

# philippine studies

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

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**Stimulating the Reader:  
Current Issues in Philippine Education+**  
by Cresencio Peralta, Ph.D.

Review Author: Frederick Fox

*Philippine Studies* vol. 3, no. 4 (1955): 432–436

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viciously, apparently in perfect health. After arriving at the boy's house, the priest and his companions were told that the boy had been bitten by a snake on a big toe, and so they immediately sent for the "stone." Now in order to apply it, the wound must bleed. In this case the wound was on the toe, as far as possible from the heart, and the leg of the boy was already quite cold. Consequently they had to work for a considerable time to enlarge the wound before blood finally appeared. The "stone" was applied forthwith and firmly adhered to the wound. The inmates of the house were told to bring back the "stone" as soon as it fell off by itself. This the boy himself did the next morning: he was sprightly as ever, except that he limped for a couple of weeks on account of the large wound inflicted on his toe by the ministering angels. This is only one example of many witnessed by the reviewer. After use the "stone" has to be manipulated as described by Mr. Pasley with the result reported by him. However, milk is preferred to water whenever possible. Afterwards the "stone" can be used again. It also serves for extracting poison from wounds inflicted by scorpions and centipedes, etc., but these are of course rarely serious.

In Part II, after having given an idea of the society of the Andamanese and the Senei (Chapter I), the author treats very elaborately the sociology of both Semang (Chapter II-IV) and Aeta (Chapter VI).

The few adverse criticisms of the reviewer do not detract in any important way from the high value of this publication, which is also profusely illustrated and splendidly edited.

Of course we miss an index, but the author promises amply to supply this deficiency at the end of his next book, where indexes will serve both that book and the one under review.

M. VANOVERBERGH

## STIMULATING THE READER

CURRENT ISSUES IN PHILIPPINE EDUCATION. By Cresencio Peralta, Ph.D. Manila: Silangan Publishing House, 1955. Pp. 203. ₱4.50

"It's about time we do our own thinking on Philippine Education," writes Dr. Peralta, Director of the Graduate School at

National Teachers' College in Manila. Quite long enough, he contends, we have been tied, directly or indirectly, forcibly or with consent, to the apron strings of Spain or the United States. To promote this supposedly new and hitherto unknown phenomenon of independent Filipino thought in affairs educational, he presents the volume here under review.

*Current Issues in Philippine Education*, as the title suggests, is a discussion of those school problems now confronting the Filipino people which the author regards as major. Foci for his attention are: democracy in the schools, the medium of instruction, the community school, political interference, and finance. The approach employed is commentarial rather than analytic.

In composing this book Dr. Peralta's purpose, it appears, is not so much to conduct a search for the one most satisfactory solution for each of the problems cited as to provoke the reader to reflect by presenting him with a summary of each problem and of each of the principal solutions so far proposed. Within this limited sphere the book succeeds.

Unfortunately, in this reviewer's opinion, Dr. Peralta's work possesses little beyond this somewhat informal stimulative value. Individual issues are accorded such brief consideration that neither the well informed nor the profound leave satisfied. Two hundred and three small pages scarcely suffice merely to record the salient data much less explain and interpret them adequately. Almost no attempt is made to evaluate critically the various solutions described. Nor does the author, quite inconsistently with his opening demand for independent thinking, seem willing to set down in clear and unequivocal terms his own position relative to each issue.

A further notable manifestation of this tendency to mere surface treatment is the author's pervasive stress on Filipinism. Over and over again the reader is informed that a large proportion of our present educational ills are the work of non-Filipinos. Correlatively, he is promised a happy issue to them if only the "Filipino" way is followed. Everybody admits, of course, the necessary and powerful force that emotions exert both in our individual and in our social lives. At the same time no thoughtful citizen can expect a solution to a national problem to stand broadly acceptable and enduring if to any appreciable extent it is based upon emotion.

Commenting upon the Filipino's proclivity to imitate, Dr. Peralta rightly condemns indiscriminate acceptance of foreign culture items, ideas, and behavioral patterns. He is wholly mistaken, however, in implying that there is something servile in adopting such contributions from other countries. Both history and sociological research demonstrate that precisely those groups who are most reluctant to accept cultural contributions from others, are the most backward and stagnant. Contrariwise, the more alert and progressive the nation, the more ready it inclines to be to adopt what it considers superior in another's culture. Sociologists estimate that approximately 90 per cent of the present American culture configuration originated elsewhere.

There is a genuine Filipino culture, capable of scientific sociological description and distinct from other contemporary national cultures, but what purpose is served by this continual harping upon the differences between Filipinos and non-Filipinos except to stir up mutual distrust and animosity? Do we not already suffer enough discord without someone deliberately promoting it? In every essential and basically significant aspect Filipinos and non-Filipinos are alike. Physically we share the same first parents, Adam and Eve. Supernaturally, we possess one common Father, God Almighty, and one common Brother, Jesus Christ, His Son.

Directly involved in the above considerations is the problem of the medium of instruction to be employed in our schools. Ten years ago fifty nations gathered at San Francisco to found the United Nations organization dedicated to the smoothing out of differences among nations and to facilitating the flow of communication and commerce among them. Conspicuous among the participants stood the Philippines. Today, we seem more concerned with building barriers than with removing them. English, for example, the chief instrument we possess to understand and be understood by our fellow nations, and the chief bridge whereby we maintain contact with the world's cultural and scientific development, deteriorates daily among us. The replacement of English by Tagalog and the introduction of the regional dialects into the schools strike this reviewer as being nothing less than the erection of so many new walls isolating us not only from other nations but also from ourselves, region from region.

Just as resistant, perhaps, to successful resolution will be the question of democracy in the public schools. For, although after the recent War former Director of Public Schools Benito Pangili-

nan encouraged a modicum of local and personal initiative, the legal structure of the public educational system constitutes it *de facto* an unfavorable climate for the object in view. Control, uniformity, and a certain disregard of the individual are, one regretfully observes, its outstanding characteristics.

Genuine and successful democracy is built upon a respect for the individual and a trust in his intellectual capacity and sense of moral responsibility. On the contrary, the concept basic to any intensely centralized human organization is *distrust* of the individual member and of the rest of society in general. In the case of our own public school system, the assumption is that members of the organization outside the Central Office, whether administrative or instructional, cannot be relied on to exercise any significant amount of authority with prudence, temperance, and wisdom. The frequent and detailed orders, circulars, and memoranda comprise further active evidence that the field personnel are considered deficient in the mental competence, the moral character, and the skill, managerial or teaching, necessary to carry out their jobs properly.

Treated by the system with a similar disrespect are the parents of the country. With the possible exception of the National Board of Education established within the last year, the very people to whom the schools belong and who are most intimately affected by what goes on in them, are denied all direct authoritative voice in their management at every level, municipal, provincial, and national.

This unhappy condition of affairs, however, cannot be remedied by rushing to the opposite extreme of making democracy mean licence or universal equalitarianism, as Dr. Peralta seems to imply. He quotes with approval, for example, this amazing sentence from a current public school document called *Teaching the Ways of Democracy*:

The ideals of democracy demand that the child be treated not merely as an immature adult but as a full-fledged member of an active present day society. (p. 48)

Such a notion of the nature of the child is contradicted by all the findings of modern genetic psychology, not to speak of our own experience. The child is an immature person. He is *not* a full-fledged member of society. Precisely because he is not yet a fully

developed human person he needs the guidance and the support of adults. In turn he owes them obedience and love. To regard children as full grown, independent, and responsible individuals is unscientific and a crime against both the child himself and society.

FREDERICK FOX

## LA ESCONDIDA SENDA

TEN CENTURES OF SPANISH POETRY. An Anthology in English Verse with Original Texts From the XIth Century to the Generation of 1898. Edited by Eleanor L. Turnbull with introductions by Pedro Salinas. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press. 1955. Pp. xv-452

Ten centuries—a thousand years—are a long time in the history of any country, but particularly so in that of Spain. These ten centuries from the year 1000 A.D. to the early 1900's have witnessed stirring events on the Iberian Peninsula. They saw most of Spain under the Moors, and they witnessed the pushing back inch by inch of Moslem power till all the Peninsula was free. They saw Spain transformed from a chaos of counties, dukedoms, and kingdoms, into a united realm under the monarchs who were "Catholic" in more senses than one. They saw the Crusades, the voyages of discovery, the "stately Spanish galleons," the "invincible armada," the phenomenal expansion of the Spanish empire that encircled the globe and its slow shrinking back into the isolation of the Iberian Peninsula. These centuries saw the Spanish monarchy at its zenith and in its decadence. They saw the building of the great cathedrals and palaces; the rise and slow decline of the universities of Alcalá and Salamanca; the spread of the great religious orders; the great Spanish mystics: St. John of the Cross, St. Theresa of Avila, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius Loyola—to name a few. These were centuries of great movements in art: gothic, renaissance, baroque, romanticist. These centuries saw on the one hand a rigorous Spanish Inquisition that counted among its victims a great saint (Loyola) and a famous poet (Fray Luis de Leon); and on the other hand a militant anticlericalism and rationalism that could with one stroke of the pen, "for reasons hidden within our royal bosom," order the expulsion of thousands of priests and religious from all Spanish dominions in both hemispheres and the closing down of churches, colleges and schools.