

philippine studies

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

Credo, by Guevara-Fernandez

Review Author: Joseph A. Galdon, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 35, no. 3 (1987) 390–393

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

this reviewer that the class difference between the two groups is the more decisive factor. Dr. Pido also mentions the difference in social climate, inroads of civil rights groups, Third World consciousness, and these too have doubtless eased the later assimilation. But one could well argue that U.S.-Philippine relations remain about as unequal as they ever were.

Nevertheless, the interesting thing about Pido's approach, and thus the greatest virtue of the book, is precisely in the fact that it will bring up questions and stimulate debate by broadening the field for consideration of the problem. Presumably the viewpoint would also vary from discipline to discipline, with different scholars emphasizing political, economic, or social explanations, although the macro approach is by its very nature interdisciplinary. The book is thus a valuable contribution to the literature on immigration.

Susan Evangelista
Department of English
Ateneo de Manila University

CREDO: TEACHING AND SHARING. By Pacita Guevara-Fernandez. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1985. ix, 89 pages.

It is perhaps redundant to describe the present Philippine historical moment as a time of crisis. Philippine society has staggered from crisis to crisis in its relatively short history of independence and has always emerged to move on to the next challenge with apparently inexhaustible resilience and imperturbable confidence in itself and the ways of a provident God. The main theme of Professor Fernandez's *Credo*, low-keyed but pervasive throughout her book, is that Philippine education, reflective of the Philippine political and economic situation, confronts a crisis of its own.

The situation in most Asian countries is that of suffering from a series of protracted child-birth pangs and pains of nation building. Our Philippines is one of these. The situation is one that focuses sharply on economic growth through industrialization But wherever and whenever the machine has largely taken over human and humane contacts and relationships . . . the beauty that there is, is cold, hard, unyielding and non-personal because non-human. (pp. 1-2)

The crisis in Fernandez's eyes is precisely a crisis in human values.

In the opening essay of her collection Fernandez describes the value crisis, this "spiritual bankruptcy" (p. 6), in many different ways: "exacting ethical discourse is no longer demanded even of the better educated" (p. 3): "the

business of living and doing, especially education, is a *moral* enterprise" (p. 5); and "this (humanistic) vision includes values and convictions that underlie all the more utilitarian, more professional, more technique-oriented things we have to spend so much time learning" (p. 5). She quotes with approval the Rockefeller Survey of 1980: "The greatest challenge facing humanists is not to find more money or students, but to demonstrate the importance of the humanities to education and to society" (pp. 3-4).

In her essay on "General Education," Fernandez laments the fact that Philippine education no longer requires "exacting ethical discourse," that professional schools no longer demand that their doctors, lawyers, engineers, economists, nurses make critical choices governed by "the moral discipline imparted by the humanities" (p. 15) and that students no longer discriminate between "values, purposes, means and ends" (p. 18).

In the final essay in the collection, "The Teacher as Paradigm and Paradox," Fernandez stresses the role of the teacher as "value-carrier and value-sharer":

Is the teacher an orthodox believer, a conservative, a radical, an Avant-garde, an off-beat character, an activist, apolitical, non-political or sharply political? A die-hard Marxist? A crass materialist? An incurable Romantic . . . ? A rabid nationalist whose myopic eyesight does not extend beyond Corregidor? A sterile aesthete reducing literature and the other arts into garbled systems and methods? An indefatigable researcher whose be-all and end-all is to publish or perish? An entertainer who refuses to teach, and wastes time and energy by clowning and recycling bold jokes? Whatever kind or style of philosophy the teacher . . . believes he carries with him, and lives by, such philosophy is the non-cashable, non-transferable goods he brings to class. They will wield the most powerful force on his students long after they have left their classrooms. (p. 85)

One cannot escape the dominant theme of Fernandez's book which recurs throughout her essays: Philippine education is confronted with a crisis in values.

The crisis is not uniquely Filipino, of course, although it may be more pronounced in an emerging nation. The 1980 Rockefeller Commission report, which Fernandez quotes often and at length, grew out of a "profound disquiet about the state of the humanities" in American culture. Some years ago Harvard's President Bok called for an increased emphasis on "applied ethics." "A University," Bok wrote, "which refuses to take ethical dilemmas seriously violates its basic obligations to society." Charles Muscatine, Professor of English at Berkeley and a member of a committee that is analyzing liberal arts curriculums for the Association of American Colleges, says that the key goal of education should be "informed decision making that recognizes there is a moral and ethical component to life." Most universities, he

continues, "are propagating the dangerous myth that technical skills are more important than ethical reasoning." Psychiatrist Robert Cole, who teaches at both Harvard and Duke, says people "should be taught philosophy, moral philosophy and theology. They ought to be asked to think about moral issues" Cornell's President Frank Rhodes, in an address at the State University of New York in Binghamton on 29 March 1984 pointed out that "science and technology, in a narrow sense are amoral. But their application involves profoundly moral issues."

Nor is the concern with moral questions limited to the United States and First World nations. The Philippine revolution of February 1986 was essentially a moral revolution, and the Aquino government, based on the moral as well as the physical presence of People Power is intrinsically and irreversibly committed to a change in moral values. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports in recent months has emphasized values education. The Ministry's concern was echoed in the Educators' Congress in Baguio in May 1986, the convention of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction in the University of Life in June, and by the delegates to the meeting of the Association of Private Colleges and Schools in Manila in September. Deputy Minister Minda Sutaria of the Ministry and Fr. Raul Bonoan of the Ateneo de Manila have been articulate spokesmen for values education in the Philippines. The present collection of essays bears witness that Professor Fernandez has been preaching the same credo for most of her career in Philippine education. For almost thirty years she has been preaching Tolstoy's dictum: Education must "make people good by *choice*."

A credo has two dimensions, of course, dimensions which Fernandez calls "Weltanschauung" and "Weltansicht." There is the world view, the objective content, the body of subject matter, the *Teaching*. Fernandez has ably articulated that body of subject matter in the four major essays of her collection, "Humanities and Technology," "Towards a Balanced General Education Program," "The Teaching of the Humanities" and "The Teacher as Paradigm and Paradox." She has also outlined the teaching methodology of that content in her three more specific essays on "The Comparative Method," "The Matter of Relevance in a Swiftian Voyage" and "The Teaching of Fiction." Although these three latter essays are primarily concerned with literature, the methodologies of teaching values in the classroom can be abstracted from the literary context and applied to the whole field of teaching.

But there is also a subjective aspect to any Credo – the participation and the belief in, the acceptance and the communication of the Credo; the *Sharing*, both participative and communicative. This subjective conviction of the teacher is also clear throughout Fernandez's little book of essays. It is *her* belief, her credo.

For some few, however, whose drive for self-expression is as compelling as eating or sleeping, the transformation of thought into vision, and of vision into self-expression is like hunger. . . . Hence, the collection's title *Crede*. [It reveals] in rather uncompromising stance . . . what I believe a philosophy of teaching should be . . . what it should give and share, what it should guard and defend, what it should nurture and nourish, what it should reject as inimical to the healthy growth of the mind and the wisdom of the heart. (Prefatory note)

In this regard, her final essay on "The Teacher as Paradigm and Paradox," is prophetic. "There can be no substitute for good teaching, only cold facts, and sterile information" (p. 89).

One might raise several objections against Fernandez's thesis. The most serious, perhaps, is that education of this sort is not an affordable luxury in an emerging nation. Education must first provide the technical skills for economic development before it proceeds to educate for humanity. The answer, of course, as Fernandez points out, is that the skills themselves must be human, value-oriented skills, or they inevitably lead to human self destruction. But the objection would remain that her vision is, at best, only a partial vision. She quotes Yale's A. Bartlett Giametti - "At the heart of civil society is a liberal education, and at the heart of a liberal education is the act of teaching" (p. 89). But the critic might respond that the prior task is to create the civil society before we educate it humanistically.

Secondly, one might object that values education becomes little more than propaganda. All education is propaganda, but the critic might reasonably ask: Whose propaganda? First World nations demand a certain set of values that might be quite different from those demanded in an emerging, Third World nation. Education depends, therefore, on the cultural and economic context of the locus of education. One might reasonably complain that Fernandez's vision is applicable to the United States (she echoes very often the Rockefeller report on "The Humanities in American Life") but that Philippine society at this moment in its history demands a completely different approach to education.

Finally, Fernandez is understandably vague about the content of her values education. Human values have been particularly difficult to define and pin down and have exercised the minds of philosophers for hundreds of years in both East and West. Just what is it to be human? Samuel Lipman's perceptive review of the Rockefeller Commission report in *Commentary* commented that although the Commission was strong on the need for values, it was particularly reticent on what those values are or should be. Although Fernandez is not reticent on what she feels should be the content of Philippine values education, she is (understandably) vague and general. Readers of

this collection might complain that she is prophetic but not pedagogical, that she preaches, but offers few concrete suggestions beyond her sermon, either as to the specific values to be reflected in Philippine education or as to how they are to be implemented in the teaching process. The process is a particularly slippery problem, for Fernandez would be the first to admit that values education cannot be indoctrination. As John Gardner says, "Morality by compulsion is a fool's morality." How then are values, human beliefs, moral choice, to be transmitted in an educational system? If they are the values that are inherent in the humanity of man, universalist in both time and culture, how are they to be made applicable in a concrete time and culture?

Yet, perhaps, a reviewer should not quarrel with another's vision, especially a vision that is articulated with as much conviction as Fernandez brings to the task. Fernandez feels deeply about her vision. She has enunciated it with conviction and with style. In Philippine education at the moment we need more prophets like her and more visions like hers

Joseph A. Galdon, S.J.
Department of English
Ateneo de Manila University

AMADO V. HERNANDEZ: TUDLA AT TUDLING. Edited by Rosario Torres-Yu. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1986. 532 pages.

Ambitious or unassuming, an anthology is always regarded as a research facilitator. It is, however, the logic behind the collection that could keep or kill the reader's interest. This book under review is offered as a documentation of a well-known Tagalog poet's development — from idealist to ideologue. Dr. Rosario Torres-Yu has assumed the exacting responsibility of accompanying her reader on a journey to witness Amado V. Hernandez's evolution into a poet with a cause.

Dr. Yu has adopted a conventional format for this documentation, which she presents in four parts, namely: prefatory notes (*Samutsaring Paliwanag*) on her own difficulties and final triumph in collecting the poems for this book; a digest (*katas*), suggesting a larger previous work, of her own study of the development of Hernandez' ideology; the collection of poems from 1921 to 1970; and a list of critical studies on Hernandez.

The anthologist has suggested that the digest, entitled "Ang Pakikibaka ng Manunulat na Pilipino para sa Lipunang Makatao" (The Filipino Writer's