

# Intellectual Neocolonialism in the University: Restructuring the Education of Juan de la Cruz\*

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## Abstract

After achieving independence in 1946, the Philippines had to confront vestiges of colonialism imposed by the West, mainly Spain and the United States. Filipino intellectuals began addressing the need to decolonize politically, economically and culturally. Colonialism, however, had the most insidious effect on the intellectual and popular culture as Western ways of knowing were and still are being propagated in schools, colleges and universities unsuitable to Philippine realities and conditions. This article discusses the origins of Western epistemology in Philippine universities, and tells the efforts to decolonize the university curricula and the reasons behind their continuing failure. It traces the growth of ethnic studies in the country in the midst of ascendant monoculture, proposes the incorporation of programs for ethnic studies and curricular revision in regional universities and finally argues for the change on the name, identity and political and economic setup of the archipelago that will really set the course for full decolonization.

**Keywords:** decolonization, ethnic studies, intellectual neocolonialism, monoculture, Philippine universities

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Education in the Philippines has undergone several stages of development from the pre-Spanish times to the present. In meeting the needs of the society, education serves as focus of emphases/priorities of the leadership at certain periods/epochs in our national struggle as a race. As early as in pre-Magellanic times, education was informal, *unstructured, and devoid of methods*. Children were provided more vocational training and less academics (3 Rs) by their parents and in the houses of tribal tutors [italics added].

Philippines' Department of Education (2011)

The agency stretched its wingspan to make higher education more accessible and equitable, relevant and responsive, more efficient and effective and last but not the least, *attuned to global standards to deliver quality and excellent education* [italics added].

Philippines' Commission on Higher Education (2009" 3)

Juan de la Cruz is the typical stereotype of the Filipino reeking with bias against the Muslims and non-Christian minorities who continue to defy state-directed colonization and oppression. Catholic or Christian, a Muslim or a pagan, Juan who speaks Tagalog, renamed Filipino, belongs to an ethnic group, attends the public school system, graduates from a university either in Manila or in his province and teaches in the same university coaching a generation of students – one of them is another Juan – for the next twenty-five years. Juan, a teacher, is of course a product of a university culture that basically accepts Western epistemological concepts and ideas at its face value and a society that is susceptible to anything foreign in its long history of colonialism and imperialism.

In this essay, I would outline the origins and development of this educational culture in the Philippines. I would provide the context, which had given rise to a nationalist movement involving the university, and discuss the efforts of some Filipino intellectuals as they were influenced by this movement towards crafting an indigenous worldview. I would assess the impact since the seventies to the present of this decolonization in the university, provide a

critique of its limitations and weaknesses, identify the sources for the continued patronage of non-indigenous ways of thinking and account for the rise of ethnic studies throughout the country. Lastly, I would argue that decolonizing the Filipino – which I had earlier advocated (Fernandez, 2006) – is an impossible task for the Filipino embodies its colonial origins unacceptable to the Muslims and non-Christian minorities (Quimpo, 2000). Decolonization requires the reclaiming of indigenous selves and forging a pan-archipelagic identity that respects diversity and promotes unity. In so doing, the role of universities in the ethnic regions in designing an emancipatory curriculum is crucial in the production of indigenous knowledge systems and their collection and dissemination as the cultural archive of the entire archipelago.

### The University and Western Epistemological Tradition

The origins of Western epistemological tradition can be traced back to the creation and establishment of universities in Manila inside the walls or Intramuros (Alzona, 1932; Bazaco, 1953). In 1611 the University of Santo Tomas was established as a small college ran by the Dominicans, later elevated to university in 1645. An earlier institution was the Colegio de Manila, or the Colegio de San Ignacio erected in 1585 but it ceased to exist when the Jesuits were expelled from the Philippines in 1768. Courses offered were theology and philosophy, canon law, logic and grammar, arts and civil law, later pharmacy and medicine in 1871 in the former and theology and the arts, later canon law and civil law in the latter.

Steeped into European, particularly Hispanic intellectual tradition, the missionaries-turned-teachers were transmitting their acquired learning to few students, mostly Spaniards born in Spain and in Manila and perhaps a number of Spanish mestizos with Chinese or native descent living in the capital. Although established in 1620 as a secondary institution, the Colegio de San Juan de Letran could have catered only on its early years to select students, specifically orphans, from around Manila or nearby regions until 1706 (Bazaco, 1933). Only the implementation of the educational decree of 1863 mandating

the establishment of primary schools for boys and girls throughout the country could have changed a little the educational landscape but only a few still, particularly from the landed and the middle classes, which had lucratively participated in the commercialization of agriculture, could enter the university, the University of Santo Tomas (Fast and Richardson, 1979). By this time, Ateneo de Manila, from a small primary school for children of Spanish residents, became a Jesuit secondary institution offering a bachelor's degree as well as certificate courses in agriculture, surveying and business (Arcilla, 1988; Bonoan, 1988).

Thus, the university became the training ground for native and non-native scholars and professionals in various fields under the spell of European and Spanish epistemology. The generation of Gregorio Sanciango (1852-1897), Trinidad Pardo de Tavera (1857-1925), Pedro Paterno (1858-1911), Jose Rizal (1861-1896), Isabelo de los Reyes (1864-1938), Apolinario Mabini (1864-1903) and others turned out specimens for the creation of a corpus of Philippine knowledge under the aegis of European intellectual theories and practices.<sup>1</sup>

### The Indigenous Traditions in the Midst of Nationalist Awakening and Re-awakening

While these Filipino intellectuals were churning out treatises, books, monographs on the Philippines, they were also charting the course of an independent nation. They have to cite works by European scholars to disprove the prejudiced assumptions made against their race (Rizal's *Sobre la indolencia de los Filipinos* [1890]), to stress their equality with the Spaniards (Sanciango's *El Progreso de Filipinas* [1881]), to document their ancient civilization as it was connected to a larger Asia (Mojares 2009) (Rizal's annotations to Morga [Morga 1890], Paterno's *La antigua civilizacion Tagalog* [1887], De los Reyes' *El folklore Filipino* [1889], Mabini's idea of a

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<sup>1</sup> For a brief background on these personalities, see National Historical Institute (1989). For a comprehensive study on three of these figures, see Mojares (2006).

pan-Malayan identity [Majul 1996]) and to demonstrate their capacity for thinking (Sanciangco's). The Philippine revolution (1896-1898) upon the establishment of the first Philippine republic promised the break with Spanish clergy-controlled curriculum with the creation of the *Universidad Científica-Literaria de Filipinas* (Agoncillo, 1960). But this secular university manned by Filipino scholars and intellectuals who graduated from Santo Tomas and Ateneo would only last from November 1898 to September 1899 because the United States and the republic were at war since February.

The entry of the U.S. and the subsequent annexation of the Philippines destroyed the republic, and set in motion a new relationship with another colonial master under the pretext of tutelage, which had an effect in the direction of Philippine scholarship. The previous regime curtailed the production of knowledge through censorship. The U.S. guaranteed freedom of the press, and introduced mass education in English forcing universities and colleges to teach an English-based curriculum. The University of the Philippines, established in 1908, pioneered in the teaching of American-based curriculum in all disciplines. Most universities, however, during this period up to the present, were and are still handled by Catholic missionaries.

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Filipino scholars had to travel to Spain or other European countries to further their education. In 1903 till 1941 in three phases, under the pensionado program, Filipino students were provided scholarships to study in colleges and universities in the U.S. (Orosa, 2007; see also Teodoro, 1999). These scholars, studying under American mentors and schooled in American ways of thinking and feeling, would return to the Philippines to practice what they learned. They would subsequently become heads of government departments, agencies, and universities or become politicians affecting national policies.

From claims of equality and assimilation that they aimed for hispanization to claims of national culture, identity and Asianness of the early generation, Filipinos of this generation, either intellectuals or the common people, underwent Americanization. There were efforts to think as a Filipino (Quirino

and Hilario, 1924) and understand the Filipino (Osias, 1940), Filipinize the curriculum, to create and impose a national language and to develop a national culture in preparation for independence (Hayden, 1955). All these were momentarily derailed due to the Japanese occupation during the Second World War although the stirrings for Asian identity had finally taken shape but in the service of propaganda.

By the time independence was recognized in 1946, universities and their curricula exhibited form and content of the early decades as economic and cultural relations with the US assumed a new form called neocolonialism. Cooperation between American and Philippine universities continued. Scholarships from various American foundations supported academic exchanges (Miralao, 1999). Donations of American books to Philippine libraries intensified. In the midst of these, a nationalist reawakening erupted in the early and late 1950s led by Senator Claro M. Recto who questioned the overt American control in Philippine foreign policy and the lack of policy towards Asia (Constantino, 1969). It continued into the 1960s reaching the halls of the academe when Filipino social scientists, particularly at the UP Community Development Research Council, recognized the limitations of Western social science methods to Philippine conditions and the originality of Filipino culture and tradition (Feliciano, 1965; Jocano, 1965). Through the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN), leading nationalists and professors bewailed the Americanization of the state university (MAN, 1967; Rosca, 1969). They challenged the deliberate use of American social science models in explaining Philippine social reality and probed the unsuspecting acceptance of American aids through scholarships and grants, the Filipino scholar becoming obligated to the funding agencies.

This context would help explain the rise of indigenization movement in the academe alongside ultra-nationalism in the early 1970s at the height of student activism, communist insurgency, Moro secessionism and martial law in the country. The continued use of English had been deplored in the late 1950s (Constantino, 1966) and the re-writing of Philippine history from the point of

view of the colonized had begun in the late 1940s and sustained in early 1960s till the 1990s (Guerrero, 1947; Agoncillo, 1962).<sup>2</sup> The reorientation of the Philippines towards Asia got a boost with the creation of the Institute of Asian studies in mid-1950s at the UP College of Liberal Arts, later to be called the “Asian Center” (Sobritchea, 2002). With the imposition of Tagalog, renamed Pilipino in the 1973 Philippine constitution, indigenous knowledge came to mean studying and understanding the Filipino in the national language. Thus, the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* was conceptualized in the early 1970s and formalized in 1975 to understand Filipino indigenous psychology, followed by *Pilipinolohiya* in 1989 and *Pantayong Pananaw*, which were further refined in terms of meaning and substance in the early 1990s (Pe-Pua and Marcelino, 2000; Salazar, 1998).<sup>3</sup> These were partly in reaction to studies undertaken by the Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC) at the Ateneo de Manila in the early 1960s on the realm of Philippine values basically seen as outsiders’ or American point of view (Lynch, 1961; San Juan, 1995-96) and the discipline called “Philippine Studies” established in 1974 at UP College of Arts and Sciences whose origins can be traced to studies made by American colonial scholars on their new colony and developed into “area studies” after the war (Salazar, 1998; Aquino 2000). It was also a response to the growing clamors for indigenization in Asia (Bennagen, 1980; Atal 1979 as cited in Enriquez 1982). Outside UP during the 1970s up to the 1990s, there were efforts to indigenize Filipino philosophy and theology (Mercado, 1974; 1975; 1994; Ferriols, 1991; 1999). One author even has found justification to Filipinos’ authoritarian tendency in supposed Filipino philosophical moorings (Mercado, 1975).

*Sikolohiyang Pilipino* aims to search and develop indigenous ways of knowing and understanding the Filipino psychology in contrast with the

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<sup>2</sup> See also the subsequent editions of [A Short History of the Filipino people](#) by Agoncillo and his co-author.

<sup>3</sup> I want to thank Mr. Atoy Navarro of the Pambansang Samahan sa Sikolohiyang Pilipino for sending me a number of articles related to Philippine indigenization.

mainstream Philippine psychology, which is basically Western and American-oriented psychology (Enriquez, 1981). *Pilipinolohiya*, as defined by its theoretician, is “the systematic study of Philippine psyche, culture and society” using “one’s own theory that is apt to the [Filipinos’] thinking, culture and society based on their experience and perspective” (Covar, 1998: 27-34). *Pantayong Pananaw* envisions a civilizational discourse in Tagalog/P/Filipino in which Filipinos are in control of the construction, comprehension and dissemination of knowledge about Filipinos and the world around them (Salazar in Bautista and Pe-Pua, 1991).<sup>4</sup>

### Mono-cultural Indigenous Knowledge: Impact, Limits, and the Rise of Ethnic Studies

The rise of this indigenization movement in the academe coincided with the growing threats to the stability of Philippine nation-state, which had to confront the armed resistance by the communists, and the Moros. The imposition of Pilipino as the national language and the suspension of the teaching of the other languages in their respective regions in 1974 were made to ensure unity at the expense of diversity. The nationalism of the new presidential administration in 1965 and the growing resentment against English had reconfigured the division of humanities at UP when a new department in 1966 was created, the Department of Pilipino and Philippine Literature. The move incurred the opposition from non-Tagalogs primarily and ironically by the first chairman who had to include in the curriculum of courses the study of non-Tagalog languages and literatures meeting undue resistance from rabid Tagalog, Pilipino nationalists (Yabes, 1973). By the 1970s, this ultra-nationalism from UP began to infect other universities around Manila through the establishment of their own departments of Pilipino and the institutionalization of degrees in Pilipino, later Filipino after the 1986

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<sup>4</sup> For a critical discussion on the issues about Philippine indigenization, see Mendoza (2002; 2006).

Philippine constitution (Hofileña 2010).

There are limited gains in the dissemination of this mono-cultural indigenization at UP because it had slowly influenced other major universities primarily around Manila and nearby areas. More important factor in its reception is the teaching of Pilipino, later Filipino as medium of instruction along with English since 1974.<sup>5</sup> Its conduits are organizations with their annual conferences. Its influence had reached the provinces through memberships. There are publications done but still limited in circulation. *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* practitioners instituted an undergraduate course on Filipino psychology at UP in 1978, the first to do so, and then in the following years, a PhD with concentration on Philippine psychology was made (Pe-Pua and Marcelino, 2000). In 2004 a conference, book-launching, film-showing on Filipino personhood was held at UP gathering the leading lights of the movement.<sup>6</sup> Undergraduate course of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is offered in non-UP universities such as De la Salle University in Manila. Based on Commission on Higher Education (CHED) memorandum no. 38 issued on 18 November 2010 on policies and guidelines for undergraduate programs in psychology, a course on *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is offered but as mere elective. Publication of textbooks in Tagalog on various fields, i.e. aquaculture, biology, medicine, etc. by the UP Sentro ng Wikang Filipino began in late 1990s.<sup>7</sup> Writing of textbooks by Filipinos does not automatically mean weaning away from Western concepts although it is a beginning. In the fields of medicine and nursing, engineering and sciences, foreign authored textbooks are still the norm in the curriculum. Of course, the teaching of social science courses as part of the general education as far as UP is concerned is still dominated by

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<sup>5</sup> This is the result of the bilingual policy in Philippine education in which Pilipino and English were made to be the medium of instruction from elementary to high school.

<sup>6</sup> I was able to attend this conference.

<sup>7</sup> The UP Sentro ng Wikang Filipino or Center for the Filipino Language was established in 1989 by the UP Board of Regents. Since then, it had assumed a major role in the crafting of policies and programs for the propagation of Filipino inside and outside UP through publication of books and a journal, translation projects and the hosting of conferences, seminars and fora.

Western epistemological texts and textbooks authored by foreigners.<sup>8</sup>

Its slim success has got to do with a number of factors. First, its founders failed to institutionalize in the university curricula and structure of UP the necessary infrastructure for its development, sustenance and propagation in terms of personnel, and funding. An institute or a center of Filipino psychology similar to the Third World Studies Center established in 1977 at UP could have set the directions needed for *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* both in theory and practice. It is worth taking note that alongside this movement, a number of Filipino scholars were engaged in the discourse of Marxism as an alternative paradigm (Bautista, 2000), which led to the establishment of the center based on a western construct that the Philippines belonged to the Third World. The hold of Western epistemology on Filipino academics at UP would explain the logistics and resources provided for the creation of the center. It is not surprising then that the founders had to establish on their own independent research centers [i.e., Philippine Psychology Research House (PPRH), later the Philippine Psychology Research and Training House (PPRTH) or the Bahay Saliksikan sa Kasaysayan (BAKAS)] for the propagation of their ideas. Second, which is related to the first, is the resistance from faculty members of a department, and college and university officials who had doubts about its relevance. Although one founder became dean of a college, another associate dean, and another, chair of a department – they have succeeded during their terms to implement the vision they had in mind for their respective fields and disciplines – their success in realizing their ideas is overturned once their successors took the reins. Last, it can be attributed to its skewed essentialist perspective on the use of Tagalog as prism of observation and study in a multi-ethnic, multicultural archipelago like the Philippines, coupled with its slow progress in articulating theories and their practical application to researches, in the case of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (Torres, 1997; Diokno 1997; Sta. Maria, 1996).

The Filipino was and is thus reduced to understanding himself through the

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<sup>8</sup> Textbook used are by Curtis (1961) and Ebenstein (1960) with their present editions available in major Philippine bookstores.

national language.<sup>9</sup> Although the main theoreticians acknowledged the role of ethnic communities in understanding Filipino culture, they could not see any problem with the use of Tagalog, Pilipino/Filipino categories in making assumptions about other non-Tagalog cultures. They view the diverse cultures in the archipelago as having commonalities neglecting the nuances in culture that each of these ethnic cultures possesses. The richness of the archipelagic cultures in the hundred ethnicities and languages is never really appreciated and the culture-bearers are taken for granted, unable to study their own cultures in their own languages in relation to their selves and to others. The indigenes cannot think and speak in his language; he must speak in another language under the dictate of another claiming to be his elder brother. Language is a way of thought. To think in another language other than your own is to deny your ability of thinking in your own language.

The continued sway of Western epistemology upon Philippine academic practitioners has got to do with the lack of official policy at the government level, which monitors higher education institutions. The inadequacy of the tenets of indigenization by its few practitioners due to its mono-cultural tendency neglecting the other cultures as they are being othered is another factor. The availability of books by foreign authors in local bookstores nationwide and in local and national libraries and the open access of materials in the internet provide venues for the patronage of Western concepts and ideas. There is a lack of definite national policy on translation of major texts in social science, either by Filipino or foreigners, to the key languages of the country, which can be explained by the bilingual syndrome, either English or Tagalog, of policymakers. In the case of UP, reward system do help in the increase of researches but not in the promotion of original or indigenous thinking since publications are encouraged and at the same time rewarded with monetary prizes in ISI accredited journals usually at the hands of Western journals. In other local universities and colleges, research is also encouraged but they are

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<sup>9</sup> Virgilio G. Enriquez and Amelia B. Alfonso (1980) conflated Tagalog psychology to mean Filipino psychology.

more of a teaching university whose curricula are basically Western. The effective challenge to Western epistemological tradition is the growing realization among the different ethnic groups or nations outside Manila that they need to study their cultures using their own language, frameworks and perspectives. Although there are regional centers specializing on particular ethnic cultures, the universities, which these are under, do not offer degrees in ethnic studies, which should be the aim in the long run for the communities they are serving.

The University of San Carlos in Cebu City pioneered in the study and research of Cebuano culture and history since 1975 through its Cebuano Studies Center (CSC). At present, the university offers a certificate in Cebuano heritage studies under its Department of History. Following the CSC is the Cordillera Studies Center at the University of the Philippines Baguio in 1980, the Center for Tarlaqueño Studies at Tarlac State University in 1984, and the Institute of Bicol history and culture at the Ateneo de Naga University and the Juan D. Nepomuceno Center for Kapampangan Studies at Holy Angel University in Angeles City, Pampanga both in 2002. The rise of these regional centers could be traced to the imposition of Tagalog as the national language and medium of instruction in schools that threatened the existence of the different ethno-linguistic cultures in the country since the suspension of the teaching of the different mother tongues in the regions in the first two grades in 1974. By the turn of the millennium, the effect of the bilingual policy has been felt in the regions with Tagalog quickly displacing the local languages among children through education and mass media forcing native speakers of these languages to advocate their preservation and propagation. In 2001 an International Conference on Kapampangan Studies was held in Angeles City, Pampanga, which led to the creation of a center devoted to Kapampangan culture. In 2007, the 1<sup>st</sup> Pangasinan Conference on Revitalizing the Pangasinan Language and Cultural Heritage was held in Urdaneta City, Pangasinan in which the theoretical bases of Pangasinan studies were presented and articulated. In 2008 the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Cordillera Studies was held in Baguio City, Benguet. In 2009 a Bicol studies conference was

held in Naga City, Camarines Sur. All these are sure indication that the regions are taking up the responsibility of understanding their respective cultures glossed over in Anglo-American/Tagalog national discursive practice and scholarship.

### Breaking the Dependency: From Consumer to Producer of Indigenous Knowledge

It has been noted that an academic dependency exists between the universities in the north and universities in the south – the latter only consumes what is being produced in the former (Friedman, 1965; Gaureau, 1988; Alatas, 2000; 2003). This intellectual neocolonialism, or academic imperialism, preserves the dominance of Western epistemological over local indigenous knowledge systems and sustains the captivity of non-Western minds to anything produced in the West. Native intellectuals in North and South America, Australia, New Zealand, and Taiwan, all home to indigenous peoples, had called for intellectual self-determination to break free from the stranglehold of “White Studies” (Churchill, 1982; 2002; Warrior, 1992; Forbes, 1998; Deloria, 1998; Lander, 2000; Rigney, 2001; Smith, 1999; Shih, 2010).

This sort of academic dependency had also developed in the Philippine context since the colonial times in which Manila universities, dependent on knowledge being produced in Europe and America, had maintained a non-reciprocal relations with provincial or regional universities in terms of knowledge production. Manila scholars enjoy the esteem and accolades coming from local universities as they are supported by university presses and publishing houses located in the capital. This intellectual dependency is borne out of the Philippine political system, heir to a centralized Spanish and American colonial structure, which is Unitarian, and centrist (Pensar, 1988; Martinez, 2004). It is no wonder, then, that Manila scholars, including the proponents of a Tagalog, Pilipino/Filipino indigenization, think they are thinking for the whole nation so that they close their eyes on the diversity, i.e. cultural, intellectual, that exists in the archipelago.

Decolonizing universities in this context would mean being freed from this dependency. It requires the recognition that there are nations that exist within the archipelago and that they, too, are bearers of ancient knowledge and traditions, buried alive in the long centuries of colonialism, imperialism and Philippine statism, waiting to be exhumed for the benefit of their own peoples. That only when they are recognized shall they become worthy members of an archipelagic federal political entity that will supplant the present colonial unit in name and in setup. Universities in their respective ethnic regions become repositories of indigenous knowledges, producers as well as consumers of liberating information and that their collection would embody the holistic character of a new archipelagic identity. Indigenous intellectuals, therefore, face a two-pronged challenge in their struggle to attain autonomy not only for themselves in terms of knowledge theorizing, construction and interpretation but also for the economic development and self-determination of their own people (Smith, 1999): to resist Eurocentric models and to oppose and provide alternative to what can be called Tagalog studies. These ethnic studies in the regional universities, catering to ethnic minority cultures, either Muslim, Christian, or non-Christian, aim to develop intellectual autonomy on the level of theory and practice from Manila and the West. The “national” universities, which are located in the capital, are beginning to wean away from Western epistemology through their Tagalog studies and it would be better for the regional universities to catch up for the constitution of a holistic body of archipelagic knowledges and cultures.

The following are ten universities selected randomly in their regions, which could provide the educational logistics for the creation of program of study geared to their respective ethnic cultures.

Universities	Program of study
1. Pangasinan State University	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Pangasinan studies
2. University of Northern Philippines	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Ilocano studies
3. Holy Angel University	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Kapampangan studies
4. University of the Philippines Baguio	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Cordillera studies
5. St. Mary's University	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Ilongot/Isinay studies
6. West Visayas State University	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Western Visayas studies
7. Divine Word University	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Waray studies
8. Ateneo de Naga University	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Bicol studies
9. Mindanao State University	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Mindanao/Sulu studies
10. University of San Carlos	AB/BS, MA/MS, PhD Cebuano studies

The theoretical underpinnings of Pangasinan studies and its application in the university had been dealt with (Fernandez, 2008). It was written that: “the programme for a four-year BA/BS in Pangasinan Studies may consist of 144 units (48 courses) with 72 units (24 courses) devoted to general education courses and core courses and the other half assigned to either one or two areas of specialisation: ...history, economics, literature, language, sociology, music, fine arts, mass communication, chemistry, biology and other possible areas of specialisation” either Pangasinan or non-Pangasinan domains (Ibid., 108). The latter covers education, nursing, medicine, engineering, law and information technology. To develop and pursue indigenous methods of research, an MA/MS and PhD program in Pangasinan studies with particular specializations as in the BA/BS program. It is fundamental and imperative that in all these programs, the discursive medium orally and in print is Pangasinan.

To foster collaboration among Pangasinan scholars and government policymakers, the establishment of a “Center for Pangasinan studies” was proposed. The center “as a research center on Pangasinan history and culture aims to strengthen the identity and culture of Pangasinenses through the

documentation, preservation, promotion and revitalization of Pangasinan arts and culture” and “as a think tank for Pangasinan policymakers promotes scholarship and research collaboration among Pangasinan scholars and engages in policy researches and advocacies affecting the lives of the Pangasinan people” (Fernandez, 2010). On the other hand, to promote Pangasinan as an intellectual and literary language, the creation of a “center for creative writing” was suggested. This “Institute of Creative Writing” “should also deal with the enhancement of writing in other disciplines such as science, math, law, and others. To catch up with other literatures and to promote good writing in all academic disciplines, it would create a venue where Pangasinan literature, researches, textbooks and their writers will thrive with the nucleus of support and manpower coming from the academe supported by affiliated literary organizations...” (Ibid.).

Quotations from the DepEd and CHED at the beginning of this essay respectively reflect in the former the ignorance of Philippine educators on the rich and untapped indigenous ways of knowing and understanding among the various ethnic groups because they are blinded by their Western-oriented education and in the latter that degrees offered in the Philippines are pale imitations of what is existing in the West to tie the Philippine workforce to unfair and unjust global division of labor. Despite the more than 30 years of the indigenization movement in the social sciences, it failed to give a dent on the way social sciences is being taught in colleges and universities in the country. For instance, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* is not included in the introductory course on psychology and what had been challenged as negative value system (i.e., bahala na, hiya, utang na loob etc.) perpetuated by outsiders to further the inferiorization of the Filipino is still being taught. Introduction to political theories as part of the general education starts with Plato and ends with Marx in small colleges or universities or with a fashionable thinker, perhaps Zizek, in top Manila universities.<sup>10</sup> It is logical that American colonial

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<sup>10</sup> Interviews with recent graduates of political science from Mindoro and nutrition from Panay Island, Quezon City, 3 June 2011.

discourse still filtered into studies of Philippine politics influencing the production and consumption of political knowledge by Filipinos (Ileto 2001). As in non-Western societies, Philippine university studies mold and teach students according to Western models and categories, prepare them to become consumers and producers of Western ideas and values, and naturalize them into accepting the order of things based on the way the West had made it to be.<sup>11</sup>

The need to design an ethnic-oriented university curriculum is urgent and necessary for a people in quest of liberating information and knowledge and in search of an equitable political and economic system. It is important to put it in place before one can really gather, analyze and systematize the indigenous knowledge systems of the entire archipelago that will be a counter to Eurocentric ways of being, knowing, and understanding. In general terms, the various ethnic studies mentioned would deal primarily but not exclusively with these areas in the curricula: indigenous philosophy, native pedagogy, communication, engineering, ethno-science and technology, law, and human relationships. Indigenous philosophy deals with understanding the meaning of life and being. Native pedagogy explores indigenous ways of teaching and passing down knowledge. Communication studies indigenous norms of writing and speaking. Engineering focuses on the indigenous techniques of realizing an abstract idea into a concrete one. Ethno-science and technology investigate the indigenous ways of comprehending the environment and the indigenous ways of designing tools for comfort and convenience. Law is the study of the regulation of human conduct to preserve society. Human relationships deal with the study of rituals and different phases in the life of an individual as one is a member of a group (i.e., peers, family, nation, union).<sup>12</sup>

The systematic overhaul of curricula in universities is a beginning in the road to decolonization. Nonetheless, decolonization is also a question of how it could be enforced and implemented politically and economically. As said earlier, it requires the political participation of all the nations in the archipelago

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<sup>11</sup> Needless to say, the Indian experience discussed in Alvares (2011) applies to the Philippines.

<sup>12</sup> I benefited from my reading of Asante (2011).

through a constitutional convention that would revise the political setup from Unitarian to federal or to an appropriate indigenous political system and create a new name for the union, which is more acceptable, non-colonial, and pan-archipelagic.<sup>13</sup> Name change is the first step to full decolonization as it signals a new chapter in the history of a new political body; thus it cannot be underestimated. “Filipino” and “Philippines” for the last fifty years since 1946 had been associated with failures, embarrassments, shame, and dishonor so that a new name would mean breaking free from all these sordid colonial, neocolonial past (Mulder, 1996).

## Conclusion

The struggle for decolonized universities is also the struggle for the equality among ethnicities and languages in the archipelago. For an alienated Juan de la Cruz who comes from an ethnic region and who was jolted out of his senses on the need to study, disseminate and preserve the indigenous knowledge contained in his language, it is a difficult struggle for political, economic and cultural emancipation when all, including his people, had acquiesced to the present dependency. His is a voice in wilderness just like select Juan de la Cruzes scattered in the different parts of the country. But the situation will change in the long run since a number of universities outside Manila had begun conducting researches on the cultures where they serve. It is hoped that it will not take time for the intellectuals and administrators of these universities to think about indigenizing their curriculum and courses not only to promote indigenous knowledge among their constituents but also to emancipate minds long accustomed to the Anglophone West and Tagalog Manila and jumpstart the celebration of a hundred selves, thoughts and ideas.

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<sup>13</sup> The Filipino intellectual and economist Salvador Araneta had proposed a semi-unitary national government and three semi-autonomous states (1976) and suggested the name “Rizaline islands” for a new political setup in honor of the national hero who fathered the nation (n.d.).

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# 菲律賓高等教育去殖民化的奮鬥

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## 摘要

菲律賓在 1946 年獨立後，必須面對來自美國和西班牙的後殖民挑戰。知識份子戮力於政治、經濟、和文化上的去殖民化。不幸地，殖民主義持續宰制菲律賓知識界與通俗文化的認知和思維。本文先追溯普遍存在菲律賓各大學的西方式認知模式的根源，然後討論大學針對去殖民設計課程的努力，也檢討這些去殖民化運動失敗的原因。本文建議菲律賓必須以族群研究突破單一文化的專制思維和政策，透過本土的多元文化研究與推廣，在地區性大學強化本土的族群研究，如此才能讓菲律賓得去殖民化運動步上正軌。

**關鍵詞：**去殖民化，族群研究，知識界新殖民主義，單一文化，菲律賓的大學