

# Humanistic Appraisal of Filipino Sakup -Orientation and Amor Propio

Recently there has been an upsurge of interest in things Filipino perhaps in connection with the move to complete the process of filipinizing our educational system, which is sometimes accused of being colonial. In line with this trend, it is my purpose in this paper to appraise ethically from the eudemonistic or humanistic viewpoint two of our Filipino behavioral traits, namely, our *sakup* mentality and our *Amor Propio*. In going about this task, I will proceed in the following quite natural manner: First, I will set down and describe my chosen normative frame. In the second place, I will describe anthropologically or phenomenologically the two-above-cited traits as they manifest themselves to observation in traditional as well as contemporary Filipino life. Then lastly, I will apply my pre-selected norm to the traits under consideration and in its light perform my intended ethical evaluation of these Filipino behavioral qualities.

## I. DESCRIPTION OF THE NORMATIVE FRAME

The system of normative ethics which I have chosen as the evaluative frame for my study is known under various names: Eudemonism, Perfectionism, Self-Realization or Self-Actualization ethics, and finally humanistic ethics. In the history of Western philosophy, it was Aristotle who first consolidated and formalized humanistic ethics in the fourth century, B.C., and this school of

ethical thought was continued as a tradition through the centuries by such major figures as Augustine, Aquinas, Spinoza, Hegel and Dewey. Now it enjoys greater vigor than ever in our own times, thanks to the renewed interest sparked by the attention and work applied to it by members of the contemporary Third Force school of psychology, presided over, among others, by Maslow, Rogers and Buhler.

Humanistic ethics holds the *fullest and richest possible development of human nature* to be the goal of living and the ultimate standard of morality. Such concept of the maximal and optimal unfolding of human personality has been expressed in many equivalent terms by the advocates of this particular normative theory. *Eudemonia* or happiness, self-realization or self-actualization, human fulfilment or perfection, personality adjustment or maturation and the fulness of life are some of the interchangeable terms used to articulate the central concept and moral norm of humanistic ethics.

Eudemonistic humanism holds both that the fulness of human life or the fruition of humanization is the *Summum Bonum* or highest value of human existence, and that such gradual unfolding of human potential or process of human perfection is the supreme goal of life and the ultimate standard of what is morally right or wrong. It is the highest good of man that must shed its goodness on all the aspects and acts of his life.

Aristotle's significant contribution to normative ethical theory consisted in his general analysis of the good and the moral good in functional terms. We designate something as good, he says,<sup>1</sup> when it fulfills its peculiar function or attains properly its peculiar end. This is true whether we speak of a good bridle or a good flutist. And it is equally true of man as man. For it would be astonishing, indeed, if, while an eye and a shoemaker as such have a peculiar function and end which is their good, man as such would be left by Nature without his own specific function and good. But then what exactly is this specific purpose, function and good of man, Aristotle asks. To answer this, Aristotle compares man with other living things. Like the plants man takes

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, Book One, Ch. I, VII.

in food from the environment, grows with nutrition, and reproduces his kind. Like the animals, he moves about physically and relates to his environment through his sense knowledge and various emotions and appetites. But these functions do not represent man's distinctive function and nature, for he shares such activities with lower forms of living things. The function which is distinctively human is rationality or the capacity to reason and know in abstract terms. A good man, therefore, in a moral sense, is one who lives up to his distinctive function of rationality or intellectuality. To bring his intellectuality to fullest possible development is the peculiar function and aim of man. It is his particular *telos* or purpose in an essentially teleological or purposive universe. For him to strive to accomplish purposively and consciously his specific function and aim constitutes his peculiar way of participating in, and of expressing, the purposiveness or teleology that pervades the whole of Nature. As Socrates declared, the universe is not a chaotic drift bereft of guiding principles, nor are human lives mere tangled webs of feelings and passions. If moral virtue and happiness are possible to man, it is because objective knowledge of the world, of himself and of his peculiar function is open to him. The human life worth living, therefore, is not a life of random impulse but a critically examined life, an intellectual or rational life based on deliberate conviction and upon an objective understanding of oneself and of the outer world, and of one's peculiar aim and function as man.

Aristotle opens his discussion of the nature of the true aim, function and happiness of man by affirming the existence of nominal agreement regarding it. He says that as far as the name goes, there is a pretty general agreement that the ultimate good of man and the supreme good at which his actions are aimed is happiness (*eudemonia*). When it comes, however, to stating in what happiness or *eudemonia* consists, there is difference of opinion between the intellectuals and the unsophisticated, and between philosophers and the generality of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing remarks of Aristotle implies that there can be a distinction between a distorted or wrong conception of happiness and one that is true or objective. In what is believed to be the true and objective conception of *eudemonia*, Aristotle implicitly

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Book One, Ch. IV.

differentiates between the *existential* and the *psychological* aspects of happiness. Existentially or as an ontological condition of being, *eudemonia* or happiness consists in a dynamic state of human growth, in a gradual process of humanization, personality unfolding or self-actualization, which should mainly be *intellectual* in nature. The reason for this is that man's nature is principally intellectual, inasmuch as the specific difference of man as compared to the other animals is intellectuality or rationality. Aristotle sees the development and fruition of rationality in the acquisition of *prudence*, which is practical behavioral wisdom; in its application to guiding all aspects of life — individual, social and political —, and in the pursuit of truth, especially in that area of knowledge where the intellect may contemplate the noblest among its possible objects, namely, the Prime Mover or God. For Aristotle this is the primary essence of the existential well-being of man. Its secondary essence lies in a sufficiency or moderate amount of auxiliary external goods such as money, material possessions, friends, political connections, and justice, peace and order in society.

The psychological aspect of *eudemonia* or what it is in terms of consciousness is that habitual and relatively abiding *sense of well-being or fulfilment* which naturally results from, and accompanies, an existential condition of healthy personality growth, full functioning of powers and optimal and consistent humanization.

#### *Eudemonia and the Five Real Goods*

Mortimer Adler, a modern exponent of eudemonistic humanism, has, by way of elaboration and explanation of Aristotle's ideas, identified and spelled out five types of real or genuine natural goods, the acquisition of which constitutes happiness, both in its existential and psychological aspects.<sup>3</sup> These goods are to be attained through a balanced and integrated engagement in five corresponding specific types of activity. They are:

1. *Bodily health and vigor*: through all biologically necessary activities such as eating, cleansing, sleeping, and sometimes, playing when playing is therapeutic or recreational.

<sup>3</sup> For an elaborate treatment of these five real goods, see Mortimer J. Adler, *The Time Of Our Lives — The Ethics of Common Sense*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970.

2. *Wealth* (the means for subsistence and the comforts and conveniences of life): through economically necessary activities such as working for a living or managing one's estate.
3. *Pleasure* (in all its experienceable forms, sensual, esthetic and intellectual): through all forms of activity engaged in for their own sake, with no result beyond themselves intended.
4. *Goods of Self- or Social Improvement*: all forms of activity by which the individual improves himself and contributes to the improvement of his society and its culture.
5. *Goods of Creativity*: relaxed, care-free and free-wheeling contemplation called "idling" through which the mind and body are given a chance to rest and recuperate, and the sub-conscious, to be creative. Such meditative "coasting" is conducive also to mental peace and constructive self-inventory.

Aside from the primary and secondary essences of human growth and fulfilment consisting in a rounded and balanced development, which would be mainly intellectual, and in a reasonable modicum of external goods, Aristotle posits and requires a sort of tertiary essence or adjunct to happiness which would represent its bloom or complete fruition. This refers to certain goods of fortune such as an average degree of native intelligence, physical health and beauty, and at least moderately good, intelligent, healthy and attractive children when one becomes a parent. For it would seem that one cannot be fully happy or one would find it much more difficult to achieve *eudemonia*, if one is not sufficiently fortunate in these matters.

#### *Maslow's Contribution to the Eudemonistic Concept*

Another modern thinker who made a significant contribution to elaborating and explicating Aristotle's initial insights on the consistency of the eudemonistic or humanistic norm was Abraham Maslow, a recent thinker who was at the lead of the Third Force school of modern psychology. On the basis of a biographical or clinical study of concededly self-actualizing persons, both living and dead, such as Spinoza, Lincoln, William James, Eleanor Roosevelt and Aldous Huxley, this contemporary psychologist-

philosopher has discovered that persons who are well established on the road to full humanization or self-actualization possess certain common characteristic traits. These include the following:<sup>4</sup>

1. *Efficient Perception of Reality.* Self-actualizing persons have good taste and good judgment. They can distinguish the fresh, concrete and idiosyncratic from the abstract or conceptualized, with the result that they live more in the real world of Nature than in the world of fantasies, beliefs, stereotypes and expectations which most people confuse with reality.
2. *Acceptance of Self, Others and Nature.* Fully-functioning individuals look upon and accept human nature in themselves and in others as it is and not as they wish it to be. This is different from passive resignation in its oriental sense. Self-realizing persons are able to accept human nature with all its deficiencies and shortcomings. They tend to be lusty animals with hearty appetites and enjoy their biological functions without guilt, apology, regret or qualm of conscience. What they can and do feel ashamed or guilty about are character defects that can be overcome such as thoughtlessness or unkindness to others, laziness and the like.
3. *Spontaneity.* Healthily growing personalities are characterized by comparative naturalness and simplicity in behavior, which may also be negatively described as lack of artificiality, pretence and straining for effect.
4. *Problem-centeredness.* Generally speaking, self-actualizers are observed to be problem-centered rather than ego-centered. They as a whole are no problem to themselves and, consequently, are not usually concerned about themselves or their own problems. They usually have some worthwhile task to perform, some worthy cause to serve, some problem outside of themselves or some preoccupation larger than themselves to enlist their attention and energies.
5. *Detachment.* It has also been noted about self-realizing people that they can be alone by themselves

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<sup>4</sup> A fuller discussion of these traits is found in Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Second Edition, Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1968.

without discomfort and without detriment to themselves. They are capable of rising above circumstance, and of remaining unperturbed in situations which ordinarily upset the average person. They seem to like privacy and solitude more than the average person, and they tend to rely more on their own inner resources for satisfaction than on external aids.

6. *Autonomy and Relative Independence.* This trait partly overlaps with detachment. Deficiency-motivated persons must necessarily have available to themselves other people since the gratification of their lower basic needs for survival, safety, love and prestige can be provided for only by other human beings. On the contrary, self-realizing individuals have become sufficiently strong to be independent of the approval and the reassurance of other persons.
7. *Continued Freshness of Appreciation.* Fully functioning individuals were also noted to have an amazing child-like capacity to appreciate the simple good things of life again and again with a certain freshness and naiveness. To these healthy people even the casual workaway course of daily living can be very stimulating and even rapturous.
8. *Greater Frequency of Peak Experiences.* The intense emotions mentioned relative to consistent freshness of appreciation sometimes intensify to such a degree that they can be called mystic experiences or oceanic feelings. Such experiences are rather common occurrences for self-actualizing men and women.
9. *Greater Identification with the Human Race.* Although self-actualizing individuals are in a sense strangers in a strange land and sometimes feel so because they are very different from ordinary people, still they feel for all human beings a deep affection, sympathy and sense of identification.
10. *Better Interpersonal Relations.* Growing personalities have deeper interpersonal relations than average adults, though not necessarily deeper than children. They are found to be capable of more perfect identification, love and obliteration of ego boundaries than others would believe possible.
11. *Democratic Character Structure.* Without exception Maslow's subjects were observed to be democratic in

the profoundest possible sense. They are friendly towards anyone at all of a suitable character, regardless of race, color, political persuasion, education or social class.

12. *Definite Moral Standards.* Well-adjusted and growing people are also remarkable for being strongly ethical, for having well-defined principles and standards of right and wrong actions. On this point they contrast with the inconsistency, confusion or conflict that characterize the average person in his moral dealings with others.
13. *Philosophical and Unhostile Sense of Humor.* Another finding common to all the subjects of Maslow's study was that their sense of humor is of a different type from that of average human beings. Thus, unlike the non-self-actualizing persons, they do not laugh at hostile jokes or at humor that make people laugh by hurting someone else or at superiority humor which ridicules someone's inferiority.
14. *Creativeness.* Finally, all self-realizing and fully-functioning personalities invariably exhibit creativeness, some form of originality or inventiveness which seems akin to the universal and naive creativity of unspoiled children. Most human beings are born with this quality but lose it in the way as they get acculturated. Self-actualizers seem to retain it for life and it seems to touch whatever type of activity they may undertake or engage in.

### *Eudemonia and the Cardinal Virtues*

The cardinal virtues are habits the acts of which are seen, in the light of the eudemonistic norm, to be good or moral ways of behaving. Though recognized as such probably at first through some vague moral intuition, they can be shown, through critical analysis and through an objective observation of their effects on individuals and on social life, to be either essentially or teleologically related to eudemonia. These fundamental virtues have been recognized to be basically four in number: *Prudence, Justice, Temperance* and *Fortitude*. The first two are seen as directly or essentially connected with *eudemonia*, while the last two are seen to be *conditio sine qua non* or modalities of the emotions which favorably condition the attainment of *eudemonia* or self-actualization.



*Prudence* is practical behavioral intelligence or wisdom. It is reasoned discretion in matters behavioral. It is also definable as the right and objective grasp or perception of proper goals and proper means not only in every specific rational and conscious task one may undertake but also in living human life as a whole. As such it renders the whole conscious process of living out our human existence an expertise or an art, as against a mere random and chaotic process left to chance. Prudence is, as can readily be seen, practically the same as a sound, properly educated and emotionally unwarped conscience. It is both an intellectual and a moral expertise or virtue. It is a *moral* virtue by reason of the matter on which it operates, namely, voluntary practical behavior in relation to the true goal of living, which is self-realization or *eudemonia*. It is also and principally an *intellectual* virtue or skill because it is practical behavioral *wisdom* or a practical *judgment* and *deliberative* expertise which perfects the practical intellect. As a practical and behavioral deliberative as well as discriminative skill, it structures and gives rational guidance to itself and to the three other cardinal virtues, inasmuch as each of these basic virtues seeks, and lies upon, the *rational* mean between two extremes: Prudence, between Precipitousness and Overcautiousness; Justice, between Inclemency and Injustice; Temperance, between excessive Abstemiousness and Intemperance; and Fortitude, between Audacity and Cowardice. But it is mainly because of the fact that Prudence is essentially a perfection of the intellect that it belongs directly to the very essence of *eudemonia*, personality growth, or full humanization which, as has been demonstrated earlier, ought to be principally *intellectual* in character.

Like Prudence, Justice, the second among the fundamental virtues, is directly of the very essence of *eudemonia*, for it brings to perfection the social dimension of man's nature. Insofar as it is the *rendering to each one his due*, it is the bedrock foundation of social peace, order and harmony, if not indeed of the very existence and possibility of society and social living, outside the context of which the survival, unfolding and fulfilment of the individual man is unthinkable. How can one conceive of a human society to speak of in which there is not even that minimal degree of mutual respect for each other's rights and dignity called Justice

on the part of its component elements who are the individuals? Justice begins as a minimal respect for human personality wherever it may be found, which respect finds expression in a minimal reverence for rights and duties which are its warp and woof. But Justice flowers into perfection as *benevolence* or *neighborly love* as minimal respect blooms into genuine and sincere love. *Rendering to my fellowman his due* transcends itself and flowers into *rendering to him more than what is due because I hold him dear in genuine affection* as my co-sharer in the same human nature. Strict justice thus graduates into neighborly love or benevolence.

Temperance, the third of the basic moral virtues, gives intelligent direction to the appetitive aspect of man's emotional life. It places under rational control and regulation the whole gamut of his appetites, desires, likings and affections particularly of the sensuous type. Though it imposes order and moderation upon the sensuous appetites for foods, drinks and sexual pleasure principally, it also includes for its subvirtues *liberality*, and *humility* which are the reasonable moderation of the love for money and of self-esteem, respectively. Under the wise direction and structuring of prudence, temperance seeks a happy middle between excessiveness and deficiency in matters of desire and appetite, both of which extremes are detrimental to a harmonious and total personality development. Deficiency below a certain minimal point in those physiological needs towards which our sensuous appetites gravitate is obviously harmful to our organism and therefore is negative in moral character in the light of the humanistic norm, which is full human growth or humanization. Likewise, passing above a certain optimal moderate level of satisfaction in these appetites which constitutes *Intemperance* proves equally unhealthy and destructive of organic wholeness and balance. Besides, excessiveness in these matters of sensual appetites has a way of dulling and obfuscating reason and of warping and distorting the objectivity of the intellect which is our guide for survival and personality development. Consequently, from the standpoint of eudemonism, intemperance is a life-negating, personality-destroying or immoral way of behaving. Temperance, therefore, is an indispensable condition for happiness.

Finally, we come to the fourth and last of the pivotal virtues, *Fortitude*. Like Temperance, Fortitude is a favorable condition

without which personality growth cannot occur. For the process of survival and attainment of full human stature are in themselves formidable tasks that call for the steadfastness and courage of will that is the essence of Fortitude. The full maturation and fulfillment of personality is not for the spineless individual who shies away from effort and struggle especially at the enticement of soft, physical ease and sensual indulgence. The growth and happiness can be the reward only of the strenuous and the undiscouraged. Thus, Fortitude is characterized as the steadfast and persevering spirit, midway between irrational overboldness and plain cowardice, which steels us against difficulties and obstacles in the pursuit of rational and worthwhile goals, particularly the overall goal of *eudemonia* or maximal and optimal humanization. It can thus be seen to be a *conditio sine qua non* of the effective achievement of life's ultimate objective, and as such to be a teleologically and humanistically desirable moral trait.

## II. ANTHROPOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO SELECTED FILIPINO TRAITS

The second stage of our enquiry takes us to the more or less scientific description of Filipino *sakup*-orientation and *amor proprio* as these two manifest themselves in Filipino individuals and society. A good number of local as well as foreign writers, some formally as social scientists, others less formally as ordinary observers, have already identified and described these two traits for us. All that we need to do here is to borrow and present in summarized form some of their findings.

### *Filipino Sakup-Orientedness*

In a seminar recently held in Tagaytay (Philippines) on Filipino thought, one of the observations in which the participants were agreed is that Filipino by and large are group-centered or exhibit a *sakup*-orientation. *Sakup* as a noun means a group, and the verb *sakupin* connotes the act of including, comprehending or embracing. Hence, the *sakup*-orientedness of the Filipino means his group-consciousness, his tendency to identify himself with a group as against the tendency to an isolationist and divisive individualism. Traditionally, the Filipino finds it hard to believe in

"*kanya-kanyang kayod*" or "Let each one fend for himself." On the contrary, he believes that the individual never stands alone or should never stand alone. The rugged individualism of some modern and highly industrialized nations of the West is foreign to his traditional way of thinking. He does not take easily to subscribing to the "Dog eat dog" philosophy. Instead he is convinced that "*Ang sakit ng kalingkingan, damdam ng buong katawan*" (the pain of the finger is the pain of the body as a whole). This is a folk saying which reflects the Filipino's feeling that he is not an isolated individual but a being-in-a-group, a creature that always belongs to some larger unit, be it the immediate family, the wider kinship group, the peer "gang" or *barkada*, or the wider community.

Sociologists and anthropologists perceive the group — or *sakup*-orientation of the Filipino as small-group centeredness and/or as the inter-members solidarity of the family, the kinship group, the tribe or the region and the corresponding loyalty to it. Among the ancient pre-hispanic Malay settlers in Panay who were the immediate historically-known ancestors of the present-day Filipinos, such closely-knit organization and group orientation was already apparent in the *barangay* unit and spirit. *Barangay* originally meant the sailboats in which those early Malay tribal families made their way to the Philippines. By extension it referred to the social and political units that rode in those sailboats. Today it is used to designate the smallest units of political organization in the Philippines, namely the *barrios*, and the spirit of small-group cohesiveness and loyalty which characterized their historical prototypes that landed in Panay centuries ago.

Such small-group orientation, which we now designate with the generic term *sakup*-orientedness or *barangay* spirit, finds expression also in such related attitudes or values as the following:

1. *Bayanihan*. Known also as *tulongan* or *damayan*, this is a spirit and a system or arrangement of mutual help and concern. It manifests itself and is used on such occasions as rice-planting or harvesting, hauling in of the catch in fishing, building or moving a house, fencing a farm and the like.

2. *Awa* and *Abuloy*. In times of bereavement and mourning, *sakup*-orientedness and the attitude of mutual concern and helpfulness takes the form of *awa* or commiseration and *abuloy* — some form of aid, financial, in kind or in form of services given by relatives and friends of the bereaved family.
3. *Pagkakaisa* and *Pakikipagkapwa-Tao* — which literally means spirit of unity and the ability to feel for, and get along well with, one's fellow human beings.
4. *Tayo-tayo*, *Hindi ka Naiiba* and *Awan Sabsabali* (Ilocano) — which, though translated literally as "Just between us" and "You are no different from us," really connotes an invitation to be at ease and have a sense of familiarity because one is being welcome with open arms into a family, kinship, group, a peer group or *barkada* or into an otherwise intimate *sakup* or grouping.
5. *Pagtatakip*. Literally, the willingness and even eagerness to cover up or find excuses for the shortcomings or deficiencies of one's group or group mates.
6. *Pakikisama*. This is concern for one's cohesiveness with the *sakup* or group and with its common objectives, tasks or activities. It entails also a fear of failure to measure up to the group expectations as far as the cooperativeness of a particular member is concerned. Hence, the assumption and maintenance of the *pakikisama* attitude is negatively motivated also by the fear of being branded as one who does not know or is not willing to identify with the group, as *hindi marunong makisama*.

Osias, a Filipino scholar and educator, sees the development of this attitude of *sakup*-orientation reflected in the evolution of language as far as the use of the personal pronouns is concerned. Using the Ilocano pronouns which have their equivalents in other Filipino dialects as his basis, Osias distinguishes four stages in the development of the Filipino psyche in its *sakup*-orientation:<sup>5</sup>

1. The *Siac* stage — the "I" stage, or the singular stage.
2. The *Datá* stage — the "We two" stage, or the dual stage.
3. The *Dacamí* stage — the "We exclusive" stage or the plural exclusive stage.

<sup>5</sup> See Camilo Osias, *The Filipino Way of Life — The Pluralized Philosophy*, Boston: Given and Company, 1940, Ch. I.

#### 4. The *Datayó* stage — the “We inclusive” stage, or the plural all-inclusive stage.

It is the fourth stage or the “We all-inclusive” stage that Osias sees as the basis for *Datayoism* or *Tayoism* or the “pluralized philosophy” which we identify here with *sakup*-orientedness or with the ideal highest point of development of *sakup*-orientedness.

#### *Filipino Amor Propio*

*Amor Propio*, which literally means self-love, is the local name which designates an extremely touchy sense of personal dignity and concern over one's own secure sense of excellence, status or social acceptability. Guthrie, reflecting earlier authors and observers, describes this trait as “a high degree of sensitivity so that one takes slight easily, is very intolerant of criticism and has easily wounded pride.”<sup>6</sup> One who had been touched or wounded in his *amor propio* would usually show it by refusing to cooperate, retaliating with an insult or, when the offense seems serious, by seeking revenge even in a violent manner. Lynch defines this attitude or tendency as sensitivity to personal affront which is a manifestation of self-esteem,<sup>7</sup> while Fox describes it as an exceedingly touchy sense of shame or *hiya*.<sup>8</sup> Thus *amor propio* is an extraordinarily strong degree of esteem for oneself, one's dignity, excellence or accomplishments resulting in an extremely sensitive sense of *hiya* or shame, which is a socio-cultural device to guarantee that the individual would securely protect and maintain his status or social acceptance in the eyes of others or of the community.

Specifically, Filipino *amor propio* manifests itself in the following various ways:

<sup>6</sup> George M. Guthrie, *The Filipino Child and Philippine Society — Research Reports and Essays*, Manila: Philippine Normal College Press, 1961,

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. Frank Lynch, “Social Acceptance,” *Four Readings on Philippine Values*, Fr. F. Lynch, comp., Institute of Philippine Culture Papers No. 2, second revised ed., Quezon City: Ateneo University Press, 1964, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Robert B. Fox, “The Filipino Concept of Self-Esteem,” *Area Handbook on the Philippines*, Preliminary edition, Human Relations Area Files, Sub-contractor's Monograph HRAF — 16 Chicago — 5 (Chicago: University of Chicago, for the Human Relations Area Files, Inc., 1956). 4 Volumes. Vol. I, p. 431

1. *Great sensitivity to scolding*: This touchiness is likewise towards insulting, belittling, discourteous or criticizing language. Regarding this, Juan Delgado observed in 1754 that Filipinos would rather suffer a hundred lashes than a single harsh word. "*Gumagaling ang isang sugat; ang masamang wika'y di kumukupas* — "A wound eventually heals, but a foul word is unfading," states a Filipino proverb. So quickly wounded is the Filipino's sense of personal dignity that he often draws out his gun or his *balisong*<sup>9</sup> over seemingly trivial matters, such as a discourteous remark or being cheated of small change.
2. *Poor sportmanship*: In almost any form of competition, be it in business or in a beauty contest, rare are the Filipinos who through education have learned to accept defeat or inferiority with grace. More common is the propensity to sulk when beaten, to take defeat too seriously as a degradation of personal worth, and to offer all kinds of excuses to justify one's defeat or to minimize the victor's merit or glory.
3. *Hesitancy to admit limitation*: For example, a Filipino hispanist, who may laugh along with others at his own "bamboo" English, will be dangerously irritated if his knowledge of the Spanish language is in the least questioned. Filipino participants in seminars or conferences are extremely cautious about pressing a question upon a respondent who gives sign of emotional involvement because they take this as an indication of strong commitment to his position and his unwillingness to admit the inadequacy or inferiority of his opinion. Filipinos themselves realize that where emotional involvement exists, their *amor-propio* is active, and that when one dares to prick it in the least, he is out for trouble.<sup>10</sup> Thus, opinionatedness constitutes one more modality of *amor-propio*.
4. *Craze for publicity*: Last among the symptoms of the Filipinos' strong self-esteem is the widespread craze for publicity. At all levels of society, not uncommon is the annoying practice of trying to trace blood relationships, even though distant, to important personalities or social figures. In the cities and bigger

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<sup>9</sup> A long deadly knife made in the province of Batangas, Luzón.

<sup>10</sup> Lynch, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

towns the ubiquitous photographer is as inevitable as the news-reporter at social affairs. And when the Filipino is going abroad for studies or an important mission, or has earned a college diploma especially "With Honors", he will be unhappy if the reading public is not duly informed of such a distinction through a news item and his photograph to boot. And if it were at all possible to have the event of his departure or graduation reported by TV coverage, that would definitely catapult him to unimagined heights of ecstatic delight.

### III. ETHICAL EVALUATION OF THE TWO TRAITS

Applying now the humanistic norm of self-actualization to *sakup*-orientedness, we find that it is a positive or good trait insofar as it is a life-building and a personality-enhancing quality. It represents the Filipino way of practising *benevolence*, or *neighborly love*, the perfection of *justice*. It is the local version of the Confucian virtue of *jen* or *human-heartedness*. As indicated earlier, justice and its perfection — benevolence are among those ways of behaving that must be deemed morally good in the light of the eudemonistic norm, for they bring to full growth and perfection the *social* dimension of man's nature. The Filipino's self-identification with, and concern for, his *sakup* and *sakup* co-members bespeaks of his basic altruism and evidences the fact that he holds his social fellows in affection and sincere esteem. The *sakup*-orientedness of the Filipino, however, tends to remain narrow in scope. It retains traces of being tribalistic or regionalistic. Though basically good in itself, the Filipino *sakup*-orientation should seek to widen its circle of comprehension and move beyond regionalism and nationalism towards a truly universal humanism and international brotherhood.

The fact that there are some instances when Filipinos thoughtlessly abandon their principles because of *pagtatakip* or make unwarranted concessions to their *sakup* co-members in the name of *pakikisama* betrays a *lack of prudence* in the practice of *sakup*-orientedness and *pakikisama*, and does not necessarily imply a defect in *sakup*-orientedness and *pakikisama per se*, which are basically right in themselves. The cultivation of a greater degree of prudence will provide the necessary corrective.



Moreover, *sakup*-orientedness has a humanizing and self-actualizing quality and potential insofar as it entails the goods of social improvement of which Adler speaks and veers in the direction of *Acceptance of Self, Others and Nature; Problem-centeredness, Greater Identification with the Human Race, Better Interpersonal Relations and Democratic Character Structure*, all which, as Maslow's investigation has disclosed, are traits of self-actualizing personalities and, therefore, right ways of behaving from the eudemonistic or humanistic viewpoint.

As regards Filipino *amor propio*, it would seem that our ethical appraisal has to be negative. It appears that *amor propio*, the way it manifests itself in the Filipino psyche, borders upon *self-conceit* or *pride*, that is, an intemperate and irrationally exaggerated or excessive self-esteem which runs counter to the virtue of humility, a specific aspect of Temperance. As a behavioral pattern diametrically opposed to Temperance, *amor propio* has to be judged negative or dehumanizing in character, for it undermines one of the favorable conditions for effective self-actualization. Furthermore, *amor propio* on the part of individuals and group does not only easily lead to violence but also militates against the smooth interpersonal relations that should exist in a society if this is to prove a favorable milieu to the personality growth of individual human beings.

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