E. ARSENIO MANUEL: BECOMING AN ANTHROPOLOGIST, 1945-1955

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After the second World War, the 37-year old E. Arsenio Manuel returned to work at the University of the Philippines, to brief stints in the University Library and as an Instructor of the Tagalog language. The language teaching post helped him to publish *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language* in 1948, which became the basis for his appointment to the Department of Anthropology soon after. Examining the pioneer Filipino scholar's early years in his new home, this paper highlights his first publications in the emergent field of Folklore Studies. This is the third essay in a series of six that narrates the life of anthropologist E. Arsenio Manuel (1909-2003).[1]

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Remaking home, 1945 to 1948

In 1946, the Philippines became free of direct control by a colonial power for the first time in the history of the modern world. But the event of independence from five centuries of colonial rule itself did not bring an end to the various forms of subjugation, whether within or without, that made Filipinos unfree. The most conspicuous challenges to the new nation's sovereignty came in the form of a military agreement with the US which allowed it to install military bases for a century hence, and a trade agreement, the Bell Trade Act (1946), which allowed Americans equal access to natural resources in the Philippines among other unequal

[1] For the first essay, please see *Aghamtao* Vol.29 (2021). The fourth, fifth, and sixth essays are in this volume. The second essay will be in a forthcoming issue of *Aghamtao*.

stipulations (Abinales & Amoroso 2017:186-89). To note these newer, "neocolonial" impositions by the former colonial master however is to overlook the ways in which America never left. Education in particular was one major realm of Filipino life that had yet to be decolonized following independence. Unsurprisingly one of the major goals of cultural nationalists during the period was to indigenize the curriculum. This effort was symbolized by the passage of the Rizal Law (Republic Act No. 1425), which mandated that unexpurgated versions of the national hero's novels be read in high schools, in 1956 (Hau 2000:1-6). Filipinos were searching for the locally-originating sources of their culture. This search for historical roots was of course nothing new. It had begun much earlier, in the nineteenth century, and reached a high point with the Propaganda Movement (Schumacher 1997). In light of this longer history, which would now include events of popular struggle, history-writing, and debates about culture during the American period, the event of political independence after Japanese occupation nonetheless served to revitalize the Filipinos' desire to anchor their identity to something tangible. It was this desire to which E. Arsenio Manuel sought to contribute after the war, much as he had done during and prior to it.

The event of Manuel's return to the capital with his family was one not of great fanfare but simple relief. Housing was difficult to find immediately after the Japanese defeat and withdrawal. Luckily for Manuel, one of his brothers lent him the apartment he owned, which just happened to be close to Malacañang Palace. Better still, this apartment was "just a few minutes' walk from the Watson Building, where Professor [H. Otley] Beyer was residing with half of his collections intact" (Manuel 1989:162); Manuel would thus have ready access to his mentor as he sought to restart his life as a university academic. He and his family's most immediate concerns were thereby met. The question of his return to work, how he would continue his career as an academic, was more complicated.

As life in the capital began to return to normal, Manuel took up his job at the University of the Philippines (UP) Library. He found that the work was harder than it was before however because of all of the losses the institution sustained. It "entailed so much strenuous labor," and required, "working ten to twelve hours a day sometimes [such] that it made me reconsider my continuance in the library" (Manuel 1989:162). Another more pressing concern was that the sheer time required by the job precluded him from writing his books, particularly the *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* (henceforth "*DPB"*). "Simply stated," he wrote, "I

thought that I could not pursue research toward achieving the national biography project without the collections of the three major libraries, the rehabilitation of which would take lifetimes" (Manuel 1989:162). (His suspicion was correct, as he and his research team would subsequently undertake innumerable interviews of the family members and colleagues of the subjects of their biography series because much of the primary documents on which they could have relied, prior to the war, were now gone). Towards that end, he considered finding a new line of work more suitable for his scholarly pursuits. This search led him, fairly soon after he started it, to a new job at the UP Department of Oriental Languages, where he would take a position as Instructor of Tagalog language and literature studies. This move was made possible by his acquaintance with one of the luminaries of the emergent field: the renowned author and professor Lope K. Santos (1879-1963).

Tagalog studies was not something novel for Manuel. His own experience with the language, his qualifications to teach university-level courses in the field, were by that point fairly extensive. Tagalog was one of the two languages he had grown up speaking (the other being Ilokano) as a middle class Filipino in the provinces. More formally, before the outbreak of war, he had taken classes in the subject at the UP, and under Santos himself no less. Besides providing certifiable coursework in the discipline, these classes helped him develop his relationship with the litterateur, scholar, and professor. And as recounted above, he had undertaken various studies in the language during his alternating stays in Quezon province in the time of the Japanese occupation. At a time in when there were few institutional routes to gain an expertise in the language that would form the basis of the nation's official dialect, Manuel numbered among a relatively select few who had interested themselves in its effortful study, with his refined further through his recent stint of fieldwork. He was, in other words, one of the few experts in the language anywhere.

There were downsides to the new job of course. It meant resigning from his current one at the library, where he worked side-by-side with his mentor Gabriel A. Bernardo (1891-1962). To even conceive of the move filled him with guilt. He knew better than most that devoted workers like him were needed to help reconstruct the country's patrimony after the destruction wrought by the war. That his mentor Bernardo stayed behind, in the trenches, as it were, and continued the work of fleshing out the Filipino heritage, while Manuel "abandoned" the task, only increased his

admiration for his erstwhile mentor, while adding to his sense of guilt. In his subsequent years as a professor at the UP, he would continue to access the library where he had spent much of his professional life before the war. But starting from the date of January 1, 1946, he was now an instructor at the Department of Oriental Languages (Manuel 1989:162).

Manuel's career as a professor of Tagalog would turn out to be short-lived and yet formative for his subsequent academic life. One practice he implemented was to require that students submit term papers as a course requirement. He learned this from his mentor Beyer, who had done the same in his own classes. While this might seem unremarkable on its own, indeed commonplace nowadays, Manuel's new course requirement would have significant consequences for Philippine studies in the long run. Over the ensuing decades, as Manuel continued to teach term after term, year after year, he would require that his students continue to submit original research papers for completion of the course. Quite often, this would mean that they completed projects on something related to their hometowns. Once assembled, these decades of student work ended up as the majority documents of his 250 volume "Pasig Papers" series. While he had the inspiration for the project before 1946, it was through teaching his Tagalog classes that Manuel began to assemble its first papers.

Manuel reported being "happier" with his new job, particularly as it served the intended purpose of providing him with more time to work on the *DPB*. The publication of the book would take some time however. In the interim, and drawing from the larger project, he did write up two short biographical pieces on then President Manuel Roxas and then Vice President Elpidio Quirino for an official function (Manuel 1984:209). These were the only biographies he published until the first volume of the *DBP* appeared in 1955. This was due partly to the time demanded by teaching itself, and partly to the fact that he had many other, smaller, projects in the pipeline at the same time. Of these smaller projects, one turned out to be of some consequence: his *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language*, which appeared in 1948, his second published book.

Largely forgotten today, Manuel's second book, the complete title of which reads: *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language: With Some Indication of Chinese Influence on Other Philippine Languages and Cultures, and an Excursion Into Austronesian Linguistics,* is interesting in many respects. The book begins with a "historical introduction" penned by Beyer, which aimed to provide some context to the centuries-long history of Chinese-Philippine interactions that explain the linguistic

exchanges at the heart of the work. The book's evidentiary core consists of Tagalog word lists that Manuel claimed were originally of Chinese origin. Manuel does not consider at length the question of precisely when these words transferred from "Chinese" – a linguistic category that he treats monolithically and generally ahistorically – into Philippine languages. Nonetheless, he theorizes, on the basis of the putatively Chinese origins of the word lists, that the linguistic transfers occurred at some point in the very distant past— as opposed to, say, during Ming times (1368-1644), when there were regular and more readily verifiable links between China and the Philippines, as Beyer himself notes in the introduction (Manuel 1948:xiii-xiv). The most provocative feature of the book is Manuel's contention that these transfers occurred prior to and apart from Austronesian migration to the Philippines from Taiwan (see, esp. Manuel 1948:70-78). The book's bibliography documents how he perused every relevant source in the Philippines he could get his hands on, or at least those available in the capital.

It will be left to Philippine linguists to pronounce the final word on Manuel's sophomore work. Scholars at the time noted some of its deficiencies, most critically that he leapt to an analysis of the travels of Chinese culture without any grounding in even a single Chinese language (Grootaers 1957, Verstraelen 1959). Few today would concur with his assertion that the origins of Philippine languages like Tagalog were distinct from those of their Austronesian progenitors in contemporary Taiwan. But for those interested in a biography of Manuel and his scholarship, the work accomplishes a feat of not little significance: it provides a unique and new originary homeland for Filipino culture. This is a line of investigation he would pursue throughout his career, most notably in the field of language studies in his essay, "Pre-Proto-Philippinesian" (1966) and his monograph *Documenting Philippinesian* (1994). The value of *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language*, in other words, perhaps lay more in what it tells us about Manuel's thinking that he would develop in multiple works over the course of decades than anything to do with Philippine linguistic history.

Manuel felt the impact of the work immediately in at least one way: it adversely affected his relationship with Professor Santos. In his early encounters as a student in Santos' classes in the prewar years, Manuel had clearly impressed himself upon his teacher. One imagines that he brought a seriousness and dedication that was unique among his peers. The clearest indication of his earning of the novelist's appreciation can be found in the

fact of Manuel finding work under his employ in 1946. However things became more harried after the former student became a professor. Santos found it odd that Manuel never disposed of his student papers after the term had ended, that Manuel was content to allow them to grow by the stack, semester after semester. Santos' perplexity at Manuel's quirks was a minor affair; other academics would make similar allowances. More consequentially, according to Manuel, Santos became irked by the fact that Manuel used the textbook he authored on Tagalog Language and Literature in his classes, but he did so with mimeographed versions of the book, so that the students never had to purchase it and hence generate income for the writer (Manuel 1989:162). These events of rancor in the workplace contributed to, but were not the final source, of the apparent rift that emerged between the two men. Rather, in classic academic fashion, their falling out was the result of a bitter dispute on the finer points of a scholarly debate. Santos was surprised in the first place by the very publication of Manuel's text on the *Chinese origins of Tagalog* terminology in 1948. (Indeed Santos's conspicuous absence in the book's acknowledgements, where Manuel thanks many others but not the prevailing Philippine-language novelist of the era, the man who hired him for the job he had while he wrote the book, is as revealing [Manuel 1948:iii-iv]). More seriously for both, Santos "objected strongly to [Manuel's] theory that probably the Philippine subfamily of languages and the Sinitic family came from one parent language" (Manuel 1989:162). Publishing *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language* had more than angered his boss. Fortunately for Manuel, just as one door closed another swung open.

The details regarding how Manuel gained an offer of a teaching post at the UP Department of Anthropology, the place where he would thereafter spend the better part of his professional life, are unclear. His own account of the move indicates that something was afoot before the then university Vice President Cesar A. Virata (the same who became Finance Minister under dictator Marcos) formally offered him the job; Virata told him: "We have heard so much about your book… How would you like to join the anthropology department" (Manuel 1989:163). Some combination of Manuel's scholarship, his connection with Beyer (who presumably pulled some levers behind the scenes), or some other, unseen factors explain what transpired. For his part, Manuel confessed some time after that he thought he had been called to the Vice President's office because of his dispute with Santos, "I was expecting the transfer and welcomed it" (Manuel 1989:163). Whatever the case, judging by his

contributions to the emergent field, one would have been hard pressed to argue that he did not deserve it. If his move from the University Library to the Department of Oriental Languages was a gamble, one that allowed him to complete his second book among other things, it had, by the feat of this subsequent appointment, paid off. By June of 1948, he was now operating out of the Department of Anthropology. With interruptions here and there, it would become the home base from which he would operate over roughly the next half century as he pioneered some of the major works of the field.

The anthropologist finds his field, 1948 to 1955

Manuel's return to the department where previously he had pursued work as one of Beyer's assistants marked the beginning of a productive era in his professional life. This was true first in the realm of scholarship. Beginning in the late 1940s, and particularly from the mid-1950s onward, he began to publish some of the more significant essays and monographs that made him into a national scholar. It was additionally true in the realm of his education. At Beyer's urging, and under his supervision, Manuel began an MA in Anthropology at the UP in 1948. Nearly two decades later he would earn a Ph.D., also in Anthropology, from the University of Chicago. He could anticipate little if any of this on the day he began as an Instructor in anthropology on June 1, 1948. But if he had had a crystal ball, he would have seen that many of his best days were soon to come.

Following the publication of *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language*, Manuel continued to work on the *DPB* and published smaller pieces along the way. Some of these stemmed from projects he had begun in classes he took with Beyer or other professors. Others he wrote up simply because he found interest in the subject. These included minor studies on the Tagalog language, linguistics, anthropology, folklore, biography, bibliography, and a translation of a Spanish document on Batanes (Manuel 1984:213). A couple of these appeared in newspapers, others in scholarly journals one was self-published (the biography of Rizal's dear friend and collaborator, Austrian Ferdinand Blumentritt [Manuel 1953]), and others were not published at all (Manuel 1984:213). This ensemble of works he wrote in the immediate postwar, post-independence decade is perhaps best viewed as an instance of Manuel's probing of the deep roots of Filipino history through an array of disciplinary approaches.

Manuel's first foray into graduate studies was formative for him, but perhaps not in the ways one might anticipate. He did gain new insights into the study of social phenomena and learn new techniques to enable such, for instance when he enrolled in classes on "Philippine Archaeology" (Manuel 1984:201). And he was particularly pleased when these courses allowed him to churn out papers of one or another sort. Yet one would be hard pressed to discern the ways in which the experience fundamentally reshaped his thinking or methods. Judging by Manuel's scholarship, he for instance had little use for Beyer's peculiar approach to prehistory, his cultural diffusionism, ethnological studies, or fascination with tektites, despite that the latter institutionalized his vision at the department (Tatel 2010: 228-237). Graduate school was useful for Manuel for three reasons less directly related to education. First, the greater function of the MA program was that it provided him with the opportunity to work on a larger project (his thesis on Tayabas Tagalog) as opposed to the shorter, essay-type writings. Second, his deeper engagement with the discipline availed him opportunities to build relationships with major figures in the field, not only through enrolling in graduate courses but also through presenting at conferences and other such fora. Graduate work helped him to become more enmeshed in the global network of Philippine studies scholars, broadly conceived. These two things enabled the third major function of the MA: greater professional opportunities, specifically promotion from Instructor to Assistant Professor, higher pay, and more prestige. Those who have variously delighted or recoiled in their graduate school experience can attest to the obvious ways it shaped them as thinkers and writers. For Manuel the graduate experience at UP was more one of practical benefit than it was of intellectual refashioning. In fact, he completed his MA much in the same way he would later complete his doctorate, with more classes taken, analytical techniques mastered, and contacts he could call upon. But not, notably, by fundamentally rethinking, questioning, examining, or renewing how he produced his scholarship.

An illustration of this can be found in the fact that Manuel drew significance from only two events during his MA career: one an international conference, and the other, his thesis project which later became a published book. As he describes the first,

> "…in 1953 an international event of significance took place in Manila and Quezon City. This was the Eighth Pacific Science Congress, participated in by figures and eminent

> men in all sciences. In the anthropology division, I presented two papers, one on 'An Inquiry into the Origin of Philippine Languages' and the other on 'Evidence Relating to Chinese-Philippine Linguistic Relation and Its Bearing on the Possible Dating of Philippine Languages.' Though the room assigned to me was packed, it surprised me that after some demonstration on the blackboard, there were no questions asked." (Manuel 1989:163)

This is notable both for what Manuel says and does not say. First, the two papers he presented were not on new topics (introduced and explored in a graduate seminar say), but instead continuations on themes first put to paper in *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language*. His previous years of coursework seem not to have inspired him to pursue anything new, nor even dramatically reexamine his earlier approaches to projects he pursued. Indeed, he could have presented these papers at the conference even without having enrolled in any graduate program in the first place.

The great achievement of his MA degree was his thesis project, which he completed writing in 1953 (although he officially attained his degree a year later because "Prof. Beyer delayed its endorsement" for unclear reasons [Manuel 1984:201]), and which appeared as a published book almost two decades later, as "A Lexicographic Study of Tayabas Tagalog" in the journal *Diliman Review* in 1972. Here was the major project Manuel had assiduously worked to assemble by speaking to locals in Quezon Province (then Tayabas Province), where he and his family stayed during the Japanese occupation. As he conceived of it, the project was an opportunity to enrich the national language, heavily based as it was on the language of the capital and surrounding regions, by mapping out as maximally as possible its vast word bank, a mostly unwritten archive kept in the thoughts and speech of rural Tagalogs in particular. As he described the problem,

> "Up to the present time, the problem of the national language is lexicographical, especially in its shortcomings with regard to scientific and technological terms. For instance, greater Manila area Tagalog does not have terms for 'lever,' 'freeboard,' 'fog,' 'peninsula,' 'canal' (as in "Panama Canal), 'mask,' 'radiation,' and so forth, for which there exist in Tayabas Tagalog usage appropriate terms (*baliway*, *balitaw*, *hamuog*, *tulon*, *talusan*, *alimukhâ*, *danggâ*, respectively). When people and students have a need for

> these concepts in their daily conversation in Filipino (the national language, which is really Tagalog), they use the English terms which they have learned in school without blushing." (Manuel 1989:163)

The value of the work for anthropology is obvious: its author documented in fairly comprehensive detail the culture of an understudied community through its language. But as Manuel makes clear, his goals were not merely scientific; he wanted nothing less than to indigenize the national language, to excise it of the English accretions it absorbed during the American period. Thus what seems like a simple feat of creating a dictionary was in fact a means of decolonial practice. When the work did appear in print in 1972, its printing was limited to only 100 copies (Manuel 1984:232). It was un-warrantably in its time what it remains today: an esoteric, seldom read, and under-circulated work. In any case, with his MA completed in 1954, and now promoted to assistant professor because of it, Manuel could turn more of his attention to the now two-decades old national biography project.

What would become perhaps the longest-running, lengthiest research project – in terms of page length, number of entries, and years in preparation – in Filipino biographic history had begun simply, in 1929, when Manuel and his fellow library staff at the Filipiniana section of the UP Library found themselves unable, day after day, to fulfill their patrons most basic requests. He described their "daily experience":

> "…whereas it took us library workers a few minutes generally to provide reference material on questions relating to phases of American or occidental culture and life, to our great chagrin it took us as a rule much more time, often hours, sometimes days, before we could be of any assistance to students and others who had similar queries on Philippine art, literature, history, biography, or any phase of Filipino culture. It is no exaggeration to confess that often we could not provide any source material at all in weeks, nay even in months, with the resources at our command. Sometimes we succeeded in locating a reference here, or an indication there, but after great exertions and much waste of time, and after our patrons were gone! This left many of us with a guilty feeling that we were not performing our duty well." (Manuel et al. 1955a:4-5)

This problem of the main library at the country's flagship university was merely symptomatic of a larger set of issues that underlay the relative novelty of Philippine studies as a modern academic discipline in the economically developing, (then still-colonial) nation. "The general problem that calls for solution," he wrote,

> "is the need for reference books relating to the Filipino people, their languages and literatures, their culture and history, the lives of their heroes, leaders, pioneers, and distinguished citizens." (Manuel et al. 1955:6)

A literal archipelago of history remained to be written, and heretofore too few had heeded the call.

Books that attempted to provide biographies of notable Filipinos in something of a comprehensive fashion were not new to Philippine history. Notably, during the Spanish colonial era, a number of missionary histories attempted to do this very thing. Portions of Francisco Colín's *Labor evangélica* (3 vols., 1663), Pedro Murillo Velarde's *Historia de la provincia de Filipinas de la Compañia de Jesús* (2 vols., 1749), and Juan de la Concepción's *Historia general de Filipinas* (14 vols., 1788-1792), for instance provide generally brief, encyclopedia-style entries about the lives of the European men who sought to evangelize the Philippine Indios. (The first non-written biographies in Philippine history thus exclusively focused on the privileged group who served as colonialism's principal agents.) Manuel Artigas y Cueva's two-volume *Galería de Filipinos Ilustres* (1917, 1918) was the first significant national work of Filipino biography. Written during the American period, Artigas y Cueva's volume could be paired with similar contemporary works such as M. M. Norton's *Builders of a Nation* (1914). Manuel thus had models from the Philippines on which he could base his own project, but these were very few and different in scale and scope than his own. In the course of Manuel's mature life, a few select biographical works appeared after and contemporaneously with his own (see Romanillos 2008), who's-whos centered around major figures in a particular community such as scientists, writers, and the like (e.g. Alegre & Fernandez 1987, 1993; Villamin 1976, 1978), not to mention more recent studies (e.g. Zapanta-Manlapaz 2003). But prior to – and since – Manuel there had been no systematic attempt to chronicle the lives of Filipinos across class, region, profession, historical period, and more. Certainly none had the ambition to complete such a project as maximally as he did either.

As he continued fleshing out the history of the nation, he worked, in quintessential Manuel fashion, on evenings, Sundays, and holidays to gather biographical materials about Filipinos of note, from every variety of printed source, to photographs and other non-textual media, to even interviews he would undertake with family members of other individuals knowledgeable of his subjects. Given the difficulty of mapping out the life of every single conceivable important Filipino in history, Manuel enlisted his wife, Magdalena Avenir, her brother, Antonio Avenir, and his own brother, Lucio Manuel, to help with the work of gathering and organizing the information, each one of whom served as a coauthor of the project. After years of research, analysis, and writing, including the involuntary sabbatical of the Japanese occupation, the first of what were intended to be many fruits of their labor appeared in 1955.

The first volume of the *DPB*, like its successors, constitutes an authoritative collection of biographies of various Filipinos, a number of whom received treatment for the first time. It aimed to cover individuals who had,

> "contributed significantly to Philippine life or progress in any of its varied aspects or to the welfare of the Filipino people, or excelled in some intellectual pursuit, in his or her chosen profession or field, or is remembered for pioneering venture or sacrifice made for the country" (Manuel et al. 1955:6).

As he described some highlights from the inaugural volume,

> "Many of the biographical sketches included in *DPB* are almost thumbnail. However, there are long ones, e.g.: Nicanor Abelardo, Manuel Artigas, Victorino Carrion, Lorenzo Guerrero, Miguel Malvar, T.H. Pardo de Tavera receiving 30 pages of attention and being the longest, Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, Juan Crisostomo Soto (the Father of Kapampangan literature), and Joaquin Tuason are some of the notable personalities". (Manuel n.d.:7)

This was a labor of passion, completed without any significant funding, by authors with limited training as a group, and who had to make use of whatever insufficient primary documents and oral interviews they could secure (not to mention they had to do so in light of the monumental loss of Filipino patrimony during the war from 1945 onward), which goes much of the way to explain the *DPB's* variegated, even random assortment of biographies and the variable length and depth of the entries from

volume to volume. To focus on its shortcomings is however to overlook that without the *DPB* we simply would not have information about so many Filipinos of note. Even today the first volume alone remains unsurpassed as a source of biography and history for global Filipinos, not to mention the subsequent three that would appear in print, nor the other half dozen that the team of authors planned (Romanillos 2008:125-26).

The same year Manuel published the first volume of the *DPB*, he also published a significant, yet mostly forgotten, essay on his vision of the utility, methodology, and purpose of oral traditions research, "Notes on Philippine Folk Literature," which appeared in the *University of Manila Journal of East Asiatic Studies* (1955b). This was a topic he had of course thought a great deal on but not yet written about over the previous decades. His most notable entry on the subject prior to this was the very brief essay, "Folk Literature" which he published in *Philippines Quarterly* just a few years prior (1952). That essay reads like a think piece or a working paper-type draft of the essay he would refer to as his "Notes" in subsequent years.

On its surface, his article "Notes on Philippine Folk Literature" reads like any basic primer on the subject one might encounter. Manuel opens by describing the importance of oral and written literature for societies more generally. He then outlines the colonial history that explains why, say, the Ifugao have a wealth of the former and Tagalogs the latter. He then lists examples from the various genres as he reckons them: "Myths and Legends," "Ballads and Folk Songs," "Epics," "Metrical Romances," and "Folk Poetry"; and provides excerpts of each where possible. All of this is fairly conventional stuff— folkloristics in a sort of Fanslerian mold but with Beyerian touches. Where Manuel adds his own flourishes is in the essay's conclusion, which he titled, tamely, "In Appreciation". That title does little to conceal that what follows reads more like a manifesto. Building on the juxtaposition he set up earlier between oral and written literature, he writes in the key passage,

> "But Filipino folk literature has rich backgrounds! Behind it are thousands of years of development; it has imbibed the wealth of lore of varied and many cultures—from its continental moorings up to its insular surroundings. From its beginnings of customs and superstitions which gave it impetus, it developed into myths and legends, folk tales and stories; branched out into folk songs and ballad, although this may have not been the chronology; and flowered into

> narrative poems and epics of long and sustained story telling. Our recent literature, by way of contrast, does not show any inclination of using the materials of the past. Rather it has its sympathies for exotic molds; hence, it is groping—some of its courtezans thinking that they have found the straw in foreign mediums and audiences. Other groups, however, believe that the native soil can turn out something that smells of coconut oil and look upon it for ushering in a new age in Filipino national literature." (Manuel 1955b:153)

After what were now decades of research and writing, here at last was Manuel's statement about the purpose of his prehistorical scholarship, including but not limited to folklore: to locate the essence of the Filipinos' national culture. Towards that end he concludes by calling for the collection of, "materials awaiting the patient ears and diligent hands of every student, not necessarily folklorists, but anyone interested in understanding Filipino literature as a whole" (Manuel 1955b:153). If there was one statement that expressed the goal of all of the scholarship he carried out in multiple fields, not just folklore, this would be it. The purpose of studying Filipino peoples was to "discover" who they were, assimilate the parts to the whole, and arrive—produce?—the authentic Self that had heretofore never been realized.

Even less remembered than his "Notes on Philippine Folk Literature" is another brief essay on the same topic he drafted the following year, in Filipino, "*Ang* Folklore *o Kaalamang-bayan sa Pilipinas*," which was published as part of a series of papers for the Institute of National Language in 1956. This essay touches on some of the same themes as the one precedes it—Manuel introduces the subject of folklore, says something about its varieties, describes why the collection and study of oral traditions is significant, and points to avenues for further research. There are slight differences of emphasis however. The essay was more expansive in its recounting of previous examples of folkloric research, surveying as it does the early and late Spanish periods, Ilustrado efforts like those of de los Reyes and Rizal, the American scholars of their colonial era, as well as more recent work up to the present day (Manuel 1956:33-37). His explanation of the origins and purpose of oral traditions studies in this essay more closely employs Beyerian concepts and terminology, for instance when he writes,

> "*Ang kaalamang-bayan ay isang sangay ng palatauhan* (anthropology) *na ang layunin ay upang pag-aralan at*

> *malaman ang pinagmulan ng tao at kasaysayan ng sangkatauhan at ang pag-unlad ng tao sa kabihasnan*"[2] (Manuel 1956:38)

Lastly he is more explicit in terms of what policy steps he argues must be taken as a result of and in furtherance the research, for instance when he recommends that all courses in introductory anthropology require a term paper that documents some aspect of local oral culture (Manuel 1956:39-40), as was par for the course in his classes and those of his mentor Beyer.

These features notwithstanding, "*Ang* Folklore *o Kaalamang-bayan sa Pilipinas*" is most notable as an event of linguistic politics at a particular moment in post-independence Filipino history. If so much of Manuel's scholarship was geared towards building a nation, on the basis of things like a shared, pan-archipelagic language and literary heritage, then surely he would write more essays of this sort, in what became the national language. Interestingly, in choosing to write the essay through the medium of a Philippine language rather than English, Manuel anticipated a scholarly practice that did not become widespread until two decades later when anthropologists sought to indigenize research beginning in the 1970s (Tatel 2010:246-247) And yet, in hindsight, the essay would turn out to be an outlier, a one-off. In only a few instances thereafter would Manuel attempt to write his scholarship in anything besides the medium of the English language. Perhaps this was inevitable, given the supremacy of the colonial tongue, which was the lingua franca for folklore and anthropology globally as so many other fields. In this essay itself, he could not but revert to English at points, to make clear the very points of reference that he sought to restate in the local idiom. The inexorability of English was such that he even included a word bank of Tagalog/Filipino terms he used in the essay with their accompanying translations into English. There is thus much to note about this single, obscure, and seemingly unremarkable essay from 1956 for those interested in the history of Filipino cultural nationalism. Such is why the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino included it in its recent compilation of his works (2019). For Manuel, it serves as a (likely unwitting) demonstration of the challenges he would encounter in his lifelong scholarly campaign.

Manuel's early years as faculty in anthropology were a success by any measure. Aside from the obvious feat of refining his pedagogy through

[2]['Folklore is a branch of anthropology whose goal is to study and learn the origin of man, the history of humanity, and the development of human civilization.']

teaching more and more across the years, he earned his first graduate degree, drafted or published works on a variety of subjects, presented his research at various fora, and even gained a promotion. In submitting his Masters' thesis, he made substantial progress towards publishing what remains a major work of Philippine lexicography. His publication during these years of the first volume of the *DPB* ranks as career-defining accomplishment. And yet Manuel's scholarship from 1948 to 1955 was merely a preview of what was to come.

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