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THE FORMATION OF FILIPINO NATIONALITY UNDER U.S. COLONIAL RULE

Resil B. Mojares

On 13 August 1938, the Philippines celebrated the fortieth anniversary of "Occupation Day," the day U.S. forces occupied Manila and began the American conquest of the Philippines. It was a bizarre spectacle. At the Luneta, President Manuel Quezon and the highest Filipino officials marched at the head of a grand review before the U.S. High Commissioner to express the nation's gratitude to America for "the blessings of liberty and democracy." In his speech that day, Quezon declared that, under the aegis of the United States, "peace and prosperity have come to this favored land." The Philippines and the United States, he said, were irrevocably bound together not by "an alliance, nor a declaration, nor a treaty" but "eternal, spiritual kinships and relationships, that extraordinary, indefinable longing for the same sort of things." "Our aims, our hopes, our appreciations, are the same."¹

One can dismiss Quezon's speech as inflated political oratory (the kind Quezon mastered). And "Occupation Day" may have been a carnival where, as carnivals go, things were not quite what they seem. Yet, the celebration does seem a high symbolic moment in the narrative of "benevolent assimilation." In just four decades, the country had seen the implantation of an American-style political system, the country's subordination to the U.S. economy, the phenomenal expansion of public education based on the English language, and the spread of a modernity mediated by the United States.

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Reflecting on this spectacle, the problem I wish to address is the paradox that what would seem to have been a period of triumphant "Americanization" was, in fact, also a period of concerted "Filipinization." It was in the first half of the twentieth century – more than at any other time – that "Filipino nationality," the shared sense and sentiment of *being Filipino*, was formed. It was in the American "gaze" that much of what subjectively constitutes *nation* for Filipinos was formed. The story of the emergence of Filipino nationalism in the crucible of revolution and war at the turn of the century has been repeatedly told, and frequently interrogated. Its mutation into a canonical, *civic* nationalism under American auspices has yet to be adequately examined.

The beginning of the twentieth century was one of the most dynamic periods in Philippine cultural history. There was great enthusiasm for intellectual work in many fields – history, language, cultural studies, the arts. It was a "golden age" for the arts both for the volume and foundational character of work produced. Literary book publishing in Philippine languages was more vigorous during this period than at any other time. Literary organizations and language academies mushroomed. Theater companies, musical societies, and associations of architects and other artists were formed.²

There were two important conditions for the rise of the arts in the early twentieth century. The first was nationalism. The flurry of activity was driven by the will for social and cultural self-assertion that had been building up in the late nineteenth-century, suppressed, nourished by revolution and war, then bursting forth into the spaces created by the transition from one colonial order to another.

The second condition was American colonial state formation. State-building widened and "fixed" the social and territorial space for the formation of a "Filipino nationality." Constructing the Philippines as an object of knowledge and control, the Americans carried out knowledgebuilding projects from the onset of the occupation. They defined the national territory, commissioned histories, built up archives, and conducted censuses and inventories of what the country encompassed and contained (from trees and minerals to categories of inhabitants and their languages and arts). Material and mental infrastructures were built for the formation of a national culture, the apparatus for its production and circulation. In this manner, U.S. rule defined a large part of the field in which artistic work would be carried out.

Two areas in which this was most visible were education and communications. A countrywide public school system was developed. Between 1903 and 1940, the number of schools increased from 3,000 to 13,000: the number of teachers from 2,500 to 42,000; school and public 1.860,000. Facilities for communication expanded with investments in 1918, the number of newspapers and readers increased by 300 and 500 1898: there were 350 cinema houses by $1940.^3$

tional identity," agencies like the National Library, National Archives, National Museum. historical and language institutes. and. most consequential, the state university. The National Library evolved from the American Circulating Library organized in Manila in 1900. Turned over to the government in 1901, its name was changed to "Philippine Public Library" in 1908, was renamed "Philippine Library & Museum" in 1916, and became two separate institutions, the National Library and the National Museum, in 1928. The National Archives came out of the Bureau of Archives created by the U.S. Philippine Commission in 1901.⁴ The University of the Philippines, established in 1908, became the premier "manufacturer of the native elite" and played a leading role in cultural production through its various programs and units, such as the School of Fine Arts (1909) and Conservatory of Music (1916). The movement for a "national language" culminated with the provision for such a language in the 1935 Philippine Constitution, the creation of the Institute of National Language in 1936, and Ouezon's declaration of Tagalog as the basis for the national language in 1937.

Outside these formal structures, a more open economy stimulated cultural work. The proliferation of newspapers and magazines created space for writers and graphic artists. Theaters, dancehalls, and carnivals provided venues for playwrights, actors, dancers, and musicians. Government infrastructure projects and private business provided new challenges for Filipino architects as factories, office buildings, and commercial shops

libraries from a mere 12 to 5,700; school enrolment from under 300,000 to public works, transportation, and mass media. There were 41 newspapers in 1903: there were 313 in 1939. It is estimated that between 1903 and percent, respectively. In 1935, Manila outranked any other city in the Far East in the number of telephones and telephone calls, and the Philippines had one of the best mail services in the world. There were less than 30 theaters (physical structures for theatrical performances) in the country in National-colonial state building brought with it those institutions charged with being the keepers and shapers of "public memory" and "nawere built. Cosmopolitanism in the urban centers created a market for visual artists. (To cite examples: Nicanor Abelardo played the piano at cinemas, wrote zarzuelas, played jazz at a saloon, led a dance orchestra at Sta. Ana Cabaret, worked on commission for the Erlanger & Gallenger recording business, and taught music at U.P. Fernando Amorsolo worked as draughtsman for the Bureau of Public Works, did newspaper and magazine illustrations, and worked in advertising, producing theater and carnival posters.) The influx of new forms of entertainment (opera, vaudeville, radio, and sports like boxing and baseball) stirred the local imagination. Hollywood invaded the country and, by the 1920s, a Filipino movie industry had begun to emerge.

In the Filipino-American War and its aftermath, Filipinos used the cultural and artistic resources available to them in resisting a foreign invasion, as shown in the examples of patriotic *kundimans*, "seditious" plays, and political novels.⁵ The theme of anticolonial resistance would persist in the decades that followed. As the Americans consolidated their rule, however, the relationship of art to power assumed many forms. There is a complex, dynamic play of artistic motives, genres, and practices in this period, one that is not adequately captured by a simple bipolarity of resistance and submission. The new colonial order not only offered opportunities and rewards for artists and intellectuals, it enticed them with the challenge and adventure of "nation-building." The discourse on nationalism would shift from the more popular, militant forms of nationalism in the war years to the "rational," civic nationalism of the years that followed.

Postrevolutionary nationalism was distinctly *cultural* rather than political or economic. This was expressed in the debate on "Anglo-Saxonization" (*sajonismo*) in the early decades of the century. Seduced as well as repelled by American power, Filipino intellectuals voiced concern over the loss of "identity" because of rapid Americanization. Jorge Bocobo, a leading intellectual, grandiloquently warned: "The violent winds of custom that flow from across the Pacific are beginning to rock the edifice of Filipino virtues. The sound and stout qualities of the Filipino race are in danger."⁶ Bocobo, together with nationalists like Rafael Palma, Teodoro Kalaw, and Epifanio de los Santos spoke of *filipinismo*, the need to preserve and foster the "Filipino Soul," the mentality and moral sentiments, "the true genius and spirit," that make for a distinctive Filipino personality and nationality. Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, the most prominent *americanista* of the time, took the opposing side of this debate. He called for the "complete assimilation of the American spirit," envisioned a future in which Filipinos will be "reading and thinking as Americans," and once wrote that he wanted his sons "to be educated in America so that they may be Americans." He criticized the local inheritrance of "backward" cultural forms, such as *novenas, corridos,* and *komedyas,* as part of the country's "legacy of ignorantism." He attacked the fascination with the national soul as weakly grounded, sentimental, and ineffectual. He argued that what the "sentimental patriots" (Pardo's words) referred to as the Filipino Soul was, in fact, "the Latin type transplanted into our islands by the Spaniards." The "genuine Filipino soul," he said, is not something static or given but latent and developing. It "lives in our masses" and will be released with the education and prosperity that come with Anglo-Saxonization.⁷

Others shared Pardo's views but in this public debate he was a virtual minority of one. *Filipinismo* triumphed over *americanismo* or *sajonismo* early on. Thus, Teodoro Kalaw could declare in 1927 that "Americanization as an ideology" died twice.⁸ It died in 1907, with the crushing defeat of the Federal Party in the first Philippine Assembly elections. It died in 1925 when Pardo de Tavera died. Construed as U.S. statehood for the Philippines, "Americanization" was never a politically viable option. Pardo himself recognized this as early as 1904. But to equate "Americanization" with statehood does not quite do justice to how Pardo defined his position. The so-called *federalistas* and *nacionalistas* had much more in common with each other, ideologically, than their public posturings suggested. Americanization was a much more complex, persistent, and even insidious phenomenon than the political incorporation of the Philippines into the United States.

"Nationalism" -- or, in cultural terms, *Filipinism* -- was the dominant discourse of the first decades of the century. It had efficacy as a mode 'by which Filipino leaders could distance themselves from the American colonizers as well as deflect or appropriate the more radical demands of those who could not abide with the U.S.-instituted order. Quezon cast himself the hero when he declared in 1923: "I prefer a government run like hell by Filipinos to a government run like heaven by the Americans." He played to nationalist sentiments when he said that it was his government's policy to "Filipinize the Filipinos" (*Filipinizar a los Filipinos*).

What must be noted as well is that *Filipinism* was tolerated, if not encouraged, by the Americans themselves. It was the cultural complement

of the policy of *Filipinization* announced as early as the days of the Taft Commission (1900). While repressive measures – such as the Sedition Law (1901) and Flag Law (1907) – were enforced in the early years of the occupation, the Americans, confident in their partnership with the country's "directing class," had relaxed restrictions on expressions of nationalist opinions by the second decade of the century. As the prospect of eventual independence became clear, particularly with the passage of the Jones Law of 1916, Filipinization advanced quickly.

The bureaucracy was Filipinized. By 1913, Filipinos filled 71 percent of national civil service positions, 99 percent of all municipal government offices, and over 90 percent of all provincial posts.⁹ By 1907, Filipinos had their own legislature (Philippine Assembly) and by 1913 they constituted the majority in the Philippine Commission.

In the critical area of education, the Americans maintained their presence much longer. It was not until the Commonwealth that Filipinos took over the leadership of the Department of Public Instruction (Sergio Osmeña, Jorge Bocobo). In the matter of language, the Americans remained steadfast on the value of English as the language of education and government despite the call for a national language from writers and linguists. In 1908, the Philippine Commission rejected a bill providing that teaching in primary schools be given in the local language. It was not until the Commonwealth that the adoption of a national language became a public policy.

Yet, even in education, we cannot ignore the strong participation of Filipinos in the execution as well as shaping of policies. In 1920, there were only 385 American teachers compared to 17,244 Filipinos. (By 1940, there were only 77 Americans to 43,682 Filipino teachers.) As early as 1915, the University of the Philippines had Filipinos for president (Ignacio Villamor, acting presidents Jose Escaler and Alejandro Albert, Rafael Palma, Jorge Bocobo). Public education was Filipinized in terms other than personnel. After an almost exclusive diet of Americana in the early years, textbooks were Filipinized in authorship and content. In schoolhouses all over the country, the Philippine Flag floated side by side with the Stars and Stripes and daily the Philippine National Anthem was sung. Pictures of Rizal, Mabini, Bonifacio, and other heroes (and, in the 1930s, Quezon himself) decorated the walls of schoolrooms. Textbooks narrated their life-stories and stimulated a juvenile appetite in native music, games, art, and folklore.

State cultural agencies were in the hands of Filipinos almost from their inception. The leading Filipino intellectuals directed the National Library & Museum (Manuel Artigas, Teodoro Kalaw, Epifanio de los Santos. Jaime de Vevra) and the Institute of National Language (de Vevra, Lope Santos). These men were not just bureaucrats but the most productive scholars of the time: they conducted research, collected "Filipiniana." wrote on Philippine history and culture, and speculated on Filipino identity. It is quite remarkable how these intellectuals constituted a very small and homogeneous formation. They were postrevolutionary generational cohorts, middle-class, Manila-based, associated with El Renacimiento as editors or writers, enthused over the challenge of participating in the U.S.guided nation-building project. They were mostly Partido Nacionalista in affiliation (personally associated with Ouezon and Osmeña), public intellectuals who held high appointive and elective offices. They were though not quite in Gramsci's terms -- "organic intellectuals," directly connected to classes or enterprises that used intellectuals to organize interests and gain and maintain power. As educators, journalists, scholars, and leaders of the country's premier educational and cultural institutions, they exercised considerable influence in shaping civic consciousness in this period.¹⁰

They were champions of *Filipinism*, a benign and conservative view of recovering, preserving, and promoting native traditions in combination with the best in Western, specifically American, culture. Diffuse and non-aggressive, it was a form of nationalism perfectly congruent with the dominant view in politics of constructive "partnership" with America.¹¹

Early twentieth-century *Filipinism* was essentially defensive, revivalist, and reactive to the advance of Anglo-Saxonization. Anxieties over the inroads of foreign influence fueled an interest in the preservation of local and indigenous traditions.

An important site of contestation was language. At a time that saw a late flowering of Filipino writing in Spanish, *Hispanistas* defended Spanish as a language more adequate for conveying native ideas and sensibilities. More important, writers argued for the primacy of the local language over English. In the phenomenon Virgilio Almario calls *balagtasismo*, writers defended Tagalog, and its repertory of poetic forms and conventions, as a way of resisting Americanization and asserting autonomy and selfhood.¹² An instance of this surge of interest in local culture was the invention in 1924 of a "modernized" version of the traditional verse-debate called *duplo*, the *balagtasan*, which became so popular that, at its height, *balagtasan* performances took place in Manila and the provinces (under names like *bukanegan* and *crissotan*) and drew audiences of thousands from all classes.¹³ Even in the University of the Philippines – otherwise a vanguard of Anglo-Saxon influence -- interest in the study of Philippine and Austronesian languages led to the creation of the Department of Oriental Languages in 1924. The U.P. student organ, *Philippine Collegian*, had its first Tagalog section in 1928. In the register of cultural acts, however, resistance can blur and slide into antiquarianism, academism, and a dogmatic "purism." As Almario points out in the case of *balagtasismo*, what may have started as a progressive force in the 1900s had, by the 1930s, fossilized in conservatism and chauvinism.¹⁴

A similar need to preserve tradition moved Francisca Reves, a physical education teacher at the University of the Philippines, to collect folk dances in the 1920s. Her work was expanded in 1934 when Jorge Bocobo, then U.P. president, created the President's Advisory Committee on Dances and Songs that included not only Reves but the anthropologist H. Otley Bever, linguist Cecilio Lopez, and members of the U.P. Conservatory of Music, Francisco Santiago, Antonio Molina, and Antonino Buenaventura. From 1934 to 1938, the committee went on expeditions to the provinces to collect and record songs, dances, music, costumes, and musical instruments. Reves organized the U.P. Folksong-Dance Troupe in 1937, which popularized dances in Manila and the provinces. When she moved to the Bureau of Education in 1939 as supervisor of physical education, she exercised even greater influence not only in collection work but the articulation of a canon of "national dances." Her work led to the "discovery" of dances like the *tinikling* in Levte and *itik-itik* in Surigao. and inspired the emergence of numerous dance troupes, including the famous Bavanihan.¹⁵

There was a similar ferment in the field of music in the work of Francisco Santiago, Nicanor Abelardo, Antonio Molina, and Antonino Buenaventura.¹⁶ All of them studied and taught at the U.P. Conservatory of Music, which offered Western classical training and encouraged indigenous music, particularly after Santiago became its first Filipino director in 1935. Such was the patriotic mood of the time that Francisco Santiago wrote:

... the spirit of nationalism fanned by the struggle for freedom developed, under the American occupation, a sense of love and admiration for what is primitive and autochthonous – so that the success of any composition is judged by the perfect blending of the modern melody and the old air. 17

An important instance of the time's revivalist temper was the popularity of the *kundiman*. Bonifacio Abdon fixed or formalized the structure of the *kundiman*, distinguishing it from other folk songs. It was then developed from its simple unitary song form to a ternary or three-part form. This was popularized by Santiago and Abelardo, collaborating with lyricists like Jose Corazon de Jesus and Jesus Balmori. With works like Abelardo's *Nasaan ka Irog* and *Mutya ng Pasig* and Santiago's *Anak-dalita* and *Pakiusap*, composers did not only elevate folk song into art song, they lifted the *kundiman* to the status of a national anthem.¹⁸

The yearning for what was "quintessentially Filipino" is an important part of both the motive and appeal of the art of Fernando Amorsolo. While there is a pre-American genealogy to Amorsolo's art (going back to Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, Lorenzo Guerrero, and Amorsolo's mentor and uncle, Fabian de la Rosa), Amorsolo was, as Alfredo Roces puts it, the archetypal "Painter of the American Period." He dominated the art scene from at least the 1920s to the 1940s. His highly skilled, idealized portrayals of pastoral landscapes and rural maidens expressed and nourished an appetite for a traditional way of life threatened by rapid Westernization.

Amorsolo rode "the crest of a national nostalgia for the Filipino pastoral lifestyle."¹⁹ His work is of a piece with the time's revivalist interest in folk dance and songs, the popularity of *kundimans* and *rondallas* ("the Filipino stringed band"), romantic evocations of barrio life in the fiction of Valeriano Hernandez Peña and the Spanish poetry of Manuel Bernabe and Claro Recto, and the rise of the *balagtasan* in which poets like Jose Corazon de Jesus extolled the virtues of the traditional Filipino maiden, "pure and innocent, redolent of the sampaguitas."

There were other forces in culture formation at work during the period. For all its anxieties, the early twentieth century was a time in which opportunities for artists multiplied and diversified. Musicians and composers entered productive careers in the American era with opportunities for formal training, sponsorship, and employment in such venues as theaters, cinemas, dancehalls, and carnivals. In this milieu they not only mastered an eclectic range of foreign musical genres and styles (including American popular music), they had opportunities to compose and perform "Filipino music." Filipino compositions were disseminated through music

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education in the schools, marketed by an emerging record industry, and performed in movies and on radio. Foreign recording companies produced phonographic records of Philippine folk songs. Santiago wrote in 1931 that these records sold "like hot cakes." "It is now estimated that about two thousand records of Filipino songs by Filipino artists have been recorded here and abroad during the last few years."²⁰

Genre painting was stimulated by the influx of Americans and foreign tourists, creating a market for postcards and paintings of "typical" Philippine scenes (farmers planting rice, women washing clothes). At a time when there were no art galleries and art exhibits were rare, foreign demand was an important determinant in painting. The appetite for Amorsolo's art, however, was not just foreign but domestic. With the fever for things Philippine, Amorsolo's art was everywhere – advertising posters, calendars, magazines, textbooks, postage stamps, even product labels. Few artists contributed as much to the country's stock of "national" images. While critics lament how Amorsolo succumbed to commercialized, stereotyped work (*calendarismo*), Roces writes that Amorsolo "gave the nation a sense of confidence in its culture, pride in its beauty, joy in its simple day-to-day living, and graciousness in the face of reality."²¹

Commodification, however, was a problem. In the literary arts, the attractions and pressures of the publishing industry led to routinized, repetitive productions of formulaic fiction and poetry. In painting, commerce occasioned a pandering to foreign patrons. "Concessions were made to foreign expectations and preconceived notions about the people and the country," and "the spirit of the work changed from one of self-discovery to one of self-exposure."²² It was reported in 1929 that Fabian de la Rosa had "almost entirely discontinued catering to local patrons" and was confining himself to foreign buyers. He reportedly said: "It is not worth the candle, I have found that out from experience. It is not that people out here cannot afford decent prices for paintings. It is only that they are not willing to pay such prices because they do not have a proper evaluation of works of art."²³

Contact with America nourished an appetite for urbanity and cosmopolitanism. International recognition for Filipino artistic achievement was coveted, and there were achievements celebrated – the Philippine Constabulary Band winning second prize in the International Band Contest at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, and playing at President Taft's inauguration in Washington in 1909; Miss Enya Gonzales, graduate of the U.P. Conservatory of Music, singing for President Roosevelt, the first Filipino singer to perform at the White House; or Fernando Amorsolo staging his one-man show at Grand Central Art Gallery in New York in 1925. The pride was legitimate. Francisco Santiago, on holding his public recital in Chicago in 1924, wrote: "Filipino above all, I thought I should do my part [for] propaganda for our country. I'wanted the American public to perceive that we are not savages..."²⁴

Yet, there was a mendicant side to it as well, what N.V.M. Gonzalez calls the "Jones Law syndrome," a desire to impress the world (mostly the Americans, of course) that Filipinos are not as uncivilized as they had been represented and that, therefore, they are now capable of running their own government. Thus, recalling his own apprenticeship as a writer in the 1930s, Gonzalez learned to see how parochial it all was – the country's literati agog over Edith Sitwell's praise for Jose Garcia Villa, and excited over which local writers had crashed into American publications or who made it to the American anthologist Edward J. O'Brien's honor roll of short stories. The hankering to be recognized in the colonial metropolis was such that the story is told that when the critic Ivor Winters dismissed the samples of free verse Amador Daguio had sent him by remarking that Daguio's poetry was "what one might contrive from the vocabulary of the San Francisco telephone directory," Daguio fell into such despondency he contemplated committing suicide.²⁵

It was not just parochial. It was disengaged from much of what was happening in the country. An illustration is the case of the Metropolitan Theater of Manila.²⁶ The theater was a joint undertaking of the Manila government and the private sector, responding to a clamor for building a theater proper to "one of the most cultured cities in the Far East." The building showcased the Filipino talent of Amorsolo and the architect Juan Arellano. Amorsolo did the murals for the theater interior. Arellano introduced architectural motifs that gave the building a Filipino and "Malay" look. Opened on 10 December 1931, its inaugural program was attended by Manila's "Who's Who." The program was a hybrid mix: vocal selections from "Samson and Delilah," symphonic renditions of Beethoven and Strauss by a Filipino orchestra under the baton of a Czech (Alexander Lippay), a short American film from Paramount, a Spanish-language play, and an American play performed (I presume) by a group of American expatriates in Manila. Billed as the country's "national theater," Metropolitan was in fact the playhouse of Manila's internationalizing elite. While it featured local artists like Santiago, Abelardo, and Jovita Fuentes, its theater fare was mostly foreign. In its first decade, it staged only one play in a local language (Francisco Rodrigo's Sa Pula, sa Puti in 1935).²⁷

There were distinct gains and achievements in the Filipino artist's commerce with the West. It not only occasioned the reflex of revivalism and defense. It provided ground in which artists creatively engaged foreign forms by reinterpreting, localizing, and even hybridizing them.

Filipino architects trained in the U.S., grounded themselves in Western architectural traditions and technology, and profited from the experience of working with American architects and urban planners (Daniel Burnham, William Parsons) in the heyday of American-colonial edificebuilding. More important, as in the case of Juan Arellano, they began to lay the ground for a modern Filipino architecture with their attempts to localize and vernacularize the best in Western classical and modern practice.²⁸ Similarly, exposure to other artistic traditions enabled writers to renovate local literary forms and enrich tradition with new, original work. Composers adapted Tagalog *kumintang*, Bisayan *balitao*, or Igorot and Manobo folk songs for modern compositions. And despite the criticism that has been made of Amorsolo, it is not inconsequential that, in the 1920s, when artists in other Asian countries were still apprentices in Western painting, Amorsolo already mastered it and had succeeded, in his own way, to "naturalize" it.

The relationship, however, was unequal. The realities of political and economic dependency under U.S. rule were such that even before the Filipino could find out where he stood he or she had to deal with a veritable flood of ideas, images, and goods from the West. Early Filipino filmmakers like Jose Nepomuceno – who produced the first Filipino movie, *Dalagang Bukid* (1919), a film version of a Tagalog zarzuela -- had to struggle to create a local movie industry in an environment where American companies and Hollywood dominated the supply and distribution of films. American culture was so invasive, young Filipino writers discovered Sherwood Anderson and Ernest Hemingway before they came to know Faustino Aguilar or Vicente Sotto.

In the Commonwealth era and the years leading to it, *Filipinism* was not just nostalgia. It was harnessed as part of civic formation, citizenship training, and "preparation for nationhood." National histories were conventionalized; national symbols decreed; arts-and-crafts museumized; civic rituals enacted. The process of national identity-formation was hierarchical, selective, and biased in favor of the metropolitan center where the "nation" was imagined. (For instance, writers in Philippine languages had to contend with the fact that, in the emerging canon, they had been relegated to being merely "local" while writers in English -- and, to a certain extent, Tagalog -- were "national.")

There were moves to codify the "Filipino personality." Books like Norberto Romualdez' *The Psychology of Filipinos* (1925) and Camilo Osias' *The Filipino Way of Life* (1940) were published. Teodoro Kalaw offered a synthesis of the "true Filipino" in *Cinco Reglas de Nuestra Moral Antigua* (1935), which distilled Filipino traditional virtues (like bravery, purity, courtesy, and family solidarity), illustrating them with examples from literature, folklore and history. Quezon appointed a committee (which included Kalaw himself) that drew up the "Commonwealth Code of Ethics" (1939), which prescribed sixteen civic and ethical principles to be taught in the schools. Such texts as the "Code of Calantiao," Andres Bonifacio's "Duties of the Sons of the People," and Apolinario Mabini's "True Decalogue" were invented (as in the Calantiao code) or wrested out of their contexts (as in the case of Bonifacio and Mabini) and deployed for citizenship-building.²⁹

If we trace the genealogy of the common symbols of what is *Filipino*, it is remarkable how many of them have their origin in the American-colonial period: *bahay kubo*, *kundiman*, *tinikling*, *rondalla*, *barong tagalog*, *sarswela*, *balagtasan*, Rizal monuments, *Araw ni Balagtas*, National Heroes Day, *Juan de la Cruz*, *Dalagang Filipina*, even the country's Anglicized name, *Philippines*.³⁰ It was in this time of self-conscious, colonial nation-building that the trappings of what came to be called "Filipino culture" were invented, assembled, officialized, and propagated.

Civic nationalism looked towards the past and was distinctly conservative and ruralist in orientation. It answered a need for community and cohesion among a people marking their distinctness vis-à-vis the Americans and the world. Yet, the romancing of "tradition" and the "past," I suspect, was also a refuge of the subjugated, the claim of some secret power by those who were, in the real world, powerless. It was common for intellectuals of the period to criticize Americanization for such baneful effects as materialism, consumerism, and the erosion of such traditional virtues as respect for elders and the modesty of women. In lamenting the loss of "native values," they claimed a spiritual and moral ascendancy over the Americans. Educated *hispanistas*, like Claro Recto, affected an elite disdain for "barbaric" Americans. Even Jorge Bocobo, one of the first government *pensionados* to the U.S., bewailed how the Filipino had been seduced by "the superficial things of American civilization" – cabarets, "foolish beauty contests," prize-fighting, "barbaric and primitive" jazz music, and the striving to keep up with fashion. The Filipino educated in American public schools, Bocobo said, "does not possess that higher culture which the older Filipinos have" (such as the refined taste for art and the classics) nor the power of "profound and original thinking" (because of this education's bias for the technical and utilitarian). Bocobo concluded: "America has been able to help the Filipinos only in things material; but morally and spiritually, its influence has been unwittingly harmful."³¹

This view easily translates into a "culturalism" that divides art from politics, as illustrated by Teodoro Kalaw's remark: "Let me write the songs of a nation and I do not care who makes its laws."³² Or Bocobo's statement that one may imitate America in her government, education, and business, but that we must express our own in the arts.³³

There were dissenting voices. By the 1930s, a new restlessness set in, bred not only by anxieties over imminent independence but the erosion of Enlightenment optimism. Inside the country, agrarian unrest found expression in the Colorum and Sakdal uprisings, and in the founding of the Socialist and Communist parties in the 1930s. Outside, Salvador Lopez recalled, "The world was on fire – the Spanish Civil War, the war in China, Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia... That was the milieu; how could one have escaped it."³⁴

There were those who felt that what was being canonized as "national" art, or simply art, thin and insufficient, and that *Filipinism* had grown complacent and self-absorbed. Galo Ocampo lamented that "our aesthetic arteries have long since hardened that what we have been doing all the time has been to... drone the classroom glories of Luna and Hidalgo."³⁵ The debate between "tradition" and "modernity" which started in the early years of the century -- as in the quarrel between *Aklatang Bayan* (1910) and *Ilaw at Panitik* (1912) -- escalated in the 1930s in the attack against commercialism and routinized literary work mounted by *Kapisanang Panitikan*, led by Alejandro Abadilla, which culminated in a bookburning rally at Plaza Moriones in Tondo on 2 March 1940. In the visual arts, Victorio Edades and the "moderns" criticized the neo-classical academism of Amorsolo and his followers, and produced semi-abstract art that interrogated the conventional and idealized ways in which human and social reality had been represented.³⁶

There was the sense that native tradition was not "deep" enough. To some extent, the complaint was uninformed, as in Amador Daguio's lament: We do not... possess a literary tradition. Other peoples have their Homer, their Virgil, their Shakespeare... We have nothing to which we can refer, nothing that serves us as stimulus or a pattern for autochthonous work...We have no natural fathers; we are like adopted children, ignorant of whatever inheritance of genius may course through our veins. We have, it is true, our oral traditions and our songs, but they appear to be trifling.³⁷

On the other hand, there was reason to think that native culture, as it had been represented, seemed shallow and synthetic. Arturo Rotor remarked: "What was indigenous was swallowed up by the exotic and forgotten, and an art and a culture that was speciously Filipino passed for Filipino."³⁸ Inspired in part by the rising "Oriental" power of Japan, Filipino intellectuals began to look towards a broader, deeper Asian and "Malayan" past for inspiration, a move that nationalists like Rizal and Pedro Paterno had begun in the nineteenth century but was derailed by the intervention of U.S. rule.

Finally, there was the sense that the ruling art no longer represented the social realities of the time. Conventional vernacular romances, genteel, academic writing in English, Amorsolo's bright pastorals, or the intellectuals' ruminations on identity gave little or no hint of a countryside seething with peasant unrest and, outside, a world marching towards war. Salvador Lopez, while acknowledging the need for Filipinos to be grounded in their own culture, warned against chauvinism and conservatism. "A healthy appreciation of the people's debt to the past must be developed, but only in order that they may recognize more avidly still their tremendous obligation to the future." Thus in 1939, with other writers "mostly liberal and left in outlook," Lopez formed the Philippine Writers League. Speaking of the need for writers to be engaged in the struggle against economic injustice and political oppression, the League advocated the production of a socially committed, "proletarian" literature.³⁹

The problem, however, ran deeper than was appreciated even by the Manila-based intellectuals of the Philippine Writers League, who were, despite their dalliance with Marxism, quite comfortable in their relationship with the state (Quezon was the League's principal patron).

Philippine civic nationalism was constrained by the conditions of its production, complicit in the realities of profound political, economic, and cultural dependence that U.S. rule created. It was a colonial schoolhouse nationalism that affirmed colonialism at the same time that it sought to negate it. Thus, Joseph Ralston Hayden, an American colonial officer and scholar, would claim it as product of the American colonial project itself. Writing in 1941, Hayden said:

The Filipino people possess the fundamental basis of nationality in their common blood, but only within the last generation have they become generally conscious of a national history, national heroes, and common aspirations for a national destiny.⁴⁰

In a telling colonialist remark, he said: "The 'American' school system in the Philippines has never sought to teach any other than Filipino patriotism. Loyalty to the United States, yes; but patriotism for the Philippines."⁴¹

It is arrogance for Hayden to claim that what was done in the Philippines was all to America's credit. *Filipinism* was actively crafted by Filipinos themselves, in ways and for purposes that did not always coincide with U.S. colonial aims. It if it did not quite suffice for the time (nor does' for ours), this is so for two reasons. It was a nationalism not quite conscious of the ways in which it was constituted by colonialism itself, and it was one that was far less inclusive or deeply grounded as its leaders and ideologues represented it to be.

Consider one fact. The public school system laid a wide-ranging infrastructure for the formation of nationality. Yet, in 1939, public school enrolment comprised only 45 percent of the country's school-age population. About 80 percent of this enrolment was in the first four primary grades, a large bulk of which would never get beyond these grades.⁴² Undermined by its colonial orientation and use of a foreign language as medium of instruction, the educational system did not quite match the high, democratic vision its leaders had of it. Consider another fact. Muslim Mindanao entered the national body politic imperfectly and late.43 Mindanao was administered as a U.S. Army-controlled zone until 1913, then segregated (where Muslims were the majority) as "special provinces" with limited rights. Even under the Commonwealth, the Manila government withheld full suffrage to the Muslims, slighted Muslim culture and religion, and imposed laws and values (in education, taxation, justice) out of Western and Christian assumptions. For many Muslims, "Filipinization" was a sinister concept. It is not surprising that armed resistance to American and Filipino governments continued well into the 1930s (and beyond), and there was wide support for Mindanao's exclusion from the Philippine state as shown in the case of the Bacon Bill of 1926 and the 1935 petition of Maranao datus addressed to President Roosevelt, both calling for the separation of Mindanao from the Philippines.

Nation-making in the early twentieth century created the sense, space, and substance of nationhood more extensive than at any time prior to it, one that survives to the present day. The first decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of a Filipino nationality – and what comes with it, a "national" language, literature, dance, music, painting, or architecture. A canonical nationalism, however, has its costs in terms of what – by reasons of class, ethnicity, religion, gender, or location – is obscured or suppressed.

We cannot underestimate the importance and value of the civic nationalism formed in the early twentieth century. Yet, we cannot but be painfully aware as well – as nation-making continues – of what was stratified, excluded, or left unfinished.

ENDNOTES

¹ "The Filipinos celebrate Occupation Day," *Philippine Magazine*, 35:8 (August 1938), 371-72; "News summary," *Philippine Magazine*, 35:9 (September 1938), 411-12; Conrado Benitez, *History of the Philippines* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1940), pp. 477-78.

"Occupation Day" was a legal holiday since the time of Governor W. H. Taft but was celebrated mainly by Americans who came together "to exchange reminiscences, eat army beans, and drink beer." In declaring it a "special national holiday" in 1938, Quezon bucked popular sentiment and displayed confidence in his control of the Commonwealth government. He must have felt as well that the pro-American manifestation was politically useful for strengthening ties with the U.S. in the face of rising Japanese fascism.

The celebration began at 5:00 A.M. with sirens and gun salutes, followed by the U.S. 31st Infantry Band playing such tunes as "There will be a hot time in the old town tonight," the march played by U.S. troops on entering Manila in 1898; and a military-civic parade that drew an estimated crowd of over 100,000. At the reviewing stand were U.S. High Commissioner Paul V. McNutt and General Douglas MacArthur, Quezon's Military Adviser.

²Examples are, in language, Kapisanan ng mga Manunulat (1902), Kapulungan ng Wikang Tagalog (1903), Samahan ng mga Mananagalog (1904), Academia Pilipina (1909), Academia Visaya (1916), and Sanghiran san Binisaya (1918); in music, Centro Artistico (1901), Centro de Bellas Artes (1902), and Asociacion Musical de Filipinas (1919); in architecture, Academia de Arquitectura y Agrimensura de Filipinas (1902) and

Philippine Architects Society (1933; precursor of today's Philippine Institute of Architects).

³See Teodoro M. Kalaw, ed., *The Social Integration of the Philippines* (Manila: Philippine Commission of Independence, 1924); Benitez, *History of the Philippines*, pp. 410-21; Joseph Ralston Hayden, *The Philippines: A Study in National Development* (New York: Arno Press, 1972; first published in 1942), pp. 609-17.

The figures for theater and cinema are from Cristina Laconico-Buenaventura, *The Theater in Manila*, 1846-1946 (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1994), pp. 51-52; Clodualdo A. del Mundo, *Native Resistance: Philippine Cinema and Colonialism*, 1898-1941 (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1998).

⁴Adoracion B. Mendoza & Manuel F. Martinez, *Public Libraries in the Philippines* (Manila: The National Library, 2000), pp. 24-26; "National Archives: Past, Present and Future," *Archiviniana* (October 1976), pp. 3-61.

⁵See Arthur Stanley Riggs, *The Filipino Drama (1905)* (Manila: Intramuros Administration, 1981); Amelia Lapeña-Bonifacio, *The "Seditious" Tagalog Playwrights: Early American Occupation* (Manila: Zarzuela Foundation of the Philippines, 1972); Antonio J. Molina, *Ang Kundiman ng Himagsikan* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1940); Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979).

⁶Jorge Bocobo, "Filipino Contact with America," *Thinking for Ourselves: A Collection of Representative Filipino Essays*, ed. E. Quirino & V.M. Hilario (Manila: Oriental Commercial Company, 1924), p. 297. (Address before the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, September 1923.)

⁷See T. H. Pardo de Tavera, "The Filipino Soul" (*El Renacimiento*, 17 May 1906) and "The Conservation of the National Type" (Commencement address at the University of the Philippines, 4 April 1921), in *Thinking for Ourselves*, pp. 138-55, 270-89; *Idem., El Legado del Ignorantismo* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1920).

⁸Teodoro M. Kalaw, "Americanization," *Rediscovery: Essays in Philippine Life & Culture*, ed. C.N. Lumbera & T.G. Maceda (Manila: National Book Store, 1977), pp. 97-98. (Published in *Dietario Espiritual*, 9 September 1927; translated by Nicanor G. Tiongson.)

⁹Michael Cullinane, "Implementing the 'New Order': The Structure and Supervision of Local Government During the Taft Era," *Compadre Colonialism*, ed. N.G. Owen (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for South & Southeast Asian Studies, 1971), pp. 16-17.

¹⁰Palma (1874-1939) was a member of the Philippine Comission and Independence Missions, assemblyman, senator, Secretary of Interior and U.P. president (1923-33). Kalaw (1884-1940) was Quezon's secretary, National Library director (1916-17, 192938), assemblyman, Secretary of Interior (after Palma), and member of the Philippine Independence Mission. De los Santos (1871-1928) was Nueva Ecija governor and director of the Philippine Library & Museum (1925-28). De Veyra (1873-1963) was Leyte governor, assemblyman, member of the Philippine Commission, assistant director of the Philippine Library & Museum, a University of the Philippines dean, and first director of the Institute of National Language (1937-44). Santos (1879-1963) served as governor of Rizal and Nueva Vizcaya, senator, and director of the Institute of National Language. Bocobo (1886-1965) was one of the first government *pensionados* to the U.S. (Indiana University, 1904-07), U.P. president (1934-40), and Secretary of Public Instruction (1941-42).

¹¹Filipinism, Rafael Palma writes, is "the combination of the best and greatest in the Orient with the greatest and best in the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon." While Palma says that the formation of "national character" cannot be fully accomplished in a "condition of tutelage under another power," he does not quite foreground the politics of culture-making. See "Inaugural Address of Rafael Palma as Fourth President of the University of the Philippines" (18 July 1925), *Rafael Palma: A Commemorative Brochure on his Birth Centenary* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Rafael Palma Centennial Committee, 1974), pp. 57-72.

¹²Virgilio S. Almario, *Balagtasismo versus Modernismo* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1984), pp. 12-13.

¹³See Galileo S. Zafra, *Balagtasan: Kasaysayan at Antolohiya* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 3-80.

¹⁴Almario, *Balagtasismo*, pp. 12-15.

¹⁵Celia Bocobo-Olivar, *History of Physical Education in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1972), pp. 108-19.

Reyes (1899-1983) trained in U.P. and Boston University (1929-31): Francisca Reyes Tolentino, *Philippine National Dances* (New York: Silver Burdett Company, 1946; written in 1941); *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), V:233; *The National Artists of the Philippines* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1998), pp. 34-49.

Bayanihan traces its origin to a Filipiniana folk music and dance committee formed at Philippine Women's University in the 1930s; it was reorganized as the "Bayanihan Folk Arts Center" in 1957. See *CCP Encyclopedia*, V:188-89; *Our First Five Years: Bayanihan* (Manila: Philamlife, 1963).

¹⁶They all came from families steeped in music, trained and taught at the U.P. Conservatory of Music, and performed popular and concert music in the country and abroad. Santiago (1889-1947) and Abelardo (1893-1934) did advanced studies at the Chicago Musical College. For biographical information: *CCP Encyclopedia*, VI: 282 (Abdon), 283 (Abelardo), 296-97 (Buenaventura), 342-43 (Molina), 362-63 (Santiago); E. Arsenio Manuel, *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* (Quezon City: Filipiniana Publi-

cations, 1970), II:317-50 (Santiago); Ernesto V. Epistola, Nicanor Abelardo: The Man and the Artist (Manila: Rex Book Store, 1996 (Abelardo); Helen F. Samson, Contemporary Filipino Composers (Quezon City: Manlapaz Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 37-48, 145-55 (Buenaventura, Molina); National Artists, pp. 83-89 (Buenaventura); Filipinos in History (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1992), III:177-78 (Molina).

¹⁷Francisco Santiago, "The Development of Music in the Philippines," *Encyclopedia of the Philippines*, ed. Z.M. Galang (Manila: Exequiel Floro, 1950-58), VII:57.

¹⁸On the kundiman: M. Walls y Merino, La Musica Popular de Filipinas (Madrid: Libreria de Fernando Fe, 1892), pp. 36-38; Raymundo C. Banas, *The Music and Theater of the Filipino People* (Manila: The Author, 1924), p. 2; Antonio J. Molina, "The Sentiments of Kundiman," in Alredo R. Roces (ed.), *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation* (Manila: Felta Book Sales, n.d.), VIII:2026-29; *CCP Encyclopedia*, VI:93-96.

¹⁹Alfredo R. Roces, *Amorsolo (1892-1972)* (Makati: Filipinas Foundation, 1975). Amorsolo (1892-1972) apprenticed under Fabian de la Rosa, studied at Liceo de Manila and U.P. School of Fine Arts, where he also taught (and served as director in 1939). Sponsored by a patron, he sojourned in Spain (1917-19) to study the Spanish masters.

²⁰Quoted in Roces, Amorsolo, p. 74.

²¹Roces, *Amorsolo*, p. 197. Amorsolo's stature is indicated by the fact that he not only executed the illustrations for the popular schoolbook series, *The Philippine Readers*, the series includes his life-sketch, putting him in the company of Rizal and George Washington. See Camilo Osias, *The Philippine Readers* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1932), Bk. IV, pp. 160-63.

²²Felipe M. de Leon, Jr., ed., *The Filipino Nation: Philippine Art and Literature* (n.p.: Grolier International, 1982), p. 63.

²³Francisco Santiago, *The Development of Music in the Philippine Islands* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1957; originally published in 1931 by the Philippine Council, Institute of Pacific Relations), p. 19.

²⁴Quoted in Manuel, *Dictionary*, II:322.

²⁵N.V.M. Gonzalez, "Moving On: A Filipino in the World," *Foreign Values and Southeast Asian Scholarship*, ed. J. Fischer (Berkeley: University of California, Center for South & Southeast Asian Studies, 1973), pp. 140-41.

²⁶Laconico-Buenaventura, *Theater in Manila*, pp. 115-48.

²⁷See Jean Garrott Edades, "Looking toward a Philippine National Theater," *Philippine Magazine*, 33:2 (February 1936), 76, 87. The author calls for a "national"

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theater that deals with actual Philippine realities and laments the remark of one of those who watched *Sa Pula, sa Puti* in 1935 that while well-written, "the manners of the characters belong to the low class – and consequently are not pleasant to foreigners."

²⁸Arellano (1888-1960) studied art and architecture at Drexel Institute and University of Pennsylvania. He worked with the Bureau of Public Works as consulting architect. His works include Jones Bridge, Manila Post Office, Metropolitan Theater, and U.P. buildings. Of the Metropolitan Theater, the critic I.V. Mallari remarks that it showed "that at last the Philippines has awakened from its long sleep and is attempting to come abreast with the rest of the world." See Manuel, *Dictionary*, III:69-72; I.V. Mallari, "Architects and architecture in the Philippines," *Philippine Magazine*, 27:3 (August 1930), p. 192; Leonides V. Benesa, "Arellano: Blazing Sunset Finish," *Archipelago*, 4 (1977), pp. 18-23; Winand Klassen, *Architecture in the Philippines* (Cebu: University of San Carlos, 1986), pp. 173-75.

²⁹Teodoro M. Kalaw, *Cinco Reglas de Nuestra Moral Antigua* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1947; rev. êd.; first published in 1935).

Also Teodoro M. Kalaw, A Code of Ethics for Filipinos (Manila: [Pura Villanueva Kalaw], 1950); "Commonwealth Code of Ethics," Filipiniana Reference Shelf, 1:2 (January 1941), pp. 25, 32; Camilo Osias, The Code of Citizenship (Manila: Oscol Educational Publishers, 1948).

³⁰Some examples are suggestive. During this period, Rizal monuments were built across the country, many of them modeled after the Rizal statue at the Luneta, designed by Swiss artist Richard Kissling and unveiled on 30 December 1913. It was Governor-General Frank Murphy who declared, on 1 February 1934, the *sampaguita* and *narra* as national flower and tree, respectively. The *barong tagalog* (the name first came into popular use in the 1920s) acquired the status of high fashion during the Commonwealth period after President Quezon wore it on such occasions as the Commonwealth inauguration. See Corazon S. Alvina & Felice Sta. Maria, *Halupi: Essays on Philippine Culture* (Quezon City: no pub., 1989), pp. 39, 192; Eric V. Cruz, *The Barong Tagalog: Its Development and Identity as the Filipino Men's National Costume* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, College of Home Economics, 1992), p. 6.

³¹Bocobo, "Filipino Contact with America," pp. 300-303. Also Kalaw, "Americanization."

³²Quoted in Roces, Amorsolo, p. 90.

³³Jorge Bocobo, "Cultural Independence of the Philippines," *Filipino Essays in English, 1910-1954*, ed. L.Y. Yabes (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1954), I:32. (First published in *The Philippines Herald* (29 March 1925).)

³⁴See Edilberto N. Alegre & Doreen G. Fernandez, Writers and Their Milieu: An Oral History of First Generation Writers in English (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1984), pp. 173-74.

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³⁵Galo B. Ocampo, "Filipino Art," *Encyclopedia of the Philippines*, VIII:54-55.

³⁶On Edades (1895-1985): National Artists, pp. 129-41.

³⁷Amador T. Daguio, "The Malayan Spell and the Creation of a Literature" (*Philippine Magazine*, September 1934), *Filipino Essays in English*, p. 205. Also Carlos P. Romulo, "The Scholarship of Interpretation" (*Filipiniana Reference Shelf*, February 1941), *Filipino Essays in English*, pp. 40-43.

³⁸Arturo B. Rotor, "Notes on Contemporary Art and Culture" (*National Review*, December 4 & 18, 1936, January 15, 1937), *Filipino Essays in English*, p. 299.

³⁹Salvador P. Lopez, "Return to the Primitive," *Literature and Society: Essays* on Life and Letters (Manila: University Publishing Co., 1941), pp. 18-24. [21]; Manuel L. Quezon, et al., *Literature Under the Commonwealth* (Manila: Alberto S. Florentino, 1973; first published by the Philippine Writers League, 1940).

⁴⁰Hayden, Philippines, p. 515.

⁴¹Hayden, *Philippines*, p. 516. Asserting that even lessons in American history served the purpose of inculcating Filipino patriotism, Hayden relates a young Filipino leader telling him: "They couldn't help teaching us patriotism and love of our own country. They did it with every lesson in American history. When, as a little, barefoot boy, I stood up before the class and recited, 'Give me liberty, or give me death,' I wasn't thinking of Virginia and King George, I was thinking of the Philippines and the United States." (pp. 515-516).

⁴²Hayden, *Philippines*, p. 481. On the development of the national language: Ernest J. Frei, *The Historical Development of the Philippine National Language* (Manila: Institute of National Language, 1959).

⁴³Cesar Adib Majul, *The Contemporary Muslim Movement in the Philippines* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1985); Patricio N. Abinales, *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation-State* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000).