

Renato Constantino's Discourses on Philippine Education as Post-Colonial: A Philosophical Reading

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The history of the Filipino people is a history of colonization. In 1521, the Spaniards set foot in the archipelago to Christianize the natives and to obtain material benefits from the people and other resources.¹ The story of Spanish colonization centered on conversion of the natives to Catholicism, and it would not be complete without its religious color. The transformation of the archipelago's economic and political structures during the Spanish colonization centered on missionary activities. Catholic missionaries played a big role in carrying out colonial policies. Colonial policies were carried out through informal and formal education: "Informal education was imparted through sermons during the Mass" while "formal education was done through schools and colleges."² To supplement informal and formal education, missionaries also wrote and published devotional books to spread Christianity and to strengthen people's faith. They stayed regularly in rural areas to preach the Gospel while Spanish civil authorities stayed in the cities.³ That is why the main protagonist in the story of Spanish colonization were the missionaries.

In 1898, the 300 years of Spanish colonization ended. But it did not grant freedom and independence for the Filipino people. It marked the transfer of colonial power from the Spaniards to an emerging global power, the Americans. The Americans colonized the Filipinos in the name of democracy. But their real intention was economic. They colonized the Philippines to transform it as a market of their manufactured products and to utilize its raw materials for the American economy. ⁴The success of American

¹Samuel K. Tan, *A History of the Philippines* (Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2009), 50.

²Jose S. Arcilla, SJ, *An Introduction to Philippine History*, Fourth Edition (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 61.

³*Ibid.*, 62.

⁴*Op cit.*, 68.

colonization was facilitated by the educational system that used English as a medium of instruction. The colonial educational system was meant to propagate the use of English language as a unifying factor for the Philippine colony and to enable the Filipinos assimilate the values of American culture.⁵ In 1946, the Americans granted independence to the Philippines. It was, however, not an absolute independence. It was the beginning of neo-colonialism where American influence was still present particularly in the Philippine government's policies on economics, foreign relations, military, and education.

Aware of the influence of former colonial masters, Filipino intellectuals started to resist such influence not by the use of arms by the might of their writings and discourses. They brought into light the shadows of colonial power lurking in Filipino consciousness. They wanted the Filipinos to know that they have to search for their identity as nation by tracing and restoring their genuine culture and tradition, and at the same time disconnecting from colonial influences. They realized that like their former masters they can construct discourses to highlight their nation's values and truths. These discourses are known as post-colonial.

Post-colonial discourses are discourses that emanate from the experiences of the colonized people. These are the discourses of the "minorities," the "inferior, and the "other." The discourses of the once slaves are now challenging that of their former colonial masters. These discourses are manifestation that the former slaves see themselves as co-equal of their former masters who once proclaimed that their civilization and culture are superior.

Post-colonial discourses criticize the hegemonic discourses of the West which justify the normality of "uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, peoples."⁶ That is why post-colonial discourses are formulated around the issues of "cultural difference, social authority and political discrimination."⁷ These include the idea of cultural struggle and cultural power.⁸ It is the struggle between

⁵Ibid., 71.

⁶Homi K. Bhabha, "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern" in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 1993), 190.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Jon Stratton and Ien Ang, "On The Impossibility of a Global Cultural Studies" in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996), 381.

nations to create a level playing field in the “uneven and unequal forces of cultural representation.”⁹ The words of Jean Paul Sartre in his Preface to the book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, echo this struggle:

It came to an end; the mouths opened by themselves; the yellow black voices still spoke of our humanism but only to reproach us with our inhumanity. We listened without displeasure to these polite statements of resentment, at first with proud amazement. What? They are able to talk by themselves? Just look at what we have made of them! We did not doubt but that they would accept our ideals, since they accused us of not being faithful to them...

A new generation came to the scene, which changed the issue. With unbelievable patience, its writers and poets tried to explain to us that our values and the true facts of their lives did not hang together, and that they could neither reject them completely nor yet assimilate them. By and large, what they are saying was this: “You are making us into monstrosities; your humanism claims we are at one with the rest of humanity but your racist methods set us apart.”¹⁰

This paper does not contain original post-colonial discourses nor offers a unique Filipino post-colonial philosophy. This paper is a first step to the ambition of collecting and synthesizing post-colonial discourses of Filipino intellectuals in order to come up with a post-colonial philosophy. The framework for such ambition is not yet laid down. The time line is not yet determined. The ambition remains an ambition. Hopefully, this humble paper will lead to the achievement of such noble undertaking.

This paper analyzes the writings of Renato Constantino. The main idea of this paper is that Constantino’s writings that analyze the effects of American colonization to Filipino consciousness and society can be considered as post-colonial. These analyses on the effects of colonization to the Filipinos’ way of life and worldview as well as to political and social institutions make Constantino an essential writer and thinker.

Constantino’s main thesis in all of his writings was history should be written from the point of view of the people.¹¹ His goal

⁹Op cit., 190.

¹⁰Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 7-8.

¹¹Rosalinda Pineda-Ofreneo, “Renato Constantino: Biographical Sketch, Ideological Profile” in *Partisan Scholarship: Essays in Honour of Renato Constantino*, ed. Peter Limquenco (Manila: Journal of Contemporary Asia Publishers, 1989), 8.

was cultural decolonization.¹² Constantino's thesis as well as goal were shaped by his exposure to communist ideas in the 1930s and nationalist movement in the 1950s.

In the 1930s, the high school student Constantino witnessed the birth of the Communist Party in the Philippines and the mass activity of peasants and workers who cried for national independence and social justice.¹³ It marked the arrival of communist ideas in the Philippines anchored on the Leninist-Stalinist interpretation of Marx.¹⁴ These ideas were used by peasants and workers as they struggle against the problems of inequality and economic imperialism. These problems were perceived as two interconnected realities in the Philippines where the latter caused the former. In the same period, Constantino enrolled in the University of the Philippines (UP) where he assumed the editorship of the Philippine Collegian, UP's campus newspaper. As a writer and editor, he was an "uncompromising, bullheaded dissenter"¹⁵ that irked then President Manuel L. Quezon and the US military intelligence. He also participated actively in debates and discussions with "the Left" in the campus of the UP.

In the late 1950s, Constantino joined Claro M. Recto's revival of nationalist movement. He also became Recto's campaign manager when the latter ran for the presidency¹⁶ under the platform of nationalism. Rector was the central figure of post-war nationalism and he was one of the few politicians who "fought against pro-American politicians over issues like the US bases, the unequal economic and military treaties between the US and the Philippines, and the powerful hold of the American enterprises over the economy."¹⁷ Inspired by the cause of his former schoolmate in the UP, Constantino propagated Rector's ideas by publishing the Recto Reader in 1964 and wrote Rector's biography, *The Making of a Filipino*, before the end of the 1960s.¹⁸

¹²Ibid., 9

¹³Ibid., 2.

¹⁴Virgilio A. Ojoy, O.P. *Marxism and Religion: A Fusion of Horizons: A Discourse on Gustavo Gutierrez's Theology of Liberation and the Philippines' Church of the Poor* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2001), 297.

¹⁵Op cit., 3.

¹⁶Ibid., 6.

¹⁷Patricio N. Abinales, *Fellow Traveler: Essays on Filipino Communism*, (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2001), 198.

¹⁸Op cit., 6.

Constantino continued to write in the 1970s as well as published works on Philippine history (*The Philippines: A Past Revisited* and *The Philippines: A Continuing Past*) and decolonization (*Dissent and Counter-Consciousness* and *Tungo sa Banong Lumipas*) founded on his thesis and guided by his goal.

The author's reading and analysis of Constantino's discourses on education was focused on the following published essays: *Our Captive Minds* (1971), *The Miseducation of the Filipino* (1971) and *Education and Consciousness* (1996). In these essays Constantino exposed how Americans used education as technology of colonization and its effects to the present. Three themes were developed in these essays which will be used as the outline of discussion. These are the (1) education as an instrument of colonial policy; (2) English as a technology of power; and (3) the effects of colonization to the economic and political attitude and mentality of the Filipino people.

This paper was divided into two parts. The first part was an exposition of Constantino's discourses. While the second part was a philosophical interpretation of his discourses.

I. CONSTANTINO'S DISCOURSES ON AMERICAN COLONIZATION

A. Education as an Instrument of Colonial Policy

The Americans were able to retain their colonial control of the Philippine society and of the Filipino people by "conquest by acquiescence." It was a colonial control marked not by the use of force but by "vigorous economic, cultural, and intellectual 'assimilation.'"¹⁹ The "conquest by acquiescence" was concretely implemented by the establishment of an American-oriented educational system as a "means of pacifying" the Filipino people.²⁰ Education was used by the Americans as an "instrument of colonial policy" based on the strategy of conquest by acquiescence.

Education was the most powerful and effective colonial tool used by the Americans. It was used to restore tranquility in

¹⁹Renato Constantino, "Our Captive Minds" in *The Filipinos in the Philippines and Other Essays* (Quezon City: Malay Books, Inc., 1971), 68.

²⁰Renato Constantino, "The Miseducation of the Filipino" in *The Filipinos in the Philippines and Other Essays* (Quezon City: Malay Books, Inc., 1971), 42.

the Philippine archipelago, to transform the Filipinos into good colonial subjects, and to shape their minds to conform to American ideas.²¹ Constantino explained:

*Education served to attract the people to the new masters and at the same time to dilute their nationalism which had just succeeded in overthrowing a foreign power. The introduction of the American educational system was a subtle means of defeating a triumphant nationalism.*²²

The main goal, therefore, of the educational system was not for the development of the Filipinos but to train the Filipinos as “citizens of American colony” and to preserve and expand American control in the Philippines.²³ It was, therefore, consistent with the American colonial policy.

Hence, under an American-oriented educational system “educated ignorant” Filipinos were produced. These were the Filipinos who know more about American history and culture than their own history and tradition. According to Constantino, these were the Filipinos who “did not learn about the Philippine revolution, the first Philippine Republic and Filipino resistance in the Philippine-American war.”²⁴ Instead, they were “made to embrace Mother America, pledge allegiance to the American flag, recite the Gettysberg Address like a brown Abraham Lincoln.”²⁵ These Filipinos were “rendered ignorant of their historic struggles to be a free people;”²⁶ and such ignorance propelled the development of colonial mentality where they “worship at the altar of the white god, marvel at his weapons, gadgets, and glossy products.”²⁷

B. The English Language as Medium of Instruction

When the Americans introduced English as the medium of instruction, student and teachers became busy understanding

²¹Ibid., 42.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., 44, 45.

²⁴Renato Constantino, “Education and Consciousness” in *Fetters on Tomorrow*, ed. Lourdes Balderrama-Constantino (Quezon City: Karel Inc., 1996), 87.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

and learning the foreign language and it became their prime-pre-occupation.²⁸ This situation caused the delay in the development of the native language as a language of scholarly discourse. English became the official language in the academe. Teachers explained their respective disciplines in English while students read English texts and articulated themselves as well as their experiences in English. The native language suffered because it was not scholarly enriched. Filipino scholars did not bother studying it as the language of the sciences and the humanities. Instead, it was sidelined as language of the masses and of the people in the streets. Likewise, the English language hampered the enrichment of Filipino culture because it facilitated the influx of foreign culture that cause the underdevelopment of national culture. Filipino scholars did not bother studying their own history, culture, and traditions. They viewed Philippine realities using American perspectives. That is why the influx of foreign culture facilitated the development of the Filipino paradigm to view themselves and the world according to American culture. Constantino noted the enrichment of Filipino national language is significant because it is the Filipinos' cultural defense against the arrival of American hegemonic culture that is trying to establish a monoculture all over the world.²⁹

The English language did not only delay the development of the Filipino language as language of scholarly discourse and as medium of instruction. It did not only delay the enrichment of Filipino culture through scholarly activities, but it also caused the separation between the Filipinos and their past.³⁰ It separated the Filipinos to their past because it introduced them to a "strange, new world" as well as to a "new way of life, alien to their traditions and yet a caricature of their model."³¹ They were disoriented consciously and unconsciously from their nationalist goals and no longer learn as Filipinos but as colonials.³² They studied harder to become ideal colonials, to become "carbon copy" of the Americans.

It did not only create a divide between the present and the past but also between the educated and the illiterate, between the

²⁸Constantino, *The Miseducation of the Filipino*, p. 52.

²⁹Constantino, *Our Captive Minds*, 92.

³⁰Op cit, 45.

³¹Ibid., 45-46

³²Op cit, 78.

rich and the poor. The English language became the language and landmark of the elite, the well-placed and highly schooled. While the native language became the language of the masses and the uneducated. Constantino observed: "English is used within the family and the dialect is reserved for communication with the servants. How proudly the fond parents recount their children's progress in English and how frightened they are of the growing popularity of Tagalog!"³³

The Americans envisioned that English language would provide unity among the Filipino people divided by regionalism. It turned out that it created a further divide between the rich and the poor. It was introduced not to give the Filipinos a national language that will unite them. Rather it was used as a technology of power to transfer knowledge, information, values from the American country to the Philippine colony. It was used as a "channel through which ideas of hegemonic nations enter the consciousness of Filipinos, dominate their communication network and perpetuate a chronic and massive colonial mentality."³⁴ Hence, the Filipino divide "cannot be bridge by making the people learn more English."³⁵ Unity can only be achieved if they speak in a language of their own. This is "a national language which provides a sense of humanity and commonality; and at the same time, it symbolizes resistance to a homogenizing Westernization which divides rather than unite."³⁶

Until now the great debate on the medium of instruction is not yet given a definite conclusion. The issue on the use of Filipino or English as a medium of instruction still arise and being discussed in public forum. Sad to say, quality of education, sometimes, is based on the mastery and proficiency of English language. Filipinos always think, and philosophy teachers and intellectuals are also guilty of this, that "no true education can be true education unless it is based on the proficiency of English."³⁷ Education is not only about proficiency in a foreign language or acquisition of information. It is also about the processing and utilization of information to understand social problems and propose solutions

³³ Op cit, 78.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Constantino, *The Miseducation of the Filipino*, 55.

to such problems. This is one of the problems in the use of foreign language. It does not facilitate the processing of information because students are very busy understanding more the language than the ideas that it contains. This does not mean that English language should not be taught. The main issue is the use of foreign without mastery of the native tongue. It is true that English is the global language. Mastery of it is important for students' mobility and employability. However, the significance and value of the national and native language should not be downplayed for language gives one an identity and always connects one to his/her culture and traditions.

C. The Effects of American Colonial Education on Filipino Economic and Political Mentality

The American educational system paved the way for the Americanization of the economic and political systems of the Filipinos. Through education, the Americans were able to conceal their real intention when they introduced free trade policy. The Filipinos perceived free trade policy as a "generous gift of American altruism."³⁸ According to Constantino, "the almost complete lack of understanding at present of those economic motivations and of the presence of American interests in the Philippines is the most eloquent testimony to the success of the education for colonials which we have undergone."³⁹ The Filipinos accepted the notion of progress as "tied to the quantity of natural and human commodities" being exported in order to "earn dollars with which to buy more imported goods and pay our gargantuan foreign debt."⁴⁰ They saw foreign investors as "saviors of ailing economy and dynamos for our great leap forward to the NIC age;"⁴¹ without realizing that they take out more dollars than bring in. Foreign companies sent their profit to their mother country. It did not trickle down to the poor Filipino people.

American colonial education caused the development of apathetic attitude towards industrialization among the Filipinos.⁴²

³⁸Ibid., 47.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Constantino, *Education and Consciousness*, 87.

⁴¹Ibid., 87-88.

⁴²O p cit, 47.

American teachers instilled in the mind of the young Filipinos the idea that the Philippines is “essentially meant to be an agricultural country” and it should not be changed. Constantino pointed out that the “schools attempt to inculcate an appreciation for things Philippine, the picture that is presented for the child’s admiration is an idealized picture of a rural Philippines, as pretty and as unreal as an Amorsolo painting with its carabao, its smiling healthy farmer, the winsome barrio lass in the bright clean patadyong, and the sweet little nipa hut.”⁴³ Such picture imprinted in the mind of the Filipinos the idea that it is good to live in an agricultural society. Agricultural society should be preserved and not be sacrificed for industrialization even if it means underdevelopment and lack of progress. The Americans’ motive in propagating such idea and discourse was to monopolize and exploit natural resources for the benefit of their own economy. The Americans emphasized the beauty in an agricultural society but never highlighted the problems of an agricultural society such as “poverty, the disease, the cultural vacuum, the sheer boredom, the superstition and ignorance of backward farm communities.”⁴⁴ They did not present the problem of unequal distribution of land and the urgent need for agrarian reform, which until now haunts the Philippine economy and society.

Colonial education facilitated the transplantation of American political institutions in the Philippine colony.⁴⁵ Because of this, the Filipino people failed to develop indigenous institutions that evolved from their experiences and needs. The Philippine government and bureaucracy were brought by the Americans in the Philippines ready made. These institutions were products of American experiences, values and needs. These evolved from their problems and needs. These were established and created solve problems and look after the welfare of the people. Such was not the case for the Philippine society. Until now the form of government suitable to the Filipino people is still a debate. Filipino politicians still argue about the form of government that is best for the country to achieve growth and development.

The American educational system did not only facilitate

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 48.

⁴⁵Ibid., 49.

the development of pro-American economic attitude and transplantation of political institutions. It also made the Filipinos over dependent to the Americans.⁴⁶ This over dependency led to the failure of the Filipino people to “develop independent, serious, and solid thinking on matters of national concern.”⁴⁷ Filipino politicians, economists and policy makers would easily look for American or western models that explain the cause, effects and solutions of public problems. Instead of considering public problems in terms of the local circumstances, they would resort to following and copying American models. American models were treated as “messiahs” of Philippine public problems. These were the outright solutions to the problems experienced by the Filipino people and in Philippine society. That is why globalization, privatization, deregulation and liberalization were considered good policies for the ailing Philippine economy and society because they were effective in the American economy. The Filipino people cherished political and economic values and policies that are not products of their own thinking and analysis as well as of their own experiences and needs.

Because of the effective use of education as instrument of colonial policy, the Filipino people were confused of their national goals.⁴⁸ The “follow America” political and economic mentality became the cornerstone of Filipino national and international life.⁴⁹ This mentality prevented the Filipino people in pursuing any agenda independently and an agenda that is based on the true and genuine national interests. They equated American or foreign interest as national interest. Where the Filipino people aligned their interests with the American national interests. That is why, every time the Philippines experienced a problem or crisis the first consideration was, “how will the Americans regard this, how will this affect Philippine-American relations?”⁵⁰ For Constantino, a “blind spot” in the thinking of the Filipino people was formed; and this “blind spot” made them unable them to see America as a nation with her own national interest, values and needs.⁵¹ Constantino explained:

⁴⁶Constantino, *Our Captive Minds*, 72.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 74.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 75.

This handicap that we impose on ourselves is our assumption that we are facing, not a nation seeking what is best for herself, but a quixotic adversary gallantly seeking what is best for us. It is, therefore, easy to persuade us into believing that some action which is best for America is actually best for us. Only when the issues of self-interest stand nakedly clear, as in the bases question, do we painfully realize that our benevolent brother is thinking first of himself. Our expression of hurt surprise at this natural and normal behavior of America is evidence of our idealized and unrealistic view of our former conquerors.⁵²

Constantino's discourses gave emphasis on one of the strategies used by the Americans to colonize the Filipino people and that is education. This colonial strategy was very effective for it changed the economic and political attitudes of the Filipinos and it facilitated the slow development, or lack, of nationalism on the part of the Filipino people (please see Figure1 below). Education and the use of English language as the medium of instruction were the best strategies used by the Americans. If education was the principal agent of American colonization, English language was its master stroke.⁵³ It made the American strategies for colonization complete. Because of the English language, the Filipino people delayed the development of their own native language as medium of instruction and as language of scholarly discourse. It delayed

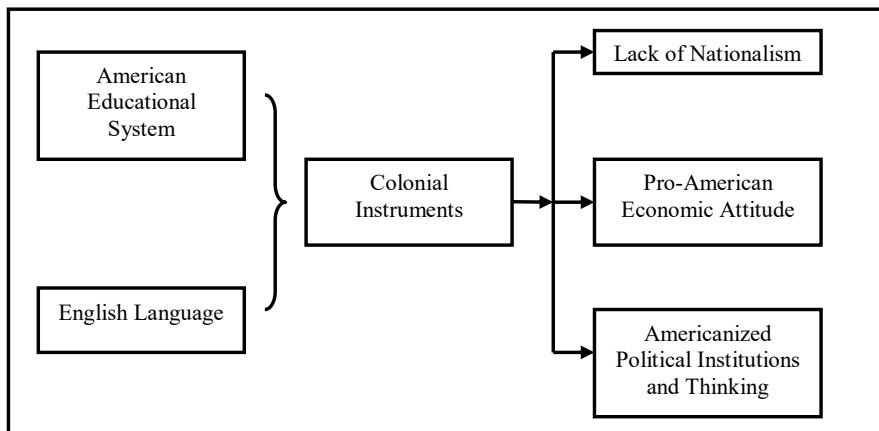


Figure 1: Effects of American Educational System and English Language

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*, Vol. 1 (Quezon City: Renato Constantino, 1975), 314.

the focus on Filipino history, culture, and tradition as subjects of scholarly activities. The American-oriented education and the English language laid down the foundation for the Filipinos to appreciate whatever is American.

II. PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF CONSTANTINO'S DISCOURSES

Constantino described how the educational system and English language were used by the Americans as colonial instruments. He also described the effects of these techniques to the Filipino people. In this second part, the writer will elucidate why education and language are effective tools of colonial policy using the philosophical ideas of Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault and Frantz Fanon.

A. Public Educational System and the American Hegemony

The success of American colonization was a result of the hegemony established by the Americans through the public educational system. The public educational system was utilized as an ideological terrain through which the Filipino consciousness was reconstructed using American culture, values, and world views.

The Filipinos who were searching for their identity and culture devastated by the Spanish colonization participated in the ideological terrain. The English language as well as the American educational system were viewed as means to regain their lost identity, culture, and unity. The American economic and political theories and frameworks were also viewed as the best models of progress and development. Such was the starting point of the American hegemonic control of the Filipinos. Allowing themselves to be like Americans in order to have culture and identity as well as progress and development. From then on, the development of the Philippine society in terms of culture, economics, and politics was influenced by the Americans. The Filipinos wanted to transform themselves and the Philippine society based on the content of the American books and textbooks, periodicals, and movies that they read and watched. The Filipinos could not escape this hegemonic

situation. That is why, they developed a blind spot in their mind. They failed to see the downsides of American colonization because of the perspective, planted in their minds that American ideas, perspectives, and institutions are the best means to achieve growth and development.

This hegemonic situation still persists in the present. Filipinos are still captives of American hegemony. They are always looking up to their former colonial masters. They always see their economic situation as well as social and political realities from the American perspectives. The blind spot remains.

How can Filipino intellectuals or philosophers solve this postcolonial problem? They should do what the Americans do. They have to create a new ideological terrain to challenge the American hegemonic control. The formulation and publication of Filipino postcolonial discourses to enlighten and re-direct their mindset and consciousness are some of the means that can be done to challenge the hegemonic control. The confusion of the Filipino people on their national goals and their lack of nationalism cannot be solved by simply requiring the Filipinos to speak Filipino and to stop patronize American ideas and products. The creation of ideological terrain and hegemonic situation are ideal actions to be done. These acts must be initiated by Filipino intellectuals in order to challenge the American and western hegemony. Discourses, textbooks, and classrooms are important technologies.

B. The English Language as a Technology of Power

Power is a relation between two forces; stated differently, in "every relation between forces is a power relation."⁵⁴ Power is productive for it produces and creates knowledge and truth. Power takes effect with the use of technologies. These technologies of power are "micro-physics" because these are exercised on the body.⁵⁵ That is why the body is "directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks,

⁵⁴Michel Foucault, "Clarifications on the Question of Power" in Foucault Live (Interviews, 1961-1984), ed. Sylvera Lotringer, trans. Lysa Hochroth and John Johnston (New York: Semiotext (e), 1996), 25.

⁵⁵Ibid.

to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.”⁵⁶ The body is locked up with power relations because of its economic use. The body is a “force of production” that is why power-relations and domination invested on it. Its importance to the economy is the reason for its subjectivation. So that it can be transformed into a useful force.

The English language was the master stroke of American colonization. It was the means used by the Americans to complete their task of transforming the Filipinos into ideal and loyal colonials. The effects of the use of English language as a medium of instruction were proofs on how effective language is as a technology of power. The English language was used by the Americans as a technology of power in producing American truths for the Filipinos and in producing ideal Filipino colonials. The technology of language was supplemented by other technologies such as textbooks, periodicals, movies and classrooms that make the work of power complete and perfect for the Americans.

Through the English language, the Americans were able to communicate the truths that they have formulated to protect their colonial interests. These truths were: the Americans as saviors of the Filipino nation; the American culture and civilization are superior; the American nation is great; the Americans are benevolent. These were accepted by the Filipino as truths and as guides in rebuilding the Philippine society. These truths still prevail today. The English language, therefore, was introduced not to provide the Filipinos a national language that will unite them. It is used as a technology of power for the Americans to transmit their truths to the Filipinos.

The divide between the Filipino elite and masses was another clear proof of English as technology of power. The English language became the language of the elite, the educated and the powerful. It became the symbol of social status and dominance in the Philippine society. It became a status of superiority and power because it is the language of the Americans. The Filipinos believed that when they master the language of their colonial master, they become more powerful and superior.

The Filipinos transmitted the truths created by the Americans to the succeeding generations. They did not only accept the truths of the Americans but they also perpetuated it. They even

⁵⁶Ibid.

recreated it. They allowed themselves to be used as technologies of the perpetuation and permanency of American power and influence over them. That is why, nowadays, it is very difficult to draw the line between the American truths about the Filipinos and the Filipinos' truths.

Filipino philosophers and teachers of philosophy are also guilty of the perpetuation of the American truths. It is, however, one of their noble tasks to challenge these truths created by the Americans that still prevail today in the mind of the Filipino people. Constantino called for the deconstruction of the Philippine education. In this process of deconstructing the truths by the Americans for the Filipinos, philosophy teachers play a critical role. The Americans created organic intellectuals among the Filipinos to express their values and interests in the American point of view. Filipino philosophy teachers and philosophers must transform themselves into organic intellectuals who express Filipino values, interests, and experiences from the point of view of Filipinos. The organic intellectuals are very important for the deconstruction of the truths created by the Americans.

C. Fanon and the Effects of American Colonization

In the preceding sections, the writer explained why and how the American educational system and English were used effectively by the Americans to control and transform the Filipinos as citizens of American colony. In this section, the writer will explain why the colonial technologies of education and language have lasting and permanent effects to the Filipinos using the postcolonial discourses of Frantz Fanon.

Fanon argues that colonized people suffer from inferiority complex because of the "death and burial of its local and cultural originality."⁵⁷ The colonized people are marked by their colonial masters as uncivilized and primitive, "no culture, no civilization, no long historical past."⁵⁸ Unfortunately, the colonized people accepted the descriptions of their colonizers. Fanon calls this as the "colonial situation," which caused the "emergence of a mass

⁵⁷Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, (Great Britain: MacGibbon and Kee Ltd, 1968), 14.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 25.

of illusions and misunderstandings”⁵⁹ about the culture of the colonized people.

The colonized people now want to elevate themselves above their current status as inferior people, without civilization, culture and history, by adopting their mother country’s cultural standards. According to Fanon:

*Every colonized people...finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country’s cultural standards. He becomes whither as he renounces his blackness, his jungle.*⁶⁰

Fanon emphasizes the use of language of the mother country as the primary and best means to improve the status of the colonized people and get out from the bondage of inferiority. By learning the language of the mother country, the colonized people “take on a world, a culture” of their masters. According to Fanon, “The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whither as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool of that language is.”⁶¹ In other words, the colonized people want to speak the language of their mother country not only to learn its culture but to elevate themselves to the status of their colonizer. It is a means to prove to themselves that they can adopt the superior culture and become superior themselves. Unfortunately, in the process of learning and adopting the so-called superior culture, they have forgotten slowly themselves and they can no longer recall who they are. Unfortunately again, learning the language and culture of the mother country to be superior means that the colonized people accepted what their colonial masters told them, they are inferior.

This is the colonial situation of the colonized people including Filipinos. Filipinos want to prove to themselves that they are equal with their colonial masters, the Americans, by learning and adopting the American culture, economic models and political ideas and institutions, not by showing to them the superiority of their original culture. According to Fanon, the “black man

⁵⁹Ibid., 60.

⁶⁰Ibid., 14.

⁶¹Ibid., 29.

wants to be white”⁶² and they “dream of a form of salvation that consists of magically turning white.”⁶³ And since the black man can no longer “negrify the world,” he is trying “to bleach it.”⁶⁴ The same with the Filipinos, they want to become Americans and dream of society like that of the Americans that is why they have adopted whatever is American - the American language, art, dance, music, stories, movies, theories, policies, institutions. They think and act like Americans not only because they wanted to become Americans but also because they wanted to become superior. However, the adoption of whatever is American is superficial because the Filipinos and their society are different to the Americans’. There is a gap between the two. Problems in the Philippine society – lack of nationalism, political and cultural confusions and crisis in Filipino identity, to mention a few, remain because Filipinos adopted superficially American culture and civilization. They still continue to behave like colonials. That is very evident in the programs and policies of the government and of the business sector. That is evident on the way politicians and economists explain, and propose solutions to the problems and issues confronting the society.

Will these effects of American colonization in the attitudes of the Filipino people be permanent? It could as it was and as it is now. It is again the task of Filipino intellectuals, especially philosophers, to enlighten the Filipino people that they have their own culture, must use it, and continuously enhance it. Filipino intellectuals must emphasize the plurality and equality of cultures and languages. Filipino people must realize that the Filipino culture and language are different to that of the Americans’. No one is inferior or superior to the other. There is nothing wrong in adopting and using the other’s language and culture as long as it is done for the enhancement of one’s native culture and language. But it is harmful to be assimilated in that culture and language and forget one’s cultural originality. The influence of the American culture cannot be denied. It is a fact. It is here. However, Filipino people should be guided for them to realize that the American culture is different and that they have to value their

⁶²Ibid., 9.

⁶³Ibid., 33.

⁶⁴Ibid., 34.

cultural originality. The blind spot in the mind of the Filipinos must be removed so that they will be able to see the reality that Filipino interest and American interest are not one and the same. Postcolonial discourses must be formulated to remove that blind spot.

There are Filipino scholars who responded to the challenge of removing the blind spot. Some of them are Virgilio G. Enriquez, Jaime B. Veneracion, Z.A Salazar, and Prospero R. Covar.

Enriquez called for the use of the Filipino language particularly in the discipline of Psychology. The use of Filipino language is critical in the study of Filipino psyche because the “process of knowing the psychology of a people is facilitated by the use of the native language of that society.”⁶⁵ He concluded that the use of English language and the predominance of American psychological theories obstruct the growth of a Filipino psychology as an indigenous scientific discipline.⁶⁶ Filipino psychology can be developed if Filipino psychologists use their own language and explain human behavior using indigenous psychological frameworks.⁶⁷ He blamed the English language for subverting the “just and legitimate aspirations of the Filipino people to place their cultural, linguistic and scientific future in their own hands.”⁶⁸

Like Enriquez, Covar provided an anthropological construction of the Filipino as a human person from the point of the Filipino culture and from the Filipino perspectives.⁶⁹ Covar explained the Filipino human person using Filipino language as well as indigenous concepts.⁷⁰ He did not present it in from the western

⁶⁵Virgilio G. Enriquez and Elizabeth Protacio-Marcelino, *Neo-Colonial Politics and Language Struggle in the Philippines: National Consciousness and Language in the Philippine Psychology (1971-1983)*, (Quezon City: Akademya ng Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Philippine Psychology Research and Training House, 1984), 9.

⁶⁶Ibid., 13.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Covar states that “Hangarin ng Disiplinang antropolohiya ang pag-aarlan ang likas na tao, kasama na rito ang pagdalumat ng pagkataong Pilipino. Di gaya ng siyensya na may pretensyong panukat na unibersal, ang paggamit kong parametro ay kaalaman bayan dalumat. Kaya’t ang pagkataong Pilipino ay tatankain kong isalarawan ayon sa konteksto ng kulturang Pilipino. Sa ganitong ehersisyo, ang mapapala ay pag-uugnay-ugnay ng mga pangyayaring nagtatalaban sa isang larangan – ang pagkataong Pilipino at ang mga salik nito” (please see the article, “Kaalamanang Bayan Dalumat ng Pagkataon Pilipino” in *Kasaysayan at Kaalaman: Mga Piling Akda Ukol sa Diskursong Pangkasaysayan*, mag patnugot N.M.R. Santillan and M.B.P. Conde, Lunsod Quezon: Limbagang Kasaysayan, 1998, 75)

⁷⁰Covar states that “Ang mithiin ng aking lekturang propesoryal...ay upang maki-ambag sa paghahawan ng madawang na laranagan ng pagkataong Pilipino. Itinatakda ng lekturang ito ang katawan ng tao bilang isang banga; may labas, loob, at lalim; at pinagagalaw ng talaban ng budhi at kaluluwa. Kaalaman baying dalumat ang pinairal sa pagkilala sa mga salik ng Pagkataon Pilipino” (please see the article, “Kaalamanang Bayan Dalumat ng Pagkataon Pilipino” in *Kasaysayan at Kaalaman: Mga Piling Akda Ukol sa Diskursong Pangkasaysayan*, mga patnugot N.M.R. Santillan

point of view but from a paradigm that is close to the Filipino. His explanation can be easily understood because it was written within the Filipino culture and language.

Salazar and Veneracion developed a framework in writing Philippine history which they named as *pantayong pananaw*. Veneracion explained that it is a historical framework that gives emphasis on the use of the Filipino language in writing history and writing history for the Filipino nation.⁷¹ It is a history written from the perspectives of the Filipino nation, not from the perspectives of the Spaniards and the Americans who were accused of writing Philippine history to highlight the superiority of the cultures. *Pantayong pananaw's* main goal is for the Filipinos to understand the historical evolution of their nation⁷² that started prior to the arrival of the colonizers. There is a Filipino nation with its own culture, traditions, structures, and institutions prior to the arrival of the colonizers. Salazar also emphasized that *pantayong pananaw* is possible when people that belong to a nation understand one another because they use the same language, concepts, and meanings.⁷³ These people use the same "code" in explaining the relationship of concepts and meanings as well as of ideas, meanings and behavior of people.⁷⁴ He further explained that it is a history that provides accounts and explanations coming from the point of the view of their own culture and society, not coming from the point of view of foreigners.⁷⁵ Salazar pointed out

and M.B.P. Conde, Lunsod Quezon: Limbagang Kasaysayan, 1998, 85).

⁷¹Veneracion says that "Sa pantayong kasaysayan, ang wika ay Pilipino at ang kausap ay sambayanang Pilipino (please see the article, "Ang Kasaysayan sa Kasalukuyang Henerasyon" in *Kasaysayan at Kaalaman: Mga Piling Akda Ukol sa Diskursong Pangkasaysayan*, mga patnugot N.M.R. Santillan and M.B.P. Conde, Lunsod Quezon: Limbagang Kasaysayan, 1998, 14).

⁷²According to Veneracion, "Mahalagang talakayin ang kumplikadong proseso ng pagbubuo ng sambayanan sa pamamagitan ng pagsasama sa kasaysayan ng lahat ng pangkat, uri at sector" (please see the article, "Ang Kasaysayan sa Kasalukuyang Henerasyon" in *Kasaysayan at Kaalaman: Mga Piling Akda Ukol sa Diskursong Pangkasaysayan*, mga patnugot N.M.R. Santillan and M.B.P. Conde, Lunsod Quezon: Limbagang Kasaysayan, 1998, 14).

⁷³Salazar states that "ang lipunan at kultura natin ay may "pantayong pananaw" lang kung tayong lahat ay gumagamit ng mga konsepto at ugali na alam natin lahat ang kahulugan, pati ang relasyon ng mga kahulugan, pati and relasyon ng mga kahulugang ito sa isa't isa" (please see *Pantayong Pananaw: Ugat at Kabuluhan, Pambungad sa Pag-aaral ng Bagong Kasaysayan*, mga patnugot Atoy Navarro, Mary Jane Rodriguez, Vicente Villan, Lunsod ng Quezon: Palimbagang Kalawakan, 1997, 56).

⁷⁴According to Salazar, "Ito ay nangyayari lamang kung iisa ang "code" – ibig sabihin, may isang pangkabuuang pag-uugnay, at pagkakaugnay ng mga kahulugan, kaisipan at ugali" (please see *Pantayong Pananaw: Ugat at Kabuluhan, Pambungad sa Pag-aaral ng Bagong Kasaysayan*, mga patnugot Atoy Navarro, Mary Jane Rodriguez, Vicente Villan, Lunsod ng Quezon: Palimbagang Kalawakan, 1997, 56).

⁷⁵Salazar explains: "Kung patungo naman sa labas, sa banyaga, ang pagpapaliwanag, ang punto-de-bistang ginagamit nila ay 'pangkami,' dahil sa pagpapaliwanag ditto ng isa tungkol sa kanyang sariling lipunan at kultura" (please see *Pantayong Pananaw: Ugat at Kabuluhan, Pambungad sa Pag-aaral ng Bagong Kasaysayan*, mga patnugot Atoy Navarro, Mary Jane

that because of colonization the history of the Filipino people was written from the point of view of the colonizers.⁷⁶ This history needs to be revisited and revised because it does not reflect the culture of the Filipinos but the biases of the colonizers. Hence, the pantayong pananaw revises history from the point of view of the Filipinos' indigenous culture and tradition using their own language. It is a history that is closer to the Filipinos because it is presented within their own culture and expressed in their own language.

The works of Enriquez, Covar, Veneracion, and Salazar called for the use of the Filipino language in teaching and writing about their respective disciplines of Psychology, Anthropology, and History. They are also in searched for ethnic theories, understandings, and explanations of the Psychology, Anthropology, and History which they believed are dominated by American concepts and written using western theories and paradigms. These scholars took the lead in opening the minds of the Filipino people, particularly Filipino scholars, to the depth and richness of their culture and language. These culture and language provide deeper and meaningful explanation about the Filipino.

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Education and language are effective technologies of power that produced and created culture. Through education and language, the consciousness of a group of people can be influenced, molded and directed by another group of people. Education and language are political for these can be used to promote the interests of a group of people over another. Culture is also political for it can be produced and manufactured through the use of different technologies like education and language.

Colonization influenced Filipino. The Spaniards used religion as their technology while Americans used education and language. These technologies altered the way of life and redirected the

Rodriguez, Vicente Villan, *Lunsod ng Quezon: Palimbagang Kalawakan*, 1997, 57).

⁷⁶Salazar concludes: "Sa medaling salita, ang namamayani sa panahong koloyal ay ang pansila at pangkaming pananaw, samantalang nanatili ang pangtayong pananaw sa loob ng mga grupong etniko, pananaw na hindi naisipang gamitin sa pangkabuuan, para sa kabuuan ng bansang itinatag" (please see *Pantayong Pananaw: Ugat at Kabuluhan, Pambungad sa Pag-aaral ng Bagong Kasaysayan, mga patnugot Atoy Navarro, Mary Jane Rodriguez, Vicente Villan, Lunsod ng Quezon: Palimbagang Kalawakan*, 1997, 65).

consciousness of the Filipino people so that they will submit to the power and interests of their colonial masters.

Postcolonial discourse is not about the past. The past can no longer be changed. It is about the present and the future. The fact of the matter is given to us. The Filipino culture is a product of power struggle between the colonized and the colonial masters where the latter prevailed. Postcolonial thinkers continue this struggle not to make the culture of the colonized superior than the colonial masters' culture but for others to see that their culture is different, unique, and original. The message of postcolonial thinkers is that culture is not singular. It is plural. The present Filipino culture is a product of colonization. But the Filipinos have their own original culture. The original culture and the culture produced by the colonizers are different with one another. This must be seen and realized by Filipinos and this is the challenge given to Filipino intellectuals.

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