

PHILIPPINE WORLD-VIEW

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PHILIPPINE WORLD-VIEW

EDITED BY

VIRGILIO G. ENRIQUEZ



SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAM



INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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FOREWORD

The Southeast Asian Studies Program (SEASP) was established in 1976 in response to a need to promote comparative research and writing on Southeast Asia by scholars in the Social Sciences and Humanities. Of particular concern was the lack of appropriate tertiary level teaching and reference materials pertaining to the region and written from local, though not necessarily nationalistic, perspectives.

Towards this end, SEASP launched three projects: one focused on the preparation of a series of country-specific volumes on Politics and Government, the second on History, and the third on World-View.

The project on World-View initially comprised the production of a volume each on Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, but was finally scaled down to those involving Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand only. As the work involved almost thirty scholars and the project was complicated, it became increasingly evident that the task was going to take much longer than originally envisaged. Each manuscript had to undergo a process of review by two independent referees - one from within and one from outside the region - to ensure the desired quality. The first volume of the series was published in Thailand in June this year. The second volume Malaysian World-View, was published in Singapore in September.

Needless to say, the project on World-View could not have been completed without the co-operation of the individual contributors, the editor, and the co-ordinator involved. In the case of the Philippines, we are especially thankful to Prof Virgilio G. Enriquez, who in addition to being the editor, was the co-ordinator of the project as a whole. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Ford Foundation for its generous financial support to SEASP and its various projects, including that on World-View.

In thanking all our benefactors and contributors, as well as others who have in one way or another helped to make this publication possible, it is clearly understood that the responsibility for the facts and opinions expressed in Philippine World-View rests with the individual authors and editor, and their interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of SEASP or its supporters.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

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Manila
February 1986

Virgilio G. Enriquez
Editor

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INTRODUCTION

VIRGILIO G. ENRIQUEZ

Anyone who finds it a challenge to pin down such concepts as truth, beauty and justice, should also attempt a definition of "world-view", more so, if the concept is qualified as a "Filipino world-view".

Perhaps it is easier to handle a concept like "way of life", -- especially when "our way" can be distinguished from "your way". Even defining the concept "national character" is a controversial affair because of reservations, ranging from a refusal to be stereotyped to a reluctance to be identified with the cultural mainstream.

Broadly speaking, world-view refers to the subjective basis of a subjective concept. It can refer to the underlying perceptions held of man, nature and the supernatural as expressed in a way of life or any aspect of it.

The Philippine World-View is an attempt to articulate the nature of this "doubly subjective" concept as manifested in a selection of identifiable sources. Filipino food, radio and TV dramas, popular songs, short stories and native and folk arts are some of the sources chosen in the following contributions to this admittedly difficult task of articulating the Philippine world-view.

The introductory article on kapwa as a core concept in Filipino social psychology provides a background for the following analyses of constituent aspects of Filipino art and culture as a basis for understanding the Philippine world-view. While the dictionary translation renders the word kapwa as "others", the word in Filipino implies an altogether different perception in that it also includes the "self". Kapwa, in fact, is a recognition of shared identity for it encompasses the "self" and "others".

One can catch a glimpse of the world-view of a Filipino in the food he takes. According to Fernandez, what the Filipino eats, the sources of his food and the way it is prepared and served, indicate a relationship between man and nature as intimate as it is practical. Food or eating is not only a biological imperative. It is also a social necessity and a socially defined phenomenon of sharing which fosters goodwill and friendship. When sharing food, the relationship can involve either the ibang-tao (outsider) or hindi ibang-tao (one of us) category. It is interesting to note that kapwa is the sole concept which embraces both categories.

Guillermo, in her article on folk arts and the contemporary Filipino painting, stresses the idea that the Philippine world-view is not a static but dynamic outcome of the circumstances in which people cope with change in the name of progress. The native and ethnic arts of the Filipinos, such as weaving, woodcarving and body decoration, reflect a close interaction between man and nature. Other expressions, as in the Filipino house (nipa hut) and the jeepney, also indicate a closeness to nature and an openness to one's fellowmen. This kind of closeness and openness goes beyond pakikisama (level of internalized conformity). At present, there is a gradual development of mass-based artists whose aesthetic interests lie in depicting the peaks, depths, hardships and aspirations of

contemporary Filipino life. This undoubtedly touches on pakikiisa (level of fusion), the highest level of kapwa psychology.

The dialectics of kapwa both as a psychology and as a world-view include not only pakikiisa, as seen in the unity of man and nature, but also pakikibaka (level of fusion in a common struggle) in the face of injustice and exploitation. Pakikibaka, as an aspect of a kapwa-oriented world-view, awakens the Filipinos' consciousness of present day realities and motivates them to be as one in their struggle to break away from the clutches of the neo-colonial set-up existing today. Their motivation to struggle might be tempered with reluctance and doubt, because the kapwa philosophy is basically non-antagonistic. Elequin discovers this sentiment, reflected as perplexity in a kapwa-oriented world-view, in the song Digmaan (War) by Florante de Leon:

**Laban sa kalooban ko man,
Ako'y handang-handang lumaban
Para sa ating kalayaan
Ngunit bakit hindi ko maintindihan,
Magkapwa-tao'y naglalaban...**

(Though my conscience disagrees
I am ready to do battle
For the cause of our freedom
But why can't I understand
A struggle amongst kapwa...)

Inasmuch as social reality shapes the Filipino world-view, the Philippine social reality interpreted through contemporary song is that of unemployment, prostitution and poverty.

The relevance of social issues also impels Cruz to remind

the Filipino writer that, as a Filipino, he has an obligation to respond to the people's needs and problems. The Filipino writer, once enchanted by the colonizer, unwittingly helped maintain the status quo as if under a spell. The kapwa-oriented world-view was displaced by an imported ideology in the guise of humanism thus quelling the resistance against the existing socio-economic structure. As Cruz puts it, a truly Filipino world-view necessarily includes the realization that the Filipinos are the "true creators of their own destiny".

Nofuente goes a step further. Calling attention to radio and TV drama as powerful instruments in the shaping of a way of life, he is painfully aware that the media is vulnerable to manipulation by the powers-that-be. Through TV and radio drama, a distorted view of reality can be developed, conditioning the people to become passive, and tolerant of the existing social ills of the country. Thus the perception of ideological manipulation in an attempt to manufacture a new world-view or a supposedly Filipino ideology comes to the fore. For example, the notion that the "oppressed are blessed" is propagated through the mass media, thus encouraging the Filipino to get stuck with his lot and not strive for betterment. Helen Remonteza is a good example from Philippine drama:

Helen Remonteza -- a woman, ready to shed tears, get hurt, face life, and shoulder the world of sufferings.
Helen Remonteza -- will cry, hurt herself and sacrifice
in the name of love.... [Nofuente, 1979]

There is no evidence whatsoever that suffering is a necessary ingredient of the Filipino world-view. Recognizing and starting out from his basically kapwa orientation is perhaps the Filipino's first step towards his liberation. The Philippine World-View is a contribution towards that end -- by not simply describing the Filipino outlook as seen in their arts, in their

behaviour and culture, but in moving them to action on the basis of their own world-view and on their own terms.