it is also used as a euphemism for the violation of chastity. It is interesting to note here that the Tagalogs seem to consider *paglalapastangan* as an external interference of something that is otherwise pure and glorious. It connotes a disturbance of the inner imperative emanating from the object of defamation: obeying parents, respecting sacred things or places, and honoring chastity. Children ought to obey parents; people must respect sacred objects; men should respect a woman’s chastity. *Paglalapastangan* is not something that is made present in the object but rather takes something away from the object in a demeaning sense. This demeaning of the object damages, rather than destroys, something essential in the object.

The essential element damaged when an object is *nilapastangan* (was-caused-to-be-defamed) is none other than the object’s purity or glory. The *dangal* of the object, which was always present in the object, is damaged when acts of disrespect emanate from the outside. The moral aspect of *paglalapastangan*, considered as a truly immoral act, is especially manifested in persons and relationships. If taken in context with humanity or *pagkatao* as another key moral element, *paglalapastangan ng pagkatao* or “demeaning one’s humanity” simply means damaging the basic requirement for being human. That is the essential connection of *pagmumura* with

⁶⁶ Dr. Gripaldo’s book gives us a chance to encounter directly Jacinto’s mind, especially with the inclusion of some of Jacinto’s writings in Tagalog. My quotations from Jacinto are taken from Dr. Gripaldo’s appendix, *The Writings of Emilio Jacinto*.

⁶⁷ (1997: 153) A popular mode of defaming another is by saying *anak ng puta* or roughly “the offspring of a whore.” Another would be calling the other person *hayup* or “animal.” Both are serious and highly deplorable so that they are actually reserved for grave situations where extreme anger is exhibited.

paglalapastangan: slander by words defies and damages the person within and demotes it into its animality, or *kahayupan*. Even in Western ethics we find such notions, although implicit, like in Kant's thesis of treating the other person in-itself instead of for-itself, or Mill's elevation of human happiness above and beyond animal happiness. Ultimately, *paglalapastangan* touches the heart of Filipino moral concepts: *katarungan* or justice as a straight path where demeaning a person is an injustice, *kabuktutan*, or a crooked path; *kalayaan* as a basic requirement for *karangalan* where an infraction thereof results in *pang-aapi* or acts of damaging domination, *pang-aalipin* as loss of freedom, or even death. We may even say that *paglalapastangan* is the prototypical moral counterpart, the greatest immorality, or whatever it is we consider vile or evil.

***Dangal* as Value and as Moral Imperative**

With the elucidation on *paglalapastangan* as the vile counterpart of *pagpaparangal*, we can now understand why the latter has the very character of a value, of being valued not only for-itself but also in-itself. It also becomes clear why social scientists, anthropologists, psychologists, and even philosophers who have attempted to study Philippine culture sees the obvious manifestation of *dangal*, which is of course *hiya*. The disclosure of *hiya* as value, as contextualized in the Tagalog dialect, reveals that it is understood as "ought-to-be-ashamed-of." By itself, it cannot stand as a value because of its groundlessness, its intentionality, so that it demands something else other than itself. This gives us the understanding that being simply ashamed is absurd. The groundlessness of *hiya* as a value is best manifested by the appearances it gives so that when one looks only at one standpoint, the vagueness of *hiya* hides its value, thus exposing the observer to the ambivalence of the so called value.

The intention of *hiya*, its direction, is nothing more than it's grounding. The ground itself should be something that is grounded-in-itself so that its mere presence is enough. This grounding is nothing less than *dangal*, which itself encompasses an aggregate of essences that ought to be respected in a person. A variety of values and their infraction thereof result in the damaging of *dangal* as a value (or even the highest of all values). Freedom taken away results in slavery; trust taken away becomes ignorance and betrayal; respect not given deplores the sanctity of the other person (or even objects). Furthermore, *dangal* is not understood as something intentional, thus giving it the quality of being pursued for its own sake. The absurdity of the word *nadangal* or even *nagdangal* as a first person verb indicates that *dangal* is not understood as something that is done but rather something that is possessed as in *marangal* (presence of/abundance of *dangal*). It is perhaps in this context that Enriquez understands *dangal* as a person's "self-dignity—the worth of a person as appreciated by the person himself."⁶⁸

Conclusion

If we would take together these value-experiences, each giving meaning to the other, *hiya* is understood as a manifestation of *dangal*. This manifestation is revealed when the person's *dangal* is at stake so that when it is violated, or damaged (but never taken away), the person simply manifests being-ashamed of having a damaged *dangal*. *Hiya* is considered merely as a manifestation of *dangal* in the sense that it is only one mode of responding to the attempted, or even successful destruction of *dangal*. One can also manifest *galit* or "anger," act in retribution in *paghihiganti* or revenge, feel remorse and distress in *pagdadalamhati* or "deep sorrow" when

⁶⁸ (1994: 48)

dangal is damaged. The depth of such reactions when *dangal* is taken away, especially in the vilest sense in *paglalapastangan*, attests to the substance and weight of *dangal* among other values.

Dangal as value demands more than just being protected as in cases of revolutionary struggles for independence. It also demands that each and every person respect the nobility, purity, and gloriousness of the other. While *paglalapastangan* damages *dangal*, *paggalang* (respect), *pagmamalasakit* (sympathy), *pagmamahal* (love), *pang-unawa* (understanding) and even *pakikisama* (social acceptance) are but some of the ways by which *dangal* is preserved. *Dangal*, therefore, can also be understood as a moral imperative. First, a person “ought to have *dangal*” so that the imperative states that a person ought to protect her dignity. Second, a person, as an implication of the value of *dangal*, should also respect the dignity of others by making sure that she does not damage the dignity of others either by word or by deed. In the first sense, the imperative of maintaining one’s dignity is a moral ought so that it becomes almost unthinkable to damage one’s *dangal* intentionally. In the second sense, the moral imperative acquires an interpersonal character so that it is one’s obligation to maintain the dignity of the other.

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Chapter III

Understanding the Filipino Philosophy of Resiliency: *Katatagang-Loob* and Its Phenomenological Considerations

Joseph Anthony Narciso Z. Tiangco

The paper necessitates the understanding that Filipinos do have their own philosophy of resiliency—the Volkgeist of the nation as reflected in its people’s sense of *katatagang-loob*. The explication of this indigenous concept shall be undertaken from a semantic and metalinguistic point-of-view. Aside from this, traditional Filipino sayings and proverbs will equally be examined so as to depict how these metaphorically reflect valuing for *katatagang-loob*. The second part of the paper takes into account corresponding frameworks that can be used towards further understanding the Filipino philosophy of resiliency. Within this context, the author argues that *katatagang-loob* is not necessarily a deeply held philosophy in itself, but instead, a deeper value reside within the phenomenology of being Filipino—that of *pangangalaga sa sarili and kapwa*. Lastly, the Filipino philosophy of resiliency in many ways reflects the Eastern Weltanschauung. Drawing from Chinese philosophers such as Mencius, Chuang Tzu, and Lao Tzu, the paper argues that Filipino worldviews are no different from their other Asian neighbors. It is hoped that a renewed understanding of the Filipino can be undertaken given that it is the people’s individual and collective strength of character that has kept them afloat, over and beyond much adversity.

The Philippines and the Filipinos are continuously confronted by insurmountable problems.¹ If one were to provide a “situationer,” a lethargic portrait best captures the events and circumstances that surround the Filipino way of life.

The present economic crisis, the steadily increasing prices of basic commodities, and disappointments over the failed efforts of the Philippine military to subdue the Abu Sayyaf rebels—these are the daily issues that confront the Filipino. Fear continues to grip the whole nation with the onset of renewed bomb threats in Metro Manila meant to destabilize the present government. Poverty, illegal gambling, violence against children and women, graft and corruption, kidnappings, and all other social ills linger relentlessly. It is perhaps correct, therefore, for James Fallows² to regard the Philippines as having a “damaged culture.”³ These concerns are actually national in scope, not to mention personal predicaments confronting each Filipino.

Albert Camus’s notion regarding suicide as the fundamental philosophical question seems apparent given the absurdities governing the lives of Filipinos. As a matter-of-fact, Estanislao mentions, “...there is a cultural tendency in the Philippines to deny the presence of depression and to endure and to suffer in silence.”⁴ Despite such cultural determinants that seemingly predispose a Filipino towards self-annihilation and other destructive behaviors, the perception remains that Filipinos are indeed one of the happiest people in the world. Andres even asserts, “The Filipino can maintain his patience and endurance in the face of adversity.”⁵

¹ (Elwood 2001: xiv-xv).

² (1987)

³ (in Gripaldo 2000)

⁴ (2001: 104)

⁵ (1989: 12)

Do Filipinos typify Camus's "absurd man"⁶ who struggles against all odds with the pretense of hopelessness and tragedy? To what then do we attribute the perception of the Filipino's undying resiliency? These questions give credence to a nation's strength of character and its peoples' courage amidst an indifferent world. The article attempts to provide a renewed understanding of a philosophy of resiliency—*katatagang-loob*—as a reflection of what Quito⁷ calls *diwa* or the *Volksgeist* of the Filipino people.

The first part is a linguistic analysis of the concept of *katatagang-loob* explicating its use and meaning in the vernacular. As Enriquez⁸ mentions, it is significant to unearth the philosophical implications in the use of indigenous concepts. Hence, a presentation of different analects and proverbs that reflect resiliency are also featured. For the second part of the article, I hope to argue for a framework that takes into account *katatagang-loob* vis-à-vis other values such as *kawalang-karahasan* (non-violence), *kahinahunan* (prudence), *kakalmahan* (calmness), *determinasyon* (determination), *bahala-na* attitude (fatalism) and *pagsusumikap* (hardwork) within the context of the Filipinos' philosophy of survival and search for meaning. An analysis is done to look at the bipolar inclinations of *katatagang-loob* towards an understanding of its positive and negative implications. And lastly, imperative comparisons are drawn between elements of *katatagang-loob* and Chinese philosophy, particularly those of Mencius, Chuang Tzu, and Lao Tzu. This is to emphasize the point that Filipinos are no different from their Asian neighbors. Although, Asian philosophy is commonly conceived of as Hindu, Chinese, or Japanese philosophy,⁹ Filipino philosophy shares more similarities than differences with the Eastern *Weltanschauung*. The efforts provided hope to argue for a Filipino Philosophy, even though, not as highly systematized as that of the West but rather typifies what Elwood¹⁰ regards as a philosophy characterized as a way of life. And in this connection, a philosophy as reflected in the way of life of the Filipino people.

Understanding the Concept of *Katatagang-Loob*

Linguists have always taken into account the use of language as a reflection of the mind.¹¹ The *Lebenswelt* is concretized through words as part of the process of giving meaning to everyday experiences. As Chandler comments,¹² "We seem as a species to be driven by a desire to make meaning: above all, we are surely *Homo significans*—meaning makers." Human beings concretize what is experienced through the use of language as one of the venues for symbolizing in the mind what is experienced from an externalized world.¹³ Embodied in it and lived through discourse is the ethos of a people, the richness of culture, and history divergent in language.

Structurally, through a semantic analysis of *katatagang-loob*, the word can be broken down into two: *katatagan* and *loob*. The word, *katatagan* comes from the rootword *tatag* which means established or stability. As a verb, *itatag* means to build or the act of establishing. When used as an adjective, *matatag* or *katatagan* pertains to durability and endurance. Hence, the idea of

⁶ (1955:44-45)

⁷ (1984: 74)

⁸ (1976: 223)

⁹ (in Gripaldo 2000)

¹⁰ (2001: v)

¹¹ (Timbreza 1999: 6)

¹² (1994:1)

¹³ (Kurcz 1984:154)

strength (*tibay*) within the context of *matatag* or *katatagan* is characterized not as forceful strength or power but rather as a sense of stability, durability, and endurance.

Although some scholars interchange *katatagang-loob* with another indigenous concept, *lakas ng loob*, I argue that they have different meanings. *Lakas* literally points to strength which oftentimes connotes forceful strength, drive or power. Although the words *tibay* and *lakas* share certain commonalities, I emphasize that they should not be taken as entirely identical in meaning. For example, when a Filipino says, “*matibay ang kotse ko sa baha*”, the message being sent forth is the durability of the car when used during a flood. Hardly will one hear someone saying, “*malakas ang kotse ko sa baha*,” which as mentioned earlier connotes forceful strength and power. Hence, the *tibay* or *katatagan* (durability) of the vehicle under such a harsh circumstance (especially during the rainy seasons in the Philippines) is the focus of attention. Another example can be traced to the use of the word to describe friendship. Filipinos often say, “*matibay/matatag ang aming pagkakaibigan, ang aming samahan*” to describe a friendship that has withstood the test of time and the challenges that it has endured. If translated into English, the message asserted is that of a strong friendship or bond among friends. Given the worldview of the English language, the message is clear in referring to an enduring relationship which characterizes the strong friendship. But when backtranslated into Filipino, a literal translation of strong friendship into “*lakas ng pagkakaibigan*” falls short in fully capturing the essence of the idea being expressed. Thus, *tibay* or *katatagan* of the friendship rightfully espouses an enduring, and perhaps, a lasting friendship within the context of challenges that had been experienced to test such endurance. Furthermore, it is also understood that the friendship continues to flourish in spite of the challenges that it has faced. It can also be said that the relationship and the love between husband and wife, or simply between two lovers, is *matatag/matibay*, pointing out the same idea in the Filipino *Weltanschauung*.

In further differentiating the usage of the words *tibay/matatag/katatagan* from *lakas/malakas*, a Filipino may comment, “*ang lakas ng tama ng Red Horse!*” Literally, one is expressing that Red Horse is such a strong beer. Within this context, the message is not that of endurance or durability but rather of being overwhelmed, or in a sense, forcefully being overcome by intoxication. A Filipino may also assert, “*malakas ang tama ko kay Donita Rose*,” which on the other hand, connotes the force of attraction for the aforementioned Filipino actress.

Metalinguistic analysis of the usage of the word *katatagan* denotes the following conclusions:

1. *katatagan* is a quality possessed by an object or a value by the person said to be *matatag/matibay*. It seems to be an inherent trait or characteristic and in the case of the *katatagan* of a person, the trait is internally inherent and originative “within” such that another term, *loob*, is used. Hence, when put together the word, *katatagang-loob*, is thus, constructed;

2. as an element in the usage of the word, the occurrence of [a] certain circumstance(s) or event(s) elicit(s) the said quality of *katatagan*. Such apparently serves as an external stimulus which draws out the inherent quality of endurance and durability. In other words, some kind of challenge or test is presented to provide a venue for exercising the experience of being *matatag/matibay*;

3. the response of *katatagan* or being *matibay* does not denote force or power;

4. instead, *katatagan*, as a response, describes durability or endurance in overcoming the said challenges confronted by an object or the individual even when faced with much adversity;

5. in understanding the Filipino condition, I would want to argue that the valuing for *katatagan* is not an end-in-itself. The drive towards *katatagan* is motivated by a conscious or unconscious teleological aspiration giving meaning to one's hardships and sufferings.

The next part of the semantic analysis focuses on the Tagalog word, *loob*. According to Iletto,¹⁴ the concept of *loob* can be regarded as an inner being associated with the notion of leadership, power, nationalism, and revolution.¹⁵ For the Tagalogs, the use of the word describes a sense of relative position. Literally, *loob* pertains to the position of being inside such that Filipinos may say, “*nasa loob ng kahon*” (inside the box) or “*nasa loob ng aking bulsa*” (inside my pocket). In Iletto's definition of *loob* as inner being, one can infer the spatial dichotomy between inner being (*loob*) and outer being (*labas*), descriptive of the body. If comparisons are to be drawn between the Tagalog's definition of *loob* and the concept of *buot* for the Visayan Cebuanos and *nakem* for the Ilokans, all of the words befit the concept of consciousness and a philosophy of spirituality traditionally subscribed to by most Filipinos. As a matter-of-fact, Mercado¹⁶ asserts that the Filipino philosophy of spirituality runs parallel to the philosophy of *loob*. Although this is the case, it is equally important to mention that the words *buot* for the Visayans and *nakem* for the Ilokans do not make distinctions between *loob* and *labas*. The two words share the same concept with their Tagalog counterpart, but they also connote a deeper meaning of unity between mind and body. In the sense, such integration leads to an understanding of an embodied spirit further strengthening the thesis that Filipinos think in a holistic manner.¹⁷

Differences can be highlighted between the Filipino philosophy of mind and body with Western theoretical models that adhere to dualism. For Plato (in *Phaedrus*), the body is seen as a sort of prison of the soul. Quito¹⁸ even asserts, “Only in death when the soul separates from the body does the soul realize its plenitude and fulfillment.” Another is the dualism of Descartes in approaching the mind-body problem. The body is regarded as the *res extensa* (an extended thing) and consciousness, the soul, or the spirit as *res cogitans* (a thinking thing). Duality in Western modes of thinking is evident especially as dichotomies are set to differentiate one category from another.

I agree with Iletto's notion of *loob* as inner being, but I think otherwise, that it is an amalgamation of leadership, power, nationalism, and revolution. It is important to mention that the focus of Iletto's study were the lives of nationalists such as Macario Sakay, Andres Bonifacio, and the other *katipuneros*. Perhaps by drawing from the experiences of these historical figures, the assertion that *loob* is such may mislead one into thinking that the concept relates well and is limited to an action-hero type of personification. In my opinion, the philosophy of *loob* is reflected in the lives of every Filipino *basurero* (garbage man) or *katipunero* (revolutionary). In the final analysis, I contend that *loob* is a subpart of the unifying act of being Filipino; better yet, the purest aggregate of being human that consolidates the phenomenology of both *loob* and *labas*.

What then is *katatagang-loob*? Simply put, it is the spirit of undying resiliency reflected upon acts of self-endurance and self-durability amidst challenges and adversity. As a valuing for self-endurance and durability, one need not assert power, forceful strength, aggressiveness, nor desire

¹⁴ (1989: 25)

¹⁵ (in Mercado 1994: 24)

¹⁶ (1994: 13)

¹⁷ (Mercado 1994: 189-190; Timbreza 1999: 7)

¹⁸

for revolution. Instead, such a Filipino philosophy of resilience—*katatagang-loob*—even maintains meekness, active-passivity, and non-violence in the face of an indifferent world.

Explicating the Underlying *Volkgeist* of the Filipino People

The values mentioned are further elaborated in the succeeding proverbs and analects that form part of a tradition that seeks to continuously perpetuate this indigenous ideal—the *Volkgeist* of the Filipino people. The following are but few examples of traditional sayings reflecting the underlying virtue of *katatagang-loob*.¹⁹

Ang tao’y punong kawayan ang kahambing.

Yumuyuko at umaayon sa bugso ng hangin.

Di-sumasalungat kundi nagpupugay,

Upang di mabakli ang sariling tangkay. (Tagalog)

[A person is like a bamboo, bending and yielding to the will of the wind. It does not go against but instead salutes, in order that its branches will not become shivered.]

Di ika magsabat sa sulog ti-baad ka ianod. (Bicolano)

Huwag mong salungatin ang agos ng ilog

upang hindi ka tangayin. (Tagalog)

[Do not go against the current of the river unless you would want to be swept away.]

Pagkatapos nin bagyo, katoninungan. (Hiligayon)

[After the storm comes fair weather.]

Ang tawo nga anad sa kalisud,

Maga-ani ug kalipay sa kaulahi-an. (Cebuano)

[A person inured to suffering will reap happiness at the end.]

Pag may hirap may ginhawa. (Tagalog)

[If there is hardship there is comfort.]

Sunod-sunod nga kasakitan

Sinyales hin kaupayan. (Waray)

[A series of misfortunes signals good fortune.]

Mapait ang magtiis

Ngunit ang bunga’y matamis. (Tagalog)

(To suffer is bitter but its fruit is sweet.)

Ang di marunong magbata

Walang hihinting ginhawa. (Tagalog)

(He who does not know how to suffer will not obtain comfort.)

¹⁹ (in Mercado 1994: 110-125)

Intrinsically, the Filipino mind is metaphorical in orientation.²⁰ Symbolisms such as the bamboo, the wind, river, and a storm are utilized to reflect a naturalistic worldview. Hence, it can be asserted that the Filipino submits to the magnanimity of nature as reflected in the symbols characterized in their proverbs. Moreover, in analyzing the first three proverbs, it can be said that the metaphoric use of wind, river, and a storm underscores the spirit of harmony between man and nature. The following metaphors are nature-bound implicitly showing the perception and valuing of oneness with the enigmatic movements within the world. The Filipino principle of non-dualism is again supported.²¹

But underlying these metaphors, a greater understanding of life; better yet, a philosophy of life is revealed. Metaphorically, the wind, river, and storm connote challenges confronted by the Filipino, and in a deeper sense, these challenges also form part of the natural processes of nature. Therefore, the problems, hardships, and sufferings that one experiences are but natural features of the world and should not be frowned upon as a contradiction of “life.” Is a Filipino then an “absurd man”? Perhaps “yes,” on one hand, and “no” on another.

Albert Camus²² views the “absurd man” as defiantly happy and is in conscious revolt against an indifferent world. The Filipino is “absurd” to such an extent as Elwood mentions regarding the absurd man, “He can then ‘decide to accept such a universe and draw from it his strength, his refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation.’”²³ At this point, I want to emphasize the aspect of drawing strength through the exercise of acceptance and negate from the notion of refusing hope and viewing life as without consolation. Once more, the proverbs can address this question of whether a Filipino is absurd amidst an indifferent world.

Clearly, the proverbs advocate acceptance of nature. In fact, the proverb regarding the yielding bamboo strengthens the thesis that acceptance and the willingness to conform to the blowing wind are necessary in order that its branches will not be shivered. In the same manner, going against the strong current of the river will just lead to being cast away. The underlying theme, therefore, is the wisdom of acceptance—conforming to the will of the wind and to the will of the water.

The proverbs, undeniably, do not advocate the use of force or even the act of a “conscious revolt” or defiance towards an indifferent world. As a matter-of-fact, the world is not even perceived as indifferent, as such is but its most natural disposition. Hence, acceptance of the world bears strength for the Filipino people and in accomplishing this, the Filipinos, in my opinion, are tasked to exemplify *katatagang-loob*.

On many occasions, the Filipino is compared to a bamboo. According to Andres:²⁴

The bamboo symbolizes flexibility, endurance, and harmony with nature; it does not fight the wind but outlasts the storm...the Filipino goes along with things, bends with fate rather than stand against things. He has the qualities of flexibility and endurance.

The words flexibility, endurance, and harmony with nature resound a people’s philosophy of resiliency that has become a source of strength even when faced with the most difficult of circumstances. But is this kind of strength, a refusal to hope, a view of life as without

²⁰ (Timbreza 1999: 7)

²¹ (in Mercado 1994: 190)

²² (1955: 44)

²³ (2001: 66)

²⁴ (1989: 11-12)

consolation? The remaining proverbs articulate the meaningfulness of life as the *Volkgeist* of the Filipino.

A theme recurs in relation to the cyclic movements between storm and fair weather, suffering and happiness, misfortune and fortune, and hardship and comfort. As Quito²⁵ mentions, there is credence in the *transience* of everything, which gives Filipinos the unexpressed disposition to take on a more favorable outlook on life. The Filipino sees the world as cyclic and holistic.²⁶ The proverbs depict that neither suffering nor happiness lasts forever and this can be argued as an important consolation. Both form part of the mysteries of the cyclic continuum of the world.

With regard to suffering, the Filipino sees life not just as suffering, but rather, as a cycle of ups and down—a wheel of fate so to speak—which relates well with the Chinese worldview. For Buddhism, life is suffering (*dukkha*) which comprises the first noble truth in the *Aryasatya* and in Hinduism, Shankara espouses that the world is *maya* or an illusion.

It is also worth mentioning that the Filipinos seem to value suffering as a sort of prerequisite to the attainment of a better life. The proverbs depict the need for one to be inured to suffering in order to achieve happiness and comfort. A cyclic succession is then perceived between suffering and happiness or suffering and comfort.

Consciously or unconsciously, the Filipinos look upon suffering as a kind of purification of *loob*. It is rather contestable to assert that Filipinos deliberately bare themselves to suffering for the purpose of developing resiliency. *Katatagang-loob*, per se, is not deliberate but rather brought about by circumstance. Interestingly, Quito comments about the Filipino:

Could he not perhaps be aiming, consciously or not, at the life in the hereafter where the last will be the first, the weak will be strong, the small will be great?²⁷

Such an assertion is not far-fetched since the observation regarding the parallelisms between the philosophy of *loob* and the philosophy of spirituality have earlier been made apparent. In a country where Christian religiosity flourishes, perhaps Filipinos are equally challenged to take up their own cross and suffer like Jesus Christ. In a way, as a nation and as a Church, they have long been conditioned to the meaning of suffering and the rewards that can be received hereafter.

Another way of looking at it is to elaborate on Renato Constantino's notion of psychological control, earlier by the Spaniards and later on by the Americans, that has led to the development of a colonial consciousness.²⁸ A by-product of the development of a captive consciousness is a consciousness inured to suffering. The Filipinos habituate in suffering as a result of historical conditioning, and perhaps even, as a coping mechanism held by the collective unconscious of the people. *Katatagang-loob*, therefore, strikes deep into the consciousness and even the unconscious of a subdued people. It can be argued that *katatagang-loob* enabled the Filipinos to embrace with open arms their sufferings out of a desire for self-preservation when in the grip of their colonial oppressors. According to Andres, "Resiliency made the Filipino people such a hardy and indomitable race that they survived the soft and insidious corruption and patent inadequacy of their colonizers and neo-colonizers."²⁹

²⁵ (1984: 74)

²⁶ (Timbreza 1999: 7)

²⁷ (1988: 46)

²⁸ (Gripaldo 2000: 162)

²⁹ (1989: 12)

Is *katatagang-loob* then a drive for self-preservation? Does it mean nothing else but a response to conditioned suffering? Why prolong the suffering and not just commit suicide to end one's misery? I argue that meaning is in every way important. As Elwood mentions:

Although the world is absurd and reason is feeble, there is no need to resign ourselves to suicide or hedonism or otherworldly hopes. There may be no 'ultimate meaning,' but that does not mean that there is no meaning at all for the human person.³⁰

In this connection, I want to assert that *katatagang-loob* is motivated by a teleological aspiration, other than seeing one's suffering as an end-in-itself or as a conditioned response to insure self-preservation. Although factors such as the influence of Christian religion, the experience of a captive consciousness, and the Filipinos' philosophy of survival may have formed causes leading to *katatagang-loob*, the phenomenology of being Filipino ultimately resounds the inherent capacity to create meaning to motivate one's self in spite of strife. Each Filipino then has the capacity towards *katatagang-loob* as part of the culture's *diwa* or *Volkgeist*. As a matter-of-fact, often unexpressed, such an attitude is already lived as part of most Filipinos' everyday experiences. For example, a mother abandoned by her husband and working as an Overseas Contract Worker (OCW) to support her three children, exemplifies the value of *katatagang-loob*. Enduring the hardships of work in another country must be difficult for a mother separated from her beloved children. How about the *labandera* (a woman who washes clothes for a fee) or maid who is struggling to send her children to school and is also taking care of an alcoholic husband who spends most of his time gambling? Another example are the street vendors, who often have no land of their own, and everyday patiently try to earn a living beneath the scorching sun. How about the farmers? The poor fishermen who harvest the seas? These people live a hand-to-mouth existence which Filipinos call "isang kahig, isang tuka." Even De La Salle University students are not exempted from exercising *katatagang-loob*. The trimestral system strikes like a storm bringing along with it a hail of projects, term papers, quizzes, and examinations. Not to mention, all students carry within them their own personal problems and burdens from family, friends, and significant loved ones. Imagine the hardships that students endure for the sake of receiving a college degree that does not guarantee success or satisfaction later on in life. Beneath it all, amidst the hardships, sufferings, and tribulations, the Filipino philosophy of resiliency is always there to carry the Filipino through. As Quito avers regarding the Filipino:

Why does he smile at the height of a typhoon or flood? Why can he laugh off annoying brownouts and potholed streets? Why can he even joke of the present political order that curtails basic human freedom?...What gives Filipinos this unexpressed optimism even in the face of tragedy and misery? It is the belief that everything is transient and, in the last reckoning, things will fall into their proper places.³¹

Resiliency is the unsung note that characterizes the strength of a great people. Negative Filipino traits have always been focused on and even attributed to the country's economic regression as compared to its Asian neighbors.³² It is about time to bring out the inherent positiveness in the Filipino character. As Andres mentions, "His resiliency helps to maintain his

³⁰ (2001: 66)

³¹ (1984: 74)

³² (Quito 1988: 42; Andres 1989: 7)

good-naturedness and good sense and ability to achieve a measure of recovery and progress under the most discouraging barriers.”³³ Perhaps, the challenge now is to bring out the best and make the Filipino realize that he can make a difference.

Towards a Conceptual Framework for Understanding *Katatagang-Loob*

The Filipino philosophy of resiliency—*katatagang-loob*—correlates with other values such as *kawalang-karahasan* (non-violence), *kahinahunan* (prudence), *kakalmahan* (calmness), *determinasyon* (determination), *bahala na* attitude (fatalism) and *pagsusumikap* (hardwork) within the context of the Filipinos’ philosophy of survival and teleological aspirations. *Katatagang-loob*, per se, is an internal value similar to what Quito³⁴ calls a secondary level value. By being secondary, it can be characterized as internal and originative “within,” but it falls short in fully taking into account the phenomenology of Filipino behavior. The Filipino philosophy of resiliency, in itself, is not the conscious or unconscious prime motivator that moves the push and pull dynamics of Filipino personality. Instead, in my opinion, a deeper value resides within the Filipino that consolidates the *loob* and *labas*, which can be regarded as a core value. Two core values seem to penetrate deep into the psyche of the Filipino people: *pangangalaga sa sarili* and *kapwa*.

The Phenomenology of *Sarili* and *Kapwa*

The Filipino term *sarili* refers to the self. According to Mercado:

Sarili points not to man (*tao*) but to his being a man (*pagkatao* or personhood). The self is not separate from personhood since man is holistic as shown in emotions. When *sarili* is used for action, the meaning pertains to the person.³⁵

Hence, the word *sarili* functions like an umbrella concept that takes into consideration the totality of being, the totality of the Filipino’s personhood. As an umbrella concept, *sarili* encompasses both *loob* and *labas* in the phenomenology of being and becoming Filipino. *Pangangalaga*, on the other hand, pertains to preservation. When combined, the indigenous concept of “*pangangala sa sarili*” literally means self-preservation, but to my understanding, it connotes the deeper sense of survival. Thus, a philosophy of survival emerges as a core value of the Filipino. In critically assessing this assertion, is it not the case that the instinct for survival is held not by Filipinos alone but by other human beings or living species as well? As Andres avers, “...the Filipino is like all other men in that he partakes of the universal human nature.”³⁶ Correlatively, human nature partakes in the physical and metaphysical mysteries of the universe.

As a core value, valuing survival or *pangangalaga sa sarili* influences the secondary level value of *katatagang-loob*. Within this context, the meaning of survival changes from the Darwinian dictum of “survival of the fittest” that denotes strength, virility, and aggression to *katatagang-loob* that presents the surface level values of *kawalang-karahasan* (non-violence), *kahinahunan* (prudence), *kakalmahan* (calmness), *determinasyon* (determination), *bahala-na*

³³ (1989: 12)

³⁴ (1983: 35)

³⁵ (1994: 32)

³⁶ (1989: 4)

attitude (fatalism) and *pagsusumikap* (hardwork). In a sense, the Filipino has made a rendition of the phrase “survival of the fittest.”

The next core value is that of *kapwa* (others). The Filipino does not stop at valuing one’s self but instead also values others. According to Mercado:

...being conscious of oneself implies consciousness of others, the world, and the environment in which one lives. The *sarili* also affirms the value of the others (*kapwa*). By recognizing the others, *sarili* also shows co-responsibility. By recognizing the others, it transcends the self. Self implies the *sakop* philosophy because the Filipino is not individualistic.³⁷

It demands altruism. The human self finds fulfillment in its interrelationships with others: selfhood then implies the collective self of society.

Kapwa espouses a longing to see oneself in others. Interrelationships are valued over individualism, a fact which is apparent in Filipino culture. Moreover, the concept of *kapwa* is further strengthened if the “other” is someone loved such as a parent, relative, a nationalist’s regard for one’s countrymen, and most evident between mother and child. Hence, the emotional-psychological proximity between the self and *kapwa* fortifies the bond that exists between the two.

The meaning given for resiliency is personal such that it is a meaning-for-me (*Bedeutung-für-mich*) borne out of a lived experience (*Erfahrendesleben*). Meaning is important as it sets the direction, the teleological aspiration that a Filipino aspires to realize. There may be no universal meaning but there is always meaning sought by the human person. This sense of attribution, other than the instinct for survival, is what determines the resiliency of the Filipino. From the Darwinian notion, teleology is exercised by the species as an act of adaptation detached from deistic belief.³⁸ As a teleological aspiration by the Filipino, once again it goes beyond mere adaptation since human beings create personal meanings.

Often times, the *sarili* sees *kapwa* as enough justification for having *katatagang-loob* such as in the experience of the OCW mother working hard for her children or even a struggling vendor supporting his family. To the extreme, a nationalist fighting for a cause and enduring hardships because of love for his people and country displays the valuing of *sarili* for *kapwa* which enables him to have *katatagang-loob*. Hence, the *sarili* is not valued alone as *kapwa* gives further meaning to one’s existence.

It is, therefore, the dynamics between the two core values—*pangangalaga sa sarili* and *kapwa*, that largely determines the formation of secondary level values such as *katatagang-loob*. On the other hand, *katatagang-loob* influences the development of positive surface level values such as *kawalang-karahasan* (non-violence), *kahinahunan* (prudence), *kakalmahan* (calmness), *determinasyon* (determination), *bahala-na* attitude (fatalism) and *pagsusumikap* (hardwork). These surface values, in my opinion, are more behavioral in orientation. Non-violence, prudence, calmness, determination, fatalism, and hardwork are overt actions that a person manifests given a particular circumstance or situation. Following through Gripaldo’s “Circumstantialist ethics”:

³⁷ (1994: 34)

³⁸ (Blackburn 1996: 374)

The logic of the situation will demonstrate that the best alternative is the only alternative possible relative to that situation and therefore the other alternatives are reduced to pseudo-ones and are simply blotted out. They ultimately cannot serve as (the) alternative(s) to the better or best one.³⁹

The logic or unsoundness of a situation is not brought about by the circumstance in-itself. It is the choosing agent that determines reason and logic within the circumference of a meaning in a given circumstance. This logic, then, inherent and unobservable can only be moved by the value system held by the valuing agent choosing to commit oneself to a particular action given a particular situation. Hence, the core values actuate the secondary level values, thus, resulting in the surface values enacted upon by a Filipino in a sort of unchained series of melodic events. The surface values, as observable actions or even as the best alternative response to a given circumstance, stem from an adhered logic or worldview. The resulting task now is to go deep into the value system of the agent—breaking through the husk so to speak—and understand from within the phenomenology of being that impels surface values that depict *katatagang-loob*.

Within this framework, it is equally important to mention the dynamics of Filipino personality. Filipino philosophy is in every way a product of both culture and history. Historical considerations are important in providing a backdrop for understanding the causality of being descriptive of the Filipino people. As Gripaldo mentions:

There is Filipino philosophy in the historical sense, rooted in Filipino historical experience and articulated by its thinkers. Specifically, Filipino philosophy is rooted in the people's colonial and neo-colonial experiences.⁴⁰

The Filipinos cannot escape the haunting grip of their colonial and neo-colonial past. At the same time, it cannot also be concluded that as a people they are largely determined by it. The capacity to give meaning to lived experiences connives with both present and future. Hence, Heidegger's⁴¹ assertions in *Sein und Zeit (Being and time)* are then realized as part of the universality of human nature as it interacts with history.

The past has formed the causes providing the dynamics of “pull” into the Filipino's personality and philosophy. In the same manner, the future beholds the dynamics of a “push” that motivates the Filipino towards conceived goals or aspirations. And undeniably, the Filipinos are living in the present valuing *katatagang-loob* in response to one's predicament. In the framework below, Figure 1, I articulate the organization of the value system held by the people as specific to *katatagang-loob*.

It should also be noted that the Filipino value system is bipolar in orientation (Andres 1989: 8). For each value, a counter-value co-exists along with it. The values so far outlined have two inclinations: a positive and a negative polarity. Both depict the possibilities that the value system of the Filipino can undertake. Therefore, the values of a people are not always towards the positive nor is it negativistic in nature. Possibilities exist in a value system instead of asserting that a people are largely determined by a specific value inclination. In Figure 2, the bipolarity of the core values, secondary level value, and surface level values are further described.

Lastly, it can also be concluded that *katatagang-loob*, as a value per se, has an equally bipolar disposition. The exercise of a healthy form of *katatagang-loob* entails that the person must have

³⁹ (1977: 11-118; 1999: 20-21)

⁴⁰ (2000: 1)

⁴¹ (1927, 1962)

some kind of proactive strategy for dealing with the difficulties being experienced. The Filipino philosophy of resiliency acts as a buffer whenever a stressful situation is encountered. As a buffer, *katatagang-loob* is meant to reduce the stressful impact of a difficult event or circumstance that can damage one's mental health. Therefore, the aspect of managing one's emotions, in my opinion, is salient in the attainment and maintenance of *katatagang-loob*.

The surface level values may indicate the immediate response of an individual but such values do not necessarily point to the resolution of the said problem. As mentioned, resiliency acts as a stress buffer allowing the experiencing agent to creatively and proactively find a solution to one's predicament. Although earlier, *katatagang-loob* was described as a form of acceptance for one's predicament, it does not mean that a posture of extreme passivity towards the problem is adopted. Part of the task in seeking a creative and proactive response to the problem is by finding ways to release one's negative emotions through venues such as a support group composed of friends, family, other relatives, and through creative activities.

On the other hand, extreme passivity to the problem as though the experiencing agent is acting like a sponge absorbing negative emotions is not a healthy exercise of *katatagang-loob*. Indulging in self-pity is not a form of resiliency. A Filipino may think and feel sad about one's problems and hardships in life. But to be preoccupied by it and feel that life has no meaning is again not a manifestation of resiliency. Moreover, deriving pleasure from suffering in a sort of masochistic way is also not characteristic of resiliency. Hence, a form of active-passivity typifies *katatagang-loob* in its positive polarity and not the extremes of accepting one's predicament wherein the experiencing agent gives up and says, "bahala na!" in a rather negativistic manner. Laziness and extreme fatalism are committed given such an attitude, which is in contradiction to the positive polarity of the Filipino's philosophy of resiliency.

Phenomenology, Chinese Philosophy, and *Katatagang-Loob*

According to Quito,⁴² the Chinese mind is one of the oldest human cultures from which most Asian philosophies draw its substance. One of these Asian philosophies is Filipino philosophy which is at the crossroads between East and West. In fact, the worldviews reflected in both Filipino and Chinese philosophies are in more ways similar rather than different.⁴³ Because of this, tracing family resemblances between them is an exciting philosophical undertaking. Imperative comparisons are organized around the following themes: (a) the Chinese and Filipino way of looking at nature and life, and (b) Chinese thoughts in the context of *katatagang-loob*.

First of all, it is important to highlight the Chinese and Filipino way of understanding the phenomenology of being. Earlier, discussions revolved around the Filipino concept of *sarili* which is taken as an umbrella idea that consolidates *loob*, *labas*, and *kapwa*. Simply, it describes the plenitude of a Filipino's sense of being. The theories provided by Mencius comes close to the assertions made. Specifically, the notion of Mencius regarding mind and matter is that both share an inextricable oneness.⁴⁴ *Loob* and *labas* also pertain to the same oneness. As Quito mentions, "The human person is not just soul but soul and body and their operations... The body is part and parcel of the human person."⁴⁵ In this regard, oneness between mind and body is emphasized over bifurcation. Moreover, the principles of *chung*(conscientiousness to others) and *shu* (altruism)

⁴² (1991: 77)

⁴³ (Co 1988: 28; Mercado 1994: 193)

⁴⁴ (Quito 1991: 84)

⁴⁵ (2001: 59)

typify the same regard of *sarili* towards *kapwa*.” According to Mencius⁴⁶ in the *Hao Jan Chih Ch’I*, the practice of *chung* and *shu* entails the “extension of one’s own scope of activity to include others.”⁴⁷ Filipinos equally value others (*kapwa*) in their different undertakings. No bifurcations are set between the two. Hence, parallelisms can be drawn between the Filipino and Chinese mind pertaining to their respective views on the philosophy of person.

The next similarity depicts the Chinese and Filipino views on a metaphysical world. Both see life as cyclic in orientation.⁴⁸ The Filipino proverbs depicting *katatagang-loob* view life as a series of ups and down or flux between suffering and happiness or suffering and comfort. The Chinese also believe in such cyclic movements similar to the movements of a pendulum.⁴⁹ As Timbreza⁵⁰ avers, the Filipino people see things as cyclic and holistic instead of being linear. The progression of life follows the *yin-yang* movements of nature.⁵¹ Although the two opposing forces symbolize bipolarity, it is also understood that both strive towards harmony with one another. As Mercado mentions, “*Yin Yang* and Filipino philosophy have several things in common. Both, in broad terms, support the goal of harmony with oneself, with others, with nature, and with the other World.”⁵²

In this regard, Chuang Tzu challenges each and every one to have a deeper understanding of the mysteries of life. For both the Chinese and Filipino, life and nature are always seen as perpetually enigmatic.⁵³ The cyclic progressions of nature cannot be easily foretold or reduced into scientific reasoning. As such, when harmonizing with *yin-yang*, Chuang Tzu asks everyone to follow the path of the nature of things and in the identification of man with the universe.⁵⁴ Furthermore, in Book XIX, 1, Chuang Tzu mentions, “He who understands the conditions of life does not strive after what is of no use to life, and he who understands the conditions of Destiny does not strive after what is beyond the reach of knowledge.”⁵⁵ A deeper understanding of nature will lead to a “Happy Excursion,” which is one of the chapters in Chuang Tzu’s book that dwells on the subject matter of searching for absolute happiness.⁵⁶ Given this, Quito asserts, “Happiness comes from conformity with *tao*; sadness and frustration proceed from non-alliance with nature.”⁵⁷

Conclusion

The Filipino philosophy of resiliency—*katatagang-loob*—is exercised as an act of harmonizing with an invariable nature. The core value of survival is not intended as an aggressive assertion of virility or power over nature. Instead, *katatagang-loob* advocates active-passivity in following the path of nature—following the will of the wind, flowing with the will of the water. Simply, both Filipino and Chinese surrender themselves to a higher force in overcoming the challenges that they confront in life.⁵⁸ Lao Tzu’s principle of *wu-wei* (actionless-action) best

⁴⁶ VIIa, 1.

⁴⁷ (Fung 1966: 76)

⁴⁸ (Mercado 1994: 193)

⁴⁹ (Quito 1991: 77)

⁵⁰ (1999: 7)

⁵¹ (Fung 1966: 138)

⁵² (1994: 193)

⁵³ (Co 1988: 33)

⁵⁴ (Fung 1966: 109)

⁵⁵ (in Quito 1991: 90).

⁵⁶ (Fung 1966: 109).

⁵⁷ (1991: 89)

⁵⁸ (Co 1988: 33)

exemplifies such a posture. In a sense, the Taoists regard this as following the way of nature.⁵⁹ Similar to the bending bamboo and gliding along with the strong current of the river, such a posture conforms to nature or commits to acts that are natural. Furthermore, the wisdom of acceptance of life—a kind of acceptance that reflects hope and consolation—are also shown through acts of selfless resiliency. Hence, Filipinos who display *katatagang-loob* enact a philosophy of resiliency that transcends egoistic survival in favor of altruistic aspirations.

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⁵⁹ (Co 1988: 33; Timbreza 1988-1989: 29)

Chapter IV

Katahimikan sa Kapayapaan: A Filipino Cultural Phenomenon and Cultural Value

Celestino A. Gianan

This paper aims at looking into the phenomenological dimension of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* [“peace of mind” in “socio-political peace”] using the phenomenological reduction [epoché or bracketing] of Edmund Husserl. Though Husserl is not a Filipino thinker, the researcher believes that his thoughts on phenomenology can shed light on how Filipino men and women should understand *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a phenomenon and as a cultural value; how this understanding could manifest in Filipino thinking; how they should understand their own existence; how they should behave on the basis of the value *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*; and how this would create a constructive passage to national progress. On the other hand, the researcher in effect establishes a new paradigm, thereby replacing the old one, which says, “Where there is *katahimikan*, there is *kapayapaan*.” In replacing the old paradigm, the new paradigm takes its stance, “Where there is *kapayapaan*, there is *katahimikan*.” This is so insofar as not every *katahimikan* is indicative of *kapayapaan*. However, every *kapayapaan* is indicative of *katahimikan*. Ultimately, the researcher claims that it is via this new paradigm that a constructive passage to national progress shall be directed.

Introduction

The researcher believes that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* plays a very crucial role in constructing a passage to national progress. In view of this, the researcher looks into the phenomenological dimension of these cultural values and how these in effect pave the way to national progress. To accomplish this, the researcher employs the Husserlian phenomenological reduction as a tool in analyzing these Filipino cultural values. Given this consideration, a series of questions is dealt with the answers of which shall, in effect, provide that which brings about the true sense of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* and how it affects national progress which all Filipino men and women are craving for. It must be noted that when the researcher speaks of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as cultural phenomenon and as cultural value in this paper, he does not imply the idea that these can only be found in Philippine society. Frank Lynch, S.J. declares that “when we speak of certain values as being characteristic of Philippine society, we do not mean that these conceptions of the desirable are found only in the Philippines. On the contrary, it will be seen that almost all the values constitute elements in the value systems of other nations.”¹ In the case, therefore, of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, these values—the researcher maintains—are also found in other nations though the terms are translated and understood in their own language. Vitaliano R. Gorospe, S.J. shares his thoughts, saying:

First of all, when we speak of “traditional Filipino values” such as *bahala na, utang na loob, pakikikisama, hiya*, we do not claim that they are peculiar to the Philippines. Although these values

may manifest themselves differently in the Philippines, they are universal human values. If subsequently we seem to speak of them as if they were peculiar to Filipinos, we would be guilty of a disservice.²

The focus indeed of this paper is to do a second look at *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* considering its phenomenological dimension and, in the process, put up a new paradigm, which is essential to paving a passage constructive of national progress.

First set of questions concentrates on *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a cultural phenomenon: What is the meaning of phenomenon? What brings about a phenomenon? What makes phenomenon cultural? What therefore makes *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* a cultural phenomenon?

The second set of questions concentrates on *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as cultural value in Philippine society: What is the meaning of values? How are values brought about? How do these cultural values emerge in Philippine Society?

The third set of questions focuses on the implications of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a cultural phenomenon: What is its logical implication? What is its metaphysical implication? What is its psychological implication? What is its epistemological implication?

The fourth set of questions deals with *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a constructive passage to national progress: What sort of tragedy does our nation experience? What becomes of our nation in the midst of this national tragedy? What possible remedy can be looked into?

After having gone through all these questions, it is expected that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* will be given a “new paradigm” as a result of this phenomenological analysis. This presupposes the fact that there has been and there is an “old paradigm” which, for the researcher, has made less contribution to the passage of national progress. This is the old paradigm: “Where there is *katahimikan*, there is *kapayapaan*”. The researcher claims this is a *non sequitur*, that is, it does not follow insofar as not all *katahimikan* is *kapayapaan* for there is a sharp distinction between *katahimikan* and *kapayapaan*. *Katahimikan* is that which is being expressed; whereas, *kapayapaan* is that which expresses. If ever there is *kapayapaan*, there is *katahimikan* insofar as *katahimikan*, from the researcher’s point of view, is indeed the consequence of *kapayapaan*, that is, the latter is the by-product of what is inside [the *loob*] and the former is that which produces this by-product [the *labas*]. Thus, where there is *kapayapaan*, there is *katahimikan* and not the other way around. There is no other significant way in which *katahimikan* takes place in any society other than the emergence of *kapayapaan*. This is the new paradigm, which the researcher tries to pose in this paper.

Part One: *Katahimikan Sa Kapayapaan*, a Cultural Phenomenon

The thesis of this particular discussion is that the phenomenon of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is cultural in character. It is intrinsic and not extrinsic to the Filipino people. Thus, it belongs to their consciousness. It is through, with, and in their consciousness that the realization of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* would take place. The term “consciousness” [the Husserlian third level of consciousness] is the depth-ego or *samadhi* in Hinduism wherein the *yogi* is not only able to contemplate being as a whole but also to be one with it.³ From a Husserlian point of view, it is in the pure I or the phenomenological I where one is on the deepest region of the self. When one reaches this pure I or the phenomenological I, one becomes absolutely convinced about one’s

² (1988: 18)

³ (Quito 2001: 17)

faith.⁴ In view of this, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as belonging to the consciousness of the Filipino people takes its shape within the framework of the Filipinos' conviction vis-à-vis their faith. Meaning to say, it is this conviction from within that the realization of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* takes place. Regardless of whatever forces there may be, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* would come into being for as long as the Filipino people are convinced of their faith in these cultural values. For apart from this conviction, nothing takes place. As a phenomenon, therefore, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* takes their stronghold within the bounds of the people's consciousness.

What is the meaning of phenomenon? Emerita S. Quito postulates several meanings of the word "phenomenon."⁵ First, its original sense is "that which is manifested in itself;" second, phenomenon as manifestation under the form of resemblance with other things; third, phenomenon that announces other things which, for the moment, are not yet apparent like symptoms; fourth, Platonic phenomenon as the appearance of the visible world which is not real; fifth, phenomenon as a correlatum of consciousness; and sixth, transcendental or pure phenomenon which is the residue of the *epoché*, or that which is arrived at by phenomenological reduction.

Taken in this study are the fifth and sixth meanings of the word "phenomenon" which are basically relevant to the Husserlian phenomenological method. This is in reference too to what Emerita S. Quito claimed in her book entitled *Phenomenology: Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein*.

What brings about a phenomenon? Understood from a Husserlian perspective, that which brings about a phenomenon is the pure I or the phenomenological I or the transcendental Ego wherein a more trenchant object or phenomenon becomes its correlatum and where true apodicticity is achieved.⁶ This means that once the object becomes a "correlatum," that is, the object of consciousness, it eventually becomes a phenomenon. This means that it is the third level of consciousness that brings about the phenomenon, without which, phenomenon does not come into being. For a phenomenon to come into being, the pure I operates in such a way that the knower and the known correlate. It is this process of correlation that brings about the existence of a phenomenon. Indeed, according to Husserl, the phenomenon⁷ is not the appearing of a being, which can be reached in an absolute knowing. In view of this, therefore, what is its contrary is what is Husserlian. What is Husserlian is that which perceives phenomenon as a "correlate" of consciousness or the object of consciousness.

What makes phenomenon cultural? The context of the text "*katahimikan sa kapayapaan*" is the very culture of the people concerned. Culture, in this regard, basically means the consciousness of the people. Apart from this, culture becomes something that is foreign to the people as if it is something introduced and brought from the outside. The researcher would like to stress the fact that culture and consciousness of the people are co-existent. In fact, the consciousness of the people is so vital in understanding the very meaning of culture. In effect, the consciousness of people therefore determines the kind of culture they have. *Katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, as a Filipino cultural phenomenon, belongs to the consciousness of the Filipino people. And, therefore, it is not something imported nor is it something being imposed upon by certain forces outside. This goes without saying that the phenomenon of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is not brought about, for instance, by the presence of military forces deployed in designated places. The deployment of these external forces does not mean the creation, preservation, and sustenance of this cultural

⁴ (Quito 2001: 18)

⁵ (2001: 9)

⁶ (Quito 2001: 15)

⁷ (Ricoeur 1967: 3)

phenomenon. The deployment of these external forces is meant to protect and safeguard the people from external and foreign aggression and not primarily to bring about *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* in the lives of people. To think of external forces such as military forces as those which bring about this cultural phenomenon is an erroneous understanding.

The researcher in this regard would like to look at this cultural phenomenon as something not extrinsic but intrinsic to Filipino men and women. When the researcher claims that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* belongs to the consciousness of the Filipino people, he strongly stresses the fact that this cultural phenomenon, insofar as it is intrinsic to them, is at the same time a manifestation of what is inside of them. This manifestation, the researcher claims, is founded on the Filipinos' personal faith, which is, properly speaking, the third level of consciousness understood from a Husserlian perspective. *Katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, therefore, becomes a phenomenon inasmuch as it is a "correlatum" or the object of consciousness of the Filipino people or, in simple terms, it belongs to the consciousness of Filipino men and women.

The researcher would like to believe that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* perceived in this fashion is neither appearances to be looked into as well as to be cried about as in a slogan, nor manifestations under the form of resemblance with other things as in symbols nor symptoms like other things which for the moment are not yet apparent. It is but a "correlatum" of people's consciousness which when people look deeper into themselves, they are better able to see, judge, and act, that is, to see the significance of these cultural values, to judge their value to personal as well as societal life, and to act on the basis of the value of this cultural phenomenon. It goes without saying that the Filipino people must go back to themselves and look into themselves, for the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* dwells in their inner selves. Husserl⁸ quotes St. Augustine at the last sentence of his five Cartesian meditations: "*Noli foras ire, in te redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas*" [Do not wish to go out, go back into yourself. Truth dwells in the inner man]. Given, therefore, the phenomenal character of these cultural values, the Filipino people, instead of going out seeking for *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* vis-à-vis the deployment of external forces, must employ an inner directed activity such as introspection and must manifest the inner goodness that is in them.

There have been various attempts by the Philippine government and its agencies and institutions to create, maintain, and sustain *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* by organizing law enforcers and deploy them in designated places, but it seems these are in vain considering the present status as well as the conditions of our Philippine society. On the other hand, moves have been initiated by the Philippine Church as well as its organizations, but still the very same situations are being experienced by our Filipino people. Deployment of external forces is not the answer. It is the employment of an inner-directed activity that paves the way for the emergence as well as realization of these cultural values in *kapayapaan* in our Philippine soil. Seeing, therefore, the significance of *katahimikan* in the Filipinos' inner selves and judging its value to personal as well as social life, and acting on the basis of the value of these cultural values would make our very own Philippine society a place where the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* would set people free.

What makes *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* a cultural phenomenon? From the point of view of the researcher, a cultural phenomenon means that which belongs to the consciousness of the people. A phenomenon becomes cultural, therefore, insofar as it belongs to the consciousness of the people. Perceived otherwise makes the phenomenon senseless. *Katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, as a Filipino cultural value, is said to be intrinsic to the consciousness of the Filipino people insofar

⁸ (Quito 2001: 16)

as this is a cultural phenomenon. As a cultural phenomenon, then, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* must be looked at not from without but from within. The personal conviction of the nearness of this cultural phenomenon to the Filipinos themselves is what matters most. For, indeed, it is the inner self that is of paramount importance. Seeing this cultural value from a distance is in itself a betrayal of the capacity of the Filipino people to manifest the amount of goodness that is in them. In view of this, the researcher relates the data contained in the writing of Francisco R. Demetrio which narrates how Zeus A. Salazar explains his notion of meaningful historiography of the Filipino people:

From the way Salazar put it, it is clear that his historiography has a program and a purpose. It contains the promise of united nationality, it is to demonstrate the still unfinished becoming of the Philippine nation. It presupposes that there are such things as a shared spirit, or world of values and ideas; a common language, and a particular civilization. And if these are not in place, they need to be created.

The greatest obstacles to this project are those who have been acculturated to the West, and Salazar never tires of lashing out at the self-colonization of those who mentally dwell at the cosmopolitan side of the great cultural divide. It is the latter who stands in the way of the development of a truly national civilization that roots in the Philippine community. They keep cultivating their ties with foreign lands, and fail to develop a deep understanding of the psychology, culture and worldview in which Philippine history is grounded. Needless to say that this understanding, which is part of the common experience and the collective consciousness of the *masa*, must be brought to the surface by the unfailing efforts of the new Filipino historiographer.⁹

The above citation must be taken as a great reminder for the Filipino people of the importance of the necessity to introspect and establish ties with themselves for, as the researcher believes, the truth of the emergence and realization of any desire dwells in the inner self. Within this context, Grietje P. Kartagi makes this observation:

The first fundamental value is that of the self, manifesting in a human person. The human person has value, not because of what he is in terms of possessions, but for what he is as a creature gifted by God with intellect and will. Because he has human dignity, he possesses certain rights and duties essential to his development.

However, it must be clearly noted, the researcher claims, that this form of belief does not deprive the Filipino people of their capacity to relate to and with others, that is, with men and women in foreign lands. Otherwise, it would be a great shame on the part of the Filipino people not to look out to others. For the truth that underlies this belief of the researcher is that the more Filipinos understand themselves, the more creative, productive, and effective they become in their relationship to, with, and for others.

Thus, the cultural character of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* extends an invitation to all Filipino people to give importance to their consciousness which in effect brings about the emergence and realization of this cultural value in Philippine society. This is so insofar as this cultural character is intrinsic and not extrinsic to the Filipino people.¹⁰

⁹ (Mercado 1980: 118-119)

¹⁰ (Osi 2000: 10)

Part Two: *Katahimikan Sa Kapayapaan* as a Cultural Value in Philippine Society

After having illustrated that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is in fact a cultural phenomenon, the researcher now delves into another significant dimension, that is, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a cultural value. Thus, the thesis of this particular discussion is that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, aside from its being a cultural phenomenon as illustrated in Part One of this paper, is perceived too as a cultural value in Philippine society. If ever a cultural phenomenon exists in a given society, it should, the researcher claims, in effect necessitate the emergence of certain cultural values. This is following common sense, the pragmatic principle that if ever something comes into being, that which comes into being should in itself be and become a value to beings—otherwise its existence would be of no sense at all. In the case of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a cultural phenomenon, the researcher asserts that as a cultural phenomenon it in effect is a cultural value insofar as it is a value to the Filipinos themselves.

Jose R. Vergara, in his foreword to the book entitled *Filipino value system: A literature survey*,¹¹ states that “values while an important aspect of a culture are sensitive issues that must be approached with the modest acceptance of clear facts and the unquestionable sincerity to utilize these to attain worthwhile goals.” On the other hand, Pedro T. Orata once said, “The best inheritance for our children is not the form of property, money, or brains or even education, although these would be helpful if properly used but values or character traits. As the values are, so will the family become, and as the family is, so is the nation.”¹²

Values, then, the researcher claims, are of value insofar as they contribute to the realization of a certain goal and to the making of a deserving society.

What therefore is the meaning of values? There is a variety of meanings attached to the term “values.” Fr. Jaime Bulatao, S.J.¹³ defines values as the object of positive attitude. It is the good to which a man tends. It is the goal, the vision of which motivates him to action. It is the thing that people want. Bella R. Munsayac¹⁴ defines values as the conception distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action. Two Filipino authors, Paz Policarpio Mendez and F. Landa Jocano,¹⁵ share this definition of values as the worth of certain aspects of behavior. Another Filipino author, Rodolfo R. Varias,¹⁶ gives the meaning of values in relation to the medical profession: “Values may be of some usefulness to the psychiatrist in his desire to understand his Filipino patient.” Fr. Vitaliano R. Gorospe, S.J. offers his view that “Filipino values serve as matrix or potential for maximum Christian renewal and spiritual maturity of the Filipino people and especially of the Filipino youth.”¹⁷ Chester L. Hunt, Socorro C. Espiritu, Richard W. Coller, and Onofre D. Corpus collectively define value as “the quality of desirability or undesirability believed to inhere in an idea, object, or action.”¹⁸ Briefly, Frank Lynch used values as “standards used in the making of a decision.”¹⁹

¹¹ (FVS 1980: 1)

¹² (FVS 1980: 1)

¹³ (FVS 1980: 3)

¹⁴ (FVS 1980: 3)

¹⁵ (FVS 1980: 3)

¹⁶ (FVS 1980: 3)

¹⁷ (FVS 1980: 3)

¹⁸ (FVS 1980: 3)

¹⁹ (FVS 1980: 3)

In effect, then, there are three important concepts²⁰ to be drawn from the above definitions and these are the following:

1. That values as a conception of what is “good” or desirable can become goals.
2. That values are the wellspring of attitudes and behaviors.
3. That values can predict probable decisions and judgments.

Given the above-mentioned consideration, the researcher at this point in time would dwell now on the dynamics of value formation. This is very important insofar as value formation is a process in itself. It involves the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of the human person.

How Values Are Brought about? How This Particular Cultural Value Emerges in Philippine Society?

The researcher himself perceives the dynamics of values formation as that which entails interplay of the three basic dimensions of human life, that is, the cognitive, the affective, as well as the behavioral. Anything that dwells in the cognitive faculty of the human person becomes an idea, a product of one’s conception. In the case of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, this cultural phenomenon is a concept which dwells in the cognitive faculty. This “dwelling in the cognitive faculty” is an affirmation of the fact that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* does belong to the consciousness of the Filipino people who have been endowed with this cognitive faculty. This is so inasmuch as this cultural value is a “correlatum” of the consciousness of the Filipinos. The fact that the Filipino people have in mind this cultural phenomenon as evidenced by the overwhelming demands of peace and order in our society shows that it certainly belongs to and dwells in their consciousness. Tomas D. Andres has this to say:²¹

We, Filipinos, hold the possibility of being thoughtful and wise. The most appropriate values will only come when we use our intellect freely and reflectively to define our relationships with each other and with an ever-changing world.

The need to clarify our values is based on the belief that values are personal matters and that they cannot be of much significance unless they penetrate our lives. Our values are true values if we act upon them with pattern, consistency, and repetition because they have been freely chosen by us after consideration of the consequences of each alternative. Furthermore, a true value is prized and cherished and publicly affirmed.

Now, this goes to show that the cognitive faculty [intellect] of Filipino men and women, when used freely and reflectively, is filled in and is in touch with this object of consciousness [*correlatum*] regarded in this particular context as the phenomenon of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* and, thereby, making this as something personal. It would become very significant only insofar as it shall penetrate the lives of Filipino men and women. What is needed is for Filipinos to be more conscious of the value of their own knowledge vis-à-vis their cognitive faculty [intellect]. Somebody occupying a very important position in our government once said:

²⁰ (FVS 1980: 4)

²¹ (1989: 9)

Filipinos should be more conscious of the value of their own knowledge. We have looked to other nations for new technologies and cures, even for ordinary ailments. Indeed, many other nations have been exploiting the potentials of our resources, claiming them as their own discoveries without giving credit to us, and making tremendous profits at our expense.²²

What is being implied in the above statement is a clear reminder to Filipinos to look into their cognitive faculty to see and understand what dwells in it; the neglect of this would mean ignorance of the Filipino people. Years have passed and the experience of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* generally has been of negative output. This indicates only that something greater has to be done, that is, Filipinos must take the initiative of suspending (“bracketing,” the Husserlian phenomenological method known as epoché or reduction) those preconceived false notions of these cultural values after all the experience has not been so well, and make a first hand move of getting in touch with the deepest region of their selves (the Pure I or the Phenomenological I of Husserl) where their goodness is to be introspected. The researcher believes that this amount of goodness can be explored in the innermost part of their being via their cognitive faculty, which is the intellect where Filipinos would start saying “Now we know; now we learn; now we understand.”

Having done this, what dwells in the cognitive faculty, that is, what has been thought of regarding *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as influenced by that amount of goodness, should flow into the affective faculty where Filipinos would start saying “We like this; we love this; we treasure this; we value this.” This is where *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* becomes a value for it is in the affective faculty that liking, loving, treasuring, and valuing take place. But sad to say, it has been a common understanding that values reside in the cognitive faculty. This is a fallacy, an erroneous understanding for that matter. No wonder the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* has been suppressed and has been stagnated insofar as it has been wrongly perceived. In view of this, the researcher further proceeds by saying that what is in the affective faculty should influence behavioral manifestations thereby making people valuable. It is in these manifestations that Filipinos are able to express themselves freely, saying: “We are at peace; we are in order; we are happy, we are liberated.” It goes without saying that it is only when Filipinos would value *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* that this cultural phenomenon would take effect. The power that enables Filipinos to value *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* comes from within, not from without. It is intrinsic, not extrinsic. It is only through this so-called phenomenological process (a term coined by the researcher himself in relation to the concept of “correlatum” or object of consciousness) that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a cultural value would emerge in Philippine society.

As a Filipino cultural value, the researcher claims, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* shall reflect the Filipino identity. This identity is very crucial in the Filipino search for something higher and greater in the order of values. This means that it is only in *katahimikan*, that is, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, that Filipinos would be able to appreciate something, which is higher and greater in the order of values. On the other hand, as a Filipino cultural value, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is a widely-held belief insofar as it is a vehicle for making human affairs not only move smoothly but for enabling these human affairs to be identified with what and who a Filipino is. Tomas D. Andres shares his thoughts, saying, “Filipino cultural values are widely-held beliefs which make some activities, relationships, goals, and feelings important to Filipino people’s identity.”²³

²² (Mulder 2000: 25)

²³ (1987: 5)

Part Three: Certain Implications of *Katahimikan Sa Kapayapaan* as a Cultural Phenomenon and as a Cultural Value

After having illustrated that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is in fact a cultural phenomenon and at the same time a cultural value, the researcher considers in this paper another important dimension, that is, its implications. The thesis of this particular discussion is that as a cultural phenomenon and as a value, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* has certain implications in the way Filipinos should think (logical implications); in the way Filipinos should understand their own existence (ontological implications); in the way Filipinos should behave on the basis of this cultural value (psychological implications); and in the way Filipinos should become knowledgeable of how this value affects personal as well as societal life (epistemological implications). Though these implications are interrelated, the researcher would like to treat them one by one in this paper.

Logical Implications. The researcher would like to claim that this cultural phenomenon and cultural value manifest how Filipinos should think. Here we see that the consciousness of the Filipino people dictates how they think about *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. This shows that nobody in this world can and would dictate the Filipino people as to how they should consider *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. Otherwise, listening to the dictates of other foreign nationals regarding what *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* means in its truest sense and how it is realized would mean insulting the Filipinos' capacity to look into their inner selves where the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* resides. In other words, both the consciousness of the Filipino people and how they think are to be understood inseparably. This is so insofar as the consciousness of the Filipino people manifests how they think, and how they think is reflective of their consciousness. Filipino consciousness determines Filipino thinking. This in effect is an effective way of determining how Filipinos should think of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. Thinking of and about *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* would be tantamount to going into the Filipinos' consciousness. On the other hand, what they value is what they also think. Here we see in effect the relationship between what is in the cognitive and that which is in the affective. What is in the cognitive is an idea; what is in the affective is a value. That which belongs intrinsically to the consciousness of the Filipino people colors *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a cultural value. *Katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as a cultural value is not taught from the outside but is effected from the inside. Thus, the thought that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is in fact a cultural phenomenon and a cultural value shows the distinctness and uniqueness of Filipino thinking. Virgilio G. Enriquez observes:

Ang pagkatao ay may higit na malalim na batayan at sa pananaw ng Pilipino ang mga katangiang panloob ang higit na binibigyan ng diin at hindi ang katangiang panlabas lamang.

[Personhood has a deeper grounding, and from the Filipino perspective, the inner personal traits are emphasized more, not the outward personal traits.]²⁴

This is an affirmation of the fact that truth dwells in the inner selves. This is an indication and at the same time an assurance that the inner selves of the Filipino men and women are very crucial in determining and realizing their cravings which are beneficial to themselves and to the wider society. Where else can Filipinos find the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* except in their inner

²⁴ (Mercado 1980: 12)

selves? “Inner selves” is associated with consciousness in this regard. In a Husserlian manner of thinking, it is the Pure I or the Phenomenological I.

Ontological Implications. Aside from the idea that this cultural phenomenon and cultural value manifest Filipino thinking, this portion of the study seeks to demonstrate too the fact that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* as both cultural phenomenon and cultural value manifests the way Filipinos should understand their own existence [being—*ontos*]. Since *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is intrinsic to the consciousness of Filipino men and women, it then reflects the kind of thinking Filipinos should have in the course of time. As mentioned a while ago, the Filipino consciousness determines the Filipino thinking, the researcher on the other hand postulates that the phenomenal character of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* does color the way Filipinos should understand their own existence. It therefore has certain ontological implications. The emergence of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* in the lives of Filipino men and women tells something about the way they should understand their own existence. The researcher now postulates his idea in this fashion:

1. That Filipino existence becomes insignificant without *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*;
2. That their existence becomes significant only insofar as this cultural phenomenon affects not only their thinking but also their existence;
3. That their existence becomes sensible only insofar as this cultural value effects its valuability;
4. That their existence becomes valuable only insofar as these cultural phenomena and cultural values contribute to their own growth and development as well as to that of their society.

Horacio de la Costa, S.J. stresses the fact that:

Now the development of people can only be brought about by the people themselves. No one can do it for them; not the government; not the Church; not foreign aid. Only they can do it. But they cannot do it if their energies are sapped and their initiatives thwarted by an unjust and oppressive social order. And so it is there that development must begin: in the dismantling of institutionalized injustice; in setting people free.²⁵

From a phenomenological point of view, to exist is to develop. The consciousness of Filipino men and women should in one way or another anticipate the fact that to exist is to develop. This is what is implicated in the above citation, that is, the development of people can only be brought about by the people themselves. And only they can do it. However, the researcher claims, this can only be realized if Filipinos understand their existence in a manner that would manifest *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, which in the mind of the researcher is very crucial in bringing about the development of their society. In a much deeper manner, the researcher would like to postulate the idea that existence understood apart from *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is no existence at all. For what is existence without the phenomenon and the value of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*? It's nonsense. The Filipino's existence should be understood in a manner that would enhance development and this can only be done by going into their inner selves where the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* dwells and by virtue of which they as a people can bring about their

²⁵ (Lumbera 1977: 336)

own development. Development is enhanced only in a society where there is *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. In fact, development, according to Pope Paul VI, is the new name for peace.²⁶

The cultural phenomenon and the cultural value of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, considered as something intrinsic to the consciousness of the Filipino people, should shape the Filipino understanding of their own existence for indeed these have ontological repercussions. They tell something about how Filipinos should exist, that is, they exist in order to develop. The logic behind this is that if Filipinos exist in order to develop, then it is a must that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* should reign in Philippine society. For a chaotic society is a disturbed society and a disturbed society is one that drives away the impetus of any form of development.

Psychological Implications. If the cultural phenomenon and the cultural value of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* have logical (thinking) as well as ontological (existing) implications, it cannot be denied too that it has its psychological (behavioral) implications insofar as this cultural phenomenon and cultural value ushers the way Filipinos should behave based on the value of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. Filipino men and women, the researcher asserts, should be made aware that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is a cultural phenomenon and, as such, it belongs to their consciousness. The fact that this phenomenon belongs to their consciousness, Filipino men and women should be made to understand that whatever is in their consciousness, that is, whatever is in the innermost region of their being which is the goodness in them should be valued. Here, the researcher would like to say that it takes one's transcendentality to be able to get in touch with that, which is a value in itself. In the case of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, Filipino men and women should transcend to that region where they shall encounter the goodness (their potentialities, capabilities, and abilities) that is in them which is the domain of the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. In other words, Filipinos should suspend (Husserlian perspective) whatever preconceived ideas or judgments they may have regarding *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* and should become transcendent towards that which opens themselves to that which brings about *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, which is the domain of goodness that is in them. For it is in this domain of goodness that the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* resides, which in effect makes *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* a value. Filipinos therefore should behave on the basis of the value that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* provides if only to put up a constructive passage to national progress. Horacio de la Costa, S.J. makes a comment, saying:

It is the burning ambition of every Filipino to be himself; to be his own man; to be a person in his own right; to make up his own mind; to do his thing. He may not say so in so many words. He may not even be conscious of this drive within him. It is there. *Pagsasarili*: to own oneself.

This is a comment which invites all Filipino men and women to go deeper into themselves in the process of being with themselves; to explore what is inside (*loob*) of them regardless of biases and prejudices they acquire from outside (*labas*) of them; to discover that region of goodness which enables them to do what is valuable; and to expose through behavioral manifestations that which is of great value. In other words, to behave on the basis of the value that the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* offers.²⁷

²⁶ (Lumbera 1977: 336)

²⁷ (Lumbera 1977: 327)

Epistemological Implications. This portion of the study shows the fact that Filipino men and women should be knowledgeable of how *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* affects one's personal as well as societal life. Earlier in this paper, the researcher postulates the idea that *katahimikan* is the by-product of *kapayapaan*. This shows that *kapayapaan* as a cultural phenomenon generates *katahimikan*. Dionisio Miranda shares his thoughts:

Negatively considered, *katahimikan* is freedom from things like threat, danger, disorder [*panganib, peligro, sakit, pinsala, ligalig*]. It is freedom from war, strife, conflict. It is freedom from worry, fear, doubt, anxiety, unease [*suliranin, takot, alinlangan, pagka-bahala, alala, sindak, pangamba, pagka-ilang, di-mapakali*]. In short, it is freedom from anything that disturbs or tires, troubles, or pains [*hirap*]. On the other hand, and in a more positive key, *katahimikan* is stillness, quite, and rest [*palagayang loob, tahimikang isip, etc.*]. *Katahimikan* implies, basically, a freedom to be what one wishes or is meant to be free [hence, also *ginhawa, tuwa, ligaya, saya*].²⁸

Katahimikan, which is the by-product of *kapayapaan*, provides an atmosphere of freedom from threat, danger, and disorder. When there is a threat of oppression and exploitation caused by society's oppressive and exploitative structure, the tendency of Filipino men and women is to react and to rebel. This reaction and rebellion often result in war, strife, and conflict. This is very obvious in the Philippine scenario, most particularly, between the administration and the opposition, between the formulation as well as the implementation of the programs of the government and the ideologies of certain militant groups, the perpetuation of which decontextualizes development. And where development is decontextualized, progress becomes invisible and unobservable. Filipino men and women should know for certain and should be made knowledgeable of this if only to enhance a movement, which is directive of progress.

Another consideration is the fact that when Filipino men and women are filled with worries, anxieties, fears, and uneasiness, the phenomenon of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* becomes invisible and unobservable in their faces. Take for instance the traffic problem in our metro localities both in cities and in towns. This is just one of the many forces making Filipino men and women feel worried, anxious, and fearful as to when and how to organize things in order to get to work or to school on time and to get home in the soonest possible time as there are other things to be done at home. Napoleon G. Rama, in his article "Use hi-tech to solve traffic mess," shares with us his thoughts on this:

For years now we have been talking our heads off trying to remedy the traffic and transport problem. There have been many solutions, from purchase of more buses, and streetcars, which would also choke the streets, construction of another, a wider very expensive EDSA beyond EDSA, posting of traffic policemen, or *tanods* at every junction, or equipping traffic cops with loudspeakers to scold and shame both drivers and pedestrians into following the rules, building bridges across the Pasig river—most of these are stop-gap or wrong solutions under our circumstances or are too expensive or it takes too long to implement them. All these years none of the experts in the engineering profession have bothered to inform the public or the President about this simpler, more sensible, less painful way of ridding the country of a national disgrace that compels the wage earners and students to wait for hours and hours in the streets for transportation and all vehicle owners to waste billions of dollars in gasoline at jammed intersections.²⁹

²⁸ (1992: 146)

²⁹ (1990: 210)

The above citation clearly indicates the reality of the traffic problem in the metropolis, which in effect affects the lives of Filipino men and women. The effect is so destructive, but even at this time, no concrete solution has been taken. This in effect means that Filipinos have not realized the impact of this problem. But it is not only the traffic problem that dehumanizes the people. Drug abuse, homelessness, unemployment, and many other problems likewise dehumanize Filipinos. Given all these sorts of problems, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* can never be and is never seen in the faces of Filipino men and women.

Again, given this reality, where is that amount of goodness which dwells in the inner selves of the Filipino people and which could in a way set them free from these problems? Oftentimes, problems are caused by outside forces. The Philippines belongs to the category of the Third World countries. This presupposes that there are First World countries, which have the tendency to dominate the Third World countries, even to the point of exploiting their potentialities and their resources. These elements, which are external to the Philippines and to Filipino men and women, are so strong and tempting that Filipinos find it very difficult to explore their potentialities as a people and as a nation. For example, some Filipinos give more value to imported goods than local ones. Some even go to the extent of finding ways and means, even at the point of engaging themselves in immoral (such as prostitutions, etc.) and illegal activities (such as theft and robbery, etc.) just to be able to get hold of these things. Once this takes place, then, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* becomes invisible and unobservable. What is visible and observable is its opposite.

What the researcher conceptualizes at this point is the fact that only through, with, and in *katahimikan*, that is, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* taken as a cultural phenomenon and as a cultural value that Filipino men and women can think (logical), exist (ontological), behave (psychological), and move in progression in their attempt to reach their goal as a people and as a nation. Apart from this and outside of this context, Filipinos will always be moving in regression and failure. Its epistemological implications, too, are very important insofar as *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* belongs to the consciousness of Filipino men and women. As a cultural value, it would give them knowledge of its effects to personal as well as societal life.

Part Four: *Katahimikan Sa Kapayapaan*: A Constructive Passage to National Progress

Following the flow of discussion, a certain direction is being aimed at, that is, towards putting up a constructive passage to national progress. It is the intention of the researcher to relate this cultural phenomenon and cultural value to a very important indispensable craving of the Filipino people, that is, a craving for national progress. This is a goal. As a goal, it needs to be attained. In the process of attaining it, a constructive passage must be pursued. This constructive passage is that of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. Since it is a constructive passage, it ushers the way to the attainment of this goal, which is national progress.

By *national progress* is meant a nation whose movement is always in progression, not in regression. However, certain national realities need to be considered to give meaning to the so-called national progress. These are national tragedy, national poverty, national progress, and national recovery.

National Tragedy. By *national tragedy*, the researcher is referring to the sad experiences encountered by the Filipino people. In Philippine society, there is so much dissension between and

among peoples both in civil as well as in ecclesiastical sphere. The frequency and intensity of these dissensions make Philippine society a troubled nation.

Before, during, and after elections, for example, political factions continue to exist. There is constant war between the administration and the opposition, and this affects disastrously the entire nation. Terrorism and insurgency in the various parts of the country equally threaten the lives of Philippine and foreign nationals.

Between and among religious denominations there are quarrels and conflicts. There are ecumenical activities but there is no ecumenical unity. In this sense, ecumenism becomes a great pretense. People expect so much from the church but such expectations have been frustrated. A great number of people nowadays seem to shy away from the church and cling more to something else.

Moreover, mass media have become so sensational that they de-intellectualize people in society. They seem high in technicality but low in morality. Criminality, rather than civility, is well portrayed. Bad news is more publicized than good news. There is much entertainment in radio and television that caters to the visionary and the auditory components of people's bodies. Less attention is given to the education of people's minds and hearts.

In the field of education, there is much competition involved rather than participation for a good cause. Colleges and universities compete with each other not only in curriculum-making but also in money-making. Students seem to be more information-seekers rather than formation-designers. Teachers seem to teach more the subject matter rather than teach life using the subject matter. Schools seem to be interested more on what system to be adopted (semestral, trimestral, or quarterly) rather than on making teachers and students more systematic in life. This is the sort of tragedy our nation is faced with.

Given these realities, the Filipino people should be able to cry out: "What a national tragedy!" In this tragedy, the face of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* becomes indescribable and hard to behold.

National Poverty. Immanuel J. DePedro makes this very significant comment, saying:

We have seen and met the enemy. National poverty, brothers, is our singular enemy. Our common enemy. No other enemy is amongst us anymore, not even a foreign one.

Exactly a century ago, during the heroic times of Dr. Jose P. Rizal, Emilio Aguinaldo, and Andres Bonifacio, we had a common enemy—the hated Spanish colonizers, who exploited us for 333 years.

Today we proclaim a common enemy, National Poverty.

Brothers, let us put to rest our troubled past. Let us cast aside our divisive politics for once. Just once.

We are a people replete with revolutions, all political revolutions. Examine our history, how we glory in our pride as the First Asian Republic, the first Asian Democracy to go up in arms against foreign aggressors.

But they were all political revolutions.

Our mass poverty is ironic. We are and have become Rich Nation—Poor People. Why?

Mass poverty is in our midst, our reputation worldwide. A significant number of our people (a recent United Nations report indicated 60%) grovel below the decent meridian, living from hand to mouth. Only 10% are rich, and 30% are middle class.

We have more natural resources than Japan, yet Japan is undisputedly Asia's Number One and chief economic rival to the only global superpower, the United States of America.

We are a nation endowed with troves of nature; unrivalled bounty from our internal seas of lapu-lapu, lobsters, bangus, coral fish. The finest woods in our forest, gold in our mines, iron ore for steel, oil newly discovered in our offshore areas. And, unlike Israel, good soil for our agriculture.

And we ask like you: Who is perpetuating our shameful mass poverty? Who is deliberately keeping us poor? Who has been exploiting us? Why are rich getting richer even while the poor multiply?

Let it be understood, loud and clear, it is mass poverty that is breeding our revolts, our revolutions, our criminality, our corruption.

The time has come, finally, to extirpate the roots of our poverty. We must close ranks in the process. Let us bury past bitterness. Let us not recriminate. Let us heal wounds. Our past must become part of history, we must forgive and understand. Let us forge ahead with a New Vision.

It is our clear and fondest hope that in so blazing and reshaping our thoughts and direction, we will not be opening old wounds.

For we seek to unite, for we had been so much divided.

Thus, we appeal at the outset to the sensitive Filipino soul. Let us honestly look at ourselves, now, with courage, not to hide a scar but to discover the truth; for it is the truth that will set us free.³⁰

The above quotation indicates the reality of poverty in our nation. However, national poverty is an internal affair, which does not come from outside. If there is something from outside that causes poverty, it is because Filipinos from the inside allow it. From a phenomenological perspective, it has something to do with how Filipinos value their inner selves and integrate these inner selves with the cravings of the nation. Dr. Mina M. Ramirez recommends her thought, saying:

At the heart of each Filipino is a desire for more access to life, and more meaning to life. But, if each Filipino also realizes that this can only be attained by common actions, then the fight for more life necessitates the awareness of national goals and of a calling to contribute one's best to these goals. Paradoxically, when one gives something of his/her life for others, the benefits of these redound to one's or his/her family's growth process.³¹

National poverty is a disturbing reality. Where there is disturbance, there is no peace and order. Poverty in the Philippines is not just a poverty of a number of families. It is a national poverty brought about by a conscious negligence on the part of Filipinos to maximize their qualities and potentialities and to integrate them with national interests. In the words of Immanuel J. DePedro:

Let us scrutinize the decayed foundations of our neglect, from whence sprung this national shame of poverty. So that perchance we may find cures.

This process of analysis pains us; there is grief buried in our hearts; the passage is dangerous.

We are trying to remind ourselves, as we write these particular passages lonely upon a distant land, the sensitivity of the Filipino soul.

³⁰ (2000: 8-10)

³¹ (1980: 22)

Many of our wounds are not yet healed. We still have a madness in us, in all of us; and we shed a tear.

We have a reverence for the Filipino thought. Our approach is an appeal, not to ignite passion but to enlighten reason.³²

If we are to respond to national poverty, then Filipinos should dig deeper into the very foundation of its emergence. Napoleon G. Rama claims “that the beginning of wisdom, they say, is to know oneself. For sure, what the sages meant was knowing one’s defects first.”³³

Filipinos, therefore, should get to know themselves first, by being conscious of the realm of their consciousness and by maximizing their own potentialities and qualities. Otherwise, government and Church programs to alleviate poverty will be to no avail. Is there a way to remedy the situation?

National Progress. To remedy the situation from national tragedy to national poverty and from national poverty to national progress, a course of action must be taken. But what should this be? Napoleon G. Rama lays a phenomenological foundation of this course of action, saying:

To peer into the interior of the Filipino is to glimpse the future of the Philippines. The picture is not reassuring. But it isn’t hopeless or irreversible. When all is weighed and said, a nation’s salvation and ability to survive or makes its mark in history is determined by the quality of its people.

No coincidence, Rizal’s main formula for national redemption is educating the Filipino. Not even a revolution, he wrote, would help an uneducated Filipino populace. Our generation’s most urgent task is not just steadying the political situation and gaining economic recovery but upgrading the quality of the Filipino, through education.³⁴

On the other hand, Emeterio Barcelona, S.J. asserts his mind, saying:

The need is for a reaffirmation of our values—of the search for happiness, of the characteristic of freedom of human beings, of the need to concern ourselves with productivity, of reaffirming the transcendence of human life into a next world, of reemphasis on honesty, hard work, cooperation, self-sacrifice for the common good, or redefining the ideology or spirituality that binds us as a nation.³⁵

It takes an effort on the part of Filipino men and women to peer into their inner selves and be educated just as it takes education on the part of Filipino men and women to be able to bring about national progress. To be able to move into progression, Filipinos should reaffirm the cultural value of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* to generate productivity and efficiency. Director Galo B. Ocampo stresses a point:

³² (2000: 56)

³³ (1990: 37)

³⁴ (1990: 36-37)

³⁵ (Montes 1982: 71)

As educators, we sincerely believe that education prepares the individual not only for the specific task of work or specialization he has planned to do but also for the more important function of leading a well-rounded life in society.³⁶

Education, in this regard, leads individuals to something higher and greater in the order of values. It makes them move progressively. There is no other effective way to construct a passage to national progress except through education. Education is not just an accumulation of knowledge, but the process of forming men and women into beings whose Being is sustained by *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* and, by virtue of this Being, the nation into which they belong moves progressively. It is this phenomenological stance of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* that paves the way to national progress.

National Recovery. Where there is national progress, there is national recovery. It should not be perceived the other way around. It is only when our nation becomes progressive that it is said to recover. National recovery, therefore, is in the real sense of the word an outcome of national progress.

Recovery takes its significance when Filipinos peer into their inner selves and see the goodness in them from whence springs the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. “Peering into their inner selves” is itself suggestive of an initial movement in progression. When this takes place, it means an initial movement to recovery is also being pursued.

What is being peered into is their goodness in which resides the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. This truth gives impetus to Filipino men and women to move progressively. This truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is the very reason for one’s authentic existence. The term “reason” is used in a much pragmatic fashion. Horacio de la Costa, S.J. points a very interesting note:

It is interesting to note how much reliance the founders of our nationalist tradition placed on reason. Rizal, of course, was always appealing to reason. Mabini here insists that freedom must be reasonable, else it is not freedom. Jacinto, in a passage quoted earlier, makes true piety not only *inpakikisama*, but in “making right reason the rule of every action, work and word.” And when Bonifacio asked the self-same question that Lenin asked—“What, then, must we do?”—it was to reason that he turned for a reply. Reason tells us [he wrote] that we must not waste our time waiting in vain for promises of felicity that will never come, that will never materialize. Reason tells us that we must rely upon ourselves alone and never entrust our rights and our life to anyone else. Reason teaches us to be united in sentiment, thought, and purpose, so that we may acquire the strength necessary to crush the evil that is affecting our people.³⁷

Reason tells Filipino men and women that the truth of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* resides in their inner selves and is the very reason for their authentic existence. It is this same truth that enables Filipino men and women to move towards national progress which is indicative of national recovery. It is in *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* that Filipino men and women become more creative, productive, and efficient in making their Filipino nation great. *Katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, understood as a cultural phenomenon and a cultural value, appears to be the best remedy the Philippine nation can ever have in paving a constructive passage to national progress.

³⁶ (1963: 1)

³⁷ (Lumbera 1977: 331)

The national tragedy that our nation experiences is not the end but the beginning of a much deserving nation. The national poverty that the nation suffers is not the beginning of its decadence but should end the Filipinos' negligence. The progress of the nation should be understood within the context of national recovery for, indeed, progress is an expression of recovery.

Conclusion

Through this phenomenological analysis of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*, the researcher shows this cultural phenomenon and value would bring into the Philippine scenario a new paradigm which paves a passage constructive of national progress. Though the old paradigm serves as the basis for the emergence of a new paradigm, nevertheless, it is this new paradigm that essentially gives the impetus to the entire Philippine nation as well as to all Filipino men and women in their journey towards the attainment of national progress. This new paradigm runs in this fashion: Where there is *kapayapaan*, there is *katahimikan*. It is in *katahimikan* brought about by *kapayapaan* that Filipino men and women become more creative, productive, and efficient in their existence as well as in their operations. Phenomenologically, the more intense *kapayapaan* is in the lives of Filipino men and women, the deeper they become in their *katahimikan*. The deeper they are in their *katahimikan*, the more creative, productive, and efficient they become.

Though there are other Filipino values which contribute to national progress, the researcher is very much confident in his belief that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* plays an extremely crucial role without which all these other values would become immaterial and unfounded as to their relevance to the realization of national progress. What is so interesting in *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* is that both are thought of as intrinsic and not extrinsic to Filipino consciousness. It is in there. It is in the innermost region of Filipino existence.

As a cultural phenomenon, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* belongs to the consciousness of Filipino men and women. It is not acquired from external sources and forces. It is lived. As a cultural value, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* makes all Filipino men and women valuable. There is no other great criterion to gauge Filipino men and women as valuable people than for them to be always in *katahimikan*, that is, *katahimikan sa kapayapaan*. What could be more valuable than for all Filipino people to live these cultural values to the fullest?

The new paradigm that this paper tries to conceptualize is aimed at making the Filipino people go back into themselves and set aside the thought that they have been colonized and dominated by foreign forces. It is so disturbing to note that the thought and the feeling of being colonized and dominated do still remain in their minds. This is and shall always be an obstacle to national progress. It is the right time now for Filipinos to dwell in the truth of their existence, that is, they exist in order to develop and not to be a subject of colonization and a puppet of foreign domination. To be able to resolve this national dilemma, it is of utmost significance that this phenomenological dimension of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* be the guiding principle by which Filipino men and women live their own authentic existence. To be true to their existence means to cling to peace which Pope Paul VI calls "development." This, from the researcher's point of view, is the phenomenological implication of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* taken as a cultural phenomenon and as a cultural value.

Katahimikan sa kapayapaan, as a Filipino cultural phenomenon and as a Filipino cultural value, acquires its significance in the lives of Filipino men and women only insofar as they take courage to go back into their own consciousness where the truth that would set them free dwells. In effect, the researcher would like to quote Husserl's two supreme principles: One positive, "Back

to the things themselves” and one negative, “Absolute elimination of all presuppositions that are unapproved and unjustified.” The entire idea of the phenomenal character of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* vis-à-vis the logic of Filipino thinking, the way Filipinos should understand their own existence and the way Filipinos should behave on the basis of the value that *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* offers, is developed in this paper following the spirit of these two supreme principles espoused by Edmund Husserl in his phenomenological method.

However, the actualization of what is being conceptualized in this paper depends now solely on how Filipino men and women would come to terms with the truth of their existence. If ever Filipinos are known to be great imitators, now is the right time to shift from being great imitators to excellent innovators. To become excellent innovators, Filipino men and women should first and foremost dwell in their inner selves where they experience the fullest sense of *katahimikan sa kapayapaan* which in turn provides them the atmosphere conducive to making them more creative, more productive, more efficient, and more progressive not only in terms of human relations but also in terms of their relationship with the nation as well as with its interests and goals.

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Part II
Logical Analysis

Chapter V

Utang Na Loob: *A Philosophical Analysis*

Francis Dancel

The search for identity is a difficult and complicated one, mainly because it involves attempting to discover something that others do not possess, which one can thereby call solely his own. This is true not only for individuals but for cultures as well.

There have been earnest efforts to discover and finally flesh out Filipino cultural identity, which, quite sadly, is ambiguous at best: having been forced to endure the encroachments of at least three foreign cultures for almost four hundred years, Filipinos find themselves confused, searching and groping for something—a trait, a belief, a view—that is free from any foreign taint.

Filipinos can consider very few of what they “have” today as something that is theirs and theirs alone. Being Christian, they realize that their religion is something altogether foreign. Being a democratic country, they realize that their government and their politics is a replica of the American way. It is no better in philosophy: to this day, many still wonder if such a thing as Filipino philosophy does exist.

But light always shines through the darkness.

One of the few things that mark a Filipino is his capacity to feel gratefulness for whatever comes his way. Certainly, Filipinos face difficulties head-on and they find themselves grateful even for these, as they give thanks for having the opportunity to encounter such hardships, consoling themselves that such challenges can only mean better lives later on.

And if the Filipino’s heart is tough enough to bear such difficulties, then certainly it, too, has room enough to be appreciative of all the good that comes the Filipino’s way. Faced with a difficult life, a Filipino no doubt finds it easy to be thankful for whatever good things and pleasant tidings come his way.

One of the many ways by which a Filipino expresses this appreciation is through gratitude. Mind you, a Filipino’s gratitude is no ordinary thing. It runs deep and true, cerulean, noble, and pure. And it remains inexpressible in any language save that of the Filipino’s.

As an indebtedness which even death cannot erase, utang na loob stands out among the many virtues that define a Filipino. The article is an attempt to explore the nature of utang na loob, as well as some of its many nuances. Often placing utang na loob in the context of other Filipino values, the article is a sojourn into the whys and wherefores of utang na loob, a deep seated reverence for gratitude, a soul-debt, if you will, a trait that the Filipino can call uniquely his own.

Introduction

Much has been said and written about the Filipino, about the way he lives, and about the things he treasures. Even more has been written about the way he is and the way he relates to other people. The Filipino has been characterized as hospitable, kind, generous, forgiving, non-violent and patient. Ultimately, however, the Filipino is nothing if he is not grateful.

It is a truism to say that the Filipino culture is one that prizes the value of gratefulness. Even as a truism, it is inadequate, because it does nothing to distinguish the Filipino from other cultures that exhibit gratefulness. Certainly, the virtue of gratitude is not uniquely Filipino. The moral

quality of gratefulness is universal.¹ But while this is true, it must be stressed that Filipino gratefulness, nonetheless, is peculiarly Filipino. It is therefore not enough to say simply that Filipinos as a people place importance on the value of gratitude but that it is the way we express our gratitude which contributes, in part, to our identity as a people. The Filipino sense of gratitude is uniquely Filipino, just as we are uniquely Filipino because of our sense of gratitude.

This, therefore, is the focus of this paper: to show just how peculiar the Filipino virtue of gratitude is, unique from the everyday and conventional way we have come to understand the term “gratitude,” and ultimately something altogether different from the familiar way we have come to know gratefulness.

Perhaps, this then is the primary motivation for the manner by which the issue regarding translation is approached. Many writers have made use of various translations of Filipino gratitude. Known in the vernacular as *utang na loob*, it has been translated as gratitude, as debt of gratitude, debt of goodwill, and, quite literally, as interior debt. It goes without saying that the issue regarding translation is such: which English translation of *utang na loob* is the more appropriate one?

Many have rejected the use of the term “gratitude” as an adequate translation, for the simple reason that the term fails to convey or encompass the complexities and the nuances of the term *utang na loob*. “Gratitude” as a term seems flat and contains very little, if not none at all, of the flavor and colorful nature of *utang na loob*. In addition, as was previously mentioned, gratitude is a universal moral trait. By agreeing to translate *utang na loob* as “gratitude” we lose much of the peculiarity that lends value to *utang na loob*. *Utang na loob* as gratitude becomes something common, trivial and ordinary.

An alternative to the term “gratitude” is “debt of gratitude.” While it attempts to convey some sense of lingering indebtedness, which thus differentiates it from mere “gratitude,” it remains nonetheless inadequate and insufficient, too blunt to convey any of the complexity of *utang na loob*.

There has been an instance wherein the term *utang na loob* has been translated, it seems a little too literally, into “interior debt.” While technically correct, it serves little purpose. “Interior debt” does not make much sense. The qualification of *utang na loob* implies the existence of an opposite, “exterior debt” or *utang na labas*. But as Singson clarifies “there is not in current use in Filipino languages such an expression as *utang na labas* meaning external debt.”² Thus, *utang na loob* as interior debt possesses little cognitive meaning because its foil, *utang na labas* is not even recognized as sensible.

In a paper entitled “Debts of goodwill and interpersonal justice,” Leonardo de Castro³ has argued for the use of “debts of goodwill” as a viable translation of the term *utang na loob*, instead of “debt of gratitude” because “the former terminology focuses attention on important features of the concept that the words ‘debt of gratitude’ fail to capture.” He further argues that

“Debt of good will” is meant to be a faithful translation of the Filipino term “*utang na loob*.” The use of the words “good will” instead of the word “gratitude” reflects an important nuance. Taken literally, the latter suggests that repayment is a matter of gratitude. But more than gratitude is called for when the recipient of assistance or favor puts a premium on the good will that is being conveyed.⁴

¹ (Singson 1979)

² (1979: 135)

³ (2001)

⁴ (2001)

To date, it seems that no other English translation more closely approximates the meaning of *utang na loob* than “debt of goodwill.” However, often, as an alternative recourse, others opt to forgo translation altogether and simply retain the Filipino term, in order to convey the peculiarity of *utang na loob* and because, as George Guthrie argues, “We want to emphasize that there is a certain distortion of meaning in translation.”⁵ Thus, no matter how much “debt of goodwill” may closely approximate *utang na loob* in meaning, still something is lost, some distortion in meaning takes place. Thus, going back to the question, which translation is appropriate? It seems none. This paper opts to retain and make use of the term *utang na loob* instead of any English translation, first, to convey the peculiarity and significant difference of Filipino *utang na loob* from the virtue of gratitude found in other cultures and, second, in order to avoid any distortion in translation.

Nature of Utang Na Loob

Having finally rid ourselves of the semantic complexities of translations, we are then free to pursue our investigation of the nature of *utang na loob*. The question that needs to be asked, then: just what is *utang na loob*?

Literally, *utang* means “debt” and *loob* means “inside.” From this, one can see that literally, *utang na loob* means “inside debt” or “interior debt.” As was previously mentioned, such an explanation/translation of *utang na loob* is much too literal to be of any sense or use to our purposes.

There is a need to clarify the term *loob*. While it literally means “inside,” translating it simply as such prompts one to wonder, “loob ng ano?” or the inside of what? Now it becomes clear that *loob* as inside does not make much sense. In truth, *loob* is more properly understood if it is done so in the context of the Filipino term *kalooban*.

We will find that it is just as difficult to arrive at an exact and faithful English translation of the term *kalooban* as it was with *utang na loob*. Suffice it, then, to say that *kalooban* in a general sense refers to matters concerning the inner being, the soul if you will, of a person. However, it is not the term used to refer to the soul of a person, which Filipinos call *kaluluwa*. In addition, *kalooban* does not refer to the goodness of the inner being of a person, as there can be *mabuting* (good) *kalooban* and *masamang* (bad) *kalooban*.

Loob, therefore in the context of *kalooban* refers not to literally the inside, the guts and innards of a human being, but to the inner life and being of a person. It points to an intangible, metaphysical component of a Filipino’s being, without which one would not be human.

Given this context of *loob*, we begin to see one of the many subtle nuances of *utang na loob* that differentiates it from mere gratitude. *Utang na loob* is no ordinary debt. It is a characteristically strong sense of gratefulness taken with extreme seriousness by Filipinos. *Utang na loob* is, in many ways, a debt incurred by the inner being of a person, a soul debt, which persists and endures, even after the original debt has been paid.

This implies that Filipinos are able to distinguish between two components of a debt. The first is the physical part of the debt which comprises the favor. This can take the form of the money

⁵ (1971: 61) *Amor Propio* may be understood as insecurity, indolence, arrogance, or irritability but is more accurately described as a strong sense of individual dignity (Guthrie 1971: 61-62).

Hiya is a feeling of inferiority, embarrassment, shyness, and of alienation, which is experienced as acutely distressing (Guthrie 1971: 62).

that makes up the loan, or a borrowed car, or even a job that one “gives” to a friend. There are occasions, however, when even this “physical” portion of the debt may not be readily observable, as in the case of saving another person’s life. In any case, we refer to this, the component which comprises the favor, as the observable component of the debt.

The second, and often more important component is non-observable, that is, an “internal and externally non-observable debt in terms of the good will or benevolence out of which the favor was given or done and which accompanies the act of giving or doing.”⁶ This second component is not so much the money or car that is being lent, or even the act of saving another person’s life (as all these fall under the first component) as it is the person’s kindness or benevolence or good-naturedness or sincere willingness out of which the giving or granting of the favor arises.

Utang na loob arises not out of the first component, not because one borrowed a specific amount of money or a particular thing. In truth, often, the value of the loan or nature of the thing lent has little effect on whether or not a person incurs *utang na loob* (though it may “magnify” the “amount” of *utang na loob* that must be repaid, as we shall see later). Rather, it is the second component that “creates” *pagkakautang na loob* or indebtedness. *Utang na loob* refers to this indebtedness that arises out of this benevolent willingness of another to grant one a favor, regardless of the nature of the observable component of the favor. “What the Filipino term ‘*utang na loob*’ literally means is that the lender is giving part of himself. He conveys good will. Thus, this is what he is owed. The beneficiary of his favor incurs a debt of good will that needs to be repaid.”⁷ The acknowledgment and eager and willing reciprocity of this indebtedness is called *pagtanaw ng utang na loob*.

The willingness and even eagerness to acknowledge such internal debt of benevolence and to return it in kind by rendering a similar favor or at least through token gifts or services which function to express one’s feeling of appreciation and loyalty to the benefactor is what Filipinos term *utang na loob*.⁸

Such metaphysical underpinnings of indebtedness are surely not without its complexities, the foremost of which is repayment. Unlike an ordinary loan or mortgage which one easily repays by fulfilling the financial obligations one has incurred, *utang na loob* is essentially very difficult, if not impossible to repay, primarily because the debt is an informal and intangible one. There are no contracts, no formal agreements as to how or how much *utang na loob* is being incurred.

A debt of good will is incurred under informal circumstances. The giving of assistance or the grant of a favor takes place without a formal indication or clear understanding of how it ought to be repaid or reciprocated.⁹

This informality and ambiguity of repayment of the debt is merely the beginning. De Castro’s questions are as haunting as they are disturbing.¹⁰

⁶ (Singson 1979: 135).

⁷ (de Castro 2001).

⁸ (Singson 1979:135).

⁹ (de Castro 2001).

¹⁰ (2001)

But there are no formal indications of repayment terms. There are no clear bases for determining what is owed. So many questions need to be asked. Is there an obligation on the part of the beneficiary to repay the good will? If there is, can the obligation be quantified? Are there time limits for settling the obligation? Is there a right on the part of the person granting the favor to demand that he be given a favor in return? Can he ask for a specific favor?

In addition to the informality, *utang na loob* is incurred implicitly and is an indebtedness that is not easily and readily assumed. Filipinos find this kind of indebtedness as something rather uncomfortable. It is a humbling, and sometimes even a humiliating experience which does not sit well with the Filipino's sense of *amor propio*¹, or loosely, pride or self-esteem. Often, it is only in dire circumstances that a Filipino will entreat another for help. In general, however, it is rather uncommon for Filipinos to ask for favors, especially large ones, because it involves incurring *utang na loob*. In those occasions when *utang na loob* is reluctantly incurred, sincere efforts are made by the beneficiary to not only return the favor, but to do so as soon as possible, so as to avoid feeling *hiya*² (loosely, shame) and the loss of face. It is this feeling of *hiya* (which arises out of the beneficiary himself and not from any external source) that compels the beneficiary to repay the *utang na loob*.

There is a feeling of uneasiness about being on the indebted side. This reluctance to be or to remain the indebted party encourages one to make or at least to attempt adequate reciprocation with interest as soon as the chance is given.¹¹

When *utang na loob* is incurred, the benefactor often makes no mention of it, because to do so is indecorous and goes against the common sense of courtesy of a Filipino. The benefactor conveys good will, but must not make a big show of it. In turn, the debtor is expected to know, without being told, that he has incurred *utang na loob*.

There is, however, an added twist to all this. First of all, because *utang na loob* is an indebtedness due to the good will out of which the favor was granted, it demands that the same favor be granted out of sheer benevolence, and not because of any expectation of reward or return. It is this altruism, this benevolence, often called *kagandahang loob* (or literally, a beautiful/good inner self) that creates the situation of indebtedness.¹² However, because the favor was extended out of pure benevolence, then the benefactor must not necessarily expect compensation or reciprocation.

Actions done in anticipation of reward or personal gain are not done out of *kusang loob* [one's own inner self]. There can be no *kagandahang loob* if actions are tainted with a selfish desire. If one's beneficial actions were calculated to derive public recognition or material reward, they lose the purity that is essential to *kagandahang loob*.¹³

The implication of this is clear: nothing compels the beneficiary to recognize the *utang na loob*, since the act was done out of pure good will, which demands that no return must be expected because otherwise, there would be no good will, and hence no indebtedness. Nothing, at least, that arises from the benefactor.

¹¹ (Singson 1979: 137).

¹² (de Castro 2001)

¹³ (de Castro 2001).

Given the nature of *kagandahang loob*, it can be inferred that the benefactor does not have a right to a reciprocal treatment by the beneficiary. The reason is that *kagandahang loob* presupposes disinterest in compensation or reward for the beneficial act. By demanding compensation or reward, the benefactor would be negating one of the conditions necessary for the establishment of the debt of good will. If he were truly motivated purely by a genuine concern to address an urgent need of the beneficiary, he could not be making such demands.¹⁴

De Castro then argues that there is therefore no obligation on the part of the beneficiary to “repay” an act out of *kagandahang loob*. However, we cannot simply say that there is likewise no debt, because “The *kagandahang loob* needs to be returned. Thus it would seem that the beneficiary has an obligation to return the *kagandahang loob*.”¹⁵

The irony now is this: the beneficiary is obligated to reciprocate an act out of *kagandahang loob*, which demands that the reciprocation is done freely, willfully, without any external compulsion. In de Castro’s words:

However, this last statement introduces a conceptual puzzle. *Kagandahang loob* requires that the agent act without external compulsion and be motivated purely by a concern for the beneficiary of his action. But how can one be free from external compulsion and be motivated purely by an altruistic concern as he complies with an obligation?¹⁶

De Castro’s¹⁷ solution, to which this paper adheres, is to argue that the obligation of *utang na loob* is a self-imposed one. It is imposed by the benefactor upon himself. “He owes it to nobody but himself to reciprocate with another *kagandahang loob*. It is only he who can compel himself to generate *kagandahang loob* without violating the requirement of the absence of external compulsion.”

Now, because a self-imposed obligation exists, then repayment is necessary. But the question is, how does one repay *utang na loob*? The very nature of *utang na loob* demands its intangibility: because it does not in any way refer to the observable component but rather arises out of the non-observable component, it is therefore something that cannot be repaid by means of the fulfillment of any material obligation. It is unrepayable by any material means. This, however, is not to say that it is something that cannot be reciprocated. Often, *utang na loob* is reciprocated when a person exhibits the willingness to extend the same benevolence in turn to his benefactor. “Perhaps the only thing that can be said with certainty is that the beneficiary must be willing to repay the favor with another favor. The recipient of good will must be ready to give of himself in return when the opportunity arises.”¹⁸

We must be careful, however, not to mistake reciprocity with repayment, as, in the case of *utang na loob*. These are two very different things. While it is possible and even easy to reciprocate *utang na loob* (and in that case it may be said that a person is someone who is *marunong tumanaw ng utang na loob*, loosely, someone who knows how to return a favor), a Filipino often finds it very difficult to completely repay this kind of indebtedness, primarily because there is inextricable ambiguity that surrounds *utang na loob*, particularly regarding the amount of *utang*

¹⁴ (de Castro 2001).

¹⁵ (de Castro 2001)

¹⁶ (2001)

¹⁷ (2001)

¹⁸ (de Castro 2001).

na loob that has been incurred, precisely because *utang na loob* is not something that can be quantified due to its intangible nature.

There is a bitter irony in this: though *utang na loob* may be something that is impossible, or at best difficult, to repay, this “unrepayability” results in a Filipino feeling that he is all the more indebted, and thus strives even more to repay *utang na loob*. Indeed, the “larger” the *utang na loob*, the more difficult it is to repay, and the harder a Filipino must try to pay it back.

The question remains, though. How does one repay a debt such as *utang na loob*? At the risk of contradicting what has been said earlier, the only acceptable form of repayment is reciprocity of the good will that was extended by the benefactor, even as reciprocity does not connote repayment. I repeat the words of de Castro: “The recipient of good will must be ready to give of himself in return when the opportunity arises.” Repayment of the loan, or the swift return of a borrowed car extinguishes the observable component of the debt, but not the unobservable one. Since the unobservable component is a debt of good will, then the repayment is that of good will as well.

However, this is where the complexity of *utang na loob* lies. Reciprocity in terms of the willingness to “repay” the good will extended to a Filipino by a benefactor, though very much acceptable, often does not extinguish *utang na loob*. There is no contradiction involved here. For Filipinos, while it is possible to repay an *utang na loob* in the form of reciprocity, such a debt persists, endures, and often remains unextinguished.

This difficulty in “repaying” *utang na loob* is not at all helped by the fact that repayment is often a game of one-upmanship. Upon falling under such obligation, a Filipino will often make grandiose acts of benevolence in the hope of extinguishing an *utang na loob*. After being the recipient of such benevolence, the original benefactor is now compelled to feel indebted to the original beneficiary—it is the benefactor who now owes the beneficiary *utang na loob*. This, in turn, compels the original benefactor to repay the newly-incurred *utang na loob* with an even larger act of benevolence, which then compels the original beneficiary to feel even more indebted to the benefactor than he was before. Such a cycle of payment and repayment continues, viciously and often ad nauseam, until it comes to a point when neither party knows who owes whom how much *utang na loob*, a debt whose amount was already unquantifiable at the outset.

While there is definitely an obligation on the part of the beneficiary to repay *utang na loob*, such an obligation remains unquantifiable in terms of amount and duration. Many Filipinos nurse such an obligation over extremely long periods of time, sometimes even transcending the lifetimes of the original beneficiaries and benefactors. In such cases, *utang na loob* is passed on to the sons and daughters of both parties as some sort of legacy, to be fulfilled as faithfully as it was by their parents.

Intentional failure, unwillingness, or even the mere hesitation to repay *utang na loob* is severely looked down upon and is considered reprehensible behavior. Ungratefulness does not even begin to describe such an attitude. Filipinos consider one who refuses to reciprocate or turns his back on such a debt of good will as someone who is *ingrato* or *walang utang na loob*. Such a reproach is not to be taken lightly. To be called an *ingrato* is to call into serious question one’s sense of personal honor and dignity. “It would be difficult to find a more biting reproach or invective against a Filipino than calling him an *ingrate* or a *tao na walangutang na loob*—an ungrateful one or a man bereft of a sense of gratitude.”¹⁹

Because of this, Filipinos find themselves educated on *utang na loob* rather early in life. “Filipino parents through stern and persuasive means inculcate upon their offspring as soon as they

¹⁹ (Singson 1979: 135).

are old enough to understand that no decent person can afford to be without concern for *utang na loob*.”²⁰

There are occasions, however, when one may be unable to repay an *utang na loob*, even as one may desire to do so. In cases such as these, a person is not necessarily one who is *ingrato*, because he is still willing, though, unable, to repay the debt of goodwill. However, that person is expected to feel *hiya*, which arises out of his failure, though unintentional, to repay the *utang na loob*.

Failure to pay one’s *utang na loob* by requiting with interest brings, or at least should bring *hiya* or shame on the part of *ingrato*. Likewise, failure to render partial payments through occasional token gifts or services expressive of one’s recognition of indebtedness causes or ought to cause *hiya*.²¹

In the event that one fails to recognize or admit to this feeling of *hiya*, one is then labeled as someone who is *walang hiya* or shameless, a reproach which is almost as reprehensible as *walang utang na loob*.

It is, however, considered improper to explicitly “collect” on an *utang na loob*. Just as the beneficiary is expected to know, without being told, that he has incurred *utang na loob*, the benefactor is expected to say little, if not nothing at all, about the indebtedness. In fact, ideally, even waiting for reciprocity for a favor granted is something that the benefactor should not do since *kagandahang loob*, a vital component of the indebtedness demands that he expect nothing in return. It is, however, and strangely so, common for benefactors to attempt to leverage some sort of advantage when asking for favors by calling on past favors they have granted and for a beneficiary to repay *utang na loob*.

However, a benefactor who attempts to collect on an *utang na loob* by invoking past indebtedness is said to be *nanunumbat*, an act which is frowned upon by Filipino culture, for the reason that Filipinos do not like being reminded of their indebtedness. Likewise, a benefactor who performs benevolent acts in the hope of creating a situation of indebtedness between him and his “beneficiary,” creates what are known as “debts of ill will.”²² Strangely enough, it is for this reason that Filipinos sometimes refrain from helping others, because they are reluctant to place their benefactor in a position of indebtedness.

Other Senses of Utang Na Loob

The preceding paragraphs describe the nature of *utang na loob* in the general sense, as quite loosely, that of gratitude for a debt of good will. There are, however, three other contexts of *utang na loob*. Aside from *utang na loob* as a debt of good will, Filipinos also see *utang na loob* as a means of expressing one’s loyalty to one’s benefactors, as an entreatment or a means to make pleas, and finally as an expression of vehement disagreement or as an expletive.

Utang na loob as a Means of Expressing Loyalty to One’s Benefactors

This sense of *utang na loob*, as with the general sense of *utang na loob*, normally arises out of a benefactor doing a beneficiary a good turn out of pure good will. The emphasis in this case,

²⁰ (Singson 1979: 137).

²¹ (Singson 1979: 137).

²² (de Castro 1994).

however, is not so much the general reciprocity on the part of the beneficiary but “the special claim of the benefactors’ upon the beneficiary’s adherence, appreciation, and service in virtue of the special favor done or conferred out of pure good will.”²³ This is to say that the means of repaying the *utang na loob* in this sense is manifested as a loyalty to a benefactor which arises out of the debt of good will that has been incurred. Loyalty, therefore, in this sense is understood as “grateful loyalty.”

We must note, however, that loyalty in the Filipino context, can take on a strange twist. Often, loyalty that arises out of *utang na loob* means loyalty no matter what. This means that through thick or thin, right or wrong, someone who is bound by this particular kind of “grateful loyalty” is expected to side with his benefactor. There are extreme cases when this kind of loyalty demands that a beneficiary cover up the wrong doings of a benefactor (*pagtatakip*) if only to fulfill the obligations of *utang na loob*.

This sort of loyalty is extended to a benefactor, to whom a significant *utang na loob* is owed. Benefactors may include a landowner whose land is being farmed and tilled by peasants, a friend who helps one get a job, historical figures who played important roles in the shaping of the country’s future, or one’s parents, or even God.

In the case of the benefactor being one’s parents, *utang na loob* therefore pertains to the feeling of a deep sense of responsibility towards one’s parents as a means of expressing gratitude for one’s life and for the care and love that the parents extended to the person as a child. “Grown up children vie with each other for the privilege of taking care of their retired parents [because] they are motivated by a sense of *utang na loob*.”²⁴

Filipinos, in general, also feel a deep sense of indebtedness to the supernatural. “The religiosity of Filipinos also takes on the color of *utang na loob*, gratefulness to those supernatural beings to whom, above all, they believe they owe their life and felicity.”²⁵ We can consider the relationship between Filipino religiosity and their sense of *utang na loob* as something rather circular: Filipinos are deeply religious and have a tendency to celebrate religious occasions in a lavish fashion because of their sense of *utang na loob*. However, Filipinos feel this *utang na loob* deeply and most fervently because of their religiosity.

Utang na loob as “Please do something”

There are occasions when *utang na loob* takes on a completely different flavor from that of a debt of good will. This is because sometimes, Filipinos may make use of it to make some sort of plea or entreaty, or as a means of asking for a great favor. By invoking *utang na loob*, a Filipino places himself at the tender mercies of his would-be benefactor. In this sense, *utang na loob* is synonymous with *parang awa mo na* (or loosely, “please have mercy”). Taken literally, this sense of *utang na loob* seems to mean that one would be very grateful to another, if that other person would do as one asks. This, however, is too literal an interpretation and does not make much sense.

A much better recourse is to understand this in the context of *kagandahang loob*, or benevolence which is the true source of *utang na loob*. If *utang na loob* arises out of the benevolence out of which a favor is given, then clearly, the supplication is better understood as an appeal to a person’s sense of good will or *kagandahang loob*.

²³ (Singson 1979: 141).

²⁴ (Singson 1979: 138).

²⁵ (Singson 1979: 138).

For instance, if a Filipino is in grave danger of getting hurt or mauled by an assailant, he or she might make the plea, “*utang na loob*, huwag po ninyo akong sasaktan” which loosely means “please don’t hurt me.” (Note that the person could have said “para niyo nang awa, huwag po ninyo akong sasaktan,” and it would be the same thing). The plea for mercy is a powerful one, particularly because it appeals to a person’s intrinsic benevolence and sense of kindness. Only a truly heartless individual can afford to ignore such a plea.

Utang Na Loob as an Expletive or an Expression of Vehement Disagreement

Words, sentences and other utterances that we speak are often emotionally charged. “The language we use to express ourselves varies from the neutral to the very emotionally charged.”²⁶ To say that a word is emotionally charged, either positively or negatively, is to say that the word evokes strong feelings within us. Words such as “bribe,” “hoard,” “selfish,” and “rude” have in general negative charges, while words such as “pleasant,” “share,” “efficient,” and “kind” have, in common and ordinary usage, positive charges. It is therefore common for many public speakers to make use of rhetoric in their speeches in order to be more persuasive as they make use of emotionally charged words.

Though the word gratitude may have an emotional charge that is only slightly positive, among Filipinos, the term *utang na loob* possesses a very strong emotional charge. Whether the charge is positive or negative varies depending on the context in which it is used.

Due to this strong emotional charge, there are occasions when *utang na loob* is used as an expression to convey strong feelings, often that of vehement disagreement, about an issue or an idea. It is also sometimes used as an expletive, though generally not a vulgar one.

There are many examples, and these have been previously mentioned. Sometimes, when a Filipino wishes to convey strong disappointment at not being helped or granted a favor, he resorts to saying something of this sort: “Pagkatapos ng lahat ng ginawa ko para sa iyo, heto ang isusukli mo? Wala kang *utang na loob*!” This may be loosely translated as, “After all that I have done for you, this is what I get in return? You are ungrateful!” Filipinos in general find it a strongly charged rebuke to a refusal for a request. It is particularly potent if the one who refused owes a debt of good will. Friendships often end after an episode wherein one party makes this sort of an accusation.

In other instances, *utang na loob* can also be used to express strong feelings of disagreement with an issue or a proposed idea. Take the following, for instance.

*Utang na loob lang ano! Si Gilrhea isasabak sa Miss Universe? Ano ba kayo? BULAG? Tama na nga ang inyong pagpapantasya na si Gilrhea eh beauty queen material! Susmaryosep! Kahit balutan ng ginto at pasakayin sa 1,000 helikopter eh hinde talaga MAGANDA! HOY GISING! Basilio, Crispin, mga anak ko!*²⁷

A little more complicated to translate than the previous example, the above paragraph roughly means that the speaker disagrees with the idea that Gilrhea is beautiful enough to join the Miss Universe pageant. A little on the colorful side, with several sarcastic remarks about gold and helicopters, one cannot fail but notice the particular context of *utang na loob* in this paragraph. Hardly a remark about indebtedness, “*utang na loob lang ano!*” is used more to punctuate the

²⁶ (Seech 1993: 17)

²⁷ (www.voy.com/13953/4/3803.html)

speaker's expression of extreme disagreement with the idea of a certain Gilhrea joining a beauty pageant.

Finally, Filipinos sometimes use *utang na loob* as an expletive to convey not necessarily disagreement, but strong emotions, often to shock the listener into paying attention to what the speaker is saying. For instance the expression, "Pwede ba, tigil-tigilan mo ako? *Utang na loob!* Huwag mo akong kulitin!" A very loose translation of the above is, "Stop bothering me!" Much of the color of the above statement is lost in translation, particularly because this color is provided by the phrase *utang na loob*. Again, in this context, *utang na loob* is not a reference to any debt of goodwill. Rather, it acts as an expletive, making the statement "stop bothering me" a more forceful and emotional one.

An Evaluation of Utang Na Loob as a Cultural Value

The peculiarity of *utang na loob* brings with it many complexities. First is the difficulty in explicating and differentiating it from the ordinary sense of gratitude, which is universal. This we have already dealt with in the previous sections of this paper.

What remains to be done is to determine whether *utang na loob* is a desirable virtue or an undesirable one. This, however, is no easy task, as in the end, the answer as to whether *utang na loob* is a positive or negative cultural trait is frustratingly ambiguous. That is, in some instances, it is something altogether positive, whereas in others, it is something completely negative.

It is quite easy to understand why one can consider *utang na loob* as a positive cultural value. Ultimately, *utang na loob* is just another, though peculiar, strain of the universal virtue of gratitude. To be thankful and grateful for favors extended to us, to wish to return these favors to our benefactors, certainly, there is little that is undesirable there. That *utang na loob* is intensely felt and lived by Filipinos only goes to show that Filipinos, arguably, place more premium on gratitude and are able to express this in ways more profound and colorful than other cultures.

In addition, gratitude, in particular, *utang na loob*, among Filipinos is not an isolated virtue, one that stands apart from other cultural virtues. In truth, *utang na loob* lies at the crux of many other Filipino values. The relationship of *utang na loob* with *hiya* for instance is an intricate one, with neither virtue being completely free from complications brought about by the other. One must fulfill *utang na loob* because without it, he must bear the burden that is *hiya*.

Utang na loob is also one of the many sources of Filipino religiosity. The Filipino is bound to God, because of God's act of creation. But more than just this creation, what solidifies this bond, and therefore creates *utang na loob* is that God not only created the universe, but He sustains it and the Filipino as well. God is the Filipino's rock, his sanctuary, the one true hope that shines through the deepest darkness, and His love the one thing that sustains him. Because of this, the Filipino finds the need to return this benevolence, no matter how insufficient this reciprocal act may be. Hence, it is the Filipino's gratitude to God that compels him to not only worship and praise Him, but to celebrate His feasts with an exuberance rarely matched by any other culture.

In addition to religiosity, *utang na loob* is likewise central to how a Filipino forms his loyalties. While Filipinos will often be loyal to a friend or a family member, this sort of loyalty nonetheless pales in comparison to the kind of loyalty that arises out of *utang na loob*. A benefactor to whom a Filipino owes *utang na loob* can rest easy knowing that nothing short of something miraculous can make a Filipino turn his back on a pledge of loyalty rooted in *utang na loob*. Similarly, a parent can count on his child for support during his twilight years, as the Filipino views this as a means of repaying one's *utang na loob* to one's parents. It is the moral force

of *utang na loob* that compels this: no Filipino who has any sense of *utang na loob* would dare send his parents to a nursing home.

Utang na loob binds the Filipino to his *kapwa*, his fellowman. It forms the foundations of his loyalty, his religiosity, his fellowship with the people around him. With it, and through it, he expresses in a thoroughly unique way, his heartfelt gratitude for a deed that springs from the wellspring of goodness that Filipinos believe to be living within each and every one of us. Because of it, the Filipino preserves his identity. At no other time is a Filipino truly a Filipino as when he takes it upon himself to fulfill any and all obligations arising out of *utang na loob*.

But again, a virtue as intensely felt as *utang na loob* is not without its negative consequences, and for many reasons. True altruism is an ideal, and even among Filipinos, such an ideal is not always upheld. For *utang na loob* to be binding and true, the benefactor must extend the act of good will without any thought of reciprocation; such is the demand of acts of goodwill. If any reciprocation is expected or even demanded, then the act no longer arises out of pure good will and thus no *utang na loob* is owed.

Even as *utang na loob* demands this disinterestedness on the part of the benefactor in any sort of reciprocation, it remains uncommon, even among Filipinos, for one to act without expecting any measure of reciprocity. At its ugliest, a Filipino will attempt to explicitly collect on an *utang na loob*; he will resort to *sumbat*, to explicitly and palpably remind a creditor of the favors owed and the returns expected, in order to compel the latter's obeisance to his whims. In cases such as these, *utang na loob* is used to control, to enforce obedience and compliance, and a Filipino will more often than not obey, no matter what the cost or consequences. And because *utang na loob* truly is compelling, often a Filipino will do something against his will or, worse, something illegal or immoral, if such a request is made against the backdrop of his *pagkakautang* or indebtedness.

There are occasions when unscrupulous individuals will take advantage of a Filipino's sense of *utang na loob*. De Castro relates how a person may grant a favor to another for the specific purpose of creating a relationship of binding indebtedness. For instance, he can lend an amount of money that is nearly impossible for a housekeeper to pay not because he truly wishes to help the poor person get out of a tight situation but because he wants to make that person beholden to him. His aim is to establish a prospectively profitable indebtedness. He can use the indebtedness to extract disproportionate or inappropriate favors.

Such a scenario is not something that is unlikely. On the contrary, it is fairly common in Filipino society for housekeepers, helpers, tenants and the like, to incur not just financial obligations, but *utang na loob* as well. While the amount the housekeeper owes may be difficult to repay, the *utang na loob* eventually becomes impossible to reciprocate. This results in the indebtedness not just of the housekeeper but of his entire family as well. Thus we see, among Filipinos, cases of servants becoming indentured for life. There are even occasions when a lifetime is not enough to repay an *utang na loob* as the children of the original benefactors and creditors continue the legacy of indebtedness. The intensity of *utang na loob* gives the indebtedness enough force to survive even the death of the original contractors of the obligation.

Small wonder, then, that Filipinos are reluctant to incur *utang na loob*, simply because it is very, very difficult to dig one out of such a deep hole. This is likewise the reason why some Filipinos are more than hesitant to grant large favors, because doing so means placing the recipient of the act of goodwill in a position of indebtedness. By granting large favors, a Filipino will unwittingly dig the hole that another Filipino is unwilling to find himself stuck in.

It is difficult to say whether these negative effects and consequences of *utang na loob* outweigh its positive aspects. But certainly, all of a sudden, it makes us pause, and compels us to ask whether *utang na loob* is a positive or negative cultural value. And it is not just *utang na loob* that comes into question, because as we attempt to determine the value of *utang na loob*, we realize that we cannot avoid examining our ideas of gratitude as well. We stare through muddy waters and peer through looking glasses darkly as we ask, just what is gratitude and how much gratitude is enough? With *utang na loob*, the question becomes a complicated and altogether confusing one. As it is, very few, if any at all, answers are forthcoming.

At the least, therefore, there can be no definite answer as to whether *utang na loob* is a positive or negative value because it is at best a two-edged sword. It must suffice then to say that ambiguity surrounds *utang na loob*. It is an indebtedness that is incurred implicitly, and thus, it is sometimes unclear as to exactly which occasions give rise to it. Neither party knows exactly how much *utang na loob* is owed, nor when an *utang na loob* has been sufficiently reciprocated. And finally, as to whether it is desirable or not, that too is unclear as *utang na loob* has its benefits and disadvantages.

To others, such ambiguity, to have no idea whether a debt has been repaid, must certainly be frustrating. However, Filipinos in general feel comfortable with such ambiguity. As with most Asian cultures, Filipinos celebrate this indefiniteness; it is a grayness that is found in most of their other values, and it marks and colors their culture which responds with a resplendence the Filipino can call his own.

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Chapter VI

Contextualizing the Filipino Values of Pagkalinga, Pag-Aaruga, Pakialam, and the Feminist Ethics of Care¹

Natividad Dominique G. Manauat

In this article, the author looks carefully into the Filipino value system as it relates to caring. A critique of traditional value theory yields the conclusion that reason-based values have primacy over those that are based on emotion, such as caring. Feminist philosophy's contribution is to cast a critical eye on the way traditional Western philosophy uses standards. It is revealed that philosophy and value theory are gendered. In looking at the Filipino values of caring such as pagkalinga, pagaaruga, and pakialam, the author puts them in context via her own life experiences. She argues that caring ought to be recognized and re-valued but finds that most Filipinos have yet to take the value of pakikipagkapwa more seriously. She adds that although caring is important, it is not independent of other value systems such as justice-based ethics.

Introduction

Filipino values have been around throughout generations, as these are what the Filipino people deem as ideal and desirable. I maintain that such values are never static, they mutate and evolve and are subject to changes as human interactions shape them. These are values that individuals consider as good, important, proper, and suitable and there are as many Filipino values depending upon the many things that are valued.² However these values have been interpreted in various ways, often in terms of consequences. That is, the result of valuing and knowing which values actually do us good and which do us harm. Many find it difficult to truly appreciate the positive functions of our traditional values because we only have a vague understanding of value system itself.³ Some have even managed to trace the country's current problems to our culture's value system and pronounce it as "damaged."⁴

According to Jocano,⁵ Filipino values may be roughly translated to *kahalagahan* (valuing) and it has one important feature; as a value paradigm, it sets standards of behavior, or "*pamantayan*." This is the term that Felipe Landa Jocano prefers over *halaga* as it is the "most appropriate term for standard."⁶ He also notes that these values do set internal rules, act as directive forces, are themselves sources of meanings, and act as a system of meanings. Jocano will figure prominently in my discussion of the Filipino value system as he has made an elaborate discussion

¹ This is a revised version of the Ceniza Lecture entitled *Pag-aaruga*, delivered in March 2002 at the Tereso Lara Seminar Room, De La Salle University, Manila.

² (Timbreza 2001: 1)

³ (Jocano 2000: 2)

⁴ (Fallows: 1987) See, for example, James Fallows' article, "A damaged culture," for his assessment of these Filipino values. This sparked critics to comment that an outsider (*taga-labas*) like Fallows is not in a position to make a sound assessment of Philippine affairs. For further references, see Rolando Gripaldo's (2000) work on Filipino philosophy.

⁵ (2000: 19)

⁶ (2000: 19-20)

of the *pamantayan*'s important elements, viz., *halaga* (evaluative core), *asal* (expressive core), and *diwa* (spiritual core). This discussion is vital in understanding how closely our value system ties in with the Feminist Ethics of Care.

Some of the examples of Filipino values that we are most familiar with and which easily come to mind are *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) and *delicadeza* (propriety). We know what these mean and realize that these are valued because the Filipino is mindful about others. These Filipino values arise out of our concern for the people around us, our "*kapwa-tao*." *Kapwa* (fellow person) is a relational standard. Importance is given to smooth inter-personal relationships because although we may be dealing with "others," we recognize them as our fellow persons worthy of consideration. This relational aspect is not unlike the emphasis on the value of caring, espoused by Feminists, where the moral voice speaks a language of care that stresses relationships and responsibilities rather than personal autonomy.

Needless to say, a lot has already been written about Filipino values—these studies involve in-depth analyses of these core values and different ways of interpreting them. But I am focusing my research on values that are ever-present but seldom acknowledged, much less recognized in Filipino society. I have also narrowed the scope into a particular field that is consistent with my academic interests.⁷ And as chance would have it, recent events in my life as a Filipino woman Feminist have provided context and contributed greatly to the outcome of this research.

In this paper I will first make a survey of some Filipino values through Jocano's value system and this will lead to my quest to reinterpret these values according to my context, my lived experience. Then there is need to re-examine the role of traditional philosophy and value theory, and in the way that these values are ordered and ranked, and whether they are universal or gender-neutral. I will assert that traditional value theory is gendered male and that there is a great need to re-valuate the missing feminine/Feminist component. Some Feminist Ethical theories will be cited, along with the realization that these values have certain traits that are shared by ideals that the Filipinos hold dear. Our value system as evidenced by the many forms of caring—*pag-aaruga*, *pagtangkilik*, *paglingap*, *pagkalinga*, even *pakialam* show that it is highly relational, emotive,⁸ and very similar to the Feminist Ethics of care as espoused by Gilligan,⁹ Noddings,¹⁰ Tronto to name a few.¹¹

I am well aware that the concept of having core Filipino values is in itself problematic as it assumes a general or essentialist idea. So too with a consistent Feminist Ethics, as there are many versions, and internal disputes prevail. However, I will argue that despite these, the Filipino experience does show that the practice of caring is indeed present and highly valued. Lastly, I recommend that caring is a value that we, Filipino women and men alike, should recognize and give importance to. But while we value care and give primacy to the Filipino version of caring in *pagkalinga*, *pag-aaruga*, and *paki(alam)*, this does not mean that care alone and its many forms ought to be ranked as the only worthy principle. It should also be reviewed constantly and tempered with the ethics of justice. These two paradigms are not distinct nor are they irreconcilable.¹²

⁷ Feminist philosophy is my area of specialization. Applied Ethics is my area of interest.

⁸ Jocano asserts that movie themes and Filipino songs show how soft-hearted and sentimental Filipinos are. As *pusong-mamon*, we are easily moved to tears. Admittedly, the evolution of emotionalism is difficult to trace.

⁹ (1982)

¹⁰ (1984)

¹¹ (1993)

¹² (Stocker 1987: 62)

Filipino Value System

According to Jocano,¹³ the Filipino value system or *pamantayan* has three elements, namely *halaga*, *asal*, and *diwa*. First, the *pamantayan*'s evaluative aspect, "*halaga*"¹⁴ is what Filipinos find most worthy. It is given to observed traits that make the virtuous person, she or he who is "*uliran*." Interestingly enough, the *halaga* has not one but three dimensions: one's self-worth (*pagkatao*), one's dignified relationships with others (*pakikipagkapwa-tao*), and having compassion (*pagkamakatao*). These three are closely tied together, since one's self-worth is interdependent with showing compassion and her dignified relationships with others.

Second, the evaluative aspect is manifested in the expressive aspect of a person's behavior or "*asal*." *Asal* has three standards: *kapwa* (relational), *damdamin* (emotional), and *dangal* (moral).¹⁵ Individualism is simply not a part of the traditional Filipino culture. Jocano shows evidence to this via the three elements of the *kapwa*, which is the relational standard. *Pakikitungo* is to act humbly, to concede, and to deal with others in order to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships. *Pakikisama* values sensitivity, it is to get along, be concerned and supportive. And in terms of crisis, *pakikiramay* is to sympathize and share sufferings. All three clearly show sensitivity, empathy, and compassion to the other (*kapwa*).

This Filipino sensitivity and intuition shows the emotional standard of the *asal*. Jocano referred to it as *damdamin*. To the Filipino,

Even an unguarded/unintentional comment, stare, reprimand can cause serious, often fatal conflicts. Emotionalism is given higher premium than rationalism in handling situations or in coping with conditions. Our rationality often involves deep emotionalism particularly in interactions having to do with personal honor, dignity, and moral principles.¹⁶

The basic supportive norms of emotions are the different levels of concern we give to the "feelings of others" where their *damdamin* ought not to be hurt and conflicts are minimized.¹⁷ With *delicadeza* proper behavior and refinement are expected. *Delicadeza* is connected to *amor proprio*, which gives us self-esteem, knowing that we behave accordingly. *Awa* is mercy, sympathy, compassion for others and *hiya* comes in various forms. It is the painful feeling for wrongdoing.

As the moral standard, *dangal*, which means social honor, reputation refers to one's character, identity, pride and commitment to revered ideals. This includes knowing what is morally right, feeling what is morally good, and acting in a morally desirable way. *Dangal* is manifested in values such as respect and deference or *paggalang*,¹⁸ reciprocity or *utang na loob*, and *pagkabahala* or concern and responsibility.

¹³ (2000: 24)

¹⁴ (2000: 29)

¹⁵ (Jocano 2000: 51-83)

¹⁶ (Jocano 2000: 68)

¹⁷ These range from vagueness or uncertainty (*alapaap ng kalooban*) to hesitation or doubt (*alinlangan*). It also includes shyness or bashfulness (*pangingimi*), and in males, even *katorpehan*. *Atubili* is reluctance or unwillingness.

¹⁸ To elders, Filipinos are expected to ask permission (*mano po*) and then proceed to kiss their hand (*pagmano*) as a sign of respect.

From the expressive standard, let us proceed to Jocano's spiritual aspect, which is *diwa*. This represents the efficacy of the spirit of firmness in what one believes in. It embodies fundamental quality of ideas, sentiments and actions. Without *diwa*,¹⁹ life would be devoid of inner vitality and meaning as it is also the highest embodiment of ethical principles and moral ideals in life.

But it is impossible to speak of the Filipino concept of *diwa* without an important point of reference, which is *loob*.²⁰ This speaks of the inner core, describing our physical, mental, and emotional condition. *Loob* figures in the Filipino language and system of meanings.²¹ In order to understand Filipino behavior and value system, Jocano avers that first we need to understand the Filipino *kalooban* where reasons and feelings are merged. Unlike the Western dichotomy of thought or reason versus feelings or intuition, these two are closely intertwined within the Filipino *kalooban*.

On the other hand, *labas* refers to outer conditions, a public persona sometimes used to conceal our true intentions.²² *Pakitang tao* is camouflage, *pagbabalatkayo* is masquerade, *pabalat-bunga* is fake, *kunwari* is pretense, while *pasikat* is to show-off.²³

In summary, the Filipino value system of *pamantayan* is heavily relational. In as much as self worth or *pagkatao* is important, it finds expression in looking out for the welfare of others (*kapwa*) in emotional terms (*damdamin*) and moral terms (*dangal*). This culminates in the spiritual aspect of *diwa* as *kalooban*.

With this awareness of the Filipino value system comes a critical revisiting of philosophical concepts, particularly of the notion of reason as it relates to the concept of "good." If values are indeed ideals, or the *pamantayan*, then it makes sense to look into the discipline by which they are constantly examined.

Gendered Philosophy

Feminist Theory cuts across various disciplines, finding itself in the humanities (in philosophy and its many branches, literature), the social sciences (history, psychology, political science), even the sciences (biology). It brings in the perspective that gender matters, calling into question the previously held belief that there is an absolute and universal way of doing things. For example when Aristotle asked,²⁴ "What kind of life shall I best lead?" we were taught that virtues, when cultivated and practiced accordingly, would lead us to the good life. What is often overlooked is the fact that Aristotle's famous question never applies to women because his philosophy denies

¹⁹ The spiritual aspect of *diwa* is connected to other notions as well. But I am only concerned with the concept of *loob* as it is the relevant feature of *diwa* connected to the Feminist Ethics of Care. In his book, Jocano discusses the following: *Diwa* and *kapalaran* (destiny), *diwa* and *budhi* (conscience), *diwa* and *bisa* (strength or potency), the different interpretations of *diwa* and *bahala na*, and as an energizing force, the *diwa* and worldview.

²⁰ (Jocano 2000: 85-118)

²¹ Some of the many ways *loob* is used, for example, are *gaan ng loob* refers to light feelings, *kabutihang loob* means benevolence, *sama ng loob* means ill feelings, while *lakas ng loob* refers to will power.

²² A public mask is worn as "panlabas" versus what is inside, *sinasaloob*. Ironically while the thought/feelings dichotomy is thwarted, the public/private dichotomy remains fixed in the Filipino value system.

²³ (Jocano 2000: 97)

²⁴ (1981)

them the right to be full moral agents.²⁵ Looking closely at Aristotle's works²⁶ will show that although he is implicitly dishing out his advice to everybody, he is coming from a particular vantage point, that is, as a privileged free man living in Ancient Greece.²⁷ Hence, Feminist philosophers argue that traditional philosophy is gendered as male, embodied by the man of reason.²⁸

Western philosophy in particular is notorious for dualisms, for example, reason/emotion, thought/feeling, abstract/concrete, general/particular, absolute/relative, active/passive, good/evil, to name but a few. Ann Ferguson²⁹ notes that although reason involves the faculty of logical argument, abstraction, and universal generalization, it is not a mere unemotional center of knowledge since it also involves a love of and a desire for the Good. What is dangerous about this kind of thinking is that not only are the gray areas reduced but also when applied to real people and real life experiences, it becomes inadequate.

Human beings as gendered individuals do not escape this dualistic thinking. Men have been assigned the privileged terms of reason, thought, capable of comprehending the abstract, activity, and goodness—while women, in this mode of thinking, are relegated to what Simone de Beauvoir³⁰ calls the “Other,” that is, the undesirable category. If man is rational then she is irrational because she is not man. Perhaps the greatest irony is that whilst philosophers since Aristotle insisted on woman's irrationality and arguing in the name of philosophy, the goddess Sophia herself is a woman.³¹

The dichotomy between reason and emotion is particularly important in discussing values. Because traditional male ethicists link goodness with reason it is now imperative to look into the traditional way of doing value theory. If “reason-good” is linked with males and “emotion-bad” with females then the latter pairing becomes suspect. This means that there is simply one universal standard of goodness. But this so-called universal is not neutral, nor value-free. It is gendered. Nel Noddings³² argues that to construct an ethic free of gendered views may be impossible as we live in gendered society. Our experiences as women are different from experiences of men, hence affecting our value systems.

Feminism, Ethics, and Values

Traditional Western moral theories are deficient to the degree that they lack, ignore, trivialize or denigrate traits and attributes that are culturally associated with women. Joan Tronto³³ notes that what men in general value most differ from women. The traditional view is that men's concerns are the more important things such as money, career, advancement and ideas. Women's preoccupations are under-valued and deemed as less important, such as families, neighbors, friends, and caring.³⁴

²⁵ (Pearsall 1999: 314)

²⁶ For further study of Aristotle's works, see Cynthia Freeland's (1998) *Feminist interpretations of Aristotle*.

²⁷ (Noddings 1990)

²⁸ (Lloyd 1984; Grimshaw 1986).

²⁹ (1999: 61)

³⁰ (1952)

³¹ Philosophy in Greek literally means love of wisdom. Sophia is taken after the Greek goddess of wisdom.

³² (1990 :390)

³³ (1989: 394)

³⁴ (Tronto 1989: 394-395)

These so-called important things to be achieved require a certain set of traits. If a man values money and advancement, it follows that he needs to cultivate a set of principles and strategies to achieve that goal. He needs to be independent, competitive but to be fair to others; he also has to be just. Justice is indeed the “good” of traditional morality. Carol Gilligan³⁵ presents her work as a response to Lawrence Kohlberg’s Six-stage process of moral development, and she concedes that although this scale appeals to many people, it is by no means applicable to all.³⁶ Kohlberg’s findings reveal that women are assigned a lower moral stage. She conducted her own research and found that the moral development of women is not deficient in relation to men’s but that it follows a different logic, truly a “different voice.” Gilligan argues that Kohlberg’s method is male biased as his ears are “attuned to male and not female moral voices.” This moral voice speaks a language of care stressing relationships and responsibilities, rather than the language of justice³⁷ that emphasizes rights and rules.³⁸

According to Gilligan, there are at least two moral orientations that in their respective truths cannot be reduced to one another and neither is one the higher good. The ideal is to integrate both the ethics of justice and the ethics of care.

Interpreting Gilligan’s work, Marilyn Friedman³⁹ notes that women, more so than men, find it difficult to respond fully in hypothetical dilemmas. If more information is provided then the woman grasps the situation and is in a better position to respond. This is where contextualizing or providing context is crucial as a concern for the contextual detail moves a moral reasoner from principled moral reasoning in the direction of contextual relativism and thus become reluctant to judge others. In Gilligan’s study, the women find that moral problems do not result from a conflict of rights to be adjudicated by ranking values (women and moral theory) but rather “moral problems are imbedded in a contextual frame that eludes abstract, deductive reasoning.” These women employ strategies that aim at maintaining personal ties whenever possible without sacrificing the integrity of the self.

The Feminist debate about an ethics of care has become so extensive that Andrea Maihofer⁴⁰ claims it is now difficult to provide an overview of it. What Carol Gilligan started in 1982 has ignited a fierce discussion of its empirical correctness and the validity of its generalizations.

Maternal thinkers like Sara Ruddick⁴¹ affirm that ethics and value systems should be built on a model that fits life as most people live in it on an everyday basis and not on a contract basis, in a way that two business executives would conduct their financial affairs. Nel Noddings⁴² takes ethics as being about particular relationships between two persons, the “one-caring” and the “cared-for”—rooted in women’s experiences in caring for loved ones (children) and this has nothing to do with abstract principles or religion. She argues that the mother’s experience of caring and everyone’s remembrance of being cared for constitute the basis of ethics.

Joan Tronto, like Ruddick, acknowledges that forms of insight, knowledge, and values develop in our everyday lives, and in concrete social settings but, unlike Ruddick, she bases her

³⁵ (1982)

³⁶ (Tong 1998)

³⁷ Where a set of pre-ordained principles already exist and they ought to be “applied” to any and all concrete situations.

³⁸ (Gilligan 1982)

³⁹ (1987: 193, 203)

⁴⁰ (1999: 393)

⁴¹ (1989)

⁴² (1990)

thought on a very broad concept of caring for others.⁴³ She identifies two types of caring, “caring about” and “caring for,” where the distinction is based on the object of caring. The boundaries aren’t fixed though she notes that caring about refers to less concrete objects and is characterized by a more general form of commitment.⁴⁴ “Caring for” implies a more specific, particular object that is the focus of caring. It also involves responding to the particular, concrete, spiritual, intellectual, emotional needs of others. She also argues that “traditional gender roles in our society imply that men care about but women care for.”⁴⁵

In developing the normative implications of the praxis of care for others, Tronto came up with the four phases of caring—caring about, noticing the need to care in the first place; taking care of, assuming responsibility for care; care-giving, the actual work of care that needs to be done; and, care-receiving, the response of that which is cared for to the care. Hence, the success of caring for others depends upon the perception of the needs of another, as well as the readiness to take responsibility for those needs. Further, she extrapolates that this praxis of care for others has “four ethical elements of care: attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness.”⁴⁶ Although the ethics of care is an independent normative conception, Tronto, like Gilligan, emphasizes the need to integrate it with the ethics of Justice.

The Experience of Caring

Recent events in my life prompted me to reflect on my experiences of caring for and caring about, *pakikisama*, *pakikipag-kapwa*, *pakikiramay*. I have realized that indeed the Filipino value system has many similarities to the Feminist Ethics of Care. As both Filipino and Feminist woman I find that I am in a unique position as I discover just how deeply I am influenced by both values. Caring is inescapable. Before I did this research I felt burdened by relationships and responsibilities. Too much caring (about or for) was taxing. My initial experience tells me that even our society does not recognize the importance of caring. Those who care about and for others were faced with that all-important question, what about me?

Caring in the broad sense carries a variety of meanings. To care is to feel concern (be bothered, worry, love, think about), to show concern (hug, caress, pay a visit, spend time with) and understand what the other is going through (empathize, sympathize).

Ultimately, it is the context of caring that will further illustrate why it is a value. For Filipinos, caring may be synonymous with any (or may be all) of the following: *pag-aaruga*, care for especially the young or the sick, may be the value of what Ruddick calls maternal thinking; *pagsasaalang-alang*, to consider, or thinking about the welfare of another; *pagtangkilik*, to care about the comforts of another, being hospitable; *pakialam*, while sometimes taken to mean negatively (as interference) “may *pakialam*” is also a caring by means of staying informed and having a stake in the matter; *pagkalinga* is benevolence, compassionate caring.

Feminist Ethics maintain that the particular, concrete, everyday life experiences matter, because unlike the traditional model, this is rooted on our reality. For many Feminists, we too should be interested in the subject of the good but the road to happiness that has been paved by traditional ethicists may be closed because of fundamental differences. These principles have been based primarily on men’s lived experiences. As privileged males who had access to resources, they

⁴³ (Pearsall 1999: 315)

⁴⁴ (Tronto 1993)

⁴⁵ (Tronto 1989: 400)

⁴⁶ (Tronto 1993: 127)

did not have to worry about sexual harassment, unwanted pregnancies, dealing with small children. The sexual division of labor further cements the wall that separates the realm of the public and the private; indeed, Tronto⁴⁷ notes that while all persons do care, men merely care about, while women care for.

Although I agree with Tronto on this score, I am also aware that she is setting up another dualism. In the past months I have experienced caring about and caring for different things, creatures, people. I care about issues like social justice, gender equality and animal rights. These are issues and causes that I am passionate about. I also feel a sense of duty towards caring for others and see to it that these goals may be realized.

But because of certain constraints I cannot fully get involved with these causes. My time is divided between what the establishment deems as “important” (that is, my career) and caring for others who depend on me and I feel responsible for. Although I am single, I am head of the family. As the eldest child and bread-winner I am caring for my family, extending financial support to my brothers who are finishing their college studies, providing emotional and moral support to my mother who is constantly worried about stretching the family budget, looking after my grandmother, who at 89 years old is senile and incontinent, providing care to pets who demand affection, showing concern and lending an ear to troubled friends and students.

Indeed my *kapwa*, important humans and creatures around me, matter a lot. And I find that caring for others in its various guises, from *pagsaalangalang* or caring about the welfare of my students and friends who need personal and academic advice, and *pakialam* or bothering to be informed about what is happening with my loved ones and their personal affairs, to *pagkalinga* and *pag-aaruga*, or caring for helpless and homeless animals, and patiently looking after my senile grandmother.

Caring fits well with the relational Filipino value system of *pakikipagkapwa tao* even as it develops in many levels. It is easy to see how Filipinos care for family members (*hindi iba sa atin*), so too with caring for members of the community—our neighbors and friends, my students (*taga-atin*)—and caring for others as evidenced by the famous Filipino hospitality. The Filipino concept of the self is not autonomous in the way that the West, particularly American society values personal liberties. Along with caring is *paki (alam)* or asking and knowing about what is happening with others as a show of concern. To say “*may pakialam*” means to be a stakeholder. But *paki* also carries with it another meaning that is taken negatively—the *usyoso* mentality of the Filipino. Westerners in particular view this as interference. At the risk of sounding nosy, Filipinos asking personal questions like where have you been or where are you going (*saan ka galing, saan ka papunta*) is borne out of a sincere desire to know because they are concerned. A quick retort to such questions may be “*ano ba ’ng paki mo?*”⁴⁸ The Filipino self, as in Gilligan’s Feminist Ethics, is a self-in-relation as we are not individualistic.

But unlike advocates of Feminist Ethics who make no bones about caring as a feminine trait, the Filipino value system appears to be gender-neutral. All forms of caring, such as *pagkalinga*, *pagsasaalang-alang*, *paglingap* may be attributed to Filipino males and females. After all, *pakikipag-kapwa tao* does not denote a generic man, for *tao* means everybody.⁴⁹

Conclusion

⁴⁷ (1993: 394)

⁴⁸ Loosely translated, this means “What’s it to you?” or “What do you care?”

⁴⁹ However, note that caring is to be valued by all, and ought to be exhibited by women and men alike.

The Filipino system of values or *pamantayan* is very similar to the Feminist Ethics of care in the sense that both are relational, both value emotional sensitivity, prize smooth interpersonal relationships, and avoid hurting others. While Filipinos use the concept of *loob* to be inward looking,⁵⁰ Feminists draw upon their experience as caregivers, as mothers and even as recipients of care. We see this in the many types of caring such as *pakialam*, *pagkalinga*, *pagaaruga*, *pangangalaga*, *pagtangkilik*, and the like.

But each system is flawed in the sense that Care Ethics claims to speak for all women while Filipino value system claims to speak for all Filipinos. Although we recognize the importance of the perspectives of gender (Feminist) and ethnicity (Filipino), there is trouble that further differences might be obscured within these categories. This type of essentialism has its pitfalls, for while we are critical of male Western/first world values, we may be guilty of erecting our own and imposing it on others. Also we must resist the allure of romanticizing the role of the caregiver because it is, as I have experienced it, burdensome. Easily the self may be obliterated in our preoccupation with caring for others.

In our country today, a mass-exodus of nurses, midwives, teachers (care-givers all) who are also mothers and primary caregivers to their immediate family members are contributing to the brain drain.⁵¹ And while they are looking after other people's children, what is happening to their own families back home? Are the fathers doing a good job of caring or mothering? It becomes easy to again make generalizations about the Filipino psyche and gloss over important differences like the categories of class (those who can afford to pay for nannies and midwives) and gender (it is still the women who do a lot of actual caring-for). Filipino women (especially the poor) are overburdened. Feminists also caution women in contributing to their own exploitation.⁵²

Putting the value of care in the Filipino context means that there is a need to be critical, and acknowledge the fact that despite this Filipino value system that is relational (that is, of *pakikipagkapwa*) there is evidence everywhere that caring is nonexistent: in the streets where male drivers are reckless (way beyond caring), a blatant disregard for traffic rules, poor work ethic in government offices ("walang paki sa dapat na pinagsisilbihan"), we cannot manage even our garbage situation so this results to flooding. Too, caring is often misplaced as *pakikialam*.

The concept of *loob* may be positive because we are inward looking but we need to expand the scope of the inner circle (the private) and encompass others. We should also include caring for other people (we are racists, we love foreigners but discriminate against our own race), creatures (we do not care as much about Philippine flora and fauna, we abuse our resources), and the environment. We should also start caring about issues, be better informed and lose our apathy so we will not keep electing lousy leaders. We have *pakialam* over showbiz happenings, and street accidents but seldom when it matters most. It is now more than ever that we have to be concerned (or to make *pakialam*). But there is also a need to temper caring with the spirit of justice.

Although scholars have done studies on values the aspect of caring has been overlooked. Caring has many forms and this is the most interesting part; it is expressed in so many ways. It is also interesting to ask why despite our being caring/*pakikipag-kapwa tao*, we are not moving on? Caring is indeed undervalued and it has to be recognized. We need to figure out how to integrate it with the ethics of justice and make it work to our advantage. Yes, we care, *may pagmamalasakit*,

⁵⁰ (Jocano 2000: 38)

⁵¹ In this case, I feel that perhaps "heart drain" is more appropriate as care-giving is associated with emotion, not reason. Hence the body organ likely to be related is the heart.

⁵² (Tronto, 1987)

but it is simply not enough. There is a need to take caring more seriously. To care about the self and the other go hand in hand.

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Chapter VII

The Filipino Value of Nonviolence

Florentino T. Timbreza

Explored in this study is the Filipino notion of violence vis-à-vis nonviolence. Reflection is centered not only on the people's indigenous metaphors of the bread and the stone, water and fire, but also on the parables of the rose plant and of the bamboo and the vine. Cited as the unfolding of the Filipino value of nonviolence was the four-day February revolution of 1986, which is now historically known as People Power EDSA I.

Introduction

Whenever we speak of Filipino values, we refer to what the people desire, want to have, to own or possess, to do, keep, attain, or to become. Filipino values are the objects of the people's interest, desire, preference, and aspiration. They are the things Filipinos consider good, important, proper, suitable, worthy, right, acceptable, and desirable in life. In other words, whatever they actually like, prize, esteem, approve of, wish, or enjoy constitute the people's values. And there are as many Filipino values as there are so many things valued.

A Filipino value may either be a thing, an idea, a person, a goal, a principle or rule, standard, convention, or a vision. In this regard, Filipino values may take the form of an ideal, a philosophy of life (e.g., philosophy of nonviolence), personal honor, human relations, or a precept by which people love, act, think, reason, evaluate, decide, and behave. These values are the desirable patterns and traits of good behavior or conduct, the suitable and proper way of doing things which is acceptable to the people who are supposed to practice and live by them. Filipino values also consist of the moral, intellectual, and spiritual principles which the people themselves hold dear and significant.

This lecture focuses on the Filipino value of nonviolence, or if you want, Filipino philosophy of nonviolence, taking "philosophy" to mean the people's perception of nonviolence. The Filipino value of nonviolence can be sourced from the various strands of the people's literature and oral tradition, insofar as Filipino life-experiences are contained in the country's literature which reflects their cultural heritage, the Filipino way of life, their world-views, values, convictions, beliefs, and their ways of doing things together. In a way, Filipino literature bears the stamp of the past and is the life of the present.

Thus we have to revisit the past and return to the treasures of our cultural heritage in order to draw guidance and inspiration from our forebears. Let us learn from the lessons which our predecessors have handed down to us. The past is not just a mere collection of previous events, or a corpus of legends, maxims, and myths which are finished and deserve nothing but to be recalled. The past is still with us, fresh and alive; it is not yet finished, precisely because we are the past, insofar as it is the vital part, or the life-line, of our personality, attitudes, and character structure as a people.

Our ancestors speak to us through our cultural patrimony and enter into dialogue with us. Let us listen to them and profit from their time-tested wisdom and experiences. Their wise sayings, moral principles, proverbs, aphorisms, parables, and fables are the vehicles through which they

have laid down their thoughts, observations, and perceptions of reality to make us sensitive to the meaning of this reality and to give us access to the wealth of being which they have unfolded.

The wealth of meanings, however, which is woven and concealed in the various fabrics of cultural experience has not been vigorously explored. But it is there, covered by centuries-old dominations and influences, often touted as foreign taste or colonial mentality. It is like a very promising gold mine waiting to be unearthed and exploited for the benefit of the Filipinos themselves.

Accordingly, in explicating the Filipino value of nonviolence from the concealed experiences of the people, we are in effect redeeming the wealth of insights long forgotten by Filipinos. We look back and return to the past (as embodied in the people's moral precepts) in order to retrieve and unfold human meanings which are of valuable and practical use for the present and the future.

The Filipinos themselves, through their moral principles and precepts presented in their native languages, have to be consulted. In effect, we can simultaneously validate and authenticate the value of nonviolence which the people themselves speak of. After each entry of the people's moral perceptions, a reflection or an analysis and explication will be provided. In this regard, it is said that there is nothing new under the sun, but there are always new interpretations and new perceptions of meanings. New ideas are formed whenever one views the Filipino cultural heritage in a different light. One can discover hidden meanings that could yield new ways of understanding. Filipino precepts or saws take on different meanings at each reflection.

Life is constantly evolving and changing. The ideals and values we hold vary according to age, education, and experience. In the same way, the philosophical interpretations of the people's value of nonviolence presented here are consistent with the speaker's mental framework and time-frame. For this reason, he must keep an open mind to allow future modifications and new interpretations of his perceptions and interpretations. The relevance of this value of nonviolence depends on the persons who view them.

Notion of Violence

Let us first tackle the people's perception of violence or *karahasan*. The root word is *dahas* which means "force," and so, one who uses force or violence is *marahas* or *mapusok*, "violent" or "furious." The Filipinos believe that anybody who lives in violence will die in violence. To wit, the Tagalogs declare: "Kung ano ang ikinabubuhay ay siyang ikamamatay" [The kind of life a man lives will determine how he is going to die]. "Ang taong marahas ay madaling mapahamak" [An impetuous person gets into trouble so easily]. "Ang isang mapaghamon ay malapit sa kabaong" [A provocateur is close to the coffin]. "Ang taong palaaway, magulo ang buhay" [A quarrelsome person leads a turbulent life].

This perception is shared by the Ilocanos: "Ti agiggen iti buneng isu't madunor" [The man who wields the bolo will get himself wounded]. Hence, "Tay tao nga agsapsapul iti riribuk, ti biagna saan nga agpaut" [The life of an individual who is looking for trouble will not last long]. This is also an element of Ilonggo experience, "Ang nabuhi sa patalom, mapatay man sa patalom" [Anybody who lives by the knife will get killed by the knife]. In the same vein, the Pampangos state, "Nung eca bisang mapali, eca lalapit ang api" [If you don't like to get burned, don't go near the fire]; and our Tausug brothers agree with them, "Ayaw kau sumaggau бага" [Don't grab a glowing ember], because according to the Sugbuanons, "Ang do-ol sa kalayo, maoy dali mapaso" [One who's near the fire will easily get burned].

All these beliefs indicate the futility and brutal consequences of violence. Anybody inured to violence, the Filipinos think, will likewise end up with it. This is in conjunction with the Filipino philosophy of reversion or *batas ng panunumbalik*: “Kung ano ang iyong gawa ay siya mong mapapala” [Whatever you do is what you are going to beget]; or “Kung ano ang ikinabubuhay mo ay siyang ikamamatay mo” [Whatever kind of life you live determines the kind of death you will go through]. So that “Sinumang gumagamit ng dahas ay sa dahas din magwawakas” [Whoever uses force or violence will also end up in violence].

Note the metaphors people use: the “bolo” and the “knife” are symbols of blood, bodily injury or wounds, and personal danger; the “coffin” or “casket” symbolizes death or physical destruction; and “fire” and “glowing ember” signify “great disaster,” “calamity,” or “conflagration.” It is thus clear that, for Filipinos, the use of violence means not only “blood, wounds, injuries, and personal danger”; it likewise means “great disaster,” “destruction,” and “death” itself. Violence is therefore destructive rather than creative; it destroys rather than builds. It is life-denying rather than life-affirming. This is the Filipino perception of violence.

Notion of Nonviolence

Let’s now take up the Filipino perception of nonviolence, *kawalang-karahasan* [“non-”, “none”, “absence” or “lack” of violence]. Despite their religious and socio-cultural disparities, not to mention their varied languages, Filipinos in general, except for some over-ambitious politicians and terrorists, regard as priceless the value of peace and reconciliation, harmony and brotherhood, and love for one another. Violence and conflict, they believe, will produce nothing beneficial save hatred and resentment, distrust and ill-will towards one another. Their moral heritage on this matter is nationwide, transcending ethnic and geographical barriers.

Bread vs. Stone

The Tagalogs spearhead the entire Filipino race in teaching “Kung hagikan ka ng bato, gantiin mo ng tinapay” [If they throw a stone at you, repay them with bread]. Expressed in Maguindanao thought, “Ug bengeran ka sa mato, bengeran nengka sa pan” [Throw bread at those who throw stones at you]. Likewise, the Pampangos preach “Nung besibas da cang batu besibasan meng puto” [If they throw a stone at you, throw at them bread in return]. Confirming the same perception, the Cebuanos state “Kung labayon ka ug bato, basli ug pan” [If they throw stone at you, return it with bread].

Sharing the wisdom of the same precept, the Ilocanos say “No batuendaka ti bato, puruakam ida ti tinapay” [If they hurl a stone at you, toss them bread]. And the Tirurays also stress “Buluke tuduan gu batew, fan ni fegesuli” [Should they cast a stone at you, recompense it with bread].

The “stone” metaphor stands for hardness, strength, toughness, power, hatred, animosity, and mercilessness. It may also connote a harsh, uncompassionate, brutal, and violent approach. On the other hand, the “bread” analogy represents softness, love, affection, friendship, flexibility, resiliency, and congeniality. Most of all, “bread” symbolizes life; it is life-affirming and life-sustaining. Hence, “bread” is the essence of life, whereas “stone” its destruction. If only for this reason, the people profess that “Daig ng tinapay ang bato” [The bread overcomes the stone].

It is in this context that the Filipinos believe that love begets love and violence begets violence; violence is divisive rather than conciliatory, it divides rather than unites. For the Filipinos, love those who hate you, if you want to overcome hatred. If somebody gets mad at you,

repay him with affection. Force, in Filipino thought, cannot resolve conflict. Force will just exacerbate the situation and create further indifference, hostility, and resentment.

Water vs. Fire

The second element of the Filipino value of nonviolence consists in the principle “Daig ng malamig ang mainit” [Anything cold overcomes heat]. For instance, the Aklanons preach that “Ro maeamig nga tubig kon sumilapo, patay ro kaeayo” [Cold water is used to put out fire]. The Tagalogs share the same perception, “Habang ginagatungan ang siga, lalo lamang lumalaki ang apoy” [The more you add fuel to a bonfire, the more it gets ablaze]. For this reason, “Ang pamuksa sa naglalagablab na apoy ay sa pamamagitan ng malamig na tubig lamang” [Only cold water is used to put out a big fire]. This is also an element of Ilocano experience: “Daytay laeng nalamiis a danum ti makapatay itay dakkal nga uram” [Only cold water can put out a wildfire].

Inferentially, it means that if fire is used to put out fire, it will end up with a bigger fire. But if cold water is used, the fire will definitely be put out. By the same token, using violence to quell violence will end up in a series of violence or violent repercussions. All this indicates that shout against shout, anger against anger, or curse against curse, will only lead to more shouting, roaring, yelling, howling, and cursing; whereas a gentle and cordial talk will soften the hardened heart so that any strife, antipathy or bitterness can be finally overcome.

At this juncture, it is interesting to mention two Filipino parables that press home the value of nonviolence. These are the “parable of the rose plant,” and “parable of the bamboo and the vine” (*Ang parabula ng punong rosas*) and (*ang parabula ng kawayan at ng baging*).

Parable of the Rose

The parable of the rose plant is narrated in Chapter 25 of Dr. Jose Rizal’s *Noli me tangere*, titled “In the house of a philosopher.” Rizal narrates the meeting between Crisostomo Ibarra and philosopher Tasio, where the former consults the latter concerning his plan to launch a revolution against the foreign oppressors. Ibarra insists that only a bloody revolution can resolve the prevailing oppression of the people in the hands of the ruthless colonizers. He is aggressive, impetuous, and ready to fight to the death. He is prepared to kill or be killed for the sake of his Motherland. It is clear that what Ibarra wants is the destruction of each other’s race, dead or alive, force against force, and survival of the fittest: “ubusan ng lahi, dahas laban sa dahas, matira ang matibay.”

In the midst of this scenario, philosopher Tasio, who is known for his sense of sobriety, prudence, and level-headedness, is seen smiling and nodding his head in admiration of the exceptional bravery of his young guest. He admonishes Ibarra to keep calm and to be circumspect with his violent and dangerous plans. To confront the strong force of the enemy, he says, will definitely be a bloody and senseless suicide. Philosopher Tasio argues that the Filipinos are not prepared to stage a revolution and that they have no sufficient arms against the colonizers.

As Ibarra remains adamant with his revolutionary scheme, the philosopher rises and slowly puts his arms around Ibarra’s shoulder and leads him towards the window facing a backyard garden. He tells the young man: “Ibarra, my son, why should we not model ourselves on the weak stem of the rose plant that is bent, almost kissing the ground, due to the weight of its buds and flowers? You know, every time a strong typhoon mercilessly beats and pounds it to the ground, the rose plant bows and bends, yielding to the strong blast of the wind, concealing and embracing

its shoots and petals. If the rose plant had stood firm, resistant, and unbending, it would have long been blasted and destroyed by the strong wind and all its buds and flowers would have been devastated into nothingness.”

“Let the strong wind pass,” the philosopher continues, “and the stem of the rose plant will become straight again, proudly displaying its new sprouts, fresh leaves, and flowers in bloom. Now, who can blame the rose plant for bending and yielding to the strong typhoon for the sake of survival? Ibarra, bear this in mind: To avoid the bullet is not cowardice; what is wrong and even fatal is to confront the bullet itself and you are not able to rise again” (Rizal 1950:116). In Filipino: “Ang umilag sa bala ay hindi karuwagan; ang masama ay ang sumagupa sa balang ito at hindi ka makabangong muli.”

Rizal’s message through philosopher Tasio is loud and clear. Elude violence as much as possible. At times, bending back in order to avoid violence is a matter of necessity and survival. But coming face to face with violence will surely destroy a person, in the same manner that the stem of the rose plant will be crushed if it stands up against the devastating blow of the wind. In conjunction with this, our Tausug brothers state: “Pana’ug in laiyag mo bang kumusug in hangin” [Let the sail go down while the wind is strong]. For the Bicolanos, “Da ika magsabat sa sulog ti-baak ika ianod” [Don’t go against the current so that you will not be carried away by it].

Parable of the Bamboo and the Vine

One fine morning, long, long time ago, so the parable goes, the mango tree, the bamboo, and the vine were taunting and ridiculing each other as to who was the weakest and the strongest among themselves. The mango tree, *punong mangga*, was boasting about its sturdy and husky trunk against the unsteady and fragile stem of the bamboo, and against the vine’s apparently spineless, shrunken, and slender stem. Jeering at the two, the mango tree was overheard saying: “Look at me, my trunk is not only brawny, robust, and hardy, but also muscular, strong and powerful. How about yours, bamboo? Look at yourself. Not only are you unsteady and skinny, lanky and lean; you are also scrawny and effeminate [*para kang bakla!*]. Moreover, you look skeletal [*kalansay*], twiggy, and bony, underfed, undernourished, and underweight. And you, too, vine? You are frail, impotent, sickly, feeble, shrunken, shriveled up, and anemic. Now, tell me, which among us is the strongest and the hardest?”

The bamboo [*punong kawayan*] answered: “True, I am thin and fragile, bony and skinny [*mistulang buto at balat*]; but I am in demand everywhere. I do provide shelter, housing, and comfort for people against the biting heat of the sun and against the rain and the wind. Besides, I can bend and stoop, and I can swing and dance with the wind; whereas you are rigid, stiff, and forever rooted in where you are.”

For its own rejoinder, the lowly vine—*baging*—remarked: “I may look flimsy, shrunken, and spineless, but I can crawl and creep, I can crouch and recoil; I slither like a snake, can drag my body, and can travel in space while my roots remain in the soil. Moreover, I can twine, coil, twist, clasp, and wrap your branches by means of my tendrils and petioles.”

Such was the almost daily conversation of the three neighbors in the forest, until one day, the parable continues, it rained heavily and the heavy downpour was accompanied by a ravaging typhoon. So strong was the rainstorm that it softened the ground where the mango tree stood. Eventually, the branches of the mango succumbed to the devastating blast of the typhoon and they broke down; until finally, the mango tree itself was uprooted from the ground due to the typhoon’s cruel beating and relentless pounding.

In the meantime, the bamboo kept swinging back and forth, yielding and following where the wind blows. It looked as if the bamboo was enjoying the whole spectacle as one could see it oscillating, sea-sawing, swaying, and dancing to the howling tune of the strong wind and the thunderous blow of the typhoon. The vine, on the other hand, kept crawling and creeping, crouching and cowering, moving and yielding to the wind blast. Like the bamboo, the vine was seen to be taking everything in stride by keeping itself slithering and crawling on the ground, without forcing itself against the destructive whip of the wind.

And when the storm was over the following morning, the mango tree was a total wreck, its branches broken, its roots pulled off the ground, and its leaves shriveled up and wilted. On the contrary, the bamboo and the vine remained alive for having yielded to the devastating blow of the typhoon. Now, it can be asked, which of them has the natural hardness and the strength? It appears that the visible strength and hardness of the mango tree are but short-lived and temporary, while the hidden strength and hardness of the bamboo and the vine (despite their resiliency and pliability, softness and weakness) is the secret of their longevity.

It is precisely due to the wisdom of the foregoing parable that the Tagalogs give this observation: “Ang tao ay kawayan ang kahambing/ Sumusuko’t umaayon sa hagupit ng hangin/ Hindi sumasalungat kundi nagpupugay/ Upang hindi mabakli ang sariling tangkay” [Man is like the bamboo, yielding and bending towards the direction of the wind blast. Not standing up against but stooping down, in order that its stem will not be broken and smashed].

Sharing the same wisdom, the Ilocanos express it thus: “Tuladem diay kawayan/ Ibautna diay bagina nga agkurno/ No napigsa ken narungsot ti angin/ Dagiti agno a nasukir ken agpasikkil/ Isuda ti mabual ken malpag/ Pagpapananna a magangodanton” [Model yourself upon the bamboo; it whips itself to bend or bow when the wind is strong and cruel. Those that are stubborn, stiff, and unbending will crack, or will be uprooted from the ground, and they get dried up soon].

Vividly enough, the parables of the rose plant, the bamboo and the vine illustrate the Filipino philosophy or value of nonviolence. Under certain situations, stooping down, or lying low, is a matter of life and death. It involves a matter of principle and survival. In Rizal’s view, bend back and let the strong typhoon pass and after that, like the bamboo and the vine, you can stand straight again. Standing up against the ravaging wind blast and getting oneself crushed to the ground mean that one can never rise again. The latter may be considered a suicidal act which is euphemistically called patriotism (*pagkamakabayan*), whereas the former is a form of intelligence, that is, knowing the principles, structures, and trends of human and natural affairs so well that one chooses the one and only intelligent option under the circumstances in order to survive.

Conclusion

The unfolding of the Filipino value of nonviolence became obvious during the four-day February (22-25) revolution of 1986, now historically known as EDSA I. When truckloads of armed troops along EDSA, near Camp Crame, threw teargas canisters to disperse the sleeping priests, nuns, and seminarians, among other hundreds of people who were keeping vigil at the place, the victims stood firm and formed themselves into a human barricade as they blocked the advancing army trucks. Instead of condemning, cursing, or castigating their attackers, the priests, sisters, and seminarians offered them food and cigarettes, and they hugged many of them. Later, the attackers retreated and eventually defected to the Reformist group.

In another instance, thousands of Filipinos, with only their mere flesh and bones, fearlessly barricaded army tanks ordered to attack Camp Crame. They met and confronted well-armed

Marine troops with candies, biscuits, *pansit*, and cigarettes. Beautiful girls cheerfully offered fragrant white and yellow flowers to the soldiers in full battle gear, then shook hands with them, embraced each other, and smiled at each other. What a beautiful scenario to behold!

Thus, the Filipinos have demonstrated for all to bear witness that, in times of conflict and strife, the “bread” overcomes the “stone” and the “bullet.” The “cold water” overcomes the “hot fire” in the same way that “love” overcomes “hate”. Most of all, “a beautiful flower” handed over by an equally beautiful lady is no match for a tank or an “armalite.”

Accordingly, the people have given a great example to the world that a revolution does not necessarily come out of the barrel of a gun, as the legendary Mao Ze Dong said. “Revolution is not a picnic,” he likewise remarked. During the four-day revolution, however, millions of Filipinos had refuted Mao’s view. They proved to the whole world that not only could a revolution be a picnic, but it could also be a big carnival.

For instance, during the revolution thousands of people were there simply eating, drinking softdrinks, smoking, laughing, yelling, singing, delivering speeches, praying, and walking in all directions. Conspicuously, most of them wore yellow ribbons and waved banners, flags, and pennants of various colors. Streamers were seen at the camp gates and in other places in the vicinity. Vendors displayed their wares everywhere. With all these goings-on and the fanfare at the place, the revolution became a grand fiesta, unexpected in the entire history of humankind.

True to the brilliant words of the then Vice-President Salvador Laurel:

Where in the world can you find a people who confront tanks and well-armed soldiers without anything to shield themselves except their rosaries and prayers? Where in the world can you find such brave people, who are courageous enough to mediate between two contending forces, holding nothing but crucifixes and the image of the Blessed Mother? Where in the world can you find a people who, without second thoughts, lie or kneel before military tanks and armored cars without anything to protect themselves except their determination to help their fellowmen and their unwavering faith in God? There are no other people like the Filipino people.¹

To sum it up, the Filipino value of nonviolence consists in the following:

1. “The bread overcomes the stone”
(*Daig ng tinapay ang bato*);
2. “The water overcomes the fire”
(*Daig ng tubig ang apoy*);
3. “The soft overcomes the hard”
(*Daig ng malambot ang matigas*);
4. “The weak overcomes the strong”
(*Daig ng mahina ang malakas*);
5. “The flower overcomes the gun”
(*Daig ng bulaklak ang baril*); and

¹ (Timbreza 1986)

6. "Love overcomes hatred"
(*Daig ng pag-ibig ang pagkakagalit*).

True Peace

Filipinos contend that only through nonviolence can peace be attained. Violence is self-defeating, for violence only breeds further violence. Thus, only through nonviolence can one get out of violence. Only through peace can one get out of war. Only through order can one get out of disorder. And only through love can hatred be overcome.

Violence is short-lived, whereas nonviolence is long-lasting. No peace is possible in a destructive, violent, and fleeting situation. For in a violent setup, only fear, threat, and force will reign. "Might is right" becomes the moral principle and so the weak and the poor will always be at the mercy of the strong and the powerful. Only in a social setting, which practices the principles of "right is might" and "truth is God," can true peace and order prevail.

Peace is concomitant with social harmony and justice. Peace comes as a result of social order and the legitimate exercise of freedom. But peace is not God-given or a pie in the sky. It is neither ready-made nor a "made in U.S.A." social phenomenon.

Peace for the Filipinos is not imported. It is something they have to work for and for which they have to strive very hard to attain by themselves. Peace is a social undertaking which is the responsibility of every Filipino, nay, of every individual. Most of all, peace is the best investment man can ever make in the game of life where he can never lose, but will have everything to gain.

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Chapter VIII

A Conceptual Analysis of Pakikisama¹

Dante Luis P. Leoncini

Pakikisama or pakisama is a Filipino concept and trait. As a trait it is used as a facility to form and maintain good relationships. It can be conceived as one among many possible contributory ingredients of the moral life but not a necessary one. The concept of pakikisama is amphibolous because it lacks an unambiguous definition. Thus it is confused with other traits such as pagkakasundo, pakikibagay, and pakikitungo. Because it is considered a trait of value, there is a tendency to abuse it. Different ways of defining the concept are shown—from its etymology to the ways it is used—including the author's way of defining it. Furthermore, two conflicting aspects of the trait—how it is abused (the negative) and what the trait really is (positive), are portrayed before the concluding remarks that show how the trait itself makes the Filipino good.

Introduction

Pakikisama or *pakisama* is both a concept and a trait. Its concept, trait, and its derivatives expressed in words or phrases² are important for the Filipinos.³ They take its application or practice in life with utmost seriousness. It is one important trait that equips them to form and maintain good, harmonious, and healthy personal relationships with others. If we are to conceive of the moral life in terms of everyday relationships as Paul J. Wadell⁴ argues, then we have to consider *pakisama* as one among the many possible ingredients of the moral life. However, in this sense, we ought to conceive *pakisama* as a contributory but not a necessary factor for living a moral life.

This paper is about the concept and trait known as *pakikisama*. This trait might exist as well in other cultures but herein we shall assume that it is a typical Filipino trait. Hence, *pakikisama*'s treatment will be in the context of Philippine culture. This paper is not concerned if it is gender-specific or if it is affected by any economic status. It aims to clarify some issues relative

¹ This paper was delivered with the same title at the Ariston Estrada Seminar Room, De La Salle University, Manila on 13 March 2002 for the Claro R. Ceniza Lecture Series. It has been revised extensively for the purpose of publication.

² Examples are: *ayos/di-marunong/mabuti/magaling makisama*, *makisama ka/tayo*, *may pinagsamahan (kami/kayo/sila)*, *pakisamahan mo/natin*, *pakikisamahan ko/mo/natin*, and *walang pakisama*, etc.

³ The term "Filipinos" must be understood as "most Filipinos" or "Filipinos in general." The examination of some Filipino concepts and traits that influence their everyday life and relationships has led some to believe that there are supposed Filipino national values and supposed regional values (Cf. Enriquez 1986).

⁴ Cf. Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (1989) and *The Primacy of Love* (1992). In the former book, his insight on the moral life and friendship can be stated as: "The moral life is the seeking of and growing in the good in the company of friends who also want to be good. Friendship is the crucible of the moral life, the relationship in which we come to embody the good by sharing it with friends who also delight in the good" (xiii). In the later work, he argues, like Thomas Aquinas, that "the primary concern of ethics is not just good decisions, but good persons" (4). I thank Fr. Daniel Kroger for bringing these works to my attention.

to *pakikisama* through conceptual analysis and discussions. Most important is the issue concerning the way it is defined and understood.

Another issue concerns the way the trait is abused (negative aspects) and what the trait is really supposed to be (positive aspects). Because of its conflicting aspects, *pakikisama* is considered an ambiguous trait. Another issue is whether *pakikisama* is a value.

Pakikisama is sometimes considered a norm or a guide to achieve or practice other values, such as *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, *katahimikan* (KTH),⁵ and Smooth Interpersonal Relations (SIR). In this sense we might think of it as one of the forms of either *pakikipagkapwa*,⁶ KTH, or SIR.⁷ It means that even without *pakikisama*, *pakikipagkapwa*, *katahimikan*, and SIR are still possible. It is sometimes considered a constituent or a part of a larger value, such as *pagkakasundo*,⁸ and again, *pakikipagkapwa*,⁹ and SIR. Still sometimes, *pakisama* is considered a value itself.¹⁰ When so defined, however, *pakisama* is conceived in many conflicting ways. This is due to the misconception of its concept. Misunderstanding the concept of *pakisama* leads to the confused and fragmented ways of viewing it as a trait. A concept that is not clearly defined is incapable of serving as a basis or foundation for describing its trait properly.

In his work “*Kapwa*,” Enriquez¹¹ suggests something very instructive. What is instructive is that “the language of the Philippines is as good a starting point as any...for understanding Filipino behavior.” His purpose is broader than our own. Understanding Filipino behavior in general¹² is his goal but we simply want to understand the concept and trait, *pakisama*. In our case, this applies in so far as we consider the Filipino language (the Tagalog language) as a starting point for understanding the key Filipino concept and trait of *pakisama*. But nothing stops us to seek the aid of other Filipino languages (Ilocano, for example) that possess concepts with meanings closer to

⁵ Dionisio Miranda writes: “*pakikibagay* and *pakikisama* are accepted as valid norms to the extent that they intend authentic KTH.” (1993: 155)

⁶ Enriquez says, “*pakikisama* is a form of *pakikipagkapwa* but not the other way around.” (1986)

⁷ We shall see the different views Frank Lynch presents regarding SIR later.

⁸ Miranda writes, “*pakikisama* exists for and in the name of *pagkakasundo*.” (1993: 155-6)

⁹ This is the case with Florentino Timbreza who writes, “Ang susi sa magaling na *pakikipagkapwa-tao* ng Pilipino ay ang magandang *pakikisama*” (The key to the good way of recognizing others as fellow-human beings is good/nice *pakikisama*.) (1982)

¹⁰ Enriquez says this of Lynch: “Perhaps he was successful in penetrating and reaching the highest level of interpersonal relations in the *ibang-tao* category, thus making him believe that *pakikisama* is a value.” (1986) And Miranda says, “To imply that *pakikibagay* and *pakikisama* are values by themselves apart from ethical KTH is to suggest that Filipinos are inherently incapable of perceiving morality at all...” (1993: 155)

¹¹ He states: “Language is not merely a tool for communication. One need not agree with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis to be convinced of the clear connection between language and culture. Given this, one is understandably led to believe that meaningful concepts for understanding a society can most probably be identified in its indigenous language. While this belief is admittedly wrought with uncertainties, it is quite reasonable to infer that the language of the Philippines is as good a starting point as any, if not better than most, for understanding Filipino behavior. In any case, I would find it logical to look for a key concept for understanding Filipino behavior in the Filipino language without discounting the possibility that such a key concept might be found in a non-Philippine language or that it may not even exist in any other language.”

¹² I hold the opinion that he has made his word true with ‘*Kapwa*’ when he uses the concept to understand and give credence to the other Filipino behavioral patterns or traits.

the concepts of the Filipino language as compared to a non-Philippine language, such as English, so that issues of meaning may be clarified better.¹³ Enriquez states:

The problems with the token use of Filipino psychological concepts in the context of a western analysis that relies on the English language and English categories of analysis are many. It no doubt can lead to the distortion of Philippine social reality and the furtherance of the mis-education of the Filipinos...The Filipino language...provides conceptual distinctions among several levels and modes of interaction.¹⁴

***Pakikisama* and Interpersonal Relationships**

George Guthrie¹⁵ attempts to explain Filipino behavioral patterns in terms of a few characteristics they behaviorally manifest or concepts they deem important in dealing with others. These behavioral patterns are *amor propio* [self-esteem], *hiya* [embarrassment], *utang na loob* [obligation], and *pakikisama*[getting along together/with others].¹⁶ These “four concepts have proven very useful in attempting to understand Filipino behavior patterns. Although they merge at many points they do have significant independent manifestations...Ordinarily implicit and unspoken, they have great influence on the ways Filipinos deal with one another.”¹⁷

For Filipinos an interpersonal relationship is more than an individual matter. One’s reputation—and that of one’s family—is involved whenever one deals with others. One, including one’s family, practices *pakikisama* towards the good and loyal friend. The friend and the friend’s family do the same. This is the proper way¹⁸ of dealing with friends for Filipinos. This is why *pakikisama* is defined as the “Filipino value of ‘belongingness’ and loyalty to one’s in-group.”¹⁹ In the practice of *pakikisama* many things are unsaid. Mostly, things are implied in behavioral patterns. This is the typical way Filipinos relate with one another.

¹³ Florentino Timbreza is one among the few who examines Filipino behavior by citing sayings in different Philippine languages and dialects. His method relates to what Enriquez says: “In spite of the American orientation in the Philippine social sciences, and the minimal use of the Filipino language in research, teaching, and publication, some supposedly important concepts in the understanding of Filipino behavior have already been identified in a number of Philippine languages.” (1986) For Timbreza’s treatment of “*pakikisama*,” cf. Chap. 19, *Pilosopiyang Pilipino* (1982).

¹⁴ (1986)

¹⁵ (1970:64)

¹⁶ Others have different concepts in mind. Some social scientists may add *Bahala na* (“come what may”) or *bayanihan* (togetherness in common effort) as key concepts for understanding Filipino behavioral patterns (cf. Virgilio G. Enriquez, “*Kapwa*: A core concept in Filipino social psychology,” in *Philippine Worldview*, 1986). In that paper Enriquez claims it is the Filipino concept of *kapwa* that serves as the core value or the substructure of all Filipino values. I currently agree with this view.

¹⁷ (Guthrie 1970: 60-1).

¹⁸ “The proper way” need not be understood thru the moral terms of good and evil. Later, we shall show that one without “*pakisama*” need not be an evil person. This leads me to think that “*pakisama*” is closer to the concept of manners rather than that of values, related more to terms like “proper/improper” rather than to terms like “good/evil.” This is why we claim from the start that “*pakisama*” is a contributory but not a necessary factor for living a moral life.

¹⁹ (Gorospe 1988: 32)

Filipinos feel more at ease when their relationship with others is personalized, like family.²⁰ “Offense is taken, not only by an individual, but by his extended family too.”²¹ More than one person is shamed or obligated. While good personal relationships are primary, success or failure in this domain is more than an individual matter.”²² This is why *pakikisama* is described as “a relatively persistent and consistent behavior pattern manifested in a wide range of circumstances.”²³ *Pakikisama* forms part of what we call the ethos of the Filipinos.¹⁸ It is one way Filipinos actually behave within the context of their relationships. Without relationships, it would not be possible to practice *pakikisama*.

Etymology and Usage of *Pakikisama*

The term *pakisama* is derived from two Tagalog words: the root word “sama, accompany, go along with”²⁴ or come along with and the prefix *paki*, please or kindly. Its etymological definition and literal meaning is, therefore, “kindly or please accompany or come along with or go along with.” Its literal meaning derived from its etymology is clear. It actually implies the concept of companion or companionship. This becomes more obvious even in Ilocano/Ilokano,²⁵ another Philippine language dialect.

Pakikisama suggests good company when I say of a friend, “I enjoy his company;”²⁶ or simply stated in a situation when good company is necessary, “Just accompany me.”²⁷ It also suggests being protective of another when one says of a friend, “He accompanied me until all the trouble subsided.”²⁸

The trait *pakikisama* is taken to mean or understood in so many ways when either described or practiced. There is either one of two reasons why this is the case. First, the trait *pakikisama* either involves too many other traits or is so associated with the concepts of other traits and values that it becomes difficult to distinguish it from the others. Second, its concept tends to be confused with the concepts of other traits and values for it probably lacks a proper definition or meaning of its own. For example, instead of conceiving *pakikisama* as a norm that implies and/or is implied by doing other traits and values, there is a strong tendency to think of it no differently from those traits and values.

²⁰ Guthrie says, “familiar family-style affair.” (1970: 60)

²¹ Different traits and values—including *pakikisama*—are culturally reinforced and learned within the context of the family. The family serves as the training ground for the development of interpersonal traits. For discussions see Lynch (1963: 10), Guthrie (1970: 60), Andres (1986: 42; 1987:74-75; 1996:54-55).

²² (Guthrie 1970: 60-1)

²³ (Andres 1987: 75)

²⁴ (Lynch 1963: 10) This is exactly Miranda’s point when he says, “In sum, *pagkakasundo* is the ethic of the culture; *pakikisama* is the ethos of the culture.” (1993:155-6)

²⁵ Companion is *kasama* and companionship is *samahan* in the Filipino language (Tagalog). In Ilocano, companionship is translated as *panakikadwa*. The concept of “*pakikisama*” is translated as “*makikadwa*.” “*Maki*” suggests the “activity of being involved” and the root word “*kadwa*” means “companion.” The literal translation derived from its etymology in Ilocano is, therefore, ‘being involved as a companion’. In both cases, the concept of companion (“*kasama*” or “*kadwa*”) presupposes the idea of the “good companion.”

²⁶ “Masarap kasama (makisama) yan.”

²⁷ “Samahan mo lang ako.”

²⁸ “Sinamahan (pinakisamahan) niya ako hanggang sa matapos ang kaguluhan.”

Consider the following examples that illustrate our point. *Pakikisama* implies consideration and cooperation when a father says, “It is not difficult to talk to my child, he gets along well.”²⁹ It implies helpfulness when a man says of his neighbor, “He knows how to get along, he helped me when he saw me having a hard time carrying wood.”³⁰ It implies leniency when a student says of a guard, “He gets along well because he allowed me to enter even without my I.D.”³¹ It suggests good nature and honesty when one does not take advantage of others (i.e., not an opportunist) by way of giving good and honest advice or suggestions. For example, a cyclist says of a bicycle storeowner, “Yoyoy knows how to get along well because he did not permit me to replace the gear changer of my bike that still works.”³²

It suggests gratitude, *utang na loob* [debt of gratitude/obligation] for something valued—such as a past friendship—when one says of another, “I never forget the deep friendship we had.”³³ It suggests other Filipino characteristics, such as *amor propio* [self-esteem] and *hiya* [embarrassment/shame]. *Amor propio* is implied when one says, “He cannot say anything with the way I get along with him.”³⁴ *Hiya*, together with compassion, concern, or understanding is somehow implied when somebody says, “You show how well you get along with my relatives, I am embarrassed.”³⁵

In the above examples, derivatives of the term *pakikisama* are used to imply other traits and values. It is through *pakikisama* that the practice of other traits and values is actualized. It is also possible to think that other traits and values imply *pakikisama*. It is through their practice that *pakikisama* is realized. If one is not careful in recognizing this fact, then one is bound to understand *pakikisama* as no different from consideration and cooperation, helpfulness, leniency, non-opportunism, *utang na loob*, *amor propio*, and *hiya*. These examples show that *pakikisama* implies and is implied by other traits and values but it does not follow that *pakikisama* itself is the same as the traits and values that it implies or imply it. We will notice later that this is one reason why giving a definite meaning to *pakikisama* taken as a trait is difficult. Understanding *pakikisama* as a trait entails the understanding of other traits and values as well.

Earlier, Guthrie pointed out that Filipino concepts or traits “merge at many points [but] do have significant independent manifestations.” We definitely agree with this good observation. I believe identifying similarities is important; however, a serious study on Filipino behavioral patterns must include making distinctions. Making distinctions is an important philosophical tool especially when the concept or trait we are currently referring to has so much in common and so associated with other concepts and traits. Making distinctions will, therefore, be a good method to arrive at a clear definition of the concept *pakikisama* so that it may be properly described as a trait.

Various Meanings of *Pakikisama*

²⁹ “Madaling kausapin ang anak ko, ayos makisama iyan.”

³⁰ “Marunong makisama ang taong iyan, tinulungan ako noong nakita niyang hirap ako sa pagbubuhay ng kahoy.”

³¹ “Maayos makisama iyan kasi pinapasok niya ako kahit wala akong I.D.”

³² “Marunong makisama si Yoyoy kasi hindi siya pumayag na mapalitan ang maayos pang ‘gear changer’ ng bisikleta ko.”

³³ “Hindi ako nakakalimot sa malalim nating pinagsamahan.”

³⁴ “Wala siyang masasabi sa paraan ng *pakikisama* ko sa kanya.”

³⁵ “Sobrang *pakikisama* ang ipinapakita mo sa aking mga kamag-anak (partido), nakakahiya sa iyo.”

So far, we have encountered many possible meanings of *pakikisama* and may have developed an impression of what it means. Frank Lynch³⁶ traces the etymology of the word and says its literal meaning is “kindly or please accompany or come along, or go along.” While discussing *pakikisama* as an important guide to understanding Filipino behavior, Guthrie³⁷ translates the term as “getting along together or with others.” The examples shown above follow Guthrie’s translation of *pakikisama* expressed as “getting along.” This translation is acceptable in ordinary parlance but let us try to improve it later on. The meaning Guthrie gives to the term is bound to confuse *pakikisama* with another trait called *pagkakasundo* that is closer to the notion of “getting along together or with others.”

While discussing personal relationships, we cited Vitaliano Gorospe³⁸ who says *pakikisama* is defined as the “Filipino value of ‘belongingness’ and loyalty to one’s in-group.” Gorospe’s definition suggests that *pakisama* is the same as the value called “belongingness.” His idea of “belongingness” is obviously derived from the concept of “companion.” But as he shows, the concept of belongingness leads to the concept of an “in-group.” I find it difficult to understand why it must be conceived of only as “loyalty to one’s in-group.” This conception is vague because he does not define what “in-group” means in this context. If by “in-group” he means “those who are very close to one” then he is limiting the practice of the trait to those close or dear to a potential doer of acts portraying *pakisama*. Truly, the trait is mostly observed when one deals with one’s close friends and relatives (in-group); but the practice of *pakikisama* is likewise possible when dealing with acquaintances. This concept does not suggest closeness or dearness but something less than that.³⁹

Andres⁴⁰ says, *pakikisama* “is the ‘ability’ to get along with others in such a way as to avoid outside signs of conflict. (It) also refers to giving in or yielding to the wish of the leader or the majority, even when at times it contradicts one’s ideas or the common good.” By thinking of *pakisama* as “ability,” we might think of it as a skill or talent,⁴¹ something developed and learned. The defect with his way of defining *pakisama* as “getting along with others to avoid outside signs of conflict” is similar to the case of Guthrie.⁴² This is closer to *pagkakasundo* as we pointed out.

³⁶ (1963: 10)

³⁷ (1970: 64)

³⁸ (1988: 32)

³⁹ Acquaintances are neither friends nor relatives. One simply knows them either by face or name.

⁴⁰ (1996: 148)

⁴¹ In Andres’s work (1996: 149), he says, “Today, however, due to a lack of Filipino values education there are people who do not understand the art of *pakikisama*. To them, it’s a matter of being *sip-sip* [gain good graces or ‘lick-ass’] to the boss. They get along well even if they go beyond their limits...” [also see quotes from Andres (1996: 149-150) on p. 74 of text]. Andres, like Guthrie and Lynch, thinks *pakisama* is culturally reinforced and learned within the context of the family, as we have pointed out earlier. I totally agree with this view. “The Filipino has been culturally brought up to value ‘*pakikisama*’ or harmony” (Andres 1986: 42). This concept of harmony is closer to *pakikibagay* [fitting in] or to *pakikipagpalagayan* [being in rapport], or even *pakikiisa* [being one with].

⁴² According to Guthrie, “It can involve extravagant praise of another, the use of metaphorical language rather than frank terms, not showing one’s own negative feelings or depressed spirits, smiling when things go wrong, and above all, never expressing anger or losing one’s temper. Avoiding stressful situations can be made easier by keeping things vague and by letting ambiguities stand. One makes commitments with the implicit understanding that either party to the agreement may seek to have matters changed if circumstances change. The common element in many activities is the desire to maintain good feelings and

Another criticism with the way Andres describes *pakikisama* is portrayed by the statement, “giving in or yielding to the wish of the leader or the majority even when at times it contradicts one’s ideas or the common good.” This is closer to *pakikibagay*.⁴³ This way, Andres makes *pakisama* appear as a trait that encourages passivity and submission. In an earlier work, however, Andres⁴⁴ tells us: “The worst thing that can be said about a Filipino is ‘*walang paki*’⁴⁵ or he does not share or cannot relate or get along with others. The philosophy of ‘each man for himself (*kanya-kanya*) is the opposite of ‘*pakikisama*.’” He⁴⁶ adds that “Filipinos censor negative attitudes such as ‘*matapobre*’ (one who despises the poorer member of the community) and ‘*wala akong pakialam*’ or the ‘What the heck syndrome.’” In here, I agree with the way Andres defines *pakisama* by way of its antonym—“each man for himself.”

Aside from the etymology and literal translation of *pakisama*, how else should we define and understand its concept? I agree with the English translation Santiago and Enriquez⁴⁷ present alongside the term *pakisama*. They say it is “being along with.” But I think “being with”⁴⁸ is better (please see note for the crucial difference). If I were asked the English concept close to that of *pakisama*, I think it is congeniality. Being congenial, therefore, is close to *may pakisama*.⁴⁹

Like *may pakisama*, being congenial implies and is implied, involves, and relates to a lot of possible behaviors described in the following ways and examples: agreeable, benevolent, companionable, cordial, empathic, friendly, helpful, pleasant, sympathetic, etc. Like *pakisama*, congeniality suggests being a good and nice companion. As pointed out earlier, a potential doer of acts portraying *pakisama* need not be a friend or relative (in-group) but an acquaintance knowing how it is to be a good and nice companion. The skill of being such a kind of companion can, therefore, be applied or practiced for the sake of and upon others who are not necessarily close or dear to one. In this sense, *pakisama* is less preferential than friendship. The notion of being friendly is not equivalent to that of being a friend. But being congenial and friendly, including acts portraying *pakisama* serve as tools for developing good friendships and presuppose good

non-stressful relationships. It should be added that there is difficulty in a society where competition for status and drive for power are also very strong.” This shows once more that Guthrie confuses *pakisama* with the concepts of *pagkakasundo*, *pakikibagay*, and *pakikitungo* [civility].” (1970: 63-4)

⁴³ Santiago and Enriquez (1986) define *pakikibagay* as “in conformity with or in accord with.” We can also take it to be close to the idea of “fitting in,” “tuning-in,” or “acting appropriately in the context of one’s relation with others.”

⁴⁴ (1986: 43)

⁴⁵ This refers to the “Who cares?” attitude or the “I don’t care” syndrome.

⁴⁶ (44)

⁴⁷ (1986)

⁴⁸ I think the difference between the concepts “being with” and “being along with” has to do with physical presence. “Being along with” would necessarily be true to the concept of companion as one who is physically present with someone else. I hold the opinion that “being with” includes physical presence and other types of presence. For example, we can think of “being with” in terms of the spirit (mind) like, “I am with you in spirit” meaning “I am thinking of you” or in terms of support, such as, emotional, financial, and moral. This will necessarily imply that *pakisama* can be practiced even without one’s physical presence. I can still show acts of being a good and nice companion even if I am not physically present. This is the case with friendship. A friend can always show friendly affection, for example, even if s/he is not physically present.

⁴⁹ Webster defines “congenial” as “having the same nature, disposition, or tastes; existing or associated together harmoniously; pleasant; especially agreeably suited to one’s tastes or outlook; sociable; genial.”

friendships. There is yet another view worth examining. Frank Lynch relates *pakisama* to Smooth Interpersonal Relations or SIR.

***Pakikisama* and Smooth Interpersonal Relations**

Lynch defines SIR as “a facility at getting along with others in such a way as to avoid outward signs of conflict.” He enumerates some outward signs of conflict and then describes how SIR is used as a facility or tool at getting along with others:

[SIR] connotes the smile, the friendly lift of the eyebrow, the pat on the back, the squeeze of the arm, the word of praise or friendly concern. It means being agreeable, even under difficult circumstances, and of keeping quiet or out of sight when discretion passes the word. It means a sensitivity to what other people feel at any given moment, and a willingness and ability to change tack (if not direction) to catch the lightest favoring breeze.⁵⁰

The examples Lynch enumerates show that SIR is closer to *pakikibagay* [fitting-in or tuning-in], *pakikitungo* [civility], and *pagkakasundo* [getting along]. I have been pointing out that the conceptions of *pakikisama* shown so far are closer to other traits, like *pagkakasundo*, *pakikibagay*, and *pakikitungo*. I hold an opinion crucial at this point. I think these traits may be practiced without *pakikisama*;⁵¹ but these may serve as preludes to the practice of *pakikisama*. Also, these may be interpreted as acts showing *pakikisama* when companionship has been established. This way, I am lead to think that *pakikisama* implies them but not the other way around.

It appears that Lynch thinks the other way around. If we take SIR as equivalent to *pagkakasundo*, then this can only be possible with the presence of *pakikisama* and two other requirements he mentions, namely, euphemism and the use of a go-between. He thinks “SIR is acquired and preserved principally by three means: *pakikisama*, euphemism, and the use of a go-between.”⁵² If SIR is acquired and preserved by the three means enumerated, then that means *pakikisama* is considered a norm or a guide so that SIR may be achieved.⁵³ Lynch (1963: 10) adds:

⁵⁰ (1963:10)

⁵¹ For example, if I intentionally block an intersection in heavy traffic resulting to the delay of vehicles crossing the road, this may be seen in different ways. I can be seen as one who is inconsiderate, one without *pakikibagay* (cannot tune- or fit-in). But if I left the intersection open, then they may see me as considerate and one who knows how to tune- or fit-in but not necessarily one who has *pakisama*. If other drivers, however, see me more as a companion in the street, then they may see me as one with *pakikisama*.

⁵² (1963: 10)

⁵³ Guthrie follows this tradition. He (1970: 63) says, “*pakikisama* or getting along together has been described by Lynch (1964) as the Filipinos’ desire for smooth interpersonal relations, a value and its related activities which he has abbreviated to SIR.” Guthrie’s reading suggests that Lynch considers SIR as the value and *pakikisama* appears to be the guide or norm in guise of a desire. This desire is manifested by one’s way of acting so that the practice of a value, such as, SIR may be realized. Guthrie continues by writing: “Filipinos place a high value on good feelings and sacrifice other values such as clear communication and achievement in order to avoid stressful confrontations. The result is that they agree with what another says and keep their reservations to themselves. They see frankness and outspoken expressions of opinions as rather uncultured and ostracize someone who behaves this way. Frankness is the characteristic (that) they may fear most in Americans and other foreigners. Because of their respect for another’s feelings, they may never let a non-Filipino know how much pain his candor causes. It is quite clear that SIR is a sort of reaction against sensitivity.” It is as if a Filipino reasons, “The best way to avoid

“At times the word *pakikisama* is used as synonymous with what I understand by SIR; when so employed, the word is very frequently (almost predictably) translated as ‘good public relations.’” I think “good public relations” is close to the concepts of *pagkakasundo*, *pakikibagay*, and *pakikitungo*. And we said these are possible even without *pakikisama* but *pakikisama* is not possible without any one of these. The absence of at least one among them serves as a good reason why one may refuse to practice acts of *pakikisama*.

Lynch taking SIR and *pakikisama* as synonymous has its origin in the way he translates *pakikisama* as “getting along,” meaning *pagkakasundo*. SIR as he describes it is close to *pagkakasundo*, including *pakikibagay* and *pakikitungo*. This shows one thing significant. The concept *pakikisama* has a clear definition being the concept of companion. But defining *pakikisama* as a trait is difficult for it is always understood in terms of other traits and values.

Lynch also distinguishes SIR from *pakikisama*. He believes “the term *pakikisama* is more commonly used with a meaning narrower than SIR. In this more restricted sense it means ‘giving in,’ ‘following the lead or suggestion of another;’ in a word, concession. It refers especially to the lauded practice of yielding to the will of the leader or majority so as to make the group decision unanimous. No one likes a hold-out.”⁵⁴ Understanding *pakikisama* as concession solicits the same argument hurled against Andres. If *pakikisama* is used with a meaning narrower than that of SIR then it might be, in this sense, a component or part of the larger value SIR.⁵⁵ SIR is realized through *pakikisama* or concession. In case he considers SIR a value, as Enriquez implies, then *pakikisama* might be seen as a “lesser” or “weaker” value.

Whether the trait *pakikisama* is considered a norm to practice a value, a component of a larger value, or a value itself is less important than the fact that it definitely is of value. It is a trait worth having for a Filipino. Filipinos appreciate people who possess this trait. We can say there is a degree of excellence attached to the trait itself—not necessarily for ethical reasons but in the way one relates to or with others. *Pakikisama* is an important facility or tool intrinsically desirable and valuable in our interpersonal relationships not only because of itself, also because of the other traits and values it implies and that imply it. A relationship where *pakikisama* is practiced is of better quality compared to one where no traces of the trait are observed or seen. It is good enough if there is *pagkakasundo*, *pakikibagay*, or *pakikitungo* but better if there is *pakikisama* for it includes at least one of these.

Andres says, “*pakikisama* is an important facility or tool in getting along with others, in maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships within the confines of the home as well as outside of it. It is through *pakikisama* that one becomes socially accepted.”⁵⁶ This is agreeable but would be better said as “facility or tool to be with others” (“being with others”) instead of “getting along with others.” It is precisely for this reason that the trait tends to be abused by others. They

slighting another is to make him feel good.” I think this is one reason why foreigners get the impression that Filipinos are hospitable. Or, we can see it another way. Because *pakikisama* is culturally reinforced, foreigners interpret acts showing *pakikisama* as hospitality.

⁵⁴ (1963: 10)

⁵⁵ Enriquez sees it differently. He writes: “Lynch [1964] proposes the construct of ‘smooth interpersonal relations’ as acquired and perceived through *pakikisama*, euphemism, the use of a go-between. Perhaps, he was successful in penetrating and reaching the highest level of interpersonal relations in the *ibang-tao* category, thus making him believe that *pakikisama* is a value. However he did not take cognizance of the importance of the other levels of interpersonal relations beyond *pakikisama*, making his observation valid to a point but definitely inadequate.” (1986) [Also see note 10]

⁵⁶ (1987: 75)

rely on the argument that one becomes socially accepted if one has *pakikisama*. This now leads us to the ways the trait is abused.

Abuse of *Pakikisama* (“Negative Effects”)

The abuse of *pakikisama* as a trait is the result of misunderstanding its concept. Some misunderstand the concept of a good and nice companion. The trait’s abuse is sometimes based on the premise that one wants to maintain good relations with others. The others, knowing this desire that one has, take advantage and abuse the trait.

More than anything else, the Filipino wants to get along well with everyone whom he considers as very necessary to maintain good relations in order to feel that he belongs and to be socially accepted. Human relations is *pakikisama* to Filipinos. Unfortunately, this Filipino value has not been fully understood; in fact, it has been used many times in a negative way.⁵⁷

Some people abuse others by taking advantage of their effort to be on good terms with them. In the process the trait *pakikisama* acquires an irreverent meaning. The distasteful practice of abusing and taking advantage of the other in the name of *pakikisama* buries and hides its real intrinsic value and worth. One good example showing how the trait is abused is given by Gorospe.⁵⁸ The example is that of a *sabungero*⁵⁹ who wins in a cockfight.

He is expected by his group to spend all the money he won on his bet so that he can give a “blow out” to the whole group. If he refuses or tries to save some of the money for his family, he is called *mayabang* (proud) or *kuripot* (stingy). In other words, he is regarded as a very bad sport (*masamang makisama*). So he yields to social pressure even to the point of being in debt again or dead drunk on *basi*⁶⁰ or *tuba*⁶¹ just in order to have *mabuting pakikisama*. This example will suffice to show the wrong understanding and use of *pakikisama*.

In this case, it is the group that abuses a member in the name of *pakikisama*. We must also consider a case where one abuses the others in the group. For example, a man prepares food and drinks for his friends who pay him a visit. After eating and drinking for several hours, the others ask their friend’s permission so they may leave. Now, the host refuses them to leave even if they are drunk and exhausted—and late. Instead, he convinces them to drink and eat some more even when he no longer has any money left. It is time for his family to rest and sleep but he obligates his wife to cook some more and sends his children to purchase more drinks from a near-by store on credit. He goes to that extent so that his friends will consider him as one who has *pakikisama*. As mentioned, he is not the only one obligated to treat his visitors well but also his family. We understand he is not the only one shamed, but his family too, if his visitors are not treated well. But the circumstances show that he is overdoing it. Taking more alcohol and food than one can handle coupled with exhaustion is not pleasurable. The *pakikisama* shown by the host is enough to ruin the others’ evening and moods.

Pakikisama is also abused when one is consistently giving in or yielding to the will of the leader or the group. This is bad enough, but giving in or yielding to the will of the leader or group

⁵⁷ (Andres 1996: 148)

⁵⁸ (1988:32)

⁵⁹ One who gets involved in cockfighting.

⁶⁰ Sugarcane wine popularized by the Ilocanos.

⁶¹ Coconut or palm wine popular in the Visayan regions.

is worse if it is against one's will. This usually happens for the sake of *pakikisama*—for uniting the wills of a group's members. Miranda writes something relevant to this. He says, "taken in this sense, in fact, *pakikisama* becomes a misnomer for itself, since *pakikisama* contains a hint of forced cooperation or accommodation."⁶² What follows is the way Andres explains it:

Many times, "*pakikisama*" becomes the practice of yielding to the will of the leader or to the group as to make the group's decision unanimous. Conformity to the group's norms is rewarded with cooperation and assistance while non-conformity is punished by withdrawal of support. Sometimes, "*pakikisama*" leads to "small-group centeredness"—the feeling and loyalty to a small primary group. Its *resulting* negative effects are "small group thinking," "*kami*" rather than "*tayo*"⁶³ is the goal, lack of a sense of national unity, regionalism, selfishness and "*walang bigayan—walang lamangan*"⁶⁴ mentality.⁶⁵

This passage from Andres easily assists us into thinking that *pakisama* entails an element of blackmail (Miranda says "forced cooperation and accommodation" while Lynch calls it "concession"). Its description also manifests narrow-mindedness on the part of the members of the group.⁶⁶ *Pakikisama* is here portrayed as a reason for a group's decision to be consistently unanimous. Conforming to the will of the leader or group has its rewards, such as, cooperation and assistance or support. This is also relative to the concept of *utang na loob*. The group has a debt of gratitude or obligation to the member who always conforms but failure to do so means the withdrawal of support. This suggests that *pakisama* invokes the fallacies known as appeal to force and appeal to advantage⁶⁷ for the purpose of aligning wills.

This is probably true in the case of groups that practice *pakisama* in an extremely abusive way or groups consisting of narrow-minded members. Let us qualify certain points. Assume that members of a group are always obliged to conform to the will of the leader or group or at least to arrive at a consensus just so the group's decision is unanimous, then the leader or group ruins the spirit of true *pakikisama*. This is because the trait is not properly practiced. Consistently imposing one's will upon another and obliging another's will to conform to one's will in the name of *pakikisama* is not *pakikisama* but coercion.

It can be different for the case of other groups. There are numerous instances too when the leader or the group "gives in" to the wishes of at least one member. For example, if one member—not necessarily "the leader"—thinks more reasonably and saner than the rest. Or, there are other acceptable reasons, such as, studying for an examination instead of joining the group's activities. We need to point out one more thing. Insinuating that a group ought to always have a leader is misleading, unless we talk of gangs in its literal sense. The concept "leader" should not be conceived of as one who consistently leads and ought to be obeyed at all times. Ordinarily,

⁶² (1993: 155)

⁶³ "*Kami* rather than *tayo*" literally means "we, excluding you, rather than *tayo* or all of us."

⁶⁴ Roughly, this means "no giving/sharing so no one gets more."

⁶⁵ (1986: 42-3)

⁶⁶ Little do they know that their group would be a lot more interesting if they were so different from each other!

⁶⁷ Claro Ceniza (1994: 24-26) teaches that appeal to force (*argumentum ad baculum*) as the fallacy committed when one appeals to force or the threat of force to cause the acceptance of a conclusion. Appeal to advantage, on the other hand, is the fallacy committed when an appeal is made to a person or group to adopt a belief or policy that the person or group will not accept unless an advantage preferred were given.

members of a group share equal importance being human beings involved with each other. In one particular occasion one may stand out as compared to the rest; but, this is the case for each and every one of them every once in a while or from time to time.

There is some truth to the claim that support is withdrawn when one consistently refuses to cooperate with the aims and purposes of the group without good reason. In this case, one is not (“not being with”) acting the way a member of a group must. But this is not necessarily true for long-standing friendships where one understands the other’s eccentricities and mood swings. In good friendships, eccentricities, mood swings, even fetishes, are sufficient to serve as good reasons!

In *History of the Filipino people*, Agoncillo and Guerrero⁶⁸ clarify the matter by way of a loose translation: “In its original connotation, *pakikisama* may be translated loosely as the intensive signification of camaraderie or the spirit of comradeship, the main elements of which are unselfishness and good faith. There is, therefore, no element of deceit, or dishonesty, or subversion of justice attached to the term.” I agree with this view and I think this is one good way of explaining *pakisama* as a concept and trait. The phrase “intensive signification of comradeship” is obviously compatible with the concept of “companionship.”

There is a general assumption and a misconception suggesting that one who does not practice *pakikisama* is a *masamang tao* [bad person].⁶⁹ The assumption is a corollary to the notion that the trait *pakisama* is necessary for living a moral life. This assumption is false. Very often, this misconception is actually the opinion of individuals who do not receive the favors they ask from others. This practice of claiming that a person does not have *pakikisama* when one does not get one’s request or want is so prevalent that it has become a cultural practice. This is one way of justifying the importance of one’s demands or needs. One making such a claim is arguing from insufficient evidence.⁷⁰

One may not give favors asked by another because of legitimate reasons. But these reasons fail to be understood. Being the case, there is no other inference possible but perceiving the one refusing to give favors—with good reasons—as having no *pakikisama*, hence, a bad or evil person. One does not have to cooperate or fraternize with others as long as one has reasons. In this sense, *pakikisama* gives way to *paninindigan* [conviction].⁷¹ It does not follow, however, that one is uncooperative at all times and with everyone. Miranda describes the person without *pakikisama*:

He is unwilling to contribute of himself and his goods; he cares only for himself; he shares only for the sake of his private interests; he has no *paki[ki]sama* because he has no *damay* (sense for the whole, solidarity). Conversely, one must challenge the uncritical cultural assumption that one who has no *paki[ki]sama* must be *masamang-tao*; we have seen that this is simply not the case, and in fact violates the deepest logic of the culture.⁷²

⁶⁸ (Andres 1996: 148-9)

⁶⁹ That means, a bad or evil person.

⁷⁰ Ceniza (1994: 29-30) teaches that this fallacy is committed when one arrives at a conclusion with undue haste, especially, if one possesses a bias of such a conclusion.

⁷¹ This also happens in the realm of values. When Kant discusses the categorical imperative, the values that clash in his example are truth telling and the preservation of human life. As in the case of values, the trait deemed more important for the occasion is the trait preferred. Kant, of course, uses the method of elevating a maxim to a universal law. Filipinos seldom do that. More important for them is the one deemed more proper for a particular situation.

⁷² (1993:156)

However, there are situations which lend truth to the cultural assumption and practice that one who does not have *pakikisama* is a *masamang-tao*. One does not have *pakikisama* if one intentionally refuses to make some situations less tedious for others. For example, I see my neighbor's two-year old daughter playing in a busy street and likely to be hit by passing vehicles, but I do not inform my neighbor nor bring the kid home to her house. This is one way of showing I have no *pakikisama* because I show no concern, *pagpapahalaga sa kapwa*. Mostly, it is the gravity of the situation that serves as the basis whether the cultural assumption or practice holds truth or not. On the other hand, we may argue that under certain circumstances involving menial favors, one who does not practice *pakikisama* is not necessarily a bad person. Under these circumstances, however, one possibly fails to be socially accepted.

We are arguing that the wrong practice of *pakikisama* is actually based upon the misconceptions of the concept itself. If one, for example, conceptualizes *pakikisama* as a trait that implies forced cooperation or submitting to the will of the group or its leader, then one's practice of the trait would definitely manifest this misconception. To conceive of a companion as one who must always submit to the will of the group or its leader is to misunderstand the concept of *pakikisama*. The misconceptions of *pakikisama* as a concept brings forth the wrong ways of practicing it as a trait. We then see the trait abused and perceive its malpractice as its negative aspects or effects. Andres correctly points out that:

Today, however, due to the lack of Filipino values education there are people who do not understand the art of *pakikisama*. To them it's a matter of being *sip-sip* to the boss, to the people who work around them and to the management. They get along well with others even if they go beyond their limits. The feeling that they are accepted by people, especially by those with authority, makes them feel like a '10-foot' man. There are also people who are misguided and have a misinterpretation of *pakikisama*. They say that it is the way to use people in order to achieve personal goal. Thus, the feeling of being used and abused is the effect of *pakikisama*. Due to the inroads of Western civilization, particularly politics and materialism, the term *pakikisama*, according to Flordeliza Geronimo-Cruz, has been debased into an attitude that makes a crook well-liked or at least admired. For a person to be described as *mabuting makisama*, he must be dishonest mentally or otherwise, or unjust, or unfair, or unprincipled by subordinating justice in order to be in good graces to many naïve people, or to use the badly battered cliché—'to have a good public image.' He is *mabuting makisama* if he helps a politician fellowman by stealing from the public toll in order to practice bogus philanthropy. A secretary is *mabuting makisama* with her boss if she tells his wife when she calls up that the boss is in conference when in fact he is out dating his *querida*; a driver is *mabuting makisama* with the boss when the former delivers a gift or message to the latter's sweetheart; a worker is *mabuting makisama* if he punches in for a late co-worker.⁷³

Misunderstanding the concept of and the malpractice of the trait *pakikisama* just described leads us to think that we must act according to the hypothetical imperative.⁷⁴ That means we must only practice the trait because of the privileges and rewards that we shall receive as a consequence. The abuse of the trait, seen as its negative aspects, is the result of misunderstanding its concept.

⁷³ (1996: 149-150)

⁷⁴ The opposite is known as the *categorical imperative* popularized by Kant. Roughly, the categorical imperative states: "Act only according to a maxim that you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Cf. Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals*.

Misunderstanding the concept leads to the malpractice of the trait. It is incorrect to claim that *pakikisama* has negative aspects or effects. Some people have a misconception of what it really is and so practice the trait the wrong way. We may say that people practice the trait the wrong way because they misunderstand the real essence of *pakikisama*. But is it not correct to say, for example, that it is not *pakikisama* that they practice but the violation of the trait itself? It is not the trait that has negative aspects or effects. Its concept is ambiguous because its definition is open to many interpretations (amphibolous). To make this worse, the other concepts that its concept entails, such as, *amor proprio*, consideration and cooperation, empathy, friendliness, helpfulness, *hiya*, leniency, non-opportunism, sympathy, *utang na loob*, etc., are misconstrued—either intentionally or not—only for the sake of satisfying the needs and wants of one party. In this sense, there is some sort of special pleading⁷⁵ committed. Finally, the trait is practiced the wrong way and abused as a result.

Although *pakikisama* is misconceived and practiced the wrong way, the value of *pakikisama* either as a concept or trait remains. If others think that *pakikisama* is without value or worth, this does not necessarily mean that *pakikisama* is without value or worth. If a couple decides to end their marriage, for example, it is not marriage that loses value or worth. Its value remains. It is the couple that ruins the value of marriage, probably thinking that marriage is useless and worthless, therefore, ending their marriage in the process. The way they think of marriage and behave as a result of the way they think is not in accordance with the real essence of marriage but in accordance with violating the concept of marriage itself.⁷⁶ What then is the real essence of *pakikisama*? The real essence of *pakikisama* is what *pakikisama* really is and this refers to the proper way of practicing the trait, often referred to as its positive aspects or effects.

What *Pakikisama* Really Is (“Positive Effects”)

Inquiring about the real essence of *pakikisama* is inquiring what *pakikisama* does to make the Filipino good. *Pakikisama* can, indeed, make the Filipino good whether we consider it a trait or norm towards a value, a part of a larger value, or a value itself. When properly directed and understood, *pakikisama* leads⁷⁷ to very positive results. For example,

[*Pakikisama*] leads to *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, that is, treating and dealing with people on equal terms and respecting another person’s right and winning his respect for you. It leads to *pagpapahalaga sa kapwa* or concern for others. It makes the Filipino group-oriented and to think together. It makes the Filipino community-oriented (*tayo* mentality). There is mutual or community sharing among them. *Pakikisama* cannot be divorced from *paggalang sa kapwa-tao*, *pagdadamayan*, and *utang-na-loob*. It makes the Filipino *makatao*. To be *bemakatao*, one should have that concern and feeling for others. To be *makatao* is sharing one’s talent and time

⁷⁵ Ceniza teaches that it is committed when one (“pleads”) only evidence in favor of or against a case and suppressing evidence contrary to it. (1994: 33)

⁷⁶ I thank Florentino Timbreza for bringing this to my attention.

⁷⁷ The idea of Andres herein invites us to make an analogy with the ideas of Wadell in (*Friendship and the Moral Life*, 70-119) when he argues that friendship must be seen as a “school in Christian love.” Friendship is preferential compared to altruistic Christian love but it is one relationship that teaches us how to love everyone eventually. It also reminds us of the lessons learned by Socrates from Diotima in Plato’s *Symposium*. More or less, Diotima tells Socrates that the beauty we see in the person we desire or love will eventually teach us to see beauty in everything else.

with less fortunate members of the community. Some sayings that extol this value are *kung samasama*, *kayang-kaya*, and *abot kamay para sa kasaganaan*.⁷⁸

Gorospe, on the other hand, insists that the real essence of *pakikisama* is realized if it is applied not only to one's small group but to the larger community to which one really owes a deeper *utang na loob*. He continues by writing:

It makes the individual realize his oneness with the community and his personal commitment and loyalty to the community in return for a debt that he can never repay. For his own good is so bound up with the good of the community that without group identity he really has no self-identity. This is what Fr. Eugene Moran, S.J. means by 'community development,' namely, that the individual does not come as an outsider to improve the community but rather becomes part of the community and gets himself involved with the community interests, convinced that only by developing the community can he develop his own personality. The positive value inherent in the Filipino concept of *pakikisama* can be reoriented not only towards nation-building but also towards the renewal of the Church in the Philippines.⁷⁹

Andres equates *pakikisama* with *bayanihan* or doing things as a group and relates this to the community.⁸⁰

Bayanihan for the Filipino is the genuine concern for every member of the family, as well as the community in which we live. It is many hands and minds working together, each one contributing his share, doing his best for the attainment of a common goal. It is the sharing together of the fruits of our own common toil and sacrifice. It is working together to our utmost to get the job done; it is to share together in the harvest in good or bad weather.

Pakikisama makes the Filipino *makapamilya* or family-oriented. There is *bayanihan* in the family because of *pakikisama*. *Bayanihan* as actually applied in the family, is looking after the welfare of the lowliest and youngest members; equitable partaking of the fruits of the family's labors; reciprocal material and moral support in times of crises and emergency; guidance and training of the weaker members and encouragement and due recognition of the strong members.⁸¹

Andres emphasizes his point by saying, "The true meaning of *pakikisama* or *bayanihan* is community orientation, community thinking and community action. Thus, there is *abuloy* (the act of giving and asking donation) for someone who died in the community. There is *pagkamakabayan* or nationalism."⁸² Gorospe, on the other hand, explains *pakikisama* as *bayanihan* in relation to human dignity to distinguish it from forced labor. He writes:

To be secure the individual needs a sense of belongingness to a group of one's own kind and the price of security is loyalty to one's in-group. To belong to a group demands a spirit of cooperation, an attitude of give and take, a sensitivity to the feelings of others. These positive aspects of *pakikisama* are better expressed by the word *bayanihan* or togetherness. It is the true spirit of *pakikisama* that has given us one of the eight wonders of the world, the rice terraces of Banawe. It is interesting to note that the great pyramids of Egypt were built at the expense of human dignity

⁷⁸ (Andres 1986: 43)

⁷⁹ (1988: 33)

⁸⁰ (1986:45)

⁸¹ (Andres 1986: 44)

⁸² (1986:44)

and freedom....But the Banawe rice terraces will not only remain a wonder of the world but a lasting monument to human dignity and freedom since they were built so that human beings could be free from hunger and want and maintain their dignity and creativity.⁸³

“*Pakikisama* makes the Filipino basically good.”⁸⁴ This is one reason why I am sometimes inclined—if not tempted—to think that *pakikisama* is a value. Although I am totally convinced it is a trait exhibited by means of other traits and values, it might serve us some good to conceive of it as a value for now. Truly, many examples exhibit that *pakikisama* is either a norm or guide to achieve a higher value or a part of a larger value still. But one possible way we can argue that *pakikisama* is a value is to make clear that it is a personal value to achieve an end value. If we claim that *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, *pagpapahalaga sa kapwa*, being community-oriented, and being *makatao* are end values (the higher value), then these can be realized with or without *pakikisama*. Nevertheless, they may be achieved through *pakikisama* just as well. This is the case because people may practice *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, etc. whether or not they possess *pakikisama* as a personal value.

We might also see it as a value but a “lesser” or “weaker” value. In this case, *pakikisama* is necessary to practice or realize the “encompassing” value. If we may consider *makapamilya* (family-oriented) and *pagpapahalaga sa kapwa* (concern for others), *pagdadamayan* and *utang na loob* as “encompassing” values, then we view *pakisama* as the “lesser” or “weaker” value necessary for the others’ sake. This view suggests that these values are not possible without *pakisama*. Being family-oriented and concerned for others, being involved or sympathetic and obligated are possible only if we “are with” others as a companion. Lastly, if we consider belongingness and loyalty to one’s in-group as values and equate these to *pakisama* as Gorospe⁸⁵ does then it is logically valid to say that it is a value. This time, however, the argument we used to signify that *pakisama* is of value works against us. It does not mean to say that *pakisama* is a value just because we think it is!

Ultimately, we must say that *pakikisama* not only brings out the best in Filipinos but is also among the best that is Filipino. Andres reveals,

Pakikisama is the act of reaching out to people and trying to know them, and understand them in their need to develop in themselves as potential members of the group and as assets to the organization...It is a symbiotic relationship of give and take that eventually leads to understanding. *Pakikisama* if applied just like what the ‘People Power’ did at EDSA when Filipinos put their hands, hearts, and minds working together, doing the best and the right thing, then there’s no reason for us not to be united. *Pakikisama* embodies the best that’s Filipino if we a) work together for a common purpose, b) move forward together, c) help friends, neighbors, and the needy, and d) love our country.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Pakikisama is both a concept and a trait. Defining its concept as “being with” or companion finds its origin in the method prescribed by Enriquez. More or less, the prescription’s advice is to

⁸³ (1988: 32-33)

⁸⁴ (Andres 1986: 44)

⁸⁵ (1988:32)

⁸⁶ (1996: 150)

start with the use of the Philippine language to understand concepts of Filipino traits and values. This we did to examine the concept of *pakisama*. And this we did by seeking the aid of another Philippine language, the Ilocano. The method is actually an application of Enriquez's advice if we wish to see it that way. We are forced to give a "precise" definition of *pakisama*'s concept by way of its etymology and literal translation, so that we may be able to think of it in a clear and concise way.

We have argued that without a clear understanding of what the concept of *pakisama* is, without a clear definition, the concept is incapable of serving as a basis for describing its trait properly. Defining the trait *pakisama* remains a difficulty because its practice is tied up with other traits and values. The concept of companion, like that of being congenial, also includes many other concepts used to describe what it really is. In this essay, however, certain distinctions are made to give us a clearer viewpoint. It has been made clear that the trait *pakikisama* either involves many other traits or too associated with the concepts of other traits and values that it becomes difficult to distinguish it from the others. We have pointed out that being the case, there is a strong tendency to think of *pakikisama* as no different from or similar to the traits and values that it either implies or imply it. Understanding *pakikisama* entails the understanding of other traits and values as well.

Most important and interesting part of the paper is the issue about the way the concept *pakikisama* is defined and understood. There have been some side trips made along the way which delve into issues. For example—is *pakikisama* a norm or guide so that other traits may be practiced, or is it a component of a larger trait, or is it a value itself? We have also examined why people think it has negative aspects and it has been argued that this impression is formed only because the trait is abused. Some think the trait has positive effects and we argued that this impression is borne out when we determine what the trait is really supposed to be.

Whether it is a value or not, *pakikisama* is of value and it holds so much worth for the Filipino. It is culturally enforced starting within the environment of the family. In the case of Filipinos, it is difficult to imagine interpersonal relationships that do not include either the concept or trait of *pakikisama*. It is a trait worth having for the Filipino. Filipinos take its concept seriously and a degree of excellence is attached to the trait. As Andres says, *pakikisama* makes the Filipino basically good. As a concept and a trait, it invites us to do good by responding to the call of the others so that we may practice one's ability that all relationships depend on—the ability to be a good and nice companion.

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Chapter X

Bahala Na: A Philosophical Analysis¹

Rolando M. Gripaldo

This article tries to clarify the various senses of the term “Bahala na” in Filipino usage. It attempts to show that the term has many senses but the primary one is to leave one’s life—or anything—in the care of God. The paper explores the various types of determinism and points out the types which entail the “Bahala na” fatalistic attitude. Finally, the work shows that “Bahala na” as a cultural value is ambivalent in that it can be applied in various situations responsibly or irresponsibly. The author contends that it is best for Philippine society if Filipinos themselves can avoid using “Bahala na” irresponsibly.

Introduction

Bahala na is a Filipino cultural trait² which is situationally-based, that is to say, its meaning can best be understood in a situational setting. The word “*Bahala*” is believed to have been derived from the word “*Bathala*,” which in the Tagalog language literally means God.³ Thus “*Bahala na*,” as a linguistic expression, signifies leaving something or someone in the care of God. In time this expression has become a philosophy of life, a cultural trait that has strongly developed into a significant core of Filipino attitudes.

I find it interesting and theoretically surprising that the Internet provides a wealth of information about the *Bahala na* subject. The Google search engine yields some 3,710 entries as of December 6, 2001 and gives us 100 pages of 1,000 selected entries on this subject. The phrase is so popular that we find a *Bahala Namartial arts* (Arnis) association (with many branches) based in the United States, a *Bahala Na* gang, a Japanese *Bahala Na* sports team, a *Bahala Na* veterans organization, some *Bahala Na* songs, a *Bahala Na* movie, some *Bahala Na* messages in German, Japanese, and other languages, etc. (see Google+Search 2001: *Bahala Na*).⁴

The books and articles which directly discuss “*Bahala na*” are meager. There is one book by Jose de Mesa⁵ which discusses *Bahala na* and providence, and one article by Alfredo Lagmay,⁶ which discusses some psychological situations that invoke the “*Bahala na*” expression, but they

¹ Paper presented as the first of the Claro Ceniza Lecture Series that started on 12 December 2001 at Tereso Lara Seminar Room. The lecture was accompanied with a powerpoint presentation. Also read during the Annual Philosophical Convention of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines at the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary in Naga City. The theme of the convention was “Philosophy and Culture.”

² Rogelio A. Santos (1998) includes “*Bahala na*” fatalism among the Filipino cultural traits he has discussed.

³ Gorospe’s (1966: 43-44) contention that the term “Bahala” is not derived from “Bathala” is based on a linguistic error. If “meaning is use in the language,” as Wittgenstein (1989: 20) would say, then one of the significant usages of the term has a reference to God. (Bostrom 1968:401)

⁴ In particular, see Goodman (2001), *Bahala Na Systems International* (2001), *Movies* (1957), *Ecochallenge* (2001), *Mabuhay Philipinen* (2001), *Bahala na diving* (2001), etc.

⁵ Mesa (1979: 1-206)

⁶ Alfredo Lagmay (1977: 120-30)

do not really zero in on the different meanings of the phrase from the philosophical point of view. All other discussions in books treat this phrase only lightly or in passing.⁷

This paper identifies the various situations in which the expression is used, that is, the various senses or meanings associated with it. It also determines the metaphysical underpinning of the primary sense of this term and enumerates the practical and impractical applications of this expression, i.e., its ambivalence in terms of value.

The Meaning of “*Bahala Na*”

Situations have boundaries but they are not clear-cut. These boundaries are fluid and they interpenetrate one another. In the stream of consciousness, the transitional boundaries of one idea to another, one feeling to another, one decision making to another, and so on, are overlapping. We can, however, abstract from these fluid situations a rational construct of a particular situation and identify its components.

I have identified six of these different senses of “*Bahala na*,” from the Internet entries and from discussions with other people, although two of these are clearly derivatives in that the word “*na*” can be missing.

First Meaning

Of the 1,000 entries from the Internet, the first meaning of “*Bahala na*” that I was able to extract is “Come/Happen what may” or “Whatever will be will be.” Let us analyze a song composed by Heber Bartolome entitled “*Bahala Na*.” (The translation into English on the right column.)⁸

The song captures the *Bahala na* attitude of the Filipino. A Filipina worker goes abroad to seek greener pastures and hopes she will be fortunate in her work, that is, without adversities.⁹ There is so much uncertainty in working abroad considering the fact that (1) the contract signed in the native country may not be honored or may be replaced by another contract when she arrives at the workplace; (2) the salary may be delayed and cause anguish to the family left behind; (3) the prospective employer may be inconsiderate or too strict; (4) the employer may sexually abuse the worker; or (5) the spouse left behind may become unfaithful. She hopes: “Baka naman sakaling swertihin ako” (“I hope I will be fortunate”). If she is unfortunate, the pawned property will not be recovered and the family will not live comfortably.

Plagued by these uncertainties, the worker is not sure as to the outcome of her going abroad to work. She leaves to God whatever may become of her and her family. She leaves to God her fate. God will guide and take care of her and her family. Such attitude gives her, at least temporarily, peace of mind.

The situation may be summarized thus: “I am going to a foreign land to work, but the outcome of my undertaking is uncertain, so *Bahala na*.” To elaborate, “Whatever will be, will be,” in this context, means “I will leave everything to God; He will take care of me. It is up to Him. I am ready to face the consequences of working abroad.”

⁷ See Singson 1979: 196-99; Guthrie 1968: 68-69; Cruz 1977: 8-11; Church and Katigbak 2000: 6.

⁸Heber Bartolome (2001). The other “*Bahala Na*” song is by Ito Rapadas, Jimmy Antiporda, and the Neocolours (2001).

⁹ (See Lagmay 1977: 121)

Second Meaning

The variations in the second meaning pertain to the performer of the action. It can be in the third person singular (s/he, him/her) or plural (they, them), in the second person (you), or in the first person singular (I, me) or plural (we, us). The second meaning thus says: “It is up to the person(s) [him/her, us, me, you, them] to take care of things. The person(s) [s/he, they, we, I] will take care of the situation.” An example is: “...*Bahala na* kayo kay Inay. Pamimisahan ko na lang siya dito. Balitaan niyo na lang ako pagkatapos ng libing...” [“Take care of my mother. I will have a Mass for her here. Just send me news about her burial later.”]¹⁰ Vilma Santos, in this connection, is quoted to have said, “*Bahala na* nga lang ang mga kritiko ang humusga sa naging acting ko” [“I will just leave to the critics the judgment on my acting”].¹¹ We often hear something like this among friends: “Pumunta kayo sa party. Huwag kayong magdala ng anuman. *Bahala na* ako sa pulutan at inuman.” [“Please go to the party. Do not bring anything. I will take care of the food and the drinks.”] The more common expressions are: “Sila na ang bahala,” “*Bahala na* kayo,” or “Ako na ang bahala.” The purpose of the *bahala na* expression in this context is to dissipate any possible worry.

Third Meaning

The third usage of the term “*bahala na*” pertains to a situation where the person is left to do what he wants but must be prepared to face the consequences. An example is: “Bahala ka na diyan. Sarili mong problema iyan.” [“It’s up to you. It’s your own problem.”]¹² Sometimes the “na” is missing: “...bahala ka, umalis ka kung gusto mo! Ganyan ka naman, eh!” [“Do what you want; you leave if you like! You’re like that anyway.”]¹³ In this context, *bahala na* means “Do what you want, it’s up to you, but be ready for the consequences.”

In a related context, being ready for the consequences is tantamount to issuing a threat.¹⁴ “Bahala ka kung aalis ka’t pumunta sa barkada mo, pero...” [“It’s up to you to leave and join your friends [somewhere], but...”]. The “but” here could mean a threat, as in, “...but when you come home you cannot enter the house.”

Fourth Meaning

The fourth situation indicates unmindfulness on the part of the person concerned. It means basically, “Never mind or it does not matter.” This usage is common among Bisayans: “*Bahala na* ug dili perfect ang akong writings as long as this [sic] can be understood.”¹⁵ In Tagalog, we say, “Hindi na bale...” The translation of the example into English is: “Never mind if my writings are imperfect as long as they can be understood.”

Fifth Meaning

¹⁰ (Local Jokes 2001a)

¹¹ (Pinoy Central 2000)

¹² (Ekonomiya 2001)

¹³ (Jacq’s 2001)

¹⁴ This related meaning of a threat came about during the open forum of the PAP Naga City philosophical convention on 5 April 2002.

¹⁵ (Ipage 2001)

The fifth situation is to tolerate the person or allow him/her to do what s/he wants by just leaving him/her alone. An example is: “*Bahala na* siya; pabayaang mo na lang siya sa kanyang ginagawa. Okey lang; pasensiyahan mo na lang siya.” [“Let him/her be; tolerate what s/he is doing. It’s okay. Just be patient with him/her.”] The Internet entry talks about corruption and bewails the Filipino attitude towards it: “...because we purportedly LET IT BE (and this must also be our one true weakness: ‘okay lang’ or ‘pabayaang mo na lang’ or ‘*bahala na* siya’ or ‘pasensiya na lang’).”¹⁶

Sixth and Last Meaning

The sixth meaning should portray a situation where a warning is tacitly implied. The meaning is “Go on with it (as a warning) [usually without the ‘na’].” An example from the Internet, which I modified a little to emphasize this sixth meaning is: “Ano na naman and ginawa mo sa Tupperware natin? Bakit mo sinira[an]? Bahala ka, sigé. Ikaw ang tumawag na [ordinaryong] plastic [iyan!]”¹⁷ The warning in this context is that if the person continues doing what s/he does, then they will lose their market. The English translation is: “What have you done again to our Tupperware? Why did you disparage it? Go on with what you are doing! It’s you who call it an ordinary plastic.”

The Meaning

It has been mentioned earlier that two of the senses of “*Bahala na*” are clearly derivatives, i.e., the third and sixth meanings, since the “na” can be missing. It would seem, however, that the other three meanings or senses are likewise derivatives from the first sense because, etymologically speaking, the meaning of “*Bahala*” comes from “*Bathala*,” which literally means “God.” In other words, the primary sense or the meaning of the phrase “*Bahala na*” is the first one: “Come what may. It is up to God.”

The Analysis

Mertaphysical Underpinning

When one invokes “*Bahala na*,” there is always a philosophical worldview that is presupposed. This worldview is Fatalism. The classical meaning of fatalism, the Greek *Moirai*, appears distinct from determinism and predestination. Fatalism, unlike predestination, is not “prearranged by a being outside the causal order,” or, unlike determinism, is not necessarily causal in nature. But the current usage of determinism has become so broad that even fatalism, or “cosmic determinism,” and predestination are subsumed by it. Determinism is described broadly as a situation where situational conditions, circumstances, or cosmic set-ups or plans exist such that given them, nothing else could happen. Fate in ancient Greece is “blind, inscrutable,... inescapable ... impersonal, and irrational.” Even the gods were subject to it. Christianity replaced it with the “doctrine of divine providence,” which is “supremely personal and supra-rational.”¹⁸ The Filipino use of the phrase “*Bahala na*” is fatalistic in the sense that it evokes resignation to the

¹⁶ (Messages 2001)

¹⁷ (Local Jokes 2001b)

¹⁸ (Bloesch 2001)

consequences of one's undertaking, but the intent of the phrase is providential in that it carries the wish or hope that Providence will personally take care of one's future. This paper uses fatalism to mean providential (i.e., theistic fatalism) as the equivalent sense of the phrase "*Bahala na*."

The fatalistic worldview in the sense of "*Bahala na*" (theistic fatalism) can be consistent with, at least, either pantheism, Leibnizian determinism, panentheism, deistic supernaturalism, or theistic circumstantialism.

Pantheism. Pantheism is the belief that "All is God and God is all," or the "Universe is God and God is the universe." Held by the Stoics and by Benedict Spinoza, pantheism has a rigid deterministic system. Here everything is willed by God and individual freedom consists in submitting one's will to the will of God. It is construed as a violation of freedom when one does not accept God's will and the person, in this case, becomes psychologically disturbed, emotionally unbalanced, and will generally have no peace of mind. Resignation, indifference, or apathy to adverse occurrences in life are considered the highest good. One is free to do what can be done but must be ready to face the consequences of his/her actions.

Leibnizian Determinism. Gottfried von Leibnitz believes that God is all good and all perfect so He decided to create the best of all possible worlds. Hence, nothing in the universe could be different from what it is. In this best world, that is, a universe which has the maximum of perfection, evil is necessary. Human freedom consists in realizing one's inherent potentialities that were pre-established before birth. Here the person must surmount whatever obstacles may block the realization of his/her potentials. Voltaire,¹⁹ in his book *Candide*, had the optimist Dr. Pangloss remark "this world is the best of all possible worlds" whenever he met adversities in life. In other words, one is free to do what can be done, as it is in pantheism, but must be resigned to God's purpose which lurks behind the adversities that one encounters in life.

Panentheism. Panentheism is the belief that God is everywhere immanent in the universe but, unlike pantheism, is distinct from the universe. Here God maintains order in the universe. He serves like a traffic policeman who maintains order on the streets. There is Creativity going on in the universe where chance and individual freedom are possible. Again, in this metaphysical system, man is free to do what can be done but must be ready to face the consequences of his actions. It is said in this type of worldview that God is man's fellow traveler in that He is with him in his journey, in his joys and travails in life.

Deistic Supernaturalism. Deistic Supernaturalism is the belief that God created the universe with all its scientific laws—biological, chemical, physical, etc. But once in a while, God suspends the laws of nature to perform a miracle. It allows individual human freedom and is consistent with Predetermination/Predestination but God's Foreknowledge does not cause the individual human choice. I may know, for example, that Efen "Bata" Reyes, a world champion in billiards, will hit the red ball at the center to have it roll to the side pouch but my knowledge of it does not cause him to do so. He will do what he must, or through his own free will.

Deistic Supernaturalism does not also lend to Physical or Scientific Determinism because human actions (in terms of behavioral or sociological laws) are statistical in nature and not rigidly causal as in natural laws. Human actions, from a general vantage point of view, behave, as

¹⁹ Voltaire (1946)

described in fuzzy logic, in a chaotic, random, or disorderly fashion; however, there is a certain statistical uniformity in them that can be expressed in a mathematical formula.

Theistic Circumstantialism. Circumstantialism²⁰ is of two kinds: theistic and atheistic. Both may invoke fatalism after an exhaustive deliberation and decision-making, i.e., when fatalistic conditions are emergent. In the atheistic sense, the circumstantialist invokes cosmic determinism or the paganistic conception of “*Bahala na.*” In the theistic sense, s/he invokes providential fatalism or the theistic conception of “*Bahala na.*”

Fatalism and Determinism. Fatalism is closely related to determinism. Not all types, however, of determinism entail or imply fatalism. To reiterate, fatalism is “the acceptance of all things and events as inevitable; submission to fate.”²¹ Later, Fate was replaced with the doctrine of divine providence such that “*Bahala na*” is a fatalistic attitude whose intent is basically providential. Determinism, on the other hand, states that “for everything that ever happens there are conditions [causal, situational, cosmic, etc.] such that, given them, nothing else could happen.”²²

It is, I think, necessary to discuss the types of determinism in relation to fatalism as providential “*Bahala na.*”²³ There are six standard types of determinism which I will discuss here.

Types of Determinism

Ethical Determinism. Ethical determinism argues that “since every person chooses what seems good to him/her, then his/her voluntary actions are determined by this, if by nothing else.” Plato, for instance, says that one’s action is determined by what appears good to him/her. No one voluntarily chooses what is bad. Although Aristotle disagrees in that one who knows something bad for his/her health, as in smoking (at present there is the television warning that smoking is bad to one’s health), may still continue doing it. At any rate, determinism in the ethical sense does not appear to entail fatalism.

Psychological Determinism. There are two kinds of psychological determinism. The first argues that “human action is caused by an act of will, a motive, or some mental event.” This means that there is always a causal explanation or a reason for a human action. Some philosophers believe that reasons are causes of action. In this regard, rational explanations are causal explanations.

A distinction is made between a human behavior and a human action. The latter, unlike the former, is intentional. One has a reason for doing things. If Pedro wipes the glass wall of Jollibee and all of a sudden it breaks, the manager may shout, “Why did you break the glass?” And Pedro may reply, “I did not break the glass. It broke.” Or Jose is walking on the sidewalk when all of a sudden he hits the sidewalk floor. A bystander asks, “Why did you fall?” And Jose responds, “I did not fall. I slipped.” Psychological determinism does not imply fatalism.

The second type of psychological determinism is behaviorism or operant conditioning. It holds that the individual is conditioned to act in certain ways by his environment as s/he operates or interacts with it within the general framework of stimulus and response and the pleasure

²⁰ (see Gripaldo 1977: 1-144)

²¹ (Random House *Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary* 2001)

²² (see Taylor 1967: 359; Gripaldo 1977: 111-12)

²³ (see Fitelson 1999).

principle. B.F. Skinner²⁴ believes that a technology of behavior, as in *Walden Two*, can be formulated as to condition a community of people to be happy. Psychological determinism as operant conditioning does not appear to entail fatalism.

It is worthy to mention one major objection to behaviorism. The philosophy of cognitive science²⁵ tries to subvert the general S-R model by emphasizing the element of freedom that takes place in the person's head or mind in terms of mental representations (such as rules, concepts, images, analogies, logical constatives)²⁶ and mental procedures (such as deducing, searching, matching, rotating, and retrieving). Even in the recent cognitive neural science or in the shift to the neuron-to-synapse-to-brain-state connectionism, the person is assumed to be able to project a behavior that is not in keeping with his/her apparent intentions by, for example, lying or pretending.

Logical Determinism. Logical determinism maintains that "If the statement [here conceived as having no third value except true and false] 'Juan will get rich in the year 2025' is true, then it is true by 2025." In appearance, logical determinism entails fatalism. Like the proverbial Juan Tamad, Juan need not work hard because if the statement above is true, then Juan will get rich in the year 2025 whether we like it or not. But this conclusion does not have to be. The precondition of the statement might be that the reason Juan will get rich in 2025 is he continues to work hard till 2025.

The missing premises of the syllogism might be: "Juan works very hard. Juan will continue to work hard till 2025. Therefore, Juan will get rich in 2025." Construed in this way, this type of determinism does not necessarily entail fatalism.²⁷

Physical Determinism. Physical determinism says that "everything in nature, including the person himself/herself, behaves in accordance with the unchanging and inviolable laws of nature." In appearance it seems that physical determinism entails fatalism. If the human constitution and human actions are causally determined by the laws of nature, then there can be no human freedom and fatalism is a matter of course.

There are attempts to subvert this type of determinism. The first is Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy which argues that in the subatomic level it is difficult to predict both the position and velocity of an electron. One may predict the position of an electron at a given time but not its velocity, or vice versa. There is a quantum jump somewhere and this implies unpredictability. It has implications to ethical decision-making and human freedom. The second comes from the social sciences. I have already mentioned behavioral/sociological laws as statistical in nature which emphasizes group uniformity that allows individual free movements. The third objection comes from the existential and phenomenological experience of human freedom. Not only that a person feels free, but that s/he tries to fill the nothingness between his/her being (present) and his/her becoming as s/he makes himself/herself to be (future). According to Sartre,²⁸ the person is absolute freedom, a project to be realized.

²⁴ B.F. Skinner (1971)

²⁵ (Thagard 1996)

²⁶ The original phrase is "logical propositions," but I have replaced it with the term "logical constatives" since I have rejected the term "proposition" in the speech act theory (see Gripaldo 2001).

²⁷ (see Kiekeben 2000)

²⁸ Sartre (1968: 568-69)

Physical determinism as causal determinism may appear true in the natural sciences, but it does not appear to be so in the social sciences and the humanities. This type of determinism does not therefore necessarily entail fatalism.

Situational Determinism/Circumstantialism. Circumstantialism or Situational Determinism contends that “In any given situation, especially the choosing situation, there are situational conditions (or circumstances) such that given them nothing else could happen.” There are three stages in a rational choosing situation. The first stage is where the alternatives to be chosen are located or in full view at a given time. The second stage is where one starts deliberating and in the process makes up his/her mind. When a decision is made, then the person has chosen an alternative. Then comes the third stage which is the performance of the choice made, that is, the buying, eating, going to the place, etc., of the choice. It is in this context that we say the act of choosing has been fully consummated.

Our primary concern here are the sources of situational conditions: (1) the person’s present environment (where the alternatives are in principle found); (2) the person’s past (through memory where the events or situational conditions that are relevant to the present situation are creatively retrieved); (3) the person’s future (through anticipated consequences of one’s actions/choice); and (4) the person’s physical and mental health. For example, a sick person will generally choose not to go to Hong Kong on a tour.

It is readily noticeable that the chosen action or object, the choice itself, is determined by the situational conditions but it is the person who voluntarily does the choosing act, the deliberation, and the decision-making. One is free to do so. One is not compelled by an authority or by someone else. In short, circumstantialism does not necessarily entail fatalism. But when does it entail fatalism?

Circumstantialism entails fatalism, either theistic or atheistic, when there are uncertainties in the ultimate consequences of one’s choice, when after a thorough deliberation one still remains undecided but is forced to make a choice, when loved ones die unexpectedly, and the like. It is during these situations that one invokes “*Bahala na*” fatalistically.

Theological Determinism. There are, at least, three types of theological determinism: religious, Spinozistic, and Leibnitzian. I will start with the first.

(1) *Religious Determinism.* We can identify at least two kinds of religious determinism. The first is predetermination and the second is predestination. The two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they can be distinguished. It is, of course, all right not to distinguish them, but if we wish to do so, then here is the distinction. The first has something to do with the issue of foreknowledge and causality while the second deals with the issue of fatalism and divine providence.²⁹ There are necessarily overlappings since the issue of foreknowledge may also come in on the issue of divine providence.

Anyway, regarding predetermination, I have already said that God’s foreknowledge is not causal and does not necessarily countervail human freedom. Regarding predestination, or the issue between *Moira* and Divine Providence, D.G. Bloesch³⁰ makes the following contrasts: (a) “Fate is the portentous, impersonal power that thwarts and overrules human freedom” while “Providence liberates the person to fulfill the destiny for which s/he was created.” (b) “Fate means abrogation

²⁹ (See Watson 2001, Ross 2001, Bloesch 2001, and Warfield 1970)

³⁰ D.G. Bloesch (2001)

of freedom” while “Providence means the realization of authentic freedom through submission to divine guidance.” (c) “Fate is the rule of contingency that casts a pall over all human striving” while “Providence is the direction and support of a loving God.” (d) “Fate makes the future precarious and uncertain” while “Providence fills the future with hope.” (e) “Fate is impersonal and irrational” while “Providence is supremely personal and supra-rational.” Formulated in this way, religious determinism as predetermination and predestination (Divine Providence) does not entail fatalism.

“*Bahala na*” recognizes the precariousness and uncertainty of the future but at the same time hopes that Providence will take care of that future.

(2) *Spinozistic Determinism*. Spinozistic or pantheistic determinism as earlier discussed entails fatalism since God wills everything and since human freedom is in consonance with God’s will, then something that runs contrary to the human will must be accepted as God’s will and be fatalistically resigned to it, hoping that in the final analysis it is good.

(3) *Leibnitzian Determinism*. Though Leibnitzian determinism is non-pantheistic, it likewise entails fatalism in that human freedom (that is, the freedom to actualize one’s potentialities towards perfection) has been predetermined before birth. Someone, like Dr. Pangloss, must be resigned to adversities whose consequences to oneself are objects that need to be ultimately overcome.

“*Bahala Na*” as a Socio-Cultural and an Individual Value

We may imagine two “*Bahala na*” scenarios. One is Spinozistic and Leibnitzian while the other is pantheistic, deistic supernaturalistic, and circumstantialistic.

First Scenario. In all types of determinism earlier discussed, only the Spinozistic (also stoical) and Leibnitzian types of fatalism directly come into play. In both Spinoza and Leibnitz, human freedom is only illusory. There is the hovering deterministic scheme of things of which the individual is inevitably a part. The human person acts, decides, and makes choices in situations which appear to be within his/her control. Only when things seemingly do not appear within one’s control that s/he leaves them to God.

In Spinoza, a woman, for example, must struggle against a rapist, but if in the process she is still raped, then that must be the will of God, and she must think that in the final analysis what happened to her is ultimately good. She must stoically accept what happened and do what is necessary, such as filing a case against the rapist, if known.

In Leibnitz, being raped is part of the obstacles to be hurdled by a woman in realizing her predetermined destiny which is to actualize her potentialities. She must not allow herself to be deterred by that incident in the pursuit of her dreams. She must stoically accept that incident as God’s will for an unknown purpose, and then move on. If she allows herself to be deterred, then she has become unfree since she allows herself to be imprisoned by that incident, and she is paralyzed, as it were, and cannot move on.

Second Scenario. This scenario pertains to the pantheistic, deistic supernaturalistic, and circumstantialistic situations where there is a positive affirmation of human freedom. Phenomenologically and existentially, the person is free to make decisions and choices. S/He feels s/he is not under compulsion, that s/he acts voluntarily or freely. The circumstantialist also believes

in this type of human freedom, which is fundamentally Aristotelian, and also in the Sartrean type of human freedom. Jean-Paul Sartre emphasizes the freedom to fulfill oneself in the open future, to fill the void or nothingness between oneself and the project s/he makes his/her being to become.

In “*Bahala na*,” in its primary sense, it is only when things or situations go beyond one’s deliberative power that the person leaves the situation to God. God helps the person who helps himself/herself, beyond which it is hoped that God will take care of things or the situation. This view is different from a rigid type of deism wherein a person must literally help himself/herself, because God is nowhere to be found: He is an absentee God.

In other words, it is only when things or the situation goes beyond one’s control that the person says, “*Bahala na*.” It gives him/her a psychological peace of mind and an emotional stability. In this respect, “*Bahala na*” becomes a socio-cultural and at the same time an individual value. For a value is something that a cultural group or a person holds dear because of its reflexive practical consequences.

Ambivalence of “Bahala Na”

Ambivalence means the tendency of something (a person or a situation) to go either way in a certain scale. If the scale is ethical, then that something can go either good or bad, depending upon the context or situation.

“*Bahala na*” is a positive value in at least the following situations or circumstances which are beyond one’s control: (1) when calamities or accidents occur despite all precautionary measures; (2) when the death of a loved one takes place in spite of all attempts to let him/her live longer, or in spite of all careful attention made relative to the situation; (3) when the death is sudden or unexpected; (4) when one feels the uncertainties that lie ahead despite making a careful and deliberate choice or decision; and (5) when, in spite of a very extensive deliberative process, one cannot still decide what to choose until finally he picks out a choice indifferently. Here “*Bahala na*” enables one to have the stoic resolve and the attendant peace of mind. As Distor says, “Held close to the heart, the ‘*bahala na*’ phenomenon becomes a coping mechanism in the face of risky undertakings.”³¹

There is first human responsibility, even in situation (5), before invoking “*Bahala na*.” “*Bahala na*” turns negative, firstly, when one haphazardly deliberates in making a choice. “*Bahala na ang Maykapal diyan*” (“Let God take care of the situation”) or “I’m tired deliberating. I’ll take this one. *Bahala na kung ano ang mangyari*” [literally it means “Never mind what happens, I’ll leave it to God”]. Here one does not exhaust all possibilities to determine the merits or demerits of alternative options before making a choice or a decision. The person is either lazy or simply unmindful of the consequences of his/her choice/decision. In either case, s/he is simply irresponsible.

Secondly, when one indifferently picks out a choice without deliberation. Here there is a refusal to deliberate. The person simply picks out one among the options whimsically or without thinking. Or s/he may toss a coin and let it decide for him/her. “Pag cara pupunta sa party; pag cruz sa bahay na lang” [If heads I’ll go to the party; if tails I’ll stay at home]. Thirdly, when one relies too much on God by not helping himself/herself first.³² “Hindi ako nakapag-aral kagabi, pero kukuha ako ng eksamin. *Bahala na*” [I have not studied last night but I’ll take the exam. Come what may]. Lastly, when one knows something detrimental but still pursues it. For example,

³¹ Distor (1997)

³² (See Lagmay 1977: 121, 124)

s/he knows s/he is overcharging his/her credit card beyond his/her capacity to pay. “*Bahala na* kung papaano ko ito babayaran” [I do not know how to pay this, but I’ll let God help me find the way].

In all the above negative instances, “*Bahala na*” is the scapegoat of one’s irresponsibility. The person hides this irresponsibility by invoking “*Bahala na*.”

Conclusion

“*Bahala na*” is a characteristic trait of the Filipino culture. The Filipino child is exposed to this culture and s/he unquestioningly imbibes this trait, thereby forming a predisposition towards it and eventually shaping an attitude about it. The attitude is reinforced in his/her daily contact with others in society where “*Bahala na*” is openly manifested. S/He too manifests it and finds no objections from others. In time, s/he cannot distinguish its negative applications from the positive ones. S/He simply lumps them all into one piece. Not until a philosophical analysis points out what the irresponsible practices of “*Bahala na*” are.

To recapitulate, while “*Bahala na*” can presuppose both the Spinozistic/Stoical and Leibnizian deterministic systems, it is more in keeping with panentheistic, deistic supernaturalistic, and circumstantialistic theological frameworks. The latter two are theistic in orientation, where by “theism” is meant the belief in one personal God. If one is a religious circumstantialist, then “*Bahala na*” in its responsible sense can also be entailed by it since circumstantialism stresses responsible deliberative act of choosing.

In the case of Spinoza and Leibnitz, “*Bahala na*” obliquely affirms human freedom while in the case of panentheism, deistic supernaturalism, and theistic circumstantialism, it directly affirms human freedom as voluntarily making actions and choices within one’s control. There is an explicit recognition of “*Bahala na*” in the power of God on matters beyond human control.

“*Bahala na*” can be positive (with responsibility) or negative (with irresponsibility) in application. It seems to me that Filipino society will be better off if the negative applications were to be avoided or completely obliterated in Filipino decision-making.

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