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Influences of the European Middle Ages in the Philippines

David Keck



On the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas, 28 January 1995, faculty members of Ateneo de Manila University gathered to present papers on the topic "Recovering Medieval Legacies in the Philippines." This symposium, organized by the Department of History, sought to explore the manifold ways in which the European Middle Ages have been influential for the history of this country. The eager initial response of many of the participants to a proposed symposium suggested the richness of the entire subject. It was clear that the entire field of Philippine church history would be incomprehensible without understanding the formation of the political, sacramental, and devotional traditions of Roman Catholicism during the Middle Ages. The frequent use of the word "feudal" to describe Philippine land-use relationships likewise meant that a study of medieval Europe has much to offer the field of Philippine Studies. Although the problem of medieval influences for the history of Mexico has been well-studied by Luis Weckmann in his *La Herencia Medieval de México*, and although the subject of medieval influences on European history continues to be something of a minor academic industry, the subject of the importance of the Middle Ages for the Philippines had, until this symposium, remained fragmentary (Weckmann 1995; see also his earlier article [1951, 130-41] which laid the groundwork for this monograph).

This interdepartmental discussion was the first attempt to synthesize the many disparate elements which are part of this subject. Several of the papers from the symposium are published in this issue of *Philippine Studies*. This essay's review of the entire symposium, in

I would like to thank Professor Lydia Casambre of the University of the Philippines, Baguio, who invited me to speak at her school. Parts of this essay are the results of the conversations I had with students and faculty there.

addition to providing a context for these articles, seeks to synthesize the disparate problems of how the institutions, ideas, and prejudices of a certain period of European history have shaped, distorted, or contributed to this part of Asia over the last several centuries. As the papers themselves, this essay seeks to describe the nature of the problem—its depth and breadth—as well as highlight some problematics inherent in the investigation itself. The papers of the symposium are an initial step in the exploration of this significant aspect of Philippine history. (Indeed, the centrality for Philippine history of medieval European experiences is something we can only begin to consider at this stage of research.) We hope to encourage future work in this specific area and to help develop the habit of interpreting Philippine history within a much broader historical perspective.

The field of medieval history and its period's significance, too, may need to be reconsidered. Weckmann argued that "the Middle Ages found their last expression" in Spain's American colonies. John Leddy Phelan (1956, 105), like Weckmann (1951, 130), had seen the "last flowering of the Middle Ages . . . on the American side of the Atlantic in the sixteenth century." But it may be that this period's final manifestation was further west, in the Philippines.

Part of the historiographical problem is linguistic or conceptual. What is the best way to categorize the relationship between the Middle Ages and the Philippines? What is the most appropriate metaphor? A legacy? A last flowering? I have used "Influences" in the title of this paper. It is a bland word for a dynamic, often violent, sometimes inspiring number of processes, events, and transformations. The word does not do justice to this rich subject except for the fact that it highlights the inherent difficulties facing a synthetic account of the Middle Ages' manifold, sometimes contradictory relationships to Philippine history. In the conclusion, after surveying cathedrals, apparitions, Thomism, and conflicts between archbishops and governors, I will return to this question of finding the right metaphor for describing the links between two eras in two parts of the world.

Describing, not Defining, the Middle Ages

But first, what, precisely, are the Middle Ages? How do we distinguish between medieval, classical, and early modern or Renaissance influences or legacies? While exhibiting enormous regional differences and distinct evolutions in all aspects of human life, the

Middle Ages, as a period from perhaps the fifth to the sixteenth century, does exhibit some unifying and distinguishing characteristics. These include at least a theoretical common religious identity in Roman Catholicism and the idea of Christendom; Latin as the shared language of learned discourse; and similar feudal or manorial economic and political power structures. Still, given the transformations of an entire millennium, the "Middle Ages" seems vague indeed, and a definition remains elusive. Does the period begin with the fall of Rome? With Charlemagne three centuries later? When does it end?

Perhaps we should follow the lead of Fred Robinson, a medievalist. He states that the Middle Ages is that period between antiquity and the Renaissance/Reformation, and if scholars of these fields do not know when their periods begin and end, then that is their problem (Robinson 1984, 745-56). The term "medieval" is a heuristic, conceptual construct, for there are only general features and characteristics which can describe but never finally define what "medieval" might be. Still, it is a useful construct, and each participant in the symposium had his or her own ideas of what institutions, habits, and economic and socio-political structures constituted the Middle Ages. Given our shared desire to cast our net widely, it seemed unwise to circumscribe the discussion prematurely by offering a constricting definition.

One way of describing the Middle Ages as a period which exerts an influence on its successor eras is to identify how subjects from that era function in linguistic commonplaces. Societies such as the Philippines with strong European and American ties have inherited from medieval history a curious triple conceptual legacy of virtue, savagery, and parody.

In the figure of Francis, we see the great medieval saint, the lover of all creation, the devout man dedicated to the poor. Today, from popular statues, scholarly reading, or through any number of sources, everyone comes to know who he was. We can say to someone that a person is "like St. Francis," and we will be understood, and thus we can begin to have an idea of why Filipinos sometimes have expressed a desire to be buried in the saint's simple attire.¹ Similarly, to describe someone as a Crusader or a knight is to declare that this person embodies noble qualities and the pursuit of justice. Carlos Quirino's biography, *Quezon: Paladin of Philippine Freedom*, draws on this chivalric heritage as does the naming of the Makati Christian Fellowship's sports teams the Knights. (We might want to consider further the important question of whether such naming represents a

vibrant notion of medieval chivalry or merely linguistic residue.) Conceptually, then, some of our highest models for human virtue and idealism are from the Middle Ages. It should not be surprising that one of Rizal's final bequests to his family was his copy of a medieval devotional classic, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* (Da Silva and Cavanna 1961, 17-18).

On the other hand, we employ the term "medieval" to denote barbarity. Thus, we find in Amando Doronila's column in the *Inquirer* (15 December 1995), "Brutality derives inspiration from primitive methods of initiation in medieval institutions." As he develops his article, he refers, just as we might, to the infamous arm of the medieval church, the Inquisition and its use of torture. (The jurisdiction of the Inquisition was extended to the Philippines in 1583.) When we use the phrase, "That's medieval" in this sense, we often assume that such acts of cruelty belong to a distinct part of humanity's past. To be able to call something "medieval" allows us to affirm a certain moral and/or political superiority over our predecessors. Thus, at the turn of the century, some Americans used this line of reasoning to help legitimate their progressive colonial rule as being different from that of the "medieval" Spanish (see Blount [1991, 27] where he quotes from a Senate speech by Senator Lodge; see also Gilbert [1903, 303-4]).

In addition to these two opposite linguistic uses of medieval themes and figures, there is a third important legacy—satire. The zealous devotional habits of Francis exposed him and his contemporaries to savage parodies even in the Middle Ages, and the parody of excessive medieval religiosity can be seen in the *Noli*. Similarly, Miguel Cervantes' parody of chivalry and its ideals, *Don Quixote*, has provided caricatures of medieval figures to describe contemporary events (see, for example, Nick Joaquin [1988, 149-50]). In these three cultural or conceptual or linguistic inheritances, then, we can see the Middle Ages providing the men and women of subsequent eras general terms and categories for understanding their own world. The virtuous, savage, and satiric aspects of this period are derived from the political, religious, and cultural ideas and institutions which are distinguishing aspects of the Middle Ages.

Were the Sixteenth-century Spanish or Filipinos "Medieval"?

Unfortunately for our symposium, the Spanish arrived in the Philippines after the Middle Ages. The Renaissance and Reformation were well underway, breaking up different aspects of the medieval world.

Constantinople had fallen to the Turk, as had Tenochtichlan to the Christian. Hence, these seemed to be "early modern Spaniards." Nevertheless, as Weckmann's work demonstrates, the Spanish colonizers of this era were still quite medieval in their world view, political system, and Catholicism (the Council of Trent itself, for example, reaffirmed many medieval doctrines and institutions). Spain was far less influenced by the Renaissance and Reformation than other European countries, and as evidence presented at the symposium suggests, they brought the Middle Ages with them when they left Spain. Thus, Legazpi's title of *Adelantado* has its origins in the medieval Reconquista.

Still, the Spaniards who arrived in the Philippines had already had experience with colonies and catechesis in strange lands; medieval influence on the Philippines came through the Americas. Thus, the initial apocalypticism which had been a powerful feature of Franciscanism from the thirteenth century on and which reasserted itself in expectations for the New World in the sixteenth century, yielded to a more sober set of expectations for Franciscan missionary work in the Philippines.² These New World experiences as a modifying feature of medieval influences remained an important concern of the symposium participants.

The symposium faced another conceptual difficulty: not only were the Spanish not strictly medieval, but some aspects of indigenous Philippine society resembled some institutions of the Middle Ages. Several papers in the symposium sought to address the ways in which one might characterize or evaluate the presence of seemingly "medieval" elements in pre-Hispanic Philippines. Eusebio Dizon's "Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Explorations in Bataan, Sabtang and Ivuhos Islands, Batanes Province, Northern Philippines" raised questions of similarities between certain medieval European and Asian fortification construction and burial customs. Another parallel noted in the discussion was the strong similarities between Visayans and vikings. Both groups, prior to the arrival of Christianity, were characterized by sea-borne raiding and the acquisition of slaves and property. Each of these cultural practices suggests certain sets of social and political relations in these communities. When Spaniards and Filipinos met, how would similarities in their cultures affect the meeting?

Felice Noelle Rodriguez's "The *Maharlika* and the *Hidalgo*" reminded us, then, of the effect of pre-Hispanic "feudal" elements in the Philippines on the process of inculturation. Drawing on the work

of William Henry Scott, she observed that the Tagalog *maharlika* and the Spanish *hidalgo* shared the financial, social, and military obligations and benefits of a warrior class in a hierarchical society. Both groups were defined by a largely, though not exclusively, inherited status and intense ties of mutual obligation to local lords. Consequently, the Spaniards were able to impose their hierarchical or feudal experiences on a culture which shared certain features. They were able to call quite easily the *maharlika hidalgo*. (Similarly, medieval serfs and slaves found their equivalent in the *alipin namamahay* and the *alipin saguiguilid*.) This common social stratification was not without consequence for the entire history of the archipelago as the semi-feudal Tagalog and Pampangan levies of the Spanish era formed the core of the Spanish military presence until the end of the nineteenth century.

The similarities between pre-Hispanic culture and the Spanish world view which facilitated the Spaniard's seeing the Philippines through European, often medieval, lenses, led to further difficulties for grasping the subject matter of the symposium. Evelyn Caldera-Soriano's paper on the Bicol dictionary of Father Marcos de Lisboa and on Father Bernardino Melendreras' version of the Bicol epic *Handiong* (or *Ibalon*) illustrates the problem of detecting Spanish or medieval influence on the recorded versions of pre-Hispanic narratives. Even when the subject matter is pre-Hispanic, a European presence can be detected. Thus, this Bicol epic, written down only in the middle of the nineteenth century by a Spaniard, "closely follows the characteristics of . . . medieval [European] epic." Both in the *Handiong* and the dictionary, characters, creatures, and motifs which appear in medieval legends reappear here on the other side of the planet. As Soriano noted, further research will be required in order to filter out the Spanish filters of Filipino epics.

This question of pre-Hispanic "feudal" or "medieval" elements remains an important area of research and conceptualization. The subject of slavery in the Philippines illustrates not only the problem of distinguishing between pre-Hispanic and Hispanic influences but also of distinguishing between medieval and ancient factors. As William Henry Scott has shown, the Spaniards employed Aquinas in their initial legitimation of maintaining the indigenous patterns of slavery in the Philippines. But the Angelic Doctor himself drew heavily on Aristotle for his arguments for slavery (Scott 1991). Another aspect of the Middle Ages' influence on the Philippines, then, is as a transmitter and modifier of classical beliefs and practices. The better metaphor would perhaps be that of the filter, for the medieval

world allowed only certain aspects of the classical experience to pass through and these only with certain transformations. By contrast, Rizal's frequent use of Roman history in the *Noli* and Juan Luna's *Spoliarium* are the results of a direct appropriation of antiquity for the Philippines.

Medieval Catholicism in the Philippines

The clearest examples of medieval influences in the Philippines, are of course, in the history of Christianity in the Philippines. In this field, the contributions and burdens of the medieval past abound. The religious orders which arrived here, with the exception of the Jesuits, were founded in the Middle Ages. Because of the *reduccion* process, entire towns were founded according to medieval ideals of a Christian community with the church at the center. The definition of the number of the sacraments and of transubstantiation, in particular, are medieval developments. The confraternities, hospitals, and orphanages which the church established in the Philippines likewise were medieval institutions. Philippine popular practices, too, not just theological doctrines, have medieval antecedents, as the flagellants of the Black Death in the fourteenth century and the Pampangan rituals of today reveal.³

Here, too, distinguishing between general medieval practices, and particularly Spanish customs, is important. The Philippines, like other Spanish colonies, was exempted from the traditional Catholic prohibition against eating meat on Fridays because of Spain's crusading privilege (Lynch 1975, 123-27). Similarly Philippine marriage ceremonies adopt Spanish customs of the cord and the coin. The papers presented at this symposium address only some of these rich influences of the medieval church, but together, they remind us of many of the problematics and opportunities occasioned by the study of medieval legacies in the Philippines. Moreover, not only the role of previous contributions of the medieval church to Philippine history but also the ongoing utilization of medieval legacies in the contemporary church needs consideration as Manuel Tejido's "*Ang Doctrina ni P. Fray Juan de Oliver (1591) at Ang Mga Sermones ni Sto. Tomas de Aquino (1275)*," a study of the catechetical works of Aquinas and their roles in Philippines catechesis in the past and in the present, illustrates.

In the field of religion, the problem of distinguishing between parallels, influences, and common sources appears, too. Francis' early

followers had seen him as one of the angels mentioned in the Apocalypse. That he was already anticipated and foretold in the Bible demonstrated the orthodoxy of his life and his order. Curiously, the founder of the Iglesia ni Kristo, Felix Manalo, has also claimed to be an angel of the Apocalypse (Elesterio 1989, 22). Is this typological reading a case of a borrowing from the Middle Ages, or, simply a case of common readings of Scripture? More generally, both medieval Europe and the Philippines have appropriated Biblical figures, themes, and narratives, and the symposium made clear the need to discern what might make for specifically medieval influences on Philippine readings of Scripture or religious experiences. Examples of such close work can be found in René B. Javellana's, and José Mario C. Francisco's, essays on Juan de Oliver, OFM, published in the recent Pulong edition of Oliver's *Doctrina Christiana* (1995). In these articles, we see how the medieval uses of *exempla* and allegory were important for Oliver's work with Filipinos.

Another example of this type of research, presented at the symposium, came from Agustin Martin Rodriguez and Felice Noelle Rodriguez's "Apparition, Narration, and the Reappropriation of Meaning," a study of an early seventeenth-century apparition in Caysasay, Batangas. Through a close study of motifs and themes they demonstrated that the recorded text of this apparition depends heavily on medieval precursors. Maria Victoria Ibazeta's presentation on icons, relics, and *anting-anting* likewise explored the interplay between medieval and indigenous devotional traditions. Men and women of the Middle Ages and of the Philippines exhibit respect for the power of amulets, scapulars, other physical manifestations or embodiments of what is today called the supernatural world. Certainly, these syncretic practices combining ancient Filipino and medieval Catholic customs exist today, and many Filipinos see no contradiction in freely combining official and nonofficial routes to the sacred and its power. Over the last several centuries, then, there has been a rather natural blending of beliefs and traditions.

The paper of Jose Mario C. Francisco, "The Medieval 'Corpus et Anima' and the Tagalog 'Loob' in Oliver's *Doctrina Christiana*," focused discussion, not on how religious beliefs intermingle, but on how the process of translation from medieval to Tagalog led to the subversion of a medieval paradigm. Because loob can pertain to both body and soul, the distinction between the two which had been important in the Middle Ages was subverted. In light of this essay, we may echo Vicente Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism* and suggest exploring

the topic of Contracting Medievalism. One question raised in the discussion was whether Father Francisco's term "subversion" to describe the process of transference from one culture to the next could be replaced profitably with "improvement." That is, Tagalog may offer a better word than ecclesiastical Latin for describing the psychosomatic unity of humanity.

Father Francisco's interest in this topic arose from a course (which he and I team-teach) on sexuality in the Middle Ages and the Philippines. In this course, we explore the development of the church's teachings on sexuality in the Middle Ages as well as the development of courtly literature and ideals of romance. Subsequently, the class examines how these habits and beliefs were transplanted into different cultures with different sexual ethics and practices. Medieval ideals of virginity, celibacy, marriage, and romance have all become part of the experiences and world view of Roman Catholic Filipinos. Recalling that Tagalog has no word for "virgin" and noting the practices of polygamy in the pre-Hispanic Philippines or pre-marital sexual trial periods among the Ifugao suggest that medieval sexual mores have been important for the development of Philippine customs. Disentangling the precise history of these customs and the survival of pre-Hispanic practices (perhaps in the form of today's second wives) will require further detailed study of the interplay of different cultural attitudes towards the body, reproduction, kinship relations, and authority, patriarchal and otherwise. (Maria Aguilar's current research on the influence of Augustinian ideas about love and sexuality on contemporary popular culture promises to be a significant contribution to understanding these issues.)

While the apparition studied by the Rodriguez's was of Mary, medieval saints, too, have appeared in the Philippines. Indeed, according to some accounts, the survival of Manila during the 1603 Chinese uprising was due to the appearance of St. Francis himself over the walls of Manila. This peculiar incident reveals a number of medieval connections and raises interesting questions about the subject of the symposium as a whole.

On the eve of Francis' feast day, the Spaniards looked out from the walls of Intramuros and observed fires in the suburbs. They gathered their forces to quell the incipient rebellion. Don Luis Perez Dasmariñas, the leader of the Spanish knights, followed tactics familiar to medieval chivalry—he and his brave fellows mounted their chargers and galloped straight for the Chinese rebels. Alas for the Spaniards, the results of this combat had become familiar, too. Sepa-

rated from supporting infantry, the knights were slaughtered in the sugar cane, and Dasmariñas' head found its way to the head of a pike. If we examine different military engagements, can we detect other examples of medieval military tactics in the Philippines? After several weeks, however, the rebellion was put down. The governor at this time, Don Pedro de Acuña, who along with Francis was given the credit for the Spanish triumph, was a member of a medieval Crusading order, the order of Saint John. How did this affiliation with a medieval order affect his governorship? Indeed, what kinds of connections were there between medieval Crusading experiences and the Spanish interaction with Islam in these islands? (Governor Francisco de Sande, for example, asked Philip II for honors in one of the Crusading orders as a reward for his attacks on Borneo in 1578; others in the same era hoped to engage these orders for a conquest of China or to found new orders for such a venture.)⁴

Although the eighteenth-century Franciscan Fray Juan Francisco de San Antonio was convinced that "the miraculous assistance of our Seraphic Patriarch [Francis]" was the reason for the Spanish victory, others see the secret of Spanish military success throughout the colonial period in their ability to recruit loyal Filipino soldiers (Francisco de San Antonio 1977, 240). In *The Aquinos of Tarlac*, Nick Joaquin, argues that Pampangan military service throughout the Spanish period was a feudal extension of a pre-Hispanic, quasi-feudal social and military system (Joaquin 1988, 17-18).⁵ By adumbrating this system into their own rule, the Spanish were able to maintain the defenses of the ever-loyal city of Manila. We are confronted with familiar problems. Properly speaking, how "feudal" was the Spanish colonial military? Is it fair or accurate to describe pre-Hispanic Pampangan society in terms derived from medieval Europe? Or is doing so merely replicating the Spanish habit of seeing the Philippines through European lenses?

The way in which this event was remembered by subsequent generations is itself an important aspect of Philippine history. If we were to follow a certain line of historical inquiry, a line now associated with Michel Foucault and his followers, we might argue that the original 1603 event is unknowable to us. We would state that we have only the commemoration of events; all that is accessible is how events are remembered and utilized. And in the commemoration of the event by the eighteenth-century friar, we would see an attempt by the Spanish to legitimate and perpetuate their hegemony. By celebrating Francis' supernatural, quasi-divine intervention, the Spanish

declare the heavens to be on the side of the Spaniards. By not mentioning the role of Filipino soldiers, the chronicler denies the power of indigenous peoples.

Church and State: Medieval Legacies and Paradigms in the Philippines

This example of Francis' appearance also serves as a reminder of the close connections between the church and the Spanish civil authorities throughout the Spanish colonial era. As Antonia Santos' "Church and State Relations in Spanish Philippines: A Survey" demonstrated, governors and archbishops were working conceptually and practically within legal and ecclesiastical frameworks which had been developed during the Middle Ages. José Arcilla, S.J., in his "The Medieval Roots of the Spanish *Patronato Real*" indicated that the privileges held by the Spanish crown, and by extension the governor of the Philippines, had their origins in the medieval papacy's engagement with the non-European world. These privileges, which included the right of presenting candidates for investiture in ecclesiastical office, often led to conflicts between archbishop and governor.

The controversies over investiture, the proper jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts, and the right of sanctuary, which helped create incidents involving Archbishops Guerrero and Pardo in the seventeenth century (and their successors later), are familiar controversies from the perspective of medieval history. The development of these courts and other rights with significant political implications were part of the evolution of the medieval church and its bureaucracy based on canon law. To understand the behavior of both parties in these incidents (behavior which included excommunications and violence), we need to see the actors as part of a centuries-old series of contests between emperors, kings, and governors on one side and popes, archbishops, and priests on the other.

Not only do we find medieval influence when we study court and cathedral, but also when we study Philippine history "from below." Both the Freemasons of the Katipunan and the Confradía, studied by Reynaldo Ileto in his *Pasyon and Revolution*, owe the origins of their organizations to medieval masons and confraternities. Many of their rituals, prayers, and ideals derive directly from the Middle Ages. In other words, some of the most important expressions of Filipino nationalism took form within certain medieval European institutions,

institutions certainly modified by Asian circumstances, but nevertheless remaining remarkably similar. Philippine history and the origins of national identity, in this light, reach back to Europe several centuries before the Spanish arrived.

Education and Culture

In addition to their involvement with politics, land-holding, and conversion, different church orders and institutions were the sole source of formal education in the country, just as they had been in the Middle Ages. The University of Santo Tomas, as a university, was an inheritor of the great medieval tradition of the universities. The medieval garb of graduation gowns which survive across the planet even today is a reminder that all universities have their origins in the Middle Ages. (And Filipino students earlier in this century who were fined for speaking Tagalog on campus may empathize with medieval students who were penalized for not speaking Latin.) While academies and schools had existed in antiquity, there was nothing quite like the modern institution of faculty, curricula, and students until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when cathedral schools began to develop into universities.

But while the institution of the university itself came to the Philippines from the earliest period of colonization, another great medieval influence on education in the Philippines became central only towards the end of the nineteenth century. In 1879, Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* which formally promoted the study of Thomas Aquinas and scholasticism in all Catholic educational institutions. Jovino Miroy's, "Scholasticism in the Philippines" addressed the importance of Thomas Aquinas and the neo-scholastic tradition in the Philippines. This revived study of the Angelic Doctor illustrates another important aspect of the problem of medieval influences in the Philippines. Not only did the Spanish bring medieval customs and institutions but the modern world itself constantly returns to the Middle Ages in search of insight, tradition, and reflection. The temporal points of contact between medieval Europe and the Philippines are varied and fluid, and researchers of this problem must be prepared to discover influences and relationships from many different sources.

While the scholastics provided Catholicism with resources to combat the problems of the modern world, Rizal was able to find in scholas-

ticism a rich resource for satire. The series of distinctions, syllogisms, and analyses which characterize scholastic theology can, in the writings of Aquinas, become a wonderful source for investigating and discussing the truth. On the other hand, in the hands of the less saintly, they can be tools for sophistry and self-legitimation. Rizal parodies this in the first chapter of the *Noli*. The Dominican Father Sibyla interposes his traditional logic between two angry interlocutors, Father Damaso and a Spanish officer. After a series of Latin terms and comic subdivisions by the Dominican, the lieutenant is thrown into a tizzy. Rizal (1986, 10) comments wryly, "With all the growing jumble of distinctions, he was afraid he would end up being the one who was really at fault." This exchange serves to parody the process of scholastic logic and its potential for sophistry and the perpetuation of Spanish, particularly friar, domination.

The broad relationship between Rizal and the Middle Ages as a whole is complex, and it is a good illustration of how complicated medieval influences are for Philippine history. As Florentino Hornedo reminded us at the symposium, Rizal's critique of medieval influences on late nineteenth-century Philippines was developed through his reading of Voltaire. In an essay published several years ago, Cayetano Sanchez Fuertes, O.F.M., argued that to appreciate Rizal's thinking, one must comprehend the relationships between Rizal, Francis, and the Franciscans (his dislike of the friars is dependent on his great respect for their founder) (Fuertes 1988). Disentangling Rizal's multifaceted engagement with the Middle Ages requires delineating his positive and negative intellectual and emotional responses. On the one hand, he critiqued medieval superstition, on the other he prized *The Imitation of Christ*. Despite distinct critiques of medieval legacies, the total influence is deeply ambivalent.

The clerical control of printing in the Philippines, which lasted until the Revolution, is another medieval feature of the intellectual history of the Philippines. As in medieval Europe, the control of the dissemination of ideas remained largely in the hands of the Church. Whereas early modern Europe witnessed a Church no longer able to control the flow of thoughts (the Index of Prohibited Books and efforts at censorship were never entirely successful, as the publishers of Luther, Voltaire, and Rousseau all came to know), in the Philippines the Church maintained its exclusive position. The *Ilustrados* who studied abroad found themselves confronted with a wide range of ideas which were largely, though not absolutely, unavailable in the Philippines.

This striking retention of clerical control of printing into the late nineteenth century is one of the reasons why certain medieval customs and institutions survived as long as they did in the Philippines. This raises the question, What were the developments in European history which dissolved medieval traditions there but which were not a part of Philippine history? Did the absence of these more modern influences lead to a more durable medieval presence in this country? In part because immigration to the Philippines was almost exclusively from Spain (by contrast, the Spanish possessions in America did see immigrants from other, more progressive, European Hapsburg possessions), and in part because Manila was closed to international trade for so long, the Philippines remained relatively uninformed by the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment until well into the nineteenth century. (That these were primarily urban movements likewise suggests that they would be less important for the Philippines.) Further research may be able to determine if indeed the "last flowering" of the Middle Ages lasted so much longer in the Philippines because there were so few modern challenges to medieval institutions and habits of thought.

The question of the adverse affect of enduring medieval influences on Philippine education was raised by Bienvenido Nebres, S.J., in his "Science and Mathematics in Medieval and Philippine Universities." Writing with a special concern for scientific and mathematical teaching, he speculated that further research would indicate whether Philippine education in general stresses deference to authority over experimental observation and whether such a favoring is the result of lingering pedagogical attitudes which have not evolved from medieval times. He contrasted modern shifts in university culture in Europe and the United States with a teaching culture in the Philippines which may not have changed very much from its early roots. He speculated that a study of the development of other universities' systems might help Filipino educators in their transition towards a system which would place greater emphasis on mathematical reasoning and experimental methods.

Because of this clerical control of printing, the first Tagalog Bibles did not appear until the late nineteenth century. Popular access to Biblical narratives came in other forms, such as the drama of the *Pasyon*. Doreen G. Fernandez's presentation highlighted the influences of the medieval dramatic traditions on Philippine drama. She linked the *sinakulo* to medieval mystery play cycles and the *komedya* or *Moro-moro* plays to medieval metrical romances about King Arthur or

Charlemagne. Another area of research would be to determine if the American colonial educational system brought the medieval English traditions (especially Chaucer) into Philippine literature.

Fr. René Javellana's, "Gothicizing Philippine Architecture" demonstrated the importance of medieval Gothic buildings for the Philippines. In contrast to dramatic and literary traditions passed down from generation to generation through the centuries, "Gothic architecture of the nineteenth century was the product of nostalgia." Influenced by Romanticism, European and American architects sought to create a "more spiritual and elevated style" by drawing from the great stone monuments of the age of faith. In the Philippines, the opening of Manila to international trade in the middle of the nineteenth century meant that the country now received influences from all of Europe, not just Spain. Consequently, men such as Felix Roxas-Arroyo would study neogothic buildings in many European countries. When he returned to the Philippines, he helped erect the Santo Domingo Church in a neogothic style (1864-67). Later, other such churches were built, such as San Sebastian in the Manila suburbs, but the style also extended to "convents, residences, and even furniture." Protestants in the twentieth century sometimes preferred neogothic churches in order to distinguish themselves from Baroque and neoclassical Catholic churches, as has the Iglesia ni Kristo.

Economic Relationships: Feudalism in the Philippines

The familiar discussion of whether Philippine rural history is best described as feudalism, either in the past or even in the present, is another crucial element in the problem of medieval influences on Philippine history. Did the Spaniard establish something similar to the medieval feudal or manorial systems here in the Philippines? Was such an imposition a major factor in the history of land use and landlord tenant relations? The answer to this question depends in part on a historical definition of feudalism as well as a political definition. Scholars influenced by Marx, for example, sometimes find it useful to import European categories into the Philippines, since the category of feudalism was so much a part of Marx's own thinking of history and politics.⁶

Victor S. Venida's "The *Santo* in the Feudal Economy" was a close study of the medieval origins of the social and economic relationships surrounding the support for *santo* processions in the Philippines.

Working from models of England and Italian city-states in the Middle Ages, he argued that hereditary dedication of land and resources necessary for the upkeep and maintenance of the *santos* in the celebration of Holy Week are tied to medieval traditions and ideals. This close study of a particular problem demonstrates that much investigation of various economic and social phenomena will be needed in order to arrive at a more reliable understanding of "feudalism" in the Philippines. In general, the consensus of the symposium was that while the *encomienda* system was not manorial—the Spanish crown, seeking to avoid a territorial aristocracy in its colonies, based the system on rights to collect tribute, not on ownership of fief and serfs—the strong personal or paternalistic ties characteristic of both feudalism and aspects of Philippine agrarian life do suggest that the word "feudalism" is still useful for Philippine studies.

Another importation from the European Middle Ages was involved in Philippine responses to agrarian problems. Neo-Thomism served as the philosophical underpinning of Catholic social thought for the first half of this century. Thus, clerics such as Joseph Mulry, S.J., who sought to engage the Church in contemporary Philippine social issues were trained in, inappropriately it seems, categories and habits of thought which derive from the Middle Ages (Fabros 1988, 18–20).⁷

Conclusion: Application, Appropriation

One of the subjects which was discussed in the concluding discussion of the symposium chaired by José M. Cruz, S.J. was how we can appropriate the legacies of, or learn from the mistakes of, the Middle Ages today. Again, the figure of Francis is an example. The liberation theologian Leonardo Boff has written a volume published by Claretian Publications in Quezon City, *Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*. Certainly the poor man of Assisi and his own life's response to the economic and commercial expansion of his day do seem to have quite a bit to offer in these times.

We may follow the lead of Barbara Tuchman, who wrote *A Distant Mirror*, or the Medieval Academy of America, which, following a common medieval trope, calls its journal *Speculum*, or "mirror." We may want to hold the medieval world up to our own and see how we may reflect in it. To put it another way, what do we see when we gaze into the Middle Ages? Do we see Francis or King Arthur looking back at us, imploring us to follow a saintly or noble exam-

ple? Do we recognize our own capacity for supposedly "medieval" cruelty? Do we see a distant society which bequeathed to this country repressive traditions and structures? Do we perceive the development of Christian institutions and devotional habits in which we participate today?

To employ the idea of a mirror is to return to the problem of finding the right metaphor(s) for grasping the relationship between medieval European and Philippine history. How can we fathom the complexities of multifaceted relationships between two eras? It may not be easy to identify a set of images, terms, or metaphors which will allow us in brief space to synthesize the richness of the influences discussed in this symposium. Basic phrases or images are useful, but ultimately we wonder if they can do justice to a series of contacts which may well encompass and inform all aspects of Philippine history.

Notes

1. For an example from the sixteenth century, see Zaide (1990, 123). For examples from the nineteenth century, see Philippine National Archives, Protocolo #1103. (I am indebted to Joselito N. Fornier for pointing these latter wills out to me.)

2. On Franciscan millennialism in the New World, see Phelan (1956).

3. The significant differences between medieval flagellation and contemporary practices also illustrate the need to explore how Filipinos have transformed medieval traditions. See Fernando N. Zialcita (1986, 56-62).

4. See Governor Sande's letter to Philip II in Blair and Robertson (1903-1909), vol. 4, p. 133. See also the "Memorial of the Manila Citizens to the Council of the Indies (Manila, July 26, 1586)" in Blair and Robertson, (1903-1909) vol. 6, pp. 224-25.

5. I have used Joaquin's book because of its historical accuracy and because it provides good illustrations of how medieval influences can be seen in recent Philippine writing. For Governor Acuña's own emphasis on the importance of the Filipino soldiers see his letter to Philip III in Blair and Robertson (1903-1909) vol. 12, p. 160.

6. For an example of the debate surrounding this issue, see Temario C. Rivera et al. (1982).

7. Catholic social thought drew on neoscholastic thinking as part of its response to the rise of communism in Europe.

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