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Modern Psychology and Philippine National Development

ABRAHAM I. FELIPE

One of the most enduring and central propositions regarding the morality of development is that Man is its end. All our efforts in improving his political, social and economic life are geared toward his welfare. That is the purpose of development, its only justification. It is for man. Because development is for man, it can proceed only along the lines of a society's conception of his nature. Thus, different societies follow different paths of development because of differences in their concept of man's nature. For example, the view that man is an economic being who has to struggle against overwhelming forces of unjust economic systems, will lead to attempts to control and manage those economic systems in order that man would not be at a disadvantage. The view that man is a composite of body and soul leads to provisions for his soul's well-being, at the same time that his body's welfare is being attended to. The view that man is a being endowed with potentials which can be realized only within a social setting, compels us to create opportunities for realizing his potentialities within society, aside from looking into the social structures that arrest his development. Because every effort at improving man's well-being must necessarily be based on society's belief regarding his nature, we say that man is also the beginning of development. Our society's official view of what is good for the Filipino is contained in what we call our National Development Plan. Let us quote the goals which this plan seeks to attain, as stated in the foreword of the *Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, 1987-92*:

Our major tasks during this period are economic recovery in the short run and sustainable growth in the long run. Accordingly, the Plan addresses the need to institute the necessary structural reforms within the economy

in order to facilitate the attainment of the Development Plan's goals of poverty alleviation, employment generation, income redistribution and durable economic growth.¹

A more elegant expression of the same purpose was stated years ago. Let me quote from President Marcos's "Message" on the 1984-87 *Philippine Development Plan*, to assure you that the objectives have been constant, even if the source has been discredited:

This Plan shall be the basis of all our development efforts under the New Republic. It is crucial to us, not merely so that we may survive in a period visited by great economic difficulties the world over, but so that we may gain for all Filipinos a decent livelihood and a share in the prosperity we seek to engender. In sustaining the growth momentum during the critical adjustment period, it is imperative that we remind ourselves of our fundamental philosophy of development: To reach and uplift the poorest segments of our population including the unemployed, the underemployed, the homeless dweller, the out-of-school youth, the landless and upland worker, the sacada, and the sustenance fisherman. A much improved quality of life is to be extended to all our people in the shortest time possible.²

Reading the *Plan*, one encounters such ideas as improving the balance of payment, stabilizing the peso vis-a-vis the dollar, providing employment, distributing agricultural land ownership, import liberalization, progressive taxation, regular adjustment in minimum wages, emphasis on industrial peace, extension of leasehold contracts, and others. They are methods proposed in order to improve the Filipino's well-being. Many of the methods are conceptually strange to us. But let us not be confused by these details. What is important is to keep in mind certain assumptions that are not articulated, since these could guide the response to be made by psychology.

The first assumption is that the complex web of strategies and methods referred to above is designed to ensure man's well-being, as eloquently stated by our discredited source. In the plan, man's well-being is simply defined in terms of the provision of basic needs for food, water, shelter, energy, clothing, medicine, education, and security: man's basic needs. Our esteem for the Filipino is not diminished by the fact that our national plan, like the respective plans of other societies, aspires to satisfy only his basic needs, and not his higher level needs such as self-actualization. In fact, it is precisely by giving

1. National Economic Development Authority, "Foreword" in *Medium Term Philippine Development Plan 1987-1992* (Manila, 1986).

2. National Economic Development Authority, "President's Message," in *Philippine Development Plan, 1984-1987* (Manila, 1983).

the Filipino his basic wants that we aspire to ensure his human "dignity."

The second assumption is that in modern societies, the provision of these needs is mediated by the action of government. Government is not just an aide, but an active agent which makes sure that desired objectives are realized (e.g., land redistributed, credit made available, products sold at acceptable prices). A government that is unable to realize such objectives would be impotent in enabling its citizens to reach higher levels of comfort and satisfaction. It is when a government is able to effectively mobilize its various resources in providing for these needs that we speak of a modern government governing legitimately.

The third assumption is that the amount of authority government is permitted to exercise will make a difference in its ability to meet the needs of people. Everyday we hear of humble citizens who ask government to act on their behalf, to release them from the bondage of poverty and the misfortunes of ill health, unemployment, ignorance and social injustice. They pin all their hopes on government, believing that it is government's duty and responsibility to improve their situation. This expectation requires government to be strong, because a weak government would not be able to secure the welfare of its citizens. A weak government would not be able to redress radical inequities in the distribution of wealth, nor promptly provide opportunities that would permit the less fortunate to enjoy the benefits abundantly enjoyed by others.

It is part of social reality that what brings relief to a person might be resources which are controlled, sometimes illegitimately, at other times legitimately but nonetheless immorally, by others. The ill health and destruction brought about by urban floods are often traceable to illegal constructions on waterways, the undisciplined use of water control systems, the wanton disposal of garbage, the unbridled destruction of our forests. Food scarcity has been attributed to the misuse of land which has led to a decrease in productivity, the pollution of our water systems by chemicals, the low morale of farmers due to the control of prices by landlords or middlemen, the difficulty of regulating irrigation because of deforestation—matters which are beyond any individual Filipino's ability to deal with. Being related to practices of other men, these matters could be controlled by government action that would discourage such practices, together with the citizen's tacit acceptance of the need for government to intervene or regulate the exercise of certain individual liberties which tend to impair human welfare.

The degree to which human needs are gratified in human societies could be controlled by conventions—who can own land, who can borrow from the cooperative, who can plant, where one can build a house, how one can get medical care, etc. But conventions can be contaminated by power and may not be maintained by an intent to be just. Resources may be under the full control of certain classes. Rule-making could be the privilege of a few.

Government is expected to guarantee that everyone can claim this right to human welfare, and not permit that this right be enjoyed only by a few by virtue of their birth or social circumstance. For government to be able to do this, it should have the commensurate power to intervene whenever the welfare of the community is in jeopardy or injustice exists. This power emanates from the people, and government's efficacy goes only as far as the citizens' sense of duty to support it. This empowerment of government by a people must be reflected in a society's rituals, norms and traditions.

PSYCHOLOGY AND WELL-BEING

Let me restate that human well-being is what psychology is all about. Understanding the psyche as an objective of psychological science is premised on a further objective, namely, that with understanding will come a greater ability to undertake the more important purpose of designing what can enhance man's well-being. Explanation, prediction and control are scientists' ways of stating this purpose. Over the years, psychologists have discovered reasons to be preoccupied with a wide range of specializations—implanting electrodes in hamsters' brains, studying the behavior of baboons in nature, the patterns of sending information in groups imposing varying constraints, the reliability of a response on an item, color perception in inkblots, rapid eye movements, analyzing dreams, and other innumerable exotic interests. But the rationale for all these, ultimately, converges on the more utilitarian nature of the inspiration that brought about the development of psychology and continues to guide its progress, namely, the enhancement of human welfare.

This rationale is more obvious when the basic studies are applied, as in psychiatry, industrial and clinical psychology, and the latter's less prestigious derivatives, guidance and counseling. In these areas which are more unabashedly concerned with human welfare, let us take note of the methods used by psychology, so that we may be able to relate them to "welfare" from the viewpoint of development.

The immediate concerns of development and psychology are obviously different. Development deals with such matters as poverty,

ill health, malnutrition, substandard education, lack of shelter, etc. Psychologists, on the other hand, have concerned themselves with highly dysfunctional states as psychoses, socially disturbing problems such as delinquency and compulsive violence, and less fatal but still bothersome problems such as bed-wetting, stammering, tics and allergies. No gain will be attained by focusing on these differences or by contrasting the methods utilized by development technologists with the individually focused clinical methods of psychologists.

To move forward and make psychology more relevant to development, it is more helpful to study the assumptions in therapy.

Human welfare from the viewpoint of psychology is based on the satisfaction of human needs. There have been many views as to what constitute human needs, but all of them recognize what are known as basic physiological needs, such as the need for food, water, air, rest, etc. Others posit that once these needs are met, other needs become more dominant (e.g., Maslow's safety needs—security, stability, dependency, protection, freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos, need for structure, law, order, limits, strength in the protector, etc.). If both the physiological and safety needs are fairly well gratified, there will emerge the need for love, affection and belonging, which if adequately gratified will occasion the need for self-respect, self-esteem or the esteem of others to feel more important. And finally, there is the need for self-actualization (Maslow) variously called different names by different authors (Rogers' "need to be fully functioning," Fromm's "productive character"), the need for a person to be what he must be, that is, to fulfil his "nature."³

Well-being is prevented when these needs are thwarted. Thwarting could be caused by obstacles or by the absence of a needed object in the environment or by certain inhibitions or conflicts within an individual, left as residues of certain past experiences. It is due to psychology that we have a generally accepted belief that satisfaction of needs leads to health and that thwarting of needs is not desirable. One must be freed from the burden of unmet needs, for nonsatisfaction arrests a person's further development, since his time and efforts are directed towards the blocked needs, thus preventing the further enhancement of his potentialities. This view is a contribution of psychology to the world's understanding of human behavior and nature.

3. See A.H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), pp. 199–234; C.R. Rogers, "A Theory of Therapy, Personality and Interpersonal Relationships, as Developed in the Client-Centered Framework," in *Psychology: A Study of a Science*, vol. 3, ed. S. Koch (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), pp. 184–256; and Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself* (New York: Rinehart, 1941), p. 82 ff.

It is from this vantage point that the discovery of inner conflicts, unconscious strivings, or other internal structures or processes, have become important and interesting not only to health workers but also to ordinary persons. The authority attached to psychology as a "science" enabled psychologists to influence how people should regard these internal structures. They have been regarded as "problems" because they block, defer, or frustrate the satisfaction of certain needs. Certain wishes are deferred because of conflicts; certain others are denied because of internalized prohibitions. Some very legitimate needs are not satisfied because of irrational fears.

Thus, these sources of human frustrations have been recognized as unwelcome. From professional practice came the concept of "traumas" and the numerous proofs that purport to show that psychological disturbances are connected to residues of authority now irrationally controlling behavior. The harsh superego became a favorite scapegoat. However, over the years it even became less and less necessary to attribute harshness to the superego for it to obstruct health. A young lady's incredulous question to another, "Do you mean to say that you are doing that not because you really want it but only because you feel it is an obligation?," reflects the current view that even a mild superego would prejudice psychological health. We can recognize this trend in the therapeutic methods developed by psychology and medicine to enable persons to come to terms with both their needs and their conscience.

This view of psychological health held a compelling attraction for an important clientele preoccupied with neuroses (namely, the American middle class). This attraction led to a vast literature on such matters as bed-wetting, nightmares, recurrent themes in dreams, tics, exhibitionism, kleptomania, nervous sweating, sexual perversions, compulsive thoughts, visions, allergies and others. This clientele was paying for nursing these abnormalities what they might have felt was an exorbitant price of personal discomfort, embarrassment, decreased efficiency, fatigue and extreme anxiety, not to mention the strain on their finances.

Psychologists came to their rescue. We already know that, in the process, they have traced these problems to internal prohibitions—to conscience, values, or some other terms that reflect a sense of right and wrong—as the individual tries to satisfy his needs. Health is equated with the freedom from needs. A problem is equated with nonsatisfaction, frustration, denial, or deprivation of a need.

Unnoticed, a concept of human nature shaped by the socioeconomic character of the American clientele has taken hold of a large part of psychology, leading psychologists away from being interested in the

deprivation of basic needs and toward the level of higher needs, instead. This influenced the psychologists' professional conviction on the role of the superego, for it is in these higher needs where the superego (not in the strict psychoanalytic sense) has potency. It is here, for example, where what we call a "sense of duty" could easily prevent, as it usually does, something else the individual wants. Hence, "duty" could be against individual interest, and therefore unwanted. In the same way, external norms are at best tolerated, but inherently not welcomed, for as a rule they tend to intrude into matters of private interest. The spoiled delinquent is the caricature of a person who is repelled by norms.

THE PHILIPPINE SITUATION

Let us try to understand why psychology, as we know it in the Philippines, views these matters in the fashion of the Americans.

Psychology came to the Philippines via our school system whose form and content have been American. It initially came via schools of education and then via departments of psychology. The major source of the Filipino's psychological perspectives of man, therefore, has been America.

American psychology has a peculiar focus and interest shaped by the specific American experience. The emphasis on the individual, the interest in freeing the individual from the constraints of an external authority, the obsession to weaken external authority—all these are peculiarly American values that have been reflected in their views about man and transmitted to the Philippines as universal truths, without being recognized as merely the world view of another people.

American social thought has been shaped by the history of the American people's struggle for political autonomy against the British monarchy. It was nurtured in and by a people who, impelled by religious and political persecutions to leave their homelands, learned to place the highest value on freedom from traditions and authority. It was sustained by the challenge of a new country that required courage and independence of spirit, since these were virtues necessary to conquer the frontier. From the wrenching political struggle of a persecuted people living on a frontier grew a world view where individual man's liberty is valued, external authority denigrated, and the wisdom to weaken it upheld. It is the character of the American people and their peculiar history which led them, to accept, develop and promote a theory of man's nature which equated man's well-being with the expulsion of an internalized authority, even if this thinking had been invented elsewhere. Thus, we can readily under-

stand why it was in the American intellectual and academic soil that the Freudian process of flogging the harsh superego in order to bring about health found fertile ground.

Here, too, in the Philippines, the message of freedom contained in American psychology found fertile ground in a nation just emerging from centuries of autocratic rule. As freedom promised a better life in the political sphere, so was there also a promise of betterment if only individuals could be freed from the burdens of religious traditions, of social obligations imposed by the native culture, and of a sense of being an inferior people created by cultural subjugation. This is the background of the Filipino as psychologist who, spurred to be modern, did so in the only way he knew how, that is, to become Americanized. His is the portrait depicted in Nick Joaquin's oft-quoted statement on Philippine history being 300 years in a convent followed by fifty years of Hollywood.

It was therefore understandable, historically, that Filipino psychologists would acquire the American concerns, techniques and conceptualizations of psychological phenomena. The sense of achievement for having successfully taught a quadriplegic how to open a bottle of pickles, the interest in tics, nightmares and allergies, complaints of illnesses, insomnia, inactivity, perversions, compulsions, visions, amnesia, idiocy, and a host of other esoteric maladies make sense only within the context of the American tradition. Their explanations were inspired by schools of thought promoted by American sources. We have adopted them as the "correct" concerns to enhance human welfare. It has not been easy to start from another posture.

This interpretation of how psychology spread in the Philippines, has two implications. It helps us understand why certain matters are emphasized when discussing psychological well-being or health. Because of American influence, it was difficult for Filipino psychologists to develop an interest in such mundane matters as reforestation, pollution, land reform, etc. These matters were never a part of the domains of American psychological inquiry.

Second, this interpretation explains the special attention given to the methods of attaining psychological well-being. Indeed, some of the psychologist's tools for dealing with various psychological problems are imaginative (e.g. dream analysis, picturing, the use of laughter for terminally ill cancer patients). Others are cute (such as when clients are made to pet and coo sweet nothings to each other). Some would be atrocious to prim and proper Victorian ladies (such as when patients are coaxed to make up new strange words while wading together in a hot tub undressed). Even when patrons testify to the effectiveness of these strange psychological devices, we have to sadly

admit that it is not obvious how these concerns and techniques can help alleviate poverty, establish peace and order, reduce unemployment, ignorance, and sickness, which are among our people's problems. The problem of the Filipino is not expressed in terms of the incidence of insomnia, impotence or constipation. The Filipino child's problem is not that he wets his bed; rather, it is that he has no bed.

The problems of national development in the Philippines are truly different. We are concerned with the physical bodies and the humanity of young children picking on garbage to get food or selling sexual pleasure to strangers and thus risking becoming fatally sick. We speak of 20,000 street children roaming the streets begging, shoe-shining, vending, prostituting themselves, drug-pushing, pickpocketing. This is the image of poverty that the national society correctly believes should be solved. This problem could be expressed in the terms familiar to planners—average family income and poverty lines, percentage of children with second or third level of malnutrition, infant mortality rates, number of out-of-school children, etc.

Philippine national development is also concerned with maintaining a habitable environment for man and for plant and animal lives, which are important for human consumption. The forest covers, the waters and sea beds, sources of energy and patterns of energy consumption, the air we breathe, the protective layers of gases in the atmosphere that drive out certain energies and keep in certain elements needed by life, nuclear fallouts—these are our important environmental concerns. A caricature of the state of our forest resources shows one species of trees lost every hour by indiscriminate logging, the *kaingin* practice and the encroachment of a growing population. Experts have warned that by the end of the century, most of our valuable tree species would have been destroyed, and with their extinction, the loss of their potential value to our people and perhaps to all mankind. Philippine national development requires that we attend to these concerns.

National development also requires the wise and efficient use of our national resources and living treasures, the control of graft and corruption that divert public resources for the private and illegitimate enjoyment of a few, the efficient management of government, the effective generation of government revenues, the control of smuggling, the control of population growth—all in order to uplift the condition of the majority of Filipinos. The increased productivity of the economy—the equitable distribution of the fruits of labor, the availability of credit, the ownership of agricultural land, more work opportunities, the wages of workers—these are material to development.

We should not expect that the methods provided by psychology will be adequate for solving these problems. That expectation is not fair. Psychology has its own distinctive approaches that make it psychology and not any other field. But, to repeat, this is not the basis of our criticism. It is not the present methods of psychology that make it irrelevant. Instead, it is its assumptions about what is required to attain well-being, i.e., that the superego should be purged and the internalized authority, expelled. It is this low regard for the sense of right and wrong, for values, for the sense of duty and obligations and responsibility, which places psychology at cross-purposes with development.

A point of view which is concerned only with individual welfare, as is the case with modern psychology, will likely overlook what the larger community, the *nation* in particular, considers as problems of welfare. A point of view that equates human welfare with individuals being able to perform specific skills (such as a quadriplegic opening a bottle of pickles, or controlling stammering, or stopping sleep-walking) calls attention to certain problems while neglecting those of poverty, malnutrition, high infant mortality, illiteracy, which are among the concerns of national development.

Furthermore, a viewpoint that emphasizes the need to be able to liberate oneself from the irrational clutches of an internalized authority will lead to a rejection of the need for authority in order to deal with problems of human welfare. Herein lies the more serious divergence in the approach of contemporary psychology on the one hand, and the requisites of national development on the other. At this point, psychology becomes not only irrelevant to social problems; it becomes antithetical to them. Its basic premise becomes antidevelopmental, because it posits a view of man that is contrary to what is required by the thrusts of development, namely, that as a social being, man must act in a community in such a way that he accepts an obligation to ensure the welfare of its members.

It is unfortunate that American psychology did not grow out of an impoverished society. Due to that accident, psychological theories of human well-being developed from observations in a society where the basic wants are generally easily satisfied. The study of man as he tries to satisfy his basic needs was foregone. The consequence was a viewpoint of human well-being in a prosperous society where the basic needs are gratified to the extent that man can afford the luxury of being annoyed with his neuroses.

Not so in the case of the Philippines. A viewpoint of human well-being will have to come to grips with the realities of this society. These realities will dictate local priorities as well as the strategies that

its members have to employ in order to cope realistically with their needs. Poverty, environmental viability and government inefficiency, everybody agrees, summarize the major problems to be solved in order to enhance the Filipino's well-being. To reconcile its concerns with those of development, psychology cannot escape addressing such problems.

PSYCHOLOGY AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To make psychology relevant to the task of national development, those problems of national development as defined by our national planners must first be accepted by psychologists as valid for their science as well. To offer an alternative inventory of problems would just invite official indifference.

It will not be easy for psychologists to run away from this challenge. For how can a science that purports to have a theory of human well-being ignore human suffering? How can it attach a greater value to the elimination of tics and bed-wetting, or the control of anxiety in an enclosed space, and other idiosyncratic personal problems, and be indifferent to the greater problems faced by thousands of sick, destitute, illiterate, ill-housed people? Only a perverted sense of values would give a higher priority to neurotic complaints and consign the larger social problems to a lower priority. It is also the psychologists' task to show that their tools, technological and conceptual, can be counted among those used by society in dealing with social problems.

But before the technological, psychology must first examine its intellectual tools. How valid is the role given to the process of liberating the individual from demands of authority, real or internalized, in the form of a sense of duty or obligation or a sense of right and wrong, in enhancing the Filipino's human welfare? Perhaps, this view is valid in a prosperous society where basic survival is presumed and people are concerned with higher needs. But to try to alleviate ill health, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, and pollution by liberating a person from an internalized authority would require a most fertile imagination.

On the other hand, it is unregulated individualism and its concomitant unrestrained use of powers and exercise of liberties by some members of society that produce threats to human welfare. The collective perception of the deprived and the oppressed affirms this.

Can not these problems then be better solved by an acceptance of an authority to curb and restrain such threats? Let me quote O.D. Corpuz as he addressed this problem:

Conscience moves some of us to alleviate the lot of our unfortunate fellow human beings through individual and private acts of charity. But it is a higher morality to agree that the collective conscience of the community shall impose upon the government that we maintain the legal and the moral obligation to use the community's substance and intelligence to defend the dignity of every citizen against whatever threat from whatever source. This involves a commitment from all of us to restore to our fellow citizens the human capability to develop to the fullness of their potential.⁴

These views take us back to psychology's intellectual predecessors, namely, social and political philosophy, for a broader perspective of human nature and human well-being. Their relevance to our topic lies in their conception of what is good for man. In these fields are found the roots of the concept of the need for man to realize his potentialities in their fullness which is central in the modern view of ethics and which has been adopted by many psychological thinkers such as Rogers, Fromm, and Maslow, among others.

It is Aristotle to whom this modern concept is usually traced. For Aristotle, every man has potentialities to develop physically, intellectually, morally, socially. To become truly human, man must realize all these potentials in himself. It is that realization which is good and which constitutes his well-being as a person. Modern ethics has added to this view that every man has the inalienable right to claim, both from other men and society, that his human worth shall not count less than theirs. This simply means that every person has as much right to develop his potentials as anybody else. On this is based the meaning of true human equality.

Modern psychology has enriched this view. From psychology, we learn that man has basic needs which imprison his being. Unless these basic needs are satisfied, man cannot become truly free.

Modern thought accepts that man is not man without society. No man can be fully human apart from other men. But his need to be with others ironically exposes him to the risk that other men and human structures (conventions, institutions) can block the satisfaction of his needs. Such structures must be eliminated for man to be free to develop his potentials, but they must be eliminated only within a social order, not outside of it. Within this context, a morally significant action is one that promotes true freedom from human needs. Everyone who claims it is his right that his human worth be not counted any less than any other man's, must recognize such as a right in other

4. Onofre D. Corpuz, "Liberty and Government in our New Society," in F.E. Marcos, et al., *Toward the New Society* (Manila: National Media Production Center, 1974).

men. As one would not wish another to obstruct his right to be human, so must he acknowledge the same right in others.

To treat the development of others as one would his own, will make living in society more satisfying. Each must contribute to making society more hospitable to man's pursuit of well-being. This must therefore be an obligation to be extracted from all men. That is every man's *duty*. To violate this norm is therefore to violate man's nature and right. To support it must be viewed neither as a person's renunciation of his own right nor as masochism, but as the affirmation of one's man-ness with others.

To achieve this, society must employ the instrument of government which has the duty to equalize the opportunities for every man to develop fully. To quote O.D.Corpuz once more:

The institutions that men devise, including their governmental institutions, are to be regarded not as hindrances to human fulfillment, but as necessary instruments for creating those situations and opportunities that restore, promote or enhance human capability.⁵

To redress inequalities, government must affirm that it is morally correct not only to provide more opportunities for those of its members whose needs are greater, but also to actually remove the constraints to man's full development where such constraints exist. "Government therefore becomes a reflection of our enlightened conscience, an additional resource of individuals and of the community, to assist them in attaining their development, and if need be to emancipate them from despair and misfortune. In other words, government becomes the community's instrument of liberation and freedom, because government helps men to become free and human."⁶

This duty of society to its members entails a corresponding obligation on the part of its members. Every member has the unconditional obligation to help the efforts of government to justly redistribute life's opportunities to all. It is in accepting this sense of what is right that psychology may be relevant to our efforts in national development. Psychology must begin with this conviction.

CONCLUSION

In Philippine society today, there exist radical inequalities in the distribution of opportunities for man to develop fully. Our National Development Plan is premised on the conviction that these inequali-

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

ties must be redressed. It is our government's moral duty to redress them.

But Philippine society cannot perform this duty unless Filipinos first accept their obligations to their fellow men, and perform them. Certainly, the problems in Philippine Society cannot be redressed by paying inordinate attention to individual persons' psychological problems. They require, to begin with, that we Filipinos render to our fellows what is their due as humans, endowed with potentials to be attained through the process of satisfying needs.

Duty and obligation in community life are concepts that psychology must incorporate to be relevant to our country's needs. With these concepts, we bring back to the realm of psychology the feared superego, and we say that the superego has a valid and respectable place in modern man's search for his well-being. With the concept of the superego, and its social representations in the forms of norms of conduct, traditions and regulations, the search becomes easier. Psychology should not be ashamed of doing this, as if it were retrogressing after decades of fashionably devaluing "conscience." Psychology should look for the superego and, having found it, assign it a due place in its theories of human well-being.

The role we assign the superego is consistent with the perception of educational leaders for a need to reeducate the young on values, and the call of the national leadership for the same. However, we do not equate the superego with merely a basket of virtues and vices. Nor is it identical to good manners and right conduct. Instead, it represents a system of beliefs that assigns a meaningful role to man in a community. For community life to promote human welfare, this system of beliefs must be shared.