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The State of Philosophy, by Quito

Review Author: Rolando M. Gripaldo

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THE STATE OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE PHILIPPINES. By Emerita S. Quito. Monograph Series No. 5. Manila: De La Salle University Research Center, 1983. 110 pages.

The State of Philosophy in the Philippines is significant in being the first of its kind, and is a welcome overview. One may not entirely agree with some of the author's analyses and conclusions, but any serious student of philosophy should read the monograph, since it provides a base of information upon which to improve the dismal state of philosophy in the country. The research was undertaken from November 1982 to March 1983.

Quito's distinction between the academic and popular levels of the term "philosophy" may not be tenable from the analytic point of view, but it certainly intrigues one into taking another look at the term "pilosopo." Linguistic analysis has shown that, both academically and popularly, the term "pilosopo" is used to refer to either a philosopher or a sophist, depending upon the context. What is disheartening is that the Filipino language does not have a word other than "pilosopo" for a sophist. (Cf. Rolando M. Gripaldo, "Language and Its Philosophical Presuppositions," *Mindanao Journal* 5 [1978]:58-59.)

We perceive in chap. 2 an implied distinction between a Filipino indigenous philosophy based on Filipino attitudes and beliefs such as "Bahala na," "Gulong ng Palad," "pakikisama," "bayanihan," "utang na loob," etc., and a Filipino philosophy based on individual philosophizing in the same sense in which thinkers like Plato, Kant, and Russell have their own individual philosophies. But this strict sense of philosophizing is suppressed in chap. 2, probably because Quito believes that there are no real Filipino philosophers in the strict sense (p. 9). I should not easily surrender the search for a real philosopher, since Mabini, Bonifacio, Rizal, Jacinto, Laurel, Quezon, Recto, et al. can qualify as real Filipino philosophers. (Cf. R.M. Gripaldo, "Laurel: The Political Philosopher and the Man," *Philippine Studies* 30 [1982]:512-41; "Manuel Luis Quezon: His Political and Social Thought" [Ph.D. dissertation, University of the Philippines, 1984]; "Rizal's Politics of Nonviolence," *PAGE 12 Journal* 1 [1986]:1-9; and "Bonifacio the Translator: A Critique," *Kinaadman* 9 [1987]:42-56.) There is a need to redefine our concept of philosophy and perhaps to reject its limited conception as "the science that studies all things in their ultimate causes and first principles" (p. 10).

In chap. 3 and 4 Quito presents a brief historical survey of philosophy as a discipline in the country, and describes the situation and trends of teaching and research in philosophy. The earliest to offer the philosophy degree were the University of Santo Tomas, Ateneo de Manila University, and the University of the Philippines. De La Salle University offered a formal philosophy degree only in 1975. Quito has missed the Mindanao State University at Marawi City which offered a formal philosophy degree as early as 1961.

Of the three schools of philosophical thought that Quito discusses in chap. 5, viz., (a) that philosophy should subserve theology; (b) that philosophy reduces all arguments into mathematical language; and (c) that philosophy is an open market of ideas, the second school is rather inaccurately described. The belief that all arguments can be reduced to mathematical language has long been rejected at the University of the Philippines. Although U.P. Diliman emphasizes logical and linguistic analysis, it is merely as a philosophical method, not as a philosophical school. John R. Searle makes the distinction thus: "Linguistic philosophy consists in the attempt to solve philosophical problems by analyzing the meanings of words, and by analyzing logical relations between words in natural languages . . . the philosophy of language consists in the attempt to analyze certain general features of language such as meaning, reference, truth, verification, speech acts, and logical necessity." (John R. Searle, ed., *The Philosophy of Language* [London: Oxford University Press, 1971], p. 1.)

Chap. 6 is a survey of research on Filipino philosophy, while chap. 7 is a list of institutions offering philosophy. The survey (cf. chap. 2) is flawed by its interpretation of Filipino philosophy only as a people's way of looking at things, which is the anthropological approach to philosophy. The more important approach, the philosophical approach, is sadly missing in the monograph. When we speak of Greek Philosophy, we enumerate the Pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, et al. So when we speak of Filipino philosophy we should also name Filipino thinkers like Mabini, Bonifacio, Rizal, et al.

From chapters 8 to 10 we perceive the dismal situation of philosophy and philosophical research in the Philippines: the lack of institutional support for philosophical research; the heavy teaching load and small remuneration for teachers; the prohibitive cost of a foreign doctorate degree; the dearth of teaching positions, etc.

The Philosophical Association of the South mentioned (pp. 52-53) is actually the Philosophical Association of the Visayas and Mindanao (PIHAVISMINDA) founded about a decade ago as a reaction to the apparent lack of professional treatment of philosophy in many lectures sponsored by the Philosophical Association of the Philippines. Not only politicians (p. 53) but even journalists were invited to deliver lectures. The PIAVISMINDA lectures are limited to those who earn their living through the teaching and writing of philosophy.

Chapter 11 contains recommendations on motivating philosophy professors to improve themselves, on using the Filipino language in teaching philosophy, and on tapping international funding agencies for philosophical research and international philosophy conventions in the Philippines. Quito hopes that the repeal of the Spanish law may give way to more courses in the humanities, "notably philosophy" (p. 58). In the Mindanao State University, after curricular revisions of all professional courses, the repeal of the Spanish requirement did not give way to an additional twelve units of humanities, but generally to more courses in each area of specialization.

The last chapter contains a list of doctoral dissertations and masteral theses, in which omissions (e.g., of a number of University of the Philippines theses) seem to reflect a lack of seriousness in Quito's research work. On the whole, however, I believe that the inaccuracies, omissions, and other flaws do not diminish the significance of Dr. Quito's work. Even a serious initial work that is quite comprehensive in scope can be prone to errors, especially in the data gathering. With the limited research period of five months the interpretative aspect of the work may also suffer. The book can be improved by the updating of both data and interpretations. A second edition on the state of philosophy in the country would be most welcome.

I would like, however, to suggest first, the addition of a chapter on Filipino thinkers. After all, the list of masteral theses in the monograph includes references to thinkers like Jose Rizal, T.H. Pardo de Tavera and Apolinario Mabini. Secondly, another chapter could be added to include a list of articles and books on Filipino thought (the philosophical approach) and on Oriental and Western thought written by Filipinos. An empirical survey could be conducted through questionnaires sent to philosophy teachers in all Philippine colleges and universities, who could be asked to refer as well philosophy graduates who work in private and public institutions.

Thirdly, what is probably needed is not just a Philippine Academy of Philosophical Research (p. 55) that will cater to both the anthropological and philosophical approaches to philosophy, but a national Philosophical Society of the Philippines (PSP), with the lecturers limited to professional philosophers.

Dr. Quito has raised some serious questions about the state of philosophy in the Philippines. They are questions that deserve serious consideration if we are to become a nation of thinkers as well as doers.

Rolando M. Gripaldo
Department of Philosophy
Mindanao State University

MANUEL L. QUEZON: THE TUTELARY DEMOCRAT. By Aruna Gopinath. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987. xvi + 243 pages.

If we do away with partisan spirit, if cooperation rather than opposition is made the basis upon which the Government of the Philippines is to operate; if liberty is properly understood and practiced; and if the aim of government is the well-being of the people as a whole and not of a privileged class, even if it be a property-owning class, then democracy in the Philippines will endure (p. 225)