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Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints

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Rogelia Pe-Pua, ed.
Handbook of Filipino Psychology, vol. 1: Perspectives and Methodology

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Handbook of Filipino Psychology, vol. 1: Perspectives and Methodology

Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2018. 707 pages.

The *Handbook of Filipino Psychology* (Sikolohiyang Pilipino or SP) traverses through the history of indigenous psychology in the Philippines. Reading through this compilation of articles, one builds an intimate understanding of SP's development in terms of theory, method, and application. The first volume, which is the focus of this review, presents the perspectives that fueled its institutionalization as an approach and advocacy. It also introduces research methods that SP advocates deem acceptable if one seeks to conduct social scientific inquiries that are aligned with SP's emphasis on advancing Filipino culture and language, national identity and consciousness, as well as social involvement (160). Except for thirteen original chapters, the contents of the handbook have been previously published as academic journal articles, conference reports, and book chapters. Nonetheless, in compiling these writings, the book weaves a complete story of SP's purpose, history, and methodology, as well as its current state, challenges, and possible future directions.

The editor, Rogelia Pe-Pua, was one of the first students of Virgilio Enriquez, the father of SP, and is a prime mover of indigenous psychology (IP) in the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific. Prior to editing this handbook, she has authored and coauthored numerous articles and book chapters on similar topics. She also edited the first book-length volume on SP, *Filipino Psychology: Theory, Method, and Application* (Surian ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino and the University of the Philippines Press, 1982), a precursor to this handbook. Both include foundational works on SP ideology and methodology, but the handbook builds upon these materials and expands the discussion by including more recent and diverse writings. Given her contributions to the field, Pe-Pua can be considered one of the most notable and prolific Filipino psychologists in the field of IP.

The depth of Pe-Pua's engagement in the IP movement and scholarship—and perhaps her location at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia—enable her to situate SP in the global discourses on indigenization. For example, the handbook includes the chapter of Carl Martin Allwood and John W. Berry (77–108), which examines the

development and characteristics of IPs in various parts of the world. This chapter positions SP as a leading force in exposing the impotence of Western psychological concepts and methods in capturing local experiences and contributing solutions to social problems. It also indirectly substantiates Enriquez's claim that having a truly universal psychology is the overall direction of SP (20). Specifically, he put forth that in "comparing IPs from different societies (the 'cross-indigenous' method) we might observe an 'overall pattern' of human development and expressions" (103), which can form part of a universal psychology that is liberating, inclusive, and relevant.

As one may expect from a compilation that spans more than forty years, a number of chapters have content that seem to be a repetition of ideas and arguments that have been published previously. However, the repeated articulation of SP's theoretical and methodological standpoint does not present itself as a nuisance but serves as a necessary reminder of SP's ontology and epistemology. These reiterations also frame the chapters that offer constructive criticisms on SP, which are welcome inclusions in this volume.

A most notable example is the chapter written by Sylvia Estrada Claudio, which points out how the essentialism of SP contributes to its inability to surge forward. According to Claudio, SP's essentialist character is observed in its assumptions that presuppose that (a) the Philippines is an independent country and therefore "what is Filipino" and "a Filipino identity" can be distinguished through its territorial boundaries; (b) people living in the Philippines are a "homogenous group in that a distinction can be made between that which is Western/colonialist and that which is indigenous/liberating"; and (c) "what is indigenous is liberating" (236). She discusses critiques of SP's "essentializing" in both ideology and methodology not just by presenting her own views to foreground her proposed approach (i.e., radical, postmodern, and feminist), but also by integrating the appraisals of Epifanio San Juan and Allen Tan, which she describes as mainly ideological, as well as those of Madelene Sta. Maria and Allan Bernardo, which she labels as methodological (239–40). According to Claudio, the reviews of these aforementioned scholars whom she cites in her chapter point to SP's frailties that are shaped by its essentialism. Critiques that are primarily methodological (i.e., Sta. Maria and Bernardo) analyze the tendency in SP to examine psychological concepts in the local language (e.g., *kapwa*, *pakikisama*, *utang na loob*, and *bahala na*) in a manner that is disengaged

from the experiences of the culture members of that language (238). These criticisms also point to SP's failure to consider that "lived experiences of Filipinos in the Philippines are fundamentally different" and that "experience is shaped not just by the natural and physical settings in which they occur but also the social power structures and narratives that are given to differentially located individuals" (239). The analyses that are primarily ideological point to SP's tendency to valorize Filipino values and traits as well as its limitation to nuance power relations and social positioning (239–40). The latter, as pointed out by Maurice Godelier, may result in "obviating the need to anchor the analysis and critique of culture in the underlying mode of production and reproduction, together with the complex division of labor; that delineates the limits and possibilities of long-range social transformation" (240). Claudio's radical, postmodern, and feminist approach to transforming and advancing SP is both similar to and different from the universalization and emancipatory purpose of IP put forth by Enriquez. They both adhere to SP's advocacy of equity and liberation (especially of the marginalized) through the science and practice of psychology. However, Claudio seems to contend that creating a universal psychology based on the cross-indigenization of human experiences (i.e., the method of producing a universal psychology from finding overall patterns from the discoveries and rediscoveries of various IPs) drawn from a hegemonic and static view of culture and reality does not essentially free SP (and perhaps even IPs in general) from the manacles of normative psychology. From this perspective, one may surmise that the current science and practice of SP may not be fundamentally different from Western psychology.

There are chapters in the handbook that partly address some of the criticisms against SP. For instance, Pe-Pua recognizes that the diversity that characterizes the handbook is "confined to a limited geographical space" (xxvi). Thus, she, as editor, deliberately attempts to widen this space by including articles from rarely represented regions and groups. Nonetheless, the limited knowledge on SP manifests in the scarcity of representative materials that reflect the heterogeneity of Filipinos and Filipino identities.

The section of the handbook that is devoted to methodology presents chapters that describe and apply research methods that SP advocates. This section will be useful to those who wish to use SP as a guiding frame in social scientific research. The diversity and interdisciplinarity of the contents of the handbook are demonstrated in the inclusion of works that apply SP's

methodological approaches in sociological and anthropological studies. Although the addition of these materials shows the breadth of utilization of SP methods, there seems to be a need to articulate how these articles relate to SP's epistemological standpoint.

Overall, the handbook responds to calls from both advocates and critics to synthesize current knowledge on SP. The important contribution of this volume in understanding the essence of SP and in generating insights about its current state and future directions cannot be overemphasized. The first volume of the handbook does not only capture SP's theoretical as well as methodological development but also brings to consciousness issues and challenges confronted by the field. How these are reflected in SP's application to different fields will be of great interest as one reads through the second volume, *Handbook of Filipino Psychology, vol. 2: Application*, which is also edited by Pe-Pua (University of the Philippines Press, 2019).

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MA. MERCEDES G. PLANTA

Traditional Medicine in the Colonial Philippines, 16th to the 19th Century

Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2017. 279 pages.

In Philippine historiography, only in the past few decades have various aspects of the social history of the Spanish colonial period garnered a wider and deeper scholarly introspection. Ma. Mercedes G. Planta's *Traditional Medicine in the Colonial Philippines, 16th to the 19th Century* is one of the latest works that have turned toward this direction to give a more objective and nuanced analysis, devoid of the traditional anticolonial-cum-nationalistic bias that has pervaded the historiographic landscape. The book is a valuable contribution to the history of medicine in the Philippines, an area of study in which there is still limited knowledge. It is the newest addition to the short list of works in this subfield, following Jose P. Bantug's *A Short History of Medicine in the Philippines during the Spanish Regime, 1565–1898* (Colegio Medico-Farmacaceutico de Filipinas, 1953), Enrico GR. Azicate's master's thesis, "History of Medicine in the Philippines: