E. ARSENIO MANUEL, UNFINISHED: 1986-2003

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This, the final essay in a series of six[1] that narrates the life of anthropologist E. Arsenio Manuel (1909-2003), covers the period from 1986 to 2003, the year of his death, and narrates the major events at the close of the anthropologist's life. It examines the much deserved accolades bestowed upon him around 1990, the major publications he completed, those he could not, and some of the personal details that can be gleaned about his final years. A final section caps off the essay series by considering the meaning of Manuel's life today as well as offering some suggestions about what might be done to make his work more widely available.

Keywords*: Magdalena Manuel, National Commission on Culture and Arts, Philippineasian, Pasig Papers*

E. Arsenio Manuel's final years: 1986-2003

E. Arsenio Manuel formally retired from the University of the Philippines (UP) in 1976, although he would continue teaching for more than two decades after. The event of his retirement itself did not occasion the fanfare he anticipated. As he described it, "The University of the Philippines retired me on my sixty-seventh birthday, December 14, 1976, after two extensions of service, without any honors, after serving it for 49½ years" (Manuel 1989:167). One gets the impression that Manuel was nudged out rather than departing on his own volition. It was irksome as well, to Magdalena, his wife, who had herself retired three years earlier after holding various librarian posts in the Philippines and the US. She was in New York when she heard of the news. She "was the first person

[1] The first essay can be found in *Aghamtao* Vol.29 (2021). The third, fourth, and fifth essays are in this volume. The second essay is forthcoming.

abroad saddened by the news that there were no honors" (Manuel 1989:176).

Much later, the UP did eventually recognize the titan it had had in its midst. Quite belatedly, it awarded him the title of Professor Emeritus in January of 1987. However, Magdalena did not live to see it happen; she had died the year before, on May 11, 1986. Manuel's achievement was very much hers to share. Without her lifelong love and support, he never would have achieved so many of the accomplishments we now associate with him. Her family connections enabled their survival during the Japanese occupation, so one wonders how – even, *if* – he would have survived the 1940s without her. And her role in his scholarly career was momentous. She was his major co-author of the *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* (*DPB*). It was at her urging alone that Manuel pursued the Ph.D., a degree he saw little use in earning but which benefited his career (as a consequence of his graduate career at the University of Chicago he met Richard M. Dorson[2], for instance). Most importantly, she was the primary caretaker and manager of their family throughout his decades of teaching, research, and writing. One struggles to imagine how Manuel could have done it without Magdalena. The deferred joy he felt at finally being awarded emeritus status was overshadowed by her absence. The opening words to Manuel's first epic read, "To Nena/who shared his existence" (Manuel 1958a:vii). So, too, should she have shared in the final celebratory event of his UP career.

Formal retirement did not signal an end to teaching. Instead, he continued to teach graduate courses at the University of Santo Tomas and, during summer terms, at the Centro Escolar University. He also seems to have had periodic stints after 1987 at the UP. Manuel enjoyed interacting with students particularly later in life. As he put it, "I love to teach anthropology, history, folklore, archaeology, and linguistics courses, for teaching somehow eases the ageing process." (Manuel 1989:167) Predictably, he was very devoted to teaching methodology in these various fields, which of course he found exciting. But his students were less enthused; he reportedly would send students' papers back repeatedly until they completed their papers according to his exacting standards (Interview with Corazon Manuel, 2020). His bookish demeanor did little

[2] [Richard M. Dorson (1916-1981), history professor at Indiana University, cited as the "father of American folklore". How Dorson and Manuel met, and Manuel's consequent work is narrated in Manuel (2023:35).]

to inspire their own proclivities for procedure and likely stressed out more than a few students. (Azurin 1991a).

Manuel's idiosyncrasies in the classroom had their less serious sides too. The consummate anthropologist never shied away from matters of sexuality, which were seldom talked about then in the socially conservative country. After all, this was the same man who used his singular knowledge of deep Tagalog drawn from fieldwork in Central Luzon to ruminate on the proper etymology of more contemporary terms like "artificial breasts" (*alisuso*), "artificial penis" (*alititî*), among others. Whether he intended the former to refer to "surgically enlarged breasts" and the latter to refer to a "dildo," "vibrator," or something other, remains unclear. In any case, this quest for knowledge will have to be resumed by whomever among his successors aspires to continue what he characterized as the "Intellectualization of the National Language" (Manuel n.d.:17). Perhaps [the National Artist] Virgilio S. Almario, will settle these matters.

If Manuel was disappointed by the UP's lack of timely recognition of his contributions, he could nonetheless take heart in many other accolades bestowed upon him. Around the turn of the 1990s, Manuel received awards from a number of the major institutions of culture in the Philippines. In addition to his emeritus status, he was designated, in chronological order: recognition as "*Ama ng Pilipinong Folklore*" ['Father of Philippine Folklore'] in the 1989 *Gawad para sa Sining* awarded by the Cultural Center of the Philippines; the 2000 *Dangal Alab ng Haraya* by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), a "Testimonial of Gratitude" from the Ugnayang Pang-Aghamtao (UGAT);[3] and designation by the Philippine Social Science Council as a "National Social Scientist of 1991." Here at long last, as Manuel entered into his eighties, were the praise and recognition he so richly deserved for his lifelong work.

In no small part, these awards stemmed from broader societal changes, outside of the academe, regarding the brand of cultural studies Manuel had been practicing for decades. A major shift occurred in 1987 when the Corazon Aquino administration issued Executive Order No. 118, which created the Presidential Commission on Culture and Arts (PCCA), which five years later became the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Section 3, subsection (a) of Executive Order 118 mandated that the

[3] [*Aghamtao 1990* is dedicated to E. Arsenio Manuel, "Filipino Pioneer Anthropologist" (Azurin 1991b:n.p.).]

commission: "Foster a sense of national identity and pride through the conservation and promotion of our cultural patrimony and our national heritage." A high level of support for cultural research initially driven by the whims of those in power (Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos during the period of martial law especially) had become institutionalized and would now be regularly funded and promoted. There was little audience for Manuel's scholarship in the 1950s; few Filipinos at any level of society had interest in the culture or history of the archipelago's diverse peoples (Corazon Manuel 2020). He and many others, some of whom were, like him, also based at the UP, worked hard over the years to change it. The foundation, and, since then, continued operation of the NCCA shows that their labor paid off. It only took some four decades, half of Manuel's lifetime up to that point.

All the while, as much as he could, Manuel continued to churn out his scholarship. These included works he had earlier intended for publication as well as newer studies. He was most interested in completing publication of subsequent volumes of the *DPB*. He had been "engrossed" in completing the project since the decade prior. One auspicious sign in the new era was that he and Magdalena were able to complete volume three in 1986. He describes some of its major entries,

> The frontispiece of volume III (1986) is occupied by poet Cecilio Apostol whose verses stirred both revolutionaries and private citizens to fight for freedom during the second stage of the Revolution; followed by Gregorio Araneta, Cayetano Arellano (chief justice of the Supreme Court for 20 years), Manuel Arguilla (short story writer in English), Fr. Miguel Benavidez (founder of the Univ. of Santo Tomas), Maria Carpena (the songbird of zarzuela presentations), Jaime C. de Veyra (scholar, promoter of the Spanish language and the development of a National Language, who has the longest write-up in this volume), Ermin Garcia (provincial journalist who exposed local corruption in Pangasinan), Juan Javier (impresario), Gen. Vicente Lim (soldier and patriot), Fernando M. Maramag (journalist and critic), Dr. Eliodoro Mercado (pioneer and leprologist who could have been given a Nobel Prize), Dr. Rebecca Parrish (who served the Filipino people as a physician and hospital director for thirty years), Manuel Ramirez (unknown poet in Spanish), Fr. Gaspar de San

> Agustin (Augustinian missionary and humanist), Fr. Alberto Santamaria (Dominican historian and Filipinist), Don Enrique Zobel (founder and sponsor of the Zobel Literary Awards in Spanish). (Manuel n.d.:8)

The timing of publication here continued a precedent. Volume two (1970) had appeared roughly fifteen years after volume one (1955) and now this third, another sixteen after its precursor. If this trend had continued, one would have expected the next edition to appear sometime around the turn of the millennium. Happily, it appeared ahead of schedule.

Manuel and his co-authors published the fourth volume of the *DPB* in 1995, less than a decade after the preceding one. This would turn out to be the final installment he would complete during his lifetime, although he intended to put out subsequent editions. This installment,

> …features Epifanio de los Santos after whom EDSA has been named, an exponent of Filipino culture studies who tracked documents on the KKK and wrote the lives of M.H. del Pilar, Jose Rizal, Emilio Jacinto, Andres Bonifacio, and Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo in order that a better appreciation of these patriots' contribution to nation building could be made.
>
> Lakandula, the Tagalog patriarch during the coming of the Spaniards, little known in history books, now has an illuminated biography. H. Otley Beyer, Hermogenes Ilagan (the Tagalog dramatist), Juan C. Laya (author in English and Tagalog), Francisco Buencamino (composer of Mayon Symphony), Graciano Nepomuceno (woodcarver), Ferdinand Magellan (discoverer of the Philippine Islands for Europe), Eulogio B. Rodriguez (Filipinist & director of the National Library), and Norberto Romualdez (scholar and father of the law establishing the Institute of National Language) are personalities having longer biographies. (Manuel n.d.:8)

That the fourth volume ended up constituting the final one to be published was of course not what he intended. The archive of materials Manuel and his collaborators had been acquiring over the course of decades could have made for something of the order of a ten-volume compendium (Manuel 2020). Given the trajectory of *DPB* volumes churned out so far, the authors' belief that they could realistically complete the set was certainly too rosy. A short time after the completion

of volume four – perhaps a year or two or three? – they seemed to have been at least somewhat close to completing its sequel. Manuel describes their proximity to its completion and something of its contents.

> The typescript of DPB V is now being finalized for publication during the centennial of the Philippine Revolution. The frontispiece is reserved for Andres Bonifacio and the volume will feature the lives of several revolutionaries among them being Emilio Jacinto, Dr. Pio Valenzuela and others. Biographies of Roy F. Barton (American anthropologist whose works are now classic in Philippine anthropological literature), Gabriel A. Bernardo (scholar and librarian), Clodualdo del Mundo (Tagalog writer), Vicente Manansala (painter), Mariano Perfecto (author in Hiligaynon and Bikol), and Nicolas Zafra (professor of history), are among the many that will be included in this volume. (Manuel n.d.:9)

What happened to the manuscript itself after he penned these words is a mystery. A photocopied document I have found resembles a handwritten draft of the title page. Among its many scribbles is the following: "Started May 20, 1993/Verified for finalization Dec. 24, 1995" (UP Main Library n.d.). It is unclear what "finalization" meant in terms of describing a stage in the process of publication, where the final drafts ended up, and so on. Despite its proximity to completion, Manuel and his co-authors' fifth book of the *DPB* never materialized. What happened to this supposedly finalized draft is unknown. It lingers in oblivion, a fate it shares with the purported second half of the series.

The same thing happened to his completed manuscript, *Folktales of the Philippines*, but for different reasons. One might recall that the genesis of this work lay in the relationship Manuel forged with Dorson. At some point the two men discussed a comprehensive volume of Filipino folklore, which Manuel would assemble. Manuel's contributions to Dorson's world folklore volume (Dorson 1975) were a very few sample pieces of what would constitute the broader volume.

At some point after the mid-1970s, Manuel began to bring the book closer to publication. But of course, it was but one among many such works he attempted to complete simultaneously, so this volume never had his full attention. As I had found, just like the fifth volume of the *DPB*, I came across a photocopied, handwritten title page (Manuel n.d.:n.p.). In its entirety, it reads:

Folktales of the Philippines
Selected and Edited by E. Arsenio Manuel
With Notes and Bibliography
FIRST ORIGINAL COPY
Complete Dec. 24, 1992

At that point two major problems had arisen, both outside of Manuel's own control. The first was that Dorson died in Sept. of 1981, thereby placing the project in limbo. At that point, his colleague W. Edson Richmond took control, however, and sought to complete the series, Manuel's volume included. Sadly he too perished just over a decade later, in 1994, of cancer (Rosenberg 1994). So it is likely that the whole enterprise fizzled out around the very moment that Manuel had at last completed his submission. That the project began two decades before Manuel completed it, that ownership of it moved from its originator to a successor, and that the pertinent documents seemingly got lost in the shuffle when that successor expired, did not augur well for the completion of Manuel's Philippines volume. He did seem to complete at least a near final draft he intended for publication (Manuel 2020). Neither I nor anyone else who has attempted to locate the manuscript has been able to find it. (I have attempted to find the manuscript among Manuel's, Dorson's, and Richmond's personal papers but have been unsuccessful). Whether it even still exists, somewhere in the Philippines, the US, or elsewhere, is unknown.

Manuel had greater success however with at least a few of his other endeavors. Among the books he was able to successfully publish in his final decade was *Documenting Philippineasian: An Inquiry into the Ancestry of the Filipino People, Their Early Culture and Prehistory, before the Christian Era* (1994). This book served as his grand, definitive statement about the prehistory of the earliest Filipinos, whom he tracked using mainly linguistic but also [secondary] archaeological evidence. The book synthesizes insights from his earlier studies on language, dating back to his book *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language* (1948), his essay "Pre-Proto-Philippineasian" (1966), and his more recent essay published in *Aghamtao,* "Introducing Philippineasian" (1990). Perhaps because it was not a major academic press that published it, the book received little notice upon publication. No scholarly journal, in the Philippines or anywhere else, for instance, even reviewed the book. Nor has it received much attention since then.

While *Documenting Philippineasian* awaits a more definitive analysis, probably by a linguistic anthropologist, it at least some of the principal contributions Manuel intended to make bear noting. One is that in these he continues to assert that the originators of the first languages in the Philippines came from China, rather than from Taiwan which is the more common assertion of Austronesian linguists. His evidence for this is the monosyllabic basis of both prehistoric Chinese and Philippine languages, the very thing he sought to illustrate in *Chinese Elements in the Tagalog Language*. Here he acknowledges the reservations that reviewers had about its thesis when the book appeared in 1948, but he sidesteps them. He asserts,

> …these critical comments did not move me sufficiently to write a reply for the reason that to do so would require going into theoretical exercises that would not solve problems. At this point, it is not necessary for me to take up some of their comments seriously. (Manuel 1994:8)

One wonders why. Another argument Manuel advances is that "Indonesian" or "Malayo-Polynesian," or "Malay" languages were decidedly not precursors to Philippine languages. Instead of Malayo-Polynesian languages evolving over time and branching off into Tagalog, Ilocano, Visaya, and so on, he views the process as proceeding the opposite direction. As he states quite clearly in the article that preceded the book,

> …the use of the term Malay or Proto-Malay is relegated to the background or rejected because the Malays were the end-pro-ducts of the Proto-Austronesians or Proto-Philippineasians. The Malays were not our ancestors, it was rather the Proto-Austro-nesians or Proto-Philippineasians who were the descendants of a still more ancient stock of Proto-Asians who were Mongoloids. (Manuel 1990:42)

Lastly Manuel's goal with this entire project of providing a linguistic historical corrective was, quite explicitly, to instill Filipino pride. As he puts it in the first section ("National Awakening") of the first chapter ("Introduction: The Problem of National Identity"),

> It is my intention, therefore, in this paper to present *our* history from its traceable beginnings from prehistoric times through the various periods in a rapid-fire manner, but not avoiding a basic understanding of the achievements of *our forefathers* (Manuel 1990:1, emphases added).

His motivation was not primarily to outline the prehistory of peopling the archipelago and consider how that event was linked to similar movements beyond it. Instead it was to valorize the culture of the first "Filipinos"—even if doing so meant going against the mainstream of scholarly opinion.

Manuel published a very different sort of book the following year, *Treasury of Stories,* with Gilda Cordero-Fernando (1995), a collection of folktales taken from regions and cultures throughout the Philippines. It is a unique contribution in his oeuvre. Published by Anvil, it is the only commercial work Manuel ever published during his lifetime. (The coffe e table book *Si Malakas at Si Maganda* [Ramos et al. 1980] does not seem to have been published in large numbers and circulated little). The *Treasury of Stories* is very visually appealing: illustrations of many characters and settings accompany many of the stories. The text is presented in larger-than-usual font size, it is framed in places by borders or other visual effects, and lines are set apart by one-point-five spacing. In contrast with Manuel's conventional academic prose, the tales here are presented more as events of storytelling, designed to be read and enjoyed rather than critically examined. Not even his various writings on folklore for the publication *Archipelago* in the late 1970s were written in such an accessible manner. These unique features of the book raise the question of why Manuel sought to publish it in the first place, given especially his renewed desire to put out subsequent volumes of the *DPB* and possibly more of the epic songs he had recorded. He conceived of it as a novel contribution towards the "foundation of Philippine national literature" (Manuel n.d.:6). This was true of many of his works in oral traditions, of course. One wonders what similarities or differences were that this book shared with the *Folktales of the Philippines* volume that never made it to print. Was *Treasury of Stories* that same book in different form?

Aside from subsequent volumes of the *DPB*, Manuel had in mind any number of smaller and larger projects he attempted to complete in the 1990s, only some of which he was able to bring to completion; exactly how many cannot be definitively established. He was able to publish a few of his smaller essays, such as the introductory essay on Philippineasia described above. Many more persisted in the oblivion of "in preparation" until he could write no more. These included a fifty-page glossary of Manuvu' legal terms he had been readying for print as early as 1984, essays on the peopling of Mindanao, an etymology of the Tagalog word "*himbabao*," and a monograph on the origin of all Philippine languages (a work distinct from *Documenting Philippineasian*), among others (Manuel

1984:247 and Manuel n.d.:15). He additionally planned to update the checklist of his entire corpus published as part of the 1984 festschrift, both to add new works as well as those he originally neglected to include but never had occasion to complete (Manuel n.d.:n.p.).

The greatest unfinished work is his "Pasig Papers," details and the location of which are unknown as of this writing. His most substantial, final description of the project reads:

> Mr. Manuel has endeavored throughout his career to teach anthropological subjects to his students and he had urged them to do fieldwork and write term papers relevant to the courses. He has carefully read these papers, seeing to it that they followed general principles of scholarship and research. Mr. Manuel was patient enough to edit and compile these papers into organized volumes bearing on cultural subjects, the ethnographic being one of the foci of the collection. He now has 250 volumes of these papers bound stoutly and stamped in gold and called PASIG PAPERS. Some more 25 volumes are in the process of compil[ation]. It is his pride to have done this compilation from 1940 to the present. All these volumes are now part and parcel of his rich Filipiniana collection. Represented are the ethnographies of ethnic groups from the north of the country through Luzon, the Visayan Islands, Palawan, Mindanao and Sulu. He has made use of these papers in his writings and researches, for these papers are the result of personal interviews and fieldwork by his students. This is practically a continuation of H. Otley Beyer's Philippine Ethnographic Series of about 150 volumes, though this compilation included published material which PASIG PAPERS does not. (Manuel n.d.:11)

Manuel never made clear what he intended to be done with this collection, although his mention of Beyer's series suggests that he intended it to be housed at some national repository. One obvious candidate would have been the very UP Main Library where he first developed his passion for archiving. Others such as the National Library or National Archives would be eminently suitable candidates as well. It ranks as one of the great calamities of historic Filipino heritage that this series that he expended more than half of a century in assembling is still lost.

That Manuel would be unable to bring all of his works in the pipeline to eventual publication is a central theme in *Harvests of Songs: Constituting the Manuvu' Tuwaang Epic Cycle*, what stands as his final published book (Manuel 1999). The core of this work is quite simple: it is a listing of the various songs he recorded in his multiple trips to the field beginning in the 1950s, only three of which he was able to transform into published epics. The book, however, contains more than that. As he seeks to provide general information that might be useful for understanding and appreciating the songs, he episodically describes moments from his time in the field, his earlier attempts at turning the insights gained into viable works, his encounters with locals, and more. Manuel does not disclose a great deal of information here. Loosely formatted and written, it is far from systematic or comprehensive as memoir of fieldwork, biography of an academic, or anything in between. Read as a very particular list of interest to students of Philippine folklore and anthropology, the book has its uses, particularly with its glimpses of the anthropologist in the field, recollected some fifty years later. I read it as the coda to the distinguished career of one of the greatest academics the Philippines will ever produce.

Journeys unfinished: Manuel in the past and future

E. Arsenio Manuel died on December 27, 2004, two weeks after his ninety-fourth birthday (*UP Newsletter* 2004). His longevity enabled him to live a life devoted to change and to see those changes take place. He had endeavored to see that the local events organized by his father in his boyhood, for instance, become transformed and made into something of a "national culture." By at least the middle of his life this became true. He wanted Filipinos to value the lifeways of upland peoples and to understand that this was in fact their own culture. Over time, they came to do that very thing, whether in the originary archipelago or in the global locales in which Filipinos pronounce their identity today (e.g., Bascara 2012). Above all, Manuel wanted to substantiate and textualize the ephemera that he termed "Filipino culture" as a distinct, rich, and significative force in contemporary life. In the preface to the fifth volume of the DPB, he inscribed, "There is no invention by men more enduring than the inscribed word" (Manuel n.d.:n.p.). If this is true, the prolific Manuel might outlast us all.

One wonders what were the things that the nonagenarian Manuel pondered as he peered into the setting of the sun. Born later into the epochs of orality, literacy, and print, he witnessed the revolutions of radio, film,

television and, quite late, the digital. The man who transmuted voice into writing and print, however, never seemed to fancy technology as an end in and of itself. He was at home at his typewriter and seemed quite comfortable with it into the dawn of the Era of Personal Computers. As for tape recorders and such, unreliable as they were when he first made use of them in the 1950s, he viewed them, too, as merely devices to be used for recording and not extraordinary marvels in and of themselves (Manuel 1999:15). Among the hypotheticals one ponders is what he would have thought about more recent technologies that have been useful for the very sorts of research he undertook throughout his life. Certainly he would see with great enthusiasm epic scholar Nicole Revel's use of Internet and digital technology to make Filipino epics available on the web (ADMU 2023). Whether or not the man who throughout his life passionately urged Filipinos to record would have enjoyed the transformation of the geo-body he valorized into the "Selfie Capital of the World" is harder to determine (Corrales & Calleja 2014).

E. Arsenio Manuel became a foundational figure in anthropology, folklore, biography, library science, and Philippine studies at large in his century of life. His greatest contributions lie in his adding a material corpus to these fields in the Philippines through his sheer force of effort, researching, writing, and publicizing his particular form of scholarship. He was one of a handful of anthropologists, alongside others at the UP and beyond, like Ma. Delia Coronel, Francisco Demetrio, Juan R. Francisco, F. Landa Jocano, Elena Maquiso, and others,[4] who contributed

[4] [Sr Maria Delia Coronel, ICM, PhD, (b.1953), was professor at the Mindanao State University (Marawi). She implemented the research-transcription project of the Maranao epic Darangen, and wrote a literary translation in English (published in 8 volumes: Cali & Coronel 1986-1993). Her *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore* (1967), came out in 12 editions between 1966 and 1976 (Pedroza 2017).

Francisco Demetrio, SJ, PhD, (1920-1996), compiler and editor of the *Dictionary of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs* (1970, 4 vols.), *Myths and Symbols, Philippines* (1979), and the comics *Illustrated Folktales* (1980, 2 vols.: Historical and Mythico-legendary), among many other publications at Xavier University.

Juan R. Francisco, PhD. (1929- ?), specialist in Sanskrit and Indology at the University of the Philippines, translated verses of the Maranao version of the Ramayana to English (Francisco 1994).

F. Landa Jocano, PhD. (1920-2013), professor at the University of the Philippines, documented and translated the Hinilawod epic from Panay (Hugan-an & Jocano 2000).

to the professionalization of the field in the Philippines. His figure loomed large in the field of oral traditions studies, where his writings on method, textualizations of epics among other genres, and especially his activism in seeking to popularize folklore research did more to nationalize the enterprise than anything before him. His forays into library science, language studies, and the other fields were notable, if less frequent; yet some of the work he accomplished is exceptional. Who among lexicographers today can say that they have produced a project as momentous as his 420-page "A Lexicographic Study of Tayabas Tagalog of Quezon Province" (Manuel 1972) for instance? Despite all of this, both his life and especially his scholarship have gone underappreciated. This is unfortunate as many of his books and essays carry great relevance to Philippine studies and its related fields. Others might find a greater purpose once digested (such as his "Philippinensia" concept). And his very life, as a nose-to-the-grindstone academic, offers a useful model that scholars could do worse than to emulate today.

The most immediate impediment that confronts consumers of Manuel's scholarship is simply its lack of greater availability. Copies of his major books and essays on epics are few even at universities in Manila; many involving his lesser-known works are even harder to locate to this day. In a few select cases of his major books, this problem can be solved by reprinting some of the classics, for instance, as what the University of the Philippines Press has done some years ago with his *Manuvu' Social Organization* ([1973]2000), as has been its practice with other classics of Philippine anthropology (e.g., Jocano [Sr.] [1968]2008). The same can be done by cobbling Manuel's less-than-book-length essays into single volume compilations. This can be accomplished by grouping a set of similar works into a single book, say all three of his epics into a single, large volume, or by bringing together a sampling of his writings from various fields, which the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino did very recently (Manuel 2019). A complementary effort will be to make some of these available digitally. This poses its own challenges, but cultural preservationist Nicole Revel's founding of the *Philippine Epics and*

Elena G. Maquiso, PhD. (1914-1995), Silliman University professor, engaged in the project of collection and preservation of recordings of the Ulahingan epic of the Manobos in North Cotabato, Bukidnon, and Davao over the years 1963 to 1993. ('SU research on Manobo epic gets translated to Filipino by NCCA', 2021).]

Ballads Archive demonstrates the potentialities of making Filipino oral traditions available for a global audience (ADMU 2023).

More than any other work, the *Dictionary of Philippine Biography* must be transformed into some sort of digital repository. One of the most important reference works of Philippine studies, it has always been a somewhat difficult resource to access. Even in the best of circumstances, let us say sometime after 1995, when the fourth volume appeared, it was never friendly for users. Assuming for a start that an institution had all four copies, one would have the greatest ease if one already knew what one was looking for, a single biographical entry say, and then seek to find it in each successive volume. Much more exacting would be looking for thematic information related to that original term, for instance using the *DPB* to discover information about Rizal's colleagues in the propaganda. If said individuals were not specifically named in the entry on Rizal, then one would not know to look them up – assuming there was an entry about that person in the first place – or if such information was contained in the *DPB*. One would have to read the entire thing from beginning to end to find out. The piecemeal fashion in which the authors assembled the work made this inevitable. Their intention was to append a master index and other useful reading aids upon the eventual completion, which of course never came.

Transforming the *DPB* into an online database would remedy all of these impediments. Furthermore it would make the submission of further volumes, in full or in part, into a seamless task. One might easily input volume five were someone to find it. Thereafter, a team of editors for the project could then establish criteria that would allow for interested authors to add new biographical entries to the series as well as to supplement existing ones. Given Filipinos' penchant for fleshing out knowledge online,[5] such a repository would be feasible and a boon to knowledge. There will be legal, financial, and personnel issues to sort out to make such a project possible. But the reward for doing so will be the creation of a premier database of Filipino history and culture. It would be a fitting monument to Manuel's life's work.

By contrast, there is little need, as yet, to digitize the Pasig Papers; instead the goal is to simply locate them— and doing so is of the utmost urgency. Without knowing exactly what the contents of the collection are,

[5] The second and eleventh most numerous *Wikipedias* are in Cebuano and Waray, respectively (*Wikipedia* 2021).

it is difficult to speculate about what precisely the kind of documents the collection has other than the generic descriptions Manuel has himself made. One presumes that the collection additionally includes all loose notes, unpublished works, and other materials relevant to his life, research, and teaching. Speaking to those who knew him, I have heard various stories about how the Pasig Papers and his substantial personal library are considered lost. Given that I have been unable to verify any of the materials that have been lost, I am hesitant to speculate here about which version of events is correct. Once the collection is recovered, it can be processed and made available to researchers, in much the same way that the National Library of Australia has done with Beyer's Philippine Ethnographic Series (NLA 2019). We must also hope to find Manuel's personal materials that are distinct from the Pasig Papers. Manuel put in lifelong effort, with far greater expenditure of sheer human labor and time than any institutional funding he had been given, into advancing Philippine studies. It will likely take some fraction of that in our time to make his works available again.

Parallel to these efforts, specialists can continue to work through, extend, and critique his sizeable body of scholarship, and develop more specific research agenda in Folklore studies programs, and Folk Literature courses. The present moment is a particularly fortuitous time however, because of the advances in the fields in which he operated. About the joys of conducting folklore research, Manuel wrote in *Agyu*,

> There is pleasure and satisfaction derived from knowing such things. But this is only possible after a sufficient body of folktales, for instance, has been collected from the culture area sought to be covered and adjacent areas as well. (Manuel 1969:2)

Much has changed since he penned those words over four decades ago. Even if his maximalist dreams of folklorists collecting widely from every community in the Philippines never came to pass (because such dreams were impracticable), the multitudes of research completed since now make possible a deeper and more thoroughgoing analyses of recorded oral traditions than ever before. Linguists are better poised than ever before to critique his many theses about the prehistory of Philippine languages. His more sporadic but nonetheless significant studies on the Tagalog language can prove useful as various state and non-state entities seek to facilitate greater use of the national language over English. The possibilities for

continuing conversations along lines of inquiry he pursued, in other words, are numerous.

It has been surprisingly difficult to track down the documents that reveal Manuel's life and scholarship, which is ironic given how prolific he was, how many thousands and thousands of pages he produced across the decades. Almost none of his personal writings and effects—field notes, drafts of unfinished scholarship, diaries, letters, work from students, books from his library, and more—can be found in any publicly accessible archive. Almost nothing apart from a smattering of a few items can for instance be found in the UP Main Library Special Collections. His correspondence can only be found in the sundry collections of peoples to whom he wrote— in their personal collections, in repositories as far away from the Philippines as Chicago and Canberra. It has likewise been difficult to locate people who knew him. All of his colleagues from the 1960s to 1980s are unsurprisingly no longer with us. Many of his children have already passed and those that remain are of advanced age. I have for years now been trying to track down his students but have only encountered a few; it is challenging to do so in the first place given how Filipinos educated at the UP circulate globally. Had even some of these documents, materials, and oral testimonies been available, I have little doubt they would have greatly enriched these essays.

The lesson here, and it is a quintessentially Manuelian one, is, however, not to dwell on the challenging parts. Instead it is to look at what has been done by those who came before us, reflect on the things they did well as well as the things they did not, and, with an eye towards those who will inevitably come after us, launch ourselves into the field, library, archive, writing carrel, classroom, or conference, and study our past. Whether we have the funding, institutional support, or perhaps even patience to do so is secondary. For what other possible purpose could life be lived?

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