



***Tagay*: A Critique of Beverly Sarza's Analysis of the Filipino Thought in Social Drinking Tradition**

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Abstract

This paper is a critique of Beverly Sarza's analysis of the Filipino Social Drinking Tradition in her published paper *Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino*. She asserts two important claims that my findings would prove to be faulty. First, her claim that the communal culture of *inuman Pinoy* or *tagay* is determined by the Filipino communal culture, and second is her characterization of *tangero* as a selfless person that avoids getting drunk earlier by intentionally skipping 'shots' to ensure fairness in the entire duration of the drinking session. Hence, *tagay*, which could be considered a prehistoric Filipino tradition, is the focal point of this investigation. Thus, this research presents first an alternative reason why the culture of *tagay* is communal, and second, it unravels a unique concept of distributive justice in *tagay* not only contrary to Sarza's analysis but also far different from Western and modern Filipino thoughts. However, like Sarza's, this research utilizes the two complementary methods of Leonardo Mercado, namely metalinguistic analysis, and phenomenology of behavior to present an alternative to Sarza's analysis of *tagay*. Consequently, the work also seeks to help confirm Mercado's belief that there is a Filipino thought that we can uncover in Filipino language and tradition.

Keywords: Distributive justice, cheating, fermented wine, *tagay*, communal culture

Introduction

Is there a Filipino philosophy? A deceitfully simple question that splits Filipino philosophers like Leonardo Mercado, Emerita Quito, and many other younger Filipino philosophers and scholars. Leonardo Mercado believes that there is Filipino thought. This thought, he says, can be known in language and tradition. Traditions, such as, *harana*, *bayanihan*, *Simbang gabi*, *inuman Pinoy* among others are some of the prospects. *Tagay* or *inuman Pinoy* is one of the most underrated and intellectually disregarded Filipino traditions. It is a Filipino drinking tradition that is commonly practiced in almost all parts of the archipelago, engaged far long before the arrival of Ferdinand Magellan. Alcoholic drinks and *tagay*, are significant aspects of Filipino culture and history. *Tagay* refers to either the activity of social drinking or the cup of wine given to each member of the drinking session. Upon the arrival of Magellan in his expedition, palm wine was widely consumed already in various regions of the Philippines such as in Samar, Butuan, Caraga, Cebu, and Mactan.¹ The significance of *tagay* in the Philippines is highlighted by the Basi Revolt in Ilocos in 1807, which was triggered by the prohibition of the Spanish colonizers in making sugarcane wine known as *basi*. For the prohibition to trigger the anger of the local manufacturer of *basi* is not the most noteworthy, a revolt requires a good number of people resentful enough to risk their lives. This implies that something in *basi* is worth dying for. Antonio and Ancheta even described the revolt as “the Ilocanos risked their lives to give meaning to our lives.”²

In the ancient Greek Symposium, drinking wine was associated with creativity and a love of intellectual discourses.³ Plato and Xenophon even wrote separate philosophical dialogues in the same title, “Symposium.” Social Drinking, Omamalin says, can be organized due to various reasons such as leisure, relaxation, enjoyment, socialization, reunion, celebration, brokenheartedness, and a form of

¹ Antonio Pigafetta, *The First Voyage around the World (1519–1522) An Account of Magellan's Expedition*, Edited with an Introduction by Theodore J. Cachey Jr., (Toronto Canada: University of Toronto Press, Canada 2007), paragraph 54, 59, 60, 66, 68, 71, 77, 91, 93.

² Jayson L. Antonio and Celerino F. Ancheta, “Revisiting the Basi Revolt of 1807: Its Historical and Axiological Relevance.” *DLSU Research Congress* (2014).

³ Rebecca Rupp, “Cheers: Celebration Drinking Is an Ancient Tradition,” *National Geographic*, 26 December 2014.

escape from reality.⁴ Beyond these, various forms of topics are being discussed during a drinking session, hence it could be argued that *tagay* could also serve as a vehicle for the transfer of knowledge, skills, legends, techniques, traditions, beliefs, and thoughts. Hence, *tagay*, as a tradition that originated in pre-colonial 'Philippines', can be considered a fossil containing remnants of some essential ideas and ways of life of our prehistoric ancestors. Filipinos hold a romanticized view of a glorious prehistoric era lost to colonialism. This could also be observed in Jose Rizal's annotations of Dr. Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*. Thus, if we were to unearth Filipino thought through Filipino traditions free from foreign influences, *tagay* or *inumang Pinoy* should be one of the best candidates.

Since the Filipino Social Drinking Tradition has already been subjected to analysis by some scholars, this research makes use of those analyses most particularly Beverly Sarza's article *Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino* which this paper will critically analyze. This critique is intended to deal with the two aspects of Sarza's analysis of the Filipino social drinking tradition which are as follows: first, her assertion that the communal nature of '*tagay*' is consistent to the communal culture of the Filipino people and second, on her characterization of *tangero* who intentionally skips shots or *tagay* as a selfless person which for her coincided with the concept of justice in *tagay*.⁵ Therefore, this research is aimed to address two correlated questions: Why is the Filipino social drinking tradition communal? and How distributed justice is manifested within the tradition of *tagay*? This paper attempts to present an alternative analysis of *tagay* to Sarza's. Consequently, this research paper may contribute to the enduring discourse on whether there is an existing indigenous Filipino thought that can be known in Filipino traditions; however, this is just a secondary objective of the paper, in fact, a mere consequence. This research offers another angle to the discourse on whether there is an unwritten Indigenous Filipino thought that can be unveiled in Filipino traditions using *tagay* as the object of inquiry. The aim is not to encourage drinking alcohol but rather to exhibit the richness of Filipino culture that a very humble tradition like *tagay* could have

⁴ Jamaal S. Omamalin, "*Tagay ta, Bai!*: The Social Dynamics of Filipino Social Drinking," *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 5:3, (July-September 2022).

⁵ Beverly A. Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," *Malay*, Tomo XIX:3, (April 2007) 51-56.

much cultural and philosophical significance to the extent that understanding the tradition may contribute to the quest for Filipino identity.

Additionally, this study highlights the historical and cultural significance of Filipino wines which have been commonly consumed in the country since the pre-Hispanic era. The research specifically emphasizes indigenous Filipino alcoholic drinks, considering their philosophical relevance using Leonardo Mercado's framework which was accused by Roland Theuas DS. Pada for being ahistorical since it neglects foreign influences on Filipino behavior.⁶ However, since this research focuses on *tagay*, which aside from the fact that it is a pre-colonial tradition, manifests a unique concept of justice found to be opposite from modern Filipino and Western cultures, it is inferred that this will be freed from Pada's charge.

Mercado and the Current Discourse in Filipino Philosophy

Although this paper will utilize Leonardo Mercado's method and framework in its analysis, it does not neglect the recent discourse in Filipino Philosophy. The question of whether or not Filipino Philosophy exists has been the subject of ongoing discourse. In chapter five which contains several essays from his published book *Decolonial Turn in the Philippine South*, a philosophy scholar Menelito Mansueto shares the thoughts of his mentor, Fr. Leonardo "Nards" Estioko. When asked about Filipino Philosophy, Fr. Estioko responded, "There is not even a German philosophy, there are only German philosophers."⁷ Mansueto takes part in the belief that there *is* a Filipino Philosophy claiming that the *Lumads* have their own way of thinking and doing philosophy.⁸ Several Filipino philosophers and scholars believe that there are Filipino philosophers. Feorillo Demeterio, for instance, in his 2014 paper *Assessing the Developmental Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy*, lists down

⁶ Roland Theuas DS. Pada, "On Filipino Philosophy: The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 8:1, (June 2014) 24-44.

⁷ Menelito Mansueto, *Decolonial Turn in the Philippine South*. USA: Kindle Direct Publishing, 2024, 65.

⁸ Mansueto, *Decolonial Turn*, 46-72.

twenty-six leading Filipino philosophers and scholars.⁹ In their co-authored 2023 work *Questioning Demeterio's Approach to Filipino Philosophy*, Hazel Biana and Jeremiah Joven Joaquin propose expanding the list without necessarily agreeing that everyone on Demeterio's list is indeed a Filipino Philosopher, and without explicitly endorsing Demeterio's criteria for what qualifies as a Filipino philosopher.¹⁰ Having a list of Filipino philosophers, however, does not necessarily suggest that there is indeed a Filipino philosophy since Filipino philosophers can still be classified further into several categories.

Napoleon Mabaquiao Jr. explores six possible definitions of Filipino philosophy believing that it has existed for far too long. Among the six definitions he explored, he settled with a connotative definition describing "Filipino philosophy as referring to any kind of Philosophy that results from the activity of philosophizing by someone whose consciousness has the identity of being Filipino."¹¹ Perhaps this 'consciousness' is closely related to Zeus A. Salazar's *pantayong pananaw*, a framework that he urges Filipinos should develop in order to see the world around them in a manner that is their own, rather than through the lenses such as *pangkalahatang*, *pangkayong*, and *pangsilang pananaw*.¹² *Pantayong pananaw* is a lens of analysis that the center of discourse is exclusive among Filipinos, from Filipinos, and for Filipinos.¹³

Aside from the problem of discourse in Filipino philosophy, Joaquin recognizes that the meaning of the concept "Filipino Philosophy" is also a problem because of the different conceptions of

⁹ Feorillo P. A. Demeterio III, "Assessing the developmental potentials of some twelve discourses of Filipino philosophy," *Philippiniana Sacra* 69 (147), 2014, 189-230, 193.

¹⁰ Hazel T Biana & Jeremiah Joven Joaquin, "Questioning Demeterio's Approach to Filipino Philosophy," *Philosophia International Journal of Philosophy* (2023), Volume 24, 1.

¹¹ Napoleon M. Mabaquiao, Jr., "Pilosopiyang Pilipino: Isang Pagsusuri," *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, vol. 55, issue 1-4 (1998), 203-215.

¹² Zeus Salazar, "Ang Pantayong Pananaw Bilang Diskursong Pangkabihasnan," in *Pilipinolohiya: Kasaysayan, pilosopiya at pananaliksik*. Violeta V. Bautista and Rogelia Pe-Pua (eds.). Maynila: Kalikasan Press, 1991, 46-72.

¹³ Ibid.

some Filipino scholars of what it is.¹⁴ Joaquin observes that Filipino scholars have different stresses in their quests. Gripaldo, for instance, stresses who qualifies as a Filipino Philosopher, while Mabaquiao stresses what determines a particular work to be a work in Filipino Philosophy.¹⁵ While some scholars either enrich or completely reject Mercado's fundamental principles, others only reject some of his assumptions. Anton Heinrich Rennesland, for instance, in his 2021 article, argues that Filipino Philosophy is an illusion but an essential illusion since it is necessary to affirm life.¹⁶ He asserts that thinking and living are not distinct, there is a dialectical interplay between life and thoughts.¹⁷ He is upset with how philosophy is treated as the clash between consciousness (socio-cultural factors) and the academic tradition since philosophy, for him, should neither be isolated to abstract academic enterprise nor merely cultural expression.¹⁸ Thus, he affirms that Filipino philosophy should express the worldview and values of the Filipino people in a dialectical or dialogical manner.¹⁹ Another important assertion of Rennesland is the misrepresentation of the Filipinos. What has been called Filipino is composed of people with diverse cultures and traditions which cannot be represented if we focus our interpretation of Filipinos through the notions of freedom, national identity, and shared consciousness which cannot be fully understood without recognizing diversity within the group.²⁰

Similarly, a philosophy scholar from Mindanao Christopher Ryan Maboloc also emphasizes the diversity of the Filipino people. While Mercado seeks to discover thoughts that describe Filipino identity, Maboloc on the other hand, through the lens of Chantal Mouffe's Radical Democracy which rejects the notion of a homogeneous society, emphasizes the diversity of the Filipino

¹⁴ Jeremiah Joven B. Joaquin, "Gripaldo and Mabaquiao on Filipino Philosophy: A Critical Assessment of Two Attempts to Establish a Filipino Philosophy," *Dalumat e-Journal*, 2010, Volume 1:1.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Anton Heinrich L. Rennesland, "Five Assumptions on the Illusion 'Filipino Philosophy' (A Prelude to a Cultural Critique)," *SURI*, 9:1, 2021, 76-89

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Rennesland, "Five Assumptions on the Illusion 'Filipino Philosophy'," 2021, 76-89.

people.²¹ Maboloc says that "Radical democracy implies that politics cannot be limited to rational discourse" as "rational consensus for Mouffe ignores the value of passion in the political."²² In his concept of Radical Democracy anchored on Bisaya politics, he establishes how the Filipino people are divided by elitism that deprives Mindanao of its fair share of the nation's wealth and opportunities.²³ According to Maboloc, one reason Duterte has the support of the people of Mindanao is his defiance of the Western point of view.²⁴ Most Filipinos, he says, do not possess Western mentality.²⁵ In a book review, Symel Noelin S. De Guzman-Daulat notes that Maboloc perceives the Bisaya have endured centuries of institutional neglect and oppression, adding that "the people of Mindanao sought to fight back against a system which relegated their struggle as unsightly and barbaric."²⁶ For Maboloc, Duterte understands the sentiment of the Bisayan people and the former president's speeches reflect this broader ideological divide.²⁷ These younger scholars and philosophers differ from Leonardo Mercado as he assumes that there is Filipino identity and to find it is one of the goals of his quest for Filipino thought.

Tagay in Filipino Philosophy

The method of this research is critical analysis as it critically reviews Beverly Sarsa's analysis of *inumang Pinoy* in her article *Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino*. And since this research will present its own analysis of *tagay*, it additionally utilizes Leonardo Mercado's two complementary methods: the metalinguistic analysis and the phenomenology of behavior that he introduced in his books

²¹ Christopher Ryan Maboloc, Radical Democracy in the Time of Duterte, *Philippine Daily Inquirer (Inquirer.net)*, December 16, 2016.

²² Ibid.

²³ Christopher Ryan B. Maboloc, "Chantal Mouffe's Radical Democracy and Rodrigo Duterte's Radical Politics: A Second Reply to Critics," *Aradman Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, Volume 3:1, 2024, 4.

²⁴ Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "President Duterte's Grammar of Dissent," *Philippine Daily Inquirer (Inquirer.net)*, August 9, 2018.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Symel Noelin S. De Guzman-Daulat, "Radical Democracy in the Time of Duterte, by Christopher Ryan Maboloc," *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture*, Volume 26:3, Article 6, 2022.

²⁷ Maboloc, "President Duterte's Grammar of Dissent," 2018.

Filipino Thoughts and Elements of Filipino Philosophy.²⁸ These methods will help the attempt to extract Filipino thoughts in *tagay* as one of those Filipino Indigenous traditions. Mercado asserts that we can know the Filipino mind by analyzing the Filipino language and behavior because words and actions are products of the mind.²⁹ The first method addresses how thought is expressed in language, while the latter addresses how thought is expressed in traditions. Mercado also states that language and culture are inseparable. Hence, this study utilizes both methods to unveil Filipino thoughts from the Filipino Indigenous tradition known as *tagay* or *inuman Pinoy*. According to Mercado, the metalinguistic approach assumes that the thoughts of the native speakers are mirrored by the language they use.³⁰ This thought also determines their outlooks, Mercado says.³¹ He admits that the approach is foreign, as Romualdo Abulad† accuses.³² Mercado traces its origin to Aristotle, who claims that words are expressions of ideas.³³ Since language and tradition mirror thought, it is possible that in using the two methods, we could excavate some philosophical outlooks of our prehistoric ancestors through the tradition of *tagay*.

The second approach – the phenomenology of behavior, Mercado admits – is taken from a tradition introduced by Edmund Husserl.³⁴ In Pada's critical analysis of the problem of Methods in Filipino Philosophy, he interprets Mercado's phenomenological approach as necessary to verify and support the semantic content of the linguistic data by observable practices. Pada interprets that the phenomenology of behavior is needed by Mercado to counter-check the correctness of the metalinguistic data.³⁵ Mercado says that this

²⁸ Leonardo Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University Publications, 1974), 8. See also Leonardo Mercado, "Filipino Thought." In *Philippine Studies* 20 (2) Second Quarter 1972 (Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University), 207-272.

²⁹ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 8.

³⁰ Mercado, "Filipino Thought," 207-272.

³¹ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 8.

³² Romualdo E. Abulad†, "Pilosophiyang Pinoy: Uso Pa Ba? (The Relevance of Filipino Philosophy in Social Renewal, A Tribute to Romualdo Abulad, the Filipino Kantian)," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 13:2, (December 2019), 16-36.

³³ Mercado, "Filipino Thought," 207-272.

³⁴ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 11.

³⁵ Pada, "On Filipino Philosophy: The Methodological Problems," 24-44.

methodology helps the researcher act as the midwife that would facilitate the birth of philosophical ideas out of the average Filipino.³⁶

Mercado's Quest for a Filipino Philosophy

Mercado's framework for understanding Filipino thoughts is almost inseparable from the methods he promotes, the metalinguistic analysis and phenomenology of behavior. The only fundamental difference is the idea that the methods are used to excavate the Filipino thoughts from Filipino languages and traditions while the framework is the belief that there is an indigenous Filipino thought that can be unearthed from Filipino language and tradition. Culture has become a topic of philosophical investigation since the World Philosophy Congress in Montreal as mentioned by Mercado himself in the *Kritike* article entitled "Reflections on the Status of Filipino Philosophy" as he reviews the work of F.P.A. Demeterio III.³⁷ Mercado's framework is different from the anthropologists' whose works are primarily on culture because Mercado's is intended to investigate Filipino Thought in language and tradition and how from here Filipino identity can be disclosed.

In this research, *tagay* as the center of inquiry was examined through the lens of Leonardo Mercado. In his book *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, Mercado asserts that there is a Filipino philosophy.³⁸ He distinguishes three types of definitions of philosophy: the traditional, the existentialist, and the anthropological.³⁹ He claims that there is a Filipino philosophy in an anthropological sense dubbed by Rolando Gripaldo as cultural, as Dr. George F. McLean suggested to him.⁴⁰ The anthropological sense, Mercado says, refers to the worldview of a particular group of people which determines their way of thinking and behaving.⁴¹ He asserts that this is different from the first two definitions because the philosophers under the anthropological definition need not be formally educated. He further claims that the

³⁶ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 11.

³⁷ Leonardo N. Mercado, "Reflections on the Status of Filipino Philosophy," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 10:2, (December 2016), 21-28.

³⁸ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 3.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 3-4

⁴⁰ Rolando M Gripaldo, "Filipino Philosophy: Past and Present," *Kaisipan*, 1:1, (2013), 1-6.

⁴¹ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 4.

philosophers from the traditional and existentialist are individualists and elitists.⁴² Mercado believes that Filipinos must have their own philosophy even none of which is written because every nation must be unique to offer something significant to the world by being herself.⁴³ He believes that Philosophy is essential for Filipinos, as it forms the foundational framework of their identity.⁴⁴

Emmanuel Batoon asserts that Mercado's anthropological perspective on the study of philosophy is significant because it brings to light the Filipino people as a group of philosophers. As a group of philosophers, he continues, they constructed a worldview that embodied their languages, behavior, and mythology, providing them with a mission and vision as a nation.⁴⁵ As already mentioned earlier, some Filipino philosophers like Quito did not believe that there was a Filipino philosophy of this sort.⁴⁶ However, Leonardo Mercado, along with Florentino Timbreza, Rolando Gripaldo, among others, believe otherwise.⁴⁷ In Batoon's reading of Mercado, the latter believes that the absence of written indigenous Filipino Philosophy does not necessarily suggest the absence of Filipino thought.⁴⁸ Mercado uses language as an analogy to disprove the disagreement of the skeptics, that is, even if there is no written grammar, it does not mean there is no language.⁴⁹ He also believes that this Filipino thought can be unveiled in language and behavior.⁵⁰

In this line of thinking, *tagay*, as an Indigenous Filipino tradition with pre-Hispanic origin, qualifies as a subject of inquiry to unveil

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid, 7.

⁴⁴ Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, 7.

⁴⁵ Emmanuel D. Batoon, "On Filipino Philosophy: Tracing Mercado's Anthropological Perspective" (Second of Two Parts), *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 8:2, (December 2014) 1-18.

⁴⁶ Batoon, "On Filipino Philosophy", 2014.

⁴⁷ Leonardo N. Mercado, "Reflections on the Status of Filipino Philosophy," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 10, No. 2. (December 2016), 21-28. See also, Pada, "On Filipino Philosophy: The Methodological Problems," 24-44. See also Rolando M. Gripaldo, "Filipino Philosophy: Past and Present," 1-6. *Cultural Philosophy: African and Filipino Philosophy*, *φιλοσοφία, Philosophia International Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 19:1, (2018), 1-12.

⁴⁸ Emmanuel D. Batoon, "A Tribute to Leonardo N. Mercado, SVD: His Legacy to the Filipino Nation," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 14:2, (December 2020), 1-5.

⁴⁹ Mercado, "Reflections on the Status of Filipino Philosophy." 22-24.

⁵⁰ Mercado, "Filipino Thought," 207-272.

Filipino thought. Florentino Timbreza and Rolando Gripaldo assert that tradition is one of the good subjects of inquiry if we were to know indigenous Filipino thought. Inspired by Mercado, Florentino Timbreza wrote an article entitled *Pilosopiyang Pilipino*.⁵¹ Timbreza teaches that Filipino wisdom is enacted in practice in daily life.⁵² He believes that Filipino Philosophy can be unveiled through various Filipino cultural practices like *tagay*. In his response to Emerita Quito's criticism against Mercado's framework, Timbreza claims that Filipinos have their philosophy about the chaotic human lives and this could be expressed through mythology, poems, epic, songs, beliefs, riddles, values, indigenous dance, and sayings.⁵³ This specific cultural approach in philosophy which examines Filipino thought through traditions, language, folk literature, and the like is labeled by Rolando Gripaldo as ethnophilosophical.⁵⁴ Gripaldo acknowledges Mercado and Timbreza as the main proponents of the anthropological or cultural approach in Filipino Philosophy.⁵⁵

In separate articles, Gripaldo also argues that there is Filipino Philosophy, but it should be understood in three approaches: traditional, cultural, and national.⁵⁶ In the cultural sense, Gripaldo asserts that there is Filipino Philosophy; this type of philosophy can be discerned from the people's languages, folk tales, folk sayings, riddles, and the like.⁵⁷ This research, however, limits its scope to Mercado's belief that there is Filipino Philosophy or more accurately, Indigenous Philosophy – that can be excavated from Filipino or Indigenous languages and traditions. Yet between his search for a unified national identity as Filipino and the current scholars, like Rennesland and Maboloc, who emphasize diversity, this paper aligns more towards the latter group of Filipino philosophers.

⁵¹ Batoon, "On Filipino Philosophy: Tracing Mercado's Anthropological Perspective," 1-18.

⁵² Pada, "On Filipino Philosophy: The Methodological Problems," 24-44.

⁵³ Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, "Status and Directions of Filipino Philosophy in Zalcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo, and Co," *φιλοσοφία, Philosophia International Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 14:2, (2013), 186-215.

⁵⁴ Gripaldo, "Filipino Philosophy," 1-12.

⁵⁵ Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, "Rolando Gripaldo and Filipino Philosophy during his Lasallian Period," *φιλοσοφία, Philosophia International Journal of Philosophy*, 23: 1, (2022), 1-30.

⁵⁶ Gripaldo, "Filipino Philosophy," 1-6. See also, Gripaldo, "Cultural Philosophy," 2018, 1-12.

⁵⁷ Gripaldo, "Filipino Philosophy," 2013, 1-6.

Critiquing Beverly Sarza's Analysis of *Tagay*

The succeeding section is divided into two parts, the first part concerns the communal culture of *tagay* and the second part highlights the different notions of justice both in the Western and Filipino cultures. The two sections of this review are intended to provide foundations for critiquing Sarza's two major assertions.

Sarza's Notion and the Communal Culture of *Tagay*

In her article, *Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino*, Beverly Sarza claims that the communal culture of 'tagay' manifests the communal culture of Filipinos.⁵⁸ Sarza, in her analysis of *tagay*, asserts that Filipinos give more value to society than individuals, and this can also be observed in language.⁵⁹ However, a careful consideration of the type of indigenous Filipino wines could offer an alternative analysis to this claim. Because most indigenous Filipino wines, if not all, spoil quickly. There is a huge possibility that it is the determining factor of why *tagay* is communal. Hence, it is important to conduct a brief survey of the indigenous Filipino alcoholic drinks to confirm this hypothesis.

Unlu affirms that alcoholic beverages are a fundamental part of most communal feasts.⁶⁰ It is also important to note that getting drunk alone is not the sole reason why the indigenous drink their wines. Garland, for instance, claims that the Greek communal drinking party known as the symposium is associated with intellectual discourse.⁶¹ Sarza also points out that, like the Greek symposium, *tagay* is important to the Filipino spirit and culture.⁶² She further claims that *tagay* is a tangible expression of comradery and companionship.⁶³ She compares the *tangero* to a government whose main task is to ensure

⁵⁸ Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 2007, 51-56.

⁵⁹ Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," *ibid*.

⁶⁰ Elif Ünlü, "The Handle Wagging the Cup. Formal Aspects of Alcohol Consumption in the Transfer of Ideology: Anatolia and the Aegean Towards the End of the Third Millennium BC," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 35, no. 4, (November 2016), 345-58.

⁶¹ Robert Garland, "Greek Drinking Parties", in *History Today* (June 1982), 32:6.

⁶² Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 2007, 51-56.

⁶³ *Ibid*.

the fair distribution of the wine. For her, this reflects the Filipino concept of cycle and fairness.⁶⁴

Tangero who intentionally misses a shot is another important observation of Sarza that she learns from Alegre. She characterizes the *tangero* as a selfless person because she believes that the purpose of why the *tangero* intentionally skips some shots or share of wine is to avoid getting drunk earlier than the rest of the members in order to perform his/her task properly as the person in charge of distributing the wine.⁶⁵ In Sarza's analysis, to ensure fairness in the drinking session, the *tangero* must be the last person to get drunk by intentionally missing some shots or *tagay*.⁶⁶ By this, Sarza establishes the line that the indigenous Filipino culture is self-giving.

Agreeing with Alegre, Sarza asserts that intentionally not taking one's share of goods, which in this case is wine, is a selfless act and a manifestation of communal Filipino ideals.⁶⁷ However, as much as Beverly Sarza has gone this far with her analysis of this Filipino tradition, my observation and analysis respectfully disagree. In most regions, though it can be observed that the first shot or *tagay* is to be thrown to the earth for the demon [*para sa demonyo*] or earth dweller [*para sa taga yuta*] but the next shot is customarily and obligatorily for the *tangero*. This collectivist remark of Sarza on Filipino tradition is not isolated but is inclined to dominant belief. Marsha Shapiro, for instance, claims that Filipinos are usually collectivists, unlike Westerners, who are individualists.⁶⁸ Leonardo Mercado also claims that "the writings of Western thinkers complement each other based on individualistic worldview."⁶⁹ His encouragement to develop a Filipino theme that represents the unity of Filipino thought assumes the communal nature of Filipino tradition. The significant prevalence of collectivism in Filipino culture raises the question: Why is Filipino culture collectivist? Exploring the culture of *tagay* may shed light on the reasons behind this collectivist nature.

Some Filipino wines are made from honey, different root crops, sugar cane juice, palm saps, rice, and other grains. Rice wine has

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 2007, 51-56.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Marsha E. Shapiro, *Asian Culture Brief: Philippines*, (NTAC-AAPI Culture Brief Series, 2:3).

⁶⁹ Mercado, "Reflections," 2016, 21-28.

different versions and names across different regions; there is *tapuey* in Benguet, *bayah* and *lipog* in Ifugao, and *pangasi* in Samar and Leyte.⁷⁰ The *pangasi* was not restricted to rice alone; other grains and root crops present in the region could also be used such as the popular *pangasi*, among the Subanen people in Zamboanga del Sur which is made from fermented cassava.⁷¹ Other than *pangasi* and coconut wine, Samar and Leyte offer a variety of fermented wines, including *kabarawan* made from boiled bark mixed with honey, and *intus* derived from boiled sugar cane juice.⁷² *Intus* is possibly another version of *basi* which is the famous sugar cane wine in the Ilocos Region.⁷³ Thus, most indigenous Filipino wines are region-specific except palm wine which was widely consumed in many regions in the Philippines long before the arrival of the Magellan expedition. During the Voyage of Magellan, different regions of Visayas and Mindanao had already been known to have locally produced palm wines as per Antonio Pigafetta's accounts.⁷⁴

There are varying accounts on whether distilled liquors were consumed by indigenous Filipinos before Spanish colonization. Roger Pe, for instance, claims that Quezon Province had already created *lambanog*,⁷⁵ long before the Spanish era in the Philippines.⁷⁶ On the contrary, in an episode of I-Witness, it is claimed that the Spaniards introduced distillation to the native Filipinos in 1574.⁷⁷ Antonio Pigafetta's account claims that on their arrival in Samal [Samar] on

⁷⁰ "iJuander: Tradisyunal na paggawa ng alak ng mga taga-Benguet, alamin!", *YouTube*, posted by GMA and Public Affairs, (6 October 2019). See also, "Making Rice Wine and Ifugao Food with an Ifugao Elder," *Cordillera Ep 3*, *YouTube*, posted by Lasa Explorations, (29 February 2020). See also, "Local Legends: Ifugao's Lipog", *YouTube*, posted by ABS-CBN News, (11 May 2019) See also: Feorillo P.A. Demeterio III, "Kolonisasyon at mga Inuming Nakalalasing ng mga Sinaunang Bisaya ng Samar at Leyte," *Malay*, 25.1 (2012) 1-18.

⁷¹ "iJuander: Tradisyunal na pagpreserba ng alak, 2021.

⁷² Demeterio III, "Kolonisasyon at mga Inuming Nakalalasing," 2012.

⁷³ "Kris TV: How to make a sugarcane wine", *YouTube*, ABS-CBN Entertainment, (3 February 2016).

⁷⁴ Antonio Pigafetta, *The First Voyage Around the World by Magellan, Translated from the Accounts of Pigafetta and Other Contemporary Writers*, Edited by Henry Edward John Stanley, (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71, 74, 78, 89, 105, 106.

⁷⁵ A spirit distilled out of coconut palm wine or tuba.

⁷⁶ Roger Pe, "Lakan lambanog: The drink of Filipino nobility", in *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (September 14, 2015).

⁷⁷ "I-Witness: 'Patay sa Tagay', dokumentaryo ni Kara David", *YouTube*, GMA Public Affairs, (02 February 2020).

March 16, 1521, the locals gave them a vessel of palm wine which he said to be locally called *uraca*.⁷⁸ *Uraca* is the other term for *arak*.⁷⁹ In addition, as they navigate away from the Philippines, they reach an island southwest of *Palaoan* [Borneo] where they receive some gifts from the locals that include three vessels of alcoholic beverage which Pigafetta notes to be distilled from rice which was locally known as *arak*.⁸⁰ William Henry Scott interprets this as a Malay-Arabic word for distilled liquor or *alak*.⁸¹ Thus, distilled spirits may have been produced in the Philippines before the arrival of the Spaniards. However, it doesn't change the fact that fermented wine was consumed by the natives hundreds of years before distillation. Unlike distillation, wine fermentation does not require advanced techniques and processes. Furthermore, different types of wines are still consumed these days in various regions in the Philippines while small-scale distilled spirits are produced only in a few regions.

Another storable Filipino wine before the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines is probably *bahalina*. However, aside from the fact that it is only widely consumed in some areas of Samar and Leyte, like distilled spirits, it requires advanced techniques and daily laborious procedures as it continues to ferment. The fermentation and processes take at least three months.⁸² It can be concluded that fermented wines were the most consumed alcoholic drinks in the pre-colonial Philippines. It is still widely consumed even these days. Thus, more than any other alcoholic drink, the Indigenous Filipino wines play vital roles in shaping the culture of *tagay* to be communal.

The Different Notions of Justice

Beverly Sarza asserts that to ensure fair distribution of the wine in *tagay*, the *tangero* must skip some 'shots' or rounds so that he or she may not get drunk earlier than the other members of the drinking session.⁸³ She even sees this as a form of self-sacrifice. Sarza looks at

⁷⁸ Pigafetta, *The First Voyage*, 71-72.

⁷⁹ Pigafetta, *The First Voyage*, see footnote 144.

⁸⁰ Pigafetta, *The First Voyage*, 110.

⁸¹ Scott, *Barangay*, 1994, 50.

⁸² Keith Bacongco, "No more liquor ban in Davao, here's a toast to bahalina!" *Manila Bulletin*. September 24, 2020.

⁸³ Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino", 2007.

the matter with the 'communal' and even with Western lenses.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, *tagay* has a concept of justice that does not subscribe to most Western concepts influenced by Plato, Aristotle, and even John Rawls' teachings could not fully capture. These three giants in Western philosophical tradition tackle greatly how an individual could contribute to society. Individuals are expected to give but none of these theories requires or obliges an individual to receive a share of goods. Even John Rawls insists on giving some privileges to the less fortunate and disadvantaged people⁸⁵, like Plato and Aristotle, his tenet does not oblige the disadvantaged people to receive the goods due to them. I find no existence of any Western thinking that prohibits and punishes an act of refusing to receive the goods due to a person. In the Western tradition, as much as it is wrong to get more than one's share of goods and equally wrong to refuse to take a share of social burdens, it has never been wrong to refuse to receive one's share of goods. This makes the Filipino drinking tradition's notion of justice so unique which will be elaborated on later.

In one of his dialogues, "The Republic," Plato teaches that the harmony of the three classes ensures justice in the city.⁸⁶ These classes are the rulers who represent the rational aspect of the human soul, the warriors who represent the spirited aspect, and the producers who represent the appetitive aspect. Each of these classes has its own specific functions in society and justice is only ensured if they function utterly; their harmony ensures justice in the city. Hence, each of these classes must contribute to society to secure justice in the city. According to Plato, each person has a natural ability and if they were utilized for the good of society, then each person compensates for each other's insufficiencies.⁸⁷ It is only in this harmony that justice is guaranteed.

Justice is defined by Aristotle as lawful and fair while injustice is obviously the opposite.⁸⁸ Being unfair and being a breaker of the law makes a person unjust while being a law-abiding citizen and being fair

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Revised Edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 13.

⁸⁶ Plato, Translated by Tom Griffith, Edited by G.R.F Ferrari, *The Republic*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), later part of book 2, books 3-4.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Book II: 370a.

⁸⁸ Aristotle, Translated by Martin Ostwald, *Nicomachean Ethics* (USA: The Liberal Arts Press, Inc, 1962), 1129a-30.

makes a person just. Taking a share more than what one deserves or getting rid of one's share of social burdens is being a lawbreaker and unfair, hence making one unjust.⁸⁹ Aristotle's notion of justice implies, like Plato's, that a just person contributes to society, be it by not taking too much of goods for oneself or taking a share of social burdens due to oneself.⁹⁰

While John Rawls' teachings on justice are not entirely comprehensive or adequate for capturing the concept of justice in the Filipino social drinking tradition, they partly have a bearing. In his book *A Theory of Justice*, he regards justice as the foremost virtue of social institutions.⁹¹ Rawls' principles of distributive justice can be utilized as a guiding principle of the state concerning the distribution of benefits and social burdens.⁹² The aim is the fair distribution of benefits and social burdens.⁹³ The principle ensures that the goods are fairly allocated to the recipients based on merits and necessity.⁹⁴ The difference principle is John Rawls' alternative distributive principle of justice.⁹⁵ Rawls allows inequalities if it results in the benefits of the least advantaged members of society than they would be under fixed equality.⁹⁶ Justice for him is not only equality but fairness. Unlike the traditional views, Rawls' difference principle highlights that justice includes the distribution of goods to the least advantaged even if that means taking some resources from the well off as he could accept inequality as long as it is for the benefit of the least advantaged.⁹⁷ Furthermore, the maximin principle could be another important principle put forward by Rawls which is useful in this analysis of the Filipino social drinking tradition. It desires to choose the action or decision with the least damaging consequences relative to all other

⁸⁹ Ibid, 1129a30, 1129b5, 1134a-35.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1962, 1129b5, 1134a35.

⁹¹ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 3.

⁹² Julian Lamont and Christi Favor, edited by Edward N. Zalta, 'Distributive Justice', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2017.

⁹³ Michael Allingham, 'Distributive Justice,' *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, August 20, 2022.

⁹⁴ David Miller, "Justice," edited by Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2021.

⁹⁵ Lamont and Favor, "Distributive Justice," 2017.

⁹⁶ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 13.

⁹⁷ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 65.

options maximizing safety and minimizing risks.⁹⁸ This will ensure that any individual with too much burden would not receive more of which, but this consequently involves sharing the burden with the well-privileged members of society.

Jose W. Diokno proposes that a native concept of justice can be derived from the Filipino language and history, providing a distinct understanding of justice rooted in our cultural heritage.⁹⁹ *Katarungan* is the Filipino word for justice. Diokno pointed out that the word is originally a Visayan but is now commonly used not only by Cebuano-speaking people but also by Ilongos, Pampangos, and Tagalogs.¹⁰⁰ *Katarungan* is taken from the word *tarong*, which means straight, upright, correct, or appropriate. Diokno then concludes that justice in the Filipino concept is rectitude, doing the morally right act, being upright, or doing what is appropriate.¹⁰¹ *Katarungan* encapsulates justice and equity because Filipinos do not distinguish these two concepts from each other.¹⁰² Diokno writes, "...the fundamental element in the Filipino concept of justice is fairness."¹⁰³

Some foreign and Filipino scholars deal with justice and fairness concerning one's rights and responsibilities. The Visayan term *katungod* and Tagalog term *karapatan* literally mean rights. The root word of *katungod* is *tungod* while the root word of *karapatan* is *tapat*. *Tungod* literally means beneath or straight ahead relative to something. *Katungod* among Visayan speakers then could literally mean under my roof, under my control, under my protection, under my power, or at my disposal. On the other hand, the Tagalog word *tapat* literally means in front. *Tapat* is then the closest literal meaning to the Visayan term *tungod* than the Tagalog word *dapat*, which Diokno claims to be the root word of *karapatan*, which has a meaning very close to *tarong*—fitting, correct, and appropriate.¹⁰⁴ Rights entail the entitlement to claim and protect what belongs to an individual, while responsibility involves contributing to society. In modern

⁹⁸ Samuel Freeman, "Original Position." Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2019.

⁹⁹ Artemio V. Panganiban, "Filipino concept of justice", in *Inquirer.net* (14 October 2013).

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Panganiban, "Filipino concept of justice," 2013.

Philippine society, giving and contributing are praised, while taking one's rightful share of goods may not receive recognition.

Tagay and Filipino Culture

This part is divided into three sections. The first part formally introduces *tagay* or *inumang Pinoy* to the reader, while each of the two remaining parts addresses two different but related questions. The second part delves into the reason why *tagay* is communal by nature and the third part delves into the notion of distributive justice in *tagay*.

An overview of the Filipino drinking tradition

Before I proceed to the discussion proper of this research paper, allow me to give a brief overview of *tagay*. This Filipino social drinking tradition involves at least two participants at the very minimum, but it could also be as much as more than ten but should not be that much. It is normally composed of members who have known each other, they could be a circle of friends, family members, colleagues, neighbors among other forms of human relations. Sometimes, a stranger (*dayo*) or a few are welcome as well for varied reasons. The strangers should have been known and introduced by a regular member of the group. Some passers-by who came by accident, like walk-in vendors, are sometimes also called upon to join or at least have a shot. While not taking the given shot or *tagay* may not always mean disrespect for some acceptable reasons, taking the shot is always viewed as showing respect. A stranger is welcome and trusted, so he/she must show respect as well by drinking the shot. Trust and confidence of each member are vital to be part of the session. The same is true to be received from and given to a stranger. This trust and confidence can be based on personal knowledge and gut feelings. People who engage in *tagay* must also be emotionally sensitive. They must know how to get along with people of different backgrounds. Some Filipino values to be observed may include *pakikisama*, *hiya*, *pakikiramdam*, and even *amor propio*. *Tagay* is by nature communal, and no one is to have *tagay* on their own. Arguably, the word *tagay* could mean not only a shot but a share. This tradition employs one cup being shared by all members throughout the entire drinking session. This can be observed

in most regions in the Philippines. Hence, Lasco declares the word 'cheers' to have no Filipino translation since cheers require at least two cups to toast with.¹⁰⁵ The account of the use of one shared cup in *tagay* is shared by several writers including Lasco, Sarza, and even Pigafetta.¹⁰⁶ Although some regions in the Philippines do not use one cup to be shared by every member of the social drinking session, such as the account of Antonio Pigaffeta, who had drunk wine with Rajah Humabon of Cebu using reed straws.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the Subanen until this modern day drank their *pangase* using a similar straw.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, the widely practiced form of *tagay* involves the use of one shared cup for all participants in the drinking session. Antonio Pigaffeta also wrote an account of sharing one cup while drinking wine with a king in the Visayas during the Good Friday of 1521.¹⁰⁹

While the term *glass* is used by Lasco,¹¹⁰ indigenous Filipino utilize a diverse selection of cups, ranging from coconut shells and bamboo internodes to even objects like animal or human skulls. Since there is only one shared cup for everyone, it requires a person to take the task of distributing the wine, and that person is commonly known as *tangero*.¹¹¹ The *tangero* must distribute the wine fairly. He or she is to distribute the wine in a rotational manner using the same cup for every member of the session. Each member will receive a share or *tagay* in every revolution of the cup around all members. The English word 'round' literally means *tuyok* in Cebuano and *ikot* in Tagalog. English speakers also use the word 'round' to refer to a shot or drink as in the famous phrase among drinkers "one more round". This linguistic relation makes me suspect that the prehistoric drinking tradition of the English-speaking world also used one shared cup in their social drinking session. Although the use of one cup among modern English-speaking drinkers is very isolated, such as in the 1963

¹⁰⁵ Gideon Lasco, "Tagay: Why there's no Tagalog word for "cheers" and other notes on Filipino drinking culture", *Health, Culture and Societies in the Philippines*, (January 26, 2015).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* See also: Pigafetta, *The First Voyage*, Edited by Cachey, Jr., paragraph 59.

¹⁰⁷ William Henry Scott, *Barangay: Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*, (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994), 50.

¹⁰⁸ "iJuander: Tradisyunal na pagpreserba ng alak ng mga Subanen, alamin!", *YouTube*, GMA and Public Affairs, (21 December 2021).

¹⁰⁹ Pigafetta, *The First Voyage*, Paragraph 59.

¹¹⁰ Lasco, "Tagay," 2015.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* See also, Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 2007.

movie "The Great Escape" which portrays three American prisoners of war soldiers drinking moonshine liquor using one shared cup. This metalinguistic hypothesis certainly does not have a concrete basis to be established. But it is the only explanation I could think of about how the term 'round' means a 'shot' in English, otherwise, it doesn't make sense.

Discourse is a vital component of *tagay*, without it most drinking sessions if not all may not have been that attractive. Most drinkers do not like the taste of wines and liquors, it's the discourse and being with people. On the other hand, discourse is also not enough to get together in most informal settings, it is incomplete without drinking wine or liquor, especially among men. I am not to elaborate which comes first; they seem to be equally necessary. The content of the discourse is anything, it involves different ideas, opposing opinions, knowledge, skills, techniques, truth-telling, events, gossip, jokes, and even bragging. Hence, as much as it could be a venue to create and sustain friendships, it could also be a venue for confrontation and violence. As much as it is a venue for outsourcing and dissemination of information, it could also be a source of misinformation. Hence, it might also teach each regular member to be a critical recipient of information. Although there are naturally brilliant minds among indigenous Filipinos, the possibility of philosophical discourse is rare due to the lack of competence of some other members. Hence, misunderstanding and misappropriation of ideas are common due to several barriers which include differences in intellectual capacity, age gap, gender, interest, level of intoxication, and language barrier among others. However, this does not suggest that philosophical discourse is not possible at all. It happens, and it doesn't have to occur all the time to make a difference.

Each regular drinking session member knows the unwritten rules of *tagay*. The rule includes the following; when to drink one's *tagay* or shot, when to pass or skip a shot, and how to treat every drinking session member depending on age, gender, and status. Each regular member must know their rights and responsibilities. Hence, before the session, each member possesses the notions of *karapatan*, *katarungan*, and many other indigenous and special values. Refusal to drink a *tagay* or shot in certain circumstances could mean disrespect or even rudeness. It is one's duty to take the shot and throwing it away or skipping a shot could mean cheating or disrespect.

The Communal Culture of Tagay

The most obvious reason I could find why *tagay* is communal is the fact that Indigenous Filipinos mainly consumed fermented wines which spoil in a short duration. Unlike distilled liquors that can be stored for years, indigenous Filipino wines, like most other wines, spoil in a short duration of time, hence it is meant to be shared as soon as they are available for consumption or at least before they spoil. This sharing of wine becomes a tradition we now know as *tagay* or *inumang Pinoy* which Beverly Sarza considers to be manifesting the collectivist culture of indigenous Filipinos, which I disagree with.¹¹² She observes the *inumang Pinoy* at the surface level and it is understandable. The culture of sharing wine has become embedded in Filipino culture today and even the commercialized mass-produced distilled liquors, such as gin, rum, and brandy are also shared by Filipino drinkers these modern days. It even remains common to observe Filipino drinkers consuming the entire contents of a bottle once it is opened even if the alcohols are distilled and do not even spoil. *Tuba*, which is made from palm saps, is still widely consumed in Visayas and Mindanao. It is arguably the most familiar Indigenous Filipino wine among the natives, and it must have a huge influence on the communal culture of the *tagay*.

One shared cup for all members of the *tagay* session ensures fairness in sharing the wine, but it is not the reason why the tradition is communal but a mere manifestation. The collective tradition of *tagay* is primarily determined by the freshly harvested *tuba* and other regional wines existing among Indigenous Filipinos in the absence of *bahalina* and distilled spirits. Suppose that *alak* or distilled spirits and *bahalina* had been produced in prehistoric era Philippines, the communal culture of *tagay* would still emerge because *alak* and *bahalina* are produced only in a few provinces.

The Concept of Distributive Justice in Tagay

Contrary to Beverly Sarza's analysis, I find a distinct notion of distributive justice in the Filipino social drinking tradition. It is not only distinct from Sarza's analysis but also distinct from most Western

¹¹² Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 2007.

and contemporary Filipino concepts of equality and fairness. To prove this assertion, let me answer the second research concern of this paper, "How does the Filipino tradition of *tagay* embrace and embody the notion of Distributive Justice?" A very important aspect of *tagay* is the use of one shared cup which, according to Omamalin, unifies the Filipino social drinking tradition.¹¹³ He further writes that *tagay* is a Filipino variant of social drinking.¹¹⁴ This highlights the uniqueness of the tradition. Filipino drinkers have a notion of justice in their drinking tradition and Sarza correctly assumes that the purpose of the use of one cup is to distribute the wine fairly.¹¹⁵ That is, to be fair, there must be one measuring device. In *tagay*, the metric is the one shared cup. Another important aspect of the tradition is the *tangero*, the person responsible for pouring and distributing the wine all throughout the duration of the session.¹¹⁶ He or she ensures the fair distribution of the wine and that everyone drinks the same amount of wine in every certain period. This practice mitigates or lessens the possibility of any session member passing out before the others. The end of the session due to excessive consumption of alcohol also implies the end of another crucial aspect of *tagay*, the discourse and sharing of knowledge, ideas, skills, humor, and bragging [*tikal*]. *Tangero* then is the key not only to a successful drinking session but also to a successful free exchange of knowledge.

There is no clear criterion for the qualification of *tangero*, it appears, however, that a *tangero* is a servant, and like all sorts of servants with given responsibilities and privileges, *tangeros* are prone to misuse their roles or should we say power. Abusive and corrupt *tangeros* could decide who gets drunk first for whatever purposes it may serve them. If *tangeros* can be likened to a government that has the role in ensuring the fair distribution of goods and burdens to every member, like a government, *tangeros* are not selfless members of the drinking session as opposed to Beverly Sarza's observations.¹¹⁷ If we agree with Sarza's analogy of a *tangero* to the government, then she is again mistaken in her claim that as a government the *tangero* ensures

¹¹³ Jamaal S. Omamalin, "Tagay ta, Bai!: The Social Dynamics of Filipino Social Drinking," *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 5:3, (July-September 2022).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 2007.

¹¹⁶ Lasco, Tagay, 2015.

¹¹⁷ Sarza, "Isang Tagay Para sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 2007.

fairness, because if the *tangero* is a Filipino government, then it most likely is prone to corruption and selfishness.

It is generally observed that *tangeros* skip shots or drink and Sarza claims it is a selfless act.¹¹⁸ However, in general, the act is condemned and is considered unfair. In *tagay*, drinking one's share of wine is both a right and a responsibility. In Central Luzon, the person about to drink must even say *na'ay po* which means "Here is my drink."¹¹⁹ This informs everybody that he or she already drinks his or her share. In some specific social drinking rules in Cordillera, anyone who does not drink his or her *tagay* or 'shot' is also discouraged from eating 'pulutan'¹²⁰. The cheating *tangero* could use multiple ways to skip a round or 'shot.' They may pretend to drink from an empty cup or delay the cup in their possession and then give the shot to the person next to them. The other members can also be observed cheating in *tagay* by secretly pouring their wine on the ground and pretending to drink from an empty cup. Some others cheat by passing the cup to the person next to them on the pretext of helping the *tangero* make the cup reach the next drinker. All these deceptive tactics occur and could easily be performed if everyone is already a bit intoxicated. Hence, unlike the Western notion of distributive justice, the people who have committed crimes against the norm of *tagay* are not those who consumed more than the number of their shares but those who consumed less than what they should have drunk. And contrary to Sarza's analysis of *tagay*, those who skip their shots, even *tangeros*, are considered cheaters. Thus, under *tagay*'s verbal code of conduct, taking one's share should be enforced. It is every member's responsibility to drink their share of wine.

Masculinity is one of the possible factors why a certain member skips a round. Certain people, not only men, take pride in outlasting everyone else in the session creating the impression that they cannot easily get drunk symbolizing that they are the strongest and the most resilient among every other member, such a reputation has been enjoyed. Intentionally skipping a shot, especially in secret, is

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ "Pinas Sarap: Paano ginagawa ang lambanog?" *YouTube*. GMA and Public Affairs, (12 May 2017).

¹²⁰ *Pulutan* is the Filipino equivalent to the Spanish *tapas*, it is anything that can be eaten while drinking, usually pieces of meat or snacks like crackers. The term is taken from a Tagalog word '*pulot*' which means to pick up.

considered cheating, and cheating in *tagay* then is a means of self-preservation which is in some sense selfish. In the Philippine post-colonial society, cheating during *tagay* sessions is not necessarily punished but if one is given a shot, refusing could be considered disrespectful. These unwritten rules in *tagay* create an impression that it is one's responsibility and not only a right to get one's share. It appears that it is one's obligation to take his/her share of wine and not just a right. Furthermore, when the group decides to give a cup of wine or shot to a stranger, it implies that the stranger is welcome and considered one among them (*ato ni bai*). Filipinos in various regions indeed identify people that belong to them and those that don't. This way of thinking has been observed also by Maboloc in his article *Chantal Mouffe's Radical Democracy and Rodrigo Duterte's Radical Politics: A Second Reply to Critics*, where he describes President Duterte's rise to power as a manifestation of communal identity in Filipino thought, "Ato ni bai!" as the battle-cry of the Bisayan supporters of Duterte.¹²¹

The stranger can drink in the same cup they drink with as they trust that the stranger will not do any harm such as poisoning them or inflicting any form of physical abuse when everyone is drunk. In this sense, the concept of justice among Filipinos in *tagay* does not only differ greatly from the Western notion of distributive justice prevalent in contemporary Filipino culture today but is also closely intertwined with their values of camaraderie, belongingness, trust, and respect.

The code of conduct in *tagay* also encompasses the recognition of individual limits on alcohol consumption. In this regard, the application of John Rawls' maximin principle may be relevant. Individuals who become intoxicated earlier are granted certain privileges such as skipping rounds, taking naps, or even leaving the session for good. However, this privilege is limited to the latter part of the session, once it is presumed that everyone has consumed enough wine. Moreover, in cases where a buddy is not inclined to drink on a specific day, he or she may still consume at least one round as a gesture of respect implying that a single shot is sufficient to showcase camaraderie. Sick buddies are not even always free from the code as some of his or her buddies may still persuade him or her.

¹²¹ Christopher Ryan B. Maboloc, "Chantal Mouffe's Radical Democracy and Rodrigo Duterte's Radical Politics," *Aradman Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, Vol. 3:1, April 2024, 6.

Somehow, the idea that we unveil from the social dimension of *tagay* can be likened to a society struggling to survive and in constant confrontation with various threats such as rival tribes, brute animals, and nature itself. This sort of society needed each member not only to protect each other but also to generate new members of the tribe if the tribe was to survive. Everyone takes care of each other as everyone is important. Hence, in this sense, taking one's share is an affirmation of one's allegiance and loyalty to the tribe. Consequently, it is disrespectful and rude not to take one's share of goods and perhaps an indication of treason. Only in this sort of society can we observe distributive justice by which goods are forcibly given to whom it is due, and refusing to receive the goods could have serious implications and consequences. Refusal to take a shot in *tagay* could mean disrespect, just as refusing to receive the goods owed to one could be seen as disloyalty to certain primitive societies.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Leonardo Mercado's two complementary methods have the potential to unearth the minds and thoughts of our pre-historic ancestors through surviving indigenous Filipino language and traditions. It could also be asserted that *tagay* is a pre-historic and pre-colonial tradition because of its unique notion of justice which cannot be found in Western and today's Philippine society. The concept of justice in *tagay* indicates that long before the Spanish occupation of the Philippines, the Filipino people already had their own thoughts of justice, in fact, a unique notion of justice free from Western lenses.

In the latter part of the Filipino drinking session especially when the members have consumed a considerable amount of wine, John Rawls' maximin principle could be applied. However, it does not follow that this principle of Rawls captures entirely the notion of distributive justice in *tagay*. In this tradition, the receiver of the goods must accept the goods or be condemned for being disrespectful and for its lack of camaraderie. Wine must have been considered goods and never burdens because society intentionally produces goods only. However, it seems that wine is the only good that is forcibly distributed like social burden, this is the uniqueness of the Filipino concept of justice in *tagay* or perhaps in Indigenous Filipino thought.

This paper may not be able to concretely demonstrate that Filipino indigenous thought is collectivist nor is it contrary as the tradition of *tagay* is not enough to demonstrate the entirety of Filipino thought. However, I am convinced that Filipino traditions, like *tagay*, could disclose certain native Filipino thoughts.

Opposite to Beverly Sarza's claim that the communal nature of *tagay* is determined by the communal Indigenous Filipino culture, this paper found out that the determining factor of the communal nature of *tagay* is the type and quality of Indigenous wines being commonly consumed in various regions in the Philippines. This suggests, however, that the indigenous Filipino thought is determined by the indigenous environmental and social conditions. In addition, Sarza's assertion that Indigenous Filipino communal culture is revealed in *tagay* is a premature conclusion. The relation of these two factors cannot be established in this paper although it is not definitively denied as well. This paper neither denies that *tagay* is communal by nature nor that the Indigenous Filipino culture is communal. What is denied is the claim that the communal culture of *tagay* is determined by the indigenous Filipino communal culture. In this research, it is asserted that the Filipino social drinking tradition is shaped by Filipino indigenous wines. What can also be established is the fact that interactions between regions and different tribes in the archipelago must have occurred before the colonial era to share similar or the same social drinking tradition, hence the same or similar wines, even before the Spanish occupation of the archipelago we now call as the Philippines.

In this analysis of the Filipino social drinking tradition, it could also be established that *tagay* has a unique notion of justice that does not exist in Westernized modern Philippine society. The use of one cup in *tagay* ensures equal distribution of wine and it suggests that the ancient "Filipinos" could not produce two cups of the same sizes, or they could not even probably produce standardized measurements. Based on the data being gathered in this paper, we could also assert that the consumption of the different types of wines in various regions and islands in the archipelago, the tradition of *tagay*, and the unique concept of fairness are significant if we are to explore Filipino identity.

Finally, if the communal culture of *tagay* is determined by Filipino Indigenous wines, then, we may also ask, 'What determines the communal culture of Indigenous Filipinos?' Was it the social

environment that our ancestors lived in, the food they ate, or the tribal enemies they had? Most importantly, could it be a source of national pride? I think the answers to these questions are vital if we seek to unearth a few fragments of Filipino identity. However, this is beyond the scope of this paper, and it is suggested that another research project will deal with this problem.

These findings may not be that helpful to Leonardo Mercado's effort to identify commonalities among Filipinos which can form Filipino philosophy as interpreted by Emmanuel Batoon.¹²² This is because the findings of this research cannot establish the connection between the communal culture of Indigenous Filipinos and the communal culture of *tagay*. Native alcoholic drinks around the world typically start with fermentation thousands of years before distillation techniques. This observation may help explain the prevalence of communal drinking traditions among indigenous cultures in various regions worldwide. Hence, even modern societies perceived to have individualist cultures may still have communal drinking traditions. Thus, the communal culture of *tagay* does not necessarily suggest that the ancient Filipino thought was communal by nature as well. Whether the concept of justice in *tagay* represents the indigenous Filipino thought or not cannot be decisively confirmed in this paper though this is an interesting question to ask as well. However, following Mercado's framework, it theoretically must. It is recommended to conduct separate research to address these gaps.

Furthermore, discourse in *tagay* could be a very important research subject but it is beyond the scope of this paper. Thus, it is suggested that it may be thoroughly examined in a separate research endeavor. And lastly, the evolution of *tagay* from pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras in the Philippines is another research subject worthy of consideration. In addition to the evolution of *tagay*, the gathering of Filipino philosophers can be another important subject of scrutiny. There are whom many consider Filipino philosophers who used to drink and philosophize with fellow drinkers and later became inspired to produce a 'philosophy'. Here, one can think of the existentialists gathering to converse in cafes in France and pragmatists in beer pubs in America.

¹²² Emmanuel D. Batoon, "A Tribute to Leonardo N. Mercado, SVD: His Legacy to the Filipino Nation," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 14:2 (December 2020), 1-5.

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