

DEFINING THE FILIPINO THROUGH THE ARTS: FROM SPECIALISTIC INNOCENCE TO PARTICIPATORY CONSCIOUSNESS

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Cultural Identity as the Basis of Social Participation for Development

THE WORLDVIEW AND VALUES, beliefs systems, knowledge, skills and practices, core principles and ideas shared by a society—the unique totality of which constitutes what we call cultural identity.

Cultural identity is a *sine qua non* for becoming active in the world. Cultural identity is the fundamental source of social empowerment. Rob a people of their identity and they become passive, lost, indolent, uncreative and unproductive, prone to depression and substance abuse, and plagued by a pervasive feeling of malaise and powerlessness.

In order to involve people as active participants, development must be consistent with their fundamental socio-cultural traits, world view and values, and cultural principles. Only then can the enthusiasm and creative potential of the people be mobilized. (South Commission 1990)

A culture sensitive process of development will be able to draw on the large reserves of creativity and traditional knowledge and skills that are to be found throughout the developing world. Such enrichment will give development firmer roots in the society and make it easier to sustain development.

The Genesis of Subservience

To suppress and weaken these roots and successfully impose an alien culture on a people is to reduce them into a passive, docile mass subservient to the power wielders of the alien culture. They lose their originality, native intelligence, and skills, treasure troves of knowledge, accumulated wisdom, and creativity. They lose their collective will and vision of life. They become disunited, self-serving, indulgent, and short-sighted. This is why the first objective of a colonizing power is to erase the cultural memory of the conquered people, to induce a collective amnesia about their past and supplant it with the culture of the colonizers. In this lie the roots of Filipino derivativeness and inferiority complex vis-a-vis the West.

Serving Another Country's Need Through Education

Our country has been spending valuable public money for the education of Filipino professionals in the arts and sciences and many other fields. But since the cultural sources of their education are Western, it is inevitable that the expertise they acquire will be more applicable or appropriate to a Western industrialized society than to the rural, agricultural setting of most Philippine provinces. So a great number of our graduates will end up migrating to rich Western or Westernized countries. "It looks like the Philippines is spending its money for the training of manpower for the more affluent countries...This, then, is the essence of our colonial education—the training of one's country's citizens to become another country's assets" (Hornedo 1997).

Of course, one can always argue that our overseas Filipino workers bring home much needed foreign exchange. But the drain on our intellectual and creative resources as well as the public education budget is also tremendous, not to mention the negative social consequences of migrant work to the workers themselves and the families they leave behind.

How can the University of the Philippines (UP) possibly contribute to the reversal of this brain drain? In spite of decades of well-meaning attempts to decolonize UP education through academic policy reforms and curricular changes, it substantially retains its American character. For one, a student's ascent from the lower to the higher years in the undergraduate level, and especially towards the greater specialization during the graduate or post-graduate levels, is paralleled by a process of gradual change in his consciousness—from a relatively communal, familial orientation to an individualistic, detached, and self-serving bent. This process is most visible, with few exceptions, in UP's professional colleges where the technical, vocational subjects are not adequately situated within relevant socio-cultural, national, and humanistic contexts. Thus, many UP students, whose education was heavily subsidized by the Filipino people, do not even have second thoughts about leaving the country for work overseas upon graduation.

The original name of UP was the American University of the Philippines, and was clearly an instrument of the American colonial government's interests, such as the need to consolidate political control or exploit the country economically. Culturally, the American project was to instill in the Filipinos an American worldview and way of life, to make us crave for American goods, products, technology, concepts, and ideals. And this was achieved mainly through the formal educational system the colonial government established, of which UP and the Philippine Normal College (PNC) were at the forefront.

The Americans never trusted the Filipinos to handle their own educational system, feeling the need to train them first. To ensure the Americanization of the Filipino mind, 509 Americans disembarked from an American ship on 23 August 1901, to take up teaching positions in their new colony's elementary schools. Named the Thomasites after the ship that carried them, several more thousand American teachers were to follow, all the way up to 1940.

In UP, the College of Liberal Arts was established, thus beginning the process of weaning the educated Filipino away from communal bonds toward individual freedom, with its typical American emphasis on the individual's rights rather than communal obligations and social responsibility.

Since its inception, what has made UP education distinctive is its liberal arts foundation, regardless of the degree a UP student obtains, and is perhaps what trains UP students to think the way they do. But the freedom of thought UP's liberal arts education engenders is a double-edged sword because of its Euro-American bias for individual autonomy. That is why there are still Filipino parents who forbid their children from entering UP, fearing the possibility of their son's or daughter's severance of family and community ties in pursuit of professional growth or self-interest.

What UP needs is to have a balanced liberal education, one that can promote the Western ideals of individual freedom as well as the profound and lasting Asian values of communal togetherness, national unity, spiritual oneness of humanity, and especially, the Filipino ideal of *pakikipagkapwa*, whose deepest meaning is "shared goodness" or "shared divinity."

Overly Technical Education

It seems that lately, taking advantage of the globalization of work opportunities, our secondary and tertiary schools have become more and more like vocational schools, somewhat patterning themselves after the many technical and vocational schools that have been sprouting in our midst since the 1970s. With the split of UP's College of Arts and Sciences into three: CS, CSSP, and CAL, this trend toward vocationalism or careerism away from liberal education has become more pronounced.

But vocation-oriented training has to be balanced by humanistic and cultural education. Do we properly educate our children in what it means to be human, especially in a world which

they share not only with people but with other sentient beings? Do we really inculcate in them social discipline, a sense of responsibility for the common good and the nation, and ecological awareness? Do we truly and profoundly make them understand what it means to be a Filipino in the context of a multi-cultural setting not only within our archipelago but within the whole of Southeast Asia and the world?

Professional Tribalism

I am afraid that our overemphasis on technical and professional education may develop expertise and the professions but may also breed selfishness, lack of social responsibility, and professional tribalism, which arises from the cult of the professional ego. This is clearly a manifestation of the materialism of industrial or industrializing societies where, for instance, scientists advance science for its own sake no matter what the social costs; medical doctors gang up on outsiders to protect the medical “establishment”; and businessmen sacrifice valuable goods or form cartels just to maintain enormous profits. Society becomes splintered into ruthlessly competing self-interest tribes of experts, each with its own god or king (celebrity figures such as Stephen Hawking in physics or Bill Gates in technology and business), church or temple (convention hall, opera house, museum, etc.), holy book (professional journal or manual), sacred language (jargon), and religious attire (business suit, white laboratory gown, etc.). Each tribe is after its own good alone. Professional advancement is the highest good. And financial success the highest reward (a market of warring, competing tribes?)

The “specialist and his small circle of co-experts are inclined to define their own little field (i.e., their specialized theories and methods) as the final reality or as the representation of total reality” (Zijderveld 1970). Thus, he has a tendency toward arrogance inspite of his naivete in all matters outside his own limited field. Typically, he feels detached from the larger communal social context in which he lives and becomes solely devoted to the advancement of his profession.

Who then cares for society as a whole? It seems that with few exceptions, we have in our midst economists who formulate policies as if people do not matter, scientists who pursue knowledge uninformed by social considerations, artists who create for other artists and art experts alone, politicians who place party interests above all else, and officials more worried about self-preservation than their people's well being. These things are now common knowledge and much thought and study have already been made on the "barbarism of specialization" (Ortega y Gasset 1932). Can we educate the Filipinos, whether formally and non-formally, against this barbarism?

It is heartening to note that the Department of Humanities, now Department of Art Studies (DAS), has gone full circle twice. First, it explored and implemented an arts appreciation program imported from the University of Chicago, with its two modules of Learning to Look and Learning to Listen, supplemented by Dudley and Faricy's *The Humanities* (1973). Exams were of the objective multiple choice type. And the approach to the teaching and understanding of the arts was basically formalist, and thus, elitist in orientation. Nevertheless the foundation in arts appreciation laid down by the Department of Humanities in the 1950s is said to have propelled the art boom of the 1970s because the students then later became the new breed of moneyed professionals and executives who, with their acquired taste, became the enthusiastic new art patrons and collectors.

But the 1970s was also a period of awakening in UP. It was the time when, almost simultaneously, academics in different disciplines felt a need to develop a Filipino perspective and methodology in their own fields. Dr. Virgilio Enriquez founded the Sikolohiyang Pilipino school of thought, eschewing Freudian and behavioral psychologies as lacking in universality, and in reality are ethnic psychologies. Cutting edge thinkers in anthropology, sociology, and history embarked on the Filipinolohiya movement, which is an attempt to understand Filipino culture and identity using the most enlightened scientific methods and approaches.

In the arts, there began a significant move away from an overly Eurocentric, formalistic view towards a more Southeast Asian and Filipino model. Gone were the days when a Chairman of the Department of Humanities could say “given the choice between the Parthenon and Maranaw brassware, I will choose the Parthenon anytime.” Together with this, an interdisciplinary program that offered a humanized medical curriculum contributed to the rediscovery of the hidden treasures of Filipino healing and medical traditions that are more accessible to our people through the efforts of its graduates who had developed a greater sense of social responsibility than those who underwent the regular medical education.

Yet in the 1990s, the Department somehow gravitated to another Eurocentric attraction, French structuralist thought and wide ranging discourses on deconstruction and post-modernism. A more critical understanding of issues in art history, aesthetics and art criticism ensued and the Department greatly helped Filipino intellectuals and academics in the deconstruction of colonization and elite privilege, especially in the arts. But many aspects of structuralist thought turned out to be another formalism, and thus somehow elitist while the relativism of much postmodern critiques precluded the construction of a vision for the nation because of its feared imposition on the right of every individual to freely construct his own separate identity.

In this sense postmodernism may be seen as a kind of radical *laissez faire* individualism, more so as insisted by Foucault that only the individual can claim the right of authorship, rather than a community. Thus we are now so fragmented as a people that we cannot even imagine a shared identity for ourselves, making us the least nationalistic country in Asia. This is why even previously war-torn, poverty-stricken Vietnam is about to overtake us in development. What the country direly needs is an expansion of sense of self to include not only one’s person but one’s immediate social environment, the nation and the entire human community, not hegemonic imposition but a civic sense or feeling of responsibility for the nation and others.

Quite fortunately, the DAS seems to have turned deconstruction on itself, perhaps precipitated by the unending crises in national leadership since EDSA 2, and became acutely aware of the social and cultural contexts in which it existed, and started to make its presence and expertise felt in community-oriented and developmental projects, in which Filipino concepts of arts and aesthetics were recognized and promoted, in cooperation with other cultural agencies and the government. Thus, the Department again turned full circle in a still higher level.

My saying this, however, is no assurance that all the arts and humanities teachers of the DAS have clearly realized that their professional lives do not exist in isolation, that whatever their actions are affect not only themselves but also the society in which they live. Some of us in the humanities could be narrow specialists whose limited interests can blind us to the larger social, cultural, economic and political processes around us.

For instance, how can we be truly responsible for the well-being of our people if we not only endorse but even praise in writing merchants of death like Philip Morris just because they give big cash awards to artists hungry for recognition and cash? We must realize that one of the tricks of big business to entice professionals to commit socially harmful and irresponsible acts is to don the wolf (themselves) in sheep's clothing. But of course, the narrow specialist ensconced in his own little world will not be able to grasp this.

Again, many of us still do not see elements of elitism in Western individualist aesthetics, which favor wealthy art collectors and big-time art dealers. Wall painting, for instance, requires many flat walls and enclosed interior space. It is not participatory, contrary to the aesthetics of many traditional and popular Filipino cultures. Viewing it occurs outside of practical everyday life and demands leisurely contemplation for its proper appreciation. Most Filipinos do not have the luxury of space or time for this kind of art. Integrating the arts with practical activities can make

them more democratic and better serve the arts' life-enhancing function, as in the komedya, street dancing, singkaban, kite-making and flying, mat weaving, and the like.

The coming of the Americans to the Philippines occurred at a time of when their ambition, energy, and drive for political and economic power were at their peak, having been the inheritors of the European achievements in exploiting the earth's riches and mechanical progress.

Having succeeded in conquering the known world through divide and conquer tactics, the Western powers, especially the Americans, would extend the application of this technique in all aspects of Filipino social, economic, and cultural life, especially to education. The cardinal dictum of the colonizers was: fragment society into the smallest atoms possible to maximize opportunities for control and manipulation of the Filipino people in accordance with American political and economic designs.

One of the earliest victims to succumb to this colonial dictum was the symbolism of the Filipino flag, which, through American pressure, became a symbol of regional division rather than the lofty unifying emblem of our militant struggle for freedom that it was. The meaning of the stars was changed from the first three islands to revolt against Spanish rule, Luzon, Mindanao, and Panay, to a merely geographic Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The most insidious because subtle fragmentation of the Filipino social self, however, was achieved through our Americanized educational system. This process continues to the present day: we may observe that the higher a Filipino's level of education is, the greater is the loss of communal or social consciousness.

As we gradually acquire a specific set of skills and tools for disciplinary specialization, we undergo a parallel narrowing of our sphere of concrete, personal, and active social relations or a diminution of social consciousness, unless our field happens to be

in politics, education, diplomacy, social work, tourism, religious missions, communications, accompanying peoples' movements, or other developmental tasks involving community work.

Especially prone to the diminution of social consciousness are professionals in highly technical narrow specializations. It used to be that a doctor specialized in EENT medicine. But eye specialists have since parted ways with the ear-nose-throat doctors. And now there is even a left-eye or right-eye specialist.

By reducing reality into small pieces, the narrow specialist is "in danger of losing all sense of reality." He and his tiny circle of co-experts tend to define their own limited field—that is, their specialized theories and methods—as the final reality or the representation of total reality:

Hardly in touch with other disciplines, the (narrow) specialist suffers from professional blindness and endows the precarious constructions of his particular speciality with absolute and exclusive characteristics. The modern expert is a skilled operator who usually lacks the modesty one would expect a conscientious worker in a limited and rather small field...he is mostly a naïve spectator in all matters that happen to transcend his little world. (Zijderveld 1970)

This naivete makes him utterly helpless in facing many complex issues of today. Thus, he is apt to surrender easily to all sorts of ideologies. The modern specialized intellectual gets nervous outside his field of expertise where he feels an awful sense of emptiness. All throughout history, it has been the technocratic scientists or engineers, who, because of their ignorance of the social processes and political contexts in which they operated, easily succumbed to the whims of dictators and fascists of all kinds. An enlightened observer could not help but be dismayed when a UP scientist remarked recently that we just have to be resigned to the reality of global warming since we

cannot do anything about it anyway, during an National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) symposium.

Having a very puny sense of self because of his diminutive intellectual and social base, the narrow specialist is typically insecure, fearful, and jealous of the slightest competition. An obvious manifestation of this in the academe is the bitter wranglings about turf, teaching loads, and miniscule promotions.

The narrow specialist compensates for the constant, unbearable tension and angst brought about by this sense of insecurity—a form of estrangement from one's true, undivided, and creative inner self—with a lust for power. The more he becomes alienated from himself by specializing even further, the more he craves for power, ultimately becoming its slave. We can see here the roots of the arrogance we often find in the modern expert, sometimes earning for himself the derision: “an expert is one who knows nothing else.”

The expert's assertion of power, consciously or unconsciously, may be in the habitual use of jargon to mystify the laymen, but more so in the resort to technicalities only he or other co-experts understand. Technicism is the refuge of specialism, which Jacques Barzun defines as narrow specialization.

What I also like to show is the paradox of the narrow specialist or monospecialist in any field who is apparently all-knowing, but actually naive in everything else outside his own little field. What kind of art will he be able to comprehend and appreciate? Imagine a group of narrow experts or “elites” who know practically nothing outside of their different, highly specialized fields—particle physics, topology, neurosurgery, macroeconomics, and soteriology—all attending a concert of serious new music or an exhibit of avant-garde conceptual art. It is almost certain that their expectations and responses will be naive, lay, raw, and impulsive, unless some of them have some previous acquaintance with the arts. They will not even

know how to react and what questions to ask. To be fair, the art or music monospecialist attending a lecture on particle physics will be similarly situated. We have a paradoxical situation, then, where the elites or experts are also the mass or laypeople. (It is this elite/mass culture that is being rapidly exported by the industrialized economies to every part of the globe, causing widespread erosion of cultural knowledge in non-atomistic and more wholistic societies.)

A monospecialist in one field has no adequate organs of perception for understanding and appreciating the finer things or even the first principles of another field, more so if the other field “advances” its studies to the highest level of specialization, sophistication, or unintelligibility. So what kind of music, for instance, will appeal to a most diverse group of experts? What programs for cultural advancement do we design for them?

Unless we can answer this question adequately, the present situation, where the business elite/mass preys on the raw instincts of other elite/mass professionals by providing them with a pre-digested, formula-oriented type of art that cannot promote genuine human growth—what cultural critic Renato Constantino calls “synthetic culture” or what is otherwise known as mass culture—will persist. Predictable plots, bombastic language and music, irresponsible violence, senseless spectacle, shallow characterization, and stories that provide no insight into the human condition will continue to pervade the mass media. The appeal of mass or commercially-driven art is to the lowest common denominator or basic instincts. Without adequate exposure, a cultivated sensibility or ready intellect for understanding the more creative forms of expression, people will simply gravitate towards sensory entertainments and physical pleasures.

To pursue our paradox once more, we underscore the inseparability of the elitism of narrow specialization (what Jacques Barzun terms “specialism”) and the mass or pseudo culture that it engenders. The elite and the mass feed on each other. They are two

sides of the same socio-cultural reality, which reduces a person to a mere fragment or shadow of what he truly is, a multidimensional being with a sacred, creative essence. Humanist-sociologist Erich Fromm made the following experiment with various classes of undergraduate college students in the United States (US):

[The students] were told to imagine that they were to stay for three days alone in their rooms, without radio or television, escapist literature, although provided with “good” literature, normal food and all other physical comforts. They were asked to imagine what their reaction to this experience would be. The response of about 90 per cent in each group ranged from a feeling of acute panic, to that of an exceedingly trying experience, which they might overcome by sleeping long, doing all kinds of little chores, eagerly awaiting the end of this period. Only a small minority felt that they would be at ease and enjoy the time when they were with themselves. (Fromm 1960, 3 n. 1)

What is the matter with those students, the majority of whom cannot be at ease with themselves? These are the victims of a consumerist culture, which condition people to be passive recipients of external stimuli, mainly entertainment or diversions. The moment these stimuli are withdrawn, they suffer from symptoms very similar to those experienced by drug addicts suddenly removed from their opiates. Instead of nurturing a productive orientation people are reduced to reactive beings, treating and manipulating them as if they were mere objects. But any being with an inner life cannot be a mere object: it is itself a subject. At the human level, there is a subject that says ‘I’—a person. To treat a person as if he were a mere object is a perversity, not to say a crime, especially in the context of the intuitive, feeling-oriented, and creatively spontaneous Filipino culture.

Hence, notwithstanding the alleged triumph of the democratic way of life over other political systems, it is doubtful that the “will of the majority” has any bearing on artistic and cultural

excellence. Box office standards and television ratings are at best a compromise. Very rarely do they satisfy authentic criteria of creative and artistic excellence. In spite of the dominance of so-called “popular,” consumerist culture in the US, there is no assurance that it can match the creative vigor of “despised” aristocratic, monarchic, or monastic regimes. For example, Czarist Russia had Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Chekov, Pushkin, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Mussorgsky; medieval Europe left a majestic cultural legacy; the artistic exuberance of imperial regimes in China, India, and Japan is unquestionable.

The “will of the majority”(whether fictive or real) cannot be imposed on the minority, even through the pressure of obviously commercial strategies like “popularity” ratings and box office hits. Culture is a system of vital ideas and cannot be considered superior or inferior simply on the basis of the number of its bearers, unless we qualify these bearers to be the most creative, learned, and wisest of the population. The culture of ancient Rome was not necessarily superior to the emerging Christian culture during the early Middle Ages in Europe, in spite of the imperial magnitude of the former.

I am not advocating a return to despotism but certainly we should be able to formulate and implement measures of cultural excellence independent of commercial success. Note that the millions of dollars the movie Titanic raked in are not a guarantee of its literary and cinematic merit. Neither am I suggesting the setting up of an oligarchy such as a body that will review cultural productions for their artistic merit before they are presented to the public. Rather, I would recommend a participatory approach to raising standards of artistic creativity and appreciation of art. The best way is for every person, regardless of his profession, to be engaged in artistic production and have a first hand experience of the creative process and artistic principles. This is the primary social basis of the creative exuberance of cultures such as those of Bali in Indonesia or the Tboli of South Cotabato.

It is not enough to develop a critical analytic mind alone. What is more important is the capacity to generate meanings,

which can only come from an integrated, rather than an overly mental being; an interdisciplinary orientation and full awareness and, better, immersion in diverse socio-cultural, political, and economic environments. It has been well established that creative breakthroughs happen when fields, disciplines, and cultures intersect because you can combine existing concepts into a large number of extraordinary new ideas. Writer Frans Johansson has even given this phenomenon the name Medici effect because it is very well seen in the remarkable burst of creativity in fifteenth century Italy.

Alienation from the Community

Since our educational system is highly Westernized, it follows that as one ascends the academic ladder, the more Westernized and alienated from his cultural roots the Filipino becomes. That is why the more specialized a Filipino's education is, the more likely he or she will find his means of livelihood away from his community, perhaps in Manila or some other country. An Ifugao child who receives only a high school education is more likely to remain in his community than another who finishes college. And the reason for this is not just because the latter has greater work opportunities, but because his education is not culturally rooted in his community, especially if it is a rural indigenous village.

Alienation from Our Sources of Cultural Energy: Thinking in Borrowed Forms and the Economics of Dependency

Our educational system remains colonial rather than culturally appropriate, causing a great loss of cultural energy. As a result, many of our schools do not produce people who are highly resourceful, creative, and adaptable to a fast changing and extremely complex contemporary world. They encourage dependency, a job-seeking employability mentality rather than originality of thought, entrepreneurial qualities and self-reliance on native skills, knowledge and strengths.

Our colonial experience seems to have conditioned us to seek rather than create work opportunities, to adapt rather than to innovate, and to conform rather than to lead. The captive Filipino mind, having been alienated from its creative roots, cannot generate economic opportunities within its native setting because of this alienation. The needs and values it serves are external to itself. If we borrow alien thought and value systems, languages, and other forms of expression, do we have to wonder why we produce mostly derivatives and clones, superficiality and mediocrity? We forget that we can only be truly productive using our own thought processes.

The Power of Indigenous Thought

Harnessing our own minds, understandings, definitions, categories, and concepts is certainly to have confidence, power, and control over our own lives. Economic power naturally follows from this. For instance, if we worship alien ideas of beauty, whose art works, music, fashion models, and beauty products do we glorify and spend for?

If we do not see the virtues of our systems of traditional healing and medicine, how much do we spend for imported drugs, medical technology, and expertise? (Dr. Juan Flavio once reported during a Senate hearing that within the first five years of a serious health care program harnessing the resources of Philippine traditional healing and medicine, we could save as much as thirty billion pesos in medical expenses). In the Philippines, the expertise of a psychiatrist schooled in Freudian thought has often been found to be ineffective for treating culture-specific mental disturbances that a local babaylan could cure in a matter of minutes. But we do not even bother to investigate and document the basis for the babaylan's effectiveness, so that the tradition she represents languishes and is often forgotten. The erosion of the vernacular medical knowledge means depriving people of cheap and well-tested methods of medical treatment and the implementation of imported ones that most people cannot afford.

This reliance on our own traditions does not mean, however, that we become blind to new and perhaps better ideas from other cultures, but our traditions should remain as the basis because they are in consonance with our psyche and our needs, containing wisdom tested through time. Likewise, ancient Chinese acupuncture, successfully blended with Western medicine, has been receiving a lot of worldwide recognition and scientific validation in recent times, earning for the Chinese not only prestige but material rewards.

The Doña Victorina Syndrome: Alienation from Our “Race”

What I call the Doña Victorina Syndrome is a low self-esteem bordering on self-contempt. It is based on the name of a pathetic caricature of the colonized psyche in the nineteenth century novel *Noli Me Tangere* of Dr. Jose Rizal. Doña Victorina despises her race so much that she has to marry a white man, a Spaniard who is a scoundrel, just to raise her social stature. Instead of proudly wearing her brown skin and assert its rich dignity and beauty, she tries to hide it under a thick paste of white powder—just like what many Filipinos essentially still do today. This persisting Filipino social malady may be psychologically defined as:

- Doubt in the Filipino capacity for achievement
- Perverse delight among Filipinos to constantly belittle themselves
- Serious lack of respect or contempt for each other
- Instead of harnessing our culture as a vast resource of knowledge and wisdom for sustainable development, we squander it by wallowing in a negative self-image that is tantamount to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The underdevelopment of Philippine society is fundamentally rooted in this chronic loss of Filipino self-esteem due to centuries of colonization and miseducation.

This disturbing but perhaps unconscious dissonance in the Filipino soul is especially evident in our bias for European and American names even if they are at times inappropriate. Our young people would be delighted to be called John Smith but not Juan Panday, Mike Hammer but not Miguel Martilyo, or Peter but not Bato. In the desire to have a Western name, a Filipino can be given by her parents a proper name that is rather incongruous with her surname, like one girl who was given the name Marie Antoinette but whose surname was Dugaduga. We feel ashamed if our names sound too native. Perhaps this is the reason why we would rather continue using the Spanish and American corruptions of place-names in the Philippines like Baguio and Paranaque, instead of reverting to the authentic, original, and powerfully indigenous bag-iw and palanyag.

Fortunately a substantial number of Filipinos and some conscientized elites have managed to retain pride in our culture and continue to cultivate some of the best aspects of our character as a people, like the capacity to laugh at our own misfortunes, to achieve grace under pressure and flow with the life process.

Deliberate or not, the Westernization of our education provided the Filipino children with a point of reference for contrasts which tended to glorify an alien tradition and discredit our own. The colonial educators, particularly during the American period, structured an outlook which has succeeded in alienating us from our roots.

Alienation from the Indigenous: Denigrating the Local

Thus, in Philippine society until now, we put at the top of the social ladder those who are most Westernized and at the bottom those who are the least. This places the Manileño at the top, followed by the provincial city dweller, then the poblaciones or town-dweller, next comes the *taga-baryo* or *taga-bukid*, or what we call *promdi* or from the province, and lastly comes the *taga-bundok*, especially if the *taga-bundok* is indigenous or one of the so-called minorities, who

many Filipinos regard as almost subhuman. If only the Manileño realizes that the Filipino New Yorkers look down on him, too.

Unfortunately, our Westernized education makes it very difficult for most Filipinos not to look down on our indigenous peoples living in the mountains. What were made available in the schools were books containing sceneries of wealthy American urban life. Contrast this with a song taught at the same time, with an opening phrase which says “I was poorly born on top of a mountain.”

Looking down on the indigenous does not only mean indigenous peoples but anything locally conceived or originated by Filipinos, including all the indigenous knowledge systems and practices, forms of expression, traditional arts, and native languages that continue to exist today.

Alienation from the Land

The consequence of glorifying an alien lifestyle is to make us dream of dreams that are irrelevant to our real needs and existing social and material conditions. Many of us dream of a white Christmas complete with Santa Claus, sleigh bells and mistletoes in the tropics. Our experiences as a people have been so devalued that, according to a survey, 80 percent of farmers' children do not want to become farmers but would like to land into white collar jobs and live a burgis lifestyle. Indeed, who would like to labor in the fields when planting rice is said to be never fun?

Whoever did the translation of our songs into English must have had a very poor command of our native languages, unless he was party to a conspiracy to weaken the Filipino psyche, because of the glaring mistakes that any high school graduate of today will readily notice, like rendering “magtanim ay di biro” as “planting rice is never fun” instead of “planting rice is no joke” (but could be fun).

The moment we began to view ourselves through Western eyes, what we held sacred suddenly became worthless, our virtues turned into vices, and our strengths began to be seen as weaknesses. Anything indigenous became a source of embarrassment and uneasiness. We would hide whatever is native sounding or native in origin. Centuries of being regarded as backward and inferior by the white colonizers engendered in us this collective self-contempt, a psychic malady that afflicts all of us but most especially the elites.

The Doña Victorina Syndrome, a manifestation of acute inferiority complex, is disastrous for national development. It denies and confuses us about our identity as a people. A people without a strong sense of identity will have no psychic or spiritual center around which to organize their lives. For instance, the moment we identify with American values, ideals, and symbols, we begin to think as if America's concerns, problems, and solutions were our concerns, problems, and solutions. We begin to lose sight of our real needs, concerns, and problems, which are unique to our situation and require quite different but appropriate responses and solutions. Not only this, our sense of priorities becomes skewed, incapable of distinguishing between the essential and the trivial.

There can be no national unity without a sense of pride in being Filipino. How do we expect a Filipino to care and work for the good of the nation if he does not even believe in being Filipino? If at the slightest opportunity, he would eagerly migrate to other countries in pursuit of a foreign identity? If at the slenderest sign of political instability, he will stash away his savings in a foreign bank?

The basis of collective self-respect and respect for each other—and thus of social cohesion and nation-building—is always a sense of one's worth as a Filipino, a firm belief in one's own strengths and creativity. Such brilliant men as Jose Rizal and Ninoy Aquino laid down their lives for our country because they believed that the "Filipino is worth dying for." That is why

we regard them as heroes. They are architects of national unity and salvation. We can achieve no less.

Alienation from Being Filipino

The loss of the Filipino sense of dignity and self-worth began with the advent of Spanish rule. But the alienation of the Filipino from his roots was most systematically carried out during the American period through public education.

Education in this country being relatively an elite privilege until the present, it is the Filipino elite who became the most Westernized and developed most a damaged self-image as Filipino. There is no such thing as a damaged culture, only a damaged self image. If a “damaged culture” exists at all, according to a well-documented study done by Mahar Mangahas of the Social Weather Station (SWS), it is only among the Filipino elites, who have the lowest opinion of Filipino culture.

If the Spaniards tried to convert the Filipino to their ways primarily through religion, the Americans did it through formal education. The American military regime in the Philippines never underestimated the importance of education as a colonial tool. Although the Jones Act granted the Filipinos more autonomy and Filipinos were given government posts, the Department of Education was never entrusted to any Filipino. Americans always handled this department up to 1935. And when a Filipino took over under the Commonwealth, a new generation of brown Americans had already been produced. There was no longer any need for American overseers in this field because a captive generation had already come of age, thinking and acting like Americans.

This Americanization, though most profound among the elite, having had the closest contacts with the colonizers, is more or less shared by almost all adult Filipinos who have gone through formal schooling both in public and private schools.

Alienation from Sustainable Living

American thoughts, values, and practices were introduced as models for the desirable, the modern, and civilized. In contrast, the pleasantness of traditional Philippine life was made to appear as a liability. What was there to be proud of the little nipa hut when, in book illustrations, impressive American homes designed for a colder climate captured the imagination. Even the brick houses in the stories of "The Little Red Hen" and the "Three Little Pigs," appreciated out of context, reduced the nipa hut to inferior status. So who would realize the advantages of the bahay kubo in tropical setting?

Taught to thousands of Filipino children was a mistranslation of the Bahay Kubo: "My nipa hut is very small" whereas the original stated "My nipa hut even if it's small." Even if it's small, together all the plants around it and its creative use of bamboo, it could be a model for a sustainable lifestyle. But now we look down on it.

The Curse of Smallness

Representations of the Filipinos seemingly encouraged by the Americans were of the smallest kind. The bahay kubo became "very small." The little rice bird, the maya, became the national bird. The tiny sampaguita was declared the national flower by American Governor General Frank Murphy in 1934. Photographs taken of Filipinos and Americans together often deliberately exaggerated the Filipinos' diminutive stature beside that of the towering American Caucasian. Could this be an important reason why until recently many Filipino school children were expected to memorize the Latin name of, and even to be proud of having in Bikol, the smallest fish in the world? Most Filipinos then were not aware that we also have the biggest fish in the world in the same province.

Could this also be one of the psychological reasons why many Filipinos think small? Rather than become innovators, entrepreneurs, creative thinkers, producers, and manufacturers, Filipinos, including

UP graduates, are just too happy to find employment, especially overseas. In 1954 our government enacted a retail trade nationalization law, which took effect in 1964, preventing the Chinese from doing *tingi*, so the Chinese simply shifted from retail to the much bigger and more lucrative business of wholesale.

An aspect of the Doña Victorina Syndrome that is a major impediment to social progress is doubt in the Filipino capacity for achievement causing blind dependence on foreign goods, concepts, techniques, approaches, and expertise (incurring a considerable drain on our economy). We perceive our limitations rather than possibilities, impeding our ability to rise up to great challenges and surmount difficulties. Instead, we lower our standards so much that we are easily satisfied with good enough (“puwede na yan!”).

Filipinos have a curious habit of thinking that anything good and beautiful must be foreign, to the extent that our genuine achievements as a people are overlooked and belittled as copies, imitations, or derivations from foreign ideas. This is true of our ancient script, which many of our scholars think was derived from (rather than just influenced by) Sanskrit, no matter how farfetched. Our *bahay na bato* is thought of as Spanish even if it’s actually a development of the *bahay kubo*, with a design more suited to a tropical climate than any specimen of Spanish house. We hail national hero Jose Rizal as the Pride of the Malay Race rather than of the Filipino people, even if anthropologically speaking, there is no such thing as a Malay race.

This is also the case with our National Anthem, which a noted Hispanophile who became a National Artist for Literature by Presidential Decree, seriously believe is derived from the “Le Marsellaise of France,” Verdi’s “Triumphal March” from the opera *Aida*, and the “Marcha Real” of Spain. Similarly, many highly educated Filipinos still believe that “Philippines My Philippines,” translated in Filipino as “Pilipinas Kong Mahal” is an imitation of “Maryland My Maryland.” Both songs were actually inspired more by local traditions, such as religious processional music and the *kundiman*, than by any foreign model.

Celebration of Defeat

Another social quirk of the Filipinos is their tendency, according to anthropologist Dr. F. Landa Jocano, to neurotically wallow in their defeats. Why do we celebrate our defeats—like the Fall of Corregidor, Fall of Bataan, Fall of Tirad Pass, and the Death of Rizal—whereas other peoples celebrate only their triumphs? Rizal, and to certain extent Ninoy Aquino, have been repeatedly depicted in statues and photographs falling to the ground. Abraham Lincoln was also assassinated but nowhere do we find his body being depicted as he was falling down. Instead, we find him at the Lincoln Memorial seated with dignity, majestically presiding over the destiny of his country!

The Monstrous Cultural Divide (Ang Dambuhalang Hati— phrase courtesy of Zeus Salazar)

The communal consciousness of our traditional village cultures hardly advanced towards civic consciousness, and could not progress towards a national consciousness, because of the exploitative, elitist, and divisive nature of colonial rule, and later, of the fragmenting forces of industrial society.

The colonial powers inevitably encouraged and supported the emergence of an elite class with whom it could easily collaborate. A serious consequence of this is cultural fragmentation. In the Philippines, this created the monstrous cultural divide between the Western-educated ruling elite and the more or less culturally indigenous majority.

Without a common cultural identity there is no common action. A culturally fragmented and atomized mass is the worst conceivable source material for the development process. We have a soft state because of self-serving elite intervention and manipulation. As a result, the culture of the bureaucracy, including the police and the military, is more attuned to the needs and values of the elite than to the vast majority of Filipinos.

We have so much to learn from other countries when it comes to unity, especially setting aside their differences in times of crisis. “If there’s anything I envy about the Chinese, it’s their focus and ability to pull together as a people” (Cunanan 2001).

A people can only be united by the things they love, and divided by the things they hate. Generations of contempt for Filipinos by the colonizers have been imbibed by many Filipinos themselves, especially by the ruling elites, who were most exposed to Western rule. This is largely the source of their feeling of privilege, disregard of, and abusiveness towards Filipinos beneath their class and their notorious disrespect for the laws of the nation they themselves helped make. Many of them behave like spoiled brats, disobeying traffic rules, clogging the streets with their SUVs, and not paying taxes properly, as if they have a God-given right to do so. I once saw a rich couple’s car stop at the middle of a bridge in Quezon City just for the wife to come out and throw their refuse into the river.

Actually, as the research of SWS has indicated, it is this class who have the lowest regard for themselves as Filipinos, having been the most conditioned to idolize Western ways. Their low regard for Filipinos is in reality an expression of self-contempt.

Being able to see the good in the Filipino and becoming proud of Filipino identity is the cure for this social pathology of the elites. Decolonizing their minds is the only way for them to feel as one with the Filipino people and become better leaders of this country.

Anything positive about themselves always unites a people. Just witness how, in desperation to feel good about themselves, Filipinos become one with every Manny Pacquiao triumph, no matter if it is only in the not-so-civilized sport of boxing.

If are to become one nation, we have to begin deconstructing the very negative self-images that have been ingrained in us by centuries of colonial misrule and miseducation, especially among

the elites who are the power wielders and thus have the greatest responsibility to serve and be one with our people. We can never erect a viable nation if we continue to denigrate ourselves, even in the presence of foreigners.

Lack of pride in being Filipino results in lack of commitment to the nation and, consequently, a low level of achievement or even mediocrity—the “pwede na ‘yan” mentality. For the anthropologist Dr. F. Landa Jocano, pride, commitment, and excellence are inseparable.

Some of us do not even want to be identified as a Filipino at all, as in the case of a local pop singer during a singing tour in the US because Filipinos supposedly do not have a good image there. In many cases, Filipinos abroad would even pass themselves off as Hawaiian, Malay, or Indonesian because of a feeling of shame or embarrassment about being Filipino. How could we ever be one as a people with such a negative attitude, a strong repelling force that cannot but fragment the nation?

In contrast, Koreans are very proud of themselves. They always prefer their own products. Despite the Korean War, which flooded the countryside with American goods, the Koreans bought Korean goods whenever these were available because it seemed so natural for them to do so.

***Social Self-Images as Self-Fulfilling:
The Need to Develop a Strong Shared Vision***

It is the image a people create of themselves that is the psycho-cultural basis of their strengths and weaknesses, triumphs and failures. For a nation’s self-image tends to be self-fulfilling (Boulding 1956). If in our minds we think we will be defeated, we have already lost. If we think we are an inferior people, we will tend to lower our standards and be satisfied with good enough. Negative self-images, whether individual or collective, can cause untold social and cultural damage.

We have nothing to lose by creating and working for the most exalted and inspiring images of ourselves, especially because we are a highly relational, holistic, participatory and creative people with a strong nurturing and caring orientation.

Some Recommendations for Developing a Filipino and Humanistic Perspective

Heighten social consciousness and sense of responsibility to the nation

- A basic subject for all should be the history and cultural geography of the Filipino people, with emphasis on local strengths
- Teaching of highly technical courses, especially in the professional colleges, should be the most broadly situated and understood in a socio-cultural context
- Dwell on Filipino psychologies of *kapwa*, cooperation, and communal ways
- Core liberal arts subjects on what it means to be human and Filipino, sustainable living and understanding of the ecology, realization of creative potential, etc.
- Impart interdisciplinary perspectives that broaden intellectual horizon
- There should be more of *pasyal-aral* activities for cultural immersion and increase of face to face interactions toward social understanding among Filipinos

Promote people participation, local genius, and cultural diversity

- Identify local cultural genius and promote it nationally, based on the assumption that we are bound together by the good or the positive
- Affirm local cultures to enhance cultural energy and productivity. To achieve this, the educational system must be culturally rooted, appropriate to the conditions under which most Filipinos live, and relevant to their needs. Indigenous concepts and ideas, knowledge

systems and practices, forms of expression, and traditional arts and native languages that continue to exist today are the basis of a culturally-rooted education because they are in consonance with our psyche and our needs, containing wisdom tested through time. Local genius or indigenous strengths are the chief cultural and economic resource of a community.

The arts cannot be isolated from other social and cultural phenomena, and are the most lucid mirrors of social consciousness

- The arts do not exist in a vacuum. Every artistic statement is also a political one, even from the most seemingly innocuous decorative ones. There is no escape from social responsibility. Its either you are promoting art for the common people, for the elite, or for the nation as a whole. “For whom does the artist create?” can always be asked.
- Interdisciplinary, world arts, arts and ideas, comparative and other expansive approaches to art studies can be an antidote to specialistic innocence
- Participation in artistic creation is for all

Epilogue: Becoming Filipino through the Arts

The arts can provide us the most vivid images of social relations and cultural values. They are perhaps the most lucid symbols of a people’s quality of being or consciousness. Contemplating the arts is like reflecting on the psychic template of an artist or a cultural community.

An interesting manifestation of this is way the arts somehow reveal the core values of cultural communities like the Ilocano and the Visayan. Ilocano dances, music, architecture, and food show a preference for closed forms, centripetal movement, and conjunct progressions. These reflect a consistent tendency toward compactness in Ilokano behavior, language, and kinship ties.

Anything compact is more durable and longer lasting, an asset for survival. A premium on compactness, hence, seems to substantiate historian Teodoro Agoncillo's observation that the Ilocano has a talent for survival. In terms of attitude, such a tendency clearly suggests Ilocano restraint, thrift, and conservation of resources.

On the other hand, Visayan dances, music, architecture, and food characteristically display open forms, centrifugal movement, and disjunct progressions. Likewise Visayan behavior, language, kinship ties, and festivals display an exuberance and lavishness that are not the strength of the north but quite innate among the Visayans. This is because of the Visayan talent for celebration, according to Agoncillo. Just witness the popularity of street-dancing all over the region: Ati-atihan of Ibahay and Kalibo, Dinagyang of Iloilo, Sinulog of Cebu, Binirayan of Antique, Halaran of Capiz, and Masskara of Bacolod.

In Philippine culture, there is an underlying belief in the psychic unity of humanity. Individual existence is only apparent and relative. For we all exist within a cosmic matrix of being at the deepest center of which is a creative living principle or energetic process. All human beings—and to a lesser degree even animals, plants, and minerals—share this innermost sacred core: *ubod ng kalooban*. A paradox arises. In every person is a divine essence that seeks fulfillment in imaginative, creative endeavors. At the same time, the interdependence implied by a shared matrix of being seeks affirmation in a celebration of togetherness: *pakikipagkapuwa*. This social view of the world makes Filipinos harmony-seeking and unitive. It encourages a devotional attitude towards the highest ranking being in the cosmic social order for the reason that becoming one with this figure unites one with the whole world.

Hence, images of divine beings attract so much devotional fervor in all traditional Filipino towns and villages. A strongly shared devotion develops an expanded sense of self, an orientation that is communal rather than individualistic, intuitive and holistic rather than logical and analytic, and preferring interdependence and relationships over self-assertion and privacy.



Figure 1. A strongly shared devotion: the Penafrancia Festival of Naga (Photo by Felipe M. de Leon, Jr.)

Filipinos are a highly relational people. They are hardly alone and are quite happy being together—when they eat, sleep, work, travel, pray, create, or celebrate. Having a minimal sense of privacy, they are open, trusting, and easily accessible socially. Instead of a meticulous concern for safeguarding their private sphere, as in the case of Western peoples, many Filipinos actively seek a convergence of their lives with the lives of others. For example, a sharing of concern is seen in a common form of greeting such as, “Where are you going?” or “Where have you been?” which is none of our business in a Western setting. Sharing of tasks and responsibilities within the family and the community is a way of life. Thus, they become highly skilled and creative in interpersonal relations and social interaction. The capacity to integrate socially becomes one of the hallmarks of maturity.

Even in contemporary urban life, a communal orientation seems to persist as a core value. The culinary art of the *sinigang*, a prototypical Filipino food, continues to function as an effective instrument of togetherness because soup, vegetables, and meat or seafood are all mixed in one bowl, whereas in a European setting they will be placed in separate dishes. In architecture, the most visited building complex is the Filipino mall, which is a perfect embodiment of our highly relational orientation for it puts everything we need in one building or interconnected structures, making it easier for family members or friends to be together when they need to.

It is an indigenization of the department store to bring it closer to the typical Filipino store, the *sari-sari* store, which is a place for social gathering in a neighborhood because it sells everything from food to school supplies and toys to vices. When two other social power centers were added to the mall concept—the plaza complex and the park or *pasyalan*—its Filipinization was complete, ensuring its enduring popularity among Filipinos. The communal orientation is manifested in all aspects of traditional Filipino village life and, to a great extent, even in urban contexts.

The Communal Character of Philippine Traditional Cultures As Reflected In the Arts

Attributes of integral art

The traditional arts most sensitively reflect this communal orientation. Being the most lucid and expressive symbols of a culture's values, the arts are the most powerful instruments of inquiry into the essential character of a culture. It is undeniable that the following basic concepts and attributes of art and the conditions of artistic creation, expression, and experience could only have arisen in communal or integral Filipino cultural settings:

Integration of the arts with other values and functions. The arts are not valued for their own sakes. The aesthetic is not divorced from utilitarian, religious, moral, spiritual, social, and ecological

concerns. This ensures a balanced cultivation and development of human faculties—physical skills as well as inner potentials.

Unity of the arts. Consistent with the integration of faculties is the integration of artistic sensibilities. No one sensory mode and aesthetic intelligence is to be cultivated at the expense of the others. Although one may be given emphasis (literary, visual, spatial, musical, kineasthetic, gustatory, and olfactory), senses have to be harnessed and promoted together for maximum aesthetic well-being.

Art is integrated with everyday life and not regarded as a separate activity. It does not become a specialism (specialization that is narrow or at the expense of everything else, as defined by cultural critic Jacques Barzun). It is not for the specialist alone but for everyone. This implies that there will be no special venues or spaces for art because it virtually exists wherever and whenever there is human activity.

Equality of opportunity for participation in the artistic and creative process. There are relatively no superstars, for the source of power is not the individual, who is only a channel of divine inspiration or creativity. Thus, the author or creator is often anonymous. The artist is not separate from his audience or society; communal participation is the norm. Unlike in the West, there is no dichotomy of artist and society because art is not the specialist's concern alone. Everybody is expected to be an artist and participate in creative, expressive activities.

Flexibility of material, technical, and formal requirements. No rigid or fixed standards dictate the choice of materials, techniques, and forms for artistic creation and expression. For example, there is nothing like an arbitrary, fixed system of tuning as in the European equal-tempered system though definite principles underlie the tuning of musical instruments such as lutes, flutes, and gongs. Such flexibility ensures a wider more democratic participation of people in artistic activity.

Use of available resources for artistic creation. Art is not synonymous with big production costs because what matters is artistic excellence or the creative idea as well as making art part of everyday life. Thus, the least expensive mediums, like paper for kites, is regarded highly and not considered inferior to the costlier ones. And even the most practical objects like a coconut grater, container, knife handle, tree stump, mat, or hat can become a medium for the finest art.

Emphasis on the creative process rather than the finished product, endowing extemporaneous, improvisatory or spontaneous expressions of creativity a higher value than deliberate, often solitary, conceptualization and composition of forms. This valuing of process rather than product nurtures creative health and can inhibit mere idolizing of masterpieces and obsession with permanence

Simultaneity of conception and realization. Affirmation of the creative imagination through the tradition of instant mirroring or biofeedback, which, together with emphasis on the creative process, provides an excellent condition for communal participation.

The decline of integral art in urban settings

As Philippine society becomes more Westernized, particularly in the more urbanized and industrialized areas, these contexts are replaced by their exact opposite. Artistic creation becomes narrowly specialized, separate from everyday life, a glorification of the individual ego, and obsessed with commercial success. It becomes primarily a medium for technical virtuosity, sensory impacts, entertainment, and highly materialistic values. Art loses its magical, mythical, and mystical qualities—which are its links to nature, communal and shared human values, and the cosmic whole.



Figure 2. Alfonso, Cavite fire dancers: Is there a place for the magical, mythical, and mystical in contemporary art? (Photo by Felipe M. de Leon, Jr.)

Many Filipinos who have been educated in the Western way or conditioned by the massive propaganda for Western elite and mass cultures in our midst have distanced themselves from Filipino integral or communal art to the extent of denigrating it as inferior and primitive, if not ignoring it altogether as art. Such thinking has no basis in fact and is mainly the result of ignorance and lack of exposure to the excellence of our traditional arts.

The best representatives of our communal cultures—the so-called ethnic Filipinos in northern Luzon, Mindoro, Mindanao and Sulu, Palawan, lowland folk in Luzon and the Visayas, and traditional communities even in urban places like Manila and Cebu—have never succumbed to the error of dichotomizing art and life or serving art at the expense of the integrity of the community or the individual. Unlike in the West, our integral art has always been a way of making oneself whole and of harmonizing oneself with others, with nature and with life. The wholeness of this way speaks with a clear and unmistakable voice.

***Promoting the Local but Thinking National or Global:
Human Communities, not the State, are the Ultimate
Actors in the Development Process***

In mainstream development thinking, the state is always seen as the social agent or subject of the development process. From a human development perspective, human beings or small communities of human beings are the ultimate actors. Most states are, after all, artificial territorial constructions, usually the result of international wars or internal colonialism. The concept of a nation-state implies that the territorial boundaries of the state coincide with the boundaries of a culturally homogeneous nation. This is the exception rather than the rule in a world with about thousands of culturally diverse peoples but only about 190 states.

We have to encourage celebration of the unique cultural identities of cultural communities through various activities and expressive forms to provide for communication and sustainable development. Failure to do this may lead to violence, deviant behavior, depression, and suicide. Positive programs can encourage harmony and engagement in society. Underlying these programs is the attitude of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity.

A nation's development, then, can be viewed as proceeding along apparently divergent directions, one, towards a shared cultural universe at the national level and, two, towards the greatest possible intracultural diversity at the local level.

All Cultures Have Potential Importance for Human Life

The principle of cultural identity and diversity has to be applied to all kinds of cultural units, whether local communities, ethnolinguistic groups, nations, religions and civilizations. Every culture, however "unsophisticated" or "advanced" it may be in mechanistic technology, has unique strengths and virtues that make it potentially important for human life. There are, for example, many habitats where tribal people have been able to eke out a sustainable livelihood while the

modern way is ecologically devastating and unsustainable. If our criterion of cultural achievement is the degree of ability to survive even in the most inhospitable geographical conditions, surely the Eskimos and the Bedouins, among others, would come out on top.

The principle of cultural identity does not mean that cultures cannot be criticized. If all cultures on earth are to survive, most of them have to change some of their beliefs and practices in order to become compatible with one another. Cultural relativism has a limit as exemplified by our condemnation of such forms of behavior as exploitation, oppression, torture, terrorism, racism, and genocide.

Based on the above assumptions and statement of principles, it behooves us to formulate a national action plan, if not a national policy, for culture in development. We need a national advocacy to enhance investment in cultural resources as a key factor in development strategy. We have to integrate cultural and economic planning and enable the government to adopt a cultural perspective in development planning. There has to be an effective system for financing the cultural elements and dimensions of social life not only for economic advancement but as a foundation of social cohesion, without which social well-being is unattainable.

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Appendix A

The affirmation and strengthening of a society's cultural base for the purpose of development involves the following eight factors, which we may call the Key Factors for Culture in Development Planning:

1. Development of a positive, constructive social self-image and articulation of a nationally acceptable vision for Philippine society
2. Cultural Sharing, Cooperation and Unity
3. Cultural Empowerment, Justice and Equality
4. Cultural Diversity and Creativity
5. Cultural Awareness and Literacy
6. Cultural Tolerance and Sensitivity
7. Institutionalization of Cultural Principles in the Bureaucracy and other social institutions
8. Preservation, Protection, and Promotion of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

Appendix B

We also need to develop a framework for properly and adequately monitoring and evaluating the progress of a society's cultural base. That is, we need to formulate indicators of cultural growth within

a development matrix if we are to know whether we are moving forward or not. The following indicators are suggested:

1. Diversity and multiplicity of social forms
The more space and opportunities of social co-existence (organizational forms) are offered to a community, the more forms and participation possibilities will be generated, enlarging the space for social protagonists and for the accumulation of social capital (stock and resource), which is the pillar of development support. And the accumulation of social stock in any community is decisive, not only to face old problems, but mainly to give faster and more effective answers to new challenges of any nature. Participation should be actual and active rather than vicarious and passive.
2. Forms of activity/rituals (technological, scientific, medical, artistic, religious, academic-scholarly, psychological, economic, political, etc.)
3. Systems or forms of decision-making (juridical, legislature, executive, academic, ecclesiastic, corporate bodies; village councils, panels of experts, etc.)
4. Mode of production of goods and services
5. Character of the physical environment and the ecology
6. Myths and history
7. Worldview, vision of the future

Appendix C

A Filipino Perspective

- Build on our strengths
 - Need for positive self-image
 - Social self-images are self-fulfilling
 - Root cause of Philippine under- development: Filipino tendency towards self bashing, esp. among the Westernized elite, preventing us from tapping our greatest asset for sustainable development - our cultural strengths and resources.
 - Curse of smallness
 - Celebration of defeat
 - Doña Victorina Syndrome

- Work for the good of the nation as a whole: Act locally, think nationally or act locally, think globally
- Pride, commitment, excellence

Appendix D

Promoting Filipino Cultural Identity

Cultural identity as the basis of economic competitiveness:

Cultural identity has its source in:

- Originality (first of its kind)
- Indigenusness (original or native to a place)
- Authenticity (purity, genuineness)
- Uniqueness (the only one of its kind)
- Historicity (connection to past significant or momentous events)
- Magnitude (superlative degree or extent, quantitatively measured)
- Excellence or Greatness (in artistic, intellectual, scientific, humanistic, or technical quality)

Anywhere in the world people prefer the distinctive, one with character, not anything bland and featureless