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Dreamscapes from Recto Street: A Parallel Reading of Demeterio's Partially Published Novel and the Highlights of His Works on Filipino Philosophy

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Abstract

This study examines the intellectual relationship between the partially published novel "Dreamscapes from Recto Street" and the philosophical writings of Feorillo A. Demeterio III. It argues that reading these works in parallel enables a more integrated understanding of contemporary Filipino thought. Anchored in literary hermeneutics and critical Filipino philosophy, the research analyzes how narrative strategies and philosophical arguments mutually clarify Demeterio's reflections on identity, urban life, social critique, and nationhood. Using a qualitative and interpretive design, the study combines close textual analysis, thematic coding, and comparative reading. Selected philosophical essays are analyzed to trace Demeterio's major intellectual trajectories, including field architecture, critical Filipino philosophy, foreign theory appropriation, philosophizing in Filipino, intellectual historiography, cultural and public engagement, and meta-philosophical field diagnostics. These frameworks are then placed in dialogue with a narrative reading of the novel, focusing on plot structure, characterization, and representations of urban space. Interviews and archival materials provide additional contextual grounding. The findings show that Dreamscapes from Recto Street functions as a narrative continuation of Demeterio's philosophical project. Its characters embody tensions between theory and practice, migration and nationalism, as well as institutional constraint and ethical responsibility. Recto Street emerges as a symbolic urban site where precarity, intellectual labor, and aspiration converge.

Keywords: *Filipino Philosophy, Feorillo A. Demeterio III, literary hermeneutics, parallel reading, urban imaginaries*

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INTRODUCTION

Filipino intellectual production has long been marked by a dynamic interplay between literary creativity and philosophical reflection, yet few studies have explored this interface in the works of contemporary thinkers. Feorillo A. Demeterio, a prolific contributor to Filipino philosophy, exemplifies this intersection through his published philosophical writings and his partially published literary venture. His novel *Dreamscapes from Recto Street* is partially published, as three of its chapters became part of the *Denkbild* (thought-image in German) series of *the Kritike* philosophy journal between 2009 and 2010. This literary work demonstrates an ongoing engagement with ethical, cultural, and national concerns, often articulated through both conceptual analysis and narrative imagination. The partially published novel, set against the vibrant backdrop of Recto Street, presents an untapped literary landscape rich in symbolism, thematic complexity, and social commentary, offering a complementary lens to his philosophical discourse.

By examining these texts in parallel, the research foregrounds how literary and philosophical modes of inquiry can mutually illuminate one another, revealing dimensions of thought that may remain hidden when considered in isolation. This study situates Demeterio's work within broader conversations on Filipino identity, urban experience, and cultural reflection, highlighting the ways in which creative narrative can deepen philosophical understanding. In doing so, it also underscores the methodological potential of interdisciplinary and comparative readings, demonstrating that the confluence of imagination and reason provides a more nuanced and holistic grasp of a thinker's intellectual and cultural contributions.

This paper addressed the main problem: How can a parallel reading of Demeterio's partially published novel and the major themes of his works on Filipino philosophy illuminate and mutually enrich the interpretation of both texts? This main problem is further articulated by the following sub-problems: 1) What are the central themes and contributions of Demeterio's works on Filipino philosophy? 2) What contextual narratives define Demeterio's partially published novel? 3) How can the philosophical insights from Demeterio's works inform a deeper understanding of his partially published novel? 4) How can the narrative and imaginative elements of the partially published novel shed light on or enrich the interpretation of his philosophical works?

Several prominent and emerging scholars have acknowledged Demeterio's significant contributions to Filipino philosophy. Abulad noted concerns about Demeterio's shift from San Beda to De La Salle University,

highlighting debates on the use of social studies in philosophy.[1] Gripaldo aligned Demeterio's 16 discourses on Filipino philosophy with his own typologies, while Mercado proposed future directions based on Demeterio's work.[2] Younger scholars like Abellanosa[3] and Cortez[4] recognized Demeterio as a critical voice, especially regarding the socio-political elusiveness of Filipino philosophy. Batoon[5] and Pada[6] cited Demeterio's critiques of anthropological approaches and methodological solutions. His categorization framework has been widely used in theses and dissertations, including studies by Bagay Jr.[7] and De Leon[8], which Biana and Joaquin questioned.[9] Overall, Demeterio's taxonomy and critical perspectives remain influential in shaping Filipino philosophical discourse and research methodologies.

Beyond these disciplinary debates, the intellectual context of Demeterio's work may be further illuminated by situating it within the long-standing affinity between philosophy and literature. This relationship has been evident in the works of many philosophers who have relied on literary forms to articulate complex ideas. Plato, for instance, employed dialogue to explore metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical questions. Boethius combined prose and poetry in *The Consolation of Philosophy* to reflect on fate, free will, and happiness, while Friedrich Nietzsche adopted aphoristic and literary styles to probe power, selfhood, and nihilism. Similarly, existentialist thinkers such as Camus and Sartre

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1 Romualdo Abulad, "Pilosopiyang Pilipino, Uso Pa Ba?" (plenary paper presented at the 10th Philosophical Conference, Sancta Maria Mater et Regina Seminarium, Capiz, Philippines, 2010).

2 Leonardo N. Mercado, "Reflections on the Status of Filipino Philosophy," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (December 2016): 21–28, https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_19/mercado_december2016.pdf.

3 Rhoderick John Abellanosa, "Local Discourse, Identity and the Search for a Filipino Philosophy: A Re-exploration through the Lens of Reynaldo Ileto," *Asian Perspectives in the Arts and Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2013): 35–59.

4 Franz Cortez, "The Philippine Engagement with Paulo Freire," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (2013): 50–70.

5 Emmanuel Batoon, "Tracing Mercado's Anthropological Perspective (Second of Two Parts)," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (2014), 1–18.

6 Roland Theuas Pada, "The Methodological Problems of Filipino Philosophy," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 8, no. 1 (2014), 24–44.

7 Rodolfo Bagay, Jr., "Development Potentials of Undergraduate Theses in Philosophy" (master's thesis, De La Salle University, 2014).

8 Emmanuel De Leon, "Ang Pilosopiya at Pamimilosopiya ni Roque J. Ferriols, SJ: Tungo sa Isang Kritikal na Pamimilosopiyang Filipino," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (2015): 28–50.

9 Hazel T. Biana and Jeremiah Joven B. Joaquin, "Questioning Demeterio's Approach to Filipino Philosophy," *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (January 2023), https://doi.org/10.46992/pijp.24.1.a.8.

conveyed philosophical insights through fiction, demonstrating how narrative forms can serve as vehicles for philosophical reflection.

Within this broader intellectual tradition, Nussbaum argues in "Flawed Crystals" that literature functions as a form of moral philosophy by presenting ethically charged situations with emotional depth and contextual nuance. Through characters, relationships, and narrative dilemmas, literature discloses the complexity and ambiguity of moral life in ways that abstract theory often cannot.[10] Wollheim[11], Gardiner[12], Putnam[13], and Hart[14] share this view while nonetheless maintaining that literature and philosophy remain methodologically distinct, since philosophy seeks systematic clarity through argument, whereas literature explores moral experience through narrative without necessarily offering determinate conclusions.

Recent studies have also ventured into the intersection of philosophy and poetic inquiry. For instance, harnessing poetry to explore the South African philosophy of interdependence.[15] Fisher defends the use of fictional examples in philosophy, holding that fictions are underappreciated in their role in philosophical inquiry.[16] In moral philosophy and aesthetics, Dain[17], Clavel-

10 Martha C. Nussbaum, "Flawed Crystals: James's *The Golden Bowl* and Literature as Moral Philosophy," in *Love's Knowledge: Philosophy and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 142–143.

11 Richard Wollheim, "Flawed Crystals: James's The Golden Bowl and the Plausibility of Literature as Moral Philosophy," *New Literary History* 15, no.1 (1983): 191.

12 Patrick Gardiner, "Professor Nussbaum on The Golden Bowl," *New Literary History* 15, no. 1 (1983): 181.

13 Hilary Putnam, "Taking Rules Seriously: A Response to Martha Nussbaum," *New Literary History* 15, no. 1 (1983): 195.

14 William A. Hart, "Martha Nussbaum and the Golden Bowl," *Essays in Criticism* 57, no. 3 (2007): 196.

15 Victoria I. Ekpo, "At the Intersection of Philosophy and Poetic Inquiry," British Educational Research Association, 2025, https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/at-the-intersection-of-philosophy-and-poetic-inquiry.

16 Alex Fisher, "In Defence of Fictional Examples," *The Philosophical Quarterly* (2025), https://doi.org/10.1093/pq/pqaf036.

17 Edmund Dain, "Sympathy for the Devil: The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance, the Role of Fiction in Moral Thought, and the Limits of the Imagination," *Philosophy,* 96, no. 2 (2021): 253–275, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819120000431.

Vázquez,[18] Koblizek,[19] Sauchelli,[20] and Diggin[21] show that fiction and narrative art are important sites for ethical imagination, moral resistance, and ethical criticism. Taken together, these works support the view that literature is not merely an object to which philosophy may be applied, but a medium through which philosophical inquiry itself can take place.

Scholarship in the Philippines also shows that literature can function as a site of philosophical reflection, especially in decolonial contexts where identity, memory, power, and historical experience are central. Aguas[22] treats literature as a medium for reflecting on Filipino values and identity, while Biclar[23] reads Demetillo's *Barter in Panay* as a literary work that reveals ideology, class, race, and power relations. Mancenido-Bolaños[24] makes the connection more explicit by presenting literature as philosophy through Quito's reading of Sartre, where writing becomes praxis and a way of engaging human freedom within concrete historical conditions. In a recent study, Imbong[25] similarly extracts and systematizes Karl Gaspar's writings, including his voluminous literary works, to show that they articulate a distinct Mindanawon/Lumad form of Filipino philosophy. Gaspar's literary and scholarly works help build this philosophy by transforming the lived experiences, struggles, rituals, spirituality, ecological relations, and political resistance of Lumad and other Mindanawon communities into a systematic philosophical discourse. This approach is also decolonial because it moves away from the dominance of Manila-centric and Western philosophical frameworks by foregrounding Indigenous knowledge, local

18 Adriana Clavel-Vázquez, "On the Ethics of Imagination and Ethical-Aesthetic Value Interaction in Fiction," *Ergo* 9 (2023): 1518–1542, https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.3119.

19 Tomas Koblizek, "Ethical Flaws in Artworks: An Argument for Contextual Conjunctivism," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 80, no. 4 (2022): 453–463, https://doi.org/10.1093/jaac/kpac035.

20 Andrea Sauchelli, "Real Moral Options and Imaginative Resistance," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, (March 25, 2026), https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayaf056.

21 Steven Diggin, "Ethical Presuppositions in Narrative Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 66, no. 1 (2026): 179–197, https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayaf021.

22 Jove Jim S. Aguas, "Preliminary Reflections on the Functions of Literature Regarding Filipino Values and Identity," *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* 25, no. 2 (2024): 353–361. https://doi.org/10.46992/pijp.25.2.e.1.

23 Leo Andrew B. Biclar, "Assumptions Related to the Literary Persona in Demetillo's *Barter in Panay*: An Epic," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 1 (2016): 38–53, https://doi.org/10.25138/10.1.a.2.

24 Marella Ada Mancenido-Bolaños, "Writing as Praxis: Quito and Sartre on Literature as Philosophy," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (2025): 36–48, https://www.kritike.org/journal/special_issue_2025b/mancenido-bolanos_february2025.pdf.

25 Jerry D. Imbong, *Towards a Mindanawon/Lumad Philosophy: The Filipino Philosophy of Bro. Karl Gaspar, CSsR* (Aletheia Printing and Publishing House, 2024).

histories, marginalized voices, and the Lumad struggle for land, life, and self-determination.

Building on these theoretical positions, the present study is significant to Filipino literary and philosophical scholarship because it advances an interdisciplinary reading that places creative writing and philosophical inquiry in productive dialogue. By undertaking a parallel analysis of Demeterio's partially published novel alongside his philosophical works, the research demonstrates how narrative imagination operates as an extension of philosophical reflection. It shows how storytelling, symbolism, and character construction intersect with conceptual argumentation in Filipino intellectual practice.

From a philosophical perspective, the study enriches Philippine philosophy by situating Demeterio's theoretical positions within the imaginative horizon of his fiction, allowing a deeper understanding of his intellectual project beyond formal essays. From a literary standpoint, it offers a rare critical engagement with an unfinished or partially circulated text, foregrounding its thematic density and symbolic potential. Methodologically, the study contributes to comparative and parallel reading approaches by illustrating how literary and philosophical texts can illuminate one another. For students and scholars of Filipino thought, it affirms the value of engaging both creative and analytical works to grasp a thinker's intellectual landscape in a more integrated and holistic way.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive approach, grounded in comparative literary and philosophical analysis. To answer the first sub-problem, the study conducts a thematic and conceptual analysis of selected philosophical writings. Key texts are systematically examined to identify recurring motifs, critical frameworks, reflections on Filipino cultural identity, and the broader intellectual contributions of Demeterio's thought. Content coding and close reading techniques are employed to distill core philosophical concepts, contextualizing them within contemporary Philippine intellectual discourse.

For the second sub-problem, the research applies in-depth interviews with Demeterio and narrative and literary analyses of his partially published novel. The interview delves into the context and milieu of where and when the work was produced. The textual analysis focused on the novel's historical and socio-cultural contexts, narrative structure, character development, and the character's overall contribution to the whole novel. This process ensures a comprehensive understanding of the novel's imaginative landscape.

The third sub-problem is addressed through a hermeneutic overlay, wherein philosophical concepts are applied to the literary text. Character choices, dilemmas, and narrative arcs are interpreted in the light of critical, cultural, and nationalistic frameworks identified in the philosophical corpus, revealing layers of meaning that may be obscured in a purely literary reading.

The fourth sub-problem is approached by tracing illustrative segments from the novel that exemplify or humanize philosophical ideas. Symbolic motifs and narrative strategies are analyzed to expand interpretive possibilities, suggesting new angles for understanding Demeterio's conceptual arguments and highlighting the interplay between creative imagination and analytical thought. Finally, the findings from these analyses are synthesized to identify convergences, divergences, and tensions between the novel and philosophical texts, demonstrating the methodological significance of parallel reading and its contribution to a holistic understanding of Demeterio's intellectual and creative oeuvre.

Overview of Demeterio's Works on Filipino Philosophy

Demeterio is among the most prolific and methodologically rigorous contemporary thinkers in Filipino philosophy. Across three decades, his scholarship demonstrates a wide intellectual range alongside a consistently systematic and critical orientation. Drawing on the typology of Deleña et al. (2018) and later refinements, his work may be grouped into seven areas: field architecture, critical Filipino philosophy, foreign theory appropriation, philosophizing in Filipino, intellectual historiography, cultural and public engagement, and meta-philosophical field diagnostics. These seven areas collectively articulate a vision of Filipino philosophy that is at once disciplined, critical, interdisciplinary, and socially responsive.

a. Field Architecture and Taxonomy of Filipino Philosophy

This is Demeterio's most widely acknowledged contribution, reflecting his effort to systematize Filipino philosophy and transform a scattered body of work into a more coherent and organized intellectual field. Through seminal essays such as "The Status of and Directions for Filipino Philosophy"[26] and "Assessing the Development Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino

26 F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Status of and Directions for 'Filipino Philosophy' in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo, and Co," *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (2013).

Philosophy,"[27] he articulated a panoramic view of the diverse "discourses" that constitute Filipino philosophical practice. He identified sixteen distinct discourses but focused only on twelve academe-based subjects, which he eventually used to analyze the contributions of figures such as Quito, Mananzan, and Gripaldo.

This taxonomic ambition does more than classify. It provides a map for the field's future development, evaluating which areas have matured, which remain underdeveloped, and which contain the greatest potential for intellectual growth. He claimed that this work is a proactive alternative to empower the Filipino professors of philosophy.[28] On the contrary, Biana and Joaquin questioned this approach to Filipino philosophy. They argued that the conclusions of the 2014 project rest on problematic methodological assumptions that render the identified "discourses" and their corresponding assessments of "developmental potential" both superficial and insufficiently grounded.[29] Nevertheless, Demeterio remains one of the principal architects of Filipino philosophy, a scholar who envisions the field as a self-reflective, evolving, and institutionally embedded discipline rather than a loose assemblage of individual essays.

b. Critical Filipino Philosophy

The largest portion of Demeterio's oeuvre falls under what Deleña et al. describe as critical Filipino philosophy, comprising over 40% of his works.[30] Here, Demeterio deploys critical theories from the Frankfurt School, postmodernist thought, and postcolonial discourse to interrogate Filipino socio-political realities. His analyses of topics such as church-state relations, electoral processes, Filipino political ideology, multiculturalism, and national identity demonstrate how philosophy can serve as a tool for examining structures of domination, symbolic violence, and social conflict.

Demeterio's transformative move is to reject an earlier trend in Filipino philosophy that emphasized essentialist notions of Filipino identity or limited its scope to anthropological description. Instead, he insists that philosophy

27 F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Assessing the Developmental Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy," *Philippiniana Sacra* 49, no. 147 (May–August 2014): 190. https://philsacra.ust.edu.ph/admin/downloadarticle?id=59B579D8D8B39A52239B019E-33ABFF2B.

28 Demeterio, "Assessing the Developmental Potentials," 190.

29 Biana and Joaquin, "Questioning Demeterio's Approach to Filipino Philosophy," 150.

30 Mary Irene Clare O. Deleña, Joshua Mariz B. Felicilda, and Leslie Anne L. Liwanag, "Si Demeterio at ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino: Pakikipanayam Tungkol sa Kanyang Ika-25 na Taong Pamimilosopiya," Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy 12, no. 1 (June 2018): 98–139.

must confront the actual conditions of contemporary Filipino society, including its institutional failures, cultural contradictions, and ideological formations. Although he acknowledges that his work is more focused on the theoretical level of critique and still lacks practical application,[31] he nonetheless infuses Filipino philosophy with a potent political dimension, aligning it with global traditions of critical theory while ensuring that such theories illuminate distinctly Filipino concerns. This approach still positions him as a leading figure in advancing a more socially engaged and critically responsive Filipino philosophical practice.

c. Foreign Theory Appropriation

Unlike Filipino thinkers who avoid Western theory for fear of reproducing colonial dependence, Demeterio models a more nuanced approach, one that recognizes the value of foreign conceptual tools while grounding their application firmly in Filipino contexts,[32] His writings appropriate the ideas of Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer, Bourdieu, Young, Rorty, Lyotard, and others, using them to analyze Filipino cultural products, political structures, and intellectual traditions.

This strategic appropriation is neither uncritical nor derivative. Rather, it reveals Demeterio's methodological conviction that Filipino philosophy must remain interdisciplinary and theoretically robust, capable of engaging global intellectual developments. He even emphasized that scholars should concentrate on discourses that meaningfully address the Filipino context rather than pursue those to which they may not be fully connected or may find difficult to engage.[33]

By demonstrating how foreign theories can be refunctioned for Filipino realities, whether in interpreting novels, decoding ideological discourse, or analyzing historical symbols, Demeterio expands the methodological repertoire available to Filipino scholars. His work thus exemplifies a decolonial openness, one that treats theory not as an imposition but as a resource to be adapted and transformed.

d. Philosophizing in Filipino

31 Deleña, Felicilda, and Liwanag, "Si Demeterio at ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 126.

32 Deleña, Felicilda, and Liwanag, "Si Demeterio at ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 125.

33 Deleña, Felicilda, and Liwanag, "Si Demeterio at ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 126.

A transformative turning point in Demeterio's career occurred when he joined the Department of Filipino at De La Salle University. There, he deepened his engagement with the Filipino language, producing an extensive body of theoretical work written in Filipino.[34] These writings include Filipino-language expositions of Adorno, Lyotard, Bourdieu, Baudrillard, and Gramsci, as well as philosophical analyses of Filipino literature, film, and social issues. By philosophizing in Filipino, Demeterio performs two crucial interventions.

First, he contributes to the decolonization of philosophical discourse, countering the dominance of English and historically ecclesiastical Latin. Second, he helps build a linguistic infrastructure for Filipino philosophical writing, thus enabling broader participation among Filipino scholars, students, and researchers. In fact, Gonzalez argued that it would have been more effective if the promotion of the Filipino language had been discussed at the level of practical application rather than primarily through the lens of nation-building.[35] His intellectual example reaffirms that Filipino is not merely a medium for cultural narration but a fully capable philosophical language, able to articulate complex theoretical concepts with clarity and precision.

e. Intellectual Historiography

Demeterio's work has also significantly shaped how Filipino philosophers and intellectuals are studied, interpreted, and canonized. His works on Rizal, delos Reyes, Quito, Mananzan, Gripaldo, and other figures contribute to a growing body of Filipino intellectual historiography. By analyzing their ideas, methods, and historical contexts, he helps construct a genealogy of Filipino thought, situating these thinkers within both local and global philosophical conversations. This historiographical work is crucial for a field still in the process of defining its own tradition. Demeterio's interpretive reconstructions ensure that Filipino philosophy has its own intellectual ancestors, internal debates, and institutional memory. Such work is foundational for any discipline seeking continuity and scholarly identity.

f. Cultural and Public Engagement

One of Demeterio's distinctive contributions is his expansion of philosophical inquiry beyond canonical texts toward popular culture, media, and everyday practices. His analyses of radio drama, YouTube figures, lyrics,

34 Rodrigo D. Abenes and Jerwin M. Mahaguay, "F.P.A. Demeterio III: Simula sa Pagbubuo Hanggang sa Pakikibahagi," *Lukad: An Online Journal of Pedagogy* 1, no. 1 (2021): 85-114.

35 Nabanggit ni Demeterio sa isang panayam. See Deleña, Felicida, and Liwanag, "Si Demeterio at ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 129-130.

indigenous tattooing, LGBTQ+, and gay language demonstrate how Filipino philosophy can engage lived realities. Such public-oriented work affirms that philosophy is embedded in social life rather than confined to abstraction. Cultural products are treated as sites of ideology, symbolism, and aesthetic meaning. Through this approach, Filipino philosophy becomes a practice of describing culture, articulating worldview, and responding to social issues.[36] His approach models a democratized Filipino philosophy, one that dialogues with the lived experiences of everyday Filipinos and illuminates the cultural logic of contemporary Philippine society.

g. Meta-Philosophical Field Diagnostics

Demeterio also invests sustained effort in assessing the condition, limits, and future directions of Filipino philosophy. His analysis is anchored on two long-standing issues: Quito's claim regarding the field's underdevelopment and the argument that an authentic Filipino philosophy is lacking. Within these debates, he advances both counterarguments and supporting evidence.[37] His meta-philosophical writings critique anthropologism, revisit claims of underdevelopment, and examine methodological constraints that have shaped philosophical practice. These reflections show a concern not only for producing ideas but also for strengthening the discipline itself. By interrogating institutions, curricula, language choice, and research paradigms, he argues for a Filipino philosophy that is critical, socially responsive, and globally engaged. Consequently, he stands as both philosopher and field builder.

These seven areas reveal Demeterio as a multifaceted thinker whose contributions extend beyond single authorship or disciplinary boundaries. He is at once a systematizer, a critic, a methodologist, a linguistic decolonizer, an intellectual historian, a cultural interpreter, and a meta-theorist of Filipino philosophy. Through these roles, he has helped shape Filipino philosophy into a dynamic and increasingly rigorous field, one capable of confronting its colonial past, responding to contemporary social challenges, and imagining new futures for philosophical thought in the Philippines.

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36 Mary Charisse C. Antonio, "Ang Pagsusuri sa Pilosopiya ni Demeterio Tungo sa Kanyang Tunay na Kasulatan sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino," unpublished article.

37 Ben Carlo N. Atim, "Ang Diskurso ni Feorillo Petronilo Demeterio tungkol sa Pilosopiyang Pilipino: Isang Pagsusuri," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 11, no. 2 (December 2017): 28–53, https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_21/atim_december2017.pdf.

Overview of Demeterio's Partially Published Novel

This section is divided into two subsections: a) contextual background and b) structure. It examines the unfinished novel and traces its contextual origins, episodic design, and the symbolic use of Recto.

a. Contextual Background of the Novel

Demeterio was around 35 years old when he drafted the novel between 2004 and 2008, following the completion of his dissertation on Filipino novels in English at the University of the Philippines Diliman and coinciding with the closure of the Philosophy and Human Resources Department of San Beda College amid ideological tensions. At this stage, he regarded literature as more capable than academic philosophy of reaching a broader Filipino audience. The department's culture of critical philosophizing encouraged him to pursue this aim through fiction, positioning the novel as a vehicle for critical Filipino philosophy. The novel is set on Recto Street, chosen for its symbolic location linking Mendiola, Divisoria, and Manila's university belt.

Recto Street functions in the novel as a symbolic landscape of hope, aspiration, struggle, and sacrifice. Demeterio's vision of deploying literature as a medium for Filipino philosophical critique was interrupted in 2008 when the closure of the department forced his transfer to the Filipino Department of De La Salle University.[38] There, institutional expectations required him to concentrate on Philippine studies and to teach and write in the Filipino language. Immersed in the demanding research and mentoring culture of De La Salle University, he eventually set aside his earlier literary-philosophical project.

Thus, the partially published *Dreamscapes in Recto Street* remained as a testament to that brief but ambitious intellectual moment. Between 2009 and 2010, Demeterio inaugurated the *Denkbild* section of *Kritike* journal with three chapters from this novel, namely, "Dreaming with a Hammer: On Critical Theory in the Philippines" (2009)[39]; "Time Traveler: On Critical Theory in the Philippines Part II" (2009)[40]; and "Elixirs and Fabulous Potions: On Critical Theory in the

38 F.P.A. Demeterio III, personal interview, 2025.

39 F. P. A. Demeterio III, "Dreaming with a Hammer: On Critical Theory in the Philippines (A Philosophical Fiction)," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (June 2009): 185-206, http://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_5/demeterio_june2009.pdf.

40 F. P. A. Demeterio III, "Time Traveler: On Critical Theory in the Philippines Part II (A Philosophical Fiction)," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 2 (December 2009): 147–66, https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_6/demeterio_december2009.pdf.

Philippines" (2010)[41]. These published chapters constitute about 45% of the whole novel.

b. Structure of the Novel

Dreamscapes from Recto Street is organized as a sequence of seven interrelated short stories that collectively approximate the arc of a novel. Demeterio chose this form because, at the time of writing, he considered a series of short stories more manageable than a conventional full-length novel.[42] If the larger project remained unfinished, each completed chapter could still stand as an independent narrative unit. However, the structure is not merely a practical solution to the problem of composition. It also becomes an important narrative strategy. By distributing the novel's philosophical concerns across different characters, social locations, and affective conditions, the text constructs a composite vision of Filipino intellectual life.

Instead of unfolding through a strictly linear plot, the novel advances through accumulation, return, and convergence. Fred's homecoming provides the narrative frame, while the middle chapters reconstruct the intellectual, emotional, and political world that shaped him in Recto. The final chapter returns to Fred, now situated in rural praxis, where the ideals formed in the urban university belt are tested against feudal power and social violence. In this sense, the novel moves from memory to formation, from formation to critique, and from critique to ethical action. Table 01 presents the narrative structure of the seven chapters.

TABLE 1. *Narrative Structure of the Seven Chapters*

Chapter	Narrative Function
Homeward Journey	Frames the novel through Fred's return to Southern Leyte after his difficult years in Manila.
Star-Spangled Beings	Reconstructs Juliana's conflict between romantic attachment, family expectation, and migration.
Dreaming with a Hammer	Centers on Peter Mirano as a politicized literature professor shaped by activism, trauma, and institutional pressure.

41 F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Elixirs and Fabulous Potions: On Critical Theory in the Philippines—Part III (A Philosophical Fiction)," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 4, no. 2 (December 2010): 166–182, https://www.kritike.org/journal/issue_8/demeterio_december2010.pdf.

42 Demeterio, personal interview, 2025.

Chapter	Narrative Function
Time Traveler	Follows Charles as he negotiates philosophy, precarious labor, urban exhaustion, and personal dislocation.
Elixirs and Fabulous Potions	Presents Faith's work as a chemistry professor whose scientific practice is tied to activism, mentorship, labor, and migration.
Old Man's Labyrinth	Places Mang Nato at the center of ordinary memory, street-level debate, and intergenerational witnessing.
Looking Through a Tattered Dreamscape	Returns to Fred as he attempts to transform intellectual ideals into rural empowerment and technological intervention.

Viewed through Freytag's Pyramid, the novel does not simply move from exposition to resolution. It revises this structure by making exposition cumulative. Homeward Journey introduces Fred's return, but the succeeding chapters reconstruct the intellectual and affective community that shaped his ethical commitments. Juliana, Peter, Charles, Faith, and Mang Nato are not merely secondary characters. They embody the social forces that form Fred's consciousness: migration, critical pedagogy, precarious intellectual labor, socially committed science, and ordinary historical memory.

This structure may also be read through Bakhtin's chronotope,[43] where time and space produce meaning together. Recto becomes the novel's central chronotope because it gathers university life, activism, poverty, aspiration, labor, romance, and intellectual debate within one symbolic urban space. The university belt is not only a setting but also a formative site where dreams are imagined, wounded, and carried elsewhere.

The rising action develops through the widening gap between ideals and material conditions. Juliana's migration, Peter's teaching, Charles's decline, Faith's scientific commitment, and Mang Nato's memories reveal different forms of social struggle. Together, they produce what Raymond Williams calls "structures of feeling,"[44] as the novel renders not only social crisis but also its emotional texture. The climax occurs in *Looking Through a Tattered Dreamscape*, when Fred's attempt to translate theory into rural praxis meets violent resistance

43 Nele Bemong and Pieter Borghart, "Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives," in *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives,* ed. Nele Bemong, Pieter Borghart, Michel De Dobbeleer, Kristoffel Demoen, Koen De Temmerman, and Bart Keunen (Gent: Academia Press, 2010), https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/34655/377572.pdf.

44 Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling," in *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture*, ed. Devika Sharma and Frederik Tygstrup (Boston: De Gruyter), 2015.

from feudal power. His ambush becomes the decisive turn because it exposes the cost of transforming intellectual commitment into social action.

The dénouement remains open-ended. The dreamscape is "tattered" but not extinguished. Instead of triumph, the novel leaves ethical persistence: in rural organizing, pedagogy, migrant suffering, ordinary memory, and unfinished social transformation. Structurally, the novel becomes a narrative architecture of Filipino critical consciousness, tracing how thought moves from urban formation to rural praxis despite loss, displacement, and violence.

Demeterio's Philosophy as an Interpretive Lens for his Novel

This section examines how key strands of Demeterio's philosophical work may serve as an interpretive lens for reading his novel, allowing the text and the theoretical corpus to illuminate each other in a mutually enriching way. It is organized into seven subsections that correspond to the seven short stories in his novel.

a. Homeward Journey

Fred's return in *Homeward Journey*[45] dramatizes the philosophical problem of grounding thought in place. His decision to remain in Maasin rather than return to metropolitan life is not a nostalgic retreat but a deliberate movement toward community, memory, and responsibility. The chapter contrasts the abstractions of intellectual aspiration with the concrete demands of home, family, landscape, and local history. Fred's renewed subjectivity emerges from this encounter with the province, suggesting that meaningful thought must be rooted in the lifeworld that gives it ethical direction. Even his meditation on Sisyphus[46] becomes significant not as a mere borrowing from foreign philosophy but as a way of interpreting perseverance within a Filipino context of hardship, return, and unfinished labor.

b. Star-Spangled Beings

Star-Spangled Beings stages migration as both aspiration and fracture.[47] Juliana's abrupt departure from breakfast with Edward reveals a conflict that is emotional, familial, and ideological at once. Her attachment to Fred and to their

45 F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Homeward Journey," in *Dreamscapes from Recto Street*, unpublished novel, n.d.

46 Demeterio, "Homeward Journey," 15.

47 F. P. A. Demeterio III, "Star-Spangled Beings," in *Dreamscapes from Recto Street*, unpublished novel, n.d.

shared nationalist dream is unsettled by her family's expectation of mobility. The chapter, therefore, presents migration not only as physical relocation but as a reorganization of desire, obligation, and belonging. Juliana's crisis exposes the difficulty of sustaining national commitment in a society where security, success, and familial fulfillment are often imagined elsewhere. Through her, the novel renders diaspora as an intimate wound and as a structural condition that reshapes Filipino subjectivity.

c. Dreaming with a Hammer

In *Dreaming with a Hammer*, Peter Mirano's politicized teaching[48] foregrounds the problem of critical pedagogy within fragile academic institutions. The warning he receives from university authorities reveals how intellectual work becomes vulnerable when it challenges dominant assumptions about culture, power, and history. Peter's classroom is a space of awakening, but it is also monitored and constrained by institutional caution. The chapter dramatizes the tension between education as liberation and education as regulated practice. Through Peter, the novel shows that critical thought does not circulate freely. It is shaped by professional risk, institutional anxiety, and the personal wounds carried by those who teach against the grain.

d. Time Traveler

Time Traveler presents the philosophical problem of intellectual formation under conditions of precarity. Charles's life as a philosophy student and night-shift worker reveals how economic pressure, urban exhaustion, and emotional abandonment can fracture even the most promising forms of consciousness. His encounter with the Mendiola vigil connects personal confusion to the fading memory of political struggle, while his immersion in night labor exposes the disorienting effects of contemporary urban economies.[49] The coffee shop,[50] nightlife scenes,[51] and drug-induced visions[52] are not merely atmospheric details. They reveal a subject caught between critique and collapse. Through Charles, the novel asks what happens to thought when the material and affective conditions needed for reflection, solidarity, and care are absent.

48 Demeterio, "Dreaming with a Hammer," 193.

49 Demeterio, "Time Traveler," 150.

50 Demeterio, "Time Traveler," 154.

51 Demeterio, "Time Traveler," 163.

52 Demeterio, "Time Traveler," 165-166.

e. Elixirs and Fabulous Potions

Elixirs and Fabulous Potions dramatizes the problem of socially responsible knowledge. Faith's work as a chemistry professor, mentor, and labor advocate presents science not as neutral expertise but as an ethical practice that must respond to land, labor, environment, and community. Her intellectual awakening through the alchemist-babaylan lecture[53] connects scientific imagination with local cultural memory, while her work with Fred shows how research becomes meaningful when directed toward rural empowerment.[54] The chapter's tragic turn, marked by Arnold's return as a wounded OFW, expands this problem by exposing the bodily cost of labor export. Faith's story therefore links scientific work to migration, institutional neglect, and the moral demand to make knowledge answerable to social suffering.

f. Old Man's Labyrinth

Old Man's Labyrinth foregrounds the philosophical problem of memory as ordinary historical consciousness. Mang Nato's life carries the residues of war,[55] authoritarianism, poverty, and displacement, but his wisdom does not emerge from formal academic training.[56] It is formed in streets, barbershops, conversations, and acts of endurance. The chapter shifts the source of philosophical insight from the university to everyday life. Mang Nato's exchanges with younger intellectuals suggest that public thought may survive through ordinary people who remember, listen, and care. His story also shows that critical consciousness does not disappear when institutions weaken or when intellectual figures depart. It persists in memory, speech, and small practices of human recognition.

g. Looking Through a Tattered Dreamscape

In *Looking Through a Tattered Dreamscape*, Fred's attempt to transform knowledge into rural empowerment brings the novel's philosophical movement to its most urgent point.[57] His work with coconut farmers, technological interventions, and organizing efforts reveal a desire to convert intellectual formation into social praxis. Yet the violent resistance he encounters from

53 Demeterio, "Elixirs and Fabulous Potions," 166–182.

54 Demeterio, "Elixirs and Fabulous Potions," 178.

55 F. P. A. Demeterio, "Old Man's Labyrinth," in *Dreamscapes from Recto Street*, unpublished novel, n.d.

56 Demeterio, "Old Man's Labyrinth," 195.

57 F. P. A. Demeterio III, "Looking Through a Tattered Dreamscape," in *Dreamscapes from Recto Street,* unpublished novel, n.d.

landlord elites exposes the limits of idealism when it confronts entrenched power. The chapter shows that technical solutions alone cannot resolve structural inequality. Fred must recognize that rural transformation requires organization, political education, and collective struggle. His ambush marks the moment when theory becomes materially dangerous because it threatens existing relations of domination.

Figure 1 clarifies the relationship between the seven chapters of Dreamscapes from Recto Street and Demeterio's seven philosophical trajectories.

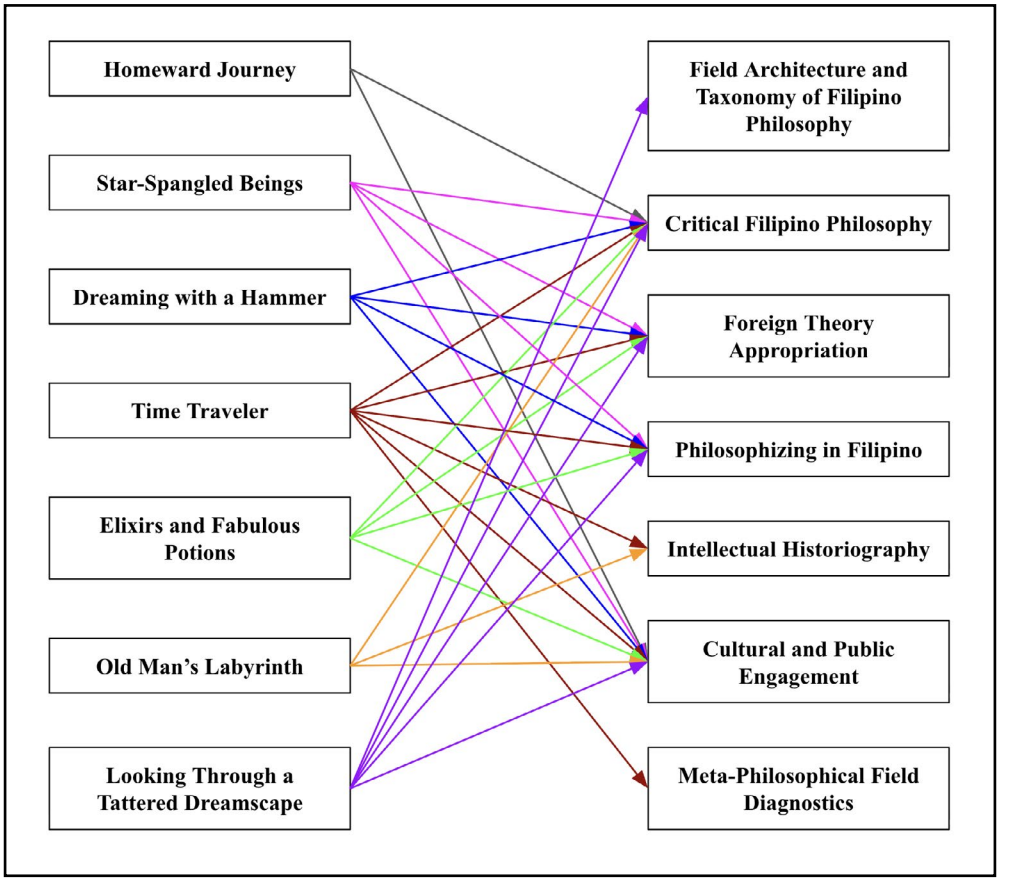


Figure 1: The relationship between the seven chapters of *Dreamscapes from Recto Street* and *Demeterio's seven philosophical trajectories.*

It is clear that the intersection between Demeterio's novel and Filipino philosophy is not linear or one-to-one, but relational and interwoven. While each chapter may be associated with a dominant philosophical concern, the overlapping arrows show that the novel operates as a field of convergence where critique, theory, language, memory, public engagement, and praxis mutually

illuminate each other. Among these, critical Filipino philosophy emerges as the strongest current because nearly all chapters dramatize structures of domination, whether in the form of feudal power, migration pressure, institutional control, labor precarity, cultural alienation, or historical violence.

At the same time, the figure shows that the novel does not reduce Filipino philosophy to critique alone. Homeward Journey grounds thought in place and return; Star-Spangled Beings frames migration as a crisis of belonging; Dreaming with a Hammer stages theory as pedagogical dissent; Time Traveler exposes the fragility of intellectual formation under precarious labor; Elixirs and Fabulous Potions links science with public responsibility; Old Man's Labyrinth locates historical consciousness in ordinary memory; and Looking Through a Tattered Dreamscape gathers these concerns into the problem of praxis. Thus, the novel becomes a narrative space where Demeterio's philosophical project is not merely reflected but tested through lived experience.

Through Fred, Juliana, Peter, Charles, Faith, and Mang Nato, Filipino philosophy appears as socially situated thought: critical yet affective, theoretical yet grounded, intellectual yet public. This deepens the parallel reading by showing that Dreamscapes from Recto Street functions as a narrative articulation of Filipino philosophy itself, where thought becomes meaningful only when it confronts concrete realities and moves toward ethical, cultural, and social responsibility.

Demeterio's Novel as an Articulative Strategy for his Philosophy

Demeterio's philosophical works are often expressed through conceptual, historical, and critical discourse. Dreamscapes from Recto Street, however, open a different mode of articulation. It does not merely repeat his philosophical ideas in fictional form; instead, it gives them narrative density, affective force, and social embodiment. Through Fred's movement from Southern Leyte to Manila's university belt and back to the province, the novel dramatizes the conditions that Demeterio repeatedly theorizes: intellectual formation, cultural displacement, institutional constraint, social inequality, and the ethical demand to ground thought in Filipino lifeworlds. Within this context, the novel may be read as an articulative strategy for Demeterio's philosophy. It translates philosophical concerns into characters, spaces, conflicts, and emotional situations. Where the philosophical essays clarify concepts, the novel tests those concepts in the lived world. Where the works of Demeterio diagnose the condition of Filipino philosophy, the novel imagines the human cost of thinking, teaching, loving, migrating, and acting critically within Philippine social realities. To further understand Demeterio's philosophical corpus, the

following subsection discusses his philosophical ideas by relating them to different parts of the novel.

The Novel as a Narrative Synthesis of Filipino Thought

One important function of the novel is its capacity to gather dispersed social and intellectual concerns into a single narrative world.[58] Demeterio's philosophical writings seek to organize Filipino thought into a more coherent and self-aware field. The novel performs a similar movement at the level of narrative. It brings together provincial memory, urban precarity, student activism, pedagogical labor, migration, scientific work, popular discourse, and rural struggle. These are not treated as separate topics. They are woven into the shared dreamscape that forms Fred and the other characters.

Fred's life in Southern Leyte[59] evokes kinship, ancestry, landscape, and rural obligation, while his Manila experience exposes him to activism, intellectual ambition, poverty, friendship, and heartbreak. The movement between province and city allows the novel to stage Filipino thought as something formed across uneven spaces. Recto becomes the site of intellectual awakening, but the province becomes the site where such awakening must be tested. Through this structure, the novel transforms philosophical architecture into narrative architecture. It shows that Filipino thought is not produced in abstraction but through the interaction of place, memory, education, labor, and social struggle.

Social Critique as Lived Experience

The novel also gives human form to Demeterio's critical concerns. Poverty, domination, institutional weakness, symbolic violence, and inequality do not appear merely as theoretical problems. They are experienced through the bodies and choices of the characters. Fred's arrival in Manila exposes the harshness of urban life; Charles's decline reveals the psychic cost of precarious labor; Juliana's migration dilemma shows how global mobility fractures intimate and national attachments; Peter's wounded intellectual life reveals the risks of critical pedagogy; and Faith's story connects scientific work to labor export, family crisis, and social responsibility.

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58 See F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Status of and Directions for 'Filipino Philosophy' in Zialcita, Timbreza, Quito, Abulad, Mabaquiao, Gripaldo and Co," *Philosophia: International Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 2 (May 2013): 186-215; and "Assessing the Developmental Potentials of Some Twelve Discourses of Filipino Philosophy," *Philippiniana Sacra*, 49, no. 147 (May-August 2014): 189–230, https://doi.org/10.55997/ps2005xlix147a4.

59 Demeterio, "Looking Through a Tattered Dreamscape."

Through these figures, critique becomes affective and embodied. The reader does not encounter social contradiction only as an argument but also as exhaustion, longing, fear, displacement, and fragile hope. This is where the novel extends Demeterio's philosophy. It does not simply state that Filipino thought must confront material realities; it narrates how those realities shape consciousness, relationships, and ethical decision-making.[60] Fiction therefore allows critique to become experiential. It makes visible the human textures that philosophical discourse can identify but cannot always fully dramatize.

Theory, Language, and Public Life as Narrative Practice

The novel further clarifies Demeterio's view that philosophical work becomes meaningful only when rooted in local experience. Fred's exposure to existentialism, Bourdieu, postcolonial thought, and political critique does not remain at the level of borrowed theory.[61] These ideas become significant only when refracted through his own life: his disorientation in Manila, his provincial identity, his love for Juliana, his engagement with rural communities, and his confrontation with feudal power. The novel therefore demonstrates that theory is not simply imported; it is remade through situated experience.

This process is also linguistic and cultural. Fred's world is shaped by Cebuano intimacy, Manila Filipino interaction, and English academic discourse. The novel's emotional universe is organized by culturally embedded concepts such as *hiya, pagmamalasakit, utang na loob, and pahiwatig,* even when the narrative itself moves through English prose. This multilingual tension suggests that Filipino philosophizing is not merely a matter of translation; it also involves the shaping of thought by memory, speech, affect, and social relation.

At the same time, the novel expands the space of philosophy beyond the classroom. Philosophical meaning emerges in dormitories, streets, barbershops,

60 Deleña, Felicida, and Liwanag, "Si Demeterio at ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 125, 127. Demeterio's scholarship likewise reflects a consistent effort to appropriate and rearticulate the theoretical frameworks of foreign thinkers for application in the Philippine context. This is evident in works such as "Ang Hermenyutika nina Schleiermacher at Dilthey bilang Batayang Teoretikal sa Araling Pilipino" and "Ang Pilosopiya ni Jean-François Lyotard bilang Batayang Teoretikal sa Araling Pilipino," and some of the same projects produced in collaboration with other scholars.

61 Deleña, Felicida, and Liwanag, "Si Demeterio at ang Pilosopiyang Pilipino," 127. In his interview, Demeterio argues that the application of foreign theories to the Philippine context initiates a process of gradual Filipinization as Filipino scholars engage with, reinterpret, and critically interrogate them. He further maintains that theories themselves have no nationality and are therefore not confined to the historical, cultural, or geographical contexts in which they were originally formulated.

laboratories, jeepneys, migrant routes, and rural communities.[62] Mang Nato's ordinary wisdom, Faith's socially committed science, Peter's critical teaching, Charles's fragile intellectual life, and Fred's rural praxis all show that thought circulates through public and everyday life. The novel thus presents Filipino philosophy not as an activity confined to academic texts but as a mode of engaging the world.

Fiction as the Humanization of Filipino Philosophy

The most important contribution of Dreamscapes from Recto Street is that it humanizes Demeterio's philosophical project. It gives narrative form to the burdens of Filipino intellectual life: the instability of academic institutions, the seductions of migration, the limits of individual brilliance, the difficulty of sustaining critical commitment, and the danger of transforming theory into social action.[63] Peter represents the wounded teacher, Charles the precarious young intellectual, Juliana the diasporic subject, Faith the ethical scientist, Mang Nato the ordinary bearer of memory, and Fred the figure of praxis.

Through these characters, the novel does not merely illustrate philosophy. It allows philosophy to be lived, wounded, tested, and carried forward. Its narrative world shows that Filipino thought is produced not only through concepts but also through landscapes, friendships, losses, labor, memory, and social struggle. In this sense, Dreamscapes from Recto Street becomes a narrative articulation of Filipino philosophy itself. It transforms Demeterio's intellectual concerns into a literary field where critique acquires emotional depth, theory becomes situated, and thought moves toward public responsibility.

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62 Popular culture is among the domains subjected to Demeterio's scholarly inquiry. His work in this area includes analyses of the songs of a prominent Filipino rapper-songwriter and of Filipino muralists. Examples of such studies are F. P. A. Demeterio III, *"Isang Semyolohikal na Pagsusuri sa mga Kontradiksyong Nakapaloob sa Panlipunang Kritisismo ni Gloc-9," Malay* 26, no.1 (2013): 17–35., and F. P. A. Demeterio III, *"Looking at Botong Francisco from the Horizon of Diego Rivera: A Visual Dialogue between Two Modern Muralists," Philippiniana Sacra* 48, no. 144 (2013): 299–328, https://doi.org/10.55997/ps2005xlix144a4.

63 In his interview with Deleña, Felicida, and Liwanag, 125, Demeterio notes that a significant number of his scholarship is devoted to critiquing Philippine higher education, which he characterizes as "half-baked." This concern is evident in his two-part, co-authored study with Roland Theuas D. S. Pada, "A Humboldtian Critique of the University of the Philippines as the Flagship of Philippine Higher Education"; see Demeterio and Pada, "A Humboldtian Critique of the University of the Philippines as the Flagship of Philippine Higher Education (Part I)," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 12, no. 2 (December 2018): 81–107, https://doi.org/10.25138/12.2.a06, and "Part II," *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy* 13, no. 1 (June 2019): 48–77, https://doi.org/10.25138/13.1.a3. Demeterio also examines the epistemological foundations of Filipino thought in "The Primitivization of the Indio Mind and the Explosion of Rationalities: The Politics of Knowledge in the Spanish Colonial Philippines."

Parallel Reading as Dialogical Hermeneutics

The study lies in operationalizing parallel reading as a form of dialogical hermeneutics. It does not propose a new school of hermeneutics; instead, it refines hermeneutic interpretation for a literary-philosophical problem: how a thinker's philosophical corpus and creative text may be read together as mutually illuminating forms of thought. Parallel reading, therefore, is not mere comparison but a dialogical procedure in which meaning emerges from the encounter between philosophical argument and literary narration.

Existing hermeneutic approaches often interpret a text through historical, linguistic, symbolic, cultural, or authorial contexts.[64] This study extends that procedure by placing Demeterio's philosophical writings and *Dreamscapes from Recto Street* in conversation. His philosophy provides the conceptual vocabulary for reading the novel's treatment of return, migration, pedagogy, precarity, science, memory, and praxis. Conversely, the novel gives these concerns narrative embodiment, affective intensity, and social concreteness.

This method avoids reducing the novel to an illustration of philosophy or treating philosophy as an external framework imposed on fiction. Instead, both are understood as co-constitutive modes of intellectual production. Philosophy clarifies the novel's conceptual architecture, while fiction reveals the lived, emotional, and ethical force of philosophical ideas.

Its contribution also lies in transferability. Parallel reading as dialogical hermeneutics may be applied to other novels whose authors have also produced essays, philosophical reflections, political writings, or cultural criticism. The study offers a model for examining how ideas travel across genres, from argument to story, theory to experience, and critique to narrative imagination and other related humanistic fields.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that a parallel reading of Demeterio's partially published novel and his major works on Filipino philosophy reveals a shared intellectual, ethical, and cultural project. Read through his philosophical corpus, *Dreamscapes from Recto Street* becomes more than a creative work; it becomes another mode of philosophizing. The novel narrativizes the concerns central to his scholarship: critique of domination, grounding of theory in Filipino realities,

64 F. P. A. Demeterio III, "Hermeneutics: The Philosophy of Interpretation," PDF, Academia.edu, accessed May 13, 2026, https://www.academia.edu/7425492/Hermeneutics_the_Philosophy_of_Interpretation.

public and cultural engagement, memory, and the movement of thought toward social responsibility.

Demeterio's philosophy clarifies the conceptual architecture of the novel. His critical Filipino philosophy helps explain its treatment of feudal power, institutional constraint, migration, labor precarity, and ideological formation. His appropriation of foreign theory explains how global concepts are refunctioned within Filipino lifeworlds. His work on language, public culture, intellectual historiography, and meta-philosophy further shows the novel as part of a broader project of making Filipino philosophy disciplined, self-aware, historically grounded, and socially responsive.

The novel enriches the interpretation of Demeterio's philosophy by giving it narrative, affective, and embodied form. Fred, Juliana, Peter, Charles, Faith, and Mang Nato are not mere representations of ideas. They embody the lived conditions through which Filipino thought is formed: displacement, aspiration, exhaustion, pedagogy, responsibility, memory, and praxis. Through them, philosophy appears in classrooms, streets, laboratories, migrant routes, rural communities, and ordinary conversations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study demonstrates that a parallel reading of Demeterio's philosophical works and his novel *Dreamscapes from Recto Street* offers an integrative model of Filipino thought that combines theory, cultural critique, and narrative imagination. To translate this into practice, several directions are proposed. Higher education institutions should formalize interdisciplinary humanities tracks linking philosophy, literature, and Philippine studies to develop hybrid critical and creative skills. Greater institutional support for Filipino language scholarship is also essential, with universities, the Commission on Higher Education, and cultural agencies expanding grants, translations, and peer-reviewed platforms. Community-based humanities laboratories, civic education that blends theory and creative writing, and support from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the National Book Development Board for philosophical fiction can further strengthen Filipino intellectual life.

Future research can extend this study in several directions. Scholars may examine unpublished or marginal creative works by Filipino philosophers to uncover philosophical positions expressed outside formal theory. Comparative studies could pair Demeterio with figures such as José Rizal, Bienvenido Lumbera, and Nick Joaquin to trace shared concerns with nationhood, urban modernity, and critique. Other work may focus on urban imaginaries, analyzing

spaces like Recto, Mendiola, or Divisoria as symbolic sites of precarity and aspiration. Methodological studies can further test narrative techniques as philosophical tools, while community-engaged research may link these insights to contemporary educational, labor, and grassroots movements.

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Statement of declaration in the use of Generative AI

Generative AI tools were used solely for language-related assistance, such as grammar correction and clarity improvement. No AI was used to generate ideas, analyses, and interpretations.

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