

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mabini's "True Decalogue" and the Morality of Nationalism

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Abstract: For its significant role in legitimizing the Philippine revolution in 1898, the place of Apolinario Mabini's "True Decalogue" in Philippine history is already well secured. In this essay, I, however, demonstrate the continuing relevance of this work in current discussions on the morality of nationalism. After explicating its arguments for why nationalism should be regarded as a moral imperative, I explore how it handles the issue concerning the moral justifiability of *national partiality*—referring to the partiality of a person to the interests of his/her own country and co-nationals. Using a combination of content, logical, and comparative types of analysis as a method, I first exhibit the philosophical character of this work in terms of both substance and form, after which I compare and contrast of its insights and views with some other perspectives on the morality of nationalism. In the main, I show that Mabini's work endorses a universalist type of nationalism, utilizes both instrumentalist and non-instrumentalist modes of reasoning, and anticipates some of the critical considerations in reconciling national partiality with the standard view, called *moral universalism*, which states that moral principles should apply equally to persons of all kinds.

Keywords: Apolinario Mabini, True Decalogue, nationalism, national partiality, morality of nationalism

Apolinario Mabini (1864–1903) has been aptly called "The Sublime Paralytic" for beneath his frail and semi-paralyzed body (brought about by polio) was one powerful and profound mind. And for utilizing this great mind for the noble cause of fighting for his nation's independence, he has been widely regarded as one of the "brains of the Philippine revolution." One of his important achievements in this regard was being the chief adviser of Emilio Aguinaldo—the first president

of the Philippines (see Agoncillo, 1964, p. 23). Mabini also became the country's first Prime Minister and Secretary of Foreign Affairs during the revolutionary government of Aguinaldo, and when later on this government was changed into a republic, Mabini headed its first cabinet. As a political philosopher, however, his significant contributions lie in his writings aimed at legitimizing the Philippine revolution in 1898—that such a movement was guided by a

collective vision of the national good and motivated by an authentic love of one's own country. Mabini, in the words of Silliman (1965, p. 4), "saved the events of 1898 from being merely labelled 'uprisings' by presenting a theory of revolution...."

Mabini conceived of a true revolution as consisting of two necessary and intimately connected aspects: the external and the internal. The objective of the revolution in its external aspect, called *external revolution* by Mabini, is to drive the colonizers out of the country; while its objective in its internal aspect, called *internal revolution* by Mabini, is to change those features of our consciousness responsible for making us easy victims to our colonizers. Majul (1996, p. 127) expounded,

Besides being the expression of a people challenging an old regime, the Revolution was to be both a technique for the attainment of independence and a process for the moral development of a people. Mabini termed the Revolution, considered a technique to overthrow foreign domination, *external revolution*. As a process to do away with the mental climate that depressed the people and to free them from the fetters of habits and vices that make it easier for them to be ruled by foreigners, the Revolution was termed *internal revolution*. These two aspects of the Revolution were viewed by Mabini as so inextricably related that by neglecting one or the other success was impossible.

Zaide (1964, p. 59) put this as follows: "The external revolution was our libertarian struggle to overthrow alien rule so that our people may regain their freedom, while the internal revolution was the social regeneration of our people so that they may be worthy of freedom." Consequently, Mabini's two seminal works, namely, the "Ordenanzas de la Revolucion" and the "Verdadero Decalogo" (Mabini, 1931), provided the necessary justifications as well as guidelines for carrying out the goals of these two aspects of the revolution: the former the goal of the external revolution, the latter that of the internal one (see Majul, 1996, p. 135).

This essay shall focus on the "El Verdadero Decalogo" ("True Decalogue," henceforth simply as

Decalogue). While the historical value of this work is widely acknowledged, its beauty and substance have not been fully explored. What we usually have are general remarks about what the *Decalogue* is all about or what it hopes to accomplish and some analyses of how it may have been influenced by the political ideas of certain European Enlightenment thinkers (see, for instance, Silliman, 1965; Magdamo, 1965). In his seminal work on Mabini, Majul (1996) devoted a section on the *Decalogue*. But in the 11 pages that consist this section (pp. 126–136), Majul touched on the specific contents of the *Decalogue* only when he summarized the work in just one paragraph (pp. 130–131). The rest of the section elaborates on the historical role and general objectives of the *Decalogue*. There is apparently no close examination or analysis of the specific contents of the *Decalogue*. For instance, how do the various kinds of love that Mabini talked about in the work—namely, love of God, love of one's honor, love of country and countrymen, and love of one's neighbor—relate to one another? Or how plausible or consistent are the justifications that Mabini provided for these various kinds of love? Still, what grounds nationalism or love of country as a moral ought for the *Decalogue*, and what is the relevance of the *Decalogue*, as a work on the morality of nationalism, in light of emerging ethical issues concerning nationalism?

In general, the studies done thus far on the *Decalogue* are mostly historical: the history of the text and the role of the text in Philippine history. This, apparently, is a natural result of seeing the work solely in light of Mabini being a national hero. On closer examination, the value of this work, however, is much more than the historical. In this essay, I thus try to fill in what I consider to be a significant gap in the literature on the work: what it offers as a way of dealing with certain substantive issues concerning nationalism and political morality. In this regard, I try to see the work in light of Mabini being a profound Filipino thinker dealing with complex philosophical issues (such as how love of God coheres with love of country, and love of neighbor with the duty to defend the sovereignty of one's country from colonizers) in order to construct a systematic and well-grounded framework for why Filipinos should love their country as a matter of moral obligation.

My objective, in particular, is two-fold: first, to expose the philosophical nature of Mabini's work, and second, to demonstrate its relevance in current philosophical discussions on the morality of nationalism, focusing on the questions of what makes nationalism a moral imperative and what morally justifies the partiality inherent in nationalism. After explicating its arguments for why nationalism should be regarded as a moral imperative, I explore how it handles the issue concerning the moral justifiability of national partiality—the partiality of a person to the interests of his or her own country and countrymen—which prima facie contradicts a standard view regarding morality, called moral universalism, which states that moral principles should apply equally to persons of all kinds.

This study utilizes a method that combines content, logical, and comparative types of analysis. In the context of this study, content analysis examines the meanings of the concepts constituting Mabini's work, logical analysis examines the structure and overall coherence of this work, and comparative analysis examines how this work relates to other works on the morality of nationalism. The discussion divides into three main parts: the first introduces the *Decalogue* as a text and as a historical treasure, the second exhibits the character of the *Decalogue* as a philosophical work both in terms of form (or structure) and content (or subject matter), and the third relates the insights of the *Decalogue* with the various viewpoints on the morality of nationalism. It is shown that Mabini's work endorses a universalist type of nationalism, utilizes both instrumentalist and non-instrumentalist types of argumentation in advancing certain views on the morality of nationalism, and anticipates some of the critical considerations in reconciling national partiality with moral universalism. Mabini's work, on the whole, is shown to be more than just a set of patriotic injunctions, for it is at the same time a coherent philosophical work that provides a moral justification for nationalism that is still relevant today.

Text and History

Mabini wrote the *Decalogue* sometime in May 1898 (Cuasay, 1974, p. 109); and it was published on June

24, 1898 (Batungbacal, 1956, p. 100). Mabini wrote the *Decalogue* first in Spanish, but due to his ardent desire for more Filipinos to understand his work, he later on also wrote it in English and Tagalog (Cuasay, 1974, p. 109). What follows, which shall be the main reference for our study and analysis of the *Decalogue*, is the full text of the work in its English version (as quoted in Orosa & del Castillo, 1964, p. 4):

First. Thou shalt love God and thy honor above all things; God as the fountain of all truth, of all justice and of all activity; thy honor, the only power which will oblige thee to be truthful, just and industrious.

Second. Thou shalt worship God in the form which thy conscience may deem most righteous and worthy: for in thy conscience, which condemns thy evil deeds and praises thy good ones, speaks thy God.

Third. Thou shalt cultivate the special gifts which God has granted thee, working and studying according to thy ability, never leaving the path of righteousness and justice, in order to attain thy own perfection, by means whereof thou shalt contribute to the progress of humanity: thus, thou shalt fulfill the mission to which God has appointed thee in this life and by so doing, thou shalt be honored, and being honored, thou shalt glorify thy God.

Fourth. Thou shalt love thy country after God and thy honor and more than thyself: for she is the only Paradise which God has given thee in this life, the only patrimony of thy race, the only inheritance of thy ancestors and the only hope of thy posterity; because of her, thou hast life, love and interests, happiness, honor and God.

Fifth. Thou shalt strive for the happiness of thy country before thy own, making of her the kingdom of reason, of justice and of labor: for if she be happy, thou, together with thy family, shalt likewise be happy.

Sixth. Thou shalt strive for the independence of thy country: for only thou canst have any

real interest in her advancement and exaltation, because her independence constitutes thy own liberty; her advancements, thy perfection; and her exaltation, thy own glory and immortality.

Seventh. Thou shalt not recognize in thy country the authority of any person who has not been elected by thee and by thy countrymen: for authority emanates from God, and as God speaks in the conscience of everyman, the person designated and proclaimed by the conscience of a whole people, is the only one who can use true authority.

Eight. Thou shalt strive for a Republic and never for a Monarchy in thy country: for the latter exalts one or several families and founds a dynasty; the former makes a people noble and worthy through reason, great through liberty, and prosperous and brilliant through labor.

Ninth. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: for God has imposed upon him, as well as upon thee, the obligation to help thee and not to do unto thee what he would not have thee to do unto him: but if thy neighbor, failing in this sacred duty, attempts against thy life, thy liberty and thy interest, then thou shalt destroy and annihilate him for the supreme law of self-preservation prevails.

Tenth. Thou shalt consider thy countryman more than thy neighbor; thou shalt see in him thy friend, thy brother or at least thy comrade, with whom thou art bound by one fate, by the same joys and sorrows and by common aspirations and interests.

Therefore, as long as national frontiers subsist, raised and maintained by the selfishness of race and of family, with thy countrymen alone shalt thou unite in a perfect solidarity of purpose and interest, in order to have force, not only to resist the common enemy but also to attain all the aims of human life.

Mabini, as earlier noted, intended his *Decalogue* as a guide for Filipinos in carrying out the internal revolution—to put them in the right frame of mind

(in which the vision and motivation of the revolution are clear) as they fight for their freedom and the sovereignty of their nation. And he, in fact, made this clear in his preface to the Tagalog version of the *Decalogue* (Mabini, 1921, p. 3), thus: “[B]agama’t ako’y hindi si Moises at di rin namamansag na tagapagbatas ng ating bayan, ay naghahanay ako sa iyong pagkukuro ng sampung katotohanan, na ang pagkakilala’t pagsasagawa nito’y maghahatid sa atin sa pagtatamo ng pinakananasang kalayaan, o kaya’y ng pangakong Kasarinlan.” We can translate these remarks into English as follows: “[T]hough I am not Moses and likewise not aspiring to be the lawgiver of our nation, I am offering for your consideration ten truths, which when recognized and followed would lead us to the attainment of the freedom that we have been hoping for, or of the promised Sovereignty.”

These same remarks also shed light on why Mabini qualified his *Decalogue* as “true.” For surely it would be asked, in what sense are its teachings true? To my mind, Mabini regarded the teachings of his *Decalogue* as true only in the sense of being “appropriate”—that is, as appropriate ways for Filipinos, given the circumstances they were in at the time, to carry out the internal revolution. Furthermore, Mabini, in qualifying his *Decalogue* as true, did not imply the falsity of the Mosaic Decalogue or its inferiority to his own *Decalogue*. This point is clarified when he noted that he does not claim to be a Moses or the lawgiver for his country. The reference to Moses was only intended to give an analogy in terms of laying down guidelines to achieve freedom and autonomy—if for the Mosaic Decalogue it was for the freedom and autonomy of the Israelites from the Egyptians, for Mabini’s it was for the freedom and autonomy of the Filipinos from their colonizers then. This point, incidentally, shows the gross mistake of Mariano Sevilla’s objection to Mabini’s *Decalogue*. For according to Sevilla, in the words of Majul (1996, p. 134), “... even the title solely considered was heretical, impious, and blasphemous, and a manifest offense against the very people to whom it was being offered... that to qualify Mabini’s *Decalogue* with the word ‘true’ was to assert that the Mosaic Decalogue was false, and hence also the god of the Christians.”

Now in 1898, the Revolutionary Congress of the Philippines deliberated on what would serve as the constitution of the Philippines. A constitution was needed to pave the way for the transition of the form of government that the country had during such time, from a revolutionary one to a republic. There were several proposed constitutions, and one of which was written by Mabini. As a prologue to Mabini's proposed constitution, his supporters used the *Decalogue*. But because the *Decalogue* was perceived to be advancing freedom of religion and his proposed constitution was advancing the separation of the church and the state, Mabini's proposed constitution encountered a number of criticisms and eventually lost to the one by Felipe Calderon. One of those who severely criticized Mabini's proposed constitution, centering on the *Decalogue*, was the Filipino priest named Mariano Sevilla. Sevilla charged the *Decalogue* of dishonoring the name of God for placing the love of God on the same level as the love of one's own dignity (see Majul, 1996, p. 134—we shall later on explain why this point of Sevilla resulted from a superficial reading of the *Decalogue*). Be that as it may, Mabini still managed to enforce his views on governmental policies, especially his view on the separation between the church and the state. As Schumacher (1991, p. 200) narrated,

From June 1898 to January 1899, two views of religious policy struggled for supremacy: that of Mabini (and to some extent Buencamino), executed largely through Fr. Gregorio Aglipay; and that pursued by Fr. Mariano Sevilla with the aid of Felipe Calderon and other laymen. By January 1899 Mabini had come to power after having won against the Sevilla party in the questions of civil marriage, the appointment of Aglipay as military vicar-general and ecclesiastical governor of Nueva Segovia diocese, and the separation of church and state. Through these means Mabini achieved his objective of putting the church at the disposal of the state.

The *Decalogue* is said to have many influences. In addition to the influence of the ideas of the European Enlightenment thinkers on Mabini's overall political philosophy (see Silliman, 1965; Magdamo, 1965),

scholars also speak of four pieces of writing that Mabini could have possibly patterned his *Decalogue* on, or which could have possibly inspired its content and form. The first is the Mosaic Decalogue—as Quirino (1964, p. 33) noted, "Mabini's True Decalogue is, of course, a definite echo of the Hebraic Ten Commandments given to Moses at Mt. Sinai some three thousand years ago. Since it is the basis of Christian-Hebrew religion he reworded it to make of it the groundwork for Filipino nationalism." The second, as Mabini was a member of the Masonry, is the *Codigo Moral Masonic* or the *Masonic Moral Code*—as Silliman (1965, p. 9) noted: "The significance of Masonry in the thought of Mabini is shown in the fact that the moral rules in his 'True Decalogue' closely resemble some of the rules of the 'Codigo Moral Masonic' of the Grand Oriente Español." Silliman, however, did not spell out which rules in Mabini's *Decalogue* he thought closely resemble which rules in the *Codigo Moral Mosanico*. The third and fourth are the two Katipunan primers written respectively by Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Jacinto—referring to Bonifacio's "Ang Dekalogo ng Katipunan" and Jacinto's "Ang Kartilya ng Katipunan." In light of these two earlier texts by Bonifacio and Jacinto, Mabini's *Decalogue* is regarded as the third among the "decalogues" (the sets of rules intended to guide the conduct of Filipinos during the Philippine revolution were generally referred to as "decalogues" despite the fact that Jacinto's set consisted of more than ten rules). De los Santos (1973, pp. 97–98) noted,

Before the approval of the famous Cartilla (primer) of Emilio Jacinto, Andrés Bonifacio had already prepared a similar primer, but he withdrew it because Emilio Jacinto's seemed better to him. Don Andrés did not call his primer decalogue, though it was one in appearance, but simply Katungkulang Gagawin ng Z. Ll. B. (Duties of the S(ons) of the P(eople)... The Verdadero Decalogo of Mabini is therefore the third of the decalogues. The first was Andrés Bonifacio's and the second Emilio Jacinto's.

One may surmise that Mabini, guided by the libertarian (or emancipating) spirit of the European Enlightenment, must have combined the spirit of each

of these four texts together to form the essence of his own *Decalogue*: say the religious spirit of the Christian Ten Commandments (where the ethical is subsumed under the religious), the humanist spirit of the Masonic Moral Code (where the ethical is subsumed under the religious through the mediation of honor, clean conscience, and good deeds), and the nationalistic spirit of the Bonifacio–Jacinto Katipunan primers (where the ethical and the religious are fused with love of country and countrymen).

As for the historical value of the *Decalogue*, the following remarks by the following notable Filipino historians and scholars best account for it. Zaide (1964, pp. 60–61) wrote that the *Decalogue* “was one of the noblest documents of the Philippine revolution”; Quirino (1964, p. 33) said that it is “the groundwork for Filipino nationalism”; Bacobo (1964, p. 99) wrote that “the influence of the precepts of the Decalogue at that time was tremendous; men of all ranks looked upon them as the true expression of the overruling spirit of that movement”; Cuasay (1974, p. 114) remarked that if it so happened that the *Decalogue* was the only work written by Mabini in his entire life, it would be sufficient for his noble name to be written, as it were, in the hearts of the Filipinos; Batungbacal (1956, p. 100) wrote that it “breathes the most exalted spirit of patriotism”; and Del Castillo (1964, pp. 114, 115) held that it “became the Bible of the rebels” and explained, “Nowhere in the writings of any Filipino had one seen such clarity and loftiness of thought. Mabini’s *True Decalogue* can easily outmatch any similar political tract. Mabini expressed his noble conception in language which the people could never forget. Even without his other writings, the *True Decalogue* would remain a fitting monument for him.”

Structure and Content

To speak of the relevance of the views of the *Decalogue* in current philosophical discussions on the morality of nationalism is to assume that the *Decalogue*, first and foremost, is one philosophical

work that advances views on related topics. To show that the *Decalogue* is one such philosophical work, we, therefore, need to demonstrate, among others, that (a) the ideas advanced by the *Decalogue* form a coherent system and are backed up by arguments and (b) that the issues it deals with are philosophical in nature. In short, we need to show the philosophical nature of the *Decalogue* both in form and content. To begin with, it shall be observed that the *Decalogue* speaks of five kinds of love which are advanced as values, namely, (1) *Love of God*, tackled in the first, second, and third commands; (2) *Love of one’s dignity or honor*, tackled in the first and third commands; (3) *Love of one’s country*, tackled in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth commands; (4) *Love of one’s countryman*, tackled in the tenth command; and (5) *Love of one’s neighbor*, tackled in the ninth command.

One striking feature of the *Decalogue*, which sets it apart from its predecessors (the Katipunan primers of Bonifacio and Jacinto, the Mosaic Decalogue, and the Masonic Moral Code), is that it does not only consist of commands that seek to cultivate certain values; rather, it also provides (1) reasons or arguments for why it is important to cultivate such values and (2) ways for how to best cultivate these values. In some instances, it also provides (3) justifications for why such values are best cultivated in certain ways. Mabini, as it were, did not only want us to follow certain rules; he also wanted us to understand why we ought to follow such rules, and to know how such rules are to be carried out properly.

To clearly see and properly appreciate this feature of the *Decalogue*, I have, in what follows, arranged its content in the following manner. First, the values being cultivated (the kinds of love) are clearly stated. Second, the ideas of the *Decalogue* under each value are arranged according to: (1) why a value ought to be cultivated, (2) how a value ought to be cultivated, and, for some values, (3) why a value ought to be cultivated in a certain way.

1. Love of God

Why should we love God?

Because God is "the fountain of all truth, of all justice and of all activity." (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

How should we love God?

"[I]n the form which thy conscience may deem most righteous and worthy." (Mabini, 1964, p.4)

And why in this manner?

"[F]or in thy conscience, which condemns thy evil deeds and praises thy good ones, speaks thy God." (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

2. Love of One's Honor

Why should we love our own honor?

Because it is "the only power which will oblige thee to be truthful, just and industrious." (Mabini 1964, p. 4)

How should we love our own honor?

By cultivating "the special gifts which God has granted thee, working and studying according to thy ability, and never leaving the path of righteousness and justice, in order to attain thy own perfection." (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

And why in these manners?

"[B]y means whereof thou shalt contribute to the progress of humanity: thus, thou shalt fulfill the mission to which God has appointed thee in this life and by so doing, thou shalt be honored, and being honored, thou shalt glorify thy God." (Mabini, 1964, p.4)

3. Love of One's Country

Why should we love our own country?

"[F]or she is the only Paradise which God has given thee in this life, the only patrimony of thy race, the only inheritance of thy ancestors and the only hope of thy posterity; and because of her, thou hast life, love and interests, happiness, honor and God." (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

How should we love our own country?

By: (a) striving "for the happiness of thy country before thy own, making of her the kingdom of reason, of justice and of labor"; (b) striving "for the independence of thy country"; (c) "not recognizing in thy country the authority of any person who has not been elected by thee and by thy countrymen"; and (d) striving "for a Republic and never for a Monarchy in thy country." (Mabini 1964, p. 4)

And why in these manners?

For (respective to each item above): (a) "if she be happy, thou, together with thy family, shalt likewise be happy"; (b) "only thou canst have any real interest in her advancement and

exaltation, because her independence constitutes thy own liberty; her advancements, thy perfection; and her exaltation, thy own glory and immortality”; (c) “authority emanates from God, and as God speaks in the conscience of everyman, the person designated and proclaimed by the conscience of a whole people, is the only one who can use true authority”; and (d) “the latter exalts one or several families and founds a dynasty; the former makes a people noble and worthy through reason, great through liberty, and prosperous and brilliant through labor.” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

4. Love of One’s Countryman

Why should we love our countryman?

Because “with whom thou art bound by one fate, by the same joys and sorrows and by common aspirations and interests.” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

How should we love our countrymen?

By considering “thy countryman more than thy neighbor; thou shalt see in him thy friend, thy brother or at least thy comrade.” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

5. Love of One’s Neighbor

Why should we love our neighbor?

“[F]or God has imposed upon him, as well as upon thee, the obligation to help thee and not to do unto thee what he would not have thee to do unto him.” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4)

How should we love our neighbor?

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself . . . but if thy neighbor, failing in this sacred duty, attempts against thy life, thy liberty and thy interest, then thou shalt destroy and hilate him for the reme law of self-preservation prevails.” (Mabini 1964, p. 4)

Another striking feature of the *Decalogue* is that the values it promotes form a hierarchy. The first being the most important, this hierarchy is as follows: first, love of God; second, love of one’s honor; third, love of one’s country; fourth, love of one’s countryman; and fifth, love of one’s neighbor. Being so arranged, possible conflicts among these values can easily be resolved: the higher value overrides the lower one. For instance, if a conflict arises between the love of one’s countryman and love of one’s country, love of one’s country, being higher than the love of one’s countrymen, should be preferred. Or if a conflict arises between the love of one’s honor and love of one’s country, love of one’s

honor, being higher than the love of one’s country, should be preferred.

At this point, let us digress a little to deal with Sevilla’s criticism against the *Decalogue* that its first commandment dishonors the name of God “because it placed one’s honor in the same level or category with God” (Majul, 1996, p. 134). Sevilla’s point can easily be shown to be mistaken. What we are only allowed to infer from the statement “Thou shalt love God and thy honor above all things...” (Mabini 1964, p. 4) is that love of God and love of one’s honor are both higher in value than the other kinds of love valued in the *Decalogue*. But being both higher in value than

the other kinds of love does not necessarily mean that relative to one another they have the same value. When we say, for instance, that numbers 9 and 10 are both higher than numbers 1 to 8, we obviously do not mean as well that 9 and 10, relative to one another, are equal. But what supports the view that *love of God* is indeed higher in value than *love of one's honor*? If we will compare the reasons for why we should love God "God as the fountain of all truth, of all justice and of all activity" [Mabini 1964, p. 4] and for why we should love our honor ["the only power which will oblige thee to be truthful, just and industrious" (Mabini, 1964, p. 4), the reasons for the former are obviously greater in magnitude compared to those for the latter.

Furthermore, in the third commandment, this is what the *Decalogue* states: "...thou shalt fulfill the mission to which God has appointed thee in this life and by so doing, thou shalt be honored, and being honored, thou shalt glorify thy God" (Mabini, 1964, p. 4). It is clear here that Mabini regards love of one's honor as the appropriate means to achieve genuine *love of God*. The idea is that a person who truly loves God is an honorable person. Since the value of a means can only be secondary to the value of its end, the value of love of one's honor, being merely a means to achieve genuine love of God, can only be secondary to the value of love of God.

Now, that love of country is third in the hierarchy is stated in the fourth commandment: "Thou shalt love thy country after God and thy honor..." (Mabini, 1964, p. 4). One fundamental presupposition of the *Decalogue* is that we can only truly love our own country if we understand why we have to do so. In the *Decalogue*, this basically means seeing how such kind of love significantly relates to the other kinds of love that we so value, such as our love for God, our honor, and neighbors. Nationalism, to be taken seriously, needs to be situated in our system of values. That our love for our country should not conflict with our love for God, in particular, is so important for us in light of the fact that religion was used by the Spaniards to colonize us. On the whole, we, Filipinos, are God-loving people, but this quality of ours was used by the Spaniards to colonize us. The Spaniards, especially the friars, were able to convince the majority of Filipinos during such time that they were privileged to know the will of God,

and that, according to their privileged knowledge of the will of God, it was God's will for Filipinos to submit to their rule. The Filipinos then were torn between their love for God and their love for their own freedom and country, for they were made to believe that these two loves were in conflict, and since love of God should be prioritized they had to put aside their love of their country. Consequently, Filipinos believed that to fight the Spaniards for their freedom was to go against the will of God.

With this conflict of values, the Filipinos then were not in the right frame of mind to stage a revolution. The beauty and power of the *Decalogue*, thus, is that it shows that these two loves—love of God and love of country—are not really in conflict. It tells us that love of country is a necessary consequence of love of God, such that if we truly love God then we should love our country. Nationalism thus is a moral imperative with a divine justification. The *Decalogue* further tells us that we should love our country because our country is the only Paradise that God has given us in this life, the only patrimony of our race, the only inheritance of our ancestors, and the only hope of our posterity; and because it is through our country that we have life, love and interests, happiness, honor, and God. Loving God then implies loving and caring for the paradise and context for the fullness of our being that God has prepared and designed for us.

We earlier dealt with how the *Decalogue* sees the relationship between love of God and love of one's honor. To recall, for the *Decalogue*, it is the honorable person's love of God that is genuine. Now the *Decalogue* further states that if we are to maintain our honor, we have to act according to the dictates of our conscience—which for the *Decalogue* refers to the voice of God within us. As the *Decalogue* puts it: "Thou shalt worship God in the form which thy conscience may deem most righteous and worthy: for in thy conscience, which condemns thy evil deeds and praises thy good ones, speaks thy God" (Mabini, 1964, p. 4). Again, in the context of the Spanish colonization of our country, Mabini here is speaking of the conflict between what the Spanish friars were saying about the will of God and what God's voice within the minds and hearts of the Filipinos was telling them. And again, as the Filipinos were convinced by the friars that they

(the Spaniards) knew the will of God, Filipinos, out of their love for God, had to disregard the dictates of their conscience. The Filipinos then, out of their love for God, had to give up their honor and submit to the rule of the Spaniards. Now what the *Decalogue* is saying is that this is mistaken, for it is only when a person has honor that his/her love for God is genuine.

Finally, that love of one's countryman is fourth and love of one's neighbor is fifth in the hierarchy are stated in the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt consider thy countryman more than thy neighbor..." (Mabini, 1964, p. 4). According to the *Decalogue*, among our neighbors, we ought to love our countrymen more than the others because our countrymen are our friends, brothers, or comrades with whom we are bound by one fate, by the same joys and sorrows, and by common aspirations and interests. This means that among our neighbors, we have a special relationship or bond with our countrymen. In light of the fact that our country is the paradise intended for us by God, our countrymen were intended by God as well to be our companions in this paradise. If it is only in our country where we will achieve the happiness intended by God for us in this temporal life, it is only then in the company of our countrymen that we will experience such happiness.

God wants us to love our neighbors in general. But what about those who threaten our life, should we also love them as a result of our love for God? How could the Filipinos then fight their colonizers if God wanted them to love their colonizers as well? Such a conflict lingering in the minds of the Filipinos then would again put them in the wrong frame of mind to stage a revolution against their colonizers. Here again is the power and beauty of the *Decalogue*. It tells us that there is a natural limitation set for our love for our neighbors. The *Decalogue* states: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; but if thy neighbor, failing in this sacred duty, attempts against thy life, thy liberty and thy interest, then thou shalt destroy and annihilate him for the supreme law of self-preservation prevails" (Mabini, 1964, p. 4). Two things are worth noting here. First, the so-called supreme law of self-preservation is a necessary consequence of the violation of the sacred duty to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Second, it is only the conjunction of the things violated—life, liberty, and interest—that justifies our annihilation of

our neighbor. In short, if our neighbors violated our life, liberty, and interest, then we are morally justified to annihilate them.

Based on the two features of the *Decalogue*—(1) that it presents arguments for the values that it advances as well as the appropriate ways for cultivating these values and (2) that these values form a hierarchy—we can thus say that the *Decalogue* presents one coherent system of ideas. The *Decalogue* is not just a set of injunctions; it is a philosophical work in its own right. And as its content centers on the moral justification of nationalism—why we should regard nationalism as a moral obligation—we can, thus, further say that the *Decalogue* is one philosophical treatise on the morality of nationalism. It is, in short, philosophical both in form and content.

Nationality and Morality

We have seen in the previous part how the *Decalogue* dealt with the moral issues concerning nationalism occurring within its own historical period and in the context of the objective of either carrying out a genuine revolution or of legitimizing a revolution. In this part, we shall examine the views and insights of the *Decalogue* in light of the current discussions on the morality of nationalism in which the central point of contention is the moral justifiability of national partiality. But first, to fully appreciate the philosophical nature and significance of the issue of the moral justifiability of national partiality, and to better situate the *Decalogue* in the overall discourse on the philosophy of nationalism, we shall provide an overview of the types of philosophical questions raised about nationalism.

Metaphysical and Ethical Questions

Nationalism raises two broad types of questions: the descriptive, which seeks to understand the nature and origins of nationalism as a social phenomenon, and the normative, which seeks to evaluate the means by which nationalism is pursued or maintained. In light of the two main components of nationalism, namely, national identity and political sovereignty (see Miscevic, 2014, p. 1), the descriptive questions ask what constitutes

national identity and political sovereignty, while the normative ones ask whether the means by which national identity is cultivated (or preserved) and by which political sovereignty is achieved are good or bad. In this context, the descriptive questions, philosophically speaking, are *metaphysical* questions since they concern the reality or true nature of certain phenomena related to nationalism, whereas normative questions are ethical questions since they involve value judgments about certain acts related to nationalism.

Examples of metaphysical questions about nationalism are: What is a nation? What defines a national unit? When do we say that a certain group of people constitutes a nation? Is nationalism a natural or a constructed phenomenon? When can we say that a nation has political sovereignty? And when can we say that a certain group of people has national identity? On the other hand, examples of ethical questions about nationalism are: Why do we have to be a nationalist, or why do we need to care about the national identity and political sovereignty of our nation? Are there proper and improper motivations for nationalism? Is nationalism inherently good or bad, or is it good or bad based solely on its consequences? What morally justifies the partiality engendered by nationalism? And what sort of actions is morally permitted to attain and maintain the political sovereignty of a nation?

Regarding the origins of nations (see Seton-Watson, 1977; and Hobsbawm, 1990), some of the contending perspectives view nations as natural entities (called primordialist view) as social constructs (called social constructivism) as culturally necessary institutions (attributed to Gellner, 1983) as an imagined community resulting from print capitalism (attributed to Anderson, 1991) as European in origin which came about during the periods of Enlightenment, the French revolution, and the birth of centralized French state (attributed to Kedourie, 1966) and as an irrational and destructive ideology (likewise attributed to Kedourie, 1966). As regards the question of when a certain group of people becomes a nation, answers vary—some argue it is when people consider themselves as (a) constituting a nation, (b) being in a group that is part of or given by nature, (c) being in a group that they have commonly willed, (d) attached to or located in a particular territory, (e) having a common language, (f) sharing unique values,

and (g) having a common history and mission (see Gilbert, 1998).

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that there are unethical actions done in the name of nationalism, such as what has been called "ethnic cleansing" and some forms of terrorism. Current discussions on the morality of nationalism, however, focus on the issue of what morally justifies national partiality, as this is what fundamentally makes nationalism morally problematic. As Hurka (1997, p. 139) wrote, "The moral issues about nationalism arise from the character of nationalism as a form of partiality. Nationalists care more about their own nation and its members than about other nations and their members; in that way nationalists are partial to their own national group." Or as Baumgarten (2007, p. 2) succinctly put it, "National partiality apparently contradicts the view that regards ethical principles as universal, according to which these principles should apply impartially or equally to persons of all kinds" (see also McMahan, 1997, p. 109).

The *Decalogue* on National Partiality

The *Decalogue* is first and foremost concerned with the morality of nationalism and not with its metaphysics. Surely, the *Decalogue* must have presupposed a certain theory of how nations came about, but this is not what the *Decalogue* problematizes. What the *Decalogue* is primarily offering is not an account of how nations or nationalism as a social phenomenon came about but an account of why nationalism should be regarded as a moral imperative (see Majul, 1996, p. 129). This topic, however, has already been tackled when we earlier analyzed the content and structure of the *Decalogue*. Thus, at this point, we shall instead focus on how the *Decalogue* handles another fundamental issue concerning the morality of nationalism, namely, the moral justifiability of national partiality.

As nationalism is not a unitary concept, we first need to be clear about the kind of nationalism that is assumed in our discussion. In this regard, we consider the distinction made by some scholars between *universalist nationalism* and *particularist nationalism* (see Hurka, 1997; Miscovic, 2014; and Dias, 2005). Hurka (1997, pp. 139–140) explicated this distinction as follows: "... I will consider only 'universalist' nationalism, the

view that all people ought to be partial to their own nation and conationals. This is a more interesting and plausible position than the “particularist”—one could equally well say “chauvinist”—view that only one’s own nation, say, only Canada, deserves special loyalty.” It is not hard to see that particularist nationalism will necessarily result in unethical actions, for if a certain group of people believes that the interests of their own nation and co-nationals are of supreme value or are superior to the interests of all other nations and their respective co-nationals, then they will also believe that they have the right to impose their own interests on other nations, or that it is the duty of other nations to serve the interests of their own nation. For this reason, if nationalism is understood as referring to the particularist type, then nationalism is never morally justifiable. Consequently, it can only be within the context of the universalist type of nationalism that the question of the moral justifiability of nationalism can meaningfully be posed.

With regard to the nationalism advanced in the *Decalogue*, it is clear that it is of the universalist type. In its fourth commandment, we can read, “Thou shalt love thy country after God and thy honor and more than thyself: for she is the only Paradise which God has given thee in this life, the only patrimony of thy race, the only inheritance of thy ancestors and the only hope of thy posterity; because of her, thou hast life, love and interests, happiness, honor and God” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4). There is nothing here that can support the inference that Mabini was advancing the view that the interests of the Philippines are superior to those of other countries. As the Philippines is the paradise created by God for Filipinos, any other country is likewise the paradise created by God for its respective citizens—and this is for the same reasons: because their country is the only patrimony of their race, the only inheritance of their ancestors and the only hope of their posterity, and so on and so forth. Furthermore, in the 10th commandment, we are told that the partiality that we ought to accord to our countrymen is solely based on the fact that we “art bound by one fate, by the same joys and sorrows and by common aspirations and interests” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4), and not for the reason that it is the Filipino race that has been ordained by God to be the superior race. What the *Decalogue* says about why we Filipinos

ought to love our own country can equally be said to the citizens of any other country—why they ought to love their own respective countries.

Having clarified that it is only within the framework of universalist nationalism where the issue of the moral justifiability of nationalism can meaningfully be posed, what then are the types of reasoning that can morally justify nationalism? More specifically, what type of moral justification is appropriate for national partiality? On this point, there are two types of justification that philosophers of nationalism speak of: *non-instrumentalist* and *instrumentalist* types of justifications (see Hurka, 1997, p. 140; and Dias, 2005, p. 1063–1069). For the non-instrumentalist justification, the moral goodness of national partiality is deemed to have been brought about by some necessary features of national partiality believed to be inherently good, while for the instrumentalist justification, it is deemed to have been brought about by the good or beneficial consequences of national partiality.

Examples of these two types of justification can be seen in how an argument for the morality of nationalism is explained. This argument refers to the point that nationalism is morally good because it satisfies our deep need for community (see Miscevic, 2014). But what makes satisfying our deep need for community in turn morally good or desirable? One non-instrumentalist answer states that belonging to an ethno-national community is valuable in itself because it is only within the context of such a community that meanings and values significant for the members are created and transferred. Since the members of the community have special cultural proximity, certain obligations arise such as their moral obligations towards one another and their obligation to preserve and cultivate their own language and customs. The assumption here is that the generation of values, meaning, and obligations is good in itself. On the other hand, the instrumentalist answers can be varied. For instance, it can be said that belonging to an ethno-national community will enable the members to flourish, develop their personal identity, learn moral traditions, and contribute to the diversity of human cultures (as each ethno-national community preserves its own unique culture). And the assumption here is that flourishing, developing personal identity, learning

moral traditions, and the like are morally desirable consequences of nationalism or of satisfying our deep need for community.

Now which of these two types of justifications is appropriate for morally justifying national partiality is still a contentious matter. In the case of the *Decalogue* it shall be observed that it utilizes and thus gives equal importance to both types of moral justification for national partiality. Its non-instrumentalist justifications are laid down in its fourth commandment, according to which, we ought to love our country because of its following features that are intrinsically good, namely, (1) that it is the only Paradise that God has given us in this life, (2) that it is the only patrimony of our race, (3) that it is the only inheritance of our ancestors, and (4) that it is the only hope of our posterity. These are features of our country that are good not in virtue of their consequences but in virtue of what they are.

On the other hand, the instrumentalist justifications of the *Decalogue* for nationalism in general and national partiality, in particular, are laid down in a number of commandments. In the fourth commandment, it tells us that we ought to love our country because it is through our country that we have life, love and interests, happiness, honor, and God. In the fifth commandment, it tells us that we ought to love our country because if our country is happy, we, together with our family, will also be happy. And in the sixth commandment, it tells us that we ought to love our country because its independence will result in our liberty, its advancements will result in our perfection, and its exaltation will result in our own glory and immortality. The overarching idea is that we ought to love our country because in so doing we shall achieve certain good things.

Finally, how do we reconcile the universality of morality with the partiality of nationalism? While it can be said that the view that moral principles should be applied equally to all persons appeals to our common intuitions, its entailment that any form of partiality is morally unjustified seems to go against common intuitions. This is because it seems to be widely regarded that while there are indeed certain forms of partiality that are not morally desirable, there are also those that are. In this regard, a paradigm example of a morally undesirable form of partiality is racism,

while that of a morally desirable form of partiality is familial partiality—that is, the form of partiality that we give to our family members. In what follows, let us examine what makes familial partiality morally desirable and how its moral desirability could be reconciled with the universality of morality.

Under the universalist view of morality, in a situation where a moral principle equally applies, for instance, to a stranger and one's mother, it would not really matter, morally speaking, whose welfare one prefers. In this situation, there is, however, something intuitively wrong if one does prefer the welfare of the stranger over that of one's own mother. Perhaps to make this clearer, imagine that an action which when done towards a stranger and done towards one's own mother would lead to the same undesirable consequences. If one were to choose to perform this action towards one's own mother instead of the stranger, there is something intuitively wrong about this decision. On the other hand, in a situation where a stranger intends to perform a morally good action while one's own family member intends to perform a morally bad action, it is, of course, morally wrong for us to prefer the action of our family member.

Our considerations above actually point to a possible synthesis between the universalist view of morality (sometimes called "moral universalism") and the view that there are at least some forms of partiality that are morally justified—in this case, familial partiality. Using familial partiality as the justified form of partiality, we can formulate this synthesis as follows. In cases where a moral principle is violated by the action of one person but not by the action of the other, it is but moral that we prefer the action of the person who does not violate the moral principle, regardless of whether this person is a stranger or a family member. But in cases where a moral principle is not violated by the actions of both the stranger and family member, it is but moral that we prefer the action of the family member. Of course, if the actions of both the stranger and family member violate moral principles, then it is moral that we do not prefer any of their actions—unless we are forced to choose the lesser evil.

Hurka (1997) argued that since familial partiality is the paradigm example of the types of partiality that can be reconciled with the universality of morality, we can

make it as the basis for justifying the compatibility of national partiality with the universality of morality. The reasoning is that if familial partiality can be reconciled with the universality of morality because of some features of familial partiality, then national partiality too can be reconciled with the universality of morality if national partiality shares these features of familial partiality. Given this, the question in order is: *What then are the morally justifiable features of familial partiality?* Hurka (1997), in response, spoke of our special ties that we have with our family members that are brought about by (1) our closeness of contact with them, (2) qualities that they have that we consider good, and (3) our shared history—of the appropriate kind—with them. This appropriate kind of shared history here consists of (a) performing good deeds together or working together in bringing about the good, and (b) suffering evil or oppression together. There might be special ties that might develop in performing evil deeds together, but partiality arising from these special ties is never morally justifiable. For instance, the special ties that developed between two Nazi officers because they were together in several acts of exterminating Jews could never morally justify the partiality that one of the Nazi officers would accord to the other.

National partiality, Hurka (1997) analyzed, fails in the area of closeness feature for the obvious reason that it is impossible that we can be close to all our countrymen. However, in the areas of good qualities and shared history (of the appropriate kind), national partiality can succeed. Hurka added that these areas where national partiality can succeed can make up for the area where it fails. As a consequence, Hurka concluded that national partiality is reconcilable with the universality of morality. There are, of course, critics of this conclusion of Hurka. For our purpose of situating the *Decalogue* in the present discourse in the philosophy of nationalism, let us grant the plausibility of Hurka's conclusion. Now, it is clear that the two areas that reconciles national partiality with the universality of morality that Hurka spoke of, namely the areas of good qualities and shared history (of the appropriate kind), can be found in the *Decalogue*. In the area of good qualities, the *Decalogue*, to recall, tells us to love our country because of the inherently good qualities of our country, namely, that it is the “[p]aradise which

God has given thee in this life, the only patrimony of thy race, the only inheritance of thy ancestors and the only hope of thy posterity; because of her, thou hast life, love and interests, happiness, honor and God” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4). And in the area of shared history of the appropriate kind, the *Decalogue*, to recall, tells us that we ought to love our countrymen because of our shared history with them, in particular, because it is our countrymen, which we see as our friends, brothers, or comrades, with whom we “art bound by one fate, by the same joys and sorrows and by common aspirations and interests” (Mabini, 1964, p. 4).

Conclusion

According to Mabini (2000, 1931), the struggle for the country's independence would not be successful and legitimate if Filipinos did not have the right frame of mind, that is, if they did not have the right motivation and a clear idea of the place of this struggle in their system of values. Thus, Mabini wrote the *Decalogue* to guide Filipinos in acquiring this right frame of mind, as well as to provide them the moral justification for why they ought to acquire it. One fundamental internal conflict that needed to be resolved then was the conflict portrayed by the colonizers, of which they were quite successful, between Filipinos' love of their country and their love of God. The *Decalogue* did a wonderful job in demonstrating the error of this conflict. For the *Decalogue*, if one truly loves God then one ought to love one's own country. Loving one's own country is thus, for the *Decalogue*, a moral imperative with a divine justification. In addition to its historical value, the *Decalogue* is a relevant philosophical work on the morality of nationalism. Its patriotic injunctions are backed up by arguments and the values it advances form a coherent system. Furthermore, its insights have anticipated some of the key considerations in current analyses of the moral justifiability of nationality.

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