

# Resisting Intellectual Imperialism and Epistemic Violence

**Towards Autonomous Knowledge Production**

9-10 November 2024 | 11:30 AM-12:50 PM; 1:00 PM-2:20 PM  
Via Zoom, Main Room

*Prepared and edited by Cian Tacasa*



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES  
CENTER FOR  
INTEGRATIVE AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES



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"School Begins"

Louis Dalrymple, Puck Magazine, January 25, 1899 <https://www.transcend.org/tms/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Uncle-Sam-Civilization-Class.jpg>

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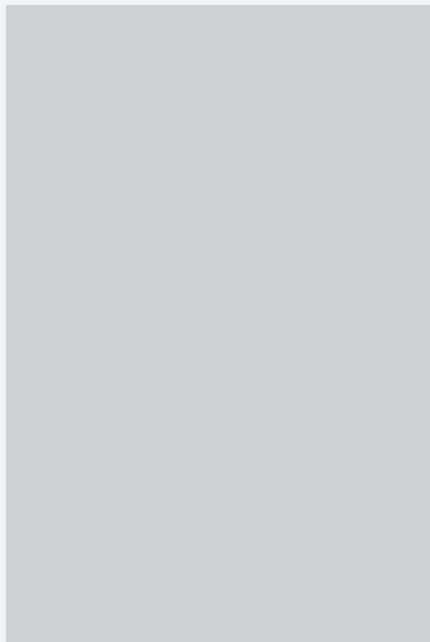
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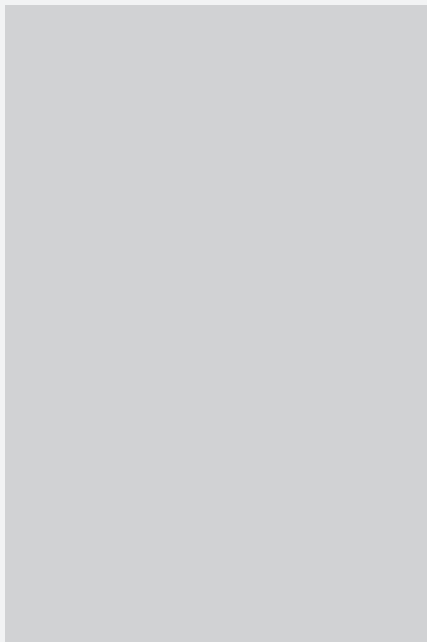


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## About the Conference<sup>1</sup>

This conference warmly invites thinkers and activists to contribute work that advances our understanding of intellectual imperialism, academic dependency, epistemic violence, and that suggests interventions paving the way to epistemic justice and autonomous knowledge production.

Scholars researching intellectual imperialism and academic dependency have critiqued the structural inequalities of global academia and knowledge production (S. F. Alatas 2003; S. H. Alatas 2000; Guillermo 2023; Patel 2021). They argue that the metrification of academia and the imposition of university and journal rankings orient all knowledge production towards the Global North, predominantly the US, where most highly ranked universities, journals, and conferences are based (Guillermo 2023). In the race for university rankings and faculty productivity metrics, scholars from the Global North, especially White scholars, hold hegemonic influence in shaping research directions, evaluating scholarly works, setting “best practices” and training the next generations of academics. I.e., scholars who hold globally disproportionate amounts of privilege, and who are benefiting from rather than being violated by global power structures and the (after) effects of imperialism, (settler)colonialism and slavery, are judging and gatekeeping the knowledge production of the Global Majority, often with vastly insufficient knowledge about Global Southern contexts and concerns. Thus, the elites of the Global North assessing and evaluating what globally counts as “good scholarship” and what not, what is globally relevant and what not, what deserves to be published or presented and what not. These global academic power relations have an uncanny resemblance to colonial power relations. Critics have for a very long time pointed out Eurocentric, white-centric and ideological biases pervading the social sciences and humanities (Rizal 1890; Du Bois 1947 [in Itzigsohn and Brown 2020]; Quijano 2000; Mignolo 2002, Alatas 2003, Grosfoguel 2013). This testifies to the problematic effects of these gatekeeping functions of Global North-based scholars and institutions. This epistemic violence is a formidable, tragic injustice of our time. It is extremely insidious that a group of elite scholars

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1 Based on the original concept notes of the conference, published at the conference’s website.

distorts global knowledge production and at the same time excludes the Global Majority from it, and we urgently call on scholars from all continents to put a stop to it.

These academic power relations render knowledge production itself racialized and colonized. Our very notions of “knowledge production” in academia are elitist in the sense that only knowledge production by academics—who often are white, upper class, and hold other privileges—is seen as valid. Laypeople, workers, farmers, the subaltern, racialized and indigenous people are producing, holding and transmitting accurate and valuable knowledges, but these knowledges are not seen as legitimate, they are instead perceived as mere “raw” data for academics to freely use, interpret, theorize upon and publish in single-authored publications (Tillman 2024). The methods used to “process” this data often carry racist and white supremacist biases (Zuberi 2000, 2001) leading to biased theories.

Even scholars from the Global North writing about decolonization and the struggles of communities situated in the Global South may commit epistemic violence. One problem that scholars with privilege writing about subaltern subjects face is the danger of extracting and appropriating subaltern knowledge. Epistemic extractivism occurs when knowledge produced by communities in struggle from the Global South are appropriated, depoliticized and decontextualized without receiving any benefits from the scholar writing about them (Rivera Cusicanqui 2012, Grosfoguel 2016). Well-intended scholars can still reproduce epistemic sexist and racist practices by not acknowledging the origins of theories of liberation by women and communities from the Global South (Grosfoguel 2013 and 2018). There has been a rich tradition of women from the Global South interrogating white feminist scholarship for excluding or appropriating the experiences of women from the Global South (Mohanty 1988, Espinosa Miñoso 2018 and 2022). Activists and scholars from the Global South have called to interrogate the political economy of intellectual production in the Global North as well as the networks of dependencies in the exchanges and collaborations between scholars from both regions. Furthermore, there is a demand to center the voices of the scholars and activists immersed in social struggles in the Global South without appropriating or depoliticizing their practices and knowledge.

In light of these issues, scholars have called for the need to dismantle the power structures and hierarchies of global academia (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021; Schöpf 2021) and to foster Autonomous Academic Communication Communities (Guillermo 2023) in the Global South and among discriminated groups in the Global North that will engage in truly autonomous knowledge production. Such communities may facilitate truly autonomous knowledge production, enabling them to theorize based on their own historical, social, and cultural contexts, and to conduct agenda setting and problem formulation informed by local, in-group concerns, without influences and pressures coming from global academic elites distorting their research (S. H. Alatas 1979, 2002).

This conference is a project of the Decolonial Studies Program (DSP), Center for Integrative and Development Studies, University of the Philippines. UP CIDS is the policy research unit of the university.

Taking the lead as the corresponding convenor of this project is Dr. Caroline Schöpf, Research Fellow of the DSP, and a professorial fellow at the UP Diliman Department of Sociology. Alongside with Dr. Schöpf, this conference was supported by the following co-convenors:

- Rosa O'Connor-Acevedo (University of Oregon, US)
- Francisco Jayme Guiang (University of the Philippines Diliman / Chinese University of Hong Kong)
- Bijulal Mecheril (Mahatma Gandhi University, India)
- Jose Monfred Sy (University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines)
- Fatima Sajjad (University of Management and Technology, Pakistan)
- Glen Christian “Cian” Tacasa (University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines)
- Korey Tillman (Northwestern University, US)
- Kebart Licayan (Policy Research and Legal Services, Bangsamoro Transition Authority)
- Patrick Maluki (University of Nairobi) - Convenor

## About the Proceedings

The organizing committee decided to make this conference purely online, to accommodate as many dialogues as possible. Regardless of geographical boundaries and differences with time zones, this conference sought to become an avenue for people to create critical discussions on the current course of epistemic injustice and intellectual dependency.

With over 28 sessions and more than 90 presentations, the 2-day virtual conference pursued a wide array of topics from Philippine Studies, critical analysis of current power dynamics, means to decolonize the classroom, theoretical canon, and knowledge productions to critical readings of decolonial literatures. We owe the success of this conference to the participation of scholars, community leaders, and community members from the Global South that interrogated intellectual imperialism and epistemic violence perpetuated by the ivory towers of the Global North.

Dr. Caroline Schöpf delivered the welcome message followed by opening remarks from Dr. Marie Aubrey J. Villaceran. The first plenary session titled sought to present possible directions on reclaiming institutional autonomy, and upholding academic freedom. On the second day of the conference, a spotlight session was dedicated to discuss teaching methods and pedagogical strategies that resist both global and local academic hierarchies. This spotlight session was graced by junior faculty members at the University of the Philippines.

This proceeding was prepared and edited by Cian Tacasa from the recordings of the sessions “Defining and Reclaiming Academic Autonomy: For who and how should we produce knowledge?” and “Teaching Towards Epistemic Justice: An Interdisciplinary Roundtable Discussion on Pedagogy against Intellectual Imperialism” during the conference held on November 9–10, 2024 via Zoom. This conference is a project of the Decolonial Studies Program (DSP), Center for Integrative and Development Studies, University of the Philippines.





# Defining and Reclaiming Academic Autonomy: For who and how should we produce knowledge?

## The Greenwich Meridian Time of Scholarship and the Alternative Ethos of "Anachronistic Academia"<sup>2</sup>

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Dr. Ramon Guillermo<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Guillermo opened his address by introducing the Vietnamese philosopher, Trần Đức Thảo and the publication of his collected works, *Phénoménologie, marxisme et lutte anticoloniale de Trần Đức Thảo* (*Phenomenology, Marxism, and the Anticolonial Struggle of Tran Duc Thao*). Thảo is an important thinker whose main work, *Phénoménologie et matérialisme dialectique* (*Phenomenology and Dialectical Materialism*, 1951), influenced important French intellectuals such as Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes, Jean-François Lyotard, Paul Ricœur, Jean-

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2 The transcription was edited for this publication. The unedited Full-Text version of his keynote speech can be accessed through his ResearchGate page at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385662110\\_The\\_Greenwich\\_Meridian\\_Time\\_of\\_Scholarship\\_and\\_the\\_Alternative\\_Ethos\\_of\\_Anachronistic\\_Academia](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385662110_The_Greenwich_Meridian_Time_of_Scholarship_and_the_Alternative_Ethos_of_Anachronistic_Academia)

3 Dr. Ramon Guillermo is currently the director of the Center for International Studies (CIS) at the University of the Philippines Diliman. His current research projects are on the textual transmission, dissemination, reception, and translation of ideas and ideologies in Southeast Asia using techniques and approaches from translation studies and digital humanities. He is a proponent of the development of Philippine Studies as an autonomous academic communication community. He has served as a Faculty Regent of the University of the Philippines and is one of the initiators of the Network in Defense of Historical Truth and Academic Freedom.



Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jacques Derrida. Despite this, Dr. Guillermo noted that Thao was “forgotten for a long time.” There is, however, renewed interest in Thảo, more than thirty years after his death, with the growing discourse on decolonialism.

Dr. Guillermo proceeded to reflect on an encounter between the French writer Thierry Marchaisse and Thảo upon the latter’s return to Paris in the 1990s. According to Dr. Guillermo, Marchaisse was unsure of what to think of with his encounter with Thảo, whose clock supposedly have appeared to stop in the 1950s by talking about “unfashionable topics such as Marx and Hegel.” He proceeded to discuss how Marchaisse’s shock with Thảo relates to the idea that metropolises such as Paris, New York, and London being known as the “Greenwich meridians” of literature. The Greenwich meridian is a line in London which serves “the zero point of all other time zones.” Here, one is judged to be either “behind” or “ahead.” For Dr. Guillermo, “[Thảo’s] own literary fate in the West, his marginalization and his apparent revival during the present wave of interest in “decolonial theory” has been determined by this very meridian.”

He moves on by highlighting how trends from metropolises affect the Filipino academe, noting how “When we talk about cutting-edge research that supposedly ‘engages with the literature,’ ‘fills the research gap,’ ‘is abreast of developments in the field’ or ‘addresses key problems and issues,’ it is usually with reference to this Greenwich meridian of Paris, London, or New York.” Against these notions, Dr. Guillermo stated that he prefers to be, like Thảo, an anachronism or “against time.” Sharing how he does this, Dr. Guillermo states: “I therefore mostly work on trying to deepen my knowledge of the classics, both foreign and Philippines.” He cites personal experiences being referred to as a “*mambubulok*” of ideas. For him, however, it is more important to master the classics, both of Filipino and foreign literature. This entails “developing a direct grasp of primary literature.” For him, being in touch with history is emphasized in understanding “theoretical fluency,” instead of being “up-to-date.” Dr. Guillermo closed by talking about writing in Filipino, and how it allows him to go beyond Paris’ meridian.

# Reclaiming the University: In Defense of Academic Freedom and Institutional Autonomy

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*Hon. Carl Marc Ramota<sup>4</sup>*

Hon. Ramota situated his keynote speech first on the current challenges to academic freedom and institutional autonomy in higher education institutions in the Philippines amid the democratic erosion caused by neoliberal market-driven adjustments in education, and public service in general. He mentioned how the University of the Philippines (UP) has become a target of violations against academic freedom and civil liberties in recent years, from the bloody regime of president Rodrigo Duterte, and the current administration of president Ferdinand Marcos Jr., the dictator's namesake.

Recently, the Office of the Faculty Regent, together with other sectoral regents have documented cases of political harassment and intimidation against UP faculty, staff, students, and alumni — many of who are engaged in labor union, social work, and human rights protection. These forms of harassment involve a string of cases which include intimidation,<sup>5</sup> surveillance,<sup>6</sup> and arrests<sup>7</sup> of members of the UP community.

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4 Hon. Carl Marc Ramota is the 27th Faculty Regent of the University of the Philippines (UP), the youngest to be elected to date. He represents more than 4,000 faculty members across the System in the Board of Regents (BOR), the highest policy-making body of the University. An alumnus and faculty member of the College of Arts and Sciences at UP Manila, he served as Chairperson of the Department of Social Sciences and coordinator of its Political Science Program for several years. Regent Ramota is recognized for his achievements in teaching and public service.

5 See Krixia Subingsubing, "PNP Called out for 'Harassing' Doctor Who Autopsied Teen," *INQUIRER.NET*, 16 July 2023, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1817119/pnp-called-out-for-harassing-doctor-who-autopsied-teen>.

6 See Johnson Santos Jr. 2023, "PNP Surveillance Drone 'Accidentally' Lands in Quezon Hall," *Philippine Collegian*, August 4, 2023. <https://phkule.org/article/920/pnp-surveillance-drone-accidentally-lands-in-quezon-hall/>.

7 See Marcelo, Elizabeth, and Bella Cariaso. 2023. "UP Professor Arrested in SSS Case Cleared." *The Philippine Star*, March 20, 2023. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2023/03/20/2252948/professor-arrested-sss-case-cleared>.

Hon. Ramota argued that this growing state interference on academic spaces reflects the grave impact of the 2021 unilateral abrogation of the UP-DND Accord, and the subsequent intensified operations under the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). NTF-ELCAC was created through the issuance of Executive Order No. 70 in 2018 by strongman president Duterte. Hon. Ramota situated the creation of the NTF-ELCAC with the emboldened state surveillance and intimidation of members of the UP community, especially those involved in advocacy work. UP faculty, staff, and students are frequently red-tagged by mere affiliation, jeopardizing their safety and undermining the university's teaching and research functions.

He also identified the creation of NTF-ELCAC as the root cause of escalated cases of political harassment across UP campus. Such as those faced by Phoebe Sanchez,<sup>8</sup> Dr. Rommel Rodriguez, Dexter Cayanes, and Ruel Aguila, along with two other writers.<sup>9</sup>

Hon. Ramota emphasized that such incidents are reminiscent of state overreach during martial law under Ferdinand Marcos Sr., underscoring UP's long-standing role as a bastion of activism and dissent. The university's commitment to academic freedom has been pivotal in fostering critical thinking, civic engagement, and social movements challenging unjust systems. Justice Estela Perlas-Bernabé of the Philippine Supreme Court highlighted this significance in *Pimentel v. Medeladea*, describing that academic freedom is a “necessary tool for critical inquiry of truth and its free exposition. Thus, the guarantee of academic freedom is complementary to the freedom of expression and the freedom of the mind. Academic freedom allowed U.P. to become a bastion of activism and dissent since the 60s.”

Hon. Ramota emphasized the historical role of UP in the struggle for academic freedom and institutional autonomy throughout different administrations.

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8 See Catherine Gonzales, “ACT Accuses CIDG of Harassing Secretary General,” *INQUIRER.NET*, 28 June 2019. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1135184/act-accuses-cidg-of-harassing-secretary-general>.

9 Karapatan, “Red-Tagging, Halting Distribution of KWF Books with ‘Anti-Marcos, Anti-Duterte’ Content, Acts of Idiocy,” Karapatan, Accessed 23 December 2024, [https://www.karapatan.org/media\\_release/red-tagging-halting-distribution-of-kwf-books-with-anti-marcos-anti-duterte-content-acts-of-idiocy-081222/](https://www.karapatan.org/media_release/red-tagging-halting-distribution-of-kwf-books-with-anti-marcos-anti-duterte-content-acts-of-idiocy-081222/).

From the Diliman Commune of 1971 to mobilizations during the Duterte administration's war on drugs, UP has consistently served as a bastion for activism, alliance-building, and resistance. This tradition aligns with the university's binate mandate as a knowledge producer and a social critic. Hon. Ramota further highlighted the crucial role of academic freedom in UP as an institution, stating that "Academic freedom allows an environment that is most conducive to speculation, experimentation, and creation."

Despite the increasingly hostile political atmosphere against academic freedom and institutional autonomy, Hon. Ramota commended the proactive efforts of the UP community. These include system-wide campaigns led by the Office of the Faculty Regent, together with the offices of the Student and Staff regents, to establish committees dedicated to the protection of academic freedom and human rights.<sup>10</sup>

Hon. Ramota cautioned that alongside direct attacks on academic freedom, universities also face systemic challenges arising from neoliberal adjustments and performance-based metrics. He critiqued the rise of managerialism within academic institutions, wherein corporate rationality increasingly supplanted academic decision-making. This shift prioritizes efficiency metrics over the intellectual and social missions of the university. He noted that this managerial culture fosters organizational environments where dissent is stifled, workloads are intensified, and scholarly independence is undermined. This proliferation of "audit cultures" within universities, Hon. Ramota argued, contributes to an untenable environment for faculty and staff. These cultures often emphasize compliance with performance metrics at the expense of academic freedom and creativity. Faculty are burdened with excessive administrative tasks, including report submissions, meetings, and evaluations, which detract from their core roles in teaching, research, and public service.

Additionally, he highlighted the dangers of internationalization efforts that prioritize institutional reputation over substantive academic goals. He pointed

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10 See UPLB Perspective, "'Hindi Mali Ang Pakikibaka': UPLB Students Push to Keep Campus a Safe Haven after Alarming Police Presence in Brgy. Batong Malake, Los Baños," UPLB Perspective, 29 April 2021, <https://uplbperspective.wordpress.com/2021/04/29/hindi-mali-ang-makibaka-uplb-students-push-to-keep-campus-a-safe-haven-after-alarming-police-presence-in-brgy-batong-malake-los-banos/>.

to the subtle yet pervasive pressures on faculty to conform to externally driven norms and priorities, which can dilute the critical and emancipatory potential of higher education. Hon. Ramota concluded his keynote address with a call to action for all of the stakeholders, claiming that “Only when academic freedom is guaranteed, and human rights are protected can we fully realize the emancipatory goal of the university that seeks not just to create knowledge but to transform and change society.”

# Ways to Decolonize the International Studies Curriculum in the Philippines

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*Prof. Nassef Adiong<sup>11</sup>*

Prof. Nassef Adiong began his keynote by providing a critical examination of the origins and current practices within the field of International Studies (IS) and International Relations (IR) in the Philippines. He framed his discussion by tracing the historical development of IR as an academic study in the Philippines and compared it with other universities around the world.

He then traced the birth of IR as an academic domain arising in the 20th century within the context of a geopolitical order that highlights state and interstate systems. The study of IR acted as an analytical and consultative resource for governments to navigate through pressing strategic state interests. He underscored that these paradigms emerged from Western academic institutions, such as Aberystwyth University in Wales. While IR is becoming globally influential, it often neglects the material realities and cultural contexts of the Global South, including the Philippines. Prof. Adiong mentioned the possibility of IR entering a post-colonial redirection within itself, for example he highlighted the dynamics within the patterns of localization of global norms to reflect local contexts. Prof. Adiong highlighted that “Eurocentrism has been leveled at the theoretical foundations, sources of knowledge, and practices in international relations ... reflecting core-periphery dynamics in the imposition of colonial modernity.”

In hindsight, however, this only revealed that the discipline of IR suggests its continuity of the form of state and system centered within Western contexts,

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11 Prof. Nassef Adiong is the Director of the Bangsamoro Parliament’s Policy Research and Legal Services and Professorial Lecturer at the University of the Philippines Diliman’s Asian Center and Miriam College’s International Studies Department. He researches policy issues relating to historical, religio-cultural, socio-political, economic, environmental, and security aspects of the Bangsamoro society and explores decolonial knowledge sources of the global south as well as interdisciplinary study between Islam and International Relations.

and it also upholds the primacy of these categories in a normative way, whether IR intended it or not.

Subsequently, Prof. Adiong argued that this normative Eurocentric state system has been criticized from reflexive and post-positivist standpoints. One such example is the criticism of the idea that scholars from anywhere may introduce universal theories, but societal structures have hindered theoretical production in the global South. Some emphasized the need to link rationality from colonial structures and ways of thinking, while others emphasized theoretical plurality in international relations. He argued that expanding the scope IR to include non-security matters and the agency of non-state actors would enable the discipline to transcend its colonial roots and better reflect the interconnected realities of a post-colonial world. By fostering inclusive frameworks that prioritize the voices and experiences of the Global South, IR can evolve into a field that not only accommodates multiple epistemologies but also contributes to a more equitable understanding of global interactions, thus fulfilling its potential as a truly transformative academic.

IR's inherent Eurocentrism can be seen in the main textbooks used to teach IR, wherein foundational theories and methodologies are largely informed by Western experiences, worldviews, and concerns. Prof. Adiong argued that these biases have created a "geocentric practicalism" that overlooks non-Western perspectives. This results in an epistemological imbalance, perpetuating the dominance of Western knowledge while sidelining diverse and pluralistic worldviews.

To address these limitations, Prof. Adiong proposed several strategies for decolonizing the IS curriculum in the Philippines. He stressed that decolonization does not imply a wholesale rejection of Western theories and practices, but rather an intellectual process of anchoring IS/IR frameworks in local contexts and self-determined purposes. He outlined three key points to guide this endeavor:

1. **Plural Intellectual Process:** Prof. Adiong stressed that Western knowledge "should be understood as an intellectual process anchored in different aspects in different contexts, such as centering our worldviews to create theories and research based on local perspectives and for self-determined purposes."

2. **Building Decolonial Structures:** He called for the creation of institutions, norms, and scholarly practices that reflect the diverse realities of the Global South. This includes interdisciplinary team teaching, the promotion of local academic journals, and fostering homegrown theorizing in classrooms.
3. **Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Systems:** Prof. Adiong emphasized the integration of indigenous knowledge with modern science, enabling the discipline to critically interrogate exploitative and hierarchical global orders. He suggested validating marginalized voices and teaching IS/IR as a field open to multiple canons, rather than veering from a single dominant narrative.

Prof. Adiong's practical suggestions for reforming the IS curriculum included the inclusion of three thematic sections:

1. **Global North-South Relations:** Prof. Adiong suggested courses on International Relations Theories and Methods, discourses on capitalism and Global Finance, International Organizations, and Public International Law.
2. **Global South-South Relations:** Complementary to the North-South Relations, Prof. Adiong suggested courses addressing post-colonial perspectives including Decolonial Theories, Global Sustainable Development and Social Enterprise, Human Security, and Regional Organizations such as ASEAN, Asian Development Bank, African Union, and the Arab League.
3. **Global Filipino:** Prof. Adiong suggested having a set of courses focused on Philippine-specific topics such as Philippine Foreign Relations, Labor Migration and Overseas Filipino Workers, and pressing issues such as Philippine National Security and Peace Process, the West Philippine Sea dispute, Climate Change, Disaster Resilience, and Philippine Agriculture; as well as complementary global trends in Philippine contexts like AI, fashion, and entertainment.



To conclude his keynote, Prof. Adiong also proposed skills-based enhancements within the curriculum. Instead of conventional thesis requirements, students could undertake capstone projects or policy research papers that address real-world challenges “with an aim to reach a multi-perspectivist global Filipino imbued by canonical dialogue of Philippine West understandings, as well as address societal issues through policy planning and implementation.”

# Six Points about Decolonization of Knowledge

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*Prof. Syed Farid Alatas<sup>12</sup>*

Prof. Alatas directed his keynote towards a critical examination of the state of knowledge production in the Global South, highlighting its enduring colonial underpinnings and offering actionable strategies for meaningful change.

Prof. Alatas began by critiquing the prevailing nature of knowledge production, which he described as often offensive, marginalizing, and in some cases, overtly hostile. He underscored the role of colonial discourse not only in marginalizing non-Western intellectual traditions, but also in perpetuating violent erasures, as evidenced by the academic treatment of historical events like the Nakba. He lamented the lack of attention and respect afforded to local and Indigenous knowledge traditions, despite the wealth of intellectual resources available in non-Western contexts. Further, he framed the persistent reliance on Western epistemologies within the Global South as a matter of collective shame among ourselves. He questions how the Global South can tolerate the lack of representation in terms of intellectual and knowledge production.

This neglect, he argued, has resulted in a failure to produce knowledge that truly reflects the intellectual richness of non-Western traditions. To address these challenges, Prof. Alatas presented six key points for thinking about and implementing the decolonization of knowledge:

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12 Prof. Syed Farid Alatas is a Professor of Sociology at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He headed the Department of Malay Studies at NUS from 2007 till 2013. He lectured at the University of Malaya in the Department of Southeast Asian Studies prior to joining NUS. Prof. Alatas has authored numerous books and articles, including *Ibn Khaldun* (Oxford University Press, 2013); *Applying Ibn Khaldun: The Recovery of a Lost Tradition in Sociology* (Routledge, 2014), and (with Vineeta Sinha) *Sociological Theory Beyond the Canon* (Palgrave, 2017). His new book on the decolonization of knowledge from the Malay world is forthcoming in 2025. His areas of interest are the sociology of Islam, social theory, religion and reform, intra- and inter-religious dialogue, and the study of Eurocentrism.

### **1. *Defining Decolonization of Knowledge***

Decolonization, according to Prof. Alatas, involves three interrelated dimensions: critique, reconstruction, and original construction. While critiquing colonial and imperialist knowledge is essential, it is equally important to reconstruct existing discourses and create entirely new ones. Drawing on José Rizal's work, he emphasized the importance of using local intellectual traditions to both challenge colonial narratives and develop original theories that reflect non-Western experiences and realities.

### **2. *Decolonization vs. Decolonial Thought***

Prof. Alatas distinguished between the broader concept of decolonization and the specific intellectual tradition of decolonial thought associated with Latin American scholars like Aníbal Quijano and Walter Dignolo. He argued that while decolonial thought is a significant tradition, conflating it with the wider project of decolonization risks narrowing its scope. Decolonization, he emphasized, encompasses a diverse range of theoretical and methodological approaches.

### **3. *Building and Recognizing Intellectual Traditions***

Prof. Alatas highlighted the importance of identifying and fostering intellectual traditions within non-Western societies. He pointed to examples such as Pantayong Pananaw in the Philippines, Said Hussain Alatas' idea of autonomous knowledge, and the Bogor School of Critical Agrarian Studies in Indonesia. Such traditions provide a sense of identity, inspiration, and community for scholars and students, fostering collaboration and continuity in knowledge production.

### **4. *Practical Implementation of Decolonization***

Decolonization must be integrated into every stage of research, from topic selection and problem formulation to theoretical application and argumentation. By embedding decolonial principles into research practices, scholars can ensure that their work reflects local realities and challenges dominant epistemologies.

## **5. *Addressing Other Hegemonies***

While decolonization is crucial, Prof. Alatas cautioned against treating it as the sole priority. He argued that knowledge production must also address other hegemonic orientations, such as statism, authoritarianism, androcentrism, and ethno-nationalism, which similarly stifle intellectual discourse. The goal, he noted, should be to attain autonomy from all forms of hegemonic dominance, not just coloniality.

## **6. *Ensuring Practical Impact***

Finally, Prof. Alatas emphasized that efforts to decolonize knowledge must extend beyond academic endeavors and go outside the campus. Scholars should act as public intellectuals, engaging with broader society to drive change.

In closing, Prof. Alatas reiterated that decolonization must engage beyond the campus, and said “otherwise, we risk being more superfluous than ever.”

# Discussions

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*Asst. Prof. Jose Monfred Sy*<sup>13</sup>

Asst. Prof. Sy led the synthesis discussion on all of the keynote addresses. He navigated through the whole plenary session which explored the pressing need to reclaim academic autonomy and decolonize knowledge production in the face of intellectual imperialism and systemic oppression. Speakers highlighted critical challenges, beginning with Dr. Guillermo addressed the dominance of urban metropolises and Western intellectual standards, which marginalize local and Indigenous knowledge systems. Hon. Ramota underscored the persistent state surveillance and silencing of academics and activists, particularly in the University of the Philippines, emphasizing how these undermine the university's role as a social critic. This call for resistance resonated with Prof. Adiong's emphasis on fostering localized theories and methodologies to counteract the hegemony of Eurocentric frameworks in International Relations curricula in the Philippines. Meanwhile, Prof. Alatas advanced the discussion by outlining possible directions for the practice of decolonial knowledge production.

Asst. Prof. Sy connected these ideas, by emphasizing the systemic barriers to epistemic justice, including state complicity with international financial institutions and militarized dispossession of marginalized communities. Drawing parallels with global struggles, such as the ongoing US-backed Zionist violence in Palestine, Asst. Prof. Sy argued that these forces not only disrupt academic freedom but perpetuate "scholasticide," denying oppressed groups the means to produce knowledge.

Resonating with Prof. Alatas, Asst. Prof. Sy also advocated to engage decolonization beyond the academe, and integrate decolonial academic efforts with the persistent collective action.

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13 Asst. Prof. Jose Monfred Sy, is an assistant professor of Philippine studies in the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature, University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman.

# Open Forum

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*Dr. Caroline Schöpf*

*Moderator*

## *On Addressing Intimidation and Epistemic Violence in Philippine Universities*

Hon. Ramota contributed to the open forum first by reflecting on the UP's recent efforts to establish mechanisms for protecting academic freedom in the aftermath of the unilateral abrogation of the UP-Department of National Defense Accord in 2021. He noted the inadequacy of institutional frameworks and discussions surrounding academic freedom, despite its enshrinement in the Philippine Constitution and the UP Charter. Ramota emphasized the importance of framing the defense of academic freedom as a collective effort, involving faculty, students, administrative staff, education support personnel, alumni, and campus communities. He highlighted the potential of coalition building within UP and with other higher education institutions, both public and private. This model, he suggested, could extend to regional networks through organizations like Education International and Scholars at Risk, which are working to foster regional coalitions in support of academic freedom and human rights. Ramota stressed the necessity of addressing academic freedom in the broader socio-political context, particularly considering the rise of populist and authoritarian regimes that threaten institutional autonomy worldwide.

He further critiqued the growing influence of neoliberal market-driven practices in academia, which he argued erode the university's core values. Ramota pointed to changes in the curriculum and operations, such as the K-12 shift that prioritizes labor market needs and the increasing reliance on performance-based metrics and audit cultures. These mechanisms, he contended, prioritize business efficiency at the expense of intellectual freedom and holistic education. As an alternative, Ramota advocated for leveraging coalitions to collectively assess the impact of such trends and explore alternatives to prevailing international mechanisms. He called for learning from other universities that have resisted or withdrawn from such

frameworks, suggesting that these coalitions could serve as platforms for dialogue and innovation. Ramota concluded by reaffirming that the defense of academic freedom must remain tied to the broader struggles for human rights, institutional autonomy, and the reimagining of higher education in the face of systemic socio-political and economic pressures.

### ***On Rizal's Exposure with Anarchism, and its relevance to Epistemic Justice in the Global South***

Dr. Guillermo addressed the relevance of anarchism in the Philippines with reference to its early introduction through Spanish influence and subsequent adaptation by local movements. He recounted Ben Anderson's *Under Three Flags*, which attempted to illustrate how anarchist ideas entered the Philippines, particularly through the labor movement, as Spain was a prominent center of anarchist thought. One significant milestone was the 1906 Tagalog translation of Errico Malatesta's manual on anarchism. Early materials like this reveal the historical presence of anarchist ideas in the country. However, the challenge lies not in tracing its historical entry but in assessing its practical relevance in contemporary Philippine society. The adoption and success of such ideas depend largely on their application, as social movements must demonstrate their effectiveness through practice, rather than being confined to theoretical discourse.

In the 21st century, elements of the anarchist tradition may still hold relevance for addressing current social and political issues in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. However, their utility hinges on whether these ideas can be adapted to local contexts and made meaningful for contemporary movements. This process demands active engagement from practitioners to translate these philosophies into actionable strategies that resonate with local realities. The question of anarchism, therefore, extends beyond academic discussion to the realm of practice, where its principles must be tested, contextualized, and proven impactful in addressing the specific challenges faced by Filipino and Southeast Asian communities today.

### ***On World Rankings, and Academic Journals Metrics***

Dr. Guillermo responded on the topic of world rankings and academic journal metrics with his observations about the uncritical adoption of ranking systems

by university administrations, using a recent example involving UP and the Alper-Dodger Scientific Index of 2025. A press release lauded UP scientists for topping this index, despite the questionable validity of the ranking system, which relies on manipulable metrics like the H-index. This reflects a broader issue in academia, where university administrators celebrate rankings without scrutinizing their implications or methodologies. Such rankings reduce academic achievements to oversimplified numbers, fostering competition among colleagues and undermining the collective nature of scholarly work.

Dr. Guillermo noted how some professors now boast about their positions in the rankings, further perpetuating a culture of self-promotion over meaningful academic contributions. This distortion of academic priorities highlights the disconnect between university leadership and the realities of academic life. He emphasized the need for academics to challenge these systems from within by strengthening faculty organizations, unions, and governance structures to advocate for more meaningful evaluations of academic success. While some resistance to these rankings is emerging, the speaker remained hopeful that a broader consensus rejecting their validity would eventually prevail. He argued that such rankings not only fail to capture the complexities of academic work, but also distort the values and mission of educational institutions, reducing academia to a numbers game that ultimately harms the integrity of scholarly pursuits.

Meanwhile, Prof. Alatas emphasized the importance of critiquing institutions for perpetuating intellectual imperialism, particularly through systems like academic rankings. While acknowledging the monumental challenges of reforming institutions, he urged scholars not to be immobilized by these systemic constraints. Transformative change, he argued, requires strong social movements, but waiting for institutional shifts is not viable. Instead, Prof. Alatas advocated for proactive intellectual activism beyond institutional boundaries. Drawing from his experiences in Malaysia, he highlighted alternative spaces for intellectual engagement, such as the rise of independent bookstores, publishers, and reading groups organized by students and alumni dissatisfied with conventional academic structures. These grassroots efforts foster a renewed interest in physical texts and intellectual discourse outside campuses.



Prof. Alatas also suggested the value of regional collaboration, proposing study trips as a means of fostering solidarity and exchange among scholars across countries. Recalling past collaborations, he extended an invitation for Filipino academics and students to engage in anti-imperialist and decolonial discussions in Kuala Lumpur, promising enriching programs that blend dialogue and cultural exchange. He encouraged academics to pursue intellectual development independently of institutional limitations, cultivating spaces for critical engagement and activism. By embracing these external avenues, Prof. Alatas argued, scholars can sustain their intellectual growth and activism while challenging the systemic forces that stifle academic freedom and innovation.

Hon. Ramota critiqued the growing obsession of university administrators with academic rankings and their influence on institutional priorities. He highlighted how rankings are increasingly used to evaluate and incentivize faculty and staff, often tying monetary rewards to metrics such as publication output. This fixation, he argued, shifts focus from the quality and substance of academic work to a numbers-driven approach that undermines broader intellectual and educational goals.

Drawing on their experience with a local conference imposing individual H-index of the participants, Hon. Ramota criticized the reductive focus on metrics such as research output and publication count, which increasingly dictate university promotion, tenure, and incentives. He argued that such practices undermine the broader mission of academia, where teaching quality and community engagement should hold equal, if not greater, value. Hon. Ramota stressed that academic work must benefit communities through meaningful public service, rather than being reduced to a numbers-driven model. He also criticized the audit culture that universities have embraced, including quality assurance systems and accreditation processes like QMS and PAASCU. While intended to improve academic programs, these initiatives often lead to superficial changes, such as cosmetic adjustments to facilities during accreditation visits, rather than substantive reforms. Such practices, he contended, highlight the disconnect between institutional processes and genuine academic improvement.

In addition, Dr. Guillermo expressed dismay on the systemic bias against Filipino and Global South scholars in academic production, emphasizing the need to challenge the inferiority complex that undervalues local research compared to outputs from the Global North. He noted that many professors still prioritize metrics like Scopus-listed articles, reinforcing dependence on Western academic standards and marginalizing Filipino and Southeast Asian voices. To counter this, he encouraged students to cite and engage with local and regional scholars, fostering academic conversations that recognize the richness of Global South perspectives.

Dr. Guillermo also advocated for intellectual production in Philippine languages such as Cebuano, Ilocano, and Hiligaynon, noting their vast speaker populations surpass those of many European countries. He argued that these languages are equally capable of academic discourse and should be used in theses, dissertations, and critical writing alongside Filipino and English. Expanding intellectual engagement to include regional languages, he suggested, could strengthen Philippine academic identity and validate diverse local traditions. By overcoming the preference for Global North scholars and promoting multilingual scholarship, Dr. Guillermo envisioned a more inclusive and equitable academic culture that uplifts Filipino and regional intellectual contributions while challenging the dominance of Western academic standards.

Prof. Adiong, as a response, shared his experience advocating for academic outputs that prioritize societal impact over metrics and rankings. Reflecting on his journey in academia and policy research, he emphasized the importance of producing work that directly benefits communities rather than focusing solely on journal publications or academic prestige. He noted the institutional challenges faced by Filipino academics, particularly the heavy teaching and administrative workloads that leave little room for research and community engagement. This imbalance, he argued, hinders the potential of educators to contribute meaningfully to societal development.

Furthermore, Prof. Adiong called for structural reforms within universities to ensure equitable distribution of teaching, research, and community service responsibilities, allowing faculty to engage more deeply in impactful scholarship. He also reiterated the need for academics to address pressing

societal issues in their work, aligning research priorities with the realities and needs of their communities. By fostering dialogue with university administrators, he suggested, institutions could better support faculty in producing research that not only enriches academic discourse but also drives positive change in society. Prof. Adiong underscored the value of grounding academic work in the service of societal progress, reflecting his broader advocacy for decolonizing knowledge production.

As a final point in the discussion, Asst. Prof. Sy added that the pressure to publish in Scopus-indexed and Global North journals stems from university administrators, not the academic community. These administrators, acting as intermediaries between state interests and academia, often prioritize rankings to align with neoliberal standards of knowledge production, which contradicts the principles of academic freedom. Sy emphasized the disconnect between the celebration of rankings and the harsh realities faced by academics, particularly in the Global South, where low wages, delayed salaries, and insufficient research support are a common situation.

Asst. Prof. Sy explained that in the context of UP, this contradiction is exacerbated by recent agreement between the UP president and Armed Forces of the Philippines, which undermines the fundamental principle of academic freedom, and the responsibility of steering away from any state intervention in research and teaching. Asst. Prof. Sy called for resisting these neoliberal policies, advocating instead for alternative approaches to publishing and knowledge production. He encouraged academics to explore small presses, non-indexed journals, and monolingual journals that publish in Filipino and other Philippine languages, as well as to collaborate with non-academic platforms like people's organizations and NGOs. Such efforts, he argued, are essential for achieving epistemic justice, as they ground academic work in the realities of marginalized sectors and contribute to creating knowledge that serves the people.

# Teaching Towards Epistemic Justice: An Interdisciplinary Roundtable Discussion on Pedagogy against Intellectual Imperialism

## About the Panelists

1. **Francisco Jayme Paolo Guiang** is an assistant professor at the Department of History, University of the Philippines Diliman (UP Diliman). He is currently taking his Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in History at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. His MPhil project is about the history of pensionado scientists in the American colonial bureaucracy in early 20th century Philippines. His other research interests broadly include intellectual history, Philippine nationalist historiography, and studies on the Martial Law period in the Philippines. He has an MA and BA History degrees from the University of the Philippines Diliman. He is a member of Congress of Teachers/Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTEND), Akademiya at Bayan Kontra Disimpormasyon at Dayaan (ABKD), and Tanggol Kasaysayan (TK).
2. **Jose Monfred C. Sy** is an assistant professor of Philippine studies in the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature, UP Diliman. He received his Master of Arts (Philippine Studies) from the same university. He is currently a project leader for the Program on Alternative Development of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies, where he is a co-editor of the multi-volume monograph *Alternative Practices* across

Southeast Asia (2020, 2023). His research appears in journals such as *Kritika Kultura*, *Humanities Diliman*, *Social Science Diliman*, *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, and *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, and edited collections published by IBON Foundation, UP Press, Routledge, Springer, Vernon, and Nova Science. He is also a writer and translator of children's books. He is a member of Congress of Teachers/Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTENTD) and the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) Philippines.

3. **Noreen H. Sapalo** is a Filipina anthropologist whose research focuses on death, disaster, and digital cultures. She is an assistant professor at the Department of Anthropology, UP Diliman, where she is also taking her Ph.D. in Anthropology. Concurrently, she is Affiliate Faculty of the Folklore Studies Program of her college and President of Ugnayang Pang-Aghamtao, the Anthropological Association of the Philippines. When taking a break from teaching or doing fieldwork, she does capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian martial art. Currently, she is a Research Fellow of Sigla Research Hub and principal investigator of a research project on the future of digital labor and precarious workers in the Philippines in light of Artificial Intelligence.
4. **Deidre R. Morales** is a literature instructor from the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature, UP Diliman and a member of Congress of Teachers/Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTENTD). She was also a fellow at the 12th *Kritika* National Workshop on Art and Cultural Criticism. Her works have appeared in *Luntian Journal* and *Makiling Review*. She is finishing her MA in Language in Literature at De La Salle University Manila. Her research focuses on the life and works of the Filipino social realist writer Efren R. Abueg.
5. **Eric Loyd P. Hilario** is an instructor from the Department of Mathematics of the UP Integrated School and currently a member of the Philippine Council of Mathematics Teacher Educators (MATHTED), Inc. and Congress of Teachers/Educators for Nationalism and Democracy (CONTENTD). He graduated Cum Laude from the UP College of Education with a bachelor's degree in secondary education majoring in mathematics and ranked 8th in the September 2018 Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (Secondary). He is also finishing his Master of Arts in Education degree

majoring in Mathematics Education at the same institution. He is also pursuing research in critical mathematics pedagogy that aims to integrate social justice issues in the mathematics classroom.

### ***Moderator***

1. **Glen Christian “Cian” Tacasa** is a dedicated researcher-in-training. Cian Tacasa is currently pursuing BA Philippine Studies, major in Filipino and major in Sociology at UP Diliman. He is a student member of the International Sociological Association (ISA), where his commitment extends to the ISA Research Committees on Conceptual and Terminological Analysis (RC35); Sociological Theory (RC16); and Racism, Nationalism, Indigeneity and Ethnicity (RC05). He is also an Undergraduate Member of the Ugnayang Pang-Aghamtao/ Anthropological Association of the Philippines (UGAT) and Philippine Sociological Society (PSS).

# Teaching Towards Epistemic Justice: An Interdisciplinary Roundtable Discussion on Pedagogy against Intellectual Imperialism

Cian Tacasa started the roundtable discussion by welcoming everyone present at the Main Zoom room. He then introduced each panel member of the roundtable discussion. This roundtable discussion was intended to be a casual conversation between junior educators from UP Diliman, tackling their experiences and strategies on decolonizing the classroom. Cian Tacasa posted questions, and each round all of the panelists were given opportunities to share their insights.

1. What specific teaching strategies have you found most effective in challenging intellectual imperialism within your discipline, and how do these approaches resonate with students from diverse backgrounds?

*Asst. Prof. Sy*

Asst. Prof. Sy responded by stating the importance of autonomous knowledge production and Philippine Studies providing a path to self-knowing. He traced this intellectual tradition to Jose Rizal, who he treated as the first person to articulate Philippine Studies as a legitimate episteme. He also mentioned how he uses Filipino as a medium of instruction in his classes. In terms of class syllabi, Asst. Prof. Sy also underscored his prioritization of including Filipino authors and asking students to cite local scholars and those from the Global South in their research. Asst. Prof. Sy further adds: “I think that that’s a way of centering the academe as a producer of knowledge and acknowledging the fact that people create knowledge based on their experiences, based on their struggles and their collective action.” He further added that he pushes his students “to also include an anti-imperialist angle or anti-colonial critique in their works.” Asst. Prof. Sy emphasized that importance of embedding the critique of imperialism in both the syllabus and research work of his classes.

### *Asst. Prof. Guiang*

Asst. Prof. Guiang how Philippine History, as a general education course, may be treated in understanding history as a linear flow of events. As a way to expand perspectives, he also includes discussions on historiography, citing Teodoro Agoncillo's *History of the Filipino People*. Asst. Prof. Guiang further noted how he asks questions of how and why did Agoncillo write the text while relating it to the context of how the Spanish wrote about Philippine history. Asst. Prof. Guiang also highlighted how he includes other thinkers such as Renato Constantino and others from the so-called "School of Nationalist Historiography" and critics such as Reynaldo Ileto. He emphasized that history is more than just "discussing events," but also involves veering away from colonial viewpoints, narratives, and historiography. He also mentioned including local journals and papers which are non-Scopus indexed in their discussions.

### *Morales*

Ms. Morales responded by emphasizing the importance of investigating the term "Philippine literature" when teaching. This allows students to overcome the misconception of Philippine literature being those only written in Filipino. She also mentioned the importance of going beyond the text itself, asking "how" and "why." Ms. Morales also stressed of looking at social contexts of literary works to better understand them. In terms of making the lessons impact students, Ms. Morales advocated for the use of intertext and other media in the learning process. She concluded her remarks by maintaining that assessments should not simply be for the purposes of instructors assessing students, but must also be useful outside of the classroom.

### *Asst. Prof. Sapalo*

Asst. Prof. Sapalo opened by introducing herself as an anthropologist. She noted that it is important to acknowledge the colonial origins of the discipline of anthropology. Asst. Prof. Sapalo maintained that she "strive[s] to dismantle these colonial legacies by challenging dominant colonial narratives and trying to empower students to critically engage with our disciplines past and present and for grounding alternative ways of knowing and being in the world as Filipinos."



Furthermore, Asst. Prof. Sapalo explained that she makes sure to have at least 50 percent of her syllabus to be composed of Filipino authors. She also stated that she uses armchair exhibits, which “allow[s] students to engage with anthropological concepts on a very personal level by selecting and presenting an artifact that resonates with them.” For her, activities like this are “meant to train them [students] to think anthropologically or to understand how artifacts or very broadly material culture signifies or symbolizes a set of beliefs, values, principles of a particular social group and how these objects basically carry and stand in for a particular social history.”

She also invites grassroots intellectuals in assessing class activities “as part of the decolonizing the classroom perspective.” Asst. Prof. Sapalo cited an example, in her urban anthropology class, where she invited urban poor mothers from Sitio San Roque or Kasiglahan Village in Montalban. She highlighted how the presence of the urban poor mothers in her class and their comments and input in her students' presentations, “not only underscore the urgency of urban issues, but undoubtedly animated and enriched our [their] class discussions.” Asst. Prof. Sapalo concluded with analyzing the Latin root word of assessment, which is *assidere*. *Assidere* literally translates into “to sit with,” which is something she strives to do in her classes.

### *Hilario*

Mr. Hilario began by stating his experience, which is different from his co-panelists, as he teaches in basic education. According to him, the Matatag curriculum and K-12 are based on policies from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Asian development Bank. He underscored how intellectual imperialism, through these entities, have already affected basic education. This, he lamented, has created an education system whose goal is to produce “cheap and docile labor for the international community.”

Citing mathematics as an example, he highlighted how it lacks relevance to students' real-life experiences. For example, word problems use objects that are not necessarily familiar to the Philippine context, such as the use of apples.

According to him, “To address this, many educators, including me, have started incorporating critical pedagogy into their teaching. So an example of doing that is to incorporate the Philippine context in some word problems.” He further added the use of mathematical concepts to discuss social issues such as landlessness, for example.

He also mentioned the use of mathematics in understanding issues such as inflation and even grade consciousness, which he notes is a symptom of intellectual imperialism which uses grades as a marker of a student’s marketability after graduation.

2. What are the challenges you face when integrating culturally relevant materials into your teaching, and how do you overcome resistance from students or institutional structures?

### *Hilario*

Mr. Hilario responded by maintaining how he integrates social issues into the classroom. He noted, however, that integrating materials in mathematics is challenging due to the standardized curriculum that is heavily packed and comes along with a list of competencies that have to be met in a short amount of time. Mr. Hilario further highlighted how students themselves resist these integrations, since they are “test-focused” and some “may initially feel that focusing on real-world issues takes away the time from learning the mechanics they need for the exams.” According to Mr. Hilario: “in these cases, I try to emphasize the broader purpose of learning math. It’s not just about scoring high, it’s about developing critical thinking skills and understanding how math can help us make sense of complex social issues.” He concluded by stating how this helps him in coming up with a balanced approach “that respects the curriculum while also bringing in relevant [and] meaningful content.”

### *Morales*

Ms. Morales responded by saying that “it’s very challenging to teach Filipino literature now, especially because the Philippine educational system does not prioritize or not give enough value to the humanities.” Apart from the lack of importance given to the humanities, the Philippine education system, she also recalled the active attempts to remove Filipino subjects from the tertiary and basic education levels. This has created

gaps in students which teachers need to fill. She further added that she emphasizes how literature has a dual nature. On one hand, it can be used to colonize. On the other, it could be used to express oneself and identity. In her classes, she also tries to show that Filipinos are not “passive,” and that they have responded to colonization and intellectual imperialism in their writings. Ms. Morales underscored how we interact with texts, however, she also acknowledged the challenge posed to it by time constraints as there is a lot to discuss in a short amount of time.

#### *Asst. Prof. Guiang*

Asst. Prof. Guiang responded to the question of integrating culturally relevant materials by stating that: “Not culturally relevant materials but materials that were deemed by the state as subversive, probably, in topics on history.” Asst. Prof. Guiang mentioned that he integrates articles written by thinkers such as Jose Maria Sison and other activists, especially for the contemporary period. He describes how these authors “are very controversial for the students because they are recipients of cultural imperialism in mass media.” He reminds his students that “these are actually individuals who sacrificed themselves for the freedom of our nation, to defend the rights, our democratic rights. And the state has a different agenda.” He concluded by noting how these individuals usually censored by the state should be discussed as they have fought for freedom throughout different periods.

#### *Asst. Prof. Sy*

Following Asst. Prof. Guiang, Asst. Prof. Sy emphasized that “Philippine studies has been constricted by empire, especially during the Cold War, but there has been a revitalization of the field during the long 1960s.” He mentioned the rise of the academic ethnonationalist movement with scholars such as Zeus Salazar and Virgilio Enriquez “writing about autonomous knowledge production...from the Filipino perspective.” Apart from ethnonationalist scholarship, he also highlights the rise of the National Democratic Movement with academics and teachers who produced a considerable body of work that actually discussed issues related to Filipinization, national culture, anti-colonialism, and anti-imperialism. Asst. Prof. Sy argued that these views have been “marginalized from academic discourse, from classrooms, just because of this pervasive anti-communist project in the Philippines influenced by the US empire.”

Asst. Prof. Sy further highlighted the contributions of the Maoist movement and its splinter groups in the development of Philippine studies. He expressed disappointment with UP's cooperation with the Armed Forces, which for him, produces a chilling effect on scholars.

Following Renato Constantino, Asst. Prof. Sy speaks of the Filipinos' miseducation and "Filipino phobia". According to Asst. Prof. Sy: "a lot of students who are more used to using the Filipino language in academic settings are being marginalized from academic discourse." He further underscored the need to be critical of decoloniality itself.

For him, "decolonization is something that is being operationalized by indigenous peoples and repatriating their lands and their ways of life." He expressed caution and care in using the term "decolonization" as it might help "those who have committed or have participated in colonization" in evading guilt and complicity. He concluded by stating how, as those who experienced colonialism, "we should be careful" with also using the term "decolonization."

#### *Asst. Prof. Sapalo*

Asst. Prof. Sapalo began by pointing out that "decolonial and anti-colonial scholars [are] not operating on a level playing field." According to Asst. Prof. Sapalo, decolonial scholars are often marginalized in universities. Even with incorporating critical resources and methods in the classroom, scholars cannot change other peoples' views overnight.

She mentioned that "the challenge is really structural." Noting how students may be resistant to critical methodologies, she shared how she allows students to participate in designing the syllabus by deciding what activities are included. For her, students "often appreciate the activities where you practically apply the learnings in class." In one of her classes, Asst. Prof. Sapalo required students to design an interview guide and develop the skill of anthropological inquiry. She shared how they will be inviting Palestinians seeking refuge in the Philippines to that class interview activity. According to her, such activities "train them in doing the interviews, it will also allow them to understand the often invisibilized or marginalized accounts and experiences of Gazans, leading to a better understanding of the human condition."

3. In what ways can interdisciplinary collaboration, like this roundtable, enhance efforts to resist intellectual imperialism and promote epistemic justice across different fields of study?

*Asst. Prof. Sapalo*

Asst. Prof. Sapalo responded stating that “interdisciplinary collaboration can enhance resistance to intellectual imperialism is through organizing” among scholars themselves “in the practical building of solidarity and support networks, which can sustain and protect precarious scholars who advocate for epistemic justice.” For Asst. Prof. Sapalo, organizing among academics fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and solidarity, which she describes as “essential” in resisting intellectual imperialism and policies that reproduce precarity among academics.

*Hilario*

Mr. Hilario, agreeing with Asst. Prof. Sapalo, added that it is also important for academics to be active not just in their respective fields but also in political struggle, “because really pushing forward decolonization is really also fighting against imperialism and knowing the needs of the marginalized groups.”

*Morales*

For Ms. Morales, interdisciplinary collaboration allows exposure to different perspectives. She said that openness is important for educators to grow and this must be something taught to students. Ms. Morales opined that the wisdom acquired from fellow academics help in strengthening their respective advocacies. This, according to her, has to be reflected in their lessons and their scholarship.

*Asst. Prof. Guiang*

Asst. Prof. Guiang agreed with his co-panelists, and stated that “recognizing intellectual imperialism is also a recognition that our efforts for decolonization involve us to really resist and challenge the power structures for us in the Philippines that we have.” For him, interdisciplinary efforts are not just for fact-checking, but involves “creating forums that challenge the institutions and discuss pressing issues of the time.” Being interdisciplinary crucial because it allows

different perspectives and minds to have a “more fruitful discussion about pressing issues and make use of the public platform in order to disseminate this information that challenges the power structures.”

He maintained that efforts like this are “very important because somehow we can make an impact in the public sphere that's outside the confines of the academe.” In history, we call that public history. Asst. Prof. Guiang concluded by emphasizing how interdisciplinary efforts are important since they allow brainstorming which could challenge dominant power structures.

### *Asst. Prof. Sy*

Asst. Prof. Sy invited everyone to just two things: He first mentioned the idea of “interdisciplinarity from below.” For him, this entails going beyond the idea of “discipline” and involves considering knowledge from other parts of society. He argued that “we need to look into grassroots knowledge production and acknowledge that we need to collaborate.” to produce “interdisciplinary knowledge.”

Apart from this, Asst. Prof. Sy also spoke of an “internationalist knowledge system.” Asst. Prof. Sy explained that he is “exploring this possibility of participating in an internationalist knowledge system, because the resistance against colonialism and imperialism happens across the North-South divide.” He further stated that “practices against the empire are brewing across the globe in different spots. For him, there should also be a decentralization of the third world and look for critical impulses across the globe. Asst. Prof. Sy further emphasized that this “relives the Bandung spirit...in relation to universities and schools, solidarity with Palestinians, for example.” He considers this as “an interdisciplinary cause or project”. Asst. Prof. Sy concluded by highlighting the need for a “broader network, some kind of international between and among academics can actually combat intellectual imperialism.”

# Open Forum

## *Prof. Alatas*

Prof. Alatas initiated the open forum with a question directed to Asst. Prof. Sy. According to Prof. Alatas:

“... as long as the selection of our topics, the formulation of our research problems are decided in an autonomous fashion, not under tutelage of Western academia, once that is done, where we look for inspiration, for concepts, for ideas, there should not be any hierarchy. It should be dictated by the relevance of ideas.”

Reacting to Asst. Prof. Sy’s discussion of prioritizing authors, Prof. Alatas thinks that “there shouldn’t be a hierarchy when it comes to where the source of ideas come from, where the inspiration comes from, as long as, in general, the research and the questions we ask are not dictated.”

## *Asst. Prof. Sy*

Asst. Prof. Sy responded by reiterating the new direction he is exploring, which is “a more international direction of looking and reading.” He hopes that his students realize that anti-colonial and anti-imperialist resistance can “happen across the globe and across these divides.” In closing, Asst. Prof. Sy mentioned how he reminds to discern “which studies actually contribute to this idea of creating an autonomous production of knowledge.”

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