

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

---

## Applied Filipino Philosophy

Review Author: Ramon C. Reyes

*Philippine Studies* vol. 25, no. 3 (1977) 366–368

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>  
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

areas for future research. Fifty recommendations are made, and these are classified according to the book's sections. The recommendations are fine, and some of these, according to what Estefania Aldaba-Lim says in the preface, have been implemented. But the editor correctly states that the recommended research topics still have to be reconciled with administrative priorities. What are these priorities? Rafael Esmundo contends that administrators seek, within the shortest time possible, research findings about reaching program goals in the most efficient and beneficial manner. In his opinion, few or none of the papers presented answer these questions. The statement is harsh, but contains some truth. As a long-term goal, it is perhaps imperative that researchers and administrators devise appropriate designs and strategies which will provide policy makers with information to make quick and responsible decisions. As a short-term measure, and given the available data and techniques, researchers and administrators should perhaps proceed with social experimentation, learning about, and dealing with, program consequences in the process.

The book covers a wide variety of topics, and should not be read in one sitting. Readers will find the book valuable if only to appreciate how social scientists grapple with Philippine population issues. Several articles (and the bibliographies contained in these) are also useful for researchers engaged in further studies. The organization, print, and binding of the book are commendable, though the same cannot be said of the editing work. Editing errors such as inconsistent bibliographic format, unclear table titles, and an array of spelling and punctuation errors, among others, proved distracting.

Ricardo G. Abad

APPLIED FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY. By Leonardo N. Mercado, S.V.D.  
Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publications, 1977. xi, 98 pages.

*Applied Filipino Philosophy* is a compilation of articles most of which have been published previously in local journals. Father Leonardo N. Mercado, considers this work as examples of application of basic concepts which he has already established in a previous work, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*.

The first article, "Aesthetics," tries to show that Filipino aesthetics is "non-dualistic" as opposed to Western aesthetics, which is seen to be "dualistic." Non-dualism is defined as a type of aesthetics wherein the subject and the object, though kept distinct, are unified in a whole, whereas dualism would dichotomize between subject and object.

The author holds that Greek aesthetics is typically dualistic, such as for example in Plato, in whom there is a distinction between the realm of the Idea and of the sense object, or in Aristotle, in whom there is distinction

between matter and form. Presumably, such distinctions are tantamount to or consequent upon the dichotomy between subject and object. On the other hand, Oriental aesthetics is presented as non-dualistic, as manifested, for example, in the strong sense of union with the Absolute in Indian art and the sense of harmony with nature in Chinese and Japanese art.

Filipino art is shown to be non-dualistic by adverting to various traces — linguistic structures in Filipino languages show that words used to denote the experience of “good” and “beautiful” are the same expressions to denote feminine beauty, words used to signify sexual pleasure at the same time refer to tastes and gustatory delights. Presumably, such data would argue toward a holistic, non-dualistic type of aesthetics. Finally, by way of what the author calls “philosophical explanation,” Filipino aesthetics is said to be non-dualistic because the Filipino thinks not in terms of “logic” but by way of “intuition” and “poetic symbols.”

In the second article, “Philosophy of History,” the author says that Filipino time is “non-linear” as opposed to “linear.” Referring to authorities such as Dumoulin, To Thi Anh, Bultmann, and Buber, the Filipino time is shown to be less of *Historie* (objective and linear) and more of *Geschichte* (not fixed in time and space). Furthermore, Filipino time is supposedly “non-linear” by reason of the Filipino trait of approaching history ethically, to wit, every story must always have a moral lesson for the Filipino.

Eliade’s concept of myth is thrown in since “ethical models or models in general are related to myth.”

In fine, the article recommends that myth be used as model in the interpretation of historical data in order to be faithful to the Filipino’s sense of history.

The third article, “Work and Leisure,” talks anew of the Filipino non-dualistic attitude as manifested in the Filipino way of intermingling work and play. The author points out that true to the nature of the Filipino worldview, the Filipino worker values more the capacity to relate to fellow-worker than mere competence. Hierarchy and authoritarianism according to age and social class standing take precedence over purely functional and efficient organizational structuring. By reason of “non-linear” time, the Filipino incurably mixes work and play. These typical traits of the Filipino toward work are reflected furthermore in Philippine folklore, the author points out in the end.

The fourth article, “Personal Management and Social Philosophy,” again brings out the hierarchic, paternalistic, interpersonal traits of the Filipino as manifested this time in business organization. Such Filipino values are claimed to be not necessarily incompatible with technology and modern organizational structures, as proven by the Japanese way of business organization — group-oriented, paternalistic, interpersonalistic, and yet productive and efficient. Hence, in conclusion, Filipino management should take into consideration

basic Filipino values, in particular, the Filipino's giving priority to group demands over ego and individual needs.

The fifth article is entitled "The Role of Filipino Philosophy in Filipino Psychology." "Filipino Philosophy" is taken to mean the Filipino world-view. Psychology in the Philippines is claimed to be heavily loaded with Western concepts and models. Thus, in general, the role of Filipino Philosophy would be to uncover the alien models subtending psychology to make it more faithful to the Filipino mind of which it is to be a description. The Filipino world-view is characterized as group-oriented, intuitive, non-aggressive vis-a-vis nature. The article recommends that psychology in the Philippines should be guided by these traits accordingly.

The sixth article, "National Goals and Philosophy of Education," is first of all a critique of the 'colonial' orientation of our educational system. The Filipino philosophy of education, if it is to be true to the communal spirit of which it is to be the expression, must be group-oriented, holistic or non-dualistic, interpersonalistic, intuitive. The author thus recommends that Philippine education, in content, form, and style, be delivered of its colonial encumbrances and should be recast in accordance with the Filipino world-view as already defined.

In the seventh and last article, "Modernization and Filipino Philosophy," the main thesis seems to be that the various characteristics of the Filipino world-view, as previously mentioned, — interpersonalistic, paternalistic, group-oriented, non-linear, non-aggressive, holistic — are not necessarily contrary to progress and modernization. Social values are claimed to be ambivalent. It recommends that instead of doing away with them, we must build on them, presumably by way of a critical attitude, retaining what remains of human value, and discarding what has proved to be untenable.

In general, the articles are loosely constructed, full of hasty generalizations, owing perhaps to their occasional origin and nature. The book as a whole is unsatisfactory as social science and just as inadequate as philosophy. As an attempt to describe the Filipino world-view, it lacks method and rigor. As an attempt to make some evaluative recommendations regarding work organization, business management, educational reform and other areas of application, the book shows lack of that sense of philosophical grounding in terms of clarity, coherence, and the ulterior possibilities of man.

*Ramon C. Reyes*

KUTIBENG: PHILIPPINE POETRY IN ILOKO, 1621-1971. By Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr. Manila: De La Salle University, 1976. viii, 153 pages.

Philippine poetry in Iloko is made up, at least of (1) Iloko folk poetry and song in oral tradition; (2) lyrics of songs in Iloko zarzuelas (see A. G.