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## A Study of Psychopathology

Review Author: Ruben M. Tanseco

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## Book Reviews

**A STUDY OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY.** By Lourdes V. Lapuz. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973. xii, 313 pages, references, index.

This book is a milestone for two reasons. Firstly, it is a major contribution to Philippine psychiatric literature; and secondly, it is a pioneering effort at interrelating the genesis and development of psycho-emotional disturbances with significant elements of Filipino culture.

The body of local psychiatric literature is appallingly minimal, in spite of the fact that we do have quite a growing number of professional Filipino psychiatrists and psychotherapists. Consequently, we continue to depend, not only largely but almost totally, on Western models and books for our local situation and needs. It seems that in psychiatry and psychotherapy, as in other areas of Filipino life, the process of inculturation has become a real need. It is in this context that the book of Lourdes Lapuz serves as a distinct contribution. Her efforts at relating local socio-cultural factors and emotional-psychological illnesses are a kind of breakthrough.

Her chapters on "Symptomatology," "Areas of Conflict," "Psychodynamic Considerations," and "Culture and Conflict" are particularly enlightening and thought-provoking. One who has clinical-pastoral counseling practice in the Philippines will readily confirm much of the author's data, analysis, and tentative hypotheses.

The author's psychodynamic analysis of symptoms commonly experienced by Filipino patients will be most helpful to both the professional therapist and the ordinary reader in the understanding of these symptoms. The symptom of depression, for instance, is more clearly understood when seen in the light of its cultural underpinnings: the Filipino's tendency to disguise or deny its presence, often coupled with the experience of guilt substituted by feelings of shame or of blaming others. In a similar manner, Filipinos seem to find it very difficult to acknowledge their aggressive impulses, due perhaps to cultural and religious expectations, thus making it more difficult for them to master and cope with those impulses directly. (Chapter III).

Scholars and students of our culture are one in pointing out how important smooth interpersonal relationships are to Filipinos. With her data Lapuz confirms this and concludes "that the patient's interpersonal world was his primary source of emotional gratification . . . superseding that of personal satisfaction from individual achievement or mastery."

(p. 72). Thus, when he finds himself "in a state of emotional stress, he automatically felt that the source of trouble was in the same interpersonal world. He quickly pointed to 'others' involved in the illness." (p. 73).

In relation to this interpersonal world, the strong psychological control of parents over their children is likewise an observable and still predominant pattern and area of conflict in one's later life.

Taking all this and more as the psychological baggage of the Filipino, the author thus focuses on *ambivalence* as a key conflict among the patients in her clinical study. It seems that with this insight, Dr. Lapuz hits the nail on the head. The various and subtle forms of "prolonged dependency" lead the patient to "impaired autonomy," inevitably resulting in a conflicted state of ambivalence. This ambivalence manifests itself in various ways, from separation anxieties to blocked aggression to success-failure conflicts to sexual distortions. (Chapter V).

A chapter is devoted to the psychotherapeutic process itself, with a focus on the following: socio-cultural characteristics which are relevant to the treatment situation; transference phenomena, and techniques of interpretations. Moreover, the author's clinical experience points to short-term psychotherapy as the preferred method of treatment rather than long-term psychotherapy, and this for two reasons: availability of external support from family and friends; and abundant emotional outlets. (p. 194).

As far as this reviewer can see, the author uses psychoanalytic psychotherapy as her exclusive method of treatment. This, it seems, is a limitation of the book. It is this reviewer's opinion that in order to help a greater number of Filipinos from various educational and sub-cultural backgrounds, a psychotherapist working in this Philippine context will have to be much more flexible and even eclectic in his therapeutic methods. This, perhaps, could precisely be a central part of the inculturation process of the psychotherapeutic enterprise alluded to earlier.

Different methods of individual and group psychotherapeutic techniques should be explored and tried. And by this I do not mean just methods transplanted from the West, but methods growing out of and flowing from the Filipino experience.

Just to take an example. It seems that one area of direct psychotherapeutic concern in the Philippine context could be that of morals and religious experience. Many emotionally-disturbed Filipinos who seek help are persons whose problems are not only psychological in nature, but moral and religious as well. Consequently, reintegration and healing in these cases will have to include, not only psycho-emotional realities, but also the moral and religious aspects of the person's life.

It may very well be argued that one should go to a psychotherapist for his psychological problems and his spiritual director for his moral-religious problems. This is easier said than done. It is difficult enough for a troubled person to seek out someone for help. It becomes doubly difficult, if not impossible, to seek out two. The task, it would seem, should be to facilitate rather than complicate therapeutic help. The western concept of technical specialization often leads to dichotomies and compartmentalization of

one's life. A wholistic, more total approach to therapy seems highly desirable in the Philippine context, particularly because the Philippines is a predominantly Christian country and not a highly pluralistic one.

This is perhaps an invitation to professional psychotherapists to be also moral-and-religious-oriented in their therapy work, and for priests to be more psychologically-trained and sensitive in their pastoral care of people.

To conclude: this reviewer congratulates the author for a major contribution to local psychiatric literature, and invites her and the Filipino psychotherapeutic world toward further inculturation and moral-religious orientation of the psychotherapeutic process.

*Ruben M. Tanseco*

**EDUCATION FOR FREEDOM.** By Benjamin Salvosa. Baguio: Baguio Colleges Foundation Press, 1974. v, 476 pages. ₱19.50 paper.

The author is a prominent Filipino educator. He has been active in educational movements both here and abroad, and has kept abreast of new concepts and programs in the field of education.

*Education for Freedom* covers a lot of matter but the material is not treated in depth. The book may be useful for information. This consists of the various contemporary efforts at forming a new educational system. Present educators and education students are provided in a handy way with the ideas and the documentation for looking at education from New Society perspectives.

To a great extent the educational program proposed by the author is geared to achieve the goals set forth in Presidential Decrees and allied official documents. One can appreciate the desire of the government to solve the country's educational problems, and also to lift the country out of underdevelopment, using education as an instrument. But it is simplistic to identify national problems as educational problems.

It is disappointing that the author does not provide much in the way of weaning Filipinos from looking at formal classroom instruction as *the* way to education. One of the noble tasks of educators is to protect the community from advertised school programs guaranteeing instant success. Proceeding along the path of orthodoxy, the book does not get very far.

*Pedro Ruano*

**ANG MUNTING PRINSIPE.** By Antoine de Saint-Exupery. Translated by Lilia F. Antonio. Quezon City: Phoenix Press, 1969. vi, 104 pages. ₱7.65 paper.

Translators have been a much maligned lot. Yet literature would not have been the great influence in the history of civilizations had translators not been at their vocation. The reviewer gratefully recalls his own joy reading Dostoevsky, Zola, Cervantes, Kazantzakis and Camus — in English.