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The Image of Philippine History and Society

Niels Mulder



This article concentrates on the analysis of two books currently in use for Social Studies in the first year of Philippine high schools. The aim of that course is to discuss Philippine history and government in such a way that the students will become good "citizens" (*mamamayan*) inspired by love for country and people (*ang damdaming maka-Pilipino*) and instrumental in the development of the nation-state (*bansa*). It is not my purpose to evaluate whether the latter purposes of the course can be attained (that basically depends on teachers and their methods) but to investigate how the social world is presented in these two texts and how students learn to think about it.

Social science school-books are an important part of culture, moulding how people are to perceive themselves. Based on the colonial American tradition of education, early Philippine textbooks were low on nationalism, United States-centric, and with the Filipinos forever appearing as the passive receivers of the blessings that foreigners brought. This, of course, was noted and commented upon by many scholars, Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike. The still reverberating denunciation of the state of history and social science teaching was Renato Constantino's essay "The Miseducation of the Filipino" (1966). In his subsequent rewriting of Philippine history, Filipinos become the active agents of their own past.

W. H. Scott wondered at the ways in which pre-Spanish history was presented in the school-books. In his dissertation (1968) he sifted myth from fact, exposing the migration theory that held that the various ethnic groups that peopled the islands came in successive waves, each in their own boat, speaking their particular language, and bringing along their characteristic culture. He also criticized the fantastic stories about early visitors, the Spanish way of viewing the people they came into contact with, and a few spectacular cases of deliberate fraud, such as the Kalantiyaw code of law, presumably written in the early fifteenth century, yet actually faked in the early

years of this century. Such distortions of history can never substitute for the critical explanation of the present, suggesting a false identity where authenticity is needed.

M. L. Doronila had other questions to ask. She investigated whether the stated purposes of Marcos's martial law educational development decree (1972) were attained, namely, "reform directed at problems of national identity" in order to ensure "that every Filipino shall become conscious and aware of his roots and feel proud about it."¹ Her findings were depressing. In her attempts to measure national identity formation, she found that "if these young students had their way, they would rather be citizens of another country" (1986).

Also Mulder (1990) was amazed at curriculum content, and the depiction of the Filipino as perennially on the receiving end drew his ire. According to the texts he consulted, Filipino civilization derives from Hindus, Arabs, Chinese, Japanese, Spaniards, and Americans, all of them bringing their beneficence to the islands. Because of their Chinese ancestry, Filipinos are devoted to their family. Because of the Hindu connection, they could read and write while being superstitious. Because of the Japanese, they learned to breed ducks. Spain brought Christianity, and America democracy. With everybody bringing and teaching, the Filipinos were gradually being dressed up to "become the most socially advanced of the Asiatic peoples who have shaken off western rule" and "the outpost of democracy in the Orient" (Leogardo et al. 1974, 127 and 130-32).

Yet Mulder also found that, in spite of receiving all that civilization, the textbooks show a strong tendency toward self-denigration. While studying Filipino Economics in the third year of high school, local working habits are characterized as:

Do not work hard; *ningas kugon* (never finishing a project); *mañana* habit (postponing); sacrifice work just to meet social obligations; absenteeism; lack pride in work; work just to please the boss; the quality of work is inferior; spend money recklessly, then borrow. (Bilaso et al. 1987, 62-63)

When the students advance to college, the knowledge is imparted that Filipinos are:

irresponsible, imitative, improvident and indolent; they dislike manual labor; their government is corrupt and serves foreigners; they are not

self-respecting, not self-reliant and have an inferiority complex. Moreover, they are the laughing stock among their fellow Asians. (Garcia *et al.* 1986, 193–99)

Thank goodness! The contents of books change over time, and, for a while at least, the EDSA “revolution” gave rise to the Proud Filipino, a self-confidence that was further boosted by the hailing of the Constitution of 1987 as the savior of the country’s woes. The two textbooks to be discussed in this article were clearly written in that spirit, one under the auspices of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS), and thus official, the other by a team of authors from the De La Salle University. The latter book also follows the DECS format, yet, like all privately issued texts, takes considerable latitude in emphasis and interpretation. The main task of the books is to explain the world beyond family and community. While the books that are used in elementary school typically depict the social world from the vantage point of family values, the high school and college texts focus on government, administration, and politics, so bringing the political economy and the use of power into focus, at the same time that they develop an interpretation of history.

The Establishment of the Filipino Nation²

The perspective of the DECS book is immediately clear from the table of contents. In the first unit, the origins of the Filipino people are explained. This is followed by chapters on the oppression of Filipino freedom, and the sprouting and development of nationalism. The second unit, “Towards Independence,” covers the repression of Filipino nationalism and the delaying of liberty. The third, “In the Period of Being on Our Own” (*pagsasarili*), presents challenges to independence (*kasarinlan*) and the authoritarian regime. The final unit is about “The New Filipino,” and discusses the reestablishment of democracy and the Filipino citizen/national.

The picture this evokes is that of the eternal Filipino, from primitive to present, whose freedom has occasionally been frustrated and who, so immediately after weaning, and thus on his own, had to surmount challenges and authoritarianism, while now facing the future with constitutionally inspired confidence. This view, of seeing early history in the light of the present, raises its own problems, and, as we shall see, presents an obstacle to the understanding of Filipino becoming.

The Chosen Land

Let us start, however, with the first, geographical chapter, "The Chosen Land." It begins with a fascinating set of questions: "Why were the foreigners attracted to the Philippines? What special qualities did the land have to persuade the foreigners to occupy it? Has this perhaps something to do with the geography of the country?" In the last paragraph of the chapter an answer is given. It was the wealth of natural resources that drew foreigners to the country and made them conquer it; in that way they grabbed the opportunity to grow rich and to expand their Asian colonies.

Whether this is a valid answer, is not in question here. It is more to the point to note that the opening sentences demonstrate a remarkable preoccupation with foreigners who, from the third chapter onwards, seem to play an important role in the islands, but whose most crucial contribution, namely, the creation of the Filipinos as a nation, and their country as a state, is not acknowledged. Yet, that there is something strange about Philippine unity is immediately apparent from the interesting statement that the country consists of 7,107 islands.³ It is this far-flung archipelagic diversity that is recognized as a barrier to transportation and communication, and so to the unity of citizens and the evolution of their national freedom/independence.

A second barrier to unity and mutual understanding among Filipinos is the presence of so many different tongues, customs, and traditions that give rise to strong feelings of local and regional chauvinism that are more powerful than the national sentiment. To overcome this barrier, the national language, Filipino, should be enriched and developed in accordance with the Constitution of 1987, in the hope that it may intensify the bond of union among the population.

Yet, there is something good about being an archipelago, too. With so much water surrounding the land, there is plenty of fish to be caught, and the islands offer many prize tourist attractions.

Basically, these observations present a continental view of the country, which raises an interesting question. According to most texts, the early inhabitants of the islands came by boat, and there is good evidence that, like all Malayo-Polynesians, Filipinos sailed the seas. Yet, in the school representation, after having arrived, the ancestors immediately unlearned their navigational skills, and so, for Filipinos, the sea became a barrier rather than a connecting element. It was foreigners, Arabs, Hindus, Chinese, Spaniards and Americans who sailed the seas; Filipinos were fishermen, or tourists, at best.

The chapter about the origins of the population is definitely an improvement over earlier accounts. While the imaginative theory of H. Otley Beyer about the various groups of people who sailed to the islands, each bringing its own language and culture, is still presented, it is juxtaposed with other ideas, and no final mythology is forced upon the student. So, what remains to be explained is the presence of so many ethnic groups who are all Filipino, in spite of their cultural differences, some of them even building their houses in trees!

This type of presentation, "We are all Filipinos," and the diversity they display, forces the authors to write highly ambiguous and inconsistent paragraphs. By introducing the old-fashioned, or archaic, Filipino (*sinaunang Pilipino*), they create a unity about which general statements can be made and a precolonial past that should either be idyllic or, contrarily, anticipate the present. Often these two points of view are at odds. Let us consider the following as an illustration:

It may be noted that the production of the archaic Filipinos precisely fitted their needs. Presumably this can be explained by the lack of knowledge about methods of storage and preservation. They made sure that their production was just enough in order not to be wasteful.

Presumably there is still another reason why the economic system of the archaic Filipinos was such, namely, the absence of groups of people taking advantage of other groups. In those days the concept of the private property of land did not yet prosper and the Filipinos were free to farm or plant wherever they liked. . . . In that way, all were equal, nobody taking advantage of the other's harvest. (p. 27)

This paradisaical situation makes one wonder at the importance of enmity, killing, and weapons that was discussed in the three previous pages. It does not seem to fit with the Spanish interpretation of early society that is repeated in all textbooks. This society is stratified, consisting of the ruler (*datu*) and his clan, the privileged nobility (*maharlika*) owing fealty to their leader, the ordinary freemen and freed slaves owing tax and services, and the slaves, or serfs, who were the property of the others. Moreover, in the following section in which it is pointed out that "the family is the basic unit of archaic Filipino society," attention is drawn to the importance of inheritance, while further property considerations are introduced under Courtship and Marriage:

In those days the adult men and women were not so free in their courtship because normally parents arranged the marriage of their children.

With courtship came a period of servitude of the man and his family at the request of the woman's family. . . . Another marriage custom was the transfer of a dowry by the man to the family of the woman. This is called *bigay-kaya*. Normally these were landholdings, gold, slaves, or valuables in accordance with the resources of the man's family. (p. 29)

On page 32 the theory of Otley Beyer is smuggled back in when the idea of "barangay" is explained. Indeed, it was the boats that brought the various Malay family groups to the country which explains the existence of the separate, kinship-based settlements of the archaic Filipinos. Apparently, they were well organized:

Historians say that then already Filipinos had political organization. This is known as the barangay-state. As a state, the barangay had a territory, a group of people, government, and authority (sovereignty). It also had a chief, laws, a juridical system . . . The head of the barangay is normally called *datu*. . . . The *datu* holds authority and is the head to discharge the tasks of government. He is the chief law-maker, executive, justice, and military leader. The chosen chief has prowess, strength, and determination in order to defend the barangay against enemies. It is also necessary that he is a respected person in order that people will immediately submit to his orders. The *datu* can be changed when he is not obeyed by his subjects. From time to time the *datu* was chosen on the basis of his suavity and intelligence. (p. 33)

Normally, however, the *datu* was succeeded by his (male) child, and he was assisted by a Council of Elders to formulate the laws. Most of these regulations were never written down, although the Muslims sometimes did. The text then goes on to explain judiciary hearings and trials, without any mention of the infamous Kalantiyaw code, which is a definite improvement.

Another element elaborated in earlier texts has also been omitted here, namely, the presumed contacts with other Asian people by way of trade, and the influence they exercised on the evolution of culture. So, there were no Hindus to teach literacy and superstitions—previously a sort of a claim to Southeast Asian respectability. There were no Chinese traders bringing jars and exotic goodies while exemplifying commercial practices, frugality, and love of parents, and no Japanese duck-breeders. Only the Arabs figure in the account, as they must, to explain the presence of Islam in the South. While the role of Arab traders is subject to historical speculation, according to

the text they arrived already in the islands in the ninth century, the presence of Islam itself can only be retraced to 1280 A.D. Yet, this type of inconsistency is so common in all Filipino school texts that I have seen, that it is not worthwhile to comment on these aspects of the books. It is more positive to report that a little over three pages are devoted to Islam, the Moslem creed, its political organization, and resistance to Castilian rule (pp. 34-37).

The Coming of the Spaniards

The coming of the Spaniards is the beginning of the suppression of Filipino freedom. The widely scattered and independent barangay-states and the Moslem sultanates did not have the opportunity to unite. The independence of the Filipinos as a nation did not prosper. When the Spaniards came, the freedom of the Filipinos was destroyed before it had the opportunity to sprout (p. 38). In the following forty-five pages of the text this line is then explained, devoting almost half the pages to Spanish rule and cultural contributions, the other half to the opposition to Spanish rule and the evolution of nationalism.

The data selected about Spanish history in the islands are standard but rather unbalanced, and their relevance for the understanding of the present is dubious. By cramming the information about three centuries of Christianization in less than half a page, the Spaniards have to appear as both benefactors and oppressors without much respect for historical process. Besides, and more serious, is the inclination to present the Filipino and the country as original and enduring, which prevents the authors from explaining the revolutionary nature of the changes that took place in society and political economy. By merely stating that the people were taught more efficient ways of agriculture and animal husbandry, the point is missed that sedentarization, irrigation, the introduction of the plow, and all kinds of new crops basically changed the way of life and are at the root of Philippine culture today.

The observations in the text about a new social structure deserve attention. Next to the Spanish officials, one finds the *principalia* and the mass of people. The *principalia* consists of teachers, local officials, and rich landlords. They are the aristocrats of society and enjoy rights and privileges, such as participation in elections, freedom from taxation and servitude. There is also the *cacique* who administers the estates of the rich, among whom we find the Spanish priests

and officials. He collects the land rent. (Five pages earlier he has, more correctly, been called *inquilino*). Those who become rich in trade enjoy a high standard of living which they show off in expensive status symbols, such as big houses, fine appliances, expensive clothing and jewelry. They study and become professionals. They form the group of *ilustrados*. To the mass of the people belong the ordinary residents of the country, most of whom are farmers. They live in poverty and experience the burdens and abuses of the Spaniards and the nation's *ilustrados* (p. 55).

It is a pity that the presentation of a changing social structure is done in such a slipshod manner and that the emergence of the various groups and strata is not linked to the changes in the political economy. Of interest is the influence of Agoncillo and Constantino. *Ilustrados* are a perfidious type of people, oppressors of the masses. The chapter then continues with a listing of other changes, such as the conversion to Catholicism, resulting in a new morality based on the Ten Commandments, thus changing the customs of excessive usury, polygamy, divorce, and enslavement; the establishment of hospitals and orphanages; the introduction of new entertainment and games, such as the fiesta, the horse race, the lottery, serenading, and kite-flying. This is followed by a further listing of developments in literature, education, arts and sciences. The observations about the Spanish language foreshadow the present language policy and the awakening of Filipino nationalism:

Some historians said that the Spaniards did not voluntarily spread their language; it may be said that it was rather withheld from the Filipinos. This is related to the belief that if the Filipinos would learn Castilian, they could know and understand their rights and achieve unity. In those days the Spaniards noted the absence of a single language that tied the Filipinos together and they thought such a situation excellent to their pursuit of colonizing the archipelago. The priests and government officials also held the level of Philippine culture low and not befitting of the Spanish language. Nevertheless, there were also many Filipinos who learned to speak and write in Spanish. (p. 56)

The chapter concludes with the statement that "The Filipinos who were subdued by the Spaniards received, were changed and enriched by colonial culture that became a part of their own civilization," which is a correct statement. It is therefore sad that it is not traced to its deepest consequences: without Spain, no Philippines; without

Catholicism, no common culture. The relationship of colonization and the sprouting and development of nationalism is, however, taken up in the following chapter that begins by restating that the changes in lifestyle ranged from the system of government to religious belief and conceptualization, and are expressed in literature, architecture, clothing, and food (p. 60).

The text's preconceived opinion about the perennial Filipino does not detract from a realistic and excellent discussion of the origin and growth of nationalism:

While the Filipino Muslims were successful, most of the uprisings in the other parts of the nation failed. The unity of the Muslims is not something one could ordinarily find in other areas of the Philippines. Many uprisings happened because of the personal interests of the leaders. The Filipino custom of merely caring for oneself [to the detriment of others] helped the colonizer in separating and dividing the Filipinos. In those days, the Filipinos were not yet forged together as a nation. With each thinking about his own interests, Ilocanos, Tagalogs, Visayans, Bicolanos, and other groups fought each other. Because of this it was easy for the Spaniards to use Filipinos to suppress the rebellions of fellow Filipinos.

However much of the uprisings were frustrated, the consciousness was also growing that all Filipinos alike were experiencing oppression and maltreatment. They felt the absence of freedom and the low esteem the foreigners held them in. The quelling of the many uprisings cultivated a hatred that slowly awakened the Filipinos to the real necessity of uniting in order to obtain freedom. Is this the beginning of nationalism?

Nationalism is a feeling for the nation of those people who show loyalty to their own country and not merely to a single leader or chief. The root of this word is "nation" which is how an association or group of people is called who have a single desire and purpose in life and who are tied together by a single race, language, religion and [common] customs and traditions. It is not enough for people to have a place to live, a recognized government, and [a set of] officials in order to have the feeling of nationalism. These are important elements, but the most important is the unity of the people who acknowledge that they are members of a single nation and prepared to defend their freedom. This feeling is not natural to people, but sprouts gradually and can quickly or slowly emerge because it will be in accordance with the historical experience of the people. In the course of time the forms [in which] nationalism [presents itself] will also be different (p. 63).

With so much honesty, and attention to the present problems of a pervasive 'individualism,' plus the weaknesses of common purpose and nationalism, the origin of the word 'Filipino' can then be explained, too. That the name of the country was given in 1542 in honor of the then crown prince Felipe, was already mentioned in the text which here continues with the conventional historical themes—secularization, Cavite and Gomburza, the reformists and the Propaganda, pro-Spanish nationalism, its radical variety, and the Katipunan. As we were prepared to expect, the role of Rizal remains under-exposed and his true significance is not grasped by the authors who repeat the elementary school wisdom that he "became an excellent physician. He learned several languages and had many alien friends. His foreign friends assisted in his endeavour to improve the welfare of the Philippines" (p. 69). So, this only omits the grade school information that he "loved his mother and was obedient to her."

While the reformists are recognized to have first formulated the separateness of the Philippine nation from Spain and even threatened that the country could dismiss the Spanish empire (p. 71), they remain ilustrados, too. "The ilustrados did not have the determination to use violence in order to obtain reforms. Also the groups constituting the middle stratum of society reacted like that. They avoided the use of arms and turmoil because that could harm their properties and businesses. While these two groups continued with their reform movement, the masses, under the leadership of Andres Bonifacio, grew restless and also lost the hope that there would be change" (p. 70). Consequently, Bonifacio gets the spotlight (pp. 71-77) until he has to give way to Aguinaldo. By the usual itinerary—Biak-na-Bato, American-Spanish war, second phase of the revolution, declaration of independence, Malolos, the surrender of Manila, and the Paris treaty—we reach the end of the Spanish period.

Towards Independence

The second unit of the text, "Towards Independence," begins with the Suppression of Filipino Nationalism and an eight-page account of the Philippine-American war, complete with the American atrocities and the prolonged resistance of Macario Sakay. This is followed by a very boring, legalistic account of the evolution of political life (pp. 92-114), the interest of which is that the American idea of 'preparation' or 'training for' self-government is not taken seriously; Filipinos are capable enough. The section also highlights the power strug-

gle between Osmeña and Quezon (pp. 102–3), and eulogizes the latter because of his impressive rhetoric (p. 112), his Code of Ethics, and as the Father of the National Language (p. 114).

In contrast with the political discussion, the evolution of culture is scantily treated, and, while it begins with the acknowledgment that even up to the present the strength of American cultural influence remains a problem, the presentation is slipshod and inaccurate. The idea of the separation of church and state is not an American innovation; it was already in the Malolos Constitution. Town-planning was not introduced by the Yankees. We only need to consider the 'plaza complex' to see the pervasive influence of Spain. Also municipal elections were first introduced by the latter. It is undisputed, of course, that the spread of Protestantism was a result of the American occupation, but the connection between the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) and the invaders is missed. Because the Americans sided with the Roman Catholic Church and with the friars, they disappointed their new subjects who desired secularization and Filipinization.

The way the book presents the origin of the IFI has nothing to do with the Americans, and one wonders why it is treated under the heading of Assimilation of American Culture. If the thesis is plausible that the introduction of all those zealous Protestant sects was directly causing the rise of an Iglesia ni Cristo, then one wonders why here, as in virtually all textbooks, this Philippine contribution to Christian expression is not mentioned at all. Especially in view of its present visibility and huge membership—probably well beyond the languishing IFI—such omissions are grave distortions of history while failing to clarify the present.

In the discussion of American influence on production, it is pointed out that they did everything to keep the Philippines an agricultural economy while flooding its market with stateside products "in the hope that the Filipinos would grow excessively attached" to them (p. 116). This, of course, serves to explain what is currently known as 'colonial mentality,' the preference for things American over the home-grown. The colonizers' influence on schooling was impressive; the education aimed at "preparing the Filipinos to become citizens of a democratic state" and "to teach them the American system." With the benefit of hindsight, we can safely conclude that this project largely miscarried, while, despite American plans, other Filipino cultural traits persisted.

In the schools the nobility of labor was taught. The course of industrial arts became part of the curriculum . . . but there was no interest for it. The Filipinos gave more importance to academic than to vocational courses. They held manual labor in low esteem. This is the reason why it is easier to find work after completing an academic than a vocational course. It became a status symbol in life to have learning . . . and to obtain a diploma. (p. 116)

After noting literature in English, and influences on arts, music, sciences, transportation, communication, and sports, we are again presented with an American contribution that failed to take roots, at least in political life and in relation to self-esteem, "Apart from the new sports, the Filipinos learned another thing from the Americans, namely, to accept losing whole-heartedly."

With twenty-five pages devoted to it, the chapter about the Japanese occupation is very elaborate, and one wonders why. It is, of course, relevant to know that a second Republic existed, and the Hukbalahap need to be explained, together with the collaboration issue and the precarious position of Commonwealth President Osmeña. The chapter closes on an interesting question, "MacArthur abandoned the Philippines and left the management of their own government to the Filipinos. Having been subjected to foreigners for many centuries, would the Filipinos already be prepared to take care of their own affairs?" (p. 143)

The Period of Independence

For obvious reasons this question is never directly answered, but paves the way for a rather critical description of the early independence period up to 1986. In the scheme of the book the preparedness for self-rule should mature with the Constitution of 1987, but it takes another fifty-six pages to arrive there, and the unit "In the Period of Independence" begins with the challenges to it, such as the destruction wrought by the war and the problem of collaboration.

Much of the unit's chapters are written in a style reminiscent of the political analysis of the better columnists and commentators. The parting of the ways of Roxas and Osmeña is lucidly painted against the background of collaboration and American anti-communism. The text leaves no doubt that Roxas was considered to be a collaborator, but the interference of MacArthur and the support he enjoyed among landowners brought him comfortably to the presidency against an

Osmeña who had to rely on the support of former anti-Japanese guerillas, among them the Huks.

Roxas's presidency is frankly treated to highlight the major problems of the day (pp. 149-58). According to many Filipinos, the inauguration of the Third Republic did not mean that the Philippines was truly free. With Roxas strongly relying on the American connection, their friendship and anti-communism, the collaboration question is dissolved while the economy becomes hostage to the United States's 'beneficence' that is expressed in trade acts, parity rights, and war damage compensation, all leading to the necessity to amend the constitution.

Roxas serves the Americans hand and foot. In his thinking the stability of the Philippines is contingent on the friendship of the United States, thus leading to agreements about military assistance and a ninety-nine year lease of military bases. Meanwhile, the 'problem of communism' needs explanation; it is traced back to Spanish times and rooted in the unjust ownership of land. A few, the aristocracy, lord it over the majority who wallow in poverty and who receive less for their labor than they need for their livelihood. Being forced into debt, even their children have to serve in the homes of the rich in compensation. Neither the revolution of 1896, nor the coming of the Americans changed the situation of the farmers.

This information serves to introduce the discovery of socialism, with which Lope K. Santos, because of his novel *Banaag at Sikat*, is credited. Subsequently laborers and farmers begin to unionize, and socialist and communist political parties arise that are not well received by the American colonial government. They receive more positive recognition from Quezon. The war leads to the formation of the Hukbalahap, its aftermath to the Democratic Alliance, whose six victorious candidates are prevented from taking their seats in Congress. Soon this leads to rural unrest in Central Luzon that, after the murder of Juan Feleo, escalates to the armed struggle between Huks and government.

It takes little imagination to expose Roxas's high-handedness, his nondemocratic attitude, and his reliance on the Americans to safeguard his position, even at the expense of the constitution. The only salient point that is not mentioned is his revenge against the people of Central Luzon who had challenged him by electing six representatives not sympathetic to the big landowners. His unleashing of a reign of terror contributed most to the decision to revive the Hukbalahap.

The idea of state violence and military abuses has to wait until the Marcos presidency to be explained.

The account of the ensuing presidencies highlights the perennial problems of American interference, frustrated independence, the struggle against the Huks, jurisdiction over the military bases, the lack of political will to initiate land reform, corruption, political manipulation and electoral fraud, the desirability of foreign investment, the irritation at American advice—however justified, the weak economy, the deceit of politicians, and the poverty of the masses. It is a pity that the rediscovery of nationalism and Recto's candidacy for the presidency receive no attention at all, because these paved the way for subsequent student protest under Marcos.

The terminal years of the Third Republic are presided over by Ferdinand Marcos who not only inherits all the social, economic, and political problems of his predecessors, but also witnesses the Mindanao situation growing out of hand. Part of this is due to systematic neglect of the southern provinces, the other cause, the text says, is the colonization by northern Christians who take advantage of the Muslims and cheat them of their land, which, naturally, gives rise to Muslim resistance and eventually armed liberation movements.

Before moving on to Marcos's authoritarian regime, the obligatory remarks have to be made in the text about the social and cultural evolution of the country. These discussions are of a much lesser quality than the political commentary that is often written in good journalistic style. It seems as if the students are trained as newspaper readers, and made attentive to the devices and tricks of politicians, with the president at the center, while cultural and social developments are presented in stereotyped fashion as marginal and unrelated events. The section begins with the observation that all problems are rooted in the long colonial past, a statement that seems to relegate the responsibility to others. The great majority of the very poor at present were already in that condition in Spanish times, the problem of the unequal landownership pattern only aggravating the gap between the affluent and the needy. Yet, during the time of the war a class of nouveau riche got rich by way of trade, and after the war they became part of high society, although they never received high education (p. 182).

But it was only a few who enjoyed such good fortune. The greater part of the Filipinos remained in poverty and were without hope. This situation exacerbated the lowering of moral standards and the

spreading of criminal behaviour. On the other side, in order to flee from poverty and joblessness, many transferred to the cities, such as Manila, to try their luck. This caused urban congestion and the increasing number of squatters. The continuing government policy of pressing for urban development instead of that of the rural communities even attracts more to migrate to the centres of development. Others, like those mentioned, chose to join the communists in the hope of changing their position in life.

The system of education, similar to other areas of Filipino life, is influenced by the Americans. Because of its likeness to the American system, American values are cultivated among the Filipinos. This is the reason why the educational system is considered colonial. It does not answer to the needs of Philippine society. Related to this is the national problem of the vast quantity of college graduates in subjects unsuitable for the demands of the industries. As a result very many professionals remain unemployed. (p. 182)

In the following section of the text about language and literature, American influence is pointed out again. People seem to be more attached to the borrowed language than to Tagalog. Besides, many people object to the use of Tagalog because they fear that it will weaken their ability of speaking English. Moreover, Tagalog is not representative of the native languages of the Philippines. In order to avoid this criticism, Pilipino (nowadays Filipino) is replacing Tagalog as the national language. In any case, the influence of English remains stronger than that of Filipino. On many occasions, English is mixed with Filipino when people are pressed to use the national language.

If this were not yet enough, a long list of titles is given, devoid of any context, of which it is said that they exemplify the influence of English in the works of poets and authors, even if they write in Tagalog/Filipino. In subject matter what they choose to write about is influenced by the Americans. Besides, many prefer to write in English. Also the painters do not find native ways of expression; first they worked in the Spanish style, and now in the American. The exception is Carlos V. Francisco who works in a style of his own. Foreign music is more popular among the Filipinos than the home-grown. This compilation of comments concludes with, "The Filipinos received, changed, and enriched the foreign influences on their style of life. The borrowed elements became part of their own culture, got a Filipino stamp, and became part of the distinguishing characteristics of the nation." (p. 186)

The word *pandaraya*, cheating, deception, fraudulence, occurs every time in relation to elections and often in reporting about politics in general. In discussing Marcos's reelection in 1969, the text reports how Marcos manipulated, how he played tricks in order to create the right atmosphere for staging the coup that inaugurated his dictatorship. This is all explained in the chapter about the "Authoritarian Regime (pp. 187-200)." Whatever he tried, must fail or be severely flawed. The Mindanao problem remained unresolved; the land reform program was not correctly implemented and made too many exceptions; labor laws were not respected and the low salaries forced many to work in the Middle East, from where they sent the much needed dollars; the educational infrastructure was not attended to and the level or quality of people's knowledge went down; industrial development was financed by increasing the foreign debt; nepotism was the rule and fed into a kleptocracy that, as a system, became known as crony capitalism; corruption was rife and its scale unprecedented; many showcase projects merely served to impress foreigners; human rights abuses were the order of the day; justice was manipulated. In the face of these excesses, the question was how to put an end to this authoritarianism. The murder of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. was the first step in this direction, inexorably leading, by way of capital flight and snap elections, to the national revolution that became known as People Power while bringing Aquino's widow to the presidency.

The last unit, "The New Filipino," basically introduces the political system of the Philippines under the new constitution of 1987 while specifying its preamble, or list of the very good intentions that it is hoped will be achieved, namely that the first task of the government is to serve and to protect the citizens. This is followed in the text by a discussion of the various branches of government and how they are supposed to function. The last short chapter begins with the question, "How to become a true Filipino citizen?," and introduces the legal criteria surrounding Philippine citizenship, and then the rights and obligations of the citizen. The book ends thus:

The fulfilment of their duties by the citizens is greatly important for the stability and the progress of a nation. They are the true hope of the country. From them emanates sovereignty. They are the government and they also resolve any political, social, or economic problem. Because of this, every citizen should actively participate in contributing to the development of their own nation. (p. 227)

Filipino History and Government⁴

Just as in the DECS book, much information about the text is already revealed by a good look at the table of contents. Of the book's 355 pages, the first 197, or 55 percent are devoted to the pre-Spanish Philippines. This is in sharp contrast with the first that allows for that period 16 percent of its space. Bro. Andrew Gonzalez told me that this emphasis should result in a more positive self-image and contribute to feelings of nationalism. The ninety-five pages about the Spanish period, inclusive of the time of the First Republic, correspond to over 28 percent of the text, against forty-five pages, or 20 percent, in the DECS's presentation. Then, interestingly, the Gonzalez book proceeds immediately to American influences and the preparation for self-government (eighteen pages or 5 percent), without a word about the Philippine-American war. The official DECS text appears far more critical, dwelling almost nine pages (4 percent) on that fight, while further discussing the American period in twenty-seven pages (12 percent).

In the Gonzalez book, Japanese times are treated in six pages (2 percent) and no mention is made of resistance or collaboration, in contrast with the other book that devoted twenty-six pages (11 percent) to the war. Eighteen pages (5 percent) are allowed for the discussion of the various presidents from Osmeña to Marcos. The last unit, "The Struggle of the Filipinos," inclusive of the new constitution, is sixteen pages (4.5 percent), compared to fifty-six pages (25 percent) about the presidents and the triumphant New Filipino (twenty-seven pages, or 12 percent) of the DECS' book. Although both texts have been written according to the official outline, the interpretation of the material discussed seems rather dissimilar. In short, *Filipino History and Government* emphasizes the past, with 83 percent of the book considering events up to 1899, and spends the remainder in briefly discussing the present century with a minimum of information about the practices of government and politics, at least when compared with the 64 percent that is written about the twentieth century in the official DECS text. But let us now look at the private school-book in more detail.

Pre-Spanish Origins

The obligatory geographical discussion is, in places, very technical and cannot possibly be understood by the age group the books

aims at. The treatment is very lengthy, too, covering 43 pages out of the 197 devoted to the old Philippines. Of interest is that the size of the country is compared to Arizona and New England in full disregard of its Asian neighbors.

The next 154 pages offer a fantastic quantity of, often baffling, information. During the Pleistocene, five land bridges connected the country with the Asian continent, namely, the bridges Borneo-Palawan, Borneo-Sulu-Mindanao, Celebes-Mindanao, New Guinea-Mindanao, and Taiwan-Northern Luzon. This physical connection with the rest is the cause that similar plants and animals are found in the islands. It was also the way by which the first people came (p. 46). This must have been some 400-500,000 years ago when the *Homo erectus* probably arrived (p. 51). More cultured groups—*Homo sapiens*—came later, the Austronesians from Southeast Asia, the Mongoloids from China (p. 54).

According to H. Otley Beyer, the first people arrived in three waves of migration. The first came five to six thousand years ago, and brought people with a neolithic culture. The second arrived in 13,000-500 B.C. They came from Indo-China and South Asia. They brought husked rice (*bigas*). The third wave came from the South, 300-200 B.C., and brought the rice plant (*palay*) (p. 54). After first being peopled by Negritos some 30,000 years ago, Indonesians [this is what Otley Beyer called them] from Indo-China and South China sailed to the Philippines, in two waves, 5-6,000 years and 1,500 years ago respectively. They had a beautifully light brown skin, and were of short, but robust stature. They looked like the people from Indonesia. They knew wet rice agriculture and sugar cane (p. 57).

Then came the Malays and the Ten Datus from Borneo, as described in the Maragtas Code. After buying the Negrito lands in Panay, the various datus settled in different parts of the archipelago and became the ancestors of various lowland peoples, among them the Tagalogs. But perhaps all this is merely legend, and research continues to search out the true origins of the Malay race in the country (p. 60).

The discussion of the Filipino communities before the coming of the Spaniards opens with a whirlpool of bewildering facts in which two elements stand out; the old Filipinos had eating habits similar to those of the present, and were exposed to overseas trade (pp. 64-65). Preferably they lived along the water, be it coast or river bank, but some groups built their houses upon trees, which is—as in so

many other books—illustrated by a naive drawing of a present day hut (*bahay kubo*) straddling the branches of a tree (p. 67).

Connecting the pre-Spanish past to the present gradually appears as a theme in the text. The Sulod of Panay not only had a calendar of twelve months, but even their first month, Ulalong, corresponded perfectly to January. The golden pieces of money they used in trade were equivalent to pesetas and divided decimally. The division of labor between the sexes was very much as it is today, and so the conclusion is inevitable, "Many of the economic activities mentioned are still pursued by our present generations" (pp. 70-71).

The islands had a large population, organized in independent barangays, that is, family groups or boat loads of original migrants, under a datu. The office of the leader was normally inherited by his offspring, but deserving ordinary people could sometimes also be elected. In such a case, age, and thus knowledge and experience, was the important criterion. That is why ancestors were also greatly respected. Basically, the political organization of a barangay rested on the family principle. Sometimes barangays united, because of trading or marriage links of the ruling families, a union that was ritually reinforced by the blood compact of their chiefs. Yet there was also conflict among the barangay groups because each group tended to be concerned with its own welfare only, to the detriment of others (pp. 72-79).

The government of the independent barangay was headed by a datu who received honor, tax, and service from his subjects. He was leader in all activities, whether in war or peace, all the time caring for and protecting his underlings. Together with the elderly councilors of the tribe (*tribu*) he issued laws that were sometimes written down. Only a few of these documents survive up to the present, because Spanish missionaries or nature destroyed them. The Moslem laws and the Kalantiyaw Code are still in existence. This statement in the text is then followed by an incredibly detailed description of all the things that were regulated by law in barangay society, the working of the legal system, and a few pages about the political organization of the Muslims (pp. 80-86).

Society, then and now, is almost without differentiation. The most important principle in life is to be related. The primary unit of Filipino communities was the family, and hierarchical family principles pervaded wider social life, with the fact of being kin to each other assuming crucial significance. The communities were stratified, much

as they are today, into the strong and the weak. In modern society we are familiar with *compadrazco*, but also the old society knew ritual kinship, such as the blood compact. Parents were generous to their children and understood their shortcomings; their first concern was the comfort and well-being of their offspring. Small children were especially pampered by their grandparents. Women were not allowed to leave the home unaccompanied; they were chaperoned by a brother or other male relative. People could be insulted easily, which then called for revenge. This, in its turn, was a common cause of conflict. Inheritance was equally divided (pp. 87-91).

The questionable statement in the text about the old society, in the image of the present, being almost without differentiation, becomes really enigmatic when the next chapter presents us with the standard fare about the four strata of barangay society that are even further subdivided in a range of offices among the highest and various classes of slaves in the lowest stratum (pp. 94-100).

The following chapters that describe the life cycle and some beliefs then give way to short, unintegrated and unrelated descriptions of the diversity of the islands' population, from Tasaday to Tagalog, and from pepper-eating Bicolano to Badyaw (pp. 116-52). When the Castilians arrived, they found that the Tagalog had an advanced civilization in which women played an important part. This can be proven by the custom of the dowry; the control of women over the family's finances; their right to property; the equality of rights in all aspects of social life; their freedom of action, of dressing, and of decoration; and the presence of female priests as heads of religious rituals or ceremonies (p. 132).

Compared to these important women, "The Tagalog male is happy-go-lucky, given to the cock-fight and other gambling, but also naturally given to music, fun, and amiable to his fellows. . . . They like to fantasize without much self-control. They were keen on their honour." Tagalogs believed in spirits and prayed to their ancestors. Their *anitos* were like the saints of the Christians. Besides, they knew a Creator God, His Messenger/Child, a Holy Spirit, and others, and believed in the last judgment, heaven, and a hell presided over by Satan and his followers, such as witches and vampires (p. 132). A few Tagalog characteristics that may be good or not so good, are their disposition to *bahala na* (we'll see), *pakikisama* (giving in to group), *utang-na-loob* (debt of gratitude), and *hiya* or *amor propio* (self-esteem) (p. 133). So what is new?

All this is followed by two rather technical chapters presenting linguistic, then, archaeological evidence about the old Filipinos, in which, among others, the custom of jar burial is noted (p. 169). The last lessons are about foreign contacts and their influence on Filipino civilization. We learn from the text that the Chinese initiated the oldest direct trading relationships. "Because of this, the influence of the Chinese on life styles and the make-up of Filipino culture is great."

The usual account follows in the text. The Philippines was one of the most important centers of Chinese commerce. Chinese chronicles refer to the country as "The Three Islands" (*ma-i*), that may well refer to the three islands that compose the Philippines now [*sic*]. The population had singular habits, such as the *suttee* (widow burning). They approached the big, sea-going vessels of the Chinese in their small boats (earlier in the book big Filipino-built boats are mentioned (pp. 70-75), but the craft had apparently sunk into oblivion). Anyway, this explains Chinese influence on economy, culture, and society, such as the use of the burial jar [!], Chinese food, words, vegetables, and their cultivation around the house. The Chinese also opened the first *sari-sari* store. An important piece of information is, almost unself-consciously, introduced, "The relationship with the Chinese was not terminated by the coming of the Spaniards. More than that, it even developed and prospered from the beginning of the colonization by the alien Europeans. The number of Chinese living in the country was recorded at a mere forty in 1571. In 1603, it had reached 20,000" (pp. 174-82).

The Hindus were the first to discover the importance of commercial relationships with the people of Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, it was the Arabs who acted to develop these relationships. They began their commerce with Asia around 800 A.D. When the Chinese obstructed their trading-stations in South China, they began to relate directly with the Philippines. When, in Sung times, they were welcomed back in China, they stuck to their trading route by way of Borneo and the Philippines (pp. 183-84). All this speculative information is given in the text to credit Arab traders with the spread of Islam in the islands.

In an ingenuous manner this argument is then enervated, "In the middle of the 13th century, a few places in Southeast Asia had embraced the Islamic faith." Then, from the second half of the fifteenth century, Islam spread in the Malay world, propagated by Arab and Malay missionaries. Coming from Tawi-Tawi, the Moslem chronicles

tell us that Makhdum Karim came to Sulu in the second half of the fourteenth century. The Maguindanao region was reached in the fifteenth (pp. 184-87). This is followed by three pages of information about Islam.

In order to appropriate a respectable Southeast Asian pedigree, relationships with India or Hindus need to be invented in the text. Indonesian and Indian influences on Philippine culture abound. Some say that India related directly with the islands, while others hold that the said influences were mediated by Indonesia. "This latter relationship occurred during the waves of migration of the Indonesians [!]. By means of their sea-going vessels they migrated to the country and mixed with the natives."

According to H. Otley Beyer, India had direct relationships with the Philippines which he proved by interpreting the color of bracelets, and various small images found. Others are not so sure and come up with different explanations. Another medallion "strengthens the close cultural relationship of Hindus and Filipinos." "There are a few Filipino customs that are similar to Hindu customs," such as flower offerings, the cock-fight, the *sipa* game, and the *tinikling* dance of the Assamese of India. Also many words have been borrowed from Sanskrit. "Because of this, it is believed that the Philippines received cultural elements from there by way of Persian, Arab, and Hindu traders and travellers." (pp. 191-93)

"The alphabet of the old Filipinos is thought to be related to the Brahmi of South India that was also used in the *Asoka Inscriptions* of 300 B.C." Others think that the Filipino alphabet originates from the Tamils. "The Tamils live in Malaya." This script came to the Philippines because of the several migrations that occurred in those times, about 200 B.C. Others hold the writing system to be rooted in Sumatra (pp. 195-96).

Spanish Times

After so much conjecture, it is a relief to come to the historical era, to Spanish times. Very detailed information about the first expeditions, and the origin of the name of the country, is followed by the history of Catholicism and the civilizing work of the missionaries, while listing the very many, and often colorful, innovations of Philippine life. From Mexico derive many plants and words, but Spain is credited with bringing many more novelties than any other foreigner, for instance, plants and agricultural practices, foods,

clothing, music, dance, architecture, vocabulary, name of places and people, counting and the telling of time. (pp. 212-30)

This is followed in the text by an extensive discussion of Spanish government in the islands, the first part technical, the second focusing on the economy. That not all was well becomes clear in the next chapter on complaints and uprisings against the Spaniards. The list of causes given is plausible and also emphasizes the freedom-loving nature of the Filipinos. Alas, they knew no unity, and the Castilians could suppress them by using other Filipino troops, with the exception of the Muslims, of course. The awakening of nationalism is related to intellectual events outside the Philippines, the emergence of a middle class, the secularization issue, and events in Spain, culminating in the Gomburza execution, the reform and Propaganda movements. In these latter sections it is of interest that Rizal's role is not specifically highlighted, and that, in the discussion of the Katipunan, his famous advice is translated positively: Rizal was not against the uprising. Also Bonifacio receives a low profile, becoming a national hero juxtaposed with Rizal. After their deaths, however, it is Aguinaldo who remains, and who has to deal with the Americans (pp. 332-82).

The great difference between the first 200 pages in the text about old Filipinos and the Spanish period is that the latter is systematically and historically treated, while the former remains sketchy, speculative, and incoherent. While there is an obvious attempt to manipulate the far-off past as adumbrating the present, it has to miscarry because of the enormous weight of the Spanish influence. It is a pity, though, that this is insufficiently realized by the authors, and that the qualitatively best part of the book does not really dig for the roots of present-day Filipino civilization.

Post-Spanish Times

Like the earlier part, the later part is full of tricks and pitfalls. Bonifacio is dead, the Americans come. The Spanish admit having been defeated by the Filipinos and the Americans, and so, "On 13 August, 1898, Manila fell into the hands of the revolutionaries with the help of American power. . . . This is the beginning of the historically important period of the American occupation and government of the whole archipelago." Aguinaldo's friendly relations with the Americans are illustrated by the signing ceremony of the declaration of independence in Cavite on 12 June 1898 "under the

chairmanship of Aguinaldo and Colonel L.M. Johnson of the American army." Soon Aguinaldo's dictatorship is replaced by the revolutionary government, which is, in its turn, converted into a constitutional regime on the basis of the Malolos constitution. This document "is the very first republican constitution of Asia" (pp. 284-94).

It is worth repeating the earlier observation that the book seeks to establish the country and its people in prehistory, and that the First Republic is discussed *en bagatelle* under the heading "The Coming of the Americans." While most recent school texts play up the fight against Spain, and then dwell on the Philippine-American war as a means to drum up nationalist feelings, that war is not even mentioned. The narrative moves immediately on to "The Influence of the Americans," in art, sculpture, architecture, dress, transportation and communication, the language, Philippine English literature, education—the influences are positive and progressive—then to The Preparation for Independence/Commonwealth. The analysis of the political process leading up to that independence is shallow and short, and the only interesting thing said about the Commonwealth's first president is that he wanted very much to be reelected, and so sought to amend the constitution (pp. 284-312).

The short observations about the Japanese occupation (pp. 313-18) and the first five republican presidents are factual and not very enlightening, apart from the persistent negative evaluation of the presidencies. Roxas's government was at fault because it failed to suppress irregularities and corruption, such as proven by the War Property Scandal, the Chinese Immigration Quota Scandal, the School Supplies Scandal. It also failed to halt the Huk movement. President Quirino had good intentions, but his administration was characterized by irregularities, corruption, scandals, embezzlement of state funds, weak in facing the Huks, the poverty of the masses, and deceit and cheating in elections. Magsaysay was the president of the people to whose problems he listened. He was the first to pay attention to moral and rural problems. He was also successful against the Huks. His excellent intentions were sadly frustrated by his early death, and so the [problems of the] economic situation could not be resolved.

President Garcia was a supporter of democracy, an exemplary father, a true Catholic, and a first rate chess player. He had many good intentions. Yet, "his administration, like his predecessors," was weakened by irregularities and corruption. For most it was no secret that officials leaving Malacañang had become millionaires overnight, while

the poor increased in number and continued to suffer." The only president not evaluated is Macapagal. What is listed are the problems he faced, and his intention to strengthen the moral fiber of the nation (pp. 321-27).

According to the text, the man who resolutely faced all the nation's problems is Ferdinand E. Marcos. Yet, the bad things that plagued the nation for several decades seem to increase. Marcos spoke about a "social volcano" that might erupt at any time, and that indeed erupted after his *State of the Nation* address of 26 January 1970. Nationalists, reformists, radicals, communists, youth, students, and other activists protested. Instability reigned, the malcontents complained, violence and crime were everywhere, the worst of all happening at Plaza Miranda on 21 August 1971. This forced the president to suspend the privilege of the *writ of habeas corpus*. Thirteen months later the country was placed under martial law that inaugurated the New Society.

This gave the president the chance to be serious about land reform and the emancipation of the tenants. At the same time his wife distinguished herself because of her important projects, such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Nayong Pilipino, Pasig River Development, and others, while the Medical Care Program finally got the full attention it deserved. The new constitution was finalized, and the barangays received a measure of autonomy. All this was approved in the referendum of January 1973. Great progress was made in establishing the national language next to the use of English, while the Education Development Decree emphasized human resource development, a science-centered school curriculum, and bilingualism. Schooling should not be the privilege of the rich only. According to Marcos, "In a truly democratic community, the voice of the ordinary people can be heard when their leadership is rooted in common culture. This can only be insured when those who become leaders arise from the common citizens and cultivate those actions that relate them to the ordinary people."

The pace of population growth was considerably slowed; rapid inflation was reined; new sources of energy were developed; new deliberative bodies were created in which functional groups were represented. After eight years of martial law, this led to the elections of January 1980. "Would the citizens be judicious enough already to vote? Could the elections be clean and without violence? Did the people have enough trust already in the leaders that they will count the votes correctly so that the casting of the vote is truly meaningful?"

"Like the former elections in our country, also this one was not without the previous irregularities, terrorism, false reports of the outcome, falsified lists of voters or *flying voters*, and many protests." But Marcos promised to investigate all the complaints. Whatever the case, the outcome of the election was a resounding success for the New Society. Soon thereafter martial law could be lifted, a period during which many positive changes for the welfare of the nation had been implemented. This great progress is demonstrated by the rapid development of infrastructure, considerable advances in the development of the economy and social justice; increasing yields of rice; a rapid transfer of the land to the former tenants; the prevalence of quiet and order. Also in foreign relations, and thanks to the great contribution of the First Lady Imelda R. Marcos, great strides were made.

Of course, all these good things could not prevent the military abuses in the South, the incarceration of many political prisoners held without trial, and the return of irregularities and corruption, and the massive embezzlement of money in the financial and banking sectors over the last two years of the martial law period. All this, positive and negative, is the background against which the Fourth, or New Republic, was inaugurated in 1981 (pp. 327-37).

The final sixteen pages of the text, "The Struggle of the Filipinos," begin with the problems the Fourth Republic is facing. The economy slows down, inflation is rapid, creditors threaten, there are shortages of spare parts, raw materials, and machinery, factories run at a loss, people are dismissed, unemployment rises, the prices of essential commodities go up, many are hoarding food and other primary necessities, crime increases, human rights are violated, and tourism slackens. In this atmosphere Ninoy Aquino makes his fateful return to the Philippines which inaugurates the period of demonstrations, protests, and "the parliament of the streets." Marcos and his cronies are accused of destroying the economy, of excessive concentration of power, presidential arbitrariness, and unaccounted for wealth and possessions abroad. (pp. 340-43)

By way of rigged and snap elections, Enrile's and Ramos's rebellion, EDSA and people power, Corazon Aquino reaches the presidency, then installs a revolutionary government. Soon a constitutional commission is nominated, and the text finishes with a short presentation of the main points of the new constitution. The authors find it important to highlight the following, "Respect for every individual and the guaranteeing of human rights; the State recognizes the

important position of the youth in the totality of the nation and should support and care for their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social excellence. The youth should be impressed with patriotism, nationalism, and should enthusiastically participate in national and civic activities."

This is followed by the obligatory legalities of Philippine citizenship, the legislative power of the president, restrictions on spending government money, and the minimal requirements for judiciary officials. Then it is pointed out that, "The Constitution must be part of the required curriculum in all schools; these must impart patriotism and nationalism, implant love for humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the service of the national heroes in the historical progress of the country, point out the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, cultivate moral character and self-discipline, enliven critical and creative thought, spread scientific and technological knowledge, and stimulate vocational skills." About the family it is then still said, "The State recognizes the family as the foundation of the nation. Therefore, it should strengthen the unity of the Filipino family and actively promote its wholesome growth" (pp. 334-54).

What Students Learn

Social studies in the first year of High School appear to aim at instilling some ideas about the history of the country, and about government and its organization; it should help the student to understand the world beyond private experience. In contrast with the elementary integrated social science course that describes society from the perspectives of family, home, and school, the secondary curriculum prepares the student for a minimal understanding of public life, past and present.

We have noted important differences in emphasis in the two books, yet there is very much that can be fruitfully compared in order to see how students learn to think about history and social life. That the Gonzalez book, like many other privately authored texts, indulges more in myth-making, and projects a rather positive picture of Marcos than the official text, is important, because similar private texts are used in the more expensive, 'better' schools, comprising 50 percent of the secondary teaching institutions. These texts thus impart ideas to those students who have more favorable chances later in life.

What strikes one in both texts is that the Filipinos are not, or only rarely, pictured as active agents of their own history. We noted the opening sentence of the official book that stated the question, 'Why are we so attractive to foreigners?' And then, following the migration theory, all and sundry, also the ancestors of the present Filipinos, came from the outside. One would think that this premise offers an excellent opportunity to analyse the becoming of the country and the nation, and it is a pity that this is not realized. The Filipino, inclusive of his territory, is static, eternal. Things were already there; they believed in a creator God, in heaven and hell; their social stratification was much like it is today, and society was hierarchically organized, with the leader, the datu, as a man of prowess, firmly on top; women were honored and supervised; their costume was the *baro't saya* (current 'national' dress); the sexual division of labor was very similar; people could read and write; datu, such as current Congressmen, were busy issuing laws, the barangay is the early form of the Filipino state; the family was the foundation of society; etc.

The perspective taken forces prehistorical myth-making and insufficiently allows for dynamic elaboration. It is good, though, to note that the authors of the DECS book have finally done away with Hindus and Chinese—while sadly neglecting the role of commerce—yet they still need "the Arabs" and their trade to explain Islam in the South. The Gonzalez text is more modest indeed than previously customary in its quest for Asian respectability, but still incorporates much dubious information about the strong cultural influences on Filipino culture of "Hindus" and Chinese traders.

One of the strange things in all texts is the idea that early Filipinos arrived by boat, then unlearned sailing the seas. It is one of the areas where there is sufficient evidence to tell an interesting—and active—story. Whether the ancestors came by boat or not, is irrelevant. They navigated the seas, had contacts with others, and the earliest relations with China were most probably initiated by raiders, pirates, and traders—difficult to distinguish categories in those days—hailing from the area that is now known as the Philippines (Scott 1983). According to Tome Pires's *Summa Oriental*, people from Luzon, and other parts of the islands, were living in the Malay peninsula when the Portuguese conquered Malacca in 1511. Enrique, the servant bought by Magellan there, probably hailed from the Visayan region and was possibly a victim of the practice of slave-raiding.

The South China Sea functioned as a Mediterranean, and the people along its littoral were for long in contact with each other, which had, of course, cultural consequences (Reid 1988; Mulder 1992). The traffic in commercial and cultural goods went all ways, and 'early Filipinos' participated actively. And then, talking about those days, wouldn't it be very interesting for school children to know that the first man to circumnavigate the globe was most probably a Visayan? Pigafetta, the 'Italian' scribe of Magellan's expedition, is quite explicit in his observation that Enrique spoke the language of the Cebuanos they met. Perhaps he communicated with them in Malay, then the *lingua franca* of a wide, sea-borne commercial area, but chances are that he came from the Visayan region indeed.

While for many in Europe history begins with their ancestors' being incorporated in the Roman Empire, or with Christianization, Philippine school history appears to have difficulty acknowledging the fact that the country is a Spanish creation. To do so is both unpopular and unfashionable. Yet it is only by addressing the Castilian period seriously that modern Filipino civilization can be understood. However grudgingly Spain is admitted to the official text as the oppressor of Filipino freedom and independence, it was oppression and colonizers' arrogance that prompted nationalism and the First Republic. It was Spain that brought the country into the modern world, that founded a style of life oriented to literacy, town and church, that sedentarized people, that introduced the plow, a plethora of new crops, and building in stone. Even while such contributions are recognized in the Gonzalez book, the importance is not pursued to its deepest consequences, namely, that they are the founding stone of the nation.

The quest for fundamentals is, of course, the message of O.D. Corpuz's *The Roots of the Nation* and Nick Joaquin's *Culture and History*, but since the Americans succeeded in substituting the roots in the past by pleasant prehistorical speculation, Spain has become a kind of an anathema, to be blamed for the land problems of the present. So the rise and continuity of the Philippine oligarchy, that strange mestizo upper class that to a large extent still owns the place, is never analysed to its historical origins. Seen in the latter's interests, this is probably more than can be expected.

It may also be that the unpopularity of the Spanish period does not befit the eternal Filipino, the 'roots' in a mythic past, or the idea of being a modern, America-oriented country. Neither does it befit

the fad of *The Revolt of the Masses* and Constantino's influential nationalism. This is not to belittle the revolution against Spain, the war against the United States, or the role of the common man in those happenings and the possibility of casting blame on the ilustrados. Quite the contrary. But it all results in throwing out the baby with the bath water. By casting Spain in the role of opponent, the total reconstruction of society Hispanization caused is relegated to the wings instead of highlighted on center-stage. Perhaps there is a political reason for this, too. The Muslim 'Filipinos' must be incorporated in the realm, their resistance against Spain panegyricized, and Islam explained, at the expense of the fact that what is really culturally common to the Philippines is Christianity, especially Roman Catholicism, and the new life style the Spaniards introduced.

Another aspect of this understanding of history is diminishing the cultural importance of Rizal as a super ilustrado. The problem is not the relative appreciation of Bonifacio, or whether it is justified to call a middle-classer a plebeian. The point is rather that all school-books I have seen so far never place Rizal in the intellectual and historical perspective he deserves, that these books shy away from his historical importance as the first Asian nationalist to expose the debasing nature of colonialism, both for the colonized and the colonizer. It was especially his *Noli Me Tangere*, that incited the imagination of ilustrados and urbanities, that galvanized the Filipinos into nationhood. But it is less this success than his being the predecessor of the long row of Asian anti-imperialists, stretching from Sun Yat Sen to Gandhi, Sukarno, Tagore, and Nehru, and that he reasoned out his anti-colonial argument in good humanist fashion. Filipinos, however, seem to take more pride in an international beauty queen or boxing champ than in the intellectual giant they gave birth to. Localized as "our national hero" who did not fight with the gun, Rizal has become sweet and unexciting.

A further remarkable omission that the two texts discussed share with other books in use, is a discussion of the now omnipresent Iglesia ni Cristo. Perhaps there is little cause for wonder considering the Gonzalez book that treats the twentieth century in a very cavalier fashion, apparently exhausted from the unconvincing effort to explore the prehistorical past and the very reasonable, yet culturally inconclusive presentation of the Spanish period. But why is this so in the official text that dwells especially on the twentieth century? The Iglesia ni Cristo is a very successful Filipino invention, perhaps not pleasing to the church of Rome, but at least innovative and

national. It seems as if Filipinos are not allowed their history and that American—and other foreigners'—meddling in the country's affairs is the essence.

By drawing programmatic lines through history, such as from the free Filipino to the new Filipino with an interval of suppression, or by projecting an archaic, idyllic past as the direct precursor of the present, history is not only seriously distorted in these texts, but it does not provide a solid framework either to explain the becoming and the current state of the nation. Because of this it becomes very difficult to explain the presence of certain social institutions in perspective. Former society was stratified, with a valiant datu as its head. That model makes today's dispensation recognizable, a powerful president, surrounded by his clan/family, and loyally followed by his privileged maharlika, or cronies, relatives, and sycophants; below these special people, one finds the freemen, or the middle stratum of society, who pay the taxes; the lowest stratum, the alipin, are the suffering peasants and laborers who provide the better-off with food and services.

This reading does not seem to be intended, though. Constitutions are written, amended, redrafted, and framed again, and there must be something important about them, while democracy, or, at least, elections, seems to be a worthwhile institution, too. Yet, why this is so, or what the function of all this is, remains unclear. There is a constitution of 1935 that is amended because Quezon wants to serve two terms, amended again to accommodate the Americans; then Marcos needs a new constitution, which is followed by a Freedom Constitution. What all this is supposed to achieve is never explained. Also the institution of democracy does not gain much transparency. The perennial observation about elections is that they are fraudulent and violent, and one of the words that most often occurs in describing the political process, is *pandaraya*, tricks and deceit. Why this is so, and why the performance of the presidents is almost invariably negatively evaluated, is carefully kept in the dark.

There seems to be a problem with land and rich landlords. For this the Spaniards are somehow to blame, but a serious treatment of unequal landownership, its origins, methods, relation to production, function in the political economy, and the merciless exploitation of agricultural labor is not subjected to serious discussion. In brief, and with the partial exception of the rise of nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century, the books fall short in structural, in sociological explanation. Governors-general and presidents are

discussed individually, not as colonial policy or presidency. Each of them has good intentions, faces obstacles, and fails, with the partial exceptions of Taft, Harrison, Magsaysay, and Marcos during his early New Society. But why failure is so common, how the obstacles are rooted, why corruption is perennial, and why elections are so violent, is not discussed, and so, the principles of scientific social analysis and historical explanation are not introduced at all. The social process is a succession of episodes, its culture vague.

The world beyond private experience is presented as the disorderly arena of politics and legalities. It is the place of artifice, rhetoric, and, for the better informed, of English. It appears as a world too big to master, beyond the grasp of a systematic, ideological or scientific, approach, and so also beyond imagination or conscious participation. Because of this it is very hard to develop a positive culture of the public realm, other than the intentions written in preambles to and sections of the constitution. The youth should be patriotic and nationalistic, cultivate ethical and spiritual values, have moral character and self-discipline, and so on, so in a subtle manner, introducing a moralistic perspective where a historical and sociological one is needed.

The outer world remains an aggregate of unruly individuals who face many problems and are left at the mercy of interference by foreigners, especially Americans. It is a run-away world of political tricks and economic manipulation, an amoral area of business and money that is beyond the possibility of domestication. Predatory practices prevail; colonizers who kill freedom and seize territory; landlords who terrorize the ordinary people with their private armies; Marcos and his cronies who robbed the country blind; presidents whose good intentions are always frustrated and under whose dispensations corruption thrives. So, how to arrive in the never-never land that is desired in the preamble of the 1987 Constitution?

We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessing of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace, . . .

The road to that paradise remains shrouded in mystery.

Notes

1. This paraphrasing of the intention of the Education Development Decree of 1972 has been quoted from the Preface of the series *Our Country and its People*. Manila: Bookmark, 1987.

2. DECS, 1989. *Araling Panlipunan I (Pagtatatag ng Bansang Pilipino)*. *Batayang Aklat para sa Unang Taon ng Mataas na Paaralan*. Quezon City: Instructional Materials Corporation, Kagawaran ng Edukasyon, Kultura at Isports.

In presenting the two books, I have been quoting and paraphrasing the contents in a way that conveys the flavor of the text. I have maintained inconsistencies and absurdities, yet only very seldom taken recourse to [sic] or [!]. I did intersperse some commentary and hope that this is clear in the presentation

3. On this score, namely, the number of rocks and stones above water at high tide, continental countries like Sweden and Finland probably outdo the Philippines by a large margin. In the former two nobody ever took the trouble of counting 'islands'; they compete with each other in boasting about the number of lakes within their territories.

Of the Philippine islands, only 2,773 have names, and 1,192 are inhabited. That 95 percent of the population lives on a mere fourteen islands does not seem to be worthy of attention.

4. Bro. Andrew Gonzalez, FSC, Lilia Sta. Ana-Rankin, Adelaida N. Hukom, 1989. *Kasaysayan at Pamahalaang Pilipino. Unang Antas. Araling Panlipunan para sa Mataas na Paaralan*. N.p.: Phoenix Publishing House.

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