

## **Prospects of Doing Philosophy in Eastern Visayas from Reading Borrinaga and Kobak's *The Colonial Odyssey of Leyte***

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### **Abstract**

Philosophy is first and foremost the invention of new problems. To invent means to throw light on the fundamental choice of thought; to throw light on the distance between thinking and power, between truths and the state; and to throw light on the value of exception against social conservatism. In a nutshell, philosophy enlarges the conception of what is possible, enriches intellectual imagination, and diminishes the dogmatic assurance that closes the mind against speculations. This paper recognizes the problem that there is poverty in doing philosophy in Eastern Visayas, in which mostly philosophy is perceived as a bygone form of knowledge. Thus, to make philosophy relevant in human affairs, as Badiou said, philosophy should not be only treated as a mere academic pursuit but at the same time to change the subjectivity and the world. But how do we transform such endeavors? As Deleuze and Guatarri suggest, parallel evolution is much needed, thus reading *The Colonial Odyssey of Leyte*, allows philosophical thinking to escape from constraints that seek to define and enclose creativity. Aiming to lay a foundation for doing philosophy in Eastern Visayas, the paper first exhaustively analyzes the discussion in the translated work of Artigas and proceeds to identify the philosophy of history and postcolonial study as the philosophical themes that can be drawn from reading the book. In the end, the paper concludes that doing philosophy in the region should not be a form of isolated speculation. It must be integrated, it must read other sources of knowledge, and there is a need for *Horizontverschmelzung*.

**Keywords:** Eastern Visayas, Postcolonialism, Philosophy of History, Colonialism, Culture, Borrinaga, Kobak

## Introduction

Philosophy plays a role in the transformation and understanding of the human condition. Historical events are a piece of concrete evidence that the art of critical thinking has been translated into the movement for justice and the promotion of the good life. In *Philosophy in the Present*, Alain Badiou contended that a philosopher is someone who decides what the important problems are and someone who proposes new problems for everyone. Philosophy is first and foremost the invention of new problems. To invent means to throw light on the fundamental choice of thought; to throw light on the distance between thinking and power, between truths and the state; and to throw light on the value of exception against social conservatism.<sup>1</sup> In a nutshell, philosophy enlarges the conception of what is possible, enriches intellectual imagination, and diminishes the dogmatic assurance that closes the mind against speculations.<sup>2</sup>

At present, there are growing discourses, optimism, and interest in philosophy among Filipino scholars in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Although people identify themselves as Filipino, the archipelagic geography of the Philippines paves the way for scholars to have a unique interest in philosophy, particularly in the Visayas. The Philosophical Society of Visayas and Mindanao and Societas Ethica Philosophica at present are the philosophical organizations that serve as an avenue for philosophers to dialogue and publish their philosophical musings. It has drawn membership coming from the islands of Leyte, Samar, Bohol, Panay, Negros, Cebu, and even outside of the Visayas. Similarly, the philosophical community outside of the Visayas had also been an avenue for scholars of philosophy from the Visayas to exchange ideas and publish. The Social Ethics Society, in particular since it had been established by Dr. Christopher Ryan

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<sup>1</sup> A. Badiou and S. Zizek, *Philosophy in the Present* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 1-20.

<sup>2</sup> B. Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 117-122.

Maboloc had been very generous and accommodating to the philosophical perspectives of the philosophers coming from Eastern Visayas. Aside from the Social Ethics Society there is also the Philosophical Association of Northern Luzon and the Philosophical Association of the Philippines.

In the Eastern Visayas, philosophy had been generally perceived as a preparatory or what was commonly used by Locke and the Medieval philosophers, philosophy as a "handmaiden," for those who wanted to pursue law or theology, leaving philosophy not considered an important discipline who contributes to the expansion of one's understanding of justice, politics, culture, and history. As a result, people particularly in Eastern Visayas, even among academicians, have a misconception about the *raison d'être* of philosophy, which is eventually not to be considered a serious discipline that contributes to the examination and promotion of justice and good life. There is a general misconception in the region over the role of philosophy and its possible contribution to human development. In addition, it is mostly thought in the region that philosophy started and ended with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas. Thus, there exists the need, to say the least, to think. Furthermore, recognizing the lack of philosophy scholars who have written extensively about philosophy or doing philosophy in Eastern Visayas, this paper recognizes the value of Rolando Borrinaga and Cantius Kobak's, *The Colonial Odyssey of Leyte (1521-1914): A Translation of Reseña de la Provincia de Leyte por Manuel Artigas y Cuerva*, to draw perspectives in doing philosophy in the region. The publication and availability of this work are of great relevance not only as a source of communal identity, role, and contribution of the inhabitants of Eastern Visayas in the national struggle for freedom but also as a seedbed of wisdom.

Furthermore, the central task of this paper is to stir interest and invite scholars of philosophy in Eastern Visayas to produce philosophical texts from the historical, political, or economic conditions of the region. Second, to serve in the future as a humble background in philosophical inquiry/research in Eastern Visayas; and at the same time to a response to Bro. Romualdo Abulad and F.P. Demeterio's question on how do we do philosophy in the Philippines despite the unfavorable conditions? Lastly, to participate in Badiou's meditation, in which the profound purpose of philosophy is not to

make it a mere academic discipline but an attempt to change subjectivity and the world.

In addition, to elaborate on the significance of the paper; first, it will attempt to expose the salient point of the book which will serve as a basis for pointing out some key philosophical perspectives in the book. It will proceed by discussing the four chapters such as: *The Discovery of Leyte*, *The Origin and Context of the Bisayans*, *The Colonization of Leyte*, and *The Philippine Revolution and the Philippine-American War in Leyte*. Next, it will discuss the prospects of doing philosophy from reading *The Colonial Odyssey*. Philosophy of History and Post-colonialism are the identified philosophical themes/disciplines that can be grasped from reading. Generally, the paper shares the same commitment with Manuel Artiga y Cuerva, Rolando Borrinaga, and Cantius Kobak, "to dedicate my best moments to the study of everything that pertains to that terrain where I saw the first light, to that small homeland, to that Bisayan corner that has my unforgettable memories, to that dear Province of Leyte."<sup>3</sup>

### **The Colonial Odyssey of Leyte: An Exposition**

The book is a translation made by esteemed historians and educators of Eastern Visayas, Dr. Rolando Borrinaga and Father Cantius Kobak to the work of Manuel Artigas concerning the condition of the region during his time. The work is considered one of the earliest extensive provincial histories at par with the works of Isabelo de los Reyes and Manuel Sastron. It is deemed that the work is a reaction that at the time of writing was still being deliberated in the US Congress, the Jones Act, formally known as the Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916. The decree states that the United States government will withdraw its sovereignty once a stable government is established. Artigas said that the purpose is to give "credit to the children of the country," particularly Leyte-Samar, which is an orphan of history, and negate "that false stain of inability with which we are ridiculed every day for malicious purposes." It is because according to Artigas, the authorities that had governed Leyte did not exert the necessary impulse to push the province of Leyte to be in parallel with the

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<sup>3</sup> Rolando Borrinaga and Cantius Kobak, *The Colonial Odyssey of Leyte (1521-1914): A Translation of Reseña de la Provincia d Leyte por Manuel Artigas y Cuerva*. (Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2006), 1-6.

progress that had happened with the coming of the years. Thus, Artiga claimed that it is the responsibility of the *Reseña* to “correct errors, to remedy deficiencies, to annul falsehood and all that are not certain or properly investigated before anything is put into print.”<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, despite the scarcity of material that “could be utilized by enthusiasts of history” still Artigas managed to produce a pioneering work on the history of Leyte which at present would allow readers and scholars of philosophy to analyze the trends of thought in the past and to project towards the future. In fruition of the study, he made use of the following works which were available in his time: Father Pedro Chirino's *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas y de lo que en ellas a Trabajo de los Padres de la Compañia de Jesus*; Father Francisco Ignacio Alcina unpublished, *Historia de las islas e indios de Bisayas...1668*, Father Juan Delgado's *Historia general sacro-profana, politica y natural de las Islas de Poniente llamadas Filipinas*; Don Jose Gutierrez de la Vega's *Biblioteca Historica*; Father Francisco Colin's *labor evangelica*; Father Pedro Murillo Velarde's *Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas de la Compañia de Jesus*; Father Felix de Huerta's, *Estado Geografico, Topografico, Estadistico, Historico-Religioso*. Isabelo de los Reyes' *Las Islas Bisayas en la epoca de la Conquista*; and *Census of the Philippine Islands* and *The Philippine Islands* edited by Emma Blair and James Robertson.<sup>5</sup>

The book is composed of four re-titled chapters: The Discovery of Leyte, The Origin and Context of the Bisayans, The Colonization of Leyte, and finally, The Philippine Revolution and the Philippine-American War in Leyte.

Chapter 1: The Discovery of Leyte has three important discussions. First is about how Eastern Visayas played a role in the advancement of Spanish colonization, where Magellan (1521), Villalobos (1544), and Legazpi (1564) were welcomed hospitably by the natives of Eastern Visayas. The coming of Spain led to a contentious puzzle in the history of the Philippines, particularly to Eastern Visayas such as the site of the recorded First Mass of the Magellan expedition in 1521 where Limawasa had been written in various ways which led to perplexing historical accounts, particularly the original site of the mass<sup>6</sup> and extensive discussion on the location

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Preface.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., vii-viii.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1, 182-192.

of *Tandaya*, where it serve as an important marker/entry point of the Spanish colonialism.<sup>7</sup> Next is the discussion that centers on the perverted stigmatization of how the Spanish transformed the natives from what they presume as "savage" practices, costumes, belief systems, etc., towards a "gallant and respectable" civilization. According to Artigas, the biases made by some Spanish historians and scholars, particularly to the people of Eastern Visayas were "made out of ignorance, to the extent that what one could read about them are opposed opinions." It is only made to justify Spanish subjugation, particularly the abuses and corrupt practices that have been done to the native Filipinos. However, Artigas pointed out that before the coming of Spain, the native Filipinos of Eastern Visayas had already established a degree of civilization as reflected in the works of Robert MacMicking, and Frederic H. Sawyer.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the perception that the Bisayan language is crude compared to Tagalog, which at present still holds a relevant point for reflection. According to Artigas Father Chirino and Father Colin pointed out that there are no traces of phrases in the Bisayan language of good upbringing, reserve, and courtesy. However, this claim was contradicted by Father Delgado saying that each native language has its beauty and elegance.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the claim over whether a certain language is crude or not is simply an adverse opinion, a clear display of racial discrimination.

The discussion in Chapter 2: The Origin and Context of the Bisayans, centers on the perspective that the present Filipino race is a *mélange* of various races because of its friendly attitude which explains the diversity among Filipinos not only in terms of physical features and geographical locations but also their expression of how Heidegger's *Alethia* appears to them as captured in folktales, songs, *siday*, *kuratsa*, *singbahan*, etc., Moreover, it is important to recognize that the natives of Eastern Visayas do have the concept of time which was made up to eight months; management of resources/economy which was called *buis*, and conducting business through the use of *talaro* and trade in the form of barter or paid in gold; and equality and

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1-2, 194-198.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 5-14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

justice.<sup>10</sup> A concrete proof of Aristotle's claim that man is a political animal, drawn to the life of *the polis*.

In chapter 3: The Colonization of Leyte drew two interesting topics that provide an important point of reflection on the present political economy of the Eastern Visayas. First, is the political structure of the Eastern Visayas which started when Miguel de Legazpi wantonly distributed the lands of the native Filipinos to those who took part in the Spanish conquest, making them *encomenderos* (territorial trustees). A form of reward for the "contingencies of the trips to unknown lands!" However, the native Filipinos' relationship with the territorial trustees was not beneficial, the inhabitants considered them as their source of misery, which forced people to end the abuses made by their *encomenderos*.<sup>11</sup>

Education has always been credited for enriching human lives. Because of this influence and tendency of education to shape and redirect the course of human lives abruptly, it has been considered an effective tool. Another key discussion in Chapter 3 is the role of education and the development of the educational system put in place by the colonizers to banish illiteracy and lift the degree of civilization of the natives of Eastern Visayas. During the Spanish colonization, the Augustinian and the Jesuit missionaries were the ones responsible for developing a curriculum, training teachers, and establishing schools. The first school was built in 1580 and it reached a total of eighty-nine schools. However, the coming of the American educational system in the Philippines took another turn from a religious-oriented educational system towards a practical one in the general diffusion of knowledge based on expert studies. Overall, the introduction of a Westernized educational system in the Eastern Visayas further manifested in people's interest in the publication of newspapers. *Ang KAADLAWUN, La Voz de Leyte, El Heraldo de Leyte y Samar, Noli Me Tangere, La Union, Gacetilla, Fenix, El Eco de Samar y Leyte, and La Jornada* become an important instrument that allows the inhabitants to express their thoughts on matters of politics, colonial slavery, vernacular philology, native history, folklore, educational and economic situation. The direction of the newspaper was mainly to promote the general interest of Eastern Visayas and at the same time create concrete evidence of a vibrant intellectual life.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 25-64.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 65-68.

Finally, chapter 4: The Philippine Revolution and the Philippine-American War in Leyte. The amount of discussion is directed to draw an interpretation and possibly offer a new perspective. First, what happened in Eastern Visayas during the American colonization, is proof of what Renato Constantino pointed out that history is the recorded struggle of people for ever-increasing freedom and higher realizations of the human person. Not just a mere chronology of events or stories of great personalities, but it includes people's efforts and aspirations of a better life free from colonial subjugation.<sup>12</sup> Next, the letters, the communication between compatriots, brothers, Filipino revolutionaries, and the Americans provide a concrete basis of what it is like to be in war; these allow us to imagine the harsh living conditions experienced by inhabitants of Eastern Visayas; admire the courage manifested by the Filipino revolutionaries and be aware of the significant places during the struggle for liberation from the American.

### **Philosophical Prospects from Reading Colonial Odyssey of Leyte**

Perhaps one of the most enduring characteristics of philosophy is that it questions and assumes nothing. Philosophers since Pythagoras have continued to expose and question assumptions that underpin everyday thinking about the world, human values, and beliefs including the self. It starts with a simple question until such a time it becomes more complicated. The question of philosophy, as Alain Badiou clearly emphasized in his lecture, is the question of creating a new desire. Certainly, individuals propose answers to some problems, but that is not the goal of philosophy. The goals of philosophy are not like the goals of economics, mathematics, chemistry, religion, and so on, but to create in everybody a new desire. If individuals create a community out of desire, it is because there is something in common that is a result of the difference of position, a collective possibility seen from the viewpoint of the individual.<sup>13</sup>

The serious vocation of philosophy can be depicted in the art of Auguste Rodin's *Le Penseur*, which shows a nude male gallant figure

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<sup>12</sup> Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited (Pre-Spanish-1941)* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 3-11.

<sup>13</sup> Alain Badiou. *What is Philosophy? A lecture by Alain Badiou 2010* (New York: Atropos Press, 2015), 9-37.



sitting on a rock. He is seen leaning over, high right elbow placed on his left thigh, holding the weight of his chin on the back of his right hand. The pose is one of deep thought and contemplation, and the statue is often used as an image to represent philosophy. The Thinker, although initially conceived as a poet, is an image that best represents what Friedrich Nietzsche claimed that the task of a philosopher must no longer accept concepts as a gift, nor merely purify and polish them, but first make and create them, present them, and make them convincing. As a result, there emerges a history of philosophy that, instead of repeating what a philosopher states, produces resemblance, which at the same time can be produced aesthetically, carrying out a movement of deterritorialization.<sup>14</sup> In addition, philosophy as Bertrand Russel pointed out, is an integral part of social and political life, not just a result of isolated speculations of a single person, but both an effect and a cause of the various communities in which different systems flourished.<sup>15</sup>

In the book, *The Colonial Odyssey of Leyte*, two possible prospects for doing philosophy in Eastern Visayas can be drawn. First, is the philosophy of history. The philosophy of history was first used by Voltaire as a book title, *la philosophie de l'histoire* in 1765. The work is considered a non-religious approach to history. It is a kind of historical thinking in which the historian recreates in the mind instead of repeating whatever stories are found in the old books.<sup>16</sup> History plays a fundamental role in human thought. It is an inquiry into what happened in the past, when it happened, and how it happened. It is an inquiry into the inevitable changes in human affairs in the past and the way these changes affect, influence, or determine the patterns of life in society. It raises the possibility of better understanding the present by examining the forces, choices, and circumstances that are brought to the current situation. Thus, it is no surprise that some philosophers are drawn to examine history, and as a result, emerges a body of collected work called the philosophy of history. Philosophers such as George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Robin

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<sup>14</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *what is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 1-12.

<sup>15</sup> Bertrand Russel, *The History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), Preface.

<sup>16</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 1.

George Collingwood have remarkably contributed to and influenced the study of the philosophy of history.<sup>17</sup>

G.W.F. Hegel's interest in history is well-known and undoubtedly, he is considered the first philosopher to link philosophy to history thus making philosophy of history an academic subfield of philosophy. Hegel believed that the philosopher had a special insight into history, only the philosopher understands that reason, is the sovereign of the world and that the history of the world is a rational process.<sup>18</sup> Hegel's contribution to the philosophy of history can be read in *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, where he identified three methods of doing history: original history, reflective history, and philosophical historiography.<sup>19</sup>

Friedrich Nietzsche's contribution to the philosophy of history is enormous. His interest in history can be reflected in his works such as *Ermanarich Symphony*, *De Theognide Megarensi*, *De Laertii Diogenis Fontibus*, *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Untimely Meditations*, *On the Use and Disadvantage of History of Life*, and so on.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, according to Nietzsche, humans are conscious not only of living but of living well or badly. Life is not wholly something that happens to man, it is also something an individual engages in according to the values of the person. *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, he pointed out that people need history for life and action, not for selfish and cowardly bad acts. Most people take comfort in history in the hope of a better future, they are called historical men. These historical men believed that every shed on the meaning of existence in the course of its process, and as they look back to consider that process only to comprehend the present better and learn to desire the future vehemently.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Daniel Little, "Philosophy of History," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2020 edition). Online <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/history>.

<sup>18</sup> Tom Rockmore, "Hegel," in *Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, 468-476. Ed. Aviezer Tucker (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 468-469.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 470-476.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony Jenkins, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7-82.

<sup>21</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, Translated by Ian Johnston (British Columbia: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 7-10; Jenkins, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of History*, 86-90; Al Franjon Villaroya. "Critical Optimism: In

The overarching idea of Nietzsche's three types of history: monumental, antiquarian, and critical history is only exactly right for a single area and a single climate. If a historian seeks to create greatness utilizing the past, then that individual will empower himself through monumental history. On the other hand, the man who intends to emphasize the customary and traditionally valued cultivates the past as an antiquarian. While the critical historian recognizes the burden experienced at the present has something to do with the past, then the historian understands the urgent need to, as Nietzsche puts it, "grasp with a knife at its roots and go cruelly beyond all reverence."<sup>22</sup>

The historian must recreate a character, the sense of a meeting, as Robin George Collingwood puts it, the modern historian must re-enact the past in the living thought of the present; the historian must put into the surface through imagination and sympathy to bring back to life past shadows of people and movements, conflicts and victories, secret passions and social forces in their specific and unique characteristics not just merely enshrining them in an uninteresting category of philosophy. The British philosopher and archeologist Robin George Collingwood placed thought about history and historiography at the center of philosophy. He believed history was philosophy, or philosophy was history.<sup>23</sup> An examination into the disposition of historical thinking is among the tasks to which philosophy may rightfully commit. He added, that whenever human thought is dominated by some interest; not passively, by mere submission to its influence, but actively, by making a necessary attempt to grasp it, by making it the focus of philosophical inquiry.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, Collingwood's overarching point of his idea is the rapprochement between philosophy and history. A philosopher, he claimed, is concerned with the events that occurred as things known to historians and asks what is about them that makes it possible for historians to know them, making the historian's mind a system of knowledge. Furthermore, he pointed out that the task of the historian

Nietzsche's Historicism and Deleuze's Cinema," *American Journal of Research*, no. 11-12 (November-December 2018): 5-8.

<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Hans Meyerhoff, *The Philosophy of History in our Time: An Anthology* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), 11, 64-65; Stein Helgeby. "Collingwood and Croce," in *Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. Aviezer Tucker, 498-507 (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 498.

<sup>24</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 231-232.

is to apprehend the past as a thing in itself. The philosopher must think about the historian's mind as an epistemologist and as a metaphysician. Epistemology and metaphysics are inseparable, philosophy cannot simply separate the study of knowledge from the study of what is known. Thus, the philosophy of history is a re-enactment in the context of his knowledge, and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his judgment of its value, and corrects whatever errors one can discern in it.<sup>25</sup>

Another poignant Collingwood's philosophical perspective on history is the concept of historical imagination. What he meant by historical imagination or common-sense theory, is that it is a theory that most people believe or imagine themselves, when they reflect on the matter. He explained saying, if an event or a state of things is to be historically known, first someone must be acquainted with it; then remember it; then one must state its recollection of it in terms intelligible to another; and finally, another must accept the statement as true. Furthermore, Collingwood explained the process of historical imagination saying that history cannot agree with theories that are abstract and changeless, a logical entity towards which the mind may take up various attitudes, making history impossible.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, aside from the philosophy of history, another prospect of doing philosophy in the Eastern Visayas from reading, *The Colonial Odyssey*, is the study of the cultural, political, and economic legacy of colonialism and imperialism, which is post-colonialism. The study deploys a set of terms as part of its terminology and conceptual framework: colonialism-imperialism, postcolonial-postcoloniality, postcolonialism, neocolonialism, decolonization, and postcolonial theory. Furthermore, postcolonialism contends that there is a need to critically analyze the legacy of colonialism and imperialism for it did not only control and exploit the natives from the guise of reform and welfare. It culturally prejudicially altered the native's forms of knowledge, art, religious beliefs, and cultural practices. Thus, defining postcolonialism as the academic, ideological, and ideational scaffolding of the condition of decolonization.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 1-13, 214-215; William Dray, *History as Re-enactment: R.G. Collingwood's Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1-3, 16-17.

<sup>26</sup> R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, 233-235.

<sup>27</sup> Pramod K. Nayar, *Postcolonialism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 1-5.

Postcolonialism as a theory and a critique emerged from within anti-social activism and political movements in Asia, Africa, and South America, interrogating colonial practices in these movements and bringing ideas that coalesced into a body of thought within academic practices. As an intellectual project finds its origins in the thought-provoking theories of the anti-colonial movements of the activists, thinkers, and professors such as Frantz Fanon, and Edward Wadie Said, their views transform into political and literary-cultural theories.<sup>28</sup>

Frantz Fanon's theory and contribution to the study of postcolonialism delve into the nature of colonialism and racism, and the psychological damage it causes to the colonized and the colonizer.<sup>29</sup> As Fanon puts it, only a psychoanalytical interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of effect that are responsible for the structure of the complex.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, the central thesis of Fanon's perspective argues that the black man (colonized) had lost his culture and his past. The resulting inferiority complex is the direct result of years of dehumanization in the colonial context where he sees himself only as the white man (colonizer) sees him. As a result of colonization or imperialism, the white man becomes the epitome of perfection which the black man seeks to emulate, by wearing a white mask. Fanon explained that the native takes on Western values, religion, language, and practices of the white colonial and rejects his traditions. But at the same time, the black man's traditions and customs continue to exert a powerful pull on the black man. He added saying that such conditions, would result in schizophrenic conditions, torn between the white man's culture that he seeks to appropriate and his own culture that he is reluctant to let go.<sup>31</sup> The neurosis and psychological crises experienced by the black man were, therefore, less a purely mental

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>29</sup> Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 3-14.

<sup>30</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Translated by Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 12.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 9-16.

condition than the effect of the social and economic realities of colonialism.<sup>32</sup>

Another important figure in the study of postcolonialism is Edward Wadie Said. His commitment to his people and scholarship made him one of the important intellectuals of the latter half of the twentieth century. Said's contribution to postcolonial study can be read, particularly by those with a background in philosophy, in his books *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. As Said puts it, is not only to expose the sources of Orientalism's views but also to reflect on its importance, for the contemporary intellectual rightly feels that to ignore a part of the world now demonstrably encroaching upon him is to avoid reality. He added saying, for the contemporary intellectual can learn from Orientalism, on the one hand, either to limit or to realistically enlarge the scope of his discipline's claims, and on the other, to see the human ground in which texts, visions, methods, and disciplines begin, grow, thrive, and degenerate. To investigate Orientalism is also to propose intellectual ways for handling the methodological problems that history brought forward, so to speak, in its subject matter, the Orient.<sup>33</sup> In a nutshell, the book offers a rethinking of the Western representations of the Muslim Middle East, arguing that ideas of domination and colonization can find their strength and justification in the production of knowledge. As Professor Maboloc puts it, Orientalism is about power relations, and that manifests in the subjection of the intellectual tradition of the East as subordinate to the ideals of enlightenment, which are brought by the Eurocentric bias, making the book an important expression of decolonization.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, as of the moment, there are some philosophers in the Eastern Visayas whose works can be deemed connected in the areas of philosophy of history and post-colonialism. Dr. Jeffrey Ocay of Eastern Visayas State University published his book entitled, *Critical Theory at the Margins: Applying Herbert Marcuse's Model of Critical Social Theory to the Philippines*; Dr. Glenn Pajares of Visayas State

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<sup>32</sup> Nayar, *Postcolonialism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 8-10; See further, Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 92-110.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Ryan Maboloc. "Theory and Practice: What is Orientalism?" <https://edgedavao.net/vantage-points/2022/12/29/theory-and-practicewhat-is-orientalism/>

University published the article, *A Philosophical Reinterpretation of Philippine History in the Perspective of Friedrich Nietzsche* while Al Franjon Villaroya of Visayas State University published the article, *Critical Optimism: In Nietzsche's Historicism and Deleuze's Cinema*. In addition, aside from *Colonial Odyssey* scholars of philosophy/philosophers in Eastern Visayas can also draw perspectives from other works of Professor Borrinaga such as *Leyte-Samar Shadows: Essays on the History of Eastern Visayas*, *Surat Binisaya: Deciphering Ancient Bisaya Writing and Language* and *The Balangiga Conflict Revisited*. Moreover, scholars of philosophy can also read the works of Dr. Merlie Alunan, Dr. Dominador Pagliawan, Dr. Guiraldo Fernandez Jr., and Dr. Jett Quebec; their works on environment, literature, and language are deemed relevant in doing philosophy, particularly in Eastern Visayas.

## Conclusion

The *Colonial Odyssey of Leyte* offers a wide range of topics that make it possible to draw frameworks and hypothesize philosophically. The philosophy of history and postcolonial study are not only identified because it is evident and glaring in the book but also as a curtain raiser as Jose Rizal emphasizes he who does not know how to look back at where he came from will never get to his destination. To build a strong sense of identity, an interdisciplinary approach is most needed. Scholars of philosophy in the region must harken to the wisdom of other fields. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, there is a need for a parallel evolution that allows thought to escape from the constraints that seek to define and enclose creativity. Therefore, the task of the scholars of philosophy in the region is not merely to interpret the document on whether it is telling the truth but to, as Nietzsche said, grasp with a knife at its roots, and go cruelly beyond all reverence. But not for the sake of intellectualizing, of tracing a line, but of transformations that serve as a new foundation: the rebuilding of foundations.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, although on a superficial calculation, the works of Hegel, Nietzsche, Collingwood, Fanon, and Said may be deemed as bound by their *Unbehagen der kultur* and their philosophical system

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<sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books), 1-17.

has its own *Sprachspiel*. However, the problems they have encountered are not strange to the community and people of the Eastern Visayas. The region is also haunted by issues that affect one's well-being, the exercise of freedom, love, politics, and so on. As Hegel emphasized in his notion of philosophical historiography, philosophy brings with it the simple ideas of reason- the idea that reason governs the world, and that world history is a rational process. Philosophy demands thinking not for the sake of thinking but there must be a dialectic movement for it enlarges concepts. In addition, as Kant, would say in his application of philosophy in the public sphere of human affairs, *Sapere Aude!* To have the courage to think in determining what to think and how to act. Thus, doing philosophy is not an easy task, as Nietzsche and Collingwood suggest, the scholar must be armed with codex and lexicon against unreliable resources to "convict the writer of concealing the truth." Philosophical thoughts must be self-independent, self-determining, and self-justifying.

Philosophy and its scholars must find relevance in melting its horizon with other fields in the region and at the same time making philosophy an engaging pursuit of knowledge. As Foucault said, to pursue the theme of the unceasing effort of a consciousness turned upon itself, trying to grasp itself in its deepest condition. To anthropologize Marx to interpret Nietzsche in terms of transcendental philosophy.<sup>36</sup> Thus, reading the *Colonial Odyssey of Leyte*, allows philosophy to be integrated into the social and political life of people of Eastern Visayas.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1-17.



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