

PHENOMENOLOGY OF NAYANAYA  
A FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY OF SURVIVAL  
INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF SILENCE IN ZHUANG ZI

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy

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by

AMOSA L. VELEZ

March 1998

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This dissertation entitled "PHENOMENOLOGY OF NAYANAYA: A FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY OF SURVIVAL INTERPRETED IN THE LIGHT OF SILENCE IN ZHUANG ZI" prepared and submitted by AMOSA L. VELEZ in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy has been examined and is recommended for acceptance and approval for ORAL EXAMINATION

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**DEDICATED**

TO

Corazon Flordelis, Ursula,

Tata Pete and Deogracia (Ubay) Llegunas

IN HONOR OF

Mary

Beloved Daughter of the Father  
Loving Mother of the Son  
Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Spirit

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## ABSTRACT

The general lightheartedness of the Filipino embodied in his sense of humor, sociality and religiosity is now and then challenged in ultimate-situations. His style of existential management when life-goes-berserk is variously named, depending on his dialect in this multi-island country, the Philippines.

This philosophical study of the nature and principle of *nayanaya* (a word that speaks for all these terms) as experienced by some Filipinos employs questionnaire/interview to facilitate doing a phenomenology of *nayanaya* with the consequent disclosure of *nayanaya* as a Filipino philosophy of survival.

The linguistic data (with corroborating songs) shared by respondents from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao unmistakably address this Filipino experience called *nayanaya*. Interpreting these data in the light of Zhuang Zi's philosophy of silence reveals that *nayanaya*, a Filipino's response to crisis-situations, is a yearning for that "silence" which "nothingness" elicits. The attainment of silence is a dialectic between the man who has predisposed himself to the dawning of silence and the Silence (*Dao*) that discloses itself to one who is open to it. *Ang ta-o* resembles most the *Tao* (*Dao*) especially in his capacity for harmony and *wu-wei*, and because he himself is a living paradox (being matter and spirit).

*Nayanaya* as an experience of silence is a "way" of dealing with stifling facticities by indirect confrontation (*wei wu-wei*) dodging them through diversive moves called "*lingaw-lingaw*" ("recreation"). It is a Filipino art of whiling the time away, a distancing from the crucible, and at its best a "shock absorber" shielding a person against violent emotions.

Its principle being man's spirituality, *nayanaya* is not only an inner force making possible a Filipino's concrete response to his concrete understanding of the verities of life but also an existential approach and attitude, divesting a painful reality of its power to hurt. As such *nayanaya* can be truly regarded as a Filipino philosophy of survival, a practical philosophy with a profound theoretical substratum, since the will to survive is invariably associated with the will to be happy and, ultimately, a will to be

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