The University of the Philippines Library before the War.

E. ARSENIO MANUEL: HIS EARLY CAREER, LIFE DURING THE 'PACIFIC WAR', 1927-1945

Brandon Joseph Macapagal Reilly

This essay examines the first years of the pioneer Philippine anthropologist E. Arsenio Manuel at the University of the Philippines, where he took courses towards a degree in law and worked as a student assistant under H. Otley Beyer, and narrates the early years of his fruitful relationship with the man who became his mentor, as well as with others Manuel made during those years. It then turns to Manuel and his family's ordeals during the period of the Japanese occupation, which provided unexpected opportunities for field research for the budding anthropologist amidst the more quotidian struggle for safety. This is the second essay in a series of six[1] that narrates the life of the pioneer anthropologist.

Keywords*: University of the Philippines, H. Otley Beyer, Gabriel A. Bernardo, Dean S. Fansler, World War Two, Japanese Occupation, San Roque (Nueva Ecija)*

E. Arsenio Manuel enters the University of the Philippines, 1927-1941

Upon graduation from Victorino Mapa High School in Manila in 1927, E. Arsenio Manuel earned admission to the University of the Philippines as a major in Law (UP). Immediately he faced the problem of how to cover the costs of admission. His parents worked hard to cover the costs of tuition but had difficulty covering anything more. Luckily, while registering for classes, Manuel saw a flyer that advertised work as an assistant or clerk. He applied for the position, whose main requirement was knowledge of typing or stenography, forthwith; it paid twenty-five centavos per hour, up to a

[1] The first essay, on Manuel's childhood, has been published in Aghamtao Vol.29 (2021). Essays three to six, covering his years at the University of the Philippines, graduate study in Chicago (USA), scholarly production during 'the Marcos era', and his accomplishments from 1986 to the close of his life in 2003, can be found in Aghamtao Vol.30 (2023).

maximum of thirty pesos per month. After passing a test for the position, he was hired. On his first day of work, he was personally escorted by the dean of students, Henry Townsend, to his workspace and introduced to his new boss: H. Otley Beyer (1883-1966) in the Department of Anthropology (Manuel 1989:156). The encounter was one of sheer chance. Yet it would profoundly shape the history of anthropology in the Philippines.

Manuel's job was easy enough: it consisted at first of typing up Beyer's students' papers and later curating his archaeological materials. Most importantly, it provided the supplementary income he needed to be able to study in UP. As he accomplished the day-to-day work, he grew increasingly interested in the objects themselves. He cleaned, washed, and dried those that Beyer had unearthed at the Novaliches Dam site (in 1925 and 1926), and had to learn what the proper procedures were to preserve them. This work piqued Manuel's interest in archaeology as an approach to studying the prehistory of his country. He was curious about the significance of the objects. However, to his chagrin Beyer never spoke to him about their meaning or importance. This was one of Beyer's habits; he was infamous for the way he jealously guarded his findings (Solheim 1968:5). Manuel thereafter took it upon himself to learn more about his boss and the nature of his work. But he never got very far. The student's curiosities went unrequited until, as Manuel narrated,

> "…in 1929 a professor from Harvard came to visit [Beyer]. I learned he was Dr. Roland Dixon, whom I learned later to be one of Beyer's instructors. After a couple of months an article titled 'The Peopling of the Pacific' appeared in the *Philippine Magazine* (September 1929 issue) under the byline of Dr. Dixon. I read the article avidly. Only then did I come to know what Professor Beyer was attempting to accomplish. This discovery aroused my interest more deeply." (Manuel 1989:157)

Fortunately for the field of anthropology, Beyer's attempt to stifle his eager student-worker only heightened Manuel's curiosity. At this point, Manuel had already completed coursework towards a major in law, and, therefore, enrolling in anthropology was out of the question. So, to educate himself in the field, what he did instead was to do it through his student job, which allowed him to work more closely and regularly with the Beyer, the figure of anthropology in the Philippines, who himself had earned the rank of full professor just two years prior to Manuel's arrival (Manuel n.d.:1).

Manuel's acquaintance with Beyer—first as a student worker, then, as a graduate student, and finally, as a colleague—profoundly shaped the arc of his

scholarly career. Manuel's work for its part shaped Beyer too, although to a lesser degree; doubtless this is because of age, perhaps racial differences, and above all because of Beyer's exacting style of mentoring his graduate students (Lynch 1967:6). The two would go on to collaborate over the course of decades on many things large and small despite their very different, strong personalities, that sometimes brought them into conflict over what each one regarded as major points of the discipline. Indeed comedy writers in need of a premise might look to the decades-long relationship between the curmudgeonly, irascible, cocksure German-American-turned-Ifugao-Filipino-colonial-transplant and his quirky, meek, and endlessly enthusiastic, born-in-the-provinces student worker for inspiration.

It is from Beyer that Manuel first developed the methodological rudiments of his approach to the study of the Filipino past, techniques he would continue to utilize and refine over the course of his life. One of Beyer's habits stuck out immediately for Manuel during their initial encounters: his hoarding. A hallmark of Beyer's was his infinite accumulation of whatever he deemed to be worthy ethnological or prehistorical materials. These included, "archaeological and ethnographic specimens, Philippine pottery, Chinese glazed wares and tektites," alongside the more typical materials of "books, pamphlets, maps, manuscripts and photographs" (National Library of Australia 2019). About this practice of Beyer's, the venerable archaeologist of Southeast Asia Wilhelm G. Solheim once remarked, charitably,

> "A visit to Beyer's Museum and Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, on the second floor of the old Watson Building in Manila, would convince an uninformed person that Beyer was a human pack rat and an antiquarian." (Solheim 1969:7)

The young Manuel saw it otherwise. As he labored under Beyer's employ, he viewed the latter's haphazard piles of objects, books, and more, with nothing but admiration and amazement. As he later described it,

> "…the things that impressed me most were his collections—the stone tools that littered the tables and floor and filled the boxes, the spears and shields, hunting gears, costumes, woodcarvings, and so on. Most attractive of all these were the porcelain collection and the bound sets of Filipinana labelled [*sic*] Tagalog Literature, Iloko Literature, etc., in gold. He collected the newspapers and other periodicals of the times, broadsides, and so on. When we parted ways in December 1929, Professor Beyer was renting four apartments on Nebraska and Florida Streets, all

> full of archaeological, ethnological and historical materials and Filipiniana." (Manuel 1984:197)

A basic lesson Manuel gleaned from this was that one of the primary goals of anthropology was to collect materials as widely as possible, whether such be objects for archaeological study, oral traditions (for folkloric analysis), or printed materials, including those student papers compiled by Manuel, all of which were then to be used as the material for publication in the appropriate places—although Beyer himself in fact published rarely and contented himself instead with merely accumulating things. Manuel conceived of his own voluminous body of published work as one of major points of difference between himself and his teacher (pers. comm. Corazon Manuel 2020).

One could easily view Manuel's scholarly life as an emulation of Beyer's. Most notably, he attempted to build his own repository of oral traditions drawn from throughout the entire archipelago, in the precise manner Beyer had one with what he called the "Philippine Ethnographic Series." Manuel titled this collection, "The Pasig Papers," and like his mentor he amassed the bulk of materials through assigning students in his classes the task of recording the oral traditions of their hometowns. In his later years, Manuel projected that his collection would reach upwards of two hundred and fifty volumes, whereas Beyer's was comprised of one hundred and eighty. He in fact imagined his series to be a "continuation" of his mentor's (Manuel n.d.:5).

At the same time Manuel's approach to prehistory differed from that of his mentor in a few crucial ways. First and foremost, Manuel was far more interested, obsessively so in fact, in assembling oral traditions rather than other ethnographic or archaeological materials. During his life, he would conduct some research in the field of archaeology, but not much. Nor did he emphasize the gathering of material artifacts from dig sites or similar material in any regular way. Furthermore, his interest in tektites was non-existent.

What Manuel was much more concerned with was the preservation of contemporary written materials such as newspaper, magazine articles, and texts of historical value such as older scholarly works, Spanish era dictionaries, books from the early American colonial era, and more. On a personal level, these books were in a sense the gems of his library. He felt great pain when he lost his copy of Jaime C. de Veyra and Mariano Ponce's *Efemérides Filipinas* (1914) because his house was looted during the Pacific War (Manuel 1984:200). And because of his work as a librarian and biographer, particularly as he and his collaborators collected materials for the *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, he came across seemingly random collections of culturally

significant documents that he sought to keep even though they were unrelated to his prehistorical studies. He also gathered things like Filipino musical compositions. Few of any of these types of written texts would have found their way into Beyer's archives; and, when they did, they documented the culture of upland populations exclusively and never the lowland majority. A comparison of Beyer's and Manuel's collected materials thus shows the greater breadth of Manuel's interest in the Philippines.

More significant than the composition of their archives was the way each one put them to use. It is here especially that the superiority of Manuel's scholarship vis-à-vis that of his mentor becomes apparent. Beyer of course gathered materials voluminously, but he also did so carelessly (Solheim 1967:4) and without deep thought about the purpose and meaning of his doing so—or at least none that he ever expressed in publication. Indeed, as Manuel put it tersely, he, "hardly touched methodology" (Manuel 1980:7). Manuel was exactly the opposite. He by contrast was a rigorous methodologist who wrote about the importance of scholarly procedures repeatedly throughout his career and furthermore insisted on proper methods in his classes—often to the distress of his students who had to redo assignments until they met the professor's exacting expectations (Manuel 1984:214, 215, 222-23, 226-27, 231; Manuel 1985; and Corazon Manuel 2020). Some of this can be explained by their differences in training—Manuel earned a Masters and a Ph.D. in anthropology whereas Beyer had merely taken a few graduate courses in the subject at Harvard (Manuel 1978:n.p.). More than that, it was a function of their unique personalities, and how they shaped each man's approach to anthropology.

Manuel was also far more interested in building the enterprise of prehistorical research in the Philippines through the disciplines of anthropology, folklore, biographical studies, history, and more. Beyer too was interested in anthropology, and he clearly relished in his position as the foremost authority in the colony and later, the independent nation. However, they differed greatly in that Beyer only rarely sought to bring prehistory to an audience outside of the academe (cf. Beyer and de Veyra 1947), did little to expand the department at the UP beyond himself, even making it difficult for researchers outside the Philippines to understand the archipelago (Solheim 1967:4-5). Again, in these respects, Manuel was his mirror image. At every turn, Manuel sought to further popularize the discipline and its methods among a broader populace in the nation-state; by actively working with colleagues in different UP departments; publishing his output and sharing it with a wider, global, and international audience. Unlike Beyer, in his pursuit to apprehend

the Filipino past, Manuel urged the nation (and its counterparts) to join him and not to venerate his contributions from afar. So, while Beyer had introduced him to the field and provided him a model, the student, Manuel, would, in his own way, end up surpassing the teacher.

Manuel also found guidance from more gregarious souls in UP, particularly as he joined other units of the university. On the official date of December 5, 1929, he "separated from the Department of Anthropology and joined the university's main library." Unsurprisingly, his "reasons for doing so" had completely to do with Beyer's style of management, for,

> "In the first place, I could not go to my classes on time because Professor Beyer dismissed me exactly upon the strike of the hour and it took me at least five minutes to run to my class from Nebraska Street. Then I had to wait for his signal to take my lunch, which usually happened about two o'clock in the afternoon. And to think of it now, he never allowed us to take snacks (though he himself didn't). To cap it all, he showed his temper by calling us none-too-pleasant words, which irked me often." (Manuel 1989:157)

Beyer's needlessly harsh management in this instance however proved fortuitous in the end: it pushed Manuel to a place he would end up working for the next decade: the UP Main Library, with the pause arising only because of the Japanese Occupation. More felicitously still, it led to Manuel meeting the person whom he regarded as the second most important professional influence in his life, then University Librarian Gabriel A. Bernardo (1891-1962).

Bernardo proved to be both a scholarly influence for Manuel's future career and, more so, someone whose company Manuel genuinely enjoyed. (Based on Manuel's writings of their encounters, the feeling seems to have been mutual). Bernardo introduced Manuel to the world of the library, that wondrous place he had first encountered just a few years earlier in high school. Combined with his growing knowledge and curiosity about studies on the Filipino, Bernardo's guidance and training allowed him to appreciate the importance of the UP Main Library as a storehouse of knowledge. It was there where Manuel acquired his formal education and professional experience in sorting, filing, and archiving books and other written materials, and making such available to all. This first hands-on experience made him realize the Library's importance to the public. All that he experienced here contrasted sharply with Beyer's idiosyncratic procedures, rules, management, and public relations.

Manuel spoke of Bernardo less regularly than he did of Beyer. Nonetheless his subsequent career makes clear that it was because of his encounter with the librarian, and Manuel's job at the UP library more broadly, that he developed his lifelong interest in library studies, in creating bibliographies, and of creating impersonal, institutionalized archives (as opposed to the highly personalized archive of a Beyer, say). Better yet, as Manuel himself put it, describing the "quiet librarian and humanist who built a library system twice (before and after World War II) in his lifetime," it was from Bernardo that he, "learned a principle of research: the indispensable role of libraries and bibliographies to research and progress, for these two tools are the keys to knowledge." (Manuel 1989:168). Small wonder that Manuel dedicated his first published book, a biography, *Felipe G. Calderon* (1954[1939]) to Bernardo.

The joy of what felt like a more professional education in furthering Filipino studies was however not what endeared Manuel most to his second boss at the UP. Instead it was that,

> "Bernardo regaled me with his ribald tales about friars, which he told in the manner of Boccacio and Chaucer. We also had long conversations on paleography and metrical romances, which added to my store of knowledge in the field" (Manuel 1980:7)

In Bernardo he found a kindred spirit; a true mentor, someone who possessed not only the knowledge and work ethic Manuel idolized but also the drive to add flesh out the emerging field of Filipino studies. He made scholarship, in other words, more personable and humane, for example as he joked about the missionaries' sexual habits.

Interestingly for the "Father of Modern Filipino Folklore Studies" (as he was later considered), Manuel seems to have been less personally influenced by Dean S. Fansler, who was supposedly the greatest folklorist of the era. To be sure, he does cite Fansler as one of his major influences in his widely circulated essay, "Philippine Oral Traditions: Theory and Practice" (1980), which he read four years earlier at the Third National Folklore Congress. There he writes of the "…course in world literature taught by Prof. Dean S. Fansler, who asked us to submit term papers on any aspect of ethnic literature, whether oral or written" (Manuel 1980a:7).

One class assignment that provoked him to write would in fact become "Tayabas Tagalog Awit Fragments from Quezon Province" (1958b) – the essay he would later publish in the journal *Folklore Studies*. Moreover, Manuel credited Fansler's magnum opus, *Filipino Popular Tales* (1921), with having paved "the way for the historical interpretation of tales" (Manuel 1980:7). In

Manuel's 1989 autobiographical essay, however, Fansler scarcely receives mention. Possibly this had to do with Fansler's irregular sojourns in the colony, which precluded him from mentoring students in a sustained way at the UP (Reilly 2013:154-160). Fansler's impact on Manuel is thus more difficult to assess. However, given that Manuel would spend his career collecting oral traditions, comparing them with those of other places, and seeking to equate them with various sorts of written literature, it can be assumed that Fansler did indeed have some influence over Manuel. If this is true and if, as Manuel put it, Bernardo was, "the person who had the most influence on my career aside from Professor Beyer," then Fansler occupied the third position.

As an undergraduate at the UP, Manuel came into contact with many other people who also added 'color' to his life as a university student, whether by providing inspiration or irritation. He found his professor in essay writing, Carl N. Taylor, who later went on to write the book *Odyssey of the Islands* (1936), amusing. Manuel enthusiastically enrolled in an American literature course taught by Carlos P. Romulo as he had initially been impressed by Romulo's fluid style of lecturing, only to become disgusted when he discovered, "that Mr. Romulo was mouthing word for word Long's book on American literature [*Outlines of English and American Literature*, 1923]" (Manuel 1989:157). Judging by his own scholarship after university, Manuel gained much from his courses on the Tagalog language, although he never said much about his teacher, the renowned novelist and activist Lope K. Santos. His interactions with his linguistics professor, and later colleague in the department, Cecilio Lopez, were more mixed. For the most part they supported one another's work but sometimes came to butt heads over debates such as the origins of Filipino languages. It did not help relations when Lopez noticed that Manuel mimeographed sections of his book *Tagalog Literature and Notes* for his students rather than having them purchase actual copies (Manuel 1989:159).

Although many of the details are unclear, it was also during the earlier part of Manuel's life in UP that he courted and later married Magdalena Avenir, whom he might have first met during his final year in high school (Manuel 2020). In their simplicity, his few words about their meeting convey his affection for his partner of nearly seven decades.

> "Something else memorable turned up on June 4, 1932. I got married to Miss Magdalena Avenir, a young girl just turned nineteen and graduate from high school. I had been courting her since about three years before, and I had come to love her... It was a quiet wedding attended by her parents and my mother, my

> father being always away and seldom in the city" (Manuel 1989:158)

In the course of their lives together, despite moments of great difficulty both for the Philippines and for them as a family, they came to have no less than seven children together: Arsenio Jr., Magdalena, Aurora, Cesar, Cora, Amor, and Lakandula. The rare glances of Magdalena that made their way into Manuel's writings paint the picture of a caring, intelligent, and immensely supportive partner. Magdalena helped him through the most difficult parts of his undergraduate years as a law student, not to mention her decades of domestic work and childrearing. She was not merely the co-maker of family life with him but also a co-researcher and coauthor on a few of Manuel's books, most notably the *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*. Her family connections also provided a safe haven during the Japanese Occupation. Without her, Manuel would not have had the career he did; early on in their marriage in fact, he would find cause for much gratitude to his spouse.

Manuel majored in law. His reasons for doing so stemmed from familial obligation. "It was from Mother that I got an inkling that Father wanted me to take up law. Anything like a suggestion was equal to dictation, coming as it was from the head of the family" (Manuel 1989:156). His father wanted his son to follow in his footsteps, to start his career in law and eventually try his hand in elected office (pers.comm. Corazon Manuel 2020). Manuel was reluctant and unenthusiastic but he acceded. His career as an aspiring lawyer was seemingly difficult at every turn. He found the prerequisite classes difficult and the actual courses in law even more trying, both because of his lack of interest in the subject and because he found it difficult to keep up his studies while working in his student jobs. On the nights when Manuel had no energy left, which were many, it was Magdalena who read to him his assignments and helped him memorize the legal codes. Later on, when he "did not attend the bar review classes because we could not afford the fees… my wife became my reviewer" (Manuel 1989:158, 159). Her intelligence, patience, and support made it possible for him to eventually complete law school and gain admission to the bar, which he achieved in 1935. Without her both would have been impossible.

According to his former student, the popular historian Ambeth Ocampo,

> "…(Manuel) said he had originally planned to be a historian, but since his friend and contemporary Teodoro A. Agoncillo was already plowing that field, he decided to shift to

> anthropology and started by becoming one of the assistants of H. Otley Beyer." (Ocampo 2008)

His earliest years of scholarship demonstrate this to be the case. Manuel's first publications—on things like Rizal's life and works, short biographies on Filipinos of note like artist Lorenzo Guerrero and the propagandist Graciano Lopez Jaena, as well as other topically-focused essays such as, "When Did Magellan Discover the Philippines?"— create the image of an early career historian of a nationalist bent, much of the sort like an Agoncillo (Manuel 1984:203-05). But while he would continue to cultivate one subset of this conventional form of history-writing, that of biographical research, by the 1940s, with an occasional exception, he mostly ceased to write such articles. Thereafter Manuel would pursue his researches into the deep Filipino past through the disciplinary prisms of folklore and anthropology.

Of more significance for his future work during his early years were the biographies he gradually began to research and publish beginning in the 1930s and, to a lesser extent, the bibliographic, linguistic and other such works he drafted along the way. It was in 1933 that he began (in collaboration with his wife Magdalena, his brother, and his brother-in-law), collecting materials on what would eventually become the multi-volume *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, although the first volume would not appear in print for another two decades. During this period, he penned some of the biographies that would be included in that work and published them in various weeklies and monthlies. In fact, building on these efforts, Manuel published *Felipe G. Calderon*, *a Biographical Portrait* in 1939, his first substantial work in the genre of biography and furthermore his first published book. In addition to being informative about its subject in the most basic sense, it was the first of its kind as a biography of the architect of the Malolos Constitution of 1899. Manuel's earlier realizations of the vast lacunae in Filipino scholarship, combined with his occupation at the UP Main Library, as well as his own initiative of gathering relevant materials on whatever particular project he happened to be researching on, led him around this time to practice another form of scholarly production: drafting bibliographies. In the latter part of the 1930s, he drafted his first bibliographies on topics such as Philippine biographical collections, materials at the National Language Library, and Tagalog metrical romances (Manuel 1984:206-07). He would continue to create bibliographies of understudied topics throughout his career.

Presumably, things in Manuel's life would have continued along a similar trajectory had not the Pacific War suddenly come to engulf his home country, an event that took most by surprise. Indeed, as Manuel recalled, "The Filipino

people did not expect the occupation of their country by Japan" (Manuel 1989:159). It was a time of immense hardship and uncertainty. Despite that, Manuel found a way to continue his work throughout.

Scholarship and survival: the Pacific War, 1941-1945

One can wonder why it was that Japan saw fit to invade the Philippines—a country that did not produce commodities which might fuel its war machine, like the petroleum of the Dutch East Indies, British Malayan tin, and French Indochinese rubber, but instead things of lesser value best traded when nations and their markets were at peace, like abaca, coconuts, and sugar—not even a day after it bombed Pu'uloa/Pearl Harbor in December, 1941 (Marshall 1995). More likely it was simple geography. Conquering the Philippines facilitated the conquest of the comparatively more resource rich countries in Southeast Asia. In any case, the comparatively larger, better-trained, and more technologically advanced Japanese military invaded the Philippines in 1941, and occupied Manila by early 1942, and despite dogged resistance from Filipinos and Americans Japanese forces ruled the archipelago for roughly the next three years, until October, 1944, February 1945, when the US began its campaign to retake its colony.

Officially, the Japanese, who preached an "Asia for Asians" through the regional apparatus of the "Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere," offered cultural nationalists new opportunities (Yellen 2019, Nakano 2018). Through its ban on the English language most notably, Japan promoted literary and cultural work in local vernaculars, including Tagalog (Abinales & Amoroso 2017:159-166). In reality, its occupation was no more benevolent, and in many ways more recurrently violent, than that of the Americans whom they supplanted (Scott 2018). It was this latter characteristic of the occupation that Manuel, erstwhile fan of promoters of cultural nationalism, came to experience. The perilousness of life under occupation also shaped his decision to flee from the capital and make a new, albeit temporary life during that period, in Central Luzon, where he and his family lived it out. Paradoxically, this act of flight itself would enable him to undertake the studies of culture that the new colonial government, anchored yet again in Manila, sought to promote.

The American colonial government, which had heretofore erected so many of the institutions in the Philippines Manuel held dear, had failed the Filipino people with its negligent defense of the archipelago. One might even call it a betrayal. Before the invasion, Manuel had come to believe that the colony had adequate defense, that if the Japanese invaded they would be quickly repulsed,

and that if they did occupy it would be brief. Events quickly disabused him of these pretensions. Manuel understated the depth of his disappointment. "Deep in their hearts the people were disillusioned, both the common people and the national leaders," he wrote (Manuel 1989:160). The mythology of the colonial state's invincibility had been laid bare.

Disappointment was no excuse for inaction. Manuel acted quickly to be able to keep his family alive during the occupation. Just a few days after it began, he dispatched his wife and children to Quezon Province, to the town where Magdalena grew up and many of her kin still lived in fact: San Roque. He did not accompany them, at least not immediately. He instead turned his attention to first securing their family home, including his library and other valued possessions, and arranging for his absence from his job at the UP Main Library. Fortunately for Manuel, he did not have to go it alone, serendipitously, one of Magdalena's brothers, Anadeto, had at that moment come to the capital, and was in need of a place for he and his family to stay. Manuel helped them to settle into his family home and then set about securing the UP Main library. Once he arrived at the library, he would likewise secure the library's holdings, many of which he had himself collected.

Manuel came to his place of employment that day in the hopes of sheltering it from the ravages of war. A few days into the Japanese occupation, employees of the UP were allowed to return to their offices and collect their belongings. Manuel planned to use this opportunity not only gather his things but also to close off access to the library's holdings for the foreseeable future. He was horrified by what he witnessed when he arrived.

> "The Japanese soldiers were boiling their rice in a huge iron vat in one quadrangle and using library books for fuel! As I entered my room, books littered the floor and other passageways, obviously trampled upon, paintings were bayoneted or slashed, drawers and boxes were scattered. What grieved me most was how my picture collection was treated—the mounted photographs of distinguished Filipinos, duly labeled with the proper identification, were intentionally mutilated, because the shears cut through the ears, eyes, neck, or head of individual pictures. Thus I lost a lifework of more than eight years." (Manuel 1989:160)

The destruction of Filipino patrimony had already begun. This included many of Manuel's personal materials too, such as his loose papers, notes, and interviews that were to be the basis for the *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*. Fortunately for posterity, his index of these materials, contained in ten boxes,

went untouched. After collecting himself, he grabbed what he could, found a large bag in which carry everything, threw that bag over his shoulder, and set about as his own personal cargador for a lengthy trek of some five kilometers. He had no choice but to hike because the occupation had effectively emptied the streets of mass transit. He eventually made it back home and deposited the books. He then said his goodbyes to his brother-in-law and company and readied himself for the next odyssey (Manuel 1989:160).

The uncertainties created by Japan's occupation made the lengthy trek to Quezon province into a perilous undertaking. Manuel's recollection of the journey, during which an unnamed sibling joined him, merely glimpses the many points at which things could have turned for the worst.

> "With a dozen hardboiled eggs as provisions, one of my brothers-in-law and I started on the hazardous trek. We were lucky to be accommodated in one of the freight cars of the Manila Railroad, overloaded as it was up to Kalamba town, and to take the road from there. Sometimes we rode on a horse-driven rig some distance, for bridges had been blown down. We slept in a small house when darkness overtook us [in] Sariaya town. After two days and one night, we reached Lucena town and from there we took a banca to Unisan. From that coastal town we immediately hired another banca to San Roque, a barrio where my family was supposed to have taken refuge. At about ten o'clock in the evening, we reached the barrio and were guided to my family in the hills. How we rejoiced and thanked God at having reached my loved ones safe and sound." (1960:160)

It was January of 1942 (Manuel 1984:199). By arriving safely in San Roque, Manuel had accomplished something significant in the context of a hostile foreign takeover: survival and reunification with his family.

Manuel would spend most of the next few years in Quezon Province with his family. He would make a brief return to the capital from February to September of 1944, after which he headed north again to San Roque, remained there until June 1945, and then, at last, came home for good. His sojourns there turned out to be unexpectedly profitable. First because he and his family had to learn how to live as farmers in the rural countryside. This meant recalling from his youth, or perhaps learning for the first time, how to plant rice, bananas, coconuts, cassava, pineapple, and more; raise livestock like chicken; manufacture daily products they previously purchased at stores in Manila (salt from saltwater, soap from coconut oil and ashes, etc.); and harvest seafood like

fish, crabs, and mollusks. It also entailed their educating themselves about all of the rituals necessary to undertake these things, for instance those performed during the "clearing, planting, and harvesting," which were taught to them by village elders (Manuel 1989:160). He "became stout and stronger. So too my children, wife, and affines. With regular eye exercises my glasses were discarded" (Manuel 1988:160). This forced sabbatical thus afforded Manuel a lengthy course of study in distinct cultural practices, practitioners, and epistemologies. That midwives from nearby could assist in the birth of his son Cesar and a shaman could treat the hemorrhaging his birth occasioned, necessarily carried a greater significance for him than others.

When he was not busy farming, Manuel assiduously catalogued as much as he could about the things he saw and heard.

> During rest days I gathered riddles, some folktales and recorded some games aside from participating in local occupations such as fishing, beehive hunting, nut picking, and so on. During this time I also recorded local dialectalisms [*sic*] which was most fruitful, to become the basis later for an M.A. thesis in the University [of the Philippines]. I got introduced to many relatives, acquired many new friends, a number of whom became our informants in learning about the customs and believes on the people (Manuel 1984:200).

Here then was the strangest paradox of all: that Japanese conquest, by pushing Manuel and his kin into flight to the countryside, created conditions for sustained cultural research that were previously impossible because his career kept him tethered to the capital. To note this is not to overlook the violence and coercion that underlay this situation. But it highlights the ways in which Manuel as a scholar made optimal use of his involuntary sojourn.

However, their remoteness from the centers of Japanese control never assured their safety. During one frightful episode, the Japanese even occupied their town.

> "Everything was going well until a platoon of Japanese soldiers came all of a sudden and occupied our village. Their task was to remove the telephone wires that passed through the village. The lieutenant ordered all male inhabitants to undertake the removal, rolling up the wires and carrying them to their Gumaka town headquarters, some twenty-five kilometers away. I refused to cooperate. But the lieutenant started to check on every male person in the different houses. He kicked an old

> widow who could not understand him. My wife, who was sewing by the window, was charged with 'Where is your husband?' My wife answered quickly, 'There he is,' pointing at someone with her finger. I was not there but had hidden myself in the woods with a brother-in-law. I always remember my wife's alacrity whenever reminded of the war." (Manuel 1989:160-61)

Other dangers were more mundane. Manuel reports that everyone in his family contracted malaria. Many had mild cases but his father- and a brother-in-law perished because of the disease (Manuel 1984:200). Fearful that he would meet the same fate, Manuel resolved to return to Manila with a brother-in-law in February of 1944, ostensibly to treat their illnesses— but also to check on his home and possessions.

There was some hope to be found in his return to the city, at least initially. For one, it produced the intended effect of restoring him and his brother-in-law to greater health. "We overcame the fevers and chills alright" (Manuel 1989:160-61). Once established, he was able to find employment at the Institute of National Language, where he worked as a librarian and language researcher cataloguing the nationalist historian Teodoro M. Kalaw's (1884-1940) papers Kalaw's daughter, writer and artist Purita Kalaw Ledesma (1914-2005), and son, businessman Teodoro Kalaw Jr. (1913-1984) aided him in this task (Manuel 1984: 208-209). Fortunately, he was able to return to his family home, which was still intact. But sadly, his premonition that his collections would be destroyed or ransacked came true.

> "There was some looting during our absence, because my brother could not be present the whole day… Among my losses were the musical compositions, loose files of periodical, and the boxes of copied materials. One of these was '*Efemerides Filipinas'*… Another valuable series that was lost was the instalment of articles on distinguished Filipinos prepared by [historian] Vicente Elio. All these copied materials were, of course, intended for use in our biographical dictionary project (Manuel 1984:200).

As far as things went, the period from February to September were the precarious months. "After the first Allied bombings of shipping on Manila Bay about the middle of September of that year, life to us became a precarious existence" (Manuel 1989:161). The most destructive phase of the war in Manila was now underway.

The movement of Japanese soldiers into the buildings where Manuel worked made it impossible for him to perform his duties, which effectively ended his stint at the Institute of National Language. Increasingly desperate for cash, Manuel sold their family home, but not, crucially, the lot on which it was built. For the sale he received a sizeable, yet unspecified amount of Japanese wartime currency, or what was called "mickey money". The question was how best to spend it. As he pondered that question inspiration struck. "One of the first things that occurred to me was to invest it by buying Filipiniana from the churches of the Walled City" (Manuel 1989:161).[2] Manuel had already proven himself a capable and even zealous private archivist. Through his sheer force of will he had preserved what even national institutional repositories could not, even in normal times. At the same time, undertaking these historical document runs would entail putting himself at greater personal risk than at any point previously. In contrast with the episode at the outset of the occupation, where he lugged his books from the UP Main Library to his house just a few years earlier, to attempt to do the same now would mean doing so in a situation of open warfare.

The risks notwithstanding, he elected to acquire and store every significant historical work he could get his hands on. He was impelled in his intermittent journeys to-and-fro in part by what he viewed as the Laurel administration's lax policies regarding the protection of the national patrimony. He became incensed in particular at the President's inability to prevent the Japanese military occupation of the "Legislative Building and Walled City," because they, "were cultural centers and never used for military purposes." The National Library was at the time housed in the Legislative Building.

His "misgivings" were based in the fact that,

> "…the Filipiniana collection, the richest in the world, was housed in that building, and the Walled City was a repository of thousands and thousands of documents and Filipiniana seldom used by scholars before, and paintings and works of art from the time the churches were built had never been listed nor appeared in any catalogue before. Not only that, the archives of the courts since the beginning of the Spanish regime were located and stored there. Even the originals of seditious plays seized by the American police in the early years of this century… More than that there were countless documents on the propaganda

[2] Here he seems to be referring to bombings in the capital irrespective of his presence there, given that he returned to San Roque sometime in May (see below).

> movement and the Revolution, one of which was a thick collection of papers, seized by the Spanish police after the discovery of the Katipunan Society, related to Andres Bonifacio and his associates." (Manuel 1989:161)

These were the irreplaceable treasures of the Filipino heritage he sought to save. As it would turn out, like a hand clenching sand, he would only be able to grasp a few grains because the vast majority of this corpus would be burned and shelled into oblivion.

These dalliances with danger seem mostly not to have put Manuel at serious risk of death, save for the final one. One of his "hobbies" during the occupation was collecting the Japanese propaganda posters that had been posted all throughout Manila. On the way home from his final trip to Intramuros, he saw

> "…a poster that was not yet in my collection—a Red Cross ship being bombed or strafed by Allied plans. I persuaded a boy to detach one of them, promising to pay him a good price. He did so, and while he tried to unfasten one from the wall of a building, a barrage of shots splattered and drilled the wall. The boy quickly scampered away, but a lamppost dropped across the street, almost hitting me. The gunfire had come from the belfry of a church." (Manuel 1989:161)

This brush with serious injury or death for Manuel and his helper pushed him to cease this potentially fatal practice of document procurement.

With the violence of war multiplying and proliferating around him, Manuel plotted his return to safe harbor in San Roque with his family. Before he departed, he witnessed what became of the once family domicile he had just sold. Rather than live in the house, the purchaser razed the building so that they could strip it of its wood and iron because those commodities had become scarce, valuable resources in the desperate, terminal days of the occupation. Manuel's sorrow at the sight of the destruction of the family home was alleviated, slightly, by the goodwill of a neighbor who generously offered to store his treasured library under her own house. Her provision of this space for his books provided Manuel with peace of mind that he and his brother-in-law could carry with themselves on their return trip north.

Neither the journey itself nor the event of their arrival in May 1944 in his family's new home was particularly noteworthy for the travelers themselves. For those back in San Roque, however, the event of their homecoming prompted great joy. First and foremost because they were alive and well, miraculous in and of itself. Better still was the news they brought about the

ongoing American military operations to retake the colony. The returnees' greatest gift for the villagers was that of hope. For the next few months Manuel and the villagers observed events unfolding around them; they listened closely to bombardments they could hear not far to the south. On Manuel's part he continued to carry out fieldwork into oral culture of the peoples of Central Luzon. This period of biding time was calm, if short-lived. Manuel headed back to the capital when conditions seemed safe, in May or June of 1945 (cf. Manuel 1984:201 with Manuel 1989:162). His goal was to find a new place for him and his family to stay, permanently, after the war's end.

What the historical preservationist encountered when he returned would haunt him for the remainder of his days. The city had been leveled, and, as one would expect, among the things destroyed were the institutions he worked so zealously to safeguard.

> "This trip occasioned so much sadness that I shall never forget it. For half of Manila was razed to the ground, including the Walled City, where nine months before I had nearly lost my life. The three major libraries in the country—the National Library, the University of the Philippines Library, and the Scientific Library—were gone, their collections reduced to ashes." (Manuel 1988:162)

No amount of work Manuel had undertaken before the war, nor anything any individual might do after it could make up for this cataclysmic loss. It is not difficult to imagine how it motivated the anthropologist's scholarship in the decades after, how it gave him renewed urgency in moments of inertness.

Manuel's understandable concern with the obliteration of these archives obscures a fact of the war that was more central: that he and his family, though certainly not unscathed, had survived the war.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful for the incisive and thoughtful comments on this essay provided by attendees of the Asian American Pacific Islander History Group at the Huntington Library organized by Connie Chen, Lon Kurashige and David K. Yoo, including Alfred P. Flores, Susie Woo, and others. He is likewise appreciative for the thoughtful suggestions offered by the anonymous reviewer. He is particularly grateful to Mary Talusan Lacanlale for her careful, detailed reading and critique. Corazon Manuel, who generously provided her time and recollections about her father's life, immeasurably enriched this essay.

References

Abinales, Patricio and Donna Amoroso. (2017). *State and Society in the Philippines (2nd ed.).* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Beyer, H. Otley, and Jaime C. de Veyra. (1947). *Philippine Saga: A Pictorial History of the Archipelago Since Time Began.* Manila: Evening News.

Fansler, Dean S. (1921). *Filipino Popular Tales*. New York: American Folklore Society.

Long, William J. ([1923]2005). *Outlines of English and American Literature: An Introduction to the Chief Writers of England and America, to the Books They Wrote, and to the Times in Which They Lived.* [Project Gutenberg: https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7800].

Lynch, Frank. (1967). Henry Otley Beyer 1883-1966. *Philippine Studies, 15*(1):3-8.

Manuel, Corazon A. (2020). Interview with Corazon Manuel. San Jose, California.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1989). E. Arsenio Manuel, 1909-. *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*, *Vol. 9*. Detroit: Gale Research.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1985). *Guide for the Study of Philippine Folklore*. Quezon City: Philippine Folklore Society.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1984). A Checklist of the Writings of E. Arsenio Manuel, 1933-1983. *Philippine Humanities Review, 1*(3-4):195-247.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1980). Philippine Oral Traditions: Theory and Practice. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society, 8*(1):7-27.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1978). H. Otley Beyer (1883-1966): Anthropologist. In Cymbeline R. Villamin (ed.), *Biographies of Early Scientists in the Philippines: Electronic Version of Scientists in the Philippines, Vols. 1-2*. Manila: National Science Development Board. Unpaginated.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1970). *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, *Vol. II*. Manila: Filipiniana Publications.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1955). *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, *Vol. 1*. Manila: Filipiniana Publications.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (1954[1939]). *Felipe G. Calderón: A Biographical Portrait*. Manila: Bookman.

Manuel, E. Arsenio. (n.d.). Unpublished notes. Quezon City: Special Collections, UP Main Library.

Manuel, E. Arsenio, and Magdalena Manuel, Antonio Avenir, and Lucio Manuel. (1955, 1970, 1986, 1995). *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*, 4 vols. Quezon City, Filipiniana Publications.

Marshall, Jonathan. (1995). *To Have and Have Not: Southeast Asian Raw Materials and the Origins of the Pacific War*. Los Angeles: UC Press.

Nakano, Satoshi. (2018). *Japan's Colonial Moment in Southeast Asia 1942-1945: The Occupiers' Experience*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

National Library of Australia. (2019). Beyer Collection. https://www.nla.gov.au/selected-library-collections/otley-beyer-collection.

Ocampo, Ambeth. (2008). A Passion for History. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. https://filipinohistorian.blogspot.com/2008/11/passion-for-history.html.

Reilly, Brandon J. (2013). "Collecting the People: Textualizing Epics in Philippine History from the Sixteenth Century to the Twenty-First." Ph.D. Dissertation. Los Angeles: University of California.

Scott, James M. (2018). *Rampage: MacArthur, Yamashita, and the Battle of Manila*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Solheim II, William G. (1968). H. Otley Beyer. *Asian lPerspectives, 12*:1-18.

Taylor, Carl Norman. (1936). *Odyssey of the Islands*. New York: Scribner.

Veyra, Jaime C. de, and Mariano Ponce. (1914). *Efemérides Filipinas*, 2 vols. Manila: Imp. y Libreria de I. R. Morales.

Yellen, Jeremy A. (2019). *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere When Total Empire Met Total War*. Ithaca: Cornell UP.

Brandon Joseph Macapagal Reilly *is Associate Professor in History at Santa Monica College. He researches gender, anticolonialism, literature, and the cultural histories of the Philippines and Guåhan* [Guam]. *His work has appeared in* Critical Ethnic Studies Journal, Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*, and* Mindanao Forum. *His forthcoming publications include* Tinipong Tinig ng Kababaihan: Priestesses to Presidents *(co-edited with Nenita Pambid Domingo, University of the Philippines Press). He is current treasurer of the Filipino Cultural School. More about him can be found on his personal website: brandonjreilly.com.*

Email: reilly_brandon@smc.edu