

Featured Article

## From Exclusion to Inclusion: The Case of Filipino Women Philosophers

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**Abstract:** I argue in this article that, apart from foreign women philosophers, Filipino women philosophers also deserve due recognition. Moreover, I advocate for the inclusion of the works of Filipino women philosophers in the canon of writings required to philosophy students, alongside the works of Filipino male philosophers. I, first, discuss the general exclusion of women philosophers in the history of philosophy, emphasizing some biases against the works of these women. I, then, turn to the case of rather unsung Filipino women philosophers who are pioneers in their fields. I provide my preliminary notes on the interesting contributions of Magdelana Villaba, Josephine Pasricha, Narcisa Paredes-Canilao, and Mary John Mananzan. The aim of this article is not to be exhaustive, but, rather, to encourage conversation that will hopefully change the terrain of Filipino philosophy.

**Keywords:** Filipino women philosophers, Filipino philosophy, philosophy curriculum in the Philippines, gender in philosophy

*“Somewhere, in the deep recesses of the Himalayas, a flower blooms for the Filipino women, subjectively and consciously.”*  
—Josephine Pasricha<sup>1</sup>

Looking at the current approved course plans for General Education (GE) in the Department of Philosophy of the University of Sant Tomas (UST), the limited number of women philosophers included in the lists of readings is noticeable. Often only Simone de Beauvoir, Philippa Foot, Hannah Arendt, Gayatri Spivak, Onora O’Neil, Kristina Korsgard, Mary Midgeley, Eleanore Stump, and Luce Irigaray are included. Moreover, these

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<sup>1</sup> Josephine Pasricha, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines: Rereading the Canon through Feminism,” in *Karunungan: A Journal of Philosophy*, 21 (2004), 82.

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women thinkers are discussed only towards the end of the semester where only one or two are included if only to honor the fact that ethical issues on gender and women's rights are part of the syllabus. Given the present circumstances in the country where classes are suspended due to natural calamities and public holidays, there is always the possibility that the thinkers placed at end of the course outline will not be covered.

In terms of course offerings, Feminism as a course was not offered in the undergraduate level until the first semester of academic year 2022–2023. This was made possible because a more flexible curriculum was implemented. The new curriculum includes elective units that can be utilized in offering non-traditional philosophy courses. In 2004, A Feminist Reading of Theology of the Body was offered by Josephine Pasricha at the UST Graduate School. Then in 2012, although there was an attempt to offer another graduate course on feminism, the male professor spent more time discussing Plato instead of the feminists. More recently, in 2020, the graduate course Women and Phenomenology: Conrad-Martius, Stein, and Arendt was offered by Gina Opiniano. Moreover, Opiniano did her best to include more women thinkers in her undergraduate course on Ancient and Medieval Philosophy. For instance, she included in the reading list the works of The Pythagoreans, Aspasia, Diotima of Mantinea, Arete, Hipparchia, Pamphile, Epicurean Women, The Stoic Logicians, and Hypatia.

Admittedly, the above attempts are noticeable developments, but not radical enough to shift the philosophical terrain in the country. Through technology, materials are made readily available. As such, access to the writings of women philosophers should prompt an increase in their readership and acceptance. Inasmuch as women philosophers also write on mainstream philosophical areas, I strongly think that GE courses should include the writings of Sonia Kruks (existentialism), Carol Gilligan (care ethics), Martha Nussbaum (ethics), Nancy Fraser (critical theory), Iris Marion Young (theory of justice and political philosophy), Sally Haslanger (epistemology, metaphysics, political philosophy), Andrea Nye (philosophy of language), Marilyn Friedman (cultural diversity and feminism), Sandra Bartky (body politics), Maria Lugones (gender, race, colonialism), Sarrah Ruddick (feminist ethics), Linda Martin Alcoff (epistemology), Miranda Fricker (ethics and epistemology), and Rae Langton (social justice), to name a few. Emerita Quito's article "What is Philosophy?"<sup>2</sup> is a good material for introductory discussion.

The old view that philosophy is a man's world needs critical reevaluation, as a revisitation of the history of ideas reveal otherwise. The truth

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<sup>2</sup> Emerita Quito, "What Is Philosophy?," in *Karunungan: A Journal of Philosophy*, 15 (1998), 28–45.

is that women have profoundly contributed to the development of ideas and, unfortunately, were left at the sidelines just because society decided on the dominance of only one gender. This wrong assumption about philosophy must be questioned and it is imperative among us academic philosophers that more gender inclusive course plans should be used.

### The Exclusion of Women Philosophers

In this section, I will present how women philosophers were excluded from mainstream philosophy and how their works were ignored because of the language and writing style that they have employed.

In a case study, Sara Protasi addresses the challenges one might experience in teaching ancient women philosophers.<sup>3</sup> She notes that “we know that there were women in ancient philosophical schools, and most of those unnamed and unknown women have been all forgotten until very recently.”<sup>4</sup>

Mary Ellen Waithe’s *History of Women Philosophers*<sup>5</sup> published in 1987 provides an extensive list of women thinkers like Theano, Myia, Damo, Arignote, Perictione, Melissa, Phintys, Aspasia, Diotima, Arete, Hipparchia, Pamphile, Leontione, Menexene, Argeia, Theognis, Artemisia, Pantalcea, and Hypatia. We also have Asclepigenia, Asiotea, Cleobulina, Lasthenia, Julia Domna, and Macrina.<sup>6</sup> How many of these thinkers are we familiar with? How many of their works do we have access to?

Protasi notes that some of these thinkers were talked about not because of the significance of their works but because of their romantic relations with male scholars. Moreover, there is a reluctance to discuss their ideas in class because sources are not readily available or the authenticity of materials at hand are questionable. Sometime women thinkers are construed as fictional. Protasi also argues that “when it comes to women philosophers, then, skepticism verging on outright denial has for a long time been the default attitude.”<sup>7</sup> These women thinkers are believed to have taught in traditional philosophical schools presumably on orthodox topics and following established methods. This is evidenced by the treatises they wrote,

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<sup>3</sup> Sara Protasi, “Teaching Ancient Women Philosophers: A Case Study,” in *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*, 6:3 (2020), <<https://doi.org/10.5206/fpq/2020.3.8437>>.

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

<sup>5</sup> Mary Ellen Waithe, *History of Women Philosophers* (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987). Waithe published five volumes of *History of Women Philosophers* from 600 BC to 1900. This voluminous book is a good source for those who are uninitiated in the works of women philosophers.

<sup>6</sup> Protasi, “Teaching Ancient Women Philosophers,” 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

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one of which is Phintys's "On the Moderation of Women." Their works are comparable to their male counterparts, like "Aesara's conception of the soul, which is very similar to Plato's but differs in linking kindness and love."<sup>8</sup>

The works of ancient women philosophers have been devalued even by contemporary scholars. In Protasi's work, she notes Peter Adamson's view that Aspasia is a "controversial historical figure who attracted extreme views: she was hated and despised by Pericles's political adversaries, who mocked her as a prostitute."<sup>9</sup> Protasi observes that Adamson's work "falls prey to the default skepticism toward ancient philosophers."<sup>10</sup>

There may be a dearth of resources and scholars willing to take on the challenge of teaching ancient women philosophers, but at least, as Protasi notes, there is a gaining traction, and it is becoming accepted in mainstream philosophy.

It is not just ancient women philosophers who are excluded but also modern and contemporary women philosophers. If we look at the commonly used course plans on modern to contemporary philosophy, we will find the canons by male thinkers but there is no representation of women thinkers who corresponded with and influenced them. Elizabeth of Bohemia's correspondence with Descartes, for example, might have urged Descartes to further clarify his concept of dualism. Ann Conway's take on monadology has influenced Leibniz, but her works are hardly mentioned. Germaine de Staël's take on the new science can be read alongside Kant's transcendental philosophy. Lou Salome and Rosa Luxemburg can also be part of the usual reading list.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, Margaret Atherton notes that we have an impression that during the modern period, only men were philosophers. This is because "majority of the works of women have not been republished since they were originally written, and they can be found only in a few research libraries or on microfilm."<sup>12</sup> And so, we raise the same question that Protasi asks: "whether they are commensurable at all and whether those who wrote about 'womanly' matters in 'womanly' ways did philosophy at all"<sup>13</sup> and "what qualifies as philosophy and relatedly what qualifies as teaching introduction to philosophy."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret Atherton, *Women Philosophers of the Early and Modern Period* (USA: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Protasi, "Teaching Ancient Women Philosophers," 7.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

This phenomenon was also explained by Manon Garcia in her book, *We Are Not Born Submissive: How Patriarchy Shapes Women's Lives*, where she talks about the silencing of the oppressed. Women in philosophy are assumed to be less intelligent than their male counterparts.<sup>15</sup> This is evidenced by our preference to read/teach the male thinker instead of the female thinker who offers the same idea; often, male resource persons are invited to speak in conferences instead of women who also specialize in the same fields. All these actions invalidate women's capacity to reason.

Rae Langton describes feminist epistemology as "epistemology aware of its own feminist implications."<sup>16</sup> Langton emphasizes that there are two strands of feminist contribution to epistemology, that is, to "show how, when it comes to knowledge, women get left out" and "to show how, when it comes to knowledge, women get hurt."<sup>17</sup> She adds that women's lives are left out by certain bodies of knowledge. Women are not acknowledged in history, her unpaid labor is not discussed in economics, and male-only samples are the ones used in studies in medicine. In philosophy, there is an assumption that women are not rational.<sup>18</sup> To a certain degree, woman's confidence is also an issue. There are instances that "she knows but she does not know that she knows, and therefore does not know."<sup>19</sup> This happens because of her condition: there are barriers to knowledge. This can be addressed by working on women's education and literacy and by changing the discriminatory attitude that excludes them from fields of knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

What women know about the world fails to enter this official story about life, the universe and everything, and the incompleteness and partiality of the story goes unnoticed. So even when women do achieve knowledge—do break free from various material and conceptual constraints on knowledge described above—their knowledge may fail to look like knowledge to men, so that women, again, fail to be counted as knowers.

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<sup>15</sup> Manon Garcia, *We Are Not Born Submissive: How Patriarchy Shapes Women's Lives* (UK: Princeton University Press, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> Rae Langton, "Feminist Epistemology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, ed. by Miranda Fricker and Jennifer Hornsby (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 129.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

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Seen this way, one goal of feminism is to correct the impartiality of existing knowledge.<sup>21</sup>

These discussions just show us that women are conditioned to view themselves as being incapable of knowledge which results in their inability to visualize themselves as knowers. This also bars them from producing new forms of knowledge.

In relation to the foregoing issues, we can also say that the philosophical quality of women's writing has been perpetually questioned whether they are philosophical enough to merit recognition. The work of Catherine Beecher is an example.<sup>22</sup> In the analysis written by Catherine Villanueva Gardner, she notes that Beecher was neglected as a philosopher because of "the apparent non-philosophical forms of some of her work."<sup>23</sup> Beecher intended it to be that way because she wanted her writings to be more accessible to more women. She wanted women to be empowered by her writings.

Aside from the philosophical essays, Beecher also wrote manuals and letters for women. She wrote this in a language that women during her time can understand. It is for this reason that she was remembered not as a philosopher but as the founder of the discipline of home economics.<sup>24</sup> Gardner argues that these manuals and letters on domestic economy are also philosophical.<sup>25</sup> Gardner notes that "Beecher's entrance into mainstream tradition comes at a price of ignoring the significance of the role of women in her philosophy for our feminist heritage and neglecting her non-philosophical works: her domestic advice and manuals."<sup>26</sup>

Gardner suggests a reconsideration of philosophical domains and the inclusion of audiences ignored in traditional philosophical discourse.<sup>27</sup> Gardner suggests that we must look for family resemblances which means being flexible with the "notion of what philosophy is and recognize that our disciplinary boundaries may be expanded as we add more philosophers to the canon."<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the mainstream philosophical and historical

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>22</sup> Catherine Villanueva Gardner, *Empowerment and Interconnectivity: Toward a Feminist History of Utilitarian Philosophy* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

approaches are not the problem but the male-dominant philosophical background that frames it.<sup>29</sup>

Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, quoting Virginia Valian, notes that there is a crucial dimension in the problem of women exclusion, that is, a “cultural tendency to rate man’s achievements more highly than those of women.”<sup>30</sup> Hutchison and Jenkins note:

If women continue to be underrepresented in philosophy, the situation is even more dire for a range of minority groups in a discipline that, despite its claims to speak on behalf of humanity, in fact speaks with a voice composed primarily from white, middle-class, and masculine sources.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Case of Women Pioneers of Philosophy in the Philippines**

Filipino philosophy is usually presented in two ways. First is the ethno-linguistic method popularized by Leonardo Mercado and Florentino Timbreza. Second is the idea of philosophy propounded by Emerita Quito, Alfredo Co, Romualdo Abulad, and Josephine Pasricha who think that as long as there are Filipinos philosophizing, the body of knowledge that they produce is considered as Filipino philosophy. Mercado and Timbreza, both spoke of the importance of language in developing Filipino philosophy. Both turned to various Filipino experiences to prove that Filipino philosophy exists. Meanwhile, Abulad believed that while their generation may not have yet produced a revolutionary idea that could equal the works of our other Eastern and Western counterparts, he was hopeful that in the future, there will be someone whose work will be recognized globally.<sup>32</sup>

While certain organizations recognize the contributions of these pioneers in Filipino philosophizing, these organizations have left out thinkers who are also worthy of recognition. In October 2012, the Philosophical Association of the Philippines organized the “Legacy Lectures: Engaging Our Philosophical Pioneers.” They included Abulad, Co, Mercado, Timbreza, and Quito, as well as Manuel Dy, Jr., Leovino Garcia, Florentino Hornedo, Roque Ferriols, Julius Mendoza, Zosimo Lee, Ramon Reyes, and Amable Tuibeo. In November 2018, the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, in partnership

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>30</sup> Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Romualdo Abulad, “Kant for Filipinos,” in *Sophia*, 16:2 (1986), 53.



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with the Philosophical Association of the Philippines, organized a similar conference with the theme “The State of Philosophy in the Philippines,” where they highlighted the contributions of Abulad, Co, Dy, Timbreza, and Tuibeo. What was strikingly evident was that, in both events, majority of those who were celebrated were male Filipino philosophers.

How do we consider one to be a pioneer? Do we just simply count the number of their publications? The depth of their publication? Do we look into the years of their service? The university where they took their PhDs? The number of students they mentored? Because if these are our qualifications, then I am sure that the women thinkers are more than qualified. For instance, Pasricha was a pioneer in Indian philosophy and feminism. Moreover, Villaba was a pioneer in Eastern philosophy. The work of Narcisa Paredes-Canilao is also worth mentioning since she has been working on the development of Filipino philosophy, particularly Ilokano philosophy since the 1990s. Sr. Mary John Mananzan was also a pioneer of feminism, as evidenced by the articles she published and the advocacy projects that she is a part of.

In her article, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines: Rereading the Canon through Feminism,” Pasricha argues that “for both women philosopher and feminist philosopher in the Philippines ... [they] have been taught and educated, by mostly male philosophy professors,”<sup>33</sup> and for her, “[o]nly one brilliant woman philosopher stands tall in our midst, and that is Emerita Quito.”<sup>34</sup> Pasricha, however, questions whether Quito was doing philosophy from a female’s voice or a male’s voice, since “[l]ike most of us Filipino women doing philosophy, [Quito’s writing] is rather a male voice-essentially based on reason, logic and system.”<sup>35</sup>

Pasricha’s generation might be a generation of forgotten Filipina philosophers. We can observe that young philosophy majors are only exposed to the scholarship of male philosophers from this generation. Like their Western counterparts, the works of these Filipina philosophers have been brushed off as second rate. The depth of their scholarship has always been doubted. For example, the length of Quito’s *Festschrift* was once mocked because it is comprised of only one volume. Villaba’s writings on Eastern philosophy is largely ignored.

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<sup>33</sup> Pasricha, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines,” 73.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*



## Preliminary Notes on Some Contributions of Filipino Women Philosophers

In the following I wish to present a brief survey of the rather unsung contributions of Villaba, Pasricha, Paredes-Canilao, and Mananzan. Villaba was a philosophy professor at UST. She was the first lay woman Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Letters and the UST Graduate School. Most of her published articles are expository accounts of the Eastern philosophical tradition, Indian and Chinese. She has inspired a good number of female philosophy students to take further studies in philosophy. But while her students know Villaba as an expert on Eastern philosophy, they are less familiar with her feminist ideas. For instance, her work *The Mission of Women: A Return to their Origin*,<sup>36</sup> was delivered during the opening ceremonies of the academic year 1975–1976 and published as a monograph, is not widely read. For Villaba, the United Nations would not proclaim 1975 as the year of woman if not because of “the thunderous appeal of 61% of the world’s population—the women.”<sup>37</sup> Villaba traces the origin of the term *babae*. She notes that *babae* came from the term *sibabay*, a shortened term for “*silang mabababa*,” which is in contrast to the term *lalaki* from the term *silalak*, short for “*silang malalaki*.”<sup>38</sup> This distinction maintains the low stature of women in the society: “low in physical resistance, low in social status, low in mentality, low in everything.”<sup>39</sup> Villaba then revisited the role of women in the society and insists that “the attitude of the Catholic Church was remarkable for insisting upon the absolute equal individual responsibility for men and women.”<sup>40</sup> She adds that there is equality in terms of men’s and women’s freedom and spirituality.<sup>41</sup> Moving forward, she emphasizes the important role that women played to make men successful. She notes that Pericles would not have succeeded without Aspasia. Mohandas Gandhi would not have been Mahatma if it were not for his mother Putlibai. Jose Rizal would not have been a hero without his mother Teodora Alonso. “Examples can be multiplied but what is significant is the fact that many times women played the substratum role; men, the accidental role. Well, accidents can be seen; the substratum can only be gleaned.”<sup>42</sup> Yet, what are celebrated are the triumphs

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<sup>36</sup> Magdalena Villaba, *The Mission of Women: A Return to Their Original Role* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1975).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

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of men, while the important role that women play are brushed aside. We do not see how their mothers sacrifice themselves, how their wives give up so much of themselves to let their husbands grow and flourish — all these are not seen, only gleaned. Villaba circles back to the idea that men and women are not competitors; they complement each other. It is only through our culture that inequality and injustice happen.

Pasricha was also a philosophy professor at the UST. From 1976 to 1977, she was a Ford Foundation fellow at the University of Delhi, where she studied Oriental Aesthetics and Philosophy. In 2000, she finished her Doctorate in Philosophy (summa cum laude) in UST with a dissertation titled, “A Hermeneutic Translation in Filipino and Gadamerian Meditation of the Indian Epic *Ramayana*.” As a renowned Indologist, she later edited Marvin Reyes and Paz Panganiban’s Filipino translation of the *Kama Sutra*.<sup>43</sup>

The themes of Pasricha’s early works include Indian philosophy, East–West comparative philosophy, aesthetics, and feminism. In the early 2000s she started working on the philosophy of Karol Wojtyla. She published two books on Wojtyla: *The Future Is Love and Marriage*,<sup>44</sup> which is based on Wojtyla’s *Love and Responsibility* and *Theology of the Body*, and *Is God Homophobic?: Rediscovering the Writings of John Paul II*, which talks about the relevance of Wojtyla’s philosophy.<sup>45</sup> She also taught Feminism and Theology of the Body at the UST Graduate School in 2004.

In “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines,”<sup>46</sup> she argues that “there is no culturally safe space that Filipino women doing Philosophy can enter to find the true self, unconditioned self in its original nature and pure subjectivity in the Philippines.”<sup>47</sup> To some extent, this remains true today. The tendency, according to Pasricha, is for women philosophers to collectively create spaces where they could be themselves—that is, as women philosophizing. She points out that, being trained by predominantly male mentors, women philosophers still have to struggle with the very tradition they were brought up in. Pasricha calls this *negative canon formation*.<sup>48</sup> In agreement with Waithe, Pasricha suggests that “the canons of the

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<sup>43</sup> See also Marella Ada V. Mancenido-Bolaños and Darlene Demandante, “Women and Philosophy: An Initial Move Towards a More Inclusive Practice in the Philippine Context,” in *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 14:1 (June 2020), 9, <<https://www.doi.org/10.25138/14.1.e.1>> .

<sup>44</sup> Josephine Acosta Pasricha, *Wojtyla: The Future Is Love and Marriage*, on Kindle Scribes, June 1, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> Josephine Acosta Pasricha, *Is God Homophobic? Rediscovering the Writings of Pope John Paul II*, on Kindle Scribe, January 2014.

<sup>46</sup> Pasricha, “Doing Philosophy in the Philippines.”

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

philosophical greats must include women.”<sup>49</sup> She points out that the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*<sup>50</sup> edited by Paul Edwards contains nine hundred philosophers but does not include even the three most known women philosophers: Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, and Hannah Arendt. She suggests that one way to address this is through the “retrieval of women philosophers for the historical record; another has been the elevation to the canon of the greats of women philosophers: Mary Wollstonecraft Hannah Arendt, and Simone de Beauvoir.”<sup>51</sup>

Another Filipina thinker that, I think, is worthy of attention is Paredes-Canilao. She is a Philosophy professor at the University of Philippines, Baguio. Her research interests include critical discourse studies, postcolonial studies, and Indigenous knowledge. Some of her publications focused on *sikolohiyang Pilipino*, feminism, critical pedagogy, and decolonialization. Her article “*Sa Loob ang Kulo: Speaking the Unconscious in the Transformations of Filipino Proverbs*”<sup>52</sup> presents a deeper discussion of Filipino proverbs tied to language, psychoanalysis, and metaphorology.

While the method of Paredes-Canilao somewhat resembles the ethno-linguistic approach of the previous works of Mercado and Timbreza, hers is neither a simple juxtaposition of proverbs to Filipino experiences nor the search of equivalences between Filipino and Western proverbs. Rather, she uses the work of Damiana L. Eugenio in understanding Filipino proverbs. Through the work of Eugenio, Paredes-Canilao traces the use of proverbs in various regions in the country. She turns to different proverbs bearing the term “*kulo*” to show a kind of “boiling” from within. She then relates the term “*puno*” or being fed up to *kulo*, eventually causing “*pagkulo*” or boiling. She underscores that there is an experience of calmness before one reaches that point of *pagkulo* or *pagkapuno*. The proverbs “slow to anger, but terrible when aroused” and “beware of the anger of the patient person”<sup>53</sup> characterize what Paredes-Canilao meant by the moment of calmness before the eruption. Paredes-Canilao writes: “The notion of the piled-up, repressed or suppressed inside needing displacement is a common motif in Philippine proverbs.”<sup>54</sup> For Paredes-Canilao, these proverbs are not just talking about individuals reaching the boiling point but also about the community that ruptures

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Edwards, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (New York: McMillan Co.), 1967

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Narcisa Paredes-Canilao, “*Sa Loob ang Kulo: Speaking the Unconscious in the Transformations of a Filipino Proverb*,” in *Re(con)figuring Psychoanalysis Critical Juxtaposition of the Philosophical, the Sociohistorical, and the Political*, ed. by Aydan Gülerce (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 76–92.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

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because of repression.<sup>55</sup> This notion of boiling is “a description of the physiology of anger [which] would include rise in temperature causing the body to heat up.”<sup>56</sup> In Tagalog, we use the expression “*kumukulo ang dugo ko*”<sup>57</sup> to describe our anger or irritation towards a person or a circumstance. She adds that this “*pagkulo*” does not only refer to anger. It could also be used to characterize a kind of creativity as in “*Kaninong pakulo ito? (Whose simmering [idea] is this?)*.”<sup>58</sup> It could also refer to mischief and social unrest, sex libido, perversion, and quirks.<sup>59</sup> She stresses that these proverbs are “interesting accounts of psychosocial individuations ... individuals or communities saw themselves or projected themselves as vessels or receptacles.”<sup>60</sup> Towards the end of her discussion, she engages the works of Derrida, Lacan, and Ricoeur to understand the metaphors. She writes, “Derrida’s fixation on the metaphor to the exclusion of other figures of speech is understandably a result of his view that language is best released from the determination of intentionality and reference.”<sup>61</sup> Using Lacan’s notion of the analysand, she stresses that the “the analysand as discourse and speech act does not confine itself to language but reaches outside itself, first by intentionality, and second by reference to an experience, situation, reality, the world and to its own speaker.”<sup>62</sup>

More than a metaphor, the concept of “*kulo*” is a metonym “which contributes to restoring the bipolarity of language and the unconscious.”<sup>63</sup> What is distinct in Paredes-Canilao’s research is her use of post-structuralist and psychoanalytic concepts. Paredes-Canilao presented the cultural significance of these proverbs and its potentials in unraveling the Filipino consciousness.

Finally, Mary John Mananzan is a Benedictine nun who finished her doctorate in philosophy at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Her works focused on feminism, liberation theology, and religious studies. Leslie Ann Liwanag has categorized the themes of her works and discovered that Mananzan’s work focuses mainly on critical philosophy, Filipino worldview, values and ethics, and she has some interest in the appropriation and exposition of non-Filipino theories.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>64</sup> Leslie Ann Liwanag, “Ang Pilosopiya ni Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB,” in *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 9, no. 2 (2015), 60–62, <<https://www.doi.org/10.25138/9.2.a.11>>.

In *Woman and Religion*, Mananzan emphasizes the influence of religion women.<sup>65</sup> She points out to the fact that “the male god image, which is taken for granted in Judeo-Christian culture evolved in a certain period of history during the establishment of patriarchal monotheism,”<sup>66</sup> which, for her, is a “sharp departure from all previous consciousness.”<sup>67</sup> She argues that the Bible was attributed to men writers, interpreted and taught by men for the last two thousand years.<sup>68</sup> She adds that there is a pronounced male domination over women.<sup>69</sup> One can say that these teachings aided in convincing women that they are the weaker sex and that there is a need to submit to the more dominant sex.

Mananzan named several women who appeared in the Old Testament of the Bible that played significant roles: Deborah, Esther, Ruth, Delilah, and Thamar. Mananzan also notes that “Jesus’ treatment of women went against the accustomed attitude of the Jews.”<sup>70</sup> It is known that Jesus also chose women to be his disciples. He engaged them in discussions and included them in his mission.<sup>71</sup> For Mananzan, the ecclesiastical patriarchalization caused women to be excluded from the Church. This also led women to follow the stereotypical role exhibited in patriarchal culture.<sup>72</sup>

Inasmuch as the works of these Filipino women philosophers could be read alongside the works of Filipino male philosophers who write on Eastern thoughts, Filipino culture, and critical philosophy, it is not farfetched to suggest that they should also be included in the canon of Filipino thinkers we require our students to study. These women started their careers in the academe during the period where the educational field was occupied by men; during the time when women’s career was limited to accounting, commerce, physical education, stenotyping, office assistant, dressmaker, housemaid, saleslady.<sup>73</sup> They must have mustered so much courage to finally claim their rightful space in the society. While they have played the traditional role of supporting male intellectuals, they have, nevertheless, carved their way out and be recognized for their own achievements. Their perseverance to create

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<sup>65</sup> Mary John Mananzan, *Woman and Religion* (Manila: The Institute of Women’s Studies - St. Scholastica’s College Manila, 1988), 3–4.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Cristina Montiel and Mary Racelis Hollnsteiner, *The Filipino Woman: Her Role and Status in Philippine Society* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Institute of Philippine Culture, 1976), 24–25.

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a name for themselves have greatly influenced generations of Filipino women doing philosophy to continue the battle.

### Conclusion

The exclusion of women in philosophy in the country is still seen in the ways organizations and individuals give premium to the work of male intellectuals. Over the years, despite the important changes and increasing readership of women intellectuals, the view that philosophy is a man's world still lingers; this is perhaps the reason why there is still only few women who pursue higher studies in philosophy. Marilyn Friedman emphasizes that "there may still be good reasons to promote women's increased participation in the field of philosophy."<sup>74</sup> It is not enough to simply say that certain events are organized for the works of women and spaces are being opened up for them if our attitude towards their work remains the same. Friedman notes that despite the number of women in the field, women are still underrepresented in sheer numbers and in publications in top-ranked journals. She notes that women have participated in philosophy throughout history, yet they have received little attention and their works are not considered as important philosophical issues.<sup>75</sup> What I have shown above is just the tip of the iceberg; the rich variety of topics explored by Filipino women philosophers remain to be explored. Moreover, we also have to recognize the fact that there are young budding women scholars who are now contributing important works in various areas of philosophy—they, too, deserve our attention.<sup>76</sup>

I wish to end this article by mentioning some disclaimers. Firstly, my plea is not to replace the male dominated philosophical canon with a women-centered canon; on the contrary, I am merely advocating for the inclusion of women philosophers in the canon because their works may supplement and, perhaps, some may even exceed their male counterparts in terms of depth and sophistication. Secondly, while I am arguing for the inclusion of women

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<sup>74</sup> Marilyn Friedman, "Women in Philosophy: Why Should We Care?," in *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, ed. by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 21.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>76</sup> See Preciosa Regina De Joya, "In Search of Filipino Philosophy" (PhD thesis: National University Singapore, Singapore, 2013); Jacklyn Cleofas, "Towards a Practical and Empirically Grounded Account of Utang na Loob as a Filipino Virtue," in *Kritika Kultura*, 33/34 (2019); Mariefe Cruz, "Ang Naging Makaldag na Lakbayin: Isang Pagsipat sa Mahalagang Yugto sa Kasaysayan ng Kritikal na Pamimilosopiyang Filipino," in *Mabini Review*, 11 (2022), <<https://apps.pup.edu.ph/ojs/assets/issue/attachment/6c575005f7b3817673babb0211a230e9cf0368ac.pdf>>. See also Leslie Ann Liwanag's articles on Filipino philosophy and Sr. Mary John Mananzan.

philosophers, some readers might find this article partial to the writers I have discussed above. This is, of course, not my intention. Rather, my humble aim is simply to share my preliminary notes of some of the interesting contributions of some Filipino women philosophers. My intention is to encourage conversation and, hopefully, the public will build on my humble offering. Yes, there are more Filipino women philosophers out there who deserve our attention—but, admittedly, one short article is not enough to give them justice. Thirdly, alongside foreign women philosophers, I argue that our local women philosophers deserve to be recognized. As a Filipina doing philosophy, I will continuously be hopeful that in the future, philosophy will be more inclusive and that we work together to fill the gender gaps not just in the way we choose our teaching materials but also in our discipline. It is about time that we turn our gaze towards the contributions of Filipina women to Filipino philosophizing.

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