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Niels Mulder

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Localization and Philippine Catholicism

Niels Mulder



This note is an exercise in interpretation. It is also a study of Filipinization, or the localization of extraneous cultural inputs. Because of the process of localization of Philippine Catholicism the interpretation of the Philippine religious mentality makes sense. Whatever the long-range effects of culture contact and subsequent developments, such as seeking inspiration or renewal at the fountain-heads of perceived orthodoxy, no cultural element will ever be received unscathed. This is because the initiative responsible for the outcome of culture contact is with the receiving culture that shapes the foreign elements to its own image. This idea is known as localization. In the process of localization foreign elements have to find a local root, a native stem onto which they can be grafted. It is because of this native life-blood that they can blossom and bloom. If they do not connect in this way, the foreign ideas may remain peripheral to the local culture.

The Filipinization of Catholicism is a case in point. When the Spaniards arrived with cross and sword, they had their own ideas about Catholicism. The Catholicism we find today in the Philippines is a statement about Philippine culture. A few examples may clarify. Spanish Catholicism of those days was top-heavy with saints and miracles. This fitted nicely with the Philippine belief in the active role of the recently deceased in the lives of the living. Even today dead parents and grandparents are often supplicated and supernatural intervention in human affairs is "naturally" expected in many areas of Philippine society.

The idea of localization also gives good reasons to disagree with the modern feminist position that the place of women in pre-Spanish days was entirely different, and that the position of the second sex today is the result of the friars' attempt to Maria-Clarify the Filipina.¹ It may be that virginity has a higher rating today than in the far-off past, but it seems most likely that the position of women as mother in the Philippines was very similar to what it is in other

cultures of Southeast Asia, such as the Javanese and the Thai (Mulder 1991, 61–72). As the giver of life and nurture, the mother is entitled to the highest honor; she is sanctified and put on a pedestal.

What the Spaniards brought was a powerful symbol that fitted the prevailing world of ideas. Consequently the Blessed Mother could enjoy a tremendous popularity, symbolizing the preexisting cult of the dependable and moral mother. In the process of becoming "Mama Mary" even Her most popular representations changed from the Spanish Madonna-Queen-Mother and Madre Dolorosa to the serene yet kind and miraculous Lady of Lourdes, without the Child that had begun a life of its own as the Santo Niño (a non-Spanish devotion).

Ideas that did not find a ready root or stem in Philippine culture were the cluster of sin, repentance, and atonement. Religion in Southeast Asia is typically future directed and serves to ensure a peaceful and blessed life. It is normally not directed to a sinful past and certainly not if those sins consist of infractions of abstract principles and commandments. If there is sinful behavior, it is located in concrete interpersonal relationships, with the relationship to the mother as the exemplary center. To go against her, to betray her expectations, is hideous indeed and an instance in which Filipinos, Javanese, and Thai all agree that supernatural retribution will be inescapable. Not to know gratitude and obligation is to place oneself beyond the pale of civilized life.

In the process of its localization, Philippine Catholicism developed to become a symbolic representation of family relationships, which is not so surprising since the family, in its communal setting, both, then and now, is the core institution of Philippine society.

The present article seeks to clarify the way people think their relationships with near others and with religious representations. It is therefore, an analysis of a mentality, a way of viewing the world, as found in research among members of the educated, urban middle stratum of Tagalog society. This is not to say that everybody thinks this way or that, especially where religion comes in, that there are no people whose thinking is secular or who are doctrinal or rational Catholics. What is presented here is a typological description of a dominant mentality in which individual people share to a greater or lesser extent in middle class Philippine society.

In this mentality, relationships with family members and near others (*hindi ibang tao*) are thought to be really intimate. What this means will be described as the positive mentality that guides these

familiar relationships. It seems clear that this same mentality inspires lowland "popular" religiosity. The relation to things religious is intimate *par excellence*, and religion seems to be a "natural" part of the life world. In the process of its localization, religious representations have been domesticated, as it were, and are readily accessible. This process will be described in the second part of the article.

In the process of Filipinization, lowland Catholicism has become a particularistic practice serving individual and family needs. At its core, religion appears as the symbolic expression of familiar relationships that it idealizes, legitimizes and sanctifies. This family-centeredness of religious practice has also been noted by other observers, such as Carroll (1970, 49-50) and De Mesa (1987, 196-97), and is nothing new. What is new in the present description, is the reduction of the way familiar and religious relationships are thought of to one and the same mentality.

Within the narrow confines of interpreting a mentality, this article does not aspire to do justice to the many other aspects of Philippine life that are heavily influenced by the Christian religion and the Roman Catholic Church, nor is the article concerned with the theological correctness or incorrectness of popular religiosity. It merely concerns itself with the description of practice and thought of an urbanized, educated public in matters relating to the family and religion.

Relationships With Near Others

According to Enriquez's *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Philippine psychology) the notion of personality as elaborated in western psychology does not correspond to the way individuals are supposed to function in the Philippines. Consequently, he proposed the notion of *pagkatao* as the counterpart. Whereas western psychology sees personality as the expression of the individual in and by himself, in isolation as it were, *pagkatao* would correspond with the Philippine situation in which individuals do not define themselves in isolation from others, but include *kapwa* ("the other") in their identity definition. *Kapwa* is the unity of "self" and "others" and expresses ego's awareness of shared identity (Enriquez 1986, 11-12).

At the time that Enriquez began to formulate the characteristics of a Philippine psychology, he was irritated by the interpretations of Philippine behavior reached by the researchers around the Insti-

tute of Philippine Culture (IPC). Especially their notion of *pakikisama* (to get along with others) drew his ire as far too facile and as only descriptive of a certain type of relationship. Enriquez developed his own scale to describe the intensity of relationships, ranging from *pakikitungo* ("transaction/civility with") through *pakikisama* ("being along with") to *pakikiisa* ("being one with"). While the lower levels of intensity, including *pakikisama*, are descriptive of relationships with *ibang tao* (outsiders; lit. other/different/strange/people), the higher levels concern the *hindi ibang tao* or near others with whom identity sharing becomes deep (Enriquez 9-11).

Some form of identity sharing would be the normal occurrence in relationships among Filipinos. According to Enriquez (1989, 35, 45), people refusing to take positive account of others somehow lose their *pagkatao* ("personhood") and *pakikipagkapwa* ("shared inner self"), that is, their essential human quality. In doing so, they place themselves beyond the pale of civil society. "We Filipinos really care about the feelings of others."

Here it is not the point to observe that "identity sharing" is mystical and mysterious, nor that it can be criticized as psychological theorizing that appears to be firmly out of date. The interesting thing about Enriquez's work is that he attempts to develop culturally relevant concepts on the basis of current Tagalog vocabulary, and that his work may therefore be relevant to understand how people think about their relationships. In a slightly different way, such thinking also surfaces in the works of his Filipino colleagues who phrase their psychology of 'the Filipino' in the more general (western) notions that Enriquez would protest. According to Bulatao (1964, 430), family-type relationships, socialization practices and inescapable togetherness, foster the intensive experience of oneself as a member of a closed group, rather than as a separate self. He describes this phenomenon with the comparative notion of "unindividuated ego." Consequently one's interpersonal world becomes the primary source of emotional gratification, and the successful negotiation of interpersonal affairs with family and friends brings reassurance, recognition, and material rewards, thus gratifying the need for security and acceptance (Lapuz 1972, 176-77).

The need for security and acceptance leads to the observation that a person's self-esteem derives from how he is perceived by others, thus making for conformity to group opinions, timidity and unassertiveness (Signal 1985). It would also lead to the security of role enactment. In Bulatao's (1964, 434) opinion this often results in an

"inferiority complex" for which the educated person "will blame colonial powers for imposing upon him a 'colonial mentality'" but that rather is the product of the suffocating close ties that allow for insufficient development of self.

Consequently Bulatao (1964, 431) describes the Filipino as somebody whose individual core is identifiable but whose ego-boundaries blend with others, an interpretation that Arellano-Carandang (1987, 66-67) refers to as relative degree of [ego] differentiation. Filipinos are parts of groups and have a group-dependent identity. Consequently the basic unit of society is not the individual but the closed group (Bulatao, interview 1988).

Whereas I can sympathize with Enriquez's (1989: 47-66) quest for a positive, Filipino-based terminology to describe Philippine psychology, the basic interpretations of others are remarkably similar. While the idea of identity sharing appears inaccessible to empirical observation and cannot be operationalized, Filipinos seem and believe themselves to be highly dependent on their family for identity, reassurance, and psychological well-being.

Whatever the ensuing psychological interpretations, we can certainly accept one or the other as statements about lowland Christian Philippine culture, and about a shared system of perception and "knowledge." This is, for instance, apparent from the Civil Code that states, "The family, being the foundation of the nation, is a basic social institution which public policy cherishes and protects." It is also apparent from the title of a collection of articles about family roles that has unwittingly or purposefully been called *Being Filipino* (Cordero-Fernando 1981), as if to be a member of a family is the Filipinos' most striking quality. According to the authors of the "Shahani Report."

To the Filipino, one's family is the source of personal identity, the source of emotional and material support, and one's main commitment and responsibility. . . . This sense of family results in a feeling of belonging and rootedness and in a basic sense of security.¹

Belonging, rootedness and identity, emotional support and security, are located in deeply felt relationships. The high emotional charge of these relationships may lead to the ideas of identity sharing, of direct participation in each other's *loób* (inner being), and thus to the widespread idea that people who are near and dear to each other easily empathize. We may formulate this as the dependent

experience of the self, as dependent subjectivity. Dependent subjectivity makes for a high degree of sensitivity to the quality of interpersonal relationships, for vulnerability of self and others in those relationships, and thus for a measure of insecurity and the desire to please the other in order to be accepted. Dependent subjectivity also makes people see others as extensions of themselves. This may be especially so in the relationship of parents with their children.

Children are generally seen as a blessing from God and the inspiration of life; an enormous amount of emotion is invested in them. Parents tend to identify with the successes and failures of their children, a child becoming their substitute self. No wonder that they may think that they know their child, that it has no secrets to them. This justifies their interfering with the child's affairs, a constant meddling (*makialam*) that the child should understand as an expression of love and acceptance. Parents' dependence on their children reinforces the authority structure of the family: parents require unquestioned obedience. Their dependence is also expressed in possessiveness towards their children and the overprotection that they extend, especially to their daughters. Needless to observe that these parental impositions do not promote children's independence. The contrary is true, leading to the vicious circle in which lowly individuated parents, especially mothers, reproduce lowly individuated children (Bulatao 1964, 436).

In the emotion-charged setting of the family, a child will be kept in line by the threat of nonacceptance and the withdrawal of love. Psychologically dependent on others, with parents in full control of its conscience, the growing Filipino child will develop particularly the right section of his brain. According to this theory of Bulatao, in that section of the brain the ego is not prominent and the self gets lost, leading to a self-unaware individualism that orientates itself toward others on the outside.²

A person belongs to somebody else and claims others. It is these others, with the members of the family and the household at the center, that spell a person's moral universe. The pillars of that universe are obligation and hierarchy. Obligation to place family before the self, hierarchy as the unquestioned acceptance of parental authority. The basic responsibility would appear to be not to hurt the feelings of parents, and thus to obey and respect them. Talking back to parents becomes a most despicable show of disrespect and a blow to the self-esteem of a vulnerable and dependent father or mother. To be a good son or daughter implies the consciousness that one

owes one's life to one's parents, that they care, suffer and sacrifice for their offspring, which places the children under a moral obligation. This moral obligation is to reciprocate parental love and care by loving one's parents. This love is expressed by loyalty, obedience, and not failing to live up to their expectations.

Whereas fathers provide and protect, they also lead a significant part of their lives outside the home. Consequently, children experience more of their mothers. Because of the mother's loving care and forgiveness, the mother-child relationship becomes the strongest of bonds, and normally she impresses herself firmly on the emotional economy of her children. If the family is a moral universe, then the mother stands at its center, and respect for her feelings becomes the moral rule par excellence.

The mother seems to embody morality. She is the person who matters most, and doing things against her is treason to her goodness, not to recognize what she has given. It is *walang utang na loob*, most shameful and destructive of self-respect. In such a case God is supposed to withdraw His blessing, resulting in a meager life in which one will be punished by the disloyal and wayward behavior of one's offspring. Consequently the righteous person thinks about his parents', especially his mother's opinion, before engaging in a dubious action. His relationship to the mother somehow becomes the measure of his conscience, and shaming her comes closest to committing sin and activating feelings of guilt.

In this thinking one's conscience is located in concrete relationships with other known people. The most important relationships involve the recognition of goodness received and the ensuing moral obligations. It is these deep-felt obligations to others that spell one's moral world where the most relevant obligations are to parents, family and household members, relatives and friends.³ One's conscience is consciousness of them and their opinions.

To develop an independent self-esteem, one would need to take distance from one's parents first of all. This seems to be very difficult. Psychiatrist Lourdes Lapuz (1972, 180) muses, "Perhaps, some day, the time will come when a Filipino no longer has to cross miles of ocean and continent to emancipate himself from his parents." The Filipino's self-definition is profoundly relational. He is bound to a group, a family and his parents to such an extent that even when married, his mother will prevail over his wife (Lapuz 1977, 57-58, 60-61).

It is from this boundedness that a person may derive his psychological, material and moral security. He is not alone in the insecure wider world surrounding his primary group of near others. Within his group he is accepted, cared for, and will be forgiven, the solidary inner relationships providing the safety net against his lapses and transgressions. Because of this his loyalty should be unquestioned.

Thus far the thinking presented about relationships in the familiar world has not considered the negative aspects of closeness and togetherness. The purpose was to present the positive side of a mentality guiding familial relationships and to reflect on its psychological and moral underpinnings and consequences, because it is these that are expressed in lowland Christian Philippine religious symbolization. As the salient characteristics of that mentality we have seen the ideas of a low degree of individuation, "identity sharing" and empathy, dependent subjectivity, primacy of family and moral obligation, emotional and moral dependence, and the validity of emotions.

Religious Reflections of Family Relationships

One of the widespread beliefs in Asia is the belief in the role that the souls of the recently departed play in the lives of those left behind. The souls that are particularly important are those of grandparents and parents whom one has personally known. As trusted near and dear relatives, one can be sure that they carry the interest of their offspring at their hearts, that they listen to a prayer, have a continual interest in family affairs,⁴ and will be present at a family reunion. The family reunion in mind is *undras*, that is, *Todos los Santos* on the first of November when people congregate in the cemeteries for a festive picnic with food and candle and prayer offerings to the dead. These dead are not only accessible, but participate in the family party, and so it was not strange that the most prestigious cemetery in Lucena had put up masts with loudspeakers from which the usual pop music was blaring.

When asked, "How come you people celebrate All Souls' Day on All Saints' Day?," some quick-witted Filipinos might answer that everybody in heaven is a saint and that people cannot imagine their dear ones to be any place else. Wherever the souls may be, they can

be addressed and respond to prayer. For instance, on a day that one has to go out into the rain because one has forgotten the good old umbrella, a short plea to one's deceased grandfather may often help to stop the rain. Psychologically this continued interest of the dear souls is very reassuring. So they are particularly invoked when someone is troubled because of the anger of others; they console and ward off the threat of revenge.

Next to these departed souls one finds the saints whose representations stand on house altars, in churches and chapels. Often they are well cared for, being provided with a change of dress at the appropriate times, and at home they may be treated as trusted relatives whom one caresses and touches. This tangible presence may express more than mere fondness or the desire to be near. Many statues are believed to harbor *bisà*, efficacious potency that may cure illness, protect from harm, or strengthen one's psychical resources. It is through touch that this potency is transferred to the devotee.

The central and most important personage in the pantheon of saints is the Virgin Mary. The Philippines is a Marian country and the Blessed Mother is its patroness. This special relationship is also expressed at the individual level, and ritual practices and prayer addressing Her are very common and widespread. As a good mother she is dear to most Filipinos and she is supposed to care and help all those who invoke her name. Although her cult is also a reflection of the familial cult of the mother, the most popular statues of the Holy Virgin, for instance, the apparitions at Lourdes or Fatima, are those without a child, radiating purity, calm and grace. Next to these omnipresent statues, one most often finds the flat icon representing her with her child, as the Mother of Perpetual Help.

How dear she is held in the Philippines is perhaps best demonstrated by the initiative of the local hierarchy to celebrate the year 1985 as her 2000th birthday. During that year Marian devotions were intensified and the anniversary itself was enthusiastically celebrated with huge birthday cakes to the cheers of "Happy birthday, Mama Mary" (Dee 1986). The Holy Mother responded to the intensive prayers. Shortly after the Marian year celebrations had ended, the dictator Ferdinand Marcos fell in the "revolution of the rosaries" and fled.⁵ It was obvious that God cared for the Philippines and intervened in its destiny. Consequently the event was declared a miracle and the Eucharistic year celebrations of 1987 could rightfully be proclaimed and find place in the *bayang pinili ng Diyos* (God's chosen country).

The Philippines is a miraculous place and wondrous things are a daily occurrence. God's power and grace are manifested by mediums and faith healers, by apparitions and the sun spinning over Manila,⁶ by power-laden images of saints and the enchanted nature of Mt. Banahaw where holy history is reenacted in pilgrimages that bring a person closest to God.⁷ Stones from the crater are thought to be efficacious amulets with curative properties. The devotees of the Iglesia ni Cristo hold their founder to be an angel of God, and to the folk around Calamba the national hero and martyr, Jose Rizal, has become the equivalent of the Holy Spirit of the Trinity. They expect him to reappear and to free his people from injustice and oppression, inaugurating the millenium.

The supernatural in all its aspects appears to participate in nature, to be directly involved in human affairs, to be very much a part of everyday life. Moreover, its major manifestations seem to be protective and benign. Consequently, people will turn to things religious when looking for help. According to IPC research, trust in God even outranks obedience to parents and is the most important child rearing value (Porio et al. 1981, 27-28). When feeling alone or worried, when others are out of reach, people will pray, "talk with God," and may sacrifice as a special offering just to please God. God can and should be trusted. After all, everything is in His hand; "He is not mad and knows what He is doing."

This trustful dependence was also expressed by the learned procurator of a seminary whom I interviewed about religious manifestations and miracles.

I agree. In the Philippines miracles happen every day. Think about this seminary. Every week I need 10,000 pesos to feed the people here and I can only account for a thousand or so. Yet, the money is there, every week. Obviously God provides. Well, He should, because if we are expected to carry out His work, then He had better see to it that the money is there to do it.

A Banahaw mystic expressed his trust in God as follows:

God is our Servant, a servant upon whom we can depend if we approach him by way of sacrifices. It is the Devil who is out in the open, who is the lord (*panginoon*) who wants to be served by us.

God is invoked at the beginning of almost every type of endeavor, whether the opening of a session of the Senate, a departure on a sea journey, the inauguration of a snack-bar, or a social at the

tennis club. His presence is a matter of course and is manifested in the multitude of religious symbols, from the "God bless our trip" in a public conveyance to the omnipresent Santo Niño, from the space devoted to religion in newspapers to the national postage stamps, from jeepneys named "Immaculate Concepcion" and "St. Peter" to Jesus's halo lighting white when speeding, His holy heart in red when stepping on the brake in an upcountry bus.

This ubiquitous symbolization hints at nearness, intimacy, accessibility. In poetry one may find sentences about "God my Brother," in advertising about "friendship between God and man," at the driver's seat "God is my co-pilot." A progressive action group is called "Friends of Jesus." In the Ateneo de Manila high school they talk about *Kuya Jess* (Older Brother Jesus). It seems that people feel they have a friendship and family relationship with their holy family.

This intimate relationship is expressed in the feelings of dependence already hinted at and in the emotional identification and empathy with the suffering of Jesus and His Mother. Naturally this suffering stands very much at the center during Holy Week when the emotion-charged passion of Christ is reenacted all over the country, but also when visiting a church while praying at and touching the image of the tormented Christ. Extreme identification appears on the part of the flagellants during Holy Week when they embark on this task in order "to help Christ and share in his ordeal," their participation in His once-a-year torment making them His bosom-friends (Zialcita 1986, 59).

The most domesticated personage is the Holy Child. Over the past thirty years His popularity has grown explosively and His image has been appropriated by all and sundry. He is the darling of the gays and the firemen, dressed as a fisherman in villages along the coast, in *barong tagalog* in night clubs, or even stark naked as the *Santo Niño ng Kalayaan* (Holy Child of Freedom) at the one-year celebrations of Marcos' flight. Normally the Sto. Niño is dressed in rich sixteenth century European garb, in red or green, and he may be found at the house altar and on the check-out counter of many a shop. Apart from all kinds of blessings ascribed to the Holy Child, he is especially thought to attract money "because people like to give to a child." Being a child makes the Sto. Niño easy to please and often people cajole Him in order to grant their wishes.⁸

The intimacy with the Holy Family consisting of a Trusted Father, Mama Mary and Older Brother Jesus/Santo Niño, makes the Holy

Family an extension of one's own family, part of one's identity as it were, with whom one feels he has direct, emotional relationships. Since the Holy Family symbolizes the positive aspects of these relationships, intimacy with them emphasizes trust, protection, dependence, consolation, and even playfulness in the case of the Sto. Niño. This intimacy with the holy family is not marred by feelings of sin. Sin and guilt are located in the concrete relationships with known persons and it is insolence against one's parents that needs to be atoned for.⁹ Sin and guilt are not located in the idealized relationships with God as a fatherly friend and protective father, or with Mama Mary as a pure, caring, and forgiving mother, or with Jesus as a reliable older brother or friend. They understand and accept human weakness. As long as one tries to be a good son or daughter, as long as one proves to be a reliable friend, error will be smoothed away and one will be accepted as long as one sticks to the basics of the family code.

Family relationships, whether idealized or concrete, are subjective, personalized, negotiable and emotional. They do not represent a hard moral order. On the contrary, because of intimacy and emotional identification with the holy as well as with one's own family, persons may remain little individuated and measure at each other. Consequently, the infraction of God's law as sin and its confession—which means measuring with an outside device, and an exercise in individuating self-criticism—are not deeply meaningful categories in the religious mentality.¹⁰

The absence of a deep sense of sin does not mean that one expects to be free from suffering. It is impossible to know God's reasons and plan, but one knows that He can be trusted. Moreover, suffering seems to be an intrinsic part of life, dramatized in the passion of Christ and the grief of Mary. It is a sacrifice, a way of praying and purification that may give the courage to struggle on. The way out of suffering, if any, appears to lie more in prayer and sacrifice than in repentance and seeking forgiveness. Religious practice is future directed and not intended to redeem a sinful past.

Emotional participation in the sphere of religion tallies with a low degree of individuation. People do not live over and against things religious, but with them. They do not transcend the symbols they believe in, but experience them concretely, directly. Fascinated with and trustful of the supernatural, miracles can be expected and prayer must be effective, often resulting in a childlike faith, but also in naive credulity.¹¹

Conclusion

If religious representations are to be vital, they need to be connected to the practice and experience of everyday life. They must be close to life, recognizable. In this sense the Filipinization of Catholicism has been very successful. The predominant religious mentality is very similar to the positive mentality guiding family life. Religion idealizes, legitimizes and sanctifies familiar relationships. Its symbols strengthen and express the private and morally binding realm of life.

Popular religiosity does not appear to transcend the family. It is not really concerned with great ideas, such as the relationship between man and universe, cosmology, metaphysics, or even the afterlife. God is an individual, personalized God and it is personal trust in God that legitimizes the conditions in the wider world outside. The practice of religion is individual and family-centered. It is not church-centered and people do not think of themselves as members of the institutional Church, or that the Church would be an expression of a (national) community of believers. The prevailing religious mentality fosters a way of life that is myopically focussed on the family and the life world. Consequently the family tends to become its own closed moral universe existing next to other such families.

Catholicism has greatly contributed to shaping lowland culture; it has also been brought in line with social experience and the prevailing world view. This process of Filipinization is continuous and probably accelerating because of the loosening hold of the priests over the beliefs of the faithful. Nowadays, the authority of the priest is questioned at times and he has become human. Because the people generally keep a strong interest in things religious, a fantastic religious supermarket appears to be flourishing that offers something for every taste, so inspiring more and more people to do their own thing.

Notes

1. *Building a People, Building a Nation. A Moral Recovery Program.* A report submitted by Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani to the Committee on Education, Arts and Culture and the Committee on Social Justice, Welfare and Development. (Instructional Materials Corporation for the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Republic of the Philippines, 9 May 1988), p. 2

2. Bulatao speaks about a "jeepney-driver individualism" that is moved by the outside, by "radar" as it were, in which the self is not the source of action of judgement. In cultures that foster the development of the left section of the brain, individuation, or the development of a prominent self, would lead to a greater degree of independence. Instead of being guided by "radar," a person would show the characteristics of a "gyroscope." (Interviews 1987, 1988).

3. Friends are often incorporated in the kin-based moral world by ritually establishing bonds of kinship through *compadrazgo*, that is, godparenthood.

4. "Filipinos also believe that spirits of their dead kinsmen take an interest in the needs of the living relatives and feel hurt when they are not remembered" (Mercado 1977, 26). Consequently family-centered church ritual, such as marriage, is often seen as a means to inform dead relatives (de Mesa 1987, 196).

5. Because of the great role of religious symbolism and prayer, it seems appropriate in this context to refer to the EDSA events of February 1986 as "the revolution of the rosaries." It was "Flowers against bullets. Rosaries against tanks. Love vs. force" (Sta. Maria 1986).

6. Interest in miracles, apparitions, saintly intercession, etc., must be strong if we consider newspaper space devoted to such things in the English language press.

7. It is often held that Banahaw and Rizalista cults are the exclusive preoccupation of simple, mostly rural folk. This does not seem to be the case. My contacts with Banahaw mysticism came through four university-educated professionals in Lucena City who regularly participated in a Tayabas-based medium-centered cult. My experiences with faith-healing are thoroughly middle class too. This point is also made by Takefumi Terada (1987), "Many economically well-off, educated, intellectual individuals are also participating in the activities as principal supporters" (p. 223).

8. Honey A. Carandang suggests that the special place of the Santo Niño may be related to the Filipino's child-like faith and his ascribing certain powers to the little child, especially the youngest (*bunsó*), who has the "power" of bringing the family together and to whose wishes the others give in (Personal Communication, February 1991).

9. Zialcita's (1986, 60) research among flagellants provides interesting detail: whereas adults engaged in the practice to redeem a vow and to ensure health and physical strength, and thus sacrificed for a future objective, young adolescents felt obliged to submit to the ritual because they had wronged their kinsmen and could in this manner publicly express their repentance.

10. Priests complain that people who come for confession tend to explain their 'sins' in terms of circumstances, of being pushed into a certain action by family or friends, blaming others for their transgressions. Consequently a sense of repentance often seems to be lacking. The concept of sin was introduced by the Spanish missionaries who had to coin a word from the root *sala*, which means mis-take, missing the target. Yet to miss or err is merely human and no good reason for extreme sanctions. Moreover, priests also err, they are human too. So why go and confess to a fellow human being who may commit the same errors? (The notions of sin, guilt, and repentance are of course known and often even alive among those who went through Catholic schools).

11. After giving a long list of utterances that may be referred to as instances of magical thinking, psychiatrist Lourdes Lapuz (1977, 110) emphasizes, "These were not utterances of provincial or rural folk, of the unschooled, or of psycho-phrenics. They

were spoken by persons who were literate, enlightened, mostly professionals (including nurses and doctors) who read current literature on psychology, child rearing, personality development. They were not spoken in the course of jesty banter or meaningless chatter, but during serious discussions of personal psychological difficulties."

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