

The Language of Indigeneity in Filipino Philosophies (First of Two Parts)

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Abstract: This paper reconstructs the language of Indigeneity in the discourses of Filipino Philosophies. It starts with an initial tracing of the diachronic presence of the concept of Indigeneity in the Philippines before it was employed as a qualitative modifier for doing philosophy. Following this is an exposition of the equation of Indigeneity to the inception of the idea of Filipino Philosophy thereby making the nationalist context of Filipinization coterminous with the early beginnings of Indigenous philosophizing. The next part elaborates the post-nationalist employment of the language of Indigeneity as exemplified by various works unified by the pluralist subtext of Indigenous philosophies in the peripheries. The final part first deploys the concept of indeterminacy as the precondition for both the nationalist and post-nationalist employment of the language of Indigeneity then redescribes Indigenous philosophizing as a critical enterprise of doing philosophy in its *particularity* understood in a recognitive framework.

Keywords: indeterminacy, Filipino Philosophies, recognition, (Critical) Indigenous philosophizing

This paper explores the employment of “indigeneity” as a modification of philosophizing found among the multitude of works that fall under, or could be associated with, the now established research area of “Filipino Philosophy.” While the terms “indigenous,” or its cognates “grassroot,” “native,” or the Filipino term “*katutubo*,” are ubiquitous in the archive, the nuances and teleological ramifications of its employment in various conceptualizations remain unexamined. This work attempts to render this activity self-reflexive and provide an interpretive framework for its performance.

The notion of Indigeneity is given a thorough disclosure in the first part by tracing the diachronic presence of the experience, idea, and various conceptualizations of Indigeneity in the Philippines. Through a cursory look at the history of its emergence in texts and Philippine discourses, an initial substantiation of the idiomatic notion of the “language of Indigeneity” is put in place. The established presence of Indigeneity in the people’s experience and intellectual history is then identified as an already latent normative resource for the emergence of various works that utilized it as a modifier for doing philosophy.

The second part bridges the continuity of the language of Indigeneity to the domain of philosophy. It commences with a claim that the self-ascription of Indigeneity in the literature is coterminous with the inception of “the idea of Filipino Philosophy.”¹ The term “Filipino Philosophy” is used here to signify its earliest association with the language of Indigeneity as a field of ideational elaboration. However, this paper does not preclude the other iterations of the term, for the inception itself marked the beginning of the production of different modalities which could now be signified as “Filipino Philosophies” in the present. The plural form in the paper’s title intends to show precisely that there is no single mode in which “the idea of Filipino Philosophy” has been posited, framed, conceived, or contended with. Indigenization in this early phase was framed from the viewpoint of nationalism² where “Filipino Philosophy” was envisaged as a “premise or promise of an identity.”³

Simultaneous with the various critiques of this project of Filipinization is an employment of the language of Indigeneity that is off

¹ With this quote, I refer to an assumption from which “Filipino Philosophy” was first posited that then gave birth to the issue of its epistemic legitimacy (implied in various questions such as “Is there a Filipino Philosophy?” and “What is Filipino Philosophy?”), heralding the beginning of it as a discursive site for what has now become a multiplicity of thematizations.

² In a historico-political context, the Filipinization of the colonial State was implemented “with the Philippine Autonomy Act, commonly known as the Jones Law, which ‘placed in the hands of the people of the Philippines as large a control of their domestic affairs as can be given them.’” Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Ambrosio, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc., 2005), 140. The Filipino philosophers in the post-war period would discourse Indigeneity in the context of an already established nation although Filipino nationalism started way back in the late nineteenth century for as Hornedo charts, “the time span of the struggle to affirm nationhood covered three regimes: the close of the Spanish era, the American era including the commonwealth, and the Japanese occupation.” Florentino Hornedo, “The Changing Core Themes of Filipino Nationalism and Their Literary Expression,” in *Unitas*, 62:4 (December 1989), 65.

³ I appropriate into a nationalist discourse this description (of “*Bikol*”) by Lagdameo in his introduction to the first issue of *Bikol Studies* where he tenders solidarity among, and with respect to, the varied standpoints of its authors in their various articles. See Federico Jose T. Lagdameo, “Constructing and Contesting What is ‘*Bikol*,’” in *Bikol Studies Perspectives & Advocacies*, 1:1 (2014), 1–4.

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tangent from nationalism and grounded on the different contexts of various Philippine ethnolinguistic and cultural groups. The third part presents this utilization of the concept among the Indigenous (Filipino) philosophies in the peripheries.⁴ The term periphery signifies both the geographical distance from the centers where Filipino Philosophy has taken mainstream, and the coverage of marginal themes, issues, subjects, and experiences of their subjects thematized. The respective (regional) assertions in the act of philosophizing among the authors in this part show a multiplicity of identities that resist singularization and homogenization. In this sense, Indigenous (Filipino) philosophies are described at the same time as a post-national employment of the language of Indigeneity. Indigeneity came to be understood more in reference to localities, the use of local languages, diverse local concepts, issues, and experiences that grant materiality⁵ to the authors' works. It will be demonstrated that instead of ethnocentrism—which is often expected from such initiatives of ethnic origination—a translocation of the philosophical enterprise is performed which mobilizes even further the critical potential immanent in the act philosophizing itself.

The final part of the paper introduces the element of indeterminacy as the primary condition for the deployment of the language of Indigeneity in philosophy. The fundamental criterion of self-identification in the claim for Indigeneity is activated in the agentic owning of the ability to philosophize as a response to the experienced indeterminacy of philosophical activity. From this perspective the normative beginnings of Indigenization as Filipinization could then be read as a critical response to the experience of extended colonialism in philosophy. Agency is prefigured as grounding either the premise or promise of an identity steered towards nationalism—the historical form of social and political resistance of the time which has likewise piloted the performance of philosophizing. The post-national employment of Indigeneity, is similarly a form of self-determination and a coping with indeterminacy but this time at a more local level. The relocation of the philosophical activity to diverse environments could be read furthermore as a critical response to the monolithic project of nationalism which has often rendered the invisibility of those in the peripheries.

⁴ “Filipino” is enclosed in parenthesis to signify the conventional turn of its signification which means that while the works included herein deflect from a nationalist project they could still be dragged and labeled as “Filipino” in the context of conventional qualifications such as geographical or sociopolitical affiliations either of its authors or of the thematic subjects of their work.

⁵ I use the term “material” in the same sense as Paolo Bolaños’s employment to unify the social with its various concerns such as the cultural, moral, and political. See Paolo Bolaños, “What is Critical Theory: Max Horkheimer and the Makings of the Frankfurt School Tradition,” in *Mabini Review*, 2:1 (2013).

The movement of these various employments of the language of Indigeneity has shown the activation of the critical potential of philosophy in its agentive and recognitive re-appraisal. The particularity that Indigenization grants to philosophizing brings home the philosophical enterprise to the material conditions of human experience from where thinking should be fundamentally grounded. In the archipelagic context of the country where material concerns are as diverse as its people (critical) Indigenous philosophizing remains to be fully mobilized in terms of its normative thrust and value.

Indigeneity as a Diachronic Concept

A cursory look into the extant texts and discourses in Philippine studies reveals that the idea and meaning of “indigeneity” has a diachronic presence in the Philippines. This part initially traces its textual emergence and semantic shifts which could provide the bridge to a better understanding of the employment of Indigeneity in the discourses of philosophy. To begin with, the English term “indigenous”

derives from the late Latin ‘indigenus’ and ‘indigena’ (native) and from the Old Latin ‘indu’ that is derived from the archaic ‘endo’ (a cognate of the Greek ‘endo’), meaning ‘in, within’ and the Latin ‘gignere’ meaning ‘to beget’, from the root ‘gene’ meaning ‘to produce, give birth, beget.’ ‘Indigena’ in Latin means ‘native’ used of plants, animals, peoples who come from a particular region. Its first known use was in 1640s when it was applied to plants and cultures in the New World. The general sense of the term applied to that produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment; also sometimes used as a synonym for ‘native,’ ‘innate,’ ‘aborigine,’ ‘endemic,’ and ‘inborn.’⁶

“*Katutubo*” is the nearest equivalent Filipino term for “indigenous.” In the old Tagalog dictionary of Juan de Noceda and Pedro Sanlucar, two entries for the term *catotobo* are encoded: the first signifies age *de una edad*, “of the same age” for *magcatotobo* and the other is *ángel de guardia* or “gurdian

⁶ Michael A. Peters and Carl T. Mika, “Aborigine, Indian, Indigenous or First Nations?,” in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 49:13 (2017), 1229.

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angel”⁷ which, obviously, is an outsider’s translation of the native term *badhalang catotobo*. The latter finds explanation from William Henry Scott’s account on the religion of Luzon in the sixteenth century where he writes that each person “had an individual protecting spirit, a kind of guardian angel, called *katutubo* or *bathalang katutubo*”⁸ that guides a person’s soul or *kaluluwa* to keep it from wandering off or being lured to some strange place believed to cause fatal illnesses.⁹ The first meaning can be found again among the entries for another separate term which we could surmise as its root word—“*tubo*”—identified by Noceda and Sanlucar with living entities “born” or “growing” such as plants and animals. Similar meanings are indicated in other dictionaries like that of Marcos de Lisboa’s oldest Bikol dictionary where “*tubo*” as “*tinutuboan*” refers further to the place where a person or something grows,¹⁰ and that of Alonso de Mentrída’s evidently colonial definition in his Bisayan dictionary where it refers to something that grows, “persons, things, animals, trees, and plants *created by God*”¹¹—obviously infusing the idea of creation in the definition. The term “*katutubo*” today is still tied to the place where one is born or the origin of something but now refers as well to ethnicity. It can also denote the quality of origination of a person, of one’s race, or of a thing.¹²

For the cultural historian Raymond Williams, while the term *native* can stand more positively in a “social and political sense, as in *native land, native country, ... or person*,”¹³ it took on a negative sense as generally referring to subjugated people or people “born in bondage.” This disparaging use of *native* was used “to describe the inferior inhabitants of a place subjected to alien political power or conquest, or even of a place visited and observed from some supposedly superior standpoint.”¹⁴ The term “indigenous” thus “has served both as a euphemism and as a more neutral term”¹⁵ for “*native*” in this pejorative sense.

⁷ Juan de Noceda and Pedro de Sanlucar, *Vocabulario de la lengua tagala* (Manila: Impr. De Ramirez y Girauder, 1860).

⁸ William Henry Scott, *Barangay Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), 234.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Marcos Lisboa, *Vocabulario De La Lengua Bicol* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico Del Colegio De Santo Tomas, 1865), 409.

¹¹ Alonso de Mentrída, *Diccionario de la lengua Bisaya Hiligueina y Haraya de la Isla de Panay* (Manila: Imp. De D. Manuel y de D. Felis S. Dayot, 1841), 403.

¹² Virgilio AS. Almario (Ed.), *Diksiyonaryong Adarna* (Filipinas: Adarna House Inc., 2015), 441.

¹³ Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 161.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 162

The negative sense of being native is further illuminated in relation to “culture” which is “one of the two or three most complicated words in English language”¹⁶ because of its long history and various nuances. The early meanings of culture from its Latin origin are interestingly parallel to the two meanings of *katutubo*: *cultura* which developed through *colonus* or “inhabit” and the “tending of natural growth” that still imply intimacy with the land signified by *tubo*, whereas *colere* or “honor with worship” is not so difficult to associate with the precolonial native belief in their *bathalang katutubo*. *Colonus* is also where the word “colony” is derived; hence, in the western context as Robert Young astutely remarks, “colonization rests at the heart of culture, or culture always involves a form of colonization, even in relation to its conventional meaning as the tilling of the soil.”¹⁷ The significance of the cultivation of land, however, was extended more metaphorically to the process of human development—the cultivation of the human mind where culture becomes more identified with “civilization,” refinement, and social class. The pejorative meaning of “native” surfaces as a characterization of subjugated peoples yet to be civilized usually ascribed to colonial subjects. This would be the background significance of Indigeneity in the advent of nationalism in the Philippines.

In the late nineteenth-century Philippine revolution,¹⁸ the self-ascription of Indigeneity or of being *Katutubo* became entwined with colonial resistance.¹⁹ Independence from Spain was conceived tantamount to the assertion of a repressed identity and autonomy deprived of the natives. This counter definition of “native,” as traced by Jovito Cariño, figures in Jose Rizal’s annotation of Fray Antonio de Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinias* where Rizal posited a “nationalist counternarrative”²⁰ of history. “In Rizal’s fictive and romantic history, the Philippines had an authentic Malayan and

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁷ Robert F.C. Young, *Colonial Desire Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 29.

¹⁸ “The central theme of national consciousness during the period of 1774 to 1892 was Filipino dignity which required of Spain recognition and respect.” Hornedo, “Changing Core Themes of Filipino Nationalism,” 64.

¹⁹ In his “Indigenous Races of the Philippines,” Ferdinand Blumentritt was still employing the neutral significance of *indigena* in his description of individual peoples. Nonetheless, the thinking of race in this period was already mired with dreams of independence. This is evident for example in Isabelo de los Reyes’s “musing” of “the possibility of adopting a broader sense of the word ‘Tagalog’” that “would transcend linguistic differences” but could “delineate racial ones” which the term “Filipino” is unable to mark. See Megan C. Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Illustrados* (Mandaluyong: Anvil Publishing, 2016), 88–89.

²⁰ Cariño borrows this term from Resil Mojares to expound Rizal’s “counter definition of the term *native*” as a discursive exercise of subverting the European colonial representation of the natives. Jovito Cariño, *Muni: Paglalayag sa Pamimilosopiyang Filipino* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2018), 153.

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Asian ancestry, an established culture and a pre-colonial nationality.”²¹ This nationalist legacy of Rizal, though more fictive than historical, “proved to be dominantly influential among scholars across generations and research disciplines.”²² According to Rainier Ibane, the same identification of Indigeneity with nationhood was imagined by revolutionaries like Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto in their ideological construction of *Katagalugan* as an encompassing identity of even the non-Tagalog speakers; *Tagalog*—the vernacular—was inscribed with an identity status covering all the natives in the islands.²³ “The term *katagalugan* offered a more indigenous sense of identity and righteously depicted their anti-colonial posture in contradistinction to the reformist term ‘Filipino’ which had traces of their vassal status under the Spanish regime.”²⁴ This move by the leaders of the revolution, however, was not unproblematic or uncontested as it was met with suspicion by non-Tagalog speakers “who viewed the revolution as an attempt of the Tagalogs to dominate the rest of the country.”²⁵

The current attachment of Indigeneity to ethnicity in the Philippines as ascribed to populations is affixed to territoriality and the “historical continuity”²⁶ that indigenes are acknowledged to have. This affinity with the land is also treated as a basis for defining the rights of Indigenous peoples.²⁷ The referential Indigenous subject however, as Melisa Casumbal-Salazar observes, is not singularly exclusive if a careful review is given to the “historically shifting lexicon of Philippine indigeneity”²⁸ from the colonial Philippines up to the present.

Historically, peoples now officially recognized as indigenous in the Philippines were popularly, academically, and juridically designated as *infielos* (infidels), *tribus independientes* (independent tribes), non-Christian tribes, wild tribes, headhunters, highlanders, cultural minorities, cultural communities, indigenous

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 154.

²³ Rainier A. Ibane, “Grafting Philosophy to the Tagalog Prefix *Ka*,” in *Kritika Kultura*, 12 (2009), 30–32.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Noel G. Ramiscal, “Indigenous Philosophy and the Quest for Indigenous Self-determination,” in *Philosophia*, 14:2 (2013), 217.

²⁷ See Republic Act No. 8371, Indigenous People’s Rights Act, Chapter II, Section 3h, <<http://www.Gov.ph/1997/10/29/republic-act-no-8371>>.

²⁸ Melisa S.L. Casumbal-Salazar, “The Indeterminacy of the Philippine Indigenous Subject: Indigeneity, Temporality, and Cultural Governance,” in *Amerasia Journal*, 41:1 (2015), 78.

ethnic communities, and indigenous cultural communities.²⁹

Salazar unveils that this technical specification of the Indigenous is an expedient instrument for cultural governance that grants authentication of the nation in a historical and traditional milieu. This is precisely the case of the function played by the National Living Treasure Award given to “indigenous” living individuals deemed to authenticate the nation with historical continuity, or pre-colonial roots that can never be fully colonized, assimilated, or modernized, hence, should be “preserved.”

Some conceptualizations of Indigeneity seek to liberate it from the narrow confines of ethnicity and attach it to the quality of a human condition as in the case of Ibane who advocates extending the ascription of being *Katutubo* beyond one’s kin towards a more planetary significance³⁰ and Karl Gaspar, a scholar deeply immersed with the *Lumads* in the south who, in his most recent book, implies Indigeneity as a part of the human constitution retrievable in history.³¹ In the case of philosophizing in the Philippines, Indigeneity will be elaborated in the next part as the ground where the very idea of Filipino Philosophy itself germinated. From the preceding descriptions, Indigeneity was already a normative resource for the various works that emerged and utilized it as a qualifier for their philosophical pursuits.

Indigenization as Filipinization of Philosophy

Philosophizing in the Philippines first assumed the modification of Indigeneity in the postulation of the “idea of Filipino philosophy.”³² Alfredo Co captures this well in his statement that “the idea of Filipino philosophy comes with the idea of a Filipino.”³³ Higher education is the site of the emergence of this idea, in the same way that the origins of nationalism could

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁰ Ibane, “Grafting Philosophy to the Tagalog Prefix *Ka*,” 53–54.

³¹ Karl Gaspar, *Handumanan: Digging for the Indigenous Wellspring* (Quezon City: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., 2021).

³² This could be referred to as the historical moment when “Filipino Philosophy” was “reified” as a normative concept that impelled the direction of a discourse, as an illusion, that is assumed however as a necessity in order for it to flourish. See Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland, “Five Assumptions on the Illusion ‘Filipino Philosophy’ (A Prelude to a Cultural Critique),” in *Suri*, 9:1 (2021), 76–89.

³³ Alfredo Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines: Fifty Years Ago and Fifty Years from Now,” *Doing Philosophy in the Philippines and Other Essays: Across the Philosophical Silk Road A Festschrift in Honor of Alfredo P. Co, Vol. VI* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2009), 58.

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be traced in its structure.³⁴ Philosophy in the Philippines was “coterminous with the beginning of the country”³⁵ as it was brought by the Spanish colonizers and became part of academic instruction in the early institutions³⁶ of higher learning in the colony. Scholasticism became the sole mode of doing philosophy which had a long-extended presence way after Spanish colonialism ended in the Philippines. Romualdo Abulad plots this period as the colonial phase of Filipino Philosophy.³⁷ The dominance of Scholasticism was only challenged in the 1950s³⁸ after the exposure to other modes of philosophizing of the post-war Filipino scholars who went abroad for their graduate studies. This exposure to difference in a way germinated the idea of Indigenization in so far as it led to the consciousness of identity in terms of doing philosophy. As Co rightly explains again, “the search for indigenous thought came with the view to discover a Filipino philosophy.”³⁹ In other words, Indigenization in this context is tantamount to the Filipinization⁴⁰ of philosophy. Abulad supports this in his articulation of the “Indigenous Phase” with a consciousness of the requirements of *originative thinking* in doing philosophy by Filipinos or by the “we” of the “imagined political community.”⁴¹

Emerita Quito who influenced a generation of Filipino philosophers in this period introduced the logical premise that facilitated the inference of a “philosophy in the Philippine culture”⁴² by positing philosophy as “the collective mind of a people”⁴³ interacting with reality. This would constitute the “popular or grassroot level”⁴⁴ of philosophy which she identified with “Filipino Indigenous philosophy” and whose task it is for Filipinos to articulate. “This indigenous philosophy,” Quito says, “may be said to be an *élan* or a spirit that permeates the Filipino as *Filipino* and without which he feels a certain malaise.”⁴⁵ Indigeneity, thus, is evidently framed by Quito in

³⁴ See John N. Schumacher, S.J., “The Philippine Higher Education and the Origins of Nationalism,” in *Philippine Studies*, 23:1–2 (1975), 53–65.

³⁵ Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines,” 28.

³⁶ Co provides a list of the institutions of learning that offered philosophy subjects.

³⁷ See Romualdo Abulad, “Contemporary Filipino Philosophy,” in *Karunungan*, 1 (1988).

³⁸ Co brackets 1950–1985 as the period of New Thought and Filipino Philosophical Scholarship. Co, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines,” 54.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴⁰ This has to be historically plotted as the Filipinization movement.

⁴¹ This is Benedict Anderson’s definition of the nation. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

⁴² Emerita S. Quito, *The State of Philosophy in the Philippines* (Manila: De La Salle University, 1983), 10.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Quito writes that philosophy in the Philippines can be discussed in two different levels: the grassroots and the academic level. *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 12. Italics mine.

the nationalist⁴⁶ context. Writing *The State of Philosophy in the Philippines* in 1983, Quito already distinguished two groups involved in research on Filipino Philosophy: the first, where she enlists herself foremost, emphasizes language in the dissemination of philosophy, while the second, with Mercado's name on top of the list, is focused on content articulation of seminal Filipino Philosophy in the English language.⁴⁷ In charting its future at the national level, Quito vouchsafed the Filipinization of philosophy especially in the employment of the Filipino language and seemingly suggests the synthesis of academic and grassroots philosophy⁴⁸ that she has earlier distinguished.⁴⁹ Philosophy at the grassroots level is an affirmation of a latent philosophy in the collective mind of the people waiting for articulation and formalization. Although Quito anticipates that "the benefits of this Filipinization will be felt only after a long time,"⁵⁰ a formal Filipino Indigenous philosophy is optimistically *promised*⁵¹ as a futural condition *premised*⁵² on normative resources that could be allowed to surface from collective experience. One can gain this same insight in Ramon Reyes's description of "Filipino thought" as a historical event undergoing the stages of development from vital thought to reflexive thought. Like Quito, Reyes alludes to the Filipino as a people, as a "we," sharing distinctive traits drawn from normative descriptions by local social scientists.⁵³

This appears to be the running mind frame among Filipino scholars who engage/d directly or work in proximity with the "idea of Filipino

⁴⁶ This nationalist motivation of Quito has been cited in previous studies. See for instance, Emmanuel de Leon, "Emerita S. Quito (1929-): Ang Ugat ng Isang Panibagong Direksyon ng Pamimilosopiya sa Pilipinas," in *Malay*, 29:2 (2017) and Leslie Anne L. Liwanag, "Ang Pilosopiya ni Emerita S. Quito," in *Kritike*, 10:1 (June 2016), 59.

⁴⁷ Quito, *State of Philosophy in the Philippines*, 41-43.

⁴⁸ "This collective mind, this general attitude toward life, this concerted effort to acquire wisdom which is manifest on the popular or grassroots level constitutes the folk spirit (*Volksgeist*) of the Filipino and it should (or will) eventually emerge as a formalized philosophy on the academic level. This philosophy is, however, still in the process of formalization." Quito, *State of Philosophy in the Philippines*, 12.

⁴⁹ A project that she still held and even more intensified after three decades in her emphasis on the value of translating philosophical texts in the Filipino language. See Emerita S. Quito, "Ang Kaugnayan ng Wikang Pambansa at Edukasyon," in *Malay*, 22:1 (2009), 21-30.

⁵⁰ Quito, *State of Philosophy in the Philippines*, 57.

⁵¹ As a task of identity articulation, "an identity in the process of construction and elaboration." Lagdameo, "Constructing and Contesting What is 'Bikol,'" 1-2. For Quito, this would be premised on the "attitudes and values [that] constitute the hidden springs of the Filipino Mind." Quito, *State of Philosophy in the Philippines*, 12.

⁵² Based on "an assemblage of multiple and diverse perspectives based on historically constituted and precariously fragile ipseities through which worlds of meaning unfold." Lagdameo, "Constructing and Contesting What is 'Bikol,'" 1.

⁵³ Ramos C. Reyes, "Sources of Filipino Thought," in *Philippine Studies*, 21:4 (1973), 429-437.

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Philosophy.” Leonardo Mercado took this as his lifetime project using the methods of metalinguistic analysis and phenomenology of behavior.⁵⁴ Floretino Timbreza combined the path of writing in the Filipino language and drawing from the sources of vital thought.⁵⁵ Feorillo Demeterio reports two modes of Indigenization in Timbreza: exogenous Indigenization which “refers to the use of Western and foreign concepts in order to explicate native realities” and endogenous Indigenization which “meant the use of native concepts in order to explicate Western or foreign realities.”⁵⁶ In the case of Rolando Gripaldo the “indigenous” is delimited to the anthropological or cultural approaches which consist in “deriving the collective *Weltanschauung* as an expression of the collective *Volkgeist*”⁵⁷ in contrast to the other two approaches, the traditional and the constitutional. Gripaldo’s adherence to the constitutional approach appears as a practical way for him to organize and unify all the works he compiled in his bibliographical research which refuses singularity in methodology. The shift from the thematic content to the nationality of authors renders a univocal classification of all the works classified as Filipino Philosophy. What Gripaldo performs is essentially a more technical—because legal—mode of defining the contours of the idea of Filipino Philosophy in the person of the author. In other words, an agentive shift in defining Philosophy as Filipino. Gripaldo is one of the most vocal proponents of the Indigenization of philosophy in the context of Filipinization. It is in this merit that Tomas Rosario, in his “Foreword” of Gripaldo’s book could write that “Filipino scholars and researchers in the field of philosophy can seriously shift their interest from a Western outlook of philosophy to an *indigenous* philosophical world-view”⁵⁸—the *Indigenous* understood by Rosario back to the “we” as nation.

Writing in the vernacular became an instrument of the Filipinization of philosophy whether vocally or performatively. Aside from Quito and Timbreza who wrote book length works on Filipino Philosophy, Leonardo de

⁵⁴ Leonardo Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy* (Tacloban: Divine Word Seminary, 1974).

⁵⁵ One among his numerous works is *Sariling Wika at Pilosopiyang Filipino* (Quezon City: C & E Publishing, 2008).

⁵⁶ Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, “Status of and Directions for ‘Filipino Philosophy’ in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Griplado, and Co,” in *Philosophia*, 14:2 (2013), 191.

⁵⁷ Rolando M. Gripaldo, *Filipino Philosophy: A Critical Bibliography, 1774–1997*, 2nd ed. (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2001), 4.

⁵⁸ Tomas Rosario Jr., “Foreword,” in *Filipino Philosophy: A Critical Bibliography, 1774–1997*, 2nd ed., by Rolando M. Gripaldo (Manila: De La Salle University Press, Inc., 2001), iii. Emphasis mine.

Castro⁵⁹ and Albert Alejo⁶⁰ also wrote books on ethics and philosophical anthropology respectively in the Filipino language which pulls them along the gravity of this path. Meanwhile even when the esteemed Roque Ferriols denied allegiance to the project of building Filipino Philosophy he did not think of its impossibility: “No one can create a Filipino or anything else philosophy,” he says, “*except by accident.*”⁶¹ Yet in his preface of the same journal issue where Reyes’s article was published, Ferriols has given the most pronounced philosophical articulation of the idea of Indigeneity in his terrestrial metaphor of “rootedness.” Rootedness in the human mind manifests as being:

... rooted in the insecurities and creativities of the human brain. Not a brain floating in the hot air of discussion groups, but constantly irrigated by a beating heart in a warm body. Which body is rooted to. Rootedness in the—for want of a real name—culture, I refer to the heartening-in-its-richness, -confusion, -potential, -frustration, -creative milieu in which each Filipino finds himself soaking at birth. Which he makes grow. Against which he defends himself. Within which he leaps. Under which he sleeps and dies. Which he will cherish in his blood at the resurrection.⁶²

What else was Ferriols’s employment of his Sampalokese Tagalog in his works but a gesture of this rootedness in which a Filipino *is soaked at birth*?

The “idea of Filipino Philosophy” however was also conceived apart from the employment of the Filipino language. This would be the case of some scholars in the Visayas and Mindanao who welcome the “idea” but were not so hospitable with the employment of the Filipino language as medium of philosophizing. Enshrined in the objectives of PHAVISMINDA, the oldest and largest organization of Visayan and Mindanaoan philosophers is “to philosophize within the context of the realities of the Philippines, especially the Visayas and Mindanao.”⁶³ Among vocal supporters of the

⁵⁹ Leonardo D. De Castro, *Etika at Pilosopiya sa Kontekstong Pilipino* (Diliman Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1995).

⁶⁰ Albert Alejo, *Tao Po! Tuloy! Isang Landas ng Pagunawa sa Loob ng Tao* (Quezon City: Office of the Research and Publications Ateneo de Manila University, 1990).

⁶¹ Roque J. Ferriols, S.J., “A Memoir of Six Years,” in *Philippine Studies*, 22:3–4 (1974), 339. Italics mine.

⁶² Roque J. Ferriols, S.J., “Editor’s Reface,” in *Philippine Studies*, 21:4 (1973), 407.

⁶³ Jan Gresil S. Kahambing and Feorillo Petronillo A. Demeterio, “Doing Philosophy in Central and Southern Philippines: Interviews with PHAVISMINDA Presidents Velez, Gallamaso, and Suazo,” in *PHAVISMINDA Journal*, 16 & 17 (May 2018), 185.

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“idea” traceable in their works are Quintin Terrenal, Amosa Velez, Eduardo Babor, and Raymundo Pavo. The conceptualization of Filipino Philosophy by these thinkers who relocate the philosophical enterprise instead into “Philippine realities” is no less the affirmation of a shared experience of a “we” which would be the material for philosophical reflection. Thus, the Indigenization in the context of the “we” of the imagined political community was a shared ground in the localization of the philosophical enterprise.

Furthermore, Indigeneity was likewise the ground from which “Filipino Philosophy” even flourished into a diversity of modalities mobilized by the criticisms hurled at the performance of Indigenization itself. One kind of criticism is that which has long been articulated by Ferriols’s metaphor of “mirroring” that is associated with the *intention* of developing a Filipino Philosophy for this would be a departure from the *elan* of philosophy in the experience itself. But not only did Ferriols not conceive of the impossibility of Filipino Philosophy, he also did not, or perhaps *could not*, depart from the identitarian location of his own experience from which the act of philosophizing itself will show “all the tension, combat, exoticness, rootedness of who he is begin to show their inner truth.”⁶⁴ Once more, with Ferriols, philosophizing and the use of one’s own language is *promised* as the site of the emergence not only of the “Pilipino mode” of “being alive,” but also of the modes of “Ilocano, Bisayan, Bikol, atbp.”⁶⁵ In plain words, Ferriols seems to say that Filipino Philosophy is something one cannot ascribe to one’s work, but for others and the future to claim.

Another kind of criticism is one which problematizes the legitimacy of “Filipino” as a semantic modifier of philosophy and the methodological manner of proceeding. Scholars who advance their criticisms along this thread do not in fact totally reject “the idea of Filipino philosophy” but scrutinize instead a *manner* of framing the “idea.” Abulad and Co share this mode of critique. Abulad follows Quito’s pedagogical technique⁶⁶ of allowing a differential approach in doing philosophy. Without discrediting the anthropological approach employed by Mercado and Timbreza, Abulad warns of a “dogmatic clinging to a particular philosophy” implied in such methods seeking to establish substantiality to Filipino Philosophy. He points out as well the futility of insisting on an *original* mental state from which to

⁶⁴ Ferriols, “A Memoir of Six Years,” 339.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 341. Cortez writes an elaborate and critical reading of Ferriols’s employment of the Pilipino language where he unveils that this linguistic turn in fact is a political act and a critique of colonial discourse and elitism. Franz Giuseppe F. Cortez, “The Linguistic Turn as a Political Act: Another Look at the Thoughts of Roque Ferriols,” in *Kritike*, 8:1 (June 2014), 45–77.

⁶⁶ As de Leon’s faithful exposition of Quito’s legacy states, the expository and openness to difference were Quito’s distinctive style in teaching and doing philosophy which brought a new direction for philosophy in the Philippines. De Leon, “Emerita S. Quito (1929–).”

base an Indigenous thinking amidst difference.⁶⁷ Abulad prefers instead a more inclusive, yet *originary* way of doing Filipino Philosophy. Thus, with the variety of methods and number of scholars in the field after more than three decades, the question concerning its “existence” has no longer much gravity for him than the question of how to keep on doing Filipino Philosophy.⁶⁸

Co’s critique of claims to originality and his nonchalance in searching for any Indigenous Filipino Philosophy could be misconstrued as a total negation of the Filipinization of philosophy. His objections primarily spring from his stand, gleaned from history, that the Philippines, the Filipino, is a Spanish creation.⁶⁹ But a closer look at the flow of his thought shows that this criticism is more of a prolegomenon for what he calls a “birthing of a new concept of Filipino Philosophy” instead of a negation. Co proceeds to describe anew the Filipino as a polymorphous identity and reveals most fully the direction he wants to take for this “new concept” in his redescription of the Philippines as “the meeting of the East and West.” It is not far to surmise that, as a sinologist and scholar in East and West comparative philosophy, Co was only reacting against the image of a Filipino Philosophy framed under the lens of *being* or *substantiality* gleaned from Western Scholastic metaphysics. Like Abulad, he also maneuvers the “idea” towards difference, and in the language of Buddhist philosophy, towards *becoming*.

At present, the idea of Filipino Philosophy which sprang from Indigenization as Filipinization has already thrived into a diversity of modalities. This was brought about by the paradigm shifts in the questions posed such as: “How to do Filipino Philosophy?”, “How to develop Filipino Philosophy?”, and “Why do we still ask or should still ask the question of what Filipino Philosophy is?” These provided various trajectories taken up by researchers resulting to an explosion of publications in the field. Demeterio is a notable scholar whose prolific works maintain the continuity of the idea of Filipino Philosophy to the present and even reproduces the project of Filipinization into a multiplicity of discourses.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Abulad, “Contemporary Filipino Philosophy.”

⁶⁸ Romualdo Abulad, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines: Towards a More Responsive Philosophy for the 21st century,” in *Suri*, 5:1 (2016), 1–20.

⁶⁹ Abellanosa has criticized Co at this point for disregarding the active participation of the people in the nationalist and post-colonial struggle of the people. Like the claim I usher in this part, Abellanosa rightly plots in a historical perspective the circumstances out of which it emerged as a response, that is, as “critique of colonial experience.” Rhoderick John S. Abellanosa, “Will Filipinos Ever Become Philosophers? Reflections on Philosophizing in an Age of Postcolonial Challenges,” in *PHAVISMINDA Journal*, 16 & 17 (May 2018), 39.

⁷⁰ See for example, among his numerous works, Demeterio, “Status of and Directions for ‘Filipino Philosophy’”; Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, “Assessing the Developmental Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy,” in *Philippiniana Sacra*, XLIX:147 (May–August 2014), 189–230.

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Aside from diversity, a more critical, inclusive, and dynamic approach toward the “idea” surrounds today’s scholarship. Jovito Cariño’s way of doing philosophy is one such example in his alternative frame of the becoming-philosophy of Filipino or *pagsasapilosopiya ng Filipino* in contrast to Filipinization of philosophy, or nationalism, that has, according to him, dominated the discourse until the present. In his illuminating foreword to Cariño’s book that won the NBDB National Book Award in 2019, Paolo Bolaños rightly ascribes “the stance of radical difference” taken by Cariño in moving “away from the essentialist nationalism inaugurated by Jose Rizal to the recognition of the variegated faces of Filipino philosophizing” signified by Cariño’s utility of the term “becoming-philosophy” gleaned from Deleuzian conceptual toolbox. “By doing so,” Bolaños continues, “Cariño displaces the question of Filipino Philosophy, from the desperate search for a pure national identity, that is to say, of Indigenous thought, to the openness, dynamism, flexibility, response-ability, inclusivity, receptivity, creativity, contingency, and uncertainty of Filipino philosophizing.”⁷¹ This is not to be taken, however, as a total negation of “the idea of Filipino Philosophy” because Cariño’s philosophizing “necessarily entails the question of national identity” albeit this time “pursued more critically.”⁷² He states this more straightforwardly: “*ang kailangan sa kasalukuyan ay ang konsepto ng nasyonalismo na mapagbuklod, hindi mapagbukod; mapang-angkop, hindi mapanakop; mapanuri, hindi mapang-uri.*”⁷³ What Cariño perhaps inaugurates, if not revitalizes,⁷⁴ in the language of Indigeneity is a liberation of the concept from its *confinement* to nationalism and ethnicity and the rechanneling of the philosophical energy from the identitarian focus on the self to the diverse Philippine realities, the “philosophizing from the outside” shift to the historical conditions of Filipinos.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Paolo Bolaños, “Original Foreword in English,” in *Muni: Paglalayag sa Pamimilosopiyang Filipino*, by Jovito Cariño (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2018), 163.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Cariño, *Muni*, 14.

⁷⁴ It should be noted that a critical mode of doing philosophy has already been present since the early beginnings of Filipino Philosophy. Demeterio traces an “indigenous phase of critical Filipino philosophy” from the early pioneers like Fernando Zialcita. Critical philosophizing in this period generally meant “critique of political and economic structures” which largely contain Marxist undertones contextualized in the mainstream issues in Philippine setting, that is, in the nationalist-indigenous framework. See Feorillo Demeterio III, “Thought and Socio-Politics: An Account of the Late Twentieth Century Filipino Philosophy,” in *Hingowa: The Holy Rosary Seminary Journal*, 8:2 (March 2003), 45–73.

⁷⁵ Cariño’s critique of, but not cessation from, Indigenous Filipino Philosophy runs parallel to Elmo Gonzaga’s reimagining of the nation from the homogenized image of what he calls *official nationalism* to one that is “constituted by the desires of the oppressed multitude for liberation” or the differential image of a “smooth nationhood, which allows for the cooperative and creative autonomy of the multitude” read likewise within a Deleuzo-Guattarian lens. Elmo

Lastly, the very idea of Filipino Philosophy is apparently implicated in what could perhaps be the most challenging critique of Filipinization by Michael Roland Hernandez in his deconstruction of the differential construction of “Filipino identity” and modern Philippine nation. For Hernandez, the very term “Filipino” is already a colonial artefact furnished in violence and the owning of this identity becomes the “defining moment of the assimilation”⁷⁶ of the natives within European ethnocentrism. Becoming-Filipino in this sense is tantamount to the completion of the internal colonization set by colonial processes codified in the works of Burgos, Rizal, and other *illustrados*. Using Spivak’s notion, an “epistemic violence” is thus always implied in any attempt to retrieve or construct a collective identity for Filipinos as it only recycles colonial violence and oppression in the complicity with the “identity-trap” set by colonial ideology, this time a more subtle form of hegemony in a façade of the struggle for nationalist liberation. If, as Cariño writes, the campaign for Filipino Philosophy was an extension of the nationalist project,⁷⁷ then its inception and persistence has been compromised from the beginning, and that it must be held suspect of preserving in an epistemic form a sort of time-loop of oppression, unless a radical beginning is begun by “ceasing to use the language and identity within which [it] has been captured by colonial ideology.”⁷⁸ Although Hernandez has not yet written a more direct criticism of the idea of Filipino Philosophy, the logic of his argument seems to thread not necessarily on the question of its existence but on the question of its legitimacy as a representation of the “diverse reality of the different regional ethno-linguistic societies, and the sub-classes within them, together with their attendant interests, struggles, conflicts, and aspirations”⁷⁹ which it claims to subsume in a nationalist parlance.

Indeed, a nationalist discourse of philosophy is confronted with the archipelagic context of the Philippines characterized by a diversity of sociocultural contexts and political inclinations, linguistic differences, and a

Gonzaga, *Globalization and Becoming-Nation: Subjectivity, Nationhood, and Narrative in the Period of Global Capitalism* (Diliman, Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2009), 12. While Cariño writes of “becoming-philosophy,” Gonzaga speaks of a “becoming-nation” that Devilles, in his review of the book, interprets as a departure from the modernist, fascist, image of the nation. “Although it claims nation is still a worthwhile project, the kind of nation that must be attained in the period of global capitalism should be open, immanent, dynamic—a nation that is becoming, a nation that is interrogated less in the center than in the boundaries and margins.” Gary Devilles, “Review of *Globalization and Becoming-Nation: Subjectivity, Nationhood, and Narrative in the Period of Global Capitalism* by Elmo Gonzaga,” in *Philippine Studies*, 59:2 (June 2011).

⁷⁶ Michael Roland F. Hernandez, “Trapping Identities: Filipinization and the Problems of a Nationalist Historiography,” in *Suri*, 5:2 (2016), 150.

⁷⁷ Cariño, *Muni*, 155.

⁷⁸ Hernandez, “Trapping Identities,” 168.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

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“multiversity of rationalities.”⁸⁰ The designation of Indigeneity as Filipinization is therefore problematized as a legitimate representation. The “idea of Filipino Philosophy” in this case therefore, itself, served as an ideational space of contention, articulating the dangers of sidelining diverse sociocultural resources in favor of a dominant, popular, and mainstream thought that could be mainstreamed.

There is however a different employment of the language of Indigeneity that deflects from the homogenous nationalist discourse and mobilizes the philosophical enterprise in the diverse ethno-linguistic societies of the country which a critique such as that of Hernandez’s implicitly clamors for. This will be treated in the next part.

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⁸⁰ Borrowing this term from Agustin Rodriguez. See Agustin Rodriguez, *Governing the Other: Exploring the Discourse of Democracy in a Multiverse of Reason* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009).

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