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CULTURAL PHILOSOPHY: AFRICAN AND FILIPINO DIMENSIONS

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This paper traces the development of "cultural philosophy," distinguishes it from the "philosophy of culture," discusses African and Filipino philosophical dimensions, and then makes the concluding remarks. This paper argues that while cultural philosophy is a significant development in the history of ideas, any given culture must opt to develop its own philosophical tradition.

INTRODUCTION

Greek philosophy is an example of a "philosophy proper," or what I otherwise call "traditional philosophy." It is Western, all right, but it began when someone—an individual person, not a group, that is, not a national or an ethnic group—raised a question, later described as "philosophical" (see Chroust 1964, 423-34)—"What is the ultimate material of the universe?" This question is primordial, which was subsequently labeled "metaphysical" (see Chroust 1961, 601-16) and it is rational in that it tried to determine through the use of reason the basic stuff out of which the world is made of. It was originally raised by a singular person whose name was Thales. Very much later, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1922, §4.112) would argue that what we properly call "philosophy" is an activity—the activity of persons acting as individuals, not as groups. Even in small groups, like the Vienna Circle (see Murzi 2004) which had a common agenda, the philosophizing in expressing the agenda was done by individual persons with distinct personal touches, so to speak.

But an individual belongs to a given culture. So one's philosophy is a product of one's culture because no one can philosophize in a vacuum. A philosophy is always reactive, that is to say, a reaction to an existing aberrant, curious-laden, or problematic situation, which could be phenomenal, empirical, curiously filled with wonder or doubt, and so on. It is argued, for example, that philosophy came about in Greece as a rational reaction (*logos*) to the apparent irrational mythical origins of the universe and of human beings (*mythos*) (see Markhinin 2013, 58-68).

CULTURAL[1] PHILOSOPHY

It is difficult to reconstruct how our ancient ancestors exactly interacted with nature. We assume that for their experience, nature was a given. In accordance with their basic

survival needs, they arranged, manipulated, cultivated, and so on, the natural surroundings. They hunted for food, made use of branches of trees for spears and of stones for basic solid tools, found security in caves, discovered fire, invented language and clothing, etc. According to William Graham Sumner (1906, 2), the first instincts of man were to satisfy his needs, which were essentially unconsciously pursued:

> …the first task of life is to live. Men begin with acts, not with thoughts. Every moment brings necessities which must be satisfied at once. Need was the first experience, and it was followed at once by a blundering effort to satisfy it…. The ability to distinguish between pleasure and pain is the only psychical power which is to be assumed.

A constant attempt to satisfy these needs established a routine and became habitual. Thinking came only very much later. Before any *leisurely* thinking could emerge, the satisfaction of physiological and economic needs, as Karl Marx would say, must first be met. It is their social existence that determines their consciousness, not the other way around. As Arthur Mendel (1965, 5) puts it:

> The mode of production…represents the economic "substructure" which gives form and character to the social, political, and ideological "superstructure" of society at each stage in human history. In effect, this means that the prevailing intellectual ideas and ethical ideals, the artistic tastes and political institutions, and everything else that comprises the culture and civilization of the period are consistent with and reflect the interests of the dominant class, the class in control of the means of production. Resting on such theories, economic determinism can be summarized by the famous statement that "it is not the consciousness of men that determined their existence, but rather it is their social existence that determines their consciousness."

A similar view is held by Abraham H. Maslow (1943, 370-96) in his hierarchy of needs: physiological needs are to be satisfied first before all other higher needs.

Thinking

Thinking, however, at that time was very crude or rudimentary. Most acts were done out of instinct. Expediency was the guide for selecting pleasure and avoiding pain. The method was carried on not individually but in groups. In time they become customary—become the folkways—which are sanctioned by fears of an ancestral ghost (Sumner 1906, 3).

At best, thinking was a *communal* reaction to unexplainable phenomena and the reasoning used was likewise crude in the sense that it did not have any methodical or scientific basis. However, all initial thinking was related to survival. This led to animistic beliefs: trees, rivers, the wind, the sun, and so on, have spirits. These spirits can be good or bad; they must not be disturbed, and when displeased, they must be appeased. Sacrifices of some form would be done in order to thank the good spirits for a good hunt or to placate the bad spirits for releasing, e.g., a bad strong wind. Religious rituals could be multiplied and

could become elaborative. When language was invented, all religious references were embedded in their language. The family or community shared a common religious perspective, filled with rituals, ethical precepts, and sanctions. These formed part of the evolving mores of the community.

At a higher level of thinking, myths evolved with the same function of explaining something "beyond" what were given by direct empirical experience such as the origin of life, the beginnings of the universe, the creation of man and woman, and so on. Many of these are expressed in poetry, cave paintings, folk stories, folk songs, riddles, sayings, and even legends.

As folkways and mores become more and more complex, they sometimes in some cases conflict. Generally, they are simply accepted and tolerated without any critical evaluation. Folk stories or myths may also become conflicting but are tolerated or accepted and enjoyed (see Markhinin 2013, 66). But parts of mores that became inconsistent with others are modified, rectified, and gradually strictly observed. Any abrupt change in behavior inconsistent with the mores was sanctioned. Mores can evolve differently from community to community but in the main, they are similar or generally the same within a given territory or region.

Folkways[2] are the existing social practices—while mores,[3] the existing moral or customary practices—of the community or ethnic group. They govern the life of the individual and society. These social and moral practices and customary rules gradually develop and evolve to maintain social and moral order or decorum within the community. They are still part of the survival needs of the group. Sanctions are developed because social and moral aberrations disrupt the social and moral order of the group.

Folkways and mores intertwine in the conduct of hunting, childbirth, eating, courting, marriage, family relations, respect of elders and ancestor worship, protection of the group, celebrations or festivals, religious rites, war rites, and so on. They define the lifestyle of the group. Many of these practices are expressly stated in oral traditions or in writing—some metaphorically expressed in riddles, sayings, and poetry. Some are simply embedded in particular expressions in language, that is, in words, phrases, and clauses. It is in this way that the lifestyle, type of reasoning, and philosophical outlook are embedded in these cultural practices as displayed in rituals and expressed in writing and linguistic expressions.

Modifications in cultural practices, for as long as they enhance the survival needs of the group, are accepted but when they impede, disrupt, destroy, or radically reroute these practices, they are modified or rejected. They are perceived as doing harm to the community.

Critical thought

In time, some of these moral/customary and social practices are reflectively scrutinized because of changing circumstances. The modifications are, this time, *consciously* sought since these are perceived to enhance more the survival needs of the group, or to refine its cultural development. Inconsistencies among these practices are smoothened out, justified or explained, and refined. Mythical stories about the origin of life and the universe, about what ought to be, about religious practices that appear irrational are analyzed, modified or discarded, and given rational explanations. The explanations may still be crude but, at least, these are based on empirical observations with a logical reasoning that is anchored on

rational consistency, coherence, and believability. When Thales, for example, said that the ultimate material of the universe is water, he gave some empirical explanations that appeared, at that time, believable, consistent, and coherent with other observable phenomena. Later the customary codes may be influenced by more critical thinking and become the moral rules of the epoch. As Sumner (1906, 36) says:

> …changes in history are primarily due to changes in life conditions. Then the folkways change. Then new philosophies and ethical rules are invented to try to justify the new ways. The whole vast body of modern mores has thus been developed out of the philosophy and ethics of the Middle Ages. So the mores which have been developed to suit the system of great secular states, world commerce, credit institutions, contract wages and rent, emigration to outlying continents, etc., have become the norm for the whole body of usages, manners, ideas, faiths, customs, and institutions which embrace the whole life of a society and characterize an historical epoch. Thus India, Chaldea, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, Modern Times, are cases in which the integration of the mores upon different life conditions produced societal states of complete and distinct individuality (ethos).

Ethnophilosophy and philosophy of culture

A philosophical worldview or outlook as a reaction to or an explanation of a problematic or aberrant phenomenon becomes embedded in the behavioral response to it and in the language—oral or written—that is used to express it. The task of the ethnophilosopher is to extract and present it with coherence so that it can be understandable to and can be understood by the audience or readers—either local or international. This understanding is important because the audience will grasp the cultural essence of the ethnic or national group—how it thinks and why it behaves in a particular way and not in any other way. Philosophical and other evaluations of the cultural group as primitive, irrational, civilized, rational, etc., depends largely on the stature of the evaluator—whether he or she is educated, civilized, primitive, etc. There is a moral implication on how the evaluation goes. One view says that one ought to evaluate a culture on its own terms thereby avoiding ethnocentrism[4] or ethnochauvinism.[5]This is generally the task of the ethnophilosopher who tries to disembed and describe the philosophical underpinnings, presuppositions, and implications of ethnic oral traditions and practices and tries to rationally justify the merits or advantages of the existing cultural patterns as a measure of survival and artistic framework (see Gripaldo 2012, 59-65).

The world is fast changing and cultural influences coming from the outside slowly but intermittently encroach on an existing ethnic or national culture. Some of the cultural changes in grassroots cultural patterns are either unconscious or semiconscious such as changing one's clothing style to cover most parts of one's body, using sandals rather than remaining barefoot, etc. These changes are not in terms of survival but largely in terms of comfort. Other changes are conscious like sending one's child to study abroad, being converted to a new religion like Islam or Christianity, adopting the democratic way of life, using Western technology like the computer, etc. It goes without saying that some members of the same

ethnic group will start evaluating their own cultural patterns in terms of greater survival, better governance, better artistic taste, more comfortable way of life, more rational way to worship, and so on. They study the existing philosophical outlook, critically examine it, and propose some basic changes that would refine it and that would stress a plural understanding of ethnic differences within the national group. In many cases they propose the modification or elimination of cultural "survivals,"[6] or those outmoded remnants of old patterns as new patterns have been fast accepted and assimilated. They are the philosophers of culture. In short, ethnophilosophy whose task is mainly to preserve and justify one's culture can lead to a philosophy of culture whose task is to explain and describe existing cultural patterns in order to critique, improve, and refine them. Unfortunately, there are some thinkers who apparently simply just want to remain as ethnophilosophers.

Philosopher-of-culture at large

The ethnophilosopher who has become a philosopher of culture can be a philosopher of culture-at-large, that is, a genuine philosopher of culture. He transcends his own culture and philosophizes on culture itself in general. He philosophizes on the nature of culture; on issues about cultural identity, migrant culture, cultural hospitality, cultural identity, cultural respect, social atomism, cultural survival; on questions about nature and nurture, cultural relativism and multiculturalism, culture and human nature, cultural invention or evolution, cultural and cognitive thinking, social liberalism and neutrality, ethical dimensions of culture; and so on.

One important philosopher of culture is Charles Taylor who, while making his own society as the ground for his philosophizing, tries to universalize his philosophical views on culture. First of all, in his critique of naturalism, Taylor (1985) argues that the human constitution has an embedded cultural makeup which serves as a background for how he acts in certain ways such as following a direction/rule or not at all. Such a human makeup cannot be simply tailored along the natural human embodiment as held by the natural sciences.[7] Secondly, he (1991) stresses the role played by society and the social institutions that shape the individual's perception of meaning and identity. Lastly, he discusses a number of cultural issues that include secularization (2007), which he tries to show has given rise to diverse religious activities rather than to a decline of religion; genuine respect or recognition (1985) of cultural and individual differences; the acceptance of multiculturalism (1994); and so on. William Sweet (2011) also presents another important discussion on these matters, which affect the cultural and social life of a person.

AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSION

Philosophers and scholars (see "African philosophy," 2013), who deal with the subject *African philosophy* write about many areas in philosophy such as ethics, theories of knowledge, metaphysics, and so on, but many of them also discuss the nature of African philosophy. On the one hand, a philosophy is "African" if it deals with distinctively African themes (such as "African perceptions of time, personhood," and the like) or if it uses distinctively African methods. These refer to content and are in the areas of ethnophilosophy. On the other hand, a philosophy is "African" if the activity is done by "Africans or by

people of African descent, or others engaged in the realm of African philosophy." These refer to individual thinkers or scholars themselves.

Premodern African philosophy

If by "African" we refer to the whole continent of Africa, then African philosophy becomes an interesting subject because it includes (see Omoregbe 1998 and "African philosophy," 2013) personages such as Plotinus of Egypt, Augustine of Hippo (Algeria), Ibn Bajja [Avempace] (born in Aragon but lived and died in Morocco), Ibn Rushd [Averroes] (born in Cordova but lived and died in Morocco), Ibn Sab'in (born in Murcia, lived in Morocco where he wrote *Escape of the Gnostic*, but died in Mecca), and Anthony William Amo (born in Ghana but studied in Europe and became a professor in Germany). Among other premodern thinkers are Ptah-Hotep, whose political *Maxims* were taught to Egyptian schoolboys, Zera Yacob—the Descartes of Ethiopia—and Walda Heywat, Yacob's disciple. Moreover, it is expected that even when a culture—especially an ancient one—does not have, strictly speaking, a philosophy based on reasoning, it can have a system of beliefs, grounded on reflections about fundamental issues in life, that serve as a background for ways of acting and behaving: they constitute a philosophical tradition, even when there is no identifiable philosopher; they are the people's natural philosophy.

Modern African philosophy

A Kenyan thinker by the name of Henry O. Oruka (1990; see also Masolo 2006, and "African philosophy," 2013), identifies four trends in African philosophy: ethnophilosophy, philosophical sagacity, nationalistic-ideological philosophy, and professional philosophy. Later, he (1991, 5) added two more: hermeneutic philosophy, which seeks to disembed philosophic content from an examination of African languages, and artistic-literary philosophy, which seeks to find philosophic gems in the works of African literary figures. Since Oruka (1991, 5; see also Ochieng'-Odhiambo 2010, 6) does not consider the last two with high esteem, I will present only the first four trends.

Ethnophilosophy

Oruka (1991; "African philosophy," 2013) says that *ethnophilosophy* is the philosophical approach "used to record the beliefs found in African cultures." Paulin Houtondji (see Anjov, n.d.) uses it to refer to anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, and philosophers who discuss the collective thoughts on life and the world by Africans. In this view, African philosophy is a "set of shared beliefs, values, categories, and assumptions that are implicit in the language, practices, and beliefs of African cultures," or "the uniquely African worldview." Ethnophilosophical ideas are of "communal thought" and are items of "communal property" rather than items of individual activity.

Placide Tempels, who wrote the work *Bantu philosophy* (1959) and whom Oruka cited, argues that embedded in the languages of the Bantu people (sub-Saharan Africa) are their metaphysical categories. This statement can then be generalized to mean that "African philosophy can best be understood as springing from the fundamental assumptions about

reality reflected in the languages of Africa…" Tempels says that the Bantu primary metaphysical reality is Force rather than Being. Other authors associated with this ethnophilosophic category are Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal, who capitalized on the word "Negritude" as "based on emotion rather than logic" to portray a positive African cultural heritage; John S. Mbiti (1997) of Kenya, who published a book on African proverbs, E. J. Alcoa of Nigeria, who bases his African philosophy of history in oral tradition, particularly in proverbs; and Alexis Kagame of Rwanda, who made an analysis of Kinyarwanda-Bantu languages and culture in relation to the metaphysical concept of Being; among others.

Philosophical sagacity

On the other hand, Oruka (1991; see also Masolo 2006 and "Henry Odera Oruka," 2013) maintains that *philosophical sagacity* is some kind of an individualist version of ethnophilosophy whereby one or a few individual members have become "sages" with deep knowledge and understanding of the culture's worldview such that they become capable of reflecting on, and even questioning, some aspects of this worldview. This category of thinking is similar to what I describe as an ethnophilosopher who has become a philosopher of culture.

Ochieng'-Odhiambo (2009) identifies three functions or trends in philosophic sagacity: the academic (or "bridging the gap between ethno-philosophy and the professional school"), the cultural-nationalist (or "a useful avenue in assisting formulate a systematic national culture"), and the epistemic (or "a useful source of information, knowledge, and education"). Sage philosophy is distinguished from philosophic sagacity proper in that while the former is mainly folk or popular sagacity, the latter expresses philosophic wisdom by men and women who were able to transcend mass wisdom through reflection and a certain amount of reasoning to become a philosopher of culture, so to speak. The former expresses popular communal sayings, aphorisms, and common sense, but the latter transcend them for being able to attain a certain level of philosophic capacity (see Oruka 1990, 33 and Ochieng'-Odhiambo 2002, 19-32). It is a given that all types of philosophic sagacity can be situated within sage philosophy but not necessarily vice versa. Philosophic sagacity is the transition between sage/folk philosophy and professional philosophy. The thinkers who continue to follow Oruka's footsteps are Ochieng'-Odhiambo of the University of West Indies, Oriare Nyarwath of the University of Nairobi, and American Gail Presbey of the University of Detroit Mercy, among others.

Nationalist-ideological philosophy

Nationalist-ideological philosophy, for Oruka ("African philosophy," 2013) could be viewed as a "special case of philosophic sagacity." However, the subjects are not sages but political ideologues. It could, therefore, be a form of professional philosophy. But Oruka wishes to make a distinction between "philosophy," which is a set of ideas, and "ideology," which is a "special way of reasoning."Among these nationalist-ideological philosophers (see Anjov, n.d.) are Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana whose philosophy of political liberation without conditions led to his idea of Political Consciencism, which is materialist-based; Kenneth David Kaunda of Zambia who desired Zambian independence and became its first

president; Julius Nyerere of Tanzania who succeeded in merging Tanganyika and Zanzibar; Aime Cesaire of Martinique, who formulated "the concept and movement of negritude"—the term means "affirmation that one is black and proud of it"; Nnamodi Azikiwe of Nigeria whose preferred ideology is political eclecticism among capitalism, socialism, and welfarism; Obafemi Awolowo of Nigeria who advocated federalism; and Maulena Karenga (1977), an African-American professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach, who introduced an ideological secular humanistic religion called "Kawaida"—meaning "tradition and reason"—as an alternative to existing established religions, especially Christianity; among others.

Professional philosophy

Lastly, Oruka (1991; "African philosophy," 2013) takes *professional philosophy* as "the view that philosophy is a particularly European way of thinking, reflecting, and reasoning." It is something relatively novel in most of Africa. Professional African philosophy should be something that should develop in the philosophical works "carried out by Africans" themselves as "applied to (perhaps, not exclusively) African concerns."Andrew F. Uduigwomen (1995) classifies this as the universalist school of African philosophy because the proponents believe that philosophy is universal in nature and method, that is, it should deal with abstract philosophical themes or issues in a manner that is logical, analytical, mathematical despite the presence of probable cultural biases. Among the major proponents of this school are Kwasi Wiredu of Ghana, whose exposure to analytic philosophy in Oxford led him to contend that genuine philosophizing, while acknowledging one's debt to his own cultural thoughts, should be pursued critically, analytically, and rigorously; Paulin Hountondji of Benin, whose exposure to continental philosophy in Paris led him to reject ethnophilosophy as genuine and later opts for a combination of folk thought with the rigorous method of philosophy in what appears to be an "eclectic approach" (see Anjov, n.d., 42-43); Emmanuel E. O. Anyiam-Osigwe (see Gripaldo 2013) whose three-pronged holistic notion of development takes into consideration the person, the community or society, and the nation-state; and Andrew F. Uduigwomen (2005), who writes a critique of the postmodern position on truth; among others.

FILIPINO PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSION

The Philippine philosophical dimension identifies three approaches to Filipino philosophy: cultural, nationality (constitutional), and traditional.

Cultural Filipino philosophy approach

Cultural philosophy answers the question, "What is the philosophical perspective/worldview of the ethnic or national community?" Or "What are the philosophical ideas of the tribal or national people based on their sociolinguistic and folk concepts, or the like?" These philosophical views are usually embedded in oral traditions, folk poetry, native languages and dialects, sayings, riddles, proverbs, folk songs, myths, legends, and suchlike. The ethnophilosopher, among others—such as the ethnosociologist, ethnoanthropologist,

ethnopyschologist, etc.—extracts from these works the relevant philosophical (or sociological, anthropological, psychological, as the case may be) ideas or views to explain how and why the community thinks and behaves in specific ways. In particular, we could say, "This is the way things are, this is the way people think and behave, so this is the way they should be understood."

Many of these cultural philosophical views were patterns of thought that helped the community survive physiologically and culturally in a rather harsh environment. They became part of the folkways or traditions of the group. Over the years, the cultural and philosophical patterns evolved and those which suitably adapted to the environment became the dominant patterns of thinking and behaving. Most of the expressions of these patterns are reflected in their language (words, phrases, and the like). Outside influences were either rejected or assimilated to the folkways.

Those foreign—modernizing—influences, when they are radical and pose a threat to the survival of the group or cause harm to their harmonious relationships, are rejected while others which help strengthen the cultural, emotional, etc., bond of the group are accepted and slowly assimilated in their thought and behavioral patterns.

Cultural philosophy—and this includes what is called *indigenous philosophy*—in this particular sense of extractions of philosophical views from myths, languages, folk stories, poetry, and the like, may be used not only to *explain* how the community thinks and behaves but even to *justify* such thinking and behaving. The ethnophilosopher usually does this task.

Among these cultural Filipino philosophers include Leonardo Mercado, who wrote *Elements of Filipino philosophy* (1976),*The Filipino mind* (1994), *and Filipino thought* (2000) on the basis of his analysis of Filipino customary practices and of words, phrases, and expressions of the three major Filipino languages—Tagalog, Bisaya, and Ilokano—and of some dialects and tribal languages; Florentino Timbreza who wrote *Pilosopiyang Pilipino* (1982) and *Filipino philosophy today* (2008), based on Filipino folklores, folk sayings, proverbs, reasoning, and so on; and Dionisio Miranda, who wrote *Loob* (1989), an anthro-linguistic moral analysis of the Filipino within.

When the ethnophilosopher begins to *rationally* reflect analytically on the merits and demerits of some items in his communal cultural philosophy and effect some changes that may modify some patterns of thought (assumed to be better), then he becomes a true-bloodied philosopher—a genuine philosopher of culture. The genuine philosopher is an individual who rationally answers philosophical questions—it may be within one's cultural environment or universally to include other cultural environments—and appropriate this answer as his or her own. This answer may gradually effect critical changes to the thought-patterns of his or her society or of other societies as well.

Nationality/Constitutional Filipino philosophy approach

In this *nationality approach to Filipino philosophy*, the constitutional sense comes about in the Philippine setting because of the proliferation of Filipino philosophical writings on Western and Eastern philosophy, which may be comparative and basically expository. The bibliographic classification of these works becomes problematic when one is writing a comprehensive critical bibliography of Filipino philosophical works on whatever topic. The

constitutional sense answers the question, "What is Filipino philosophy from the perspective of bibliographic writing?" It tries to zero in on the nationality "Filipino" as defined in the Philippine Constitution.

The usual criterion of bibliographic classification of philosophical works of this nature is the subject matter regardless of the nationality of the author. If a Nigerian writes about Hegelian Idealism, the work is classified as belonging to German philosophy. If a Filipino writes about European postmodernism, this work will be classified as Western philosophy. Many Filipino philosophy teachers have titles like "Hegel and the history of ideology," "Self-reflection in critical social theory: Kant, Hegel, and Marx," "Confucian ethics," and so on. In this classification criterion, the subject matter is at the center while the author's nationality is at the periphery.

There is a need to deconstruct. We place the author's nationality at the center and the subject matter at the periphery. This means that Filipino philosophical works on Western and Eastern philosophy can be classified as Filipino philosophy in this nationality sense, that is, the author's nationality as defined in the Philippine Constitution. There are two reasons for this. First, there is a hermeneutic input in the work even when it is only expository but especially when it is comparative or critical, and the Filipino mind is at work in this interpretation. Second, when, e.g., Heidegger reacted to Cartesian metaphysics, the work in question is classified as German on the basis of Heidegger's nationality, and not French. In these two instances, the author's nationality is at the center while the subject matter is at the margin.

Deconstruction in general simply means that there is no permanent center and margin when we view or classify things or ideas. It all depends on *situational need*. One should not be surprised, e.g., to see in a bibliography of Filipino philosophy titles like Eugene Hessel's (1983) *The religious thought of Jose Rizal* where the classificatory criterion is subject matter as the center rather than the author's nationality. The reason for this is that the bibliography is on *Filipino philosophy* which means that while we include in the bibliography works interpretatively written by Filipinos on foreign philosophy, we include likewise foreign interpretative papers or books on Filipino philosophers and their works (see Gripaldo 1999-2000 and 2007).

Traditional Filipino philosophy approach

Historians of philosophy such as Bertrand Russell (1972), who writes *A history of Western philosophy*, chronologically enumerates the philosophers of each country or each group of philosophers—such as the atomists, the Pythagoreans, etc.—and discuss their respective philosophies (and some historical influences). This is how *traditionally* a history of philosophy is written. The import of this tradition is that, firstly, philosophy is an activity undertaken by an individual person either on his or her own or by sharing his or her philosophizing on a common theme within a group; secondly, what I call *traditional philosophy* answers the question, "What is your own philosophy?"

It is good to start within a smaller specialization such as ethics, epistemology, metaphysics, or philosophy of mind, or a broader tradition such as the analytic tradition, continental tradition, pragmatic tradition, etc. It is also good to be able to master the philosophy of a certain thinker or to master the philosophy embedded in one's own cultural philosophical tradition. But if one wants to be truly counted in the philosophical tradition of

one's country or even of the world, one should endeavor to innovate within one's specialization or within one's favorite philosopher. One may have mastered Friedrich Nietzsche through and through, including his likes and dislikes, his idiosyncrasies, and so on, but if he or she spends a lifetime mouthing basically the ideas and teachings of Nietzsche, then he or she will, in effect, end up, as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1841) would say, as an *intellectual suicide,* since "imitation is suicide." One should become in his or her own right, a *new intellectual*.

Being a "new intellectual" does not mean one's philosophizing will have no outside influences, but the person should be able to build and create something new, a novel perspective, from within one's philosophical ground. A novel perspective usually emerges from action and reaction. Immanuel Kant, for example, reacted to the empiricism of David Hume who earlier reacted to George Berkeley's reduction of John Locke's primary and secondary qualities to the latter (only secondary qualities), thereby rejecting matter while upholding mind as the only metaphysical reality. Hume contended that there is no such thing as mind and what we call "mind" is nothing but a *collection* or *bundle* of ideas, sensations, emotions, etc. Kant maintained that what Hume discovered is the empirical ego (empirical mind) which can be observed in terms of thoughts, emotions, ideas, sensations, and so on. But what binds all these mental items of experience together is the transcendental ego (transcendental mind). Georg Hegel, on the other hand, reacted on this Kantian view and rejected myriad transcendental egos by formulating a universal Absolute Ego which expresses its freedom through the individual persons. The process by which the Absolute will be able to realize its perfect freedom is through what is known as dialectical idealism of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. We know, of course, what Karl Marx did to this process. He turned it upside down—dialectical materialism—by arguing that the progress of history is brought about not by the mind acting on matter but by matter acting on the mind. I can go on with this kind of discourse with Friedrich Nietzsche reacting (1) to both Hegel and Marx by stressing the role of the passions wherein history is a history of struggle and warfare within oneself and where peace is just a momentary aberrant situation; history is known by genealogical descent within one's self rather than by chronological origin, and (2) to Arthur Schopenhauer's "Will to Live" by formulating the "Will to Power," but I have already made my point. If one cannot be entirely original with his or her thoughts, the person should innovate. One contemporary example in the attempt to innovate is the rejection of the logical term "proposition" and replacing it with the term "constative" (see Gripaldo 2001, 2003; 2010; and 2011).

CONCLUSION

There are many things in common between Nigeria and the Philippines (or the whole of Africa and of Southeast Asia for that matter), philosophically speaking. Both countries belong to the Third World, both are multitribal and multilingual, both were colonized, both have somehow made English as a unifying language that is used as the academic medium of instruction, both desire to be industrially progressive, and both want to be counted (super)industrially and intellectually in the world of nations.

However, in the philosophical aspect of the intellectual spectrum, the desire to be counted would surely fail if we put both our feet in the cultural side of philosophy rather than cultivate the traditional side of philosophy. We probably cannot put both our feet on the traditional side, but while one of the feet is on the cultural side, the stride of the other

foot on the traditional side must be such that it can be counted as a giant stride to the making of a history of philosophy individually for both nations.[8]

NOTES

1. Culture includes its material and nonmaterial aspects. The former encompasses tools; all types of inventions, of technological and industrial developments, of infrastructures like roads, bridges, and buildings, etc., while the latter encompasses literature, philosophy, religion, artistic expressions, and the like. Edward Burnett Tylor (1920, 1) provides one broad definition of culture: "Culture, or civilization, taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole [material and nonmaterial] which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

2. Folkways, for Sumner (1906, 25), are the products (mass phenomena) of an ethnic group exerting efforts to satisfy interests that result from the relations of their needs and the conditions of hunger, love, vanity, and fear "by virtue of uniformity, repetition, and wide concurrence." These efforts are governed by pleasure and pain, and when "folkways take on a philosophy of right living and a life policy for welfare, [t]hen they become mores" that pursue the satisfaction of "needs without pain."

3. Sumner (1906, 27) says:

> The mores [the term is of Roman origin] are the folkways, including the philosophical and ethical generalizations as to *societal welfare* which are suggested by them, and inherent in them, as they grow…. The mores necessarily consist, in a large part, of taboos, which indicate the things which must not be done. (Italics mine.)

Later, Sumner (1906, 40) offers a "more complete" definition of mores:

> They are the ways of doing things which are current in a society to satisfy human needs and desires, together with the faiths, notions, codes, and standards of well living which inhere in those ways, having a genetic connection with them. By virtue of the latter element the mores are traits in the specific character (ethos) of a society or a period. They pervade and control the ways of thinking in all the exigencies of life, returning from the world of abstractions to the world of action, to give guidance and to win revivification.

4. Sumner (1906, 13) defines ethnocentrism as "the technical name for the view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it."

5. Wiki.answers.com ("What is ethnochauvinism?" 2013) defines ethnochauvinism as "when you are chauvinistic about your ethnic group. That is, you say yours is better than any other ethnic group, you put down members of other groups and unfairly discriminate against them." Sumner (1906, 15) defines chauvinism as a degeneration of patriotism: "It is a name for boastful and truculent group self-assertion."

6. Tylor (1920, 16) defines "survivals" as "processes, customs, and opinions, and so

forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home, and they thus remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved."

7. Specifically, Taylor (1985, 1) says that naturalism holds "the ambition to model the study of man on the natural sciences."

8. *A history of Nigerian philosophy* should be written in the same sense of Russell's *A history of Western philosophy.* In the Philippines, I have started with two volumes, *Filipino philosophy*, Part I, Sections 1 & 2 (see Gripaldo 2009a and 2009b).

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