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Tradition and Discontinuity

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call their children Mary, instead of Maria (Spanish form). American forms of entertainment have practically smothered local efforts. What does this mean? That to the ordinary Filipino the United States is a powerful and successful nation worthy of emulation. The dream once was to make the Philippines into a successful democratic nation according to the American model. Hind-sight shows us now that it was not the best approach. To see where the error lies, to explain where people went wrong in order to understand the present, is the historian's task. Of course, there is much for which to congratulate the Americans, in what they did for the Philippines. It was not an easy task. It was, at bottom, an attempt to transform the Filipino heart. What the Americans did—if we rely only on Gleek's *The American Half-Century*—seems hardly to have affected it!

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TRADITION AND DISCONTINUITY: ESSAYS ON PHILIPPINE HISTORY AND CULTURE. By Miguel A. Bernad, S.J. Manila: National Book Store, 1983. 275 pages.

Father Bernad's more popular reputation, which stretches over twenty-five years, is most often based upon his contribution to Philippine letters as critic (*Bamboo And The Greenwood Tree*, 1961, and his early essays in *Philippine Studies*), editor (*Philippine Studies*, 1956-59, and now *Kinaadman*) and columnist (*Sunday Express*). But I suspect that he is a historian at heart. He has collaborated with Pedro S. de Achutegui, S.J. on the four-volume *Religious Revolution in the Philippines*, (1960-72) and *Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896* (1972). The majority of his other books are historical—*History Against the Landscape* (1968), *The Christianization of the Philippines* (1972), *Adventure in Vietnam* (1974), *Filipinos in Laos* (1974) and *Dramatics at the Ateneo de Manila* (1977). They also indicate the breadth of his interests.

With the possible exception of "Telephone and Powdered Milk: Some Philippine Social Values" (and even in that essay there are historical reverberations) all the essays in the present collection are basically historical. Father Bernad's standard approach in these ten essays is to draw a conclusion from accumulated historical facts, or to illustrate a point with historical allusions.

In Part One, the essay on Philippine literature is essentially a history of Spanish and English literature in the Philippines. Fr. Bernad's thesis is that "The Filipino is both Oriental and Occidental, and in this dual citizenship lie both his destiny and his conflict. To be at home in both worlds is his peculiar

perfection; to be confronted with both worlds is his peculiar burden" (p. 5). (That sentence is also a good example of the Bernad "style.") "Telephone and Powdered Milk" is an anecdotal list of Filipino social values under seige in an age of transition. He discusses a similar topic in "Philippine Culture and the Filipino Identity" which considers the evolution of the Filipino identity, from a fragmented, multilingual and pluralistic society to an emergent Filipino political nation which is still fragmented, multilingual and pluralistic. The final essay in Part One is a survey of education in the Philippines in the past four centuries, with a balanced discussion of the advantages and problems of both the Spanish and American educational systems.

The remaining essays in Part Two and Part Three are concerned with historical personages (Quezon, Magsaysay and MacArthur), an analysis of the data for the site of the first Mass in the Philippines, a history of the Knights of Columbus in the Philippines, and an interesting discussion of the confiscation of the funds of the Jesuit Mindanao Mission by the Philippine Revolutionary Government in 1899 and later by the American Government, and the attempts to recover those funds. The longest essay in the book retells the story of the first exploration of the Pulangui River in Mindanao (1888-90) and puts it in its historical context. The Appendices include the three major documents on the site of the first Mass in the Philippines and an interesting comment on the Butuan tradition by William Henry Scott, a catalog of the forty-five documents on the Jesuit Funds in the National Archives in Washington, and brief biographical notes on the Jesuits involved in one way or another with the Pulangui expedition.

The best essay in the collection, to my mind, is "Philippine Literature: A Twofold Renaissance." Along with Fr. Bernad's essay on "Philippine Literature Perpetually Inchoate" in *Bamboo And the Greenwood Tree*, it is a masterly attempt to outline the historical framework of Philippine literature. These two essays both appeared in 1961 and were among the first to attempt a systematic and reasoned analysis of Philippine literature. They were, of course, followed by many other studies by other eminent critics, but they were among the first. Structurally, the essays on "Quezon and Magsaysay" and "MacArthur and the War in the Philippines" are less satisfactory. The juxtaposition of Quezon and Magsaysay seems forced, for there are more contrasts than similarities between the two men. They are, in fact, worlds apart in time as well as in approach to the Philippine political scene. The essay on MacArthur was originally two book reviews, and therefore suffers from lack of unity. Similarly, the essay on the exploration of the Pulangui would probably have been better if the author had simply retold the story of the first exploration and left out much of the historical background which is not directly connected with the exploration.

Perhaps a second word can be added to the description of Fr. Bernad as a historian—he is a "literary" historian. The essays in the collection are literate,

perceptive and personal. He is a stylist *par excellence*. In good Jesuit fashion his thoughts move in orderly procession, from thesis to examples, from data to conclusion, in language that is clear and precise. His skill with the English language, particularly in Part One of the collection, produces a number of memorable sentences. For example: "The American conquest, on the other hand, brought greater freedom, greater economic progress, greater social mobility, better hygiene, and a greater regard for the common man; but it also brought the tawdry literature of the magazine stands, the mores of Hollywood, and a type of mass education that, paradoxically, has made genuine culture the possession of a very few" (p. 5).

Fr. Bernad's insights on Philippine literature (pp. 5, 57-58), the missionaries and culture (p. 10), language in the Philippines (p. 51), Filipinization (pp. 55-56) and Americanization (p. 68), relevance in Philippine education (pp. 72-73) and on Jesuit missionary linguistics (p. 175) are particularly perceptive and often ahead of his time. In all the essays, Fr. Bernad is personal and anecdotal. "Such things as these may be trivial, but they are the recollections that come to mind which are not written in the books . . ." (p. 99). Georg Lukacs has said that "The essay is a judgment, but the essential, the value-determining things about it, is not the verdict but the process of judging." In these historical essays of Fr. Bernad, we are witnesses to the process of the mind of the literate and perceptive essayist at work.

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PATNUBAY SA MASINOP NA PAGSULAT. Ni Virgilio S. Almario.
Manila: National Bookstore, Inc., 1981.

Taglay nitong aklat ang napakayamang talino upang makaagapay ang kahit na sinong naglalayon na mapaunlad at mapalawak ang kanilang kaalaman ukol sa pagsulat ng masinop. Ang kabuuan ng aklat na ito na isinulat ni Virgilio S. Almario ay naglalaman ng iba't ibang bantas o gamit ng wika. Tinalakay rito ang mga karaniwang suliranin sa pagsulat at iba pang pagbabago ukol sa ating balarila. Sa kanyang paunang salita, idiniin ng may-akda ang kahalagahan at kagalingan ng pagsunod sa mga batas ng mekanika ng wika na siyang nagsisilbing pinakamabisang paraan patungo sa malinaw na pagpapahayag. Ibinatay ang mga tuntuning matatagpuan sa nakamihansan nang mga batas na kinikilala ng mga nakakaalam ukol sa wikang Pilipino at para sa praktikal na paggamit nito.

Hinati ang aklat upang maging maliwanag ang pagpapahayag ng mga batas o tuntunin bilang patnubay sa masinop na pagsulat sa sampung bahagi na binubuo ng mula sa simpleng paggamit ng bantas, hanggang sa mga mas mahirap na talakaying uri ng balarila. Tampok dito ang mga sumusunod: