

## Book Reviews

***Between the Homeland and the Diaspora: The Politics of Theorizing Filipino and Filipino American Identities.* By S. Lily Mendoza. Manila: UST Publishing House, 2006, xii +274pp. ISBN: 971-506-362-4(pbk.)**

For any student, scholar, or enthusiast on Philippine indigenization movement and cultural studies theory, this book is a good introduction and overview on the beginning of the movement in the country, how it transpires to the Filipino American communities mostly in the Northern California, United States of America; its challenges; and understand the possible process of cross-cultural engagement of critical theory between them.

The Philippines had been colonized for centuries. Historically, nationalist imperatives from different sector of the intelligentsia stimulate the indigenization movement in the Philippine academy. In late 50s to 70s, rectifying the deemed to be distortions made by the colonial historical narratives became the primary concern of Filipino nationalist scholars (Mendoza p.53). Thus, indigenization is the process of shaping the identity outside the Euro-American perspective. In the 70s, the three programmatic indigenization movements from different disciplines were founded by Filipino scholars upon returning in the Philippines after studying abroad namely Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP)/Liberated Psychology (Psychology) by Dr. Virgilo G. Enriquez, Pilipinolohiya (Anthropology) by Dr. Prospero R. Covar, and Pantayong Pananaw (PP, History) by Dr. Zeus A. Salazar. Meanwhile, the number of Filipino immigrants increases in the U.S. In this book, the author was able to articulate the reason why SP became the prominent movement among the aforementioned three in the Filipino American diasporic community. Using the deconstructive critical theory, she was able to read the indigenization narrative in two locations, on

one hand. On the other hand, she provides the clear arguments for the needed translation to bridge the gap of theoretical divide between the two locations that may result to new possibilities of theoretical dialogue and may be beneficial for both communities. The author has the profound knowledge of the subject matter as she is present and actively involved during the theoretical debates in the two Filipino scholarly communities and conducted personal interviews with key persons.

S. Lily Mendoza is a scholar and faculty of Culture and Communication at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, as well as an intellectual leader. She became known for her works on politics of indigeneity and critique of the cultural logic of modernity. Some of her known works are *Between the Homeland and the Diaspora: The Politics of Theorizing Filipino and Filipino American Identities* and *Back from the Crocodile's Belly: Philippine Babaylan Studies and the Struggle for Indigenous Memory*. Her other works also appears in various cultural studies and intercultural communication journals and anthologies. She also serves as the Executive Director of the non-profit Center for Babaylan Studies (CfBS), a movement for decolonization and indigenization among the Filipinos in diaspora in North America and beyond.

The book consists of eight chapters. Based on the chapters arrangement one can easily notice that this is born from a dissertation. The chapters one, two, and four layouts the introduction of the text, research problem, goals of the research, significance of the study, and methodology. Meanwhile, chapter three gives the readers the knowledge on the theoretical lens of the study such as dynamic equivalence translation, social movement theory, postcolonial theory, and principle of the dialectic. The core section of the book are the chapters five and six. Chapter five precisely and concisely narrates the beginning and development of the three

indigenization movements in the Philippine academy, their principles, gains, setbacks, and their effect on cultural politics. The sixth chapter generally tells the influence of Enriquez on the inception and progress of Sikolohiyang Pilipino in the U.S. The Filipino American diasporic community warmly welcomes the concepts and methodologies of SP. It leads to institution-building and professionalization. However, with the untimely death of Enriquez, it is observed that his students' and followers' attachment to his expertise and developed methodologies affect the SP to move forward as an intellectual tradition. The seventh chapter provides a brief discussion on Philippine colonial history and the emergence of the indigenization movement where the Filipinos continue to deconstruct and seek alternative narratives against the meta-narratives of the colonizers and the elite. Furthermore, the problems in translation in the discourse of Philippine indigenization mainly focus on the common misunderstanding on the "Pantayong Pananaw" as a closed circuit / exclusionary communication. Language is seen as storage and expression of culture, due to this it is expected that it will be a source of national discourse. The importance of properly historicized, contextualized, and translated text is highlighted to appropriate foreign sources to the Philippines as well as for the Filipino Americans to establish a link and avoid misreading their Filipino heritage. The chapter ended with the discourse on the intersection between the homeland and diaspora.

The author suggests that transformational than a fixed and static framework is the better perspective on the discourse on indigenization. In the last chapter, Mendoza states the two necessary moments of mutual exchange in the dispute between indigenization and deconstructive cultural theory: 1) The degree of Indigenization which involves the "rootedness" to the location or

the return to the place called "home" and the "healing" of colonial narcissism and cultural alienation and 2) deconstruction and criticism. The first moment is achieved when the subject formation is seen as a point of arrival, the entry point, or a link to a lost historical memory. Mendoza emphasizes that only upon attaining it will the second moment begin. At the time of writing the author states that the Philippine indigenization is still at the first moment.

The book was able to tackle the relevance of strong ground to Filipino identity, culture, and history for the first and second generation Filipino Americans to be able to negotiate to their location. It also reiterates the state of limbo between the homeland and diaspora that the second generation of Filipino Americans experience and their "born-again" experience as they discover their Filipino roots. Additionally, the need for continuous program in the Philippine academes that will cater the Filipino American student's introduction to the Filipino society, as well as a counterpart program in the American academies thru the Filipino American scholars that will provide a debriefing session to help the students digest the experience and avoid an oriental lens.

This book is a great contribution to the Philippine Studies as it summarizes the three programmatic indigenous movements, their advancements, and setbacks. It also clarifies the common misunderstanding on the principles of the said movements particularly the "Pantayong Pananaw" closed-circuit principle and how some easily dismiss advancements. This work foregrounds the need for proper translation of the attempts on Filipino identity construction based on the context and history

**Deborrah Sadile Anastacio**

Ph.D. Candidate, Doctor of Philosophy in  
Philippine Studies

De La Salle University, Philippines  
[deborrah.anastacio@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:deborrah.anastacio@dlsu.edu.ph)