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# Philippine Democracy: A Form of Resistance against the Common Good?<sup>(1)</sup>

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フィリピンは独立以来、アジアにおける合衆国流民主主義の「ショーケース」の名をもっぱらにしてきた。現在でも多くのフィリピン人は、それが合衆国による「善意にあふれた」植民地政策の帰結であると考え、民主主義はアジア諸国のなかでフィリピンをきわ立たせる国家的アイデンティティの主要素であるとみなすことが多い。

こうした通説にもかかわらず、あるいは制度的な民主主義の移植は認めるとしても、フィリピンにおける民主主義のさらなる達成には、社会・経済的にも、文化の面からも困難が山積している。現実には選挙が行われる反面、政治的暴力や社会的な格差と不平等は容易には解消されない。むしろ植民地時代から続くそうした格差は、移植による民主主義を、植民者と植民地化された側のエリート層が占有した結果、解消されずに永続化したとも考えられる。

本稿の目的は、近代の「善なる」価値のひとつの体現といってもよい制度、思想が、植民地状況という文化接触を経て、必ずしも望ましくはないものへ変貌してゆく過程を分析することにある。植民者と被植民者の接点には、表向きには（そして実際にも少なからず）有和的な接点が形成され、その接点を共通領域にして、そこで接触のコミュニケーションが生起する。民主主義はそうした領域のなかで、外国の支配者にとっては文明による支配を正当化する象徴として、被支配者にとっては文明化への希求の証しとして、それぞれの意図に沿った、似かよってしかも異なる機能を果たしたのである。

## I.

Immanuel Wallerstein's short treatise on the problematic of universalism in the modern context, as follows, is one of the most revealing accounts dealing with the paradox of modernity. He states,

“Universalism is a ‘gift’ of the powerful to the weak which confronts the latter with a double bind: to refuse the gift is to lose; to accept the gift is to lose. The only plausible reaction of the weak is neither to refuse nor to accept, or both to refuse and accept — in short, the path of the seemingly irrational zigzags (both cultural and political) of the weak that has characterized most of 19th. and especially 20th. century history.”<sup>(2)</sup>

This double bind is still overshadowing most of non-Western societies today in the realm of inter-relations with the West. Philippine society is no exception, or rather a paradigmatic case to be scrutinized. The gift of ‘universalism’ surely opened up a brighter horizon for those who were exploited in the traditional order, and provided over-all enlightening experiences to the whole of Philippine society. Faith in Catholicism brought by the Spaniards, and the system of modern democracy and education granted by the U.S. gave not only profound effects on the

society, but also even constituted the skeletal structure of the society. On the other hand, the fore-mentioned 'goodness' of civilization such as Christianity, democracy and education, might be regarded as a driving force in perpetuating the ever-lasting predicament and subjugation of the people within the context of encountering the West. Further the imposed foreign 'goodness', in some way, jeopardized the formation of their national identity as well as their personal integrity. This adverse effect of modern virtues has grown worse because they were transmitted to the Filipinos as gifts from their mentors. Gift-giving and its acceptance of this kind, which is based upon hierarchy, induced an intriguing sense of both refusal and acceptance, for that very sentiment itself was formed under the specific colonial conditions.

One conspicuous example of the above-mentioned double bind is clearly represented in their reception of Western liberal democracy in the Philippines. In the wake of recent euphoria over the victory of liberal democracy in Eastern Europe and in other areas such as the Philippines (in 1986), democracy has again been revived as a sole leading ideal of the World at large. It appears to be true that the cynicism regarding democracy during the Cold War era, when anything but communism was hailed as democracy, suddenly diminished. This resurged confidence, or rather complacency, in liberal democracy as a sole ideal reminds us of a danger embodied in the Manichaean dichotomy between 'civilized us' and 'uncivilized others'. The world-wide media coverage of Tianenmen Square incident in 1989 well implied this danger. We cannot help recognizing certain degree of biases and preoccupations in the media coverage of the incident. The number of the dead inflated without firm evidences up to several thousands. The coverage easily transgressed the demarcation line between factual information and sensationalism/condemnation not only against the government involved, but against their cultural tradition itself. In that incident, democracy seemed to become a hegemonic weapon to introduce a cleavage into a global population of the world. The cleavage between the civilized and the yet to be civilized. This appropriation of democracy reveals a fundamental contradiction in the democratic ideal of relativism and tolerance in differences.

Even though democracy has been manipulated and monopolized by both local and foreign elites in the Philippines, it still has an enormous attraction for the oppressed. Many aborted attempts and even the feeling of discomfort at surrendering to foreign 'goodness' have, if any, only made democracy more attractive. The demand for democracy is clearly shown in the incident of February Revolution in 1986 and after in Aquino regime. People, although half-disenchanted, confirmed their cravings for democracy once again. Despite the difficulty in realizing it in its full sense, democracy still remains the only one plausible choice for the society. In this paper, I would like to address some problematic on the nature of the fore-mentioned double bind in the Philippine society in their relation to the outside world (especially the West) which still executes an enormous influences upon their society. Conceptual notions such as acceptance, assimilation, resistance, deception and accommodation are to be

considered.

## II.

In considering their relations to the outside world, the representation of Philippine society by themselves, which is most tellingly expressed in their tourism promotion, might be quite relevant. In their tourism promotion, the Philippines is presented as follows.

“...if a Spanish prince came to the islands, he might have found the archipelago a beguiling and agreeable place; then as now, blessed with a temperate climate, sprawling beaches, incomparable coral gardens, spectacular sunsets, pastoral lands and a warm, hospitable people of Malayo Polynesian stock accustomed to welcoming and feting visitors to their shores. If the Philippines is unique among its neighbours in Southeast Asia, it is because of the remarkable ability of its people to accept and assimilate foreign cultural influences and then think and behave in a manner that can only be called Filipino. The Spanish prince would have recognized religious rites that have evolved from the Catholic faith implanted by his governors and friars over 400 years of Spanish colonial rule. But he would have marvelled at the passion, earthiness and pageantry with which Filipinos celebrate Catholic feastdays. Yet Americans visiting the Philippines feel a kinship as well with the people. Certainly English is spoken quite well almost everywhere and is a second tongue after Filipino, the national language. Almost 50 years of United States’ occupation of the Philippines have served to “Americanize” Philippine culture; or put it more accurately, have allowed Filipinos to “Filipinize” what the Yankees brought in. ...The present Philippine government, led by President Corazon (Cory) Aquino, is a restoration of the Congress and two-party political system modeled after American-style democracy and established after the United States granted Filipinos independence in 1946. The country’s democratic traditions were upheld by five successive presidents until Ferdinand Marcos, sixth chief of the Republic, imposed martial law in 1972. But democracy and freedom were restored and Marcos’ authoritarian rule toppled after the people power revolution in 1986. That four-day non-violent coup was hailed worldwide as the first of its kind in recent history, a dazzling display of love for peace and freedom, and certainly, uniquely Filipino.”<sup>(3)</sup>

The brochure also extends their welcome to the Islamic visitors and the Chinese. “Muslim visitors may feel a sense of brotherhood with Muslim Filipinos and their culture. Chinese, tracing their own culture and traditions, would also feel quite at home most anywhere in the archipelago.” And the brochure, after mentioning some virtues and pleasures provided by staying in the Philippines; sightseeing, dining, and shopping, concludes that “the best bargain, of course, is the entire visit to the country, where the welcome never wears out.”<sup>(4)</sup>

By looking into the above merry depiction of the country and some of its virtues which might attract foreign visitors, I can recognize two frequently employed rhetorical styles of Filipino

historico-cultural overview. One is a reference to its history of adoption of and adaptation to anything foreign, the other is the uniquely Filipino way of adjustment and cultural incorporation of the things foreign. Filipinos are not just passive recipients of foreign influences, rather ingenuous talents who can recompose things foreign into their environment. This double-facetted process of adoption and adaptation is well mediated by the celebrated notion of "Filipino hospitality". Hospitality becomes not only a touristic gimmick but a password for the national-cultural character. In this notion of hospitality, Filipinos are expected or believed to play a role of being a host. However, this hospitality cannot escape from a implied set of hierarchical relation between the host and the guest. Looking back several historical watersheds, those hosts appears to be subjugative to their guests more often than they should be. In Philippine culture, generosity and good behaviour as a host are no mere matter of personal preference, but are part of fundamental conviction about the nature of human relationship which facilitate smooth functioning of social universe. The negligence of this cultural norm matters enormous. At the same time, humiliation caused by differences in their status and discrepancy in their economic standing appears to be mitigated by the existence of this function which introduces the notion of prestige in being a host. This clearly shows that hospitality is a cherished behaviour, while it presupposes a difference in status and inequality between those who are to be engaged in relations. And not very uncommonly, the inferior is supposed to become a host who shows one's generosity toward the superior. This, of course, means a further deprivation of one's resource on the one hand, while one's cravings for social respectability (being an accomplished man) is to be fulfilled. People are unwittingly obliged to affirm their pride of being hosts. Also, it is significant to pay a careful attention to their conviction that Filipino hospitality is a unique phenomenon. Generally speaking, hospitality is rather a universal phenomenon which almost every culture claims to be their unique character. In a fundamental sense, hospitality (especially based upon a hierarchical relation) might include a notion of resistance, by which I mean a proclivity to neutralize and somehow negate hierarchical differences between those who are engaged in relationship. This inherent sense of resistance is reflected in Filipino way of adoption and adaptation to the things from outside world.

The urge to welcome others (others who should be somewhat superior) and to accept seemingly better things from outside has been a major component of Filipino mytho-history. However, this is not a total surrender to anything foreign. The refracted psyche has brought a long-lasting uneasiness and an uncertainty in their sense of Filipino identity. A craving for relatedness; hospitality and friendship, or both actual and fictitious kin relations, seems to be a natural tendency for people who try to maximize scarce resources and to survive. The relatedness both within and without of the group assures wider networks which would bring more security for those being involved. The longing for relatedness is also well embodied in their notion of friendship. Anyone who comes across is involved into a sort of friendship.

Friendship, at least its notion, conceals the innate difference in human relationship, and brings a space where social actors with different social standings minimize constraints in their interaction. Therefore notions such as hospitality and friendship are not incongenial to those as domination and hierarchy. The obsessive idea of relatedness is well represented in tourism promotion of the Philippines. The Philippines, as well as Filipinos, is thoroughly accommodating to and welcoming the others, or to be believed so. And the image of the Filipinos is depicted as Friendly Others by the Americans.<sup>(5)</sup> At the base of this friendliness, there is an idea of similarity caused by cultural adoption and adaptation, in spite of a premise that Filipinos are dissimilar with Westerners in their physical and cultural features. It is rather obvious to note that the similarities are mostly from civilizational adoptions from the West. This criss-cross of similarity and dissimilarity brings up a domain where Filipinos securely make them relate to the others. This relation seldomly includes confrontations and conspicuous hostility. A relatively brief and superficial encounter like tourism provides a fitting occasion to reproduce the above domain of accommodation where *clichés* and passwords are frequently reproduced. However, even this type of joyous encounter with the world cannot deny a traumatic experience for the Filipino as its outcome.

A paradox is to be detected in the formation of Philippine cultural identity. In order to make its distinctive character, especially as a unique Asian nation, there is a need to emphasize its affinity with the West. But the reason of affinities is seldomly sought in the consequence of colonization. Rather that aspect of colonization is consciously minimized. Instead, its openness toward the wider world has been paid special attentions. A proper mixture of difference and similarity must be carefully maintained among the Filipino in order to highlight the distinctive character of Philippine culture and society. Their inclination to ideas of being a bridge between East and West, cultural adoption, friendly and assimilated Asian has been quite convenient for both the colonizers and the colonized to create a space for connivance. Although it sounds pejorative, Americans then dubbed Filipinos their "Little Brown Brothers".

This celebration of the process of harmonious incorporation of other cultures rather has fortified an affirmation of the *status quo* of its historical trajectory. Filipinos have played a role of accommodating host in accepting even undue imposition from the others. A seemingly static view of Philippine socio-historical process is very susceptible to criticisms such as the one from Reynaldo Ileto. He criticizes the existence of "the dominant view in current scholarship", because their "common interpretation of the revolution in terms of the ideas and goals of the *ilustrado* class is symptomatic of the widespread acceptance among scholars of the educated elites as articulators of Filipino values and aspirations". He puts doubt on a dominant value orientation which makes "Philippine society naturally tend toward stasis and equilibrium". He further continues;

"If we accept most current definitions of the Filipino, we come up with something like the

image of the smiling, peace-loving, religious, deferential, hard-working, family-bound and hospitable native. The masses, in particular, are regarded as passive acceptors of change on which the modern mass media can effectively train its guns.”<sup>(6)</sup>

Ileto's critique makes a good sense. But his quick equation of a smile with docility itself reminds of what he criticizes as an elitish view of the matter. Not only some conspicuous features of resistance on which Ileto made an illustrating research, but also appear-to-be signs of subjugation like innocent looking smile composed the whole notion of resistance. A smile is really intriguing. This intriguing nature of interaction is quite obvious in the Filipino way of addressing others. As I earlier emphasized, Filipino relationality is immersed in status differences and hierarchy. Addressing others as '*don*' or 'boss' is a common place among their everyday interaction. Both words for address literally mean someone in higher in hierarchy. However, those are casually used among peers and intimates quite commonly. This twist implies both their subservience and resistance against on-going hierarchy. Their representation of acceptance and twisting of *status quo* shows an oblique psyche of the people nurtured under the double-bind.

No simple dialectics of domination and resistance recapitulate the process through which the present-day Philippines emerged. On this matter, Gerald Sider states, "Domination even at its most violent can still be permeated with ambiguity, uncertainty, and peculiar mixture of fantasy and reality; resistance can occur simultaneously with collusion."<sup>(7)</sup> He further mentions about relations between Europeans and Indians in America as follows; "The Europeans created a fantasy of what native people as they fantasized that native people would act toward them, they realized (and perhaps even became) their own fantasy. The groundless fear of the Europeans were both revenged and made true. ... This form of domination creates a relationship that is, on the part of the dominators, simultaneously full of rage and destructiveness and also peculiarly intimate.... The peculiar intimacy between dominators and dominated — from above, an intimacy that comes packaged with brutality and contempt; from below, an intimacy given with ambiguity — seems particularly important to the historically unfolding process of domination and resistance, though perhaps more directly important to understanding resistance (and also non-resistance). It is trying to unravel the interwoven paradoxes and ambiguities of this intimacy that we can most clearly see what seems to be the fundamental cultural contradiction of the process of domination by the Europeans over native Americans; between domination as a form of creating distance, difference, and otherness. Both resistance and collusion took their variant shapes within this matrix of incorporation and distancing."<sup>(8)</sup>

The relation between dominators and dominated in the Philippines has been three-fold. Or it tends to be depicted so. The distinction between elites and masses, although it is conspicuous in multiple terms, has been reproduced as innate natural process. And ironically, a bystander

would notice that sympathy for the masses especially from "liberal" foreigners helps so much indeed the national class disunity which facilitates the foreign domination. A naive implementation of class consciousness into a foreign terrain always contributes the greater dispersal of the society. This pre-determined structure of cognition has a similar equivalence in the history of Spanish-Moor relations. The Spanish archetypal relation between Christians and Muslims was brought to the Philippines under Spanish rule, and reenacted there even today. I witnessed a highlight performance of a local fiesta celebration in Zamboanga city of Mindanao. The fiesta was for the patron saint of the city, Nuestra Senora Del Pilar, which has its origin in the city of Zaragoza, Spain and renowned for its miraculous power preventing Muslim intruders. The reenactment of the miracle and the reproduction of archetypal enmity against Muslims was performed by university students. The play began with a jovial scene of dancing by Spanish officers and mestiza local beauties, and was followed by Muslim attempt to capture Fort Del Pilar. After a lovely evening, all the officers retired and there was a certain laxity in security. But at the very moment of invasion, a guard who fell asleep fortunately heard a celestial alarm and awake to inform Muslim invasion. The guard saw the figure of Nuestra Senora warning the incident on the wall of the Fort. As it happened, Spanish soldiers with Filipino counterparts made prompt moves and drove Muslims back away narrowly. After this miraculous incident, the Spanish stationed in the city started to celebrate their annual fiesta for the Lady. This reenactment drew a large crowd and reproduced Spanish legacy in the presentday Philippines. This also reflects the tense ethnic situation in the region. But it was surprising to find that the archetypal model of Spanish-Moor relation was reproduced in a seemingly similar, but essentially different context. The Filipino being constructed as the other by the Europeans, again in their turn, construct the other by following the similar manner as Spaniards did. This tells eloquently an existence of complicity which mediates resistance and cooperation under the colonial context, however this distorted psyche is not unnatural within colonial condition. In Philippine history alone, a seemingly strange co-existence of resistance and acceptance has been ever-lasting.

### III.

A craving for friendship and intimacy with its dominator produced a so-called "special relationship" between the Philippines and the United States. This special relationship has even been casted into personal relations among influential Filipinos and Americans who play the role of patrons and benefactors toward their Filipino proteges. To take examples only a few; Manuel Roxas and Douglas McArthur, Pardo de Tavera and Governor Taft, Ramon Mag-saysay and Edward Lansdale. Many of Filipino business elites as well as political elites developed close ties with Americans and also were close to Japanese during Japanese Occupation. This special relationship connotes unequal friendship or that of protege and mentor, which could be regarded as the extension and reproduction of the long-lasting colonial legacy of



patron-client relationship. As a typical colonial relationship, those personal relationships are not of simple domination-subordination. The Magsaysay case would be interesting in observing the power behind Philippine democracy then. For maintaining its political stability and removing corruption tainted incumbent President of the Republic in early 50's, Ramon Magsaysay was handpicked as a presidential candidate by Filipino elites and Americans. Americans regarded him as relatively 'honest' and thoroughly pro-American. But Magsaysay then as Defence Minister lacked political connections and capitals sufficient enough to contend the presidency. Since working together for counter insurgency operations, Magsaysay and Lansdale, an intelligence expert, made friends each other. Under the guidance and support of Lansdale, Magsaysay revitalized corrupt Armed Forces and initiated money incentives for rebels' bodies and informations. Magsaysay to some extent succeeded to cut the rebels' influences and their power. Edward Lansdale made frequent occasions to introduce Magsaysay to American journalists. And that brought him appearing in almost every major American periodicals as a clean, dedicated counter-insurgency fighter for the democratic Philippines. In accordance with this media spree, Magsaysay myth was created; the emphasis of his humble origin, and series of his succesful counter-insurgency campaigns (some of them were rumoured to be set-ups). In 1952, one year before the presidential election, Magsaysay together with Lansdale went to the U.S. for his first visit. Americans and Filipinos who were working together made various efforts and arrangements to initiate his début to America. Magsaysay received an honorary degree from Fordham University and was honoured by gun salute in N.Y., and was granted a closed-door meeting with President Truman, Secretary Acheson and top Pentagon officials in Washington D.C. And more, he received a secret fund for his military campaign as well as his presidential campaign. The firm U.S. support for him caused avalanche effects among Filipino elites. That led him a land-slide victory in 1953 election. After being elected, he followed pro-American policy as an American Boy. He propagated the importance of free enterprise and foreign capital investment. In contributing an article to *"Foreign Affairs"*, he said, "We have learned from our own Hukbalahap Communist revolution that communism is not just some distorted Nationalist ambition, like Hitler's, to be satisfied with land or riches but an unremitting universal campaign to rule the earth, to eradicate individual liberty, to destroy God and the souls of men."<sup>(9)</sup> The relation between Filipinos and Americans has been dubbed the special relations; American tutelage, that of mentors and proteges, love and hate. Magsaysay and Lansdale was just an example. And there were so many such relations. At he beginning of American rule, there also was such a relation developed between William Howard Taft, then Governer, and Trinidad Pardo de Tavera. Taft situated himself as a missionary of civilization, steering Filipinos into the pasture of righteousness, and he condescendingly refered to Filipinos as "Little Brown Brothers".<sup>(10)</sup> An American soldier composed a ditty as follows;

"They say I've got little brown brothers here,

But still I draw the line

He may be a brother of Big Bill Taft,

But he ain't no brother of mine."<sup>(11)</sup>

Taft was believed to have a conviction of making Filipinos improved under America's guidance, despite Dean Worcester's remark, "honesty among Filipinos is a theme for humorist". Worcester believed that Filipinos were naturally unfit for self-government. His idea was shared generally among American officers. But even Worcester believed in their future, only with America's guidance and tutelage. The correction and removal of the regressive Filipino nature was a key objective for American administration of the islands; that is to say, pedagogy. Despite his contempt against *ilustrados*, Taft perceived that they could be useful, if only as an expedient. And he found an instructive clue for smooth administration in one of *ilustrados*' testimony, which mentioned that "while defeating Filipinos by force would be difficult, they could more easily be dominated by leading them on by attraction". Taft applied his policy of attraction, designed to induce their elites to cooperate with Americans and by them to isolate radical faction of resistance."<sup>(12)</sup>

The more participation of Filipinos into the colonial administration would lessen criticisms against America's outright imperialism. Trinidad Pardo de Tavera was an archetypal *ilustrado* and he championed capitalism, separation of church and state, civil liberty and universal education. He once joined Aguinaldo's revolutionary movement, but later he quitted. He, in a letter to General Arthur MacArthur, wrote, "all our efforts will be directed to Americanizing ourselves" in the hope that "the American spirit may take possession of us", infusing the country with "its principles, its political customs and its peculiar civilization", so that "our redemption may be complete".<sup>(13)</sup> Taft regarded Tavera as a solid, educated, and refined Filipino who shared his own conservatism. He encouraged Tavera to organize Partido Federal in 1900. At the formal inauguration of the party, Tavera delivered a keynote address, saying "I see the day near at hand... when it shall transpire that George Washington will not simply the glory of the American World, in which we shall feel ourselves completely united and assimilated". But their dream of making Philippines as a part of the Union failed. In 1904, when members of the party visited Secretary of the State in Washington, the Secretary told, "I don't want to suggest an invidious comparison, but statehood for the Philippines would add another serious problem to the one we have already. The Negroes are a cancer in our body politic, a source of constant difficulty, and we wish to avoid developing another such problem".<sup>(14)</sup> After the leave of their patron Taft, they had crumbled. They could not compete shrewder new political party led by Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmena who advocated more dynamic nationalism. What we could notice in those series of events and display of personalities, not only at the time of Quezon and Osmena, but up to now of Aquino, Enrile and Cojuangco, is a simultaneous creation of intimacy and distance between Filipinos and Americans. The politics of assimilation and distancing has perpetuated the fundamental framework, which could not be static but dynamic, of the Philippine-American interface.

What democracy connotes in the fore-mentioned framework of inter-system of history and culture? It would be a tempting try to situate democracy in the Philippines into the aggregation of vocabularies of deception, accommodation, domination, resistance and the image of others. In the tedious process of search for the consent and justification of colonial administration, both Filipinos and Americans found a significant symbolic value of democracy for each's expediency. They could have constituted an intermediate space for complicity which played an essential part for the perpetuation of colonial domination and also that of unending resistance, as well. First of all, democracy functions as a sort of alibi for both parties involved. Frequent references to democratic ideals by the Filipino *ilustrados* contributed, at least, to their affirmation of, though unwittingly, subjugation to America which in turn embodied a great cause such as democracy. Democracy in that confinement strangely precludes a possibility of formal political resistance. This means that any resistance against foreign dominance, however in a way, appeared anti-democratic and not rational. Therefore resistance and radical political dissent were obliged to be mobilized without narrowly appropriated domain of democratic space monopolised by Filipino elites and American dominators. Through Philippine history, most of resistance movements took forms of religious craze, millenarian fanatics, banditry, and rebellions. They were excluded from democratic procedures and domains. Accordingly, democracy turned to be a rhetoric which facilitated a connivance between Filipino ruling elites and American political interests. Electoral system was and still is, though to some extent to be believed a gateway to democracy, rather an impediment to realization of mass democracy. Those movements of resistance, such as Katipunan, several millenarian movements, Corolum, Rizalistas, and many others, which were called as agrarian unrests, popular uprisings, insurgencies, and religious fanatisms, share certain characteristics; rural, mystical, indigenous, nativistic, and non-parliamentary, and they could not attain their political goals. Suppression of those movements was really necessary for the ruling elites to legitimize their power as a sole political system of democracy. Therefore, the legitimacy was somehow rested upon undemocratic manipulations of power and suppression which confirmed the exclusion of Filipino masses from formal political domain. Even after her independence, up untill now, people's participation to democratic procedures has been limited due to the lack in basic conditions for democracy. So that we might say that the very implantation of democracy itself formed a barrier to shut out democracy in a different terrain. There were some impediments which inhibited the emulation.

However, the fallacy of Philippine democracy has been maintained for too long. It was necessary for America in legitimizing their rule in the Philippines as an attempt to confirm their White Man's Burden. Their "benevolent assimilation" of the Philippines could not help appropriating the notion of democracy together with the notion of racial inferiority of the Filipino. After her independence, the Philippines has still been a celebrated case of an adopted

American democracy, and dubbed a showcase of it in Asia. For their relations, both Filipinos and Americans are obliged to maintain the myth of democracy. Despite tremendous hazards in attaining democracy in the terrain, America fantacized its former colony with a national adoration of American success stories of economic development, educational system, and democracy; making them as Little Americans. While Filipinos fantacized their image of "civilized" Asian by accommodating to colonial notion of democracy and social development as diligent pupils of their mentor. In keeping their complicity, the notion of democracy has diminished and has been distorted. This vicious circle has a strong power in confining some important notions to be appropriated. A dream of full democracy has not been fulfilled except for some short-lived euphoric moments of national fervour of Independence, first presidency of Ferdinand Marcos, and February Revolution in 1986. A dream remains a dream. Fantasy is a fantasy. As a consequence, a failure of credible democracy together with the recent economic slump in the Philippines further enforces their adherence to the ideal of democracy, and even fortifies their nostalgia toward American time. This failure also justifies, in a way, the American domination over the country. Filipinos come to very close to democracy, yet very far still. They feel very close to Americans, yet still very different. This aborted democracy constitutes a fundamental framework for politics of intimacy and distancing. Disseminating the idea of democracy is a White Man's Burden. Accepting it seems a Yellow Man's Burden. Yet, a not favourable record of democratic achievement in other areas of the world than Europe and America or their failure in realizing democracy perversely assures Western hegemony.

Democracy as rather a rhetoric than a practice constituted an intermediate space between the colonized and the colonizer where the rhetoric was so purified and sanctified as no other ideas could challenge. This rhetoric of democracy impeded an authentic political contest of democracy. Because that domain of complicity was constructed to perpetuate the whole structure of hierarchy. I do not take a stance that democracy is totally a foreign idea against indigenous system of ideas. Rather, as clearly shown in Philippine case, it becomes an inter-system by a often colonial, East-West encounter. In this setting, as in other occasions of Western hegemonic imposition of democracy to other areas of the world, the implantation of democracy, very unfortunately, cannot escape from suspicion and distrust of receivers. A reflexivity that put a second thought on imposing Western pattern of economic development on other societies never becomes prevalent in exporting democracy into foreign terrain. Although democracy is a viable political system for the world at large, the ongoing condemnations of other polities than Western liberal democracy lacks a careful insight in minimizing some difficulties inherent in transcultural contacts.

## NOTES:

- (1) This is based upon a paper read at Australian Asian Studies Conference held at Hong Kong University in July, 1990. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Michael Roberts who kindly extended his invitation to a session "Resistance and Domination in South and Southeast Asia". I also would like to thank Mr. Mathew Adkins (Osaka University) for his editorial assistance to the first draft.
- (2) Immanuel Wallerstein, 'The Modern World system as a Civilization', in *THESIS ELEVEN*, no.20, 1988, p.72.
- (3) *The Philippines: Fiesta Islands '89*, Philippine Convention & Visitors Corporation, Manila, 1989.
- (4) *op. cit.*
- (5) During Vietnamese War, the Philippines was depicted as a friendly Asian (the other) against a hostile Asian (Vietnamese). Filipinos also made a publicity to cast their self-image as above.
- (6) Reynaldo Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979, p.12.
- (7) Gerald Sider, 'Domination and Deception in Indian-White Relations', *Comparative Study of Society and History*, vol.29, no.1, 1987, p.3.
- (8) *op. cit.* p.3.
- (9) Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* Random House, N.Y., 1989, p.174.
- (10) *op. cit.* p.174.
- (11) *op. cit.* p.174.
- (12) *op. cit.* p.174.
- (13) *op. cit.* p.175.
- (14) *op. cit.* p.177.