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The Spanish Colonial Past in the Writer's Memory: (Post)colonial Nostalgias in Enrique Fernández Lumba's *Hispanofilia Filipina*

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Abstract

History and memory are often considered as each other's antithesis. But at certain critical junctures such as the end of colonization, both become avenues for a return to the past, if only to determine how earlier times have shaped the present. In the Philippines, after independence from Spain, only the social elite continued to write in Spanish. Therefore, what the historian cannot grasp due to linguistic limitations the writer can reach through memory. This paper takes off from the psychological aspect of literary writing to analyze *Hispanofilia filipina*, an anthology of essays and poems written at a critical period in Philippine history: the transition from the Spanish to the American colonization. What stands out in the anthology is the writer's nostalgia for Spain. And so we ask, what causes the writer's desire to return to the recent colonial past? How does his nostalgia for that earlier time reflect or challenge our views of identity, the nation and the functions of memory at the end of colonization? At the conclusion of this paper, I maintain that the writer's nostalgia for Spain results in the reevaluation of the colonial past as a site for conviviality and familial bond. Furthermore, the writer's longing for Spain is due to his rejection of American rule, which he perceives as a threat to his identity as Hispanic-Malayan. The anthology then can help the modern Filipino understand the Hispanic elements that make us who we are, which is something official textbook history may fail to offer us.

Keywords

Nostalgia, memory, *hispanidad*, Spanish colonization of the Philippines, Filhispanic literature

I. Introduction

The first half of the twentieth century was for Filipinos a time of great social, political, cultural and linguistic upheavals. Spain left at the turn of the century after more than 300 years of colonial rule and was immediately replaced by the Americans, who introduced the public school system with English as the medium of instruction (Gonzalez, "Language" 2).¹ Up until then, Spanish was the language used in all levels as mandated by an education decree in 1863 (Sobritchea 71).² The sudden change in the political and, subsequently, linguistic situations of the country later unleashed a literary storm and produced an irony: the end of Spain's political power coincided with the flourishing or the Golden Age of Philippine literature written in Spanish.

Because the literature of that period had as contextual background the transition from one colonial rule to the next, it may be considered as a reaction to this rupture. The reading of these texts must then reflect on how the writers of the period viewed and represented the former and the current colonial powers. Several writers have hitherto explored similar territory. For

example, Walder thinks of the fictions of Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, V.S. Naipaul and J.M. Coetzee as representations of the “present as a place marked by a trail of survivors searching for their roots, for a home, in the ruins of history” (Walder, “Writing” 935). Similarly, Hobsbawm considers the present as “a twilight zone between history and memory” (3). The work of writers to produce literature rooted in the memories of earlier times and their relation to the present is predominantly a response to the need to represent this zone, which, according to Hobsbawm, is hard for historians to grasp (3).

In the case of the Philippines, this twilight zone is, in a literal sense, hard for historians to comprehend. The reason for this can be traced back to the colonial policies in education of both Spain and the United States. In 1863, the Spanish Crown mandated a reform in education in the Philippines, which was grounded on the teaching of Christian doctrine and the *cartilla*, a syllabic way of learning to read in Spanish (Gonzales, “Language” 2). This reform was already beginning to yield positive results in the waning years of the Spanish era: students could proceed to university (University of Santo Tomás) or to institutions in Spain for further education. However, as Gonzales recognizes, such privilege was only given to the children of the social and cultural elite or the *ilustrados* so that by the time the Americans came, only 2 to 4 percent of the population or six million became fluent in Spanish (“Language” 2). English, however, would follow a different trajectory, owing to the fact that it was introduced as the medium of instruction in what Gonzales deems “one of the most positive and enduring innovations brought by the American colonial government... the public school system” (“The Legacy” 91). For Constantino, English as medium of instruction became an instrument of colonial policy: the population experienced a shift in language and ethos and English would later become “the wedge that separated Filipinos from their past” (181). This means that the writing of history over the past century is ascribed to the generation of historians educated within the framework of such American inculturation so that the gap between the 377 years of Spanish occupation and the historian writing about that era, more than temporal, is essentially linguistic. As Medina argues, to write about the Fil-hispanic cultural convergence, which represents a substantial chunk of Philippine history, without knowledge of the language and way of life of this historical process would inevitably and sadly result in the transmission of a “historical image” that lacks both profundity and cultural sensibility (n.p.). It is to bridge this gap that we turn to writers who could offer us, in Medina’s words, *una mirada alternativa*, an alternate look at history through the artist, in this context, the writers of the Golden Age.

A common ground on which we can analyze the complexities of the interplay between history and memory is nostalgia. This is especially true at critical junctures such as the end of

colonization followed by intense social change. According to Walder, nostalgia transcends national and historical as well as personal boundaries, but notably, “it is a facet of memory that has a special resonance for those of us entangled by the long histories of colonialism and decolonization” (“Writing” 935). On the topic of memory at certain historical moments, Pierre Nora says that it is selective (8). If it is so, then a specific group of individuals for whom are valuable particular pasts should be distinguishable. This is because writers demonstrate their unity in the thematic content of their works, as well as in the way they describe and highlight particular people and ideals. As Maurice Halbwachs suggests, memory is always attributed to a collective entity: “a person remembers only by situating himself within the viewpoint of one or several groups and one or several currents of collective thought” (33).

In this paper, what interests me is the group composed of Filipino writers in Spanish during the American occupation, writers caught between the cultural and linguistic entanglements of the recent past and the tumultuous present. I argue that their collective nostalgia functions to redefine the Spanish era in the Philippines, historically a colonial past, as a response to—and in rejection of—the American occupation. Furthermore, I maintain that such a process of reconstructing the remembered past entails revaluations of identity, memory and the end of colonization. The corpus under study in this paper is *Hispanofilia filipina* by Enrique Fernández Lumba. In particular, this paper seeks to address the following questions. How does the writer’s nostalgia operate to convey his sentiments and viewpoints, as well as evaluate and criticize the context in which he produced his work? Second, how does nostalgia function to promote an alternative view of the Spanish colonial past? Third, how does the use of nostalgia in the anthology reflect or challenge longstanding views of identity formation, the nation and the functions of memory at the end of colonization?

II. The Golden Age of Philippine Literature in Spanish

According to Alinea, the Golden Age of Philippine Literature in Spanish encompasses the years between 1903 and 1942. Literary works then were, in response to the shift in the dominant political power, “conciliatory in tone” (Alinea 511). Meanwhile, de la Peña says that the Golden Age corresponds to the years between 1898, marked by the culmination of the Philippine Revolution, and 1941 (“Revisiting” 119). Despite the difference in the starting and ending years of the Golden Age as determined by these two scholars, that this period covered the first four decades of the twentieth century, commencing at the conclusion of the Spanish era and lasting throughout the American occupation is an assessment that is largely unquestioned.

The literary figures who belonged to the Golden Age were those born between 1870 and 1900, at the twilight of the Spanish occupation when the education reforms of 1863 were beginning to bear fruit and opportunities for young writers to express themselves were at hand (Mariñas 51).³ The result of such artistic liberty and freedom of expression was a voluminous literary output disseminated by newspapers such as *El Debate*, *La Vanguardia* and *El Renacimiento*. These newspapers played a vital role in promoting the continuity of Spanish as official language of the Philippines. Worthy of note is *El Renacimiento*, whose editors were mostly Hispanists who opposed the policies of William Howard Taft, the first civilian governor-general of the Philippines and later, president of the United States (Cano 397).

Apart from this, the Premio Zóbel was initiated in 1922 by Enrique Zóbel de Ayala to honor the best in works in Spanish in the country. The writers of the period cultivated both prose and poetry: Antonio Abad, who won the Premio Zóbel in 1929 for his novel *La oveja de Nathán*, the poets Cecilio Apóstol (*Pentélicas*), Jesús Balmori (*Rimas malayas*), Manuel Bernabé (*Perfil de cresta*) and Fernando María Guerrero (*Crisálidas*), the poetess and short story writer Adelina Gurrea Monasterio (*Cuentos de Juana*), and the playwright and politician Claro M. Recto (*La ruta de Damasco*). Even so, by the 1940s, the Spanish language was already on the verge of decline in the country. The death in 1960 of Recto and Bernabé, staunch advocates of the cultural unity of Spain and the Philippines, ultimately delivered the fatal blow to this literary generation (Mariñas 51).

In regard to the body of work produced by the writers of the Golden Age, literary scholarship invariably concentrates on the following themes: *hispanidad* (Spanishness), *la madre España* (Mother Spain), and the Spanish language as a tool for resistance against the American occupation. For de la Peña, the “Americanization of Hispanized Philippine Society” is parallel to the “ideological dilemma of cultural re-engineering,” the pressing need to adopt or adjust to the new ways of life promulgated by the Americans (“Revisiting” 123). He explains that, in response to this predicament, writers ultimately took to pen the defense of things Fil-hispanic. In another article, he stresses the cultural confluence evoked by the term “Fil-hispanic” through what he calls the “Recto Doctrine,” which “establishes, affirms and defends” the presence of Spain and Hispanic cultural legacies which have been acquired by Filipinos and later on subsumed in the formation of a Filipino identity (“In Defense” 7). Claro M. Recto, for whom the doctrine was named, rationalizes the prevalence of a literary discourse in favor of Spanish even though Spain had already left the country many years before in the following words: “nos dejó . . . el legado espiritual de su idioma que . . . ha sido desde entonces, como será en lo sucesivo . . . componente

inseparable del conjunto de afirmaciones que forman el sistema básico, sustantivo, de nuestra nacionalidad”⁴ (Qtd. Fernández Lumba, “Personificación” 7).

According to Ortuño, the thematic content of the literature of the Golden Age is attributed to the idea that the writers of the period were experiencing a “postcolonial hangover” resulting from the end of the Spanish occupation and the ensuing fight for freedom from the American regime that replaced it (156). She adds that the figure of “Mother Spain,” which frequently appears in the literary works of writers of the Golden Age is, by and large, attributable to two factors: first, the creation of a hybrid Filipino identity, which is a mixture of the indigenous and the Hispanic (genetically or culturally or both) and second, the desire of writers-politicians to maintain their social prestige in the face of the homogenizing force of the American occupation (156).

One of these writers was Enrique Fernández Lumba. He was born in 1899 in Intramuros, Manila. He won the Premio Zóbel in 1954 for his work *Hispanofilia filipina*, an anthology of essays and poems that he had written and collected in the course of over three decades. To his name are attributed poems and essays that glorify Spain and the cultural legacies that Filipinos would later assimilate into the Philippine identity. He coined the term *hispanofilia filipina* to label this elegiac sentiment: “efecto de una nostalgia por el ambiente social y cultural en que vivían en los llamados tiempos de España” (1).⁵ De la Peña translates it as the “Filipino love for things Hispanic” (“In Defense” 7).

III. Meanings of nostalgia

Fernández Lumba’s definition of *hispanofilia filipina* involves two related concepts: longing and the irrecoverable past, which are key elements of nostalgia. The word, a combination of two Greek words, *nostos* (return home) and *algia* (pain or longing), was coined by the Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer in 1688 to label the condition he had observed among young Swiss living abroad. He described the illness as “the grief for the lost charm of the Native Land” whose only cure was the immediate return of the one afflicted with the illness to the homeland (381). Gradually, however, nostalgia has shifted from the spatial to the temporal inasmuch as it is possible to return to a place but not to an earlier time, and nostalgia becomes a reaction to the sad fact that time is irreversible (Hutcheon and Valdés 19).

While nostalgia is considered as universal and persistent, there is a polarity in regard to its functions and implications, as well as to the specificity of its definition. For example, Davis puts forward the question of how nostalgia could be different from other subjective states whose object is the past such as remembrance, recollection, reminiscence, revivification and recall,

among others (417). Furthermore, over the centuries since Hofer coined the term in the field of medicine, its locus has widened to include or “colonize” politics, history and everyday life (Boym, “Nostalgia” 9).

In *Postcolonial Nostalgias*, Walder takes advantage of the semantic drift in the term nostalgia and positions it in poetry and politics. Specifically, he refers to the term “postcolonial nostalgias . . . in the plural” to describe a variety of phenomena in which “the search for remembered times and places . . . prominent at certain critical periods of human history . . . challenged what was happening in the world,” one that involved the “nurturing potential of memory for the threatened individual” (1-2). Nostalgia, therefore, entails more than just remembrance. Rather, it performs a dual function rooted in remembrance. First, it prompts the individual to recall a certain time in the past that could help them make sense of both the present and the self. This is analogous to the negotiation of one’s identity. As in the case of writers whose lives have been shaped by colonization, to express their relationship with the remembered past or pasts is “to transform their sense of cultural disinheritance and loss into new identities for themselves and their communities” (Walder, “Postcolonial Nostalgias” 16). Second, it is used as a tool to reinforce their criticism of the present by comparing it to the past. This function is oriented towards the idea of a past-present dichotomy. According to Davis, nostalgia considers the past with positive feelings of “pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness [and] love” while the present is “bleak, grim, wretched, ugly, deprivational, unfulfilling [and] frightening” (418).

In *Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning*, Wilson sees the present as an important reason for nostalgia to develop. She describes nostalgia as “a sense of sadness and a sense of loss that comes after being removed from an ideal situation in the past” (22). This definition has two implications. First, the past is seen as better than the present so that the individual longs to return to that period yet at the same time accepts its impossibility, thereby feeling a sense of loss. Second, to consider the past as an idyllic lost paradise involves a sentimental idealization of that time and necessitates not merely looking back to the past but also reconstructing it. These two types of nostalgia are called reflective and restorative nostalgias, respectively. They are discussed by Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia*. According to her,

Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives on *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming—wistfully, ironically, desperately . . . Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective

nostalgia dwells on the ambivalence of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. (14)

While reflective nostalgia resides on sadness and melancholy, the restorative type tends to consider the past, according to Davis, in a “redeemingly benign aura,” so that “the hurts, annoyances, disappointments and irritations . . . are filtered forgivingly through an ‘it was all for the best’ attitude” (418). Such selective reading of the past prompts historians to consider nostalgia as a negative word. This is because the liberty that is involved in choosing what to remember and later, what to consider as “truth and tradition” may, according to Walder, “blind us to the pasts of others” (“Postcolonial Nostalgias” 7). He also acknowledges its exclusive, eliminatory nature and suggests that the restorative kind is of the “apologetic variety” and entails “a sometimes dangerous tendency to forget colonial pasts” (18).

Nevertheless, what reinforces the selectiveness of nostalgia is the solidarity of a particular group of individuals who value certain objects, attitudes and ideologies. Chase and Shaw consider the presence of objects such as chronicles and monuments as a condition in which nostalgia will develop, that is, they should be readily available and accessible (4). Similarly, Assmann says that a group derives its “awareness of its unity and peculiarity” from their “store of knowledge” and adds that the physical manifestations of cultural memory act as representations of a particular group’s commonality in a positive (“we are this”) or negative (“that’s our opposite”) sense (130). Nora’s influential theory of *lieux de mémoire* or sites of memory also stresses the symbolic function of material objects such as museums, books and documentaries as tangible containers of memory. He considers the existence of these objects as products of “commemorative vigilance” (12). For nostalgia to develop, therefore, a group of writers must share a collective desire to remember, reinforced by objects and monuments, as well as a similar view of the times and of the networks of power relations in which they find themselves.

It has been suggested that the past as the object of nostalgia must be personally experienced and not merely drawn from publicly available artifacts. As Davis aptly asks, “Can I be nostalgic for the Ganges, a place I have never been, or you for the Crusades, a time you have never lived?” (416). He also puts forward the question of how long ago should past be for one to feel nostalgic for it—a day, a month, a year, a decade, a generation? He suggests that the answers to these questions lie in the conditions of the present, that is, how strongly we long for a certain time in the past and to which past we tend to return depend on how different it is from the present. He says, “The ability to feel nostalgia for events in our past has less (although clearly something) to do with how recent or distant these events were than with the way they contrast-

or, more accurately, the way we make them contrast--with the events, moods and dispositions of our present circumstances” (416).

IV. The Spanish Colonization of the Philippines as a Remembered Past: Rethinking and Repercussions

In Fernández Lumba’s titular essay “Hispanofilia Filipina,” his longing for the Spanish era is accompanied by a sentimental idealization of that time. He considers his nostalgia for Spain as the result of having the illusion that life in the past was better “ya por lo que han leído en amarillentas crónicas, ya por lo que escucharon de los labios de sus padres y abuelos” (1).⁶

The nostalgic feeling here is temporal. But not only is it a yearning for a lost time but also for an experience. In this case, it is not a personally experienced past but rather that of the writer’s ancestors. His nostalgia, therefore, is reinforced by chronicles, which may include news and essays published in periodicals, as well as memoirs safeguarded by the family within the confines of the home. Apart from these physical, readily available artifacts, his nostalgic feeling is also underpinned, and more prominently so, by stories shared by mouth, much like an oral tradition committed to preserving the store of knowledge of a community. In this way, the family participates in what Walder calls the “commemorative mania” (or to borrow from Nora, the “commemorative vigilance”) of the modern world, “a renewed interest in family history, memoir and heritage” arising from the need to preserve the objects and chronicles that tell us who we are (4).

On a separate note, the younger members of the family tend to romanticize the life in the past for two reasons. First, there is freedom of imagination in secondhand stories from parents and grandparents as opposed to direct, personal experiences. This makes the past, as Hobsbawm describes it, a background to one’s own existence instead of the more conventional view that it is a remembered part of one’s life (3). In this case, the past becomes a repository of oral history: values, traditions, family circumstances and anecdotes that are always subject to modifications. Second, the conditions of the present have a significant effect on the way the older members of the family remember the past. Their “hangover,” as Ortuño puts it, and their lack of interest in or exhaustion from contemporary events prompt them to engage the younger generations in the experiences and stories from their own childhood (Ricoeur 394).

Fernández Lumba’s nostalgia for the Spanish era may then also be analyzed within the framework of the history-memory dichotomy. History, according to Ricoeur, is external, that is, a student of history did not experience the events being studied (394). In *Hispanofilia filipina*, Fernández Lumba bridges this temporal gap and offers a means by which he can reach the

physically inaccessible, by turning to memory to achieve, as Ricoeur puts it, “the gradual familiarization with the unfamiliar”. He says that, in the same way that Fernández Lumba has stressed the importance of family chronicles acting as transgenerational links, this familiarization entails “moving through the concentric circles” formed by family and friends and, most importantly, “the discovery of the historical past by means of the memory of ancestors” (394).

Apart from the family, the community of writers and other stakeholders such as the Spanish embassy also participate in this commemoration on a much wider scale. For example, the need to have physical containers of memory is satisfied in the creation of libraries that catalogue books written in Spanish. In “Biblioteca española” (“Spanish Library”), Fernández Lumba emphasizes the importance of preserving these sites of memory for the sake of cultural continuity, that is, in “mantener el interés por el idioma español entre nosotros, y cultivar, al mismo tiempo, el buen gusto literario de los filipinos que estiman la cultura hispánica” (61).⁷

Paraphrasing Davis, we can ask the same question: “can Fernández Lumba and his contemporaries be nostalgic for the Spanish era if they have not experienced it firsthand?” The author tells us that the answer lies in what elicits his nostalgia. According to him, his longing for Spain is “producto de un temperamento que los hace extrañar en nuestra época de ruido y precipitación y, por esto, añoran aquel modo de ser tranquilo y silente que entonces prevalía” (1).⁸ Here is a straightforward comparison between past and present, while it is suggested that the present is lacking. We can observe the use of the word “homesick” as a consequence of what is evidently a problem of the times (“the age of noise and hurry”). Thus, the past becomes a symbolic homeland, the idyllic lost paradise, a virtual return to which is what might ultimately rescue one from the troubled present. In the case of *Hispanofilia filipina*, the Spanish era represents a home removed from the menace of the onrushing American occupation.

The same idealization, or more accurately, idolizing of the past is seen in another essay, “Una vez más” (“One More Time”). His portrayal of Spain in a positive manner incites us to ask what desires and ideals prompt the writer to speak well of the colonial past: “Los filipinos no tenemos motivo alguno para revivir viejos motivos de rencor o resentimiento. Nada tenemos que temer de la España imperial que resurge; el imperialismo a que aspira no es el subyugador y egoísta; es un imperialismo amplio y generoso, porque es espiritual” (38).⁹ It is in this passage that the danger with nostalgia is seen, particularly that of collective nostalgia that may unite certain individuals but alienate others. To say that Filipinos did not have any reason to harbor ill feelings towards the colonizers who had just left connotes that Fernández Lumba was only addressing a specific group of individuals—the writers-politicians of the Golden Age who learned Spanish in Spain or at home and who comprised the social and cultural elite. To be more

specific, his advocacy of forgetting—or not remembering—imperial Spain is made to the exclusion of the champions of revolutionary movements as well as post-war nationalists for whom traces of the colonial period are considered taboo (de la Peña, “In Defense” 7).¹⁰ Therefore, in this passage, although it is an expression of collective nostalgia, it is only shared by a relatively small group and, as a consequence, might instead be seen as “collective myopia” (Walder “Postcolonial Nostalgias” 3).

In another essay, “Filipinas y el día español” (“The Philippines and Spanish Day”), Fernández Lumba refutes the idea that Spain was “como una nación cruel, como una nación fanática, como una nación irracional que no ha influido para nada en las ciencias ni en el progreso humano... esto es completamente falso” (46).¹¹ It is seen here how longing results in the reconstruction of the past, a process through which one can choose what to remember and what not to remember. In so doing, Fernández Lumba asserts his privileged position as a writer who is capable of challenging existing histories and retelling certain pasts from alternative perspectives (Walder, “Postcolonial Nostalgias” 19). In the passage quoted above, we can see a tendency to shy away from what Spain was and continues to be for many others: the Spain of Padre Dámaso and Polavieja.¹²

Along the same lines, Fernández Lumba compares the end of the Spanish occupation of the Philippines to the death of a person. He suggests that one must forget the shortcomings of the departed and remember only their good qualities:

Al morir la soberanía española en nuestra patria, ocurrió lo que ordinariamente sucede cuando fallece una persona, más o menos querida, y con quien, no obstante, ha tenido unos disgustos y diferencias: que se olvidan sus defectos para no recordar más de sus actos de bondad y, luego, a medida que pasan los días, su ausencia es más y más sentida y se da uno cuenta de cuán provechosa y grata fue su compañía. (1)¹³

This death is symbolic of the end of colonization and allows one to rethink past experiences, both good and bad. Reminiscent of mourning the death of a loved one, when one tends to look back on their good qualities (“advantageous” and “pleasant”) while coming to terms with the loss, what Fernández Lumba suggests in the passage could be a bittersweet experience, an oxymoronic feeling characteristic of nostalgia in that the sense of sadness felt when thinking about the departed only serves to strengthen the feeling of “recaptured joy or contentment” (418).

What produces positive feelings towards the Spanish era, the colonial period, albeit already ended, and at the time still the recent past, is again the sense that the transitional period

or the present is deficient and unfamiliar if not entirely hostile. Such negative response is due to the writer's reluctance to accept the institution and promulgation of a new education system, a new language, new politics and the resulting change in the way of life and ethos during the first half of the twentieth century. For Fernández Lumba, special vigilance must be exercised in regard to the education of younger generations. For example, the schoolchildren of his time were being raised to speak English, a negative result of which would be the eventual displacement of Spanish as a language of everyday life and, subsequently, an "incierto porvenir que se presenta ante la literatura hispano-filipina" (6).¹⁴ Remembering or alluding to bygone feelings of happiness and delight may then be, as Zwingmann says, a psychological reaction caused by "fear of actual or impending change" (204).

V. *Madre España*

The figure of Mother Spain as a recurring theme in the literary works of the Golden Age has two implications. First, remembering Spain as a maternal figure is a form of revaluating the Spanish era so that the end of colonization becomes parallel to the emancipation of a child from his mother upon reaching adulthood, metaphoric of the end of colonization and the creation of postcolonial identities and new nations. Second, to think of Spain as a mother entails positive emotional associations of love and familial warmth, contrary to the fear and threat that the writer associates with the American occupation.

In the anthology, Fernández Lumba repeatedly talks about love that persists, of the enduring love of a mother that distance cannot destroy. This is emblematic of Spain's maternal relationship with the Philippines that cannot be diminished by geographical separation. In praise of Mother Spain, Fernández Lumba's essays and poems speak of the gratitude of a daughter to her mother, that is, without the mother, the child would not grow up to know the road he would take later in life. In an essay aptly titled "La maternidad de España" ("The Motherhood of Spain"), he recognizes that the separation of the two countries was inevitable. He writes that the parting was done "con el corazón herido, pero no amargado por el resentimiento . . . y como esa herida la produjo el amor, pronto se cicatriza al ver que el hijo o la hija vive feliz y próspera en su nuevo estado" (11).¹⁵ The last two words are key, for they allude to the creation of the Filipino identity at the end of colonization.

Considering the climate in which Filipinos found themselves during the first half of the twentieth century, we can argue that the hybrid child is already more than just Hispanic-Malayan. During this period, as Holland says about the creation of identities from available cultural resources, Filipinos were caught "between past histories that have settled in them and the

present discourses that attract them or somehow impinge upon them” (4). Therefore, the hybrid child is considered not just as a product of the mixture of Hispanic and Malayan blood or cultures but rather the fusion of past histories and the onrushing institution of new commodities. This is the young Filipino caught between the ideologies of their parents and grandparents, who had experienced the Spanish era, and the ways of their own generation, products of the American occupation and its education system. In our time, they would be the quintessential mix of “300 years in the convent and 50 years in Hollywood,” a catchphrase that usually describes the nature of the two colonial powers in the Philippines: Spain is associated with religious traditions and conservative ways, and the United States with entertainment, industrialization and modernity. Moreover, it is precisely upon the differences between these two colonial powers that the Filipino identity is molded. By way of a virtual return to the past, the Filipino collects selected fragments of his/her old self and merges them with bits and pieces of the present. In this way, as Stuart Hall, writing about postcolonial identities, proposes, identity is produced and not rediscovered (224). This production, as Colmeiro affirms, is a process of “becoming” and not simply “being” (22), the prototypical *bildungsroman*.

However, Fernández Lumba, in the tradition of the Golden Age, contests this view of identity as it took him and his contemporaries a long time to accept the Americans. In fact, Recto took his anti-American ideals to the grave in 1960, firmly believing that, “to accept American rule meant alienating them from their Hispanic-Malayan heritage” (de la Peña, “The Spanish-English 9). According to Fernández Lumba, this Hispanic-Malayan heritage is attributed to the discovery of “esta serie de hermosas islas”¹⁶ by Ferdinand Magellan whose maritime fleet landed in Cebu in 1521 (2). He says that the arrival of Magellan in the 16th century is, more than anything else, advantageous to the people of the islands and has come to make up a fundamental part of what the Philippines is as a nation today, a legacy that, as the author comments, “vienen a ser como la atmósfera que respiramos, que nos mantiene la vida, pero que no vemos ni palpamos” (3).¹⁷ In his poem “A Magallanes” (“To Magallanes”), Fernández Lumba articulates the Golden Age ideal that Magellan’s legacy, even as it faces the threat of being erased from history, will never be banished from their minds. Any attempts at forgetting it will be “in vain,” two words that are repeated several times in the poem: “En vano tu recuerdo y tu nombre esclarecidos / indignas almas viles intentan olvidar” (3).¹⁸ The writer again emphasizes the importance of sites of memory, “ruins” that serve as the stronghold of the Spanish era, which, he writes, will not be “surrendered,” a clear allusion to the transition to American rule.

Mi debil voz te anuncia que tu gloriosa hazaña
los buenos Filipinos jamás olvidarán.

En vano la desidia pretender olvidarte
que el eco de tu nombre resuena sin cesar;
se oye entre las ruinas que sirven de baluarte
a un ayer glorioso que nunca cederá. (4)¹⁹

A very important site of memory that has similarly faced the threat of being expunged from memory is the walled city Intramuros. It was built right after Manila was established as capital city. For Jiménez Verdejo, et. al, Intramuros has been a witness to historical events have taken place in Manila since the sixteenth century (387) . Most notable, however, is the year 1942, in which it was bombed by the Americans on the pretext of executing Japanese troops stationed there. This event, which came to define the Battle of Manila, left hundreds of thousands dead and completely obliterated the walled city (Pugay n.p.). For Filipinos, the destruction of Intramuros also decimated Manila, which was once dubbed “The Pearl of the Orient” (Tharoor n.p.). Furthermore, the devastation of Intramuros, “a historical site,” which represented the beauty of the Spanish past, “brought about a sense of insecurity and loss of confidence” (Ongpin n.p.). In spite of this, the ruins of the walled city can still be found in Manila and thousands of tourists visit the fortification every year.

In a poem titled “Recogiendo un mensaje” (“Picking Up a Message”), the author is perceived to be a “threatened individual,” aware of the power and influence of the new colonial ruler. In response to this, he develops a renewed appreciation for things that are either lost, forgotten or devalued. Furthermore, the writer again stresses the significance of monuments (the Cross) and buildings (churches and temples) as sites of memory, as places where “historical continuity persists” amidst the transition (Nora 7). Moreover, he mentions Spain and her maternal love, both of which are positive references to the Spanish era.

odrán las maravillas del presente

velar la luz de su labor ingente
y ocultar el valor de su legado;
Pero mientras la Cruz se eleve al cielo
y a Dios un templo se alce en nuestro suelo,
será su amor de madre venerado. (66)²⁰

Along the same lines, Fernández Lumba considers the nation as the emancipated child – or specifically – one among many emancipated children, an allusion to the independence of Spanish colonies that began in July 1811 when Venezuela was first declared a republic (Rodríguez O. 115). Again, we return to the representation of independence from colonial rule as emancipation so that the decades of colonialism are rethought as formative years. Fernández Lumba writes:

“En el seno de su historia comenzó a geminar nuestra nacionalidad. El amor a un ideal que soplaba sus naves hacia ignotas tierras, engendró los pueblos que más tarde, con propia personalidad, levantaría sus banderas de naciones libres” (10)²¹ This can also be seen as a subtle rendition of the idea that resistance is a byproduct of colonization or oppression, resonant of Edward Said’s words in *Culture and Imperialism* that “domination breeds resistance” (288). Jolipa echoes the same idea and suggests that the Spaniards “nourished the Filipino’s desire for independence from foreign domination” (30). Once again, a reference to Spain’s maternal love is seen: the mother nourishing the child into adulthood. This reference also appears in “La respuesta” (“The Response”), in which the writer acknowledges that Spain instilled in the young Philippines the idea of freedom.

Tú, en fin, dirás al mundo mi derecho
de vivir una vida independiente. (51)²²

Fernández Lumba also considers the love of Spain as love that will someday return. In “España inmortal” (“Immortal Spain”), he says that the departure of Spain is considered merely as an episode that would come to pass, like the dark night that would soon turn to day. It is in this way that he makes known his rejection of American rule, a chapter in history that would meet its end, by contrast with Spain’s “immortality.” He writes:

Tú no has muerto, tú vives todavía;
tu espíritu fecundo y tesorero
se oculta pero vuelve como el día. (41)²³

VI. *La Hispanidad*

Fernández Lumba’s refusal to accept Spain’s departure and his denial of the reality of the American occupation were predominantly attributable to the idea of *hispanidad* or “Spanishness”. For Spanish writer Ramiro de Maeztu, the concept of *hispanidad* refers to the “totality of all Hispanic peoples” characterized by the spiritual community brought by Spanish evangelization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (33). In Fernández Lumba’s poem “Hispanidad,” he echoes Maeztu’s community of Hispanic peoples by highlighting Spain’s contribution to the formation of the Filipino nation, in particular, the Spanish language and the Catholic faith as undeniable cultural legacies.

Diversidad de pueblos con unidad de idioma
formando un gran imperio más noble que el de Roma
porque no los une la fuerza material.
La Hispanidad es eso: Familia de naciones

fundidas por la Fe: union de corazones
bajo el augusto signo de la Cruz inmortal. (59-60)²⁴

Again, Fernández Lumba associates the Spanish era with positive feelings of familial love, even as he alludes to something else that is less valued or esteemed. This “material force” reappears in “La despedida” (“Farewell”). Written from the point of view of Spain, the poem sees the mother country bidding the child adieu and turning her over to “the other one,” understood as the United States:

Comprendo que los días que vivimos
son los días de oro y la materia,
y yo no puedo darte más que el oro
que se guarda en el cofre del espíritu:
las ideas y nobles sentimientos.
El otro es rico, dueño de la industria,
del mundo comercial el solo árbitro. (49)²⁵

Through frequent references to the Filipinos’ *hispanidad*, Fernández Lumba embarks on what Wilson describes as “a rediscovery of a former self” in this case, a self that may have been overshadowed or lost amidst the new colonial situation (26). Many mentions of the Filipinos’ Hispanic heritage can be seen in the anthology. In the poem “¿Qué más decir?” (“What More Can I Say?”), Fernández Lumba refers to the Spanish language and Christianity as the two most important legacies of Spain in the Philippines:

¿Qué cultura habrá más alta que la tuya tan cristiana?
¿Cuál más dulce que tu idioma que parece una fontana
que hace siglos se desliza sobre un lecho de diamantes?
Y en el alma filipina, ¿qué recuerdo habrá más dulce?
¿qué potencia irresistible que al Progreso nos impulse:
que la fe de Jesucristo más la lengua de Cervantes? (12)²⁶

The role of Christianity in the creation of a Hispanized and Spanish-speaking society is noteworthy. Essentially, the Christianization of the Philippines accompanied the Hispanization of the people, particularly the children of the elite who were educated by the friars of the different religious orders and who would later pioneer the Filhispanic literary arena.

Along the same lines, Fernández Lumba pays tribute to the Spanish language even as he expresses concern over the waning interest in its conservation. Again, the writer can be regarded as “a threatened individual” and it is because of his preoccupation that he turns to a sentimental valuation of the Spanish era. In “Por la cultura y tradición” (“For Culture and Tradition”), he

blames the fast disappearance of Spanish in the country on the citizens' laziness. He says that most people "creen o parecen estar convencidos de que lo hispánico jamás desaparecerá o podrá ser eliminado de nuestra vida nacional y de nuestro espíritu,"²⁷ and adds that such presumption causes "indiferencia, dejadez, desidia, pereza o excesiva confianza en la virtualidad del idioma" (56).²⁸ The writer, therefore, is compelled to praise and underscore the Spanish language in response to the threat of its disappearance or devaluation. We can also understand this to mean that this Spanish cultural patrimony, along with the Catholic faith, apart from being sites and containers of memory, are seen as a welcome counterpoint to the current American hegemony.

In the passages quoted previously we can see that the writer is "threatened". However, in "La reliquia" ("The Relic"), a posterior essay not included in the anthology but published in the official gazette of the Academia Filipina in 1976, we perceive him as defeated as he concedes and recognizes the disappearance of Spanish in the country. He describes the language as "muy grande, que ya está muerto" (n.p.).²⁹ The title of the essay is itself quoted from a message by Spanish writer Dámaso Alonso to Odón Betanzos, then director of the Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española: "cada país hispanohablante tiene una Academia (el caso de Filipinas es una reliquia de un tiempo en que el español era idioma oficial y de una hegemonía cultural ya extinguida)" (Qtd. Fernández Lumba, "La reliquia" n.p.).³⁰ Fernández Lumba adds to this and says that the Academia Filipina, to which Alonso was referring is "una reliquia de aquel tiempo feliz ya remoto".³¹ Again, we see the writer's nostalgic feeling for a bygone time, with which he also associates positive feelings such as happiness. The same figure of the relic appears in "Tus cartas" ("Your Letters"). The object of the poem, love letters, can be considered as symbolic of the Spanish language. Furthermore, the melancholy tone of the poem suggests the writer's lamentation following a loss, evocative of his literary generation's anxiety over the fast devaluing of Spanish. He writes:

Yo las conservo como reliquias
de un amor grande, pero ya muerto;
yo las conservo como cenizas,
como despojos de extinto fuego.
Yo las conservo con el cariño
con que se guardan tristes recuerdos,
con la amargura de un bien perdido,
con el cuidado de un pobre viejo.
Cuando las miro, suave amargura
sube a mis ojos, llena mi pecho. (n.p.)³²

We can see above the words that figure most frequently in Fernández Lumba's work: love, affection and goodness as positive feelings associated with things that belonged to another time in the past, represented by relics, ashes and memories. Also, he mentions the oxymoronic feeling of "gentle bitterness," which tells us that the sadness caused by a past that cannot be returned to physically serves to intensify positive feelings of love and affection towards that point in time.

VII. Conclusions

It is interesting to note that the remembered past we are dealing with here is by nature a colonial past while the present is postcolonial (or, more accurately, post-Spanish colonization) as well as transitional and still very much colonial. However, in the case of *Hispanofilia filipina*, the remembered past is neither pre-colonial Philippines nor Spain as the empire but rather Hispanic-Malayan, so that the colonial past is reconstructed to become a site of conviviality and not chaos. We can emphasize then that nostalgia is not equivalent to a "perverse" or "masochistic" validation of colonialism (Bissell 225). Accordingly, Fernández Lumba's nostalgia for the Spanish era does not advocate a return to the repressive years of colonialism already quelled by revolution and independence movements. Rather, it tells us that the vestiges of Spanish colonialism can be redefined to mean the creation of a Hispanic-Malayan identity, new hybrid selves born of liberation.

We can also note that nostalgia figures in Fernández Lumba's work primarily in the recurring themes of *hispanidad*, Mother Spain and the Golden Age's reactionary attitude towards the American occupation. Since nostalgia is, first and foremost, an emotion, it functions in Fernández Lumba's anthology as an affectionate link to irrecoverable times of yore. Moreover, the writer and his contemporaries idealized and longed for the way of life of their forefathers because they saw it as an escape, a place of refuge in the face of a new political power they viewed as threatening and lacking. They sought a virtual connection to a past that they did not experience directly but was the home of their parents, grandparents and the heroes they revered. In this way, Fernández Lumba's work is an homage to the past that created him. Moreover, by constantly defending the Filipinos' *hispanidad*, he envisions a brotherhood made strong by a familial bond (that of the mother and her offsprings) based on a shared language, a shared culture and a shared history.

We can also argue that nostalgia functions in the anthology in support of the writer's ideals. Particularly, his longing for the Spanish era is embodied in his defense of the Spanish language as both cultural patrimony and a direct connection to the past. We can as well say that Fernández Lumba's preoccupation with the language was, in many ways, prophetic. In the

Philippines today, very few can speak Spanish, and this might be because the legacies of Spain are so deeply ingrained in the Philippine languages, in the faith of a great majority of Filipinos, in daily life, that people do not notice them anymore. Such was Lumba's fear. Today, a great number of literary works in Spanish produced by Filipino writers remain unread or untranslated to languages Filipinos can understand. For this, indeed, a huge part of our history continues to be an enigma. Medina suggests that to have a deeper understanding of 377 years of our past we must turn to our writers, but to do so, we must begin by learning Spanish and we must learn it not as a foreign language but as cultural patrimony, a language that is our own, a way to bridge the gap between the past and present made brittle by changing networks of power relations.

Certainly, Fernández Lumba and his contemporaries also had their limitations. The Golden Age, in fact, came late and it had to compete with Philippine Literature in English and in our regional languages. The task of the writers of the Golden Age then was to show the perhaps unpopular view that Spain also brought to us her virtues. To read Fernández Lumba, therefore, especially now is to introduce ourselves to the culture of our ancestors, to get to know our history and, ultimately, to understand ourselves better.

Before beginning this paper, I was unsure of whether to write it in Spanish or English. To do so in Spanish would spare me the difficult job of translating the passages from the anthology, especially the poems. But it would also keep this paper away from a huge proportion of its intended readers: the generation of Filipinos who do not know Spanish. Therefore, I decided to write this paper in English, in the hopes that whoever reads it will be compelled to interest themselves to study Spanish and later, to read the scores of Fil-hispanic literary texts waiting to be rediscovered. After all, Fernández Lumba's work, although *hispanista*, is, above all, Filipino.

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Notes

¹ On June 12, 1898, Emilio Aguinaldo, who became the first President of the Revolutionary Government, declared Philippine independence from Spain before a huge crowd in Kawit, Cavite, after the latter was defeated by revolutionary forces in the Battle of Manila Bay a month earlier, on May 1. The declaration, however, was not recognized by Spain so that on December 10, 1898, Spain sold the Philippines to the United States for \$20 million dollars and signed the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War. See Agoncillo and Alfonso, pp. 244-45, 255-56.

² This decree called for the establishment of a system of education in all levels. Among its provisions were compulsory education for children between the ages of seven and twelve, as well as financial support from the state for books and school supplies. Nevertheless, the decree did not succeed in improving literacy because of opposition from Catholic priests and lack of funds. See Sobritchea.

³ As has already been mentioned, the Golden Age of Philippine Literature in Spanish coincided with the American occupation. As background for the latter, the following are some of the most important events in this part of history. After Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War, Emilio Aguinaldo initiated a new revolt, this time against the United States. The fighting began on February 4, 1899 after two American soldiers killed three Filipinos in San Juan, Metro Manila. Called the Philippine-American War, it resulted in the death of more than 600,000 Filipinos who were poorly equipped in warfare compared to American soldiers. The war ended with the capture of Aguinaldo in March 1901. Consequently, the Philippines became an American colony after the establishment of a civil government in the country by William Howard Taft. See Agoncillo and Alfonso, especially chapters XVI and XXII for a detailed historical account of the American occupation in the Philippines and its results.

⁴ "She left us . . . the spiritual legacy of her language which . . . has since been, and will be . . . an inseparable component of the collective of affirmations that form the fundamental system of our nationality"

⁵ "The result of a longing for the social and cultural atmosphere of the Spanish era."

⁶ "As they have read in yellowing chronicles and as they have heard from the lips of their grandparents."

⁷ "Maintaining the interest in the Spanish language among us, and cultivating, at the same time, the love for literature felt by Filipinos who hold high regard for the Hispanic culture."

⁸ "The product of a disposition that makes them feel homesick in the age of noise and hurry, and for this they longed for the tranquil and silent ways that once prevailed."

⁹ "We Filipinos do not have any motive to revive old feelings of resentment and bitterness. We have nothing to fear of imperial Spain reappearing. The imperialism that she hopes for is not egoistic; it is a generous kind because it is spiritual."

¹⁰ The national hero of the Philippines, José Rizal, belonged to the group of writers and newspapermen who were educated abroad. Called the *propagandistas*, they fought for the secularization of education, the assimilation of the Philippines to Spain and representation of the Philippines in the Spanish *cortes*, among others. Locally, several men and women, inspired by the sporadic revolts in various regions, began to organize the fight for independence, which came to be known as the Philippine Revolutionary War, led by the Samahang Kataastaasan, Kagalanggalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (KKK). Rizal was opposed to this revolution, believing that it was premature. However, he was implicated in the activities of the KKK because their headquarters bore his pictures and his name was used in coded messages among the members. See Agoncillo and Alfonso, chapter IX for a discussion on the Propaganda Movement and the Revolution.

¹¹ "A cruel nation, fanatic and irrational, who did not contribute to science nor to the progress of humanity, this is completely false."

¹² Padre Damaso is a character in José Rizal's seminal 1887 novel, *Noli me tangere*. He is considered to be the villain in the story. While he was curate of the town of San Diego, he held power over the townsfolk, who obeyed him blindly. He is considered to be the quintessential example of the Spanish friars' abuse of power, exercised in the parochial towns. At the end of the novel, it is revealed that he fathered a child. If Padre Damaso is a fictional antagonist, Camilo G. de Polavieja was considered as a real-life villain. He is known as the general who ordered the execution of José Rizal in 1896.

¹³ "Upon the death of the Spanish supremacy in our country, what usually occurs when a person, who is more or less loved and with whom one has had differences, dies: her defects are forgotten in order to remember his goodness and later on, as the days go by, his absence is felt more and more intensely and one sees how advantageous and pleasant was his company."

¹⁴ "Uncertain future for Fil-hispanic literature."

¹⁵ "With a wounded heart, but not embittered by resentment, and because it was love that produced such wound, immediately it heals when the mother sees that the child is living happily and prosperously in his new condition."

¹⁶ "This chain of beautiful islands."

¹⁷ "Has come to be the very air that we breath, that sustains our lives, yet we neither see nor feel."

¹⁸ "In vain your illustrious memory and name / vile and indignant souls try to forget."

¹⁹ “My tiny voice announces that your glorious deed / the good Filipinos will never forget. / In vain apathy tries to disregard / that the echo of your name resounds ceaselessly; / it is heard in ruins that serve as the stronghold / of a glorious yesterday that will never surrender.”

²⁰ “The wonders of today may / conceal the light of your great labor / and hide the value of your legacy; / But while the Cross is lifted up to the sky / and to God a temple is raised in our land, / your motherly love will be venerated.”

²¹ “In the bosom of her history our nationality began to germinate. The love for an ideal that blew her fleet towards unknown lands bred nations that, with their own personality, would later raise their flags as free countries.”

²² “You, at last, will tell the world of my right / to live freely.”

²³ “You have not died, you still live; / Your fertile and tenacious spirit / has set but will return like the morning.”

²⁴ “Diversity of nations united by language / forming a great empire nobler than that of Rome, / because it is not material force that unites them. / Such is Hispanidad: Family of nations / united by Faith: a union of hearts / under the august sign of the immortal Cross.”

²⁵ “I understand that the days we are living / are days of gold and material things, / and I cannot give you any more than the gold / that is kept in the treasure chest of the spirit: / ideas and noble sentiments. / The other one is rich, owner of the industry / the sole arbitrator of the commercial world.”

²⁶ “What could be loftier than your Christian culture? / What could be sweeter / than your language, which is like a fountain / that centuries ago slid over a bed of diamonds? / And in the Filipino soul, what memory could be sweeter? / What irresistible power that drives us towards Progress: / than the faith of Jesus Christ and the language of Cervantes?”

²⁷ “Believe or seem to be convinced that what is Hispanic will never disappear from our lives and from our spirit.”

²⁸ “Indifference, neglect, laziness and excessive confidence in the virtuality of the language.”

²⁹ “Great, but already dead.”

³⁰ “Each Spanish-speaking country has an Academy (that of the Philippines is a relic from a time when Spanish was the official language, as well as the language of an already extinguished cultural hegemony.”

³¹ “A relic from a once happy but now distant time.”

³² “I preserve them like the relics / Of a love that is great but now dead; / I preserve them like ashes, / Like the remains of an extinct fire. / I preserve them with the affection / With which are kept sad memories, / With the bitterness of a lost goodness / With the care of a poor old man / Whenever I see them, gentle bitterness / climbs up to my eyes, fills my chest.”