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Philippine World View, edited by Enriquez

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Book Reviews

PHILIPPINE WORLD VIEW. Edited by Virgilio G. Enriquez.
Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986. x, 138 pages.

This much-awaited book is the final outcome of a project initiated by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), which supported a seminar on Philippine World-View held at the University of the Philippines in May and June of 1978, and which resulted as well in the publication of *Thai World View* and *Malaysian World View*.

Although the seminar consisted of some eighteen papers on different aspects of the Filipino world view, the present volume includes only six essays. The subject matter and content of the essays indicate to the reader the logic of the editor's choice, i.e., to cover through six essays as wide a range as possible. This range covers Filipino social psychology, food, the visual arts, popular lyrics, the short story, and radio and television.

The introductory essay "Kapwa: A Core Concept on Filipino Social Psychology," written by Virgilio Enriquez, claims that in Philippine social psychology only *kapwa* (and no other concept) covers both the concept of the self and of others. He finds it integrative of the self and the stranger, embracing "the outsider" (*ibang tao*) as well as "one of us" (*hindi ibang tao*).

Assessing an earlier study by Lynch (1964) on *pakikisama*, Enriquez's claim finds strength in having seen *kapwa* in the context of the eight levels of social interaction which he and Carmen Santiago identified in 1976, namely: 1) *pakitungo*, 2) *pakikisalamuha*, 3) *pakikilahok*, 4) *pakikibagay*, 5) *pakikisama*, 6) *pakikipagpalagayan*, 7) *pakikisangkot*, and 8) *pakikiisa*. It is in this context that he defines *kapwa* as the unity of the "self" and "others" in contrast to the English concept of *others* which is used in opposition to the *self*. Enriquez further believes that *pakikipagkapwa* is surely more important than *pakikisama* because it is both a conviction and a value. While Filipinos are unhappy about a person without *pakikisama*, they cannot accept or tolerate a person without *pakikipagkapwa*. Enriquez's essay deserves to be the introductory essay, not only for its integrative attempt at arriving at a core

national concept but for its continuous and dynamic evaluation of the Filipino manner of looking at the world.

The second essay by Doreen Fernandez entitled "Food and the Filipino" registers more strongly than Roland Barthes' *House of Symbols* because it includes not only a consideration of the cultural context and its significations but also knowledge of the lexicon of Filipino food which she interprets in the text and includes in a glossary.

Through an analysis of the lexicon, history and cultural contexts, Dr. Fernandez succeeds in interpreting the intertextuality of food and the natural environment, food and fellowmen and food and the Filipino world view.

Filipino closeness to nature is seen in food that utilizes sea life, plant life and animal life, all fruits of the earth or *biyaya ng lupa*. Fresh from the sea, earth and forests, Philippine indigenous food necessitates the simplest of cooking methods: blanching, steaming, broiling, even "cooking" the raw (marinating in vinegar).

Fernandez sees Filipino closeness to fellowmen in the dipping sauce or *sawsawan* which invites consumer participation or sharing in the preparation process, unlike European food which is ordained or prescriptive. Fernandez also sees food as nonverbal language, talking idioms of goodwill, friendship, and *utang na loob*, cutting across social classes and ideology.

Fernandez pushes the issue on food and culture further by citing its adaptability to culture change. She warns however, that the food's "primal voice" might not be able to adapt and gracefully indigenize when faced with changes too massive and powerful.

Another powerful and wide-ranging essay is Alice Guillermo's "The Philippine World-view in the Visual Arts." The longest and most data-intensive in the collection, Ms. Guillermo's essay covers the entire range of visual arts from pre-Spanish to the rise of modernism, and ethnic, folk and elitist art as well. She gives a strong basis for her study of Filipino national identity or national spirit by her macrocosmic perception of culture as a product of the broad masses of the people, and by viewing culture as dynamic and fluctuating throughout history. She clearly points out the persistence of indigenous aesthetics, from the *babaylan* and other ethnic forebears, to the cooptation of the Christians in the *moro-moro*, to contemporary aspects of material culture.

At different points of the essay, she shows the relationship between economic set-up and social values, as in the development in economy and industries that changed value placed on numerical quantity to the contemporary desire to acquire complete sets of appliances. Ms. Guillermo's ability to see aspects of culture's intertextuality is so rich that it extends from the Filipino house to its extensions: the jeepney, the buses, the tricycles, the gardens, seeing their aesthetics as well as their value to and function in Philippine community life. Ms. Guillermo's essay should be required reading

for all students of Philippine culture. It functions both as credo and text for the Filipino in understanding his world view as seen in his visual arts.

The fourth essay, Ms. Eleonor Elequin's "An Appreciation of the Filipino Philosophical Outlook Through Filipino Popular Lyrics" is the weakest essay in the collection. It reads as if the author may not have been given the chance to rethink her article. In contrast to the other essays in the collection, Ms. Elequin's essay appears like preliminary notes and seems to have been the preliminary lecture delivered during the 1979 world view seminar at the University of the Philippines.

While it is a discussion of some themes found in selected songs of Heber Bartolome, Florante, Hanopol, Banyuhay, and others, the essay is no more than scattershot impressions of the different samples of popular music. Ms. Elequin was able to cite some themes, like fate, national identity, doubts and fears, and such categories of popular music as romantic and realistic, but other than that, the essay fails to achieve integration and synthesis.

Although popular music could indeed be a source for the study of Philippine world view, it could have been more fruitful if other full-blown essays read in the 1978 U.P. seminar had been included, especially those on Philippine linguistics and other aspects of popular culture.

Indispensable source material for studying world view in literature is Patricia Melendrez-Cruz's essay "From the Philippine Revolution, 1896 to Military Rule, 1972: The Changing World View in the Filipino Short Story." The essay identifies the sociopolitical philosophies of writers at different historical periods through an analysis of the short story. It shows how historical and economic factors shape Filipino writers' perception of reality.

Melendrez-Cruz's perception of writers' philosophies is colored by her expectation of the role of the writer, i.e. that of social critic. Any short story that falls short of social criticism is easily dismissed as "puerile sentimentalism," "nothing beyond reformism," "did not transcend their individual selves," or "misled by their naturalistic view in propounding the cure," even when diagnosing social ills. As a whole, Melendrez-Cruz sees the development of the short story as the growth of social consciousness in the writers. The author fails to consider other mediating factors such as religion, geography, biology, and sex as part of a writer's consciousness of the world. In other words, Melendrez-Cruz's essay makes use of Marxist categories of the sixties and the seventies, which are understandably prescriptive, favoring the world view of protest literature, judging the romantic and other world views as secondary.

Definitely deserving of inclusion in this collection is the last essay, "Portrayal of Life and Reality in Radio and Television Drama" by the late UP teacher and scholar Valerio Nofuente. A study of the drama in TV and radio in the seventies, the essay identifies the predominant views in the broadcast

constructs which he studied as belief: 1) That Fate or Destiny decides everything on Earth, disabling man from recognizing or doing anything against oppressive structures; 2) That life among the poor is peaceful, making them complacent and resigned to their fate; 3) That the oppressed especially women, are blessed, the drama characters having been patterned after the suffering Christ; 4) That the present order offers hope to be brought in *deus ex machina* manner by fantastic and fictitious characters like Darna, Kapitang Kidlat, Johnny Davao and Ginang Milyonarya; and, 5) That everything in life is caused by love or lack of it.

Echoing Nicanor Tiongson's analysis of disvalues in Philippine drama and movies ("Four Values in Filipino Drama and Film"), Nofuente's conclusion is that radio and TV drama dulls people's perceptions of reality instead of clarifying them. He sees drama (melodrama and comedy alike) as functioning beyond pastime or escape for the Filipino, because it should reflect social realities instead of illusions. Although we miss the exuberant prose of Nofuente in the original Pilipino text, the essay's content and commitment more than compensate for the lack of lyricism which was lost in translation.

By and large, all the essays are representative of the growing trend towards the further discovery of a national world view that is continually evolving and therefore dynamic. It is a volume that should encourage further studies and seminars which should include among others paradigms for studying the relationship between folk religion, folk arts, folk music and the world view they convey as the Filipino moves diachronically and synchronically towards his cultural emancipation.

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SACRIFICE AND SHARING IN THE PHILIPPINE HIGHLANDS. By Thomas Gibson. London: Athlone Press, 1986. 261 pages.

Sacrifice and Sharing in the Philippine Highlands is an in-depth study of the value system of the social and religious organization of the Buid, a technologically primitive highland group in south eastern Mindoro. The author states his purpose:

The central concern of this book has been to elucidate the fundamental principles and idioms according to which the Buid organize their social life. It has been my contention that the Buid religious beliefs are no less essential to Buid communities than are their beliefs and practices relating to the economy, politics and the conduct of proper social relations. (p. 217)