

TOMÁS

THE JOURNAL OF THE
UST CENTER FOR CREATIVE WRITING
AND LITERARY STUDIES

Volume 2 • Issue 10
2nd Term 2016-2017



University of Santo Tomas
Center for Creative Writing
and Literary Studies

TOMÁS is a refereed journal published by the
UST Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies

©2017 by the authors and editors

All rights reserved.

No copies can be made in part or in whole without prior written
permission from the authors and the editors.

ISSN: 0119-7908

TOMÁS

The Journal of the
UST Center for Creative Writing
and Literary Studies

Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo
General Editor

Joyce L. Arriola
Issue Editor

Ma. Ailil B. Alvarez
Managing Editor

Robbie Villegas
Book and Cover Designer

Vector graphics created by Kjpargeter - Freepik.com

Augusto Antonio A. Aguila
Michael M. Coroza
Joselito D. Delos Reyes
Ralph Semino Galán

Dawn Marie Nicole L. Marfil
Ned Parfan
Chuckberry J. Pascual
John Jack G. Wigley
Joselito B. Zulueta

Editorial Board

Contents

<i>Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo</i>	❧	<i>vii</i>
TOWARD PRIDE OF PLACE FOR LITERATURE AND THE ARTS IN ACADEME		

<i>Joyce L. Arriola</i>	❧	<i>xv</i>
INTRODUCTION		

<i>Carlomar Arcangel Daoana</i>	❧	<i>I</i>
AWESTRUCK WITH AGENCY: MARK ANDY GARCIA'S THE ATTACK OF THE RIGHTEOUS		

<i>Soledad S. Reyes</i>	❧	<i>4</i>
ANG PANITIKAN SA PANAHOON NG ALDUB		

<i>Tito R. Quiling, Jr.</i>	❧	<i>25</i>
TRANSIENT SPACES, TRANSITORY RELATIONS: THE ACCESORIA IN PEQUE GALLAGA'S SCORPIO NIGHTS (1985)		

U Z. Eliserio
**E ANO NGAYON?:
PAGBABAYBAY, WIKA, PAGESASALIN**

52

Oscar Tantoco Serquiña, Jr.
**FLIGHTS AND FIXATIONS:
DISPLACEMENT AND URBAN LIVING IN
ISABELITA ORLINA REYES'
STORIES FROM THE CITY**

67

Jan Raen Carlo M. Ledesma
**QUELLING DISARRAY AND INSCIENCE:
ALTRUISTIC THRALLDOM AND SUBJECT
FORMATION IN "THE PRESIDENT OF THE
TRIBE" AND "SAM-IT AND THE LOOM"**

87

Ralph Semino Galán
**TRANSGRESSIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS:
QUEER(ED) SPACES IN METRO MANILA AS
RENDERED IN PHILIPPINE GAY POETRY
FROM ENGLISH AND IN FILIPINO**

105

Jhoanna Lynn B. Cruz
**A DIFFERENT JIHAD:
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES OF THREE
PHILIPPINE MUSLIM WOMEN WRITERS**

118

<i>E. San Juan, Jr.</i>	137
BENIGNO P. RAMOS,	
“POETA REVOLUCIONARIO”:	
ANG RESPONSABILIDAD NG MAKATA SA	
GITNA NG KRISIS NG ORDENG KOLONIAL	

THE CONTRIBUTORS	171
-------------------------	-----

THE EDITORS	174
--------------------	-----

TOWARD PRIDE OF PLACE FOR LITERATURE AND THE ARTS IN ACADEME

Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo

This year, the UST Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies celebrates the fifth anniversary of its revival after a hiatus of four years. To mark the event, the Center is releasing five issues of its peer-reviewed literary journal, *Tomás*, within the third quarter of the year, one issue for each of the major literary genres (fiction, poetry, nonfiction, drama, and literary criticism). Each volume has a different Issue Editor and Managing Editor but all are Resident Fellows of the Center.

I thought this might also be a good opportunity to rethink the question which we writers are repeatedly called upon to confront: why does the study of literature and creative writing matter? In fact, in academe these days, it isn't only the study of literature that requires defending, but the concept of General Education. The recent dramatic shift in the University of the Philippines' GE policy, which now allows colleges to require a minimum of only 21 GE units (instead of 45 units) is uncomfortably close to home. In that face-off, we were told, it was the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) faculty who argued for the reduction of GE units, and the HUMSS (Humanities, Social Sciences) faculty who argued for the retention of the original number. This is hardly a surprise.

I am reminded of something John Meacham said in an essay published in the October 7, 2013 issue of *Time* magazine. (Meacham is Ran-

dom House's executive editor and EVP. He is a former editor-in-chief of *Newsweek*, a contributing editor to *Time*, editor-at-large of WNET, and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for the Autobiography/Biography.) In that essay on the Core Curriculum issue, or "the conflict between knowledge and know-how," he wrote: "What is heartening to those who believe in the value of a passing acquaintance with Homer and the Declaration of Independence and Jane Austen and Toni Morrison, as well as basic scientific literacy, is that there is little argument over the human and economic utility of a mind trained to make connections between seemingly disparate elements of reality. The college graduate who can think creatively is going to stand the greatest chance of not only doing well, but doing some good too. As long as the liberal-arts tradition remains a foundation of the curriculum in even the most elective of collegiate systems, there is hope that graduates will be able to discuss the Gettysburg Address—in a job interview at Google."

So that's the *practical argument* for retaining a liberal arts education: it makes the graduate more—not *less*—competitive in the global job market.

Maybe we could pause for a minute here and revisit one phrase in that passage—*Doing some good*. How exactly does a study of literature and the arts help students to do that?

"In recent years all the more oversimplified political viewpoints have failed, and our awareness of the complexity of the society we live in has grown, even if no one can claim to have a solution in his pocket. The situation in Italy today is on the one hand a state of deterioration and corruption in our institutional framework, and on the other of a growing collective maturity and search for ways of governing ourselves. What is the place of literature in such a situation?"

The quotation is from an essay titled "Right and Wrong Political Uses of Literature" by Italo Calvino, and he was referring to Italy in the 70s. But, he might have been talking about the Philippines today.

In fact, last February, that very question was raised by a member of the audience during the "Bookstop Tour" organized by the National Book Development Board (NBDB) as part of the celebrations of National Literature Month. Marne Kilates, Chuckberry Pascual and I were the writers invited by the UST Publishing House to be its featured authors when the

book tour stopped at its new bookstore in the UST Main Building. “What are you doing about our current political situation?” this woman asked pointedly. The three of us hesitated before replying.

In the Italy that Calvino was describing, society demanded “that the writer raise his voice if he wants to be heard, propose ideas that will have an impact on the public, push all his instinctive reactions to extremes. But even the most sensational and explosive statements pass over the heads of readers. All is as nothing, like the sound of the wind.”

Did we hesitate because we felt, as Calvino did, that nothing the writers say will be of any consequence to most Filipinos? Or did we hesitate because in *this* society no one actually makes such demands of writers because the writers are themselves of no consequence to most Filipinos?

I believe that, whether one fears the first or the second, as writers, we need to answer the question, for ourselves first, and then for the rest of society. Because, from the very beginnings of history, literature has been, not just a means of self-expression, but a means of self-awareness.

Calvino’s concern in that essay (as it was, I feel, the concern of the woman who put the question to us in UST) was with literature’s political uses, and he mentioned two: to give voice to whatever is without a voice, to give a name to what has yet no name, “especially to what the language of politics excludes or attempts to exclude;” and “to impose patterns of language, of vision, of imagination, of mental effort, of the correlation of facts, and in short, the creation... of a model of values that is at the same time aesthetic and ethical, essential to any plan of action...” (1986, 98-99)

But in 1988, in the posthumously published *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, he focused on the larger scene. He noted that the millennium about to end was “the millennium of the book, in that it has seen the object we call a book take on the form now familiar to us. Perhaps it is a sign of our millennium’s end that we frequently wonder what will happen to literature and books in the so-called postindustrial era of technology.”

His own attitude was completely optimistic. “My confidence in literature consists in the knowledge that there are things that only literature can give us, by means specific to it.” (1993, 1) Literature, he said, has an existential function: the search for lightness as a response to the unbearable burden or weight of living. The example he offered was Milan

Kundera's novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, which "is in reality a bitter confirmation of the Ineluctible Weight of Living, not only in the situation of his hapless country, but in the human condition common to us all, no matter how infinitely more comfortable we may be." (7) The novel, said Calvino, "shows us how everything we choose and value in life for its lightness soon reveals its true, unbearable weight. Perhaps only the liveliness and mobility of the intelligence escape this sentence—the very qualities with which this novel is written, and which belong to a world quite different from the one we live in." (7)

He stressed that he was not referring to a literature of escape. Rather, he meant that "in the boundless universe of literature, there are always new avenues to be explored, both very recent and very ancient, styles and forms that can change our image of the world. (7-8)

(Of course, Calvino added that he also looked to science—and to computer science—to nourish his "visions in which all heaviness disappears.")

Calvino is not alone in believing that at the heart of great literature are moral issues. This does not mean that the writer offers pat "moral lessons." Rather, in the words of another writer, Susan Sontag: "... A fiction writer whose adherence is to literature is necessarily someone who thinks about moral problems: about what is just and unjust, what is better and worse, what is repulsive and admirable, what is lamentable and what inspires joy and approbation... Serious fiction writers think about problems *practically*. They tell stories. They narrate. They evoke our common humanity in narratives which we can identify, even though the lives may be remote from our own. They stimulate our imagination. The stories enlarge and complicate—and therefore, improve—our sympathies. They educate our capacity for moral judgment."

So that, then, is the *higher or nobler reason* for retaining a liberal arts education, where literature and the humanities have pride of place.

Which brings me back to the situation in our own country, a country constantly beleaguered by crises, both natural and man-made, and at this moment confronted by the possibility of martial law being imposed on the entire country yet again, while still trying to come to terms with an administration not averse to erasing the distinction between real news and "fake news," or of depriving some of its own citizens—such as persons suspected

of being drug users—from basic human rights. I would suggest—as I have done more than once before—that during dark days, perhaps the place to seek solace, strength and salvation, is literature.

I feel the need to add that I refer here to “serious literature,” but with a further qualification: by “serious literature” is not meant literature that is solemn or super-cerebral, i.e. boring or incomprehensible. The literature I refer to might be light, funny, even whimsical in style and tone. It may be in print or on line. It is, simply, literature produced by serious artists, i.e., men and women who are serious about what they do, who produce work in which the stakes are high, for both themselves and for their readers. In short, it is literature produced by writers who risk much, by putting into their work what they truly care about, what they consider important. In so doing, they hope that readers will accept the challenge, and be engaged or disturbed or uplifted... perhaps, sometimes, all three.

All that is well and good. On the other hand, there’s the reality. And the reality is that, even in academic institutions, we in the arts feel the need to constantly assert that the work we do is at least *as important as*, and deserves to be *valued as much as*, the work being done by the people in science and technology. But if the arts must struggle for a place even in academe, how dismal must be their chances in the larger society?

I have been asked: how exactly are literature and creative writing to thrive in the academe? My reply is to describe an imagined scenario where they already *are* thriving. I speak of a healthy literary community, consisting of students who like books, who actually buy books, and read them, who belong to book clubs or literary societies, mentored by members of the faculty who are themselves lovers of the written word. Both students and faculty participate in, or at least attend, literary readings, book launchings, literature conferences and the like, not because they are herded into them, but because they are actually interested in these activities and derive pleasure from them. They subscribe and/or contribute to, or produce literary journals. Support for these activities is accompanied by incentives for the faculty to produce both creative and critical work—literary grants and literary awards, literary journals, a creative writing center, a publishing house that publishes literary titles along with scholarly titles. And, most importantly, writers and the literary scholars in the faculty feel that their outputs are valued as highly as those of the scientists, or of the faculty of the professional colleges, who bring in the money.

I must say that UST has not been remiss in this. Many of these mechanisms are already in place. Members of the University's different Research Centers (which now include the Center for Creative Writing) are honored by the Office of the Vice Rector for Research and Innovation with the Silver Series and Gold series award; and the Faculty Union grants the *Dangal ng UST* Award to both scholars and creative writers. The UST Publishing House which is largely subsidized by the University, was named Publisher of the Year, a few years ago, by the Manila Critics Circle and the National Book Development Board (NBDB), mainly because its literary titles won a large number of awards. The Center for Creative Writing and Literary Studies was revived by the University, and is now manned by a corps of writers who are full-time faculty members, selected on the basis of their literary credentials, and who run its programs and projects, (all of them funded by the University) with the collaboration of the Faculty of Arts & Letters' Literature Department, and the Graduate School, as well as the student organization UST Literary Society (or UST LitSoc). There is an active Thomasian Writers' Guild, a student organization which draws its members from several colleges. All of these initiatives are geared toward revitalizing a literary culture on campus, but many of the activities are open to the public. *Tomás*, our literary journal accepts contributions, not just from Thomasian writers and scholars, but from distinguished national and even international writers. And it welcomes, as well, promising young writers.

Perhaps the tallest dream is for the University to put in place an Arts Development Program, which would coordinate all the university's artistic initiatives, and a Cultural Center, with first-class facilities for all the arts, headed by a top caliber arts manager, reporting directly to the Rector himself. I think that this is eminently do-able in UST, with its long tradition of excellence in music, the visual arts, architecture and literature, and its world-class museum and library. What is missing is a theater company. (In my time, there was the Aquinas Dramatic Guild, much respected both inside and outside the campus.)

The rationale for such a program and such a center would go beyond university rankings and accreditations. The rationale would be that the University's top administrators wish to establish and sustain a dynamic artistic culture in the university, because they believe in the importance of culture and the arts for national development.

Again, UST is admirably placed to play a leading role in such an artistic renaissance. One need only recall her most famous son—a renaissance man if ever there was one—Dr. Jose Rizal, who pioneered in practically all the literary genres (including children’s literature and comic books), but was also a man of science; and offered his abundant gifts in the service of his country.

And now I see that I have hit upon what could well be the strongest argument yet for giving literature—and the writers who produce it—a place of honor in academe.

References

- Calvino, Italo. 1993. *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*. New York: Vintage International.
- Calvino, Italo. 1986. *The Uses of Literature*. New York: Harvest Books.
- Meacham, Jon. 2013. What will colleges teach in 2025? In *Time Magazine*. September 26.
- Sontag, Susan. 2017. The truth of fiction evokes our common humanity. In *The Los Angeles Times*. July 1. http://www.latimes.com/local/obituaries/la-122804sontag_archives-story.html

Introduction

Joyce L. Arriola

This volume of TOMÁS is devoted to a collection of critical essays that have managed to converge on the themes of revisitation and reinvention. The essays in this collection install the past—in whatever manner (thematic, formal, historical)—and then reinvent such in the same vein.

We begin with Carlomar Arcangel Daoana's prizewinning essay, "Awestruck with Agency: Mark Andy Garcia's *The Attack of the Righteous*." This piece, which won the Metrobank Foundation-Alice Guillermo Award in Art Criticism in 2015, succinctly and skillfully analyzes the 2007 painting as a theater of war depicting the clash of cultural forces in a violent, jarring, noisy composition that clearly resists silence. In compact, lyrical fashion that only an esteemed poet like Daoana could articulate with understated flair, he helps readers understand how the brushstrokes and rhythms indicate the artist's vigorous assault on the canvas, signifying dislocations of identity and/within history, and the need to depict a "wreckage" with "fever-pitch intensity" that incinerates. By jolting the beholder in a vision of society's seemingly rage-filled urge to dominate, Daoana says, quite astutely, that in this artistic rendition of the horror from which humanity cannot tear its gaze away, "[t]he painting burns."

Soledad S. Reyes' "Ang Panitikan sa Panahon ng AlDub," a revised version of her lecture delivered at the University of Santo Tomas in connection with its annual Paz Latorena Memorial Lecture, examines the phenomenal reality show known by the label "Kalyeserye." Reyes

traces this emerging television genre to popular literary and theatrical traditions that have entertained Filipinos from the Spanish colonial years and up until the 1930s, during the final days of the sarsuela before it finally gave way to mass media such as radio, magazines and cinema. Reyes examines the impetus for the phenomenal rise of this brand of entertainment such as the TV segment's ability to resonate with ordinary folks and its summoning of narrative forms that are familiar to the viewers. Reyes' article is an attempt to paint a mini-cultural history of popular entertainment, recalling earlier forms of traditional drama staged in the streets or brought at their doorstep and where the whole barangay is conscripted to perform their respective roles. The love story and the inclusion of Filipino values such as obedience and filial piety are deployed as subtexts and are delivered through the physical and improvised comedy spiels. The Filipino craze for the episodic and spontaneous is stirred through the narrative/live segment. The narrative style therefore reinforces a nostalgia for old forms that once entertained the masses through some faint childhood remembrances of *tibag*, *Santacruzán*, *pasyon*, *panunuluyan* and other traditional theatrical forms that made use of the streets and individual homes as extended stage and where each member of community is on call for he or she may be conscripted to perform a part as the need arises or as the script—which is perennially in progress—explicitly prescribes the enlistment of some local folks who can summon, at short notice, their natural talent for drama and improvisation.

Tito R. Quiling, Jr.'s "Transient Spaces, Transitory Relations: The *Accesoria* in Peque Gallaga's *Scorpio Nights* (1985)" is a close reading of the 1980s classic using combined theories from architectural studies and film studies. The article deftly draws from the works of Gaston Bachelard and Juhani Pallasmaa on multi-sensory architecture, and of Vivian Sobchack and Laura Marks on multi-sensory experiences in cinema to examine the idea of transitory spaces as a way of framing reality and the movement of human bodies. The notions of limited mobility, transitoriness, and communal relations amidst cramped spaces are used as metaphors or filmic tropes to depict the subject of sex and betrayal as these serve as "private" themes to allegorize the repressive conditions in Philippine society in the post-Martial Law era. Quiling, Jr.'s essay is an attempt to re-examine filmic spatiality as it intersects with *mise-en-scene*, as it assists in

depicting themes that have significances along the tradition of Filipino neorealist filmmaking, and as it deploys a critical reading of how ideological construction (transitoriness and transgression being juxtaposed at that) may be inscribed inside a family drama-cum-*bomba* film—which is, coincidentally, one of the most acclaimed films during Philippine cinema’s so-called “Second Golden Age.”

U Z. Eliserio’s “E Ano Ngayon?: Pagbabaybay, Wika, Pagsasalin” discusses a contemporary issue affecting the practice of translation and translation studies. Eliserio zeroes in on three references in order to essay conventional notions of the discipline according to what is deemed to be “good translation”: Corazon Villareal’s *Translating the Sugilanon*, Vicente Rafael’s *Contracting Colonialism*, and Ramon Guillermo’s *Translation and Revolution*. Central to Villareal’s argument are the contexts pertinent to any translation project such as politics and ideology. Villareal’s argument descends from the postcolonial perspective of considering language from the perspective of the native and not from the perspective of the colonizer’s dominant language. Rafael’s groundbreaking book, meanwhile, is cited to underscore a deconstructivist view of translation: seeing translation as fishing. However, such view is pitted against Guillermo’s which treats translation as “revolution.” Translation then for Eliserio is not only a matter of going from one language to another. It is about negotiating meanings and striking a possibility beyond correct orthography. In this light, translation becomes a reinterpretation—a truly creative act.

Oscar Tantoco Serquiña, Jr.’s “Flights and Fixations: Displacement and Urban Living in Isabelita Orlina Reyes’ *Stories from the City*” analyzes this poetry collection as it tackles the subject of how deterritorialized individuals traverse two worlds: foreign lands (as immigrants), and their home city (Manila). The personae in Reyes’ poems find themselves estranged by both their adoptive country and their home city. While Serquiña, Jr. acknowledges Reyes’ poetic imaging of themes of alienation, diaspora and deterritorialization as significant contributions to a body of diasporic literature, he also observes the conflicted feeling the poet has for images of home because of the din and chaos in Manila. The poetic persona seems to be in between worlds, in a perennially transitory state. This evaluation of the poetry collection becomes an occasion for Serquiña, Jr. to call for a more balanced picture of Manila as a city, not only through the verses of whining, comfortable and moneyed transcontinental poets,

but also from the more emphatic poetic homage by those who live in the city, who walk in its streets on a daily basis, and experience its variegated faces—sunset and chaos and warmth included.

Jan Raen Carlo M. Ledesma's "Quelling Disarray and Inscience: Altruistic Thralldom and Subject Formation in 'The President of the Tribe' and 'Sam-It and the Loom'" analyzes the meaning of civilizing White Love as part of the so-called Benevolent Assimilation project by the Americans during their US Occupation of the Philippines. White Love comes in two forms: as a way of muting the natives or of requiring their subservience, and as a means of introducing them to the ways of civilization, US-style. Ledesma brings up in this article, using postcolonial critical frameworks articulated by Barbara Bush and Vicente Rafael, how the two short fictions develop the conflicting idea of a tyrannical native leader and the benevolent colonial/White social worker. The paper is able to bring focus to the trickery involved in understanding the full meaning of the word "civilization" from both the perspective of the colonizer and the colonized. The relativity of the meaning of the term may be ascribed to the ways the colonizer and the native perceive each other and how they could make full sense of the colonial project. The matter of subject formation is rightly, true to its object, a matter of subjectivity; a matter that continues to grapple post-War and latter-day Filipino fictionists.

Ralph Semino Galán's "Transgressions and Transformations: Queer(ed) Spaces in Metro Manila as Rendered in Philippine Gay Poetry *from* English and in Filipino" connects queer poetry to specific spaces in Manila. These spaces are of two kinds: queer spaces such as the gay bar, the bath house and the backroom, and the queered straight spaces like the cinema and the fitness gym. The spaces become the sites where heteropatriarchal dominance is challenged, transgressed and transformed in order to give way to libidinal activities of gay communities. These are offered as alternative spaces to their closeted existence. Such spaces open up opportunities where heteroperformativity are welcomed and become occasions for poetical creations—such as those examined in Galán's essay—to find inspiration in and to become a wellspring for imaginative construction of (alternate) gay personas.

Jhoanna Lyn B. Cruz's "A Different *Jihad*: Autobiographical Narratives of Three Philippine Muslim Women Writers" tackles the plight

of three Muslim women who have been suffering the dilemma of living out their faith and resisting it at the same time. The subjects in this essay are under the rigid control of their family and of cultural and religious codes. At the same time, they imagine themselves living their own lives, free from any ideological bind that suppresses their freedom and their art. The three women presented their testimonies in the form of autobiographical narratives, which Cruz says follow a common thread, or a common expression. What came out are the narratives of three deeply conflicted women who suffer from varying apparatuses of control: male authority through the father; religious ideology; and oppressive heteronormative notions of gender identity. The women are pictured as creatures caught up in layers of contradictions: between love of one's father and fear of the same; between adhering to religious customs and transgressing such; and between being a virtuous Muslim woman and being an avowed lesbian. The women live in between closeted worlds, and it is a double bind. Aside from the literary significance of the autobiographical narratives, the use of the confessional mode becomes an indispensable rhetorical strategy. This has given the narratives the feel of urgency and authenticity—a unique testimony to the women's experiences as gendered subjects, as followers of Islam, and as Filipinos.

Finally, “Benigno P. Ramos, ‘*Poeta Revolucionario*’: Ang Responsibilidad ng Makata sa Gitna ng Ordeng Kolonyal,” where the Marxist critic par excellence E. San Juan, Jr. locates a poet caught up in the wrong time; branding a complex dialectic, the essay takes off as an exercise in unmasking controversies over literary ambivalence and at the same time exposing its uses. Although Ramos founded the Sakdal Movement during the Commonwealth years, he was labelled pro-Japanese following after his advancing the notion of a Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, or the idea of “Asia for Asians.” This association with the Japanese has obscured the value of his poetic works, which a succession of critics from Julian Cruz Balmaceda to Bienvenido Lumbera have praised for being fine examples of dialectics of form and content. San Juan has noted how Ramos reinvented traditional poetical form, efficiently combining personal emotions with objective situations. Ramos’ collection of poetry, San Juan claims, have been influenced by his exposure to the US colonial project, which coincided with the idea of mass audience, of proletarian literature, the rise of printing and the resistance movement’s call for

more emphasis on the communal voice of literature over individual expression. For this reason, San Juan clamors for a historical materialist understanding of Ramos' poetry in order to place his complex politics from a more enlightened perspective. This essay therefore brings back an age-old debate pertaining to the interconnectedness between poetics and the author's ethical stance.

Awestruck with Agency: Mark Andy Garcia's *The Attack of the Righteous**

Carlomar Arcangel Daoana



hen one looks at the latest works of Mark Andy Garcia, particularly those in *Recent Works* (Ayala Artist Space, June 2015) and *Blessings in Disguise* (West Gallery, January 2015), one would sense a ready (and easily readable) picture representing a pared-down narrative, occasionally with Biblical underpinnings, that portrays his favorite subjects—essentially his family and people around him. A body of stillness pulsates within the lush forest of his expressionistic brushstrokes, a palpable calm in the joyous, unstoppable rhythm of his gestures—whether he is evoking a modern-day, countryside Eden or the tangle of vines in an impenetrable woods.

Such an autobiographical strain has been the mark of the artist since his first solo show, *So Near Yet so Far*, at West Gallery in 2008. “His art indeed comes from the depths of his being,” writes Alice Guillermo on his show, *Things are Different Now*. “Perhaps he is among the most personal of artists as he draws from his life experiences the material of his paintings and reflects on them to gather what meanings they may reveal of his existence. He himself as artist felt himself as the living subject at the center of his universe” (“Painting Memories”).

But in *The Attack of the Righteous*, which won the grand prize in the painting category of Metrobank Art and Design Excellence in 2007, the figures are symbolic rather than representational, the silence is not present. In fact, the point of the work is to *subvert* silence, to blast off even its minute

* This piece won the Metrobank Foundation-Alice Guillermo Award in Art Criticism in 2015.

possibility in the *horror vacui* that is his work. Incinerating it is the visual rhetoric evoked by a multitude of forms—from recognizable imagery of religion, folklore, the military and contemporary life to a confetti of dashes and strokes. Together, they are articulated, juxtaposed and layered in *medias res*, without a beginning or an end, without an introduction or closure.

Such is the iconoclastic quality of the work that it offers not as a reliable precedent to what Garcia would eventually create as a successful full-time artist: *The Attack of the Righteous* is an outlier. While his succeeding works would feature a more refined sensibility and a more masterful control and certainty of the hand, the painting, in its first instance, embodied the energy of the artist at its most extravagant and violent, a collapse of all the deeply held notions about the proprieties of composition, a cry in the dark from all the psychical wounds connected to identity and history. It is one of those paintings that are essentially unrepeatable.

For Garcia, who has been recently proclaimed one of this year's recipients of the Thirteen CCP Artists Awards, the picture field of "The Attack of the Righteous" is a battleground of conflicting forces, dominated by a figure who spews a projectile—at once conflagration and flood—that curves, ribbons and ramifies in its attempt to scorch a small chapel which is protected by a band of red, fierce flames. The tank on which he is astride attacks the Sacred Heart while seemingly holding it aloft in its scintillating white fire.

Off-center, a figure weeps and verbalizes a cross, which accrues to some kind of incantation when one considers all the crosses that litter the canvas, visual punctuation marks that fill yawning gaps and delineate forms, both symbolic and fantastical. (In the upper left-hand corner, even the shadowy silhouette of a fighter jet looks like a cross.) A dog snarls and opens its jaws, all threat and no bite.

The painting—with its explosive images, broad painterly licks, repetitively manic marks and other gestural interventions—nods at Basquiat as much as Picasso, at Ang Kiukok as much as Garibay, but the totality of the artist's searing vision is unmistakably his own, as he forges along, attacking the canvas, unleashing the complexity from multitudinous worlds, offering no respite or platitude but, rather, a series of perpetual, energetic, almost violent displacements and juxtapositions: a rude awakening, a tonic for the sleeping mind.

It is a slippery slope then to concoct an overarching narrative with which to connect the disparate images without losing the stamina on which the work sustains itself. The painting's impact lies on its resistance to being verbalized. Each pocket of space seems to be saying something, but when taken with the adjoining field, a new image is formed, a new correlation is established. The painting is like a map: Navigation is only possible when the town or capital we are looking for is contextualized within its surrounding environs, within a larger world. The key is to take in the painting all at once.

When we look at the painting in its totality, we are confronting raw intelligence detonating its power on canvas, exorcising our expectations not only of what a painting should look like, but how it should act. Here, movement everywhere is enacted—a fleet of fighter jets, a rain of missiles, a field of coruscating marks. In this world—or worlds—created by Garcia, everything is governed and operates with agency, already alive at the first contact of brush, accruing to such a fever-pitch intensity that everything seems to be on fire. This is not fire of self-annihilation, but of control towards others, by necessity or malice, both with brutal force. The painting burns.

While it is easy to assume that the scene in the painting acts out the fight between good and evil, between forces of power and symbols of piety, what it ultimately represents is the texture of history itself, how it is not a succession, but rather an accumulation, of events. Perhaps, the painting is a vision of the wreckage that Walter Benjamin alluded to in his reading of *Angelus Novus* by Paul Klee, the terrific pile of events (that constitutes human civilization itself) which the Angel History stares at with horror but can't turn his face away from, as he is dragged by fierce winds which the philosopher called "progress."

In Mark Andy Garcia's work, that history is our own.

Works Cited

Garcia, Mark Andy. *The Attack of the Righteous*. 2007, mixed media, Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Guillermo, Alice G. "Painting Memories." *MarkAndyGarcia.com*, 9 Mar. 2013, www.markandygarcia.com/2013/03/recent-solo-exhibition-things-are.html. Accessed 17 Aug. 2015.

Ang Panitikan sa Panahon ng AlDub*

Soledad S. Reyes

Mula sa pagiging isang bahagi lamang ng kalyeseryeng pinamagatang “Juan for All, All for Juan,” sa programang “Eat Bulaga,” naging isang penomenal na tagumpay ang tambalang AlDub hindi lamang sa telebisyon kundi maging sa buhay na kultural ng mga Filipino. Mula sa tatlong milyong nanonood noong Agosto 2015, pumalo ang “Eat Bulaga” ng 7.3 milyong manonood sa kasagsagan nito hanggang nuong Oktubre 24, 2015 nang upahan ang Philippine Arena para sa pagtatanghal ng #SaTamangPanahon na dinayo ng libu-libong tao.

Matagal na sa ere ang “Eat Bulaga” (mula pa nuong 1979) at sa kasaysayan nito, nagpakita na ito ng kakaibang enerhiya at atraksiyon sa mga tao, sa pamamagitan ng pag-imbento ng iba’t ibang uri ng palabas at palaro na lubhang kinagiliwan ng publikong nanatiling matapat sa Channel 7 at sa “Dabarkads” na pinangungunahan nina Tito at Vic Sotto at Joey de Leon. Sila ang mga komedyante na sagisag ng uri ng komedya sa bansa—magaspang, maanghang, magaslaw, at bulgar. Nakakasakit ang pagpapatawa nila sa panlalait sa mga pisikal na kaanyuan ng mga sumasali sa mga patimpalak, sa kawalan nito nila ng respeto sa mga kababaihan. Karaniwan sa programa nila ang paggamit ng “toilet humor” na sinasakyan ng publiko. Sa programa nila makikita ang impluwensiya ng elemento ng

* Panayam na binasa sa ika-8 edisyon ng Paz Latorema Memorial Lecture, 26 Abril 2016, AMV-College of Accountancy Hall, Unibersidad ng Santo Tomas.

bodabil, stage shows, komedyang pisikal, na unang naitanghal sa mga palasak na anyo ng dula ng nakalipas na panahon.

Sa kasalukuyan, dahil sa tagumpay ng AlDub, milyonaryo na sina Alden Richards at Maine Mendoza, ang bumubuo sa tambalan, at maging sina Jose Manalo at Wally Bayola, na bagamat nasabit sa mga iskandalo, ay naambunan ng tagumpay ng programa. Patuloy nilang ginatasan ang programa na makikita sa malaking bilang ng *endorsements* at komersyal na kanilang ginagawa, sa pagiging pabalat at laman nila sa mga magasing para sa mga nakaririwasa, sa pagtatanghal nila (lalo na ni Richards) sa Estados Unidos, sa Canada, at Gitnang Silangan, sa pelikula (*My Bebe Love* noong Disyembre 2015 kaugnay ng Metro Manila Film Festival) na kumita ng daang milyon, at sa patuloy na paglabas nila sa telebisyon.

Subalit kung ihahambing ang popularidad ng AlDub noong kasagsagan ng tagumpay nito at sa kasalukuyan (Abril 2016), may pagkakaiba na. Hindi na gaanong mainit ang pagtanggap sa programa—wala nang gaanong nagsisipagtawanan, nagsisipagtilian at nakikiliti sa paglabas nila sa telebisyon. Wala nang gaanong interes sa mga komplikasyon at mga tauhang patuloy na nililikha ng mga *scriptwriters* para hindi mawalan ng interes sa tambalan. Wala na ang “kilig” na humatak sa milyon upang subaybayan ang makulay na kabanata sa buhay ni Yaya Dub at Alden, kahit na isali sina Ai-Ai Delas Alas (bilang matapobreng lola ni Alden Richards) o Eddie Garcia (bilang dating kasintahan ni Lola Nidora) o paigtingin ang romansa sa pagpasok ni Cindy (ginampanan ng modelong taga-Rusya) o sa kasalukuyan, sa katauhan ng guwapong si Jake Ejercito na anak ni Joseph Estrada.

Sa ganitong konteksto, ano ba ang layunin ng panayam na ito?

Layunin ng papel na ito na itapat ang penomenon ng AlDub sa konteksto ng kasaysayan ng panitikan at kulturang popular sa Pilipinas. Walang nabubuong penomenon kung walang mga tradisyong pinaghugutan nito, intensiyunal man o hindi, mula sa iba pang mga artipak na kultural na sumagot sa pangangailangan ng publiko sa loob ng ilang siglo.

Mula sa kontekstuwalisasyon kung saan ang AlDub ay patutunayang produkto ng kasalukuyan at ng nakaraan, huhugot ang papel ng ilang kongklusyon tungkol sa direksiyong maaring sundan sa pagpapaunlad sa panitikan sa bansa hindi lamang bilang bukal ng aliw/ligaya/tawanan

kundi instrumento upang hikayatin ang mambabasa na pag-ukulan ng pansin ang panitikan bilang behikulo tungo sa higit na malalim na pag-unawa sa buhay.

Ang Impluwensiya ng Makabagong Teknolohiya

Ang Dubsmash

Hindi mapasusubalian na ang popularidad ng AIDub ay nag-uugat sa uri ng palabas/libangan na dala ng mga kamangha-manghang pagbabago sa teknolohiya katulad ng Dubsmash app. Halimbawa, unang nakilala si Maine Mendoza sa Internet dahil sa kaniyang nakatutuwa at eksaheradong paggaya sa mga kilos at pag-asta ng mga tanyag na artista tulad ni Kris Aquino. Bukod dito, kinatuwaan siya sa kaniyang pagtugtog ng iba't ibang instrumento habang naglilipsync, kasabay ng pagpapakita ng iba't ibang emosyon, sang-ayon sa liriko ng mga tugtugin.

Ang ganitong penomenon na biswal at awditori ay hindi *mainstream*, subalit kinagigiliwan ng marami, lalo na ng kabataan, at isang paraan upang makilala o gumawa ng koneksiyon sa mga mahilig sa ganitong uri ng programa sa Internet. At ito ay maaring magkaroon ng espasyo sa kamalayan, salamat sa popularidad ng Internet kung saan ang mga di-kilalang indibiduwal, may anking galing man o wala, ay maaaring makipagpaligsahan sa mga higit na tanyag na tao na suportado ng malalaking institusyon sa musika, pelikula o telebisyon.

Ang Tradisyon ng Mime o Mimicry

Malaon nang tradisyon sa pagpapalabas ang *mime* sa Kanluran, kung saan ang isang aktor ay nagiging bahagi ng kuwento na walang salitang binibigkas. Sa mga ekspresiyon lamang ng kaniyang mukha at katawan mababasa ang kahulugan ng mga pangyayari. Sa Pransiya, si Marcel Merceau ang mahusay na artista ng *mimicry*. Subalit bago pa siya naging popular, palasak na ang mga palabas na nilalabasan ng mga payaso sa Kanluran, na naging impluwensiya sa mga pelikula sa *silent era* kung saan ang mga aktor tulad nina Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, halimbawa na, ay umantig ng damdamin ng milyon-milyon sa husay ng paggamit nila ng kanilang mukha at katawan sa pag-arte at pagbibigay-buhay sa mga kuwento ng katatawanan o trahedya.

Idagdag na natin sa grupong ito ang tanyag na si Rowan Atkinson na higit na kilala bilang Mr. Bean, na naging tanyag sa telebisyon at pelikula dahil sa kanyang di-matatawarang mala-gomang kakayahan sa paglikha ng emosyon sa pagtaas ng kilay, sa pagpapalaki ng butas ng ilong, sa pagngiwi ng bibig, sa pag-ismid, sa ngiting nakakaloko, at iba pang kumbensiyon ng komedya.

Ilan Pang Inobasyon

Sa paglawak ng impluwensiya ng teknolohiya, sa pelikula at telebisyon, malaki ang ambag ng paggamit ng *digital computer* halimbawa na, sa paggamit ng *slow movement*, o pagpapabilis ng aksyon, o pagpapalaki o pagpapaliit ng mga imahen, ang *zoom in* o *zoom out*, nakahihilong 3D kung saan ang manonood ay mistulang kasama sa eksena ng *Star Wars*, o *Batman*, o *Jurassic Park*. Ang isa pang *device* ang paggamit ng *split screen* kung saan sabay na napapanood ang dalawang aksyon o higit pa na nagaganap sa magkaibang lugar. Winawasak ng ganitong mga kombensiyon ang kinamihasnang kombensiyon sa panood ng pelikula o telebisyon.

Ang Video

Ang lubhang mabilis na pagpapalit ng eksena o ang nakamamanghang pag-alis o paglitaw ng mga karakter, kaalinsabay ang musika at kanta, at paiba-ibang eksena na waring nagaganap sa isang panaginip o pangitain nina Michael Jackson, Miley Cyrus, Beyoncé, Katy Perry, o Taylor Swift, o Sarah Geronimo, halimbawa na, ay karakteristiko ng popular na video na kinalolokohan ng milyun-milyong tao.

Sa mga maiikling video na ito, nakapaghahabi ng isang naratibo (na kung minsan ay tila alang kahulugan) na lubhang kaakit-akit sa paningin at sa pandinig, ipinalalabas o ipinagbibli bilang bahagi ng kampanya sa paglulunsad ng isang bagong awitin o pelikula. Isa itong mahalagang penomenon sa kultura sa Pilipinas at lalo na sa ibang bansa, at emblematico sa nagbabagong pananaw tungkol sa “realidad” at “sining.”

“Reality TV”

Isa pang kumbensiyon sa makabagong telebisyon ang “*reality shows*” kung saan pinalalabas na ang napapanood sa telebisyon

ay mismong realidad na nararanasan sa tunay na buhay, walang pagtatangkang pinuhin ito; ang realidad ay hilaw na matatambad sa screens. Ito ang tesis ng serye ng *Survivor*, *Teen Mom*, *American Idol*, *The Voice*, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*, *The Bachelor*, at iba pang programa. Kung бага, kapag nanood tayo, waring nagaganap ang aksiyon sa *real time*, hindi dinoktor, walang *script*, at walang interbensiyon o pakikialam ang *production staff*.

Kung kayat, sa ating panoond, tuloy-tuloy ang pag-agos ng mga naratibo sa kuwentong ating nasasaksihan, na diretsahang dumadaloy sa harap natin. Salat sa katotohanan ang paniniwalang naturan sapagkat ang lahat ng *reality shows* ay mga *artifacts* kung saan ang hilaw na material ay inaayos, ang mga insidente ay pinagkakasunod-sunod, ang kilos at reaksiyon ng mga tauhan ay pinag-aralan, ginagamitan ng musika; sa madaling salita, nasa ilalim ng kontrol ng mga indibiduwal sa likod ng programa. Ginagawa ang lahat ng nabanggit dahil gustong ibenta ang programa para pagtubuan.

Mga Ugat sa Tradisyon: Mula sa Panitikan Hanggang Kulturang Popular

Na mahigpit ang ugnayan ng nakaraan at kasalukuyan ay tesis na dapat na ulit-ulitin sa panayam na ito. Sa bahaging ito, ipakikita ko ang nag posibleng impluwensiya na nabuo sa nakaraan at patuloy na pinayayaman at pinayayabong ng kasalukuyang kaganapan sa kultura at lipunan.

Mga Anyong Pampanitikan at Kultural

Mahaba at komplikado ang linya na nag-ugnay sa iba't ibang anyong pampanitikan, mula sa mga epiko, alamat, awit at korido na nalikha at nalinang sa ispesikong komunidad ng bansa. Subalit sa panayam na ito, nais kong limitahin ang talakayan sa mga sumusunod na anyo: ang mga dula sa unang hati ng ika-20 dantaon—ang sinakulo, ang komedya, ang sarsuela, ang dula, ang bodabil, ang nobela, ang pelikula, ang soap opera, ang komiks, ang telebisyon, at ang teleserye.

Pampubliko't hindi para lamang sa iilan ang nabanggit na anyong kultural. Sa madaling salita, tinangkilik at naging bahagi ng kamalayang popular ang mga nabanggit na anyong popular sa loob hindi lamang ng ilang dekada kundi ng ilang dantaon, mula pa sa panahon ng mga Kastila.

Sa gayon, hindi sapilitang maihihiwalay ang proseso ng paglikha at pagkonsumo sa komunidad kung saang nagmula ang teksto.

1. *Sinakulo*. Galing sa pasyon ang sinakulo, dulang itinatanghal sa mga plasa at pinaikot sa buhay at kamatayan ni Kristo. Sa kasalukuyan, may mangilian-ngilan pang pagtatanghal ng sinakulo, subalit nanatiling buhay ang pasyon sa ritwal ng Simbahang Katoliko tuwing Mahal na Araw at maging sa kinaugaliang pabasa.

Sa panahon ng aktibismo nuong ikapito at ikawalong dekada, pinalawak ang kahulugan ng pasyon sa konteksto ng paghihirap ng Pilipinas at sa pangako ng tunay na kalayaan laban sa mga pasista, imperyalista, at pangkalahatang pang-aapi. Sa mga kalye itinatanghal ang sekular na pasyon—sa mga kalye sa Tundo, sa harapan ng mga gusaling sagisag ng pagkakanulo, sa mga demonstrasyon.

Nanatili ang mensahe. Ang nagbago ay mga tauhan ng kanilang sinasagsag sa drama.

2. *Komedyang moro-moro*. Ang anyong ito ay naka-ugat sa mga popular na awit sa panahon ng Kastila, na itinatanghal sa maraming bayan ng bansa. Ilan sa mga popular na akda ang *Florante at Laura* (1838), *Prinsipe Baldovino*, *Bernardo Carpio*, *Doce Pares ng Pransiya*, *Ibong Adarna*—makukulay na kuwento ng pakikipagsapalaran at pag-ibig, na nagtatampok sa mga prinsesa at prinsipe, hari at reyna at matitikas na tauhan, sa isang banda, at mga karaniwang mamamayan sa kaharian tulad ng mg sundalo at ng pusoy o tauhang nagpapatawa, sintu-sinto, alalay ng maharlika, sa kabilang dako.

Mula sa komedyang nakahugot ng ilang kumbensiyon—maling pag-aakala, walang katapusang habulan, mga kasayahan, matinding enerhiya dahil sa aksiyon ng mga tauhan, lalo na ng pusoy, na kung minsan ay oportunista at tuso, kadalasan ay utusan na palaging nasa tabi ng bida. Sa komedyang rin makikita ang kombensiyon ng masayang wakas, na nangangahulugang sa wakas ng katakot-takot na panganib at pakikipagsapalaran, makakamtan ng prinsipe ang kamay ng prinsesa o matatagpuan ng mabuting anak ang gamot na magpapagaling sa maysakit niyang ama na isang hari.

3. *Sarsuela*. Ang sarsuela ay nagiging popular sa unang mga dekada ng ika-20 siglo sa kamay ng mga dramatistang tulad nina Juan

Abad, Aurelio Tolentino, Severino Reyes, at iba pa. Sa unang yugto ng kasaysayan ng sarsuela, politikal ang layunin ng dula—upang ilarawan ang kahambal-hambal na kalagayan ng Pilipinas sa panahon ng Kastila at sa unang dekada ng panahon ng mga Aerikano. Sa pagdaraan ng taon, ipinako ng mga sarsuela ang tuon sa nagbabagong realidad ng bansa tulad ng makikita sa *Dalagang Bukid* (1919) nina Hermogenes Ilagan at Leon Ignacio at *Ang Kiri* (1926) ni Servando de los Angeles at Leon Ignacio.

Sa ganitong dula makikita ang paggamit ng mga awit sa paglalahad ng naratibo; mahalagang sangkap, at hindi lamang insidental, ang musika at awit sa pagbuo ng dula. Maihahalintulad ang sarsuela sa opera sa Europa, sa *three penny musicals* sa Inglatera, at sa kasalukuyan, sa Broadway at West End *musical plays* tulad ng *Les Misérables*, *The Sound of Music*, o *Phantom of the Opera*.

4. *Bodabil*. Ang bodabil ay isa pang uri ng dula na kahawig ng *vaudeville* na naging popular din sa Kanluran, at sa Pilipinas ay naging tanyag na palabas hindi lamang sa Grand Opera House o Clover Theatre. Pangkaraniwang tanawin ang mga naturag palabas sa mga piyesta sa iba't ibang bayan. Karamihan sa mga popular na komedyante at artista sa bodabil ay naging popular sa pelikula at telebisyon. Ilan sa kanila sina Diana Toy, Pugo at Togo, Katy de la Cruz, Bayani Casimiro, Canuplin, Pilita Corrales, Bobby Gonzales, Lupito at Chichay, Eiiizabeth Ramsey, Dolphy at Panchito, Apeng Daldal, Chuchi at Matimtiman Cruz, Ading Fernando, Reycard Duet, German Moreno, at daan pang batikang artista na karamihan ay yumao na.

Dito makikita ang samu't saring uri ng palabas—kantahan, sayawan, maikling *skit*, awayan o gulangan, mga taong kumakain ng apoy, mga kombensiyon sa isang sirko, walang humpay na pagpapatawa na kung minsan ay may pagkabastos—tunay na isang makulay na espektakulo (*spectacle*) na isang nakaaliw na palabas. Dinala nina German Moreno, Dolphy at Panchito, halimbawa na, ang mga kombensiyong naturan sa paglipat nila sa pelikula at telebisyon. Modelo si Dolphy ng pagpapatawa nina Tito, Vic at Joey.

5. *Pelikula*. Ang pelikula ay isang makapangyarihang institusyon na humango ng maraming kombensiyon—sa pag-arte, sa pagbuo ng naratibo, sa dami't uri ng tauhan, sa pagkiling sa paggamit ng sigalot na natatapos sa isang maligayang wakas.

Isang elementong panghatak ng mg pelikula ang tinawatag na *love teams*, mula kina Rogelio de la Rosa at Carmen Rosales, Gloria Romero at Luis Gonalez, Nida Blanca at Nestor de Villa, Nora Aunor at Tirso Cruz III, Sharon Cuneta at Gabby Concepcion, at sa kasalukuyan, sina JaDine at KathNiel, at iba pang tambalan.

Sa kasaysayan ng pelikula, karaniwang iniidolo ang mga artistang mestisuhin o mestisahin tulad nina Rogelio de la Rosa, Ric Rodrigo, James Reid. Subalit sa ilang pagkakataon, katulad ng halimbawa ni Lolita Rodriguez at Nora Aunor, o Joseph Estrada o Lito Lapid, nagiging popular din ang mga mukhang “indio.”

Isa pa sa pinakapopular na tauhan ang lalaking alanganin, o ang bakla, na naunang namalas ng publiko sa mga pelikula ni Dolphy noong ikalawang hati ng ika-20 siglo. Sa *Jack En Jill*, *Fefita Fofonggay*, *Silveria*, *Ang Tatay kong Nanay*, at marami pang ibang pelikula, nabuo ang representasyon ng isang alanganin—inaapi, pinagtatawanan, subalit may ginintuang puso. At sa ilang pelikula, nakatatagpo siya ng babaeng iibig sa kanya.

Sinundan ang yapak ni Dolphy ng mga artistang tulad ni Herbert Bautista, Roderick Paulate, Vic Sotto at Joey de Leon, Eppie Quizon at marami pang iba.

6. *Nobela*. Ang nobela na naging popular sa panahon ng Amerikano at namayagpag pa ilang dekada pagkalipas ng digmaan, ay higit pang nagpalawak ng kapangyarihan ng kulturang popular na impluwensiyahan ang pananaw ng tao tungkol sa buhay. Isang mayamang larangan ng tema at tauhan ang nobela, na ang isang aspekto ay kinuha sa naunang mga anyo tulad ng awit at korido. Nandiriyan ang mga matitimyas na kuwento ng pag-ibig sa pagitan ng isang binata at dalaga, ang tagisan ng mga klase (mahirap laban sa mayaman), ang mga isyu sa pagitan ng magulang at anak, ang paghahanap ng kaligayahan, at iba pang paksa.

Mahalaga ring idiin na ang nobelan Tagalog ang pinagkunan ng marami sa mga pelikulang ginawa mula sa 1930s hanggang sa

1970s. Ilang akda nina Antonio Sempio, Teodoro Virrey, Gregorio Coching, Fausto Galauran, Liwayway Arceo at iba pa, ang ginawang pelikula. Karaniwang pinaikot ang mga nobela sa mga problemang pampamilya, na siya ring tinututukan sa mga soap opera.

7. *Telebisyon*. Ang telebisyon ang natural na ekstensiyon ng pelikula pagkalipas ng Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig, ang medium na humiram sa mga kombensiyon at mga tauhan ng pelikula, lalong lalo na sa mga naunang programa tulad ng *Tawag ng Tanghalan*, *Buhay Artista*, *Student Canteen* (timpalak sa pag-awit), *Kuwarta o Kahon*, *Kahapon Lamang*, at sa susunod na henerasyon ng programa, sa paglaki ng industriya sina Tito, Vic and Joey (komedya), ang mga nobelang puno ng drama na binansagang teleserye (*Flor de Luna*, *Annaliza* at *Gulong ng Palad*), mga programang may mga patimpalak at premyo, kantahan, sayawan, at iba pang nakakaaliw na gimik.
8. *Soap Opera*. Ang *soap opera* na unang napakinggan sa DZRH noong 1950s ang batayan ng ilang teleserye, kung saan ang komplikadong naratibo ay pinuputol-putol sa iba't ibang kabanata (sa radio ay 15 minuto lamang subalit naging kalahating oras sa telebisyon at ngayon ay isang oras na), pinupuno ng mga makukulay na pangyayari at dinadagdagan o binabawasan ng tauhan, depende sa pangangailangan.

Ang orihinal na *soap opera* ay ang *Gulong ng Palad* ni Lina Flor na naglarawan ng mga karanasan ng isang pamilya. Kaya ang iba't ibang bersiyon ng *Gulong ng Palad* at ang mga programang sumunod sa yapak nito ay nagtutuon ng pansin sa mga ugnayang-pampamilya—ligawan, di-pagkakaunawaan, ang kalbaryo ng matiising asawa, ang buhay ng isang ampon o isang ulila sa kamay ng madrasta, ang paghihiwalay ng mag-asawa, ang pag-akyat ng tauhang api sa ruok ng tagumpay, at iba pang tema.

9. *Komiks*. Ang komiks, na naging popular sa ikalima hanggang sa ikawalong dekada, ang siya namang pinagkunan hindi lamang ng teleserye (*Bukas, Luluhod ang mga Tala*) kundi ng tinatawag na pantaserye, mga kuwento ng pakikipagsapalaran o mahiwagang tauhan tulad nina Darna, Dyesebel, Captain Barbell, o Ang Panday, mga karakter sa *Mga Kuwento ni Lola Basyang*, at sa

kasalukuyang interes ng Channel 7 sa ganitong uri ng programa na impluwensiya ng pantasya, ang pantaserye tulad ng *Encantadia*, halimbawa na.

Pangkalahatang Tema at Prinsipal na Uri ng Tauhan

Mula sa naunang talakayan ng mga anyong pampanitikan at kultura, makakukuha ng ilang pangkalahatang temang hinabi at isinangkap kahit anupaman ang sitwasyon sa kuwento.

Una, ang malawakang tema ng pag-ibig sa iba't ibang manipestasyon nito. Bagamat mahalaga ang pag-ibig sa bayan na siyang tema ng maraming sarsuelang politikal at malaking bilang ng nobela, ang pinakapopular ay ang romantikong pag-ibig, o pag-ibig na ipinagkakait bunga ng ilang dahilan. Subalit sa pagdating ng tamang panahon, ito ay nagkakaroon ng katuparan na hahantong sa isang masayang wakas.

Karaniwang pinag-iikutan ng mga akda ang karanasan ng isang maganda, mabait at matulunging dalaga at ang pag-iibigan nila ng isang matikas, masunurin, at mapagkumbabang binata. Tinutukan ng akda ang matagal na paniningalang-pugad ng binata. Mga tauhan o pangyayaring magiging hadlang ang matapobre o mapanglait na magulang, isang binata o dalaga na umiibig din sa mga bida, isang matinding karamdaman, ang sapilitang pagkakalayo ng magsing-ibig, isang lihim na malaon nang nakabaon, ang di-pagkakaunawaan dala ng mga kasinungalingan, at iba pang dahilan.

Pangalawa, matatagpuan sa mga naunang anyo na ang masayang wakas ay magaganap pagkaraan ng maraming panganib, pag-aalangan, kaguluhan, at di-pagkakaunawaan, ligalig, parusa, at pagpapakasakit at sakripisyo ng mga tauhan. Makikita ito sa mga awit, sarsuela, nobela, pelikula, at *soap opera*. Kailangang maitatag muli ang orden o pangkalahatang kaayusan bago lumipas ang dilim, upang sundan ng liwanag. Isa itong tema na matatagpuan kahit na sa akdang relihiyoso, ang pasyon, kung saan nagkaroon ng Muling Pagkabuhay pagkatapos maranasan ni Kristo ang matinding sakit sa pakakapako at pagkabayubay sa krus.

Ang pangkalahatang kaayusan ay muling lalaganap sa pagsunod ng mga tauhan sa mga nobela, komiks at soap opera, halimbawa na, sa di-mababaling batas ng Diyos at kalikasan.

Pangatlo, matindi ang papel ng pamilya at komunidad sa paglalahad ng naratibo. Bihira ang mga akda na tumutuok doon lamang sa napakakipot na daigdig ng dalawang magsing-ibig. Sa mg akda, ang pag-ibig ay may dimensiyyong pampubliko, hindi isang sakit na umaatake sa *psyche* ng tauhan na nagwawakas sa kaniyang pagiging baliw. Ang pag-iibigan ay isang personal na ugnayan na nakatapat sa iba pang mga gawi at kilos ng isang komunidad kung kayat ang iniisip ng mga tao—ang pagsang-ayon o pakikialam sa pag-ibig—ay mahalaga sa mga kuwento. Mahalaga ang iisipin o sasabihin ng mga kapit-bahay sa daigdig na pinamamayanihan hindi ng indibiduwalismo, kundi ng mga saloobin at paniniwala ng komunidad.

Pang-apat, malinaw sa mga nobela, dula, awit, teleserye, komiks kung ano ang masama at ano ang mabuti, kung sino ang tauhang maganda ang puso at ang tauhang may maitim na puso. Walang pag-aalangan o pag-aalinlangan sa mambabasa kung ano ang puti at ano ang itim. Ito ang simplistikong pananaw sa daigdig na pinatibay ng libu-libong akdang popular.

Bahagi ito ng tradisyon ng didaktisimo, ang pagtingin sa akda bilang bukal ng mga aral na magagamit sa buhay. Sa *Florante at Laura*, walang duda na mababait sina Florante at Laura na ginawa ng kasamaan ng taksil na si Adolfo; sa *Dyesebel*, mabait ang sirena samantalang ang kalaban niya ay masama; sa *Darna*, sagisag ng kabutihan si Darna samantalang si Valentina ay sagisag ng kasamaan. Mga batang inapi ng madrasta sina Annaliza at Flor de Luna at malinaw na dapat lamang parusahan ang sa kanila ay nang-api.

Hindi kaagad nabuo ang ganitong pagtanaw sa akda bilang bukal ng aral. Nakita na ito sa naunang mga epiko, maiiking tula, at sawikain bago pa dumating ang mga Kastila. Pinatindi ito sa panahon ng Kastila at makikita sa pasyon at mga awit at korido. Ang panitikan bilang instrumento ng pagpapalaya ay ipinamalas sa mga nobela ni Rizal at sa mga tula nina Andres Bonifacio at Marcelo H. del Pilar. Sa ika-20 siglo, higit pa itong pinagtibay sa iba't iang uri ng dula, sa mga nobela at kuwento, at maging sa komiks.

Sa madaling salita, sa daigdig na nilikha ng libu-libong akda mula sa nakaraan, at bahagi ng kamalayang popular, makakukuha ng aral o leksiyon sa buhay ang mambabasa o tagapakinig. Maaaring luma na itong paniniwala sa panahon ngayon ng relatibismo kundi man anarkiya at kawalan ng katiyakan, subalit dapat na idiin na ang mga akda ay hindi buhay o hilaw na realidad. Isa itong *construct* o *artefact*, isang interpretasyon ng realidad

na ginagawa ng may-akda, batay sa kaniyang kaalaman at kasanayan sa paglikha.

Ang Daigdig ng AlDub, 2015-2016

Ano-ano ang mga dahilan sa tagumpay ng AlDub nuong 2015 hanggang ngayon?

Una, naisangkap ang naratibo ng AlDub sa isang popular na bahagi ng isang popular na programa na may mahabang kasaysayan ng pagdudulot ng aliw mula Aparri hanggang Jolo. Mayroon nang tiyak na publiko ang mga kabalbalan at pagpapatawa nina Tito, Vic at Joey, at mga kasamahan. Hindi naitaob ng anupamang palabas sa ibang istasyon ang matatag na posisyon ng *Eat Bulaga*, bagamat sa ilang panahon naungusan ito sa popularidad ng higit na batang komedyante tulad nina Willie Revillame at Vice Ganda.

Pangalawa, bago sa panlasa at paningin ang tambalan nina Maine Mendoza at Alden Richards. Hindi galing sa pabrika na gumagawa ng artista si Maine; isa siyang penomenon at produkto ng bagong teknolohiya—ang kaniyang dubsmash sa Internet. Bukod dito, natatangi siya sapagkat walang naririnig na tinig mula sa kaniya, puro himig lamang ng mga instrumentong pinatugtog niya, kasabay ang mala-*proteus* na pagpapalit ng eksaheradong ekspresiyon sa kaniyang mukha.

Hindi siya mukhang mestisa subalit hindi rin naman siya mukhang pobre at walang edukasyon; bahagi siya ng gitnang uri na naglakas-loob na magpakita ng kaniyang talino sa isang uri ng *mass media* na humihikayat ng indibiduwalismo, at naglaan ng espasyo sa pagsikat batay sa mga nanood at pagkahuli niya sa “kiliti” ng publiko.

Pangatlo, isang ideyal na kwento ng romantikong pag-ibig ang potensiyal ng tambalan. Sa AlDub, ang papel ng binata ay ginampanan ni Alden Richards, isang talent ng Channel 7, kilala na subalit hindi pa talagang star. Mestiso siya, makisig, at may *dimples* pa. Magaan ang dating niya sa mga tao, at malinis siyang tingnan, bukod pa nga sa siya ay galing sa isang may-kayang pamilya. Bagamat hindi kagandahan, may atraksiyon si Maine Mendoza, isang *fresh-faced* na personalidad na di kabilang sa mga dominanteng artista—tulad nina Anne Curtis, Janine Gutierrez, at Pauleen Luna—na pawang mga mestisa.

Pang-apat, ang ganitong kombinasyon ay isang resipe o pormula ng tagumpay at baryasyon ng romantikong pag-ibig na inilarawan na sa

milyun-milyong kuwento. Ito ang pag-iibigan na dinagdagan ng intriga sapagkat hindi nagsasalita si Yaya Dub na nakikipag-usap sa pamamagitan ng pagkanta at pagsulat sa papel. Nanatili ang misteryo ng dalaga. Sa pamamagitan ng lip sync, sang-ayon sa kolumnistang si Randy David, ang magkakahalang emosyon ng galit, tuwa, pagdaramdam, alinlangan, pagkainis, o kawalan ng pag-asa, halimbawa na, ay napalilitaw sa mukha ng artista (*Inquirer.net*). At sa pagsunod ng publiko sa istorya, napalalaya ang mga sinisikil na damdamin, isang uri ng *therapy*, na isang layunin ng panitikan at kulturang popular, sang-ayon na rin naman sa teorya ni Aristotle.

Hindi lamang ang hindi pagasalita ni Yaya Dub ang balakid; kasinghalaga ang radikal na pagkakaiba nila ng katayuan sa buhay. Sa loob ng ilang buwan, si Maine ay ipinakilala at pinagsuot bilang yaya, isang bayarang tauhan ng tatlong mayamang babae. Walang kapangyarihan, kahit na magsalita laban sa makapangyarihan at may kakayahang mag-utos at magtakda ng dapat niyang gawin sa pamamagitan ng salita. Ilang milyong babae ang makatatagpo sa ganitong katayuan ng sarili nilang repleksiyon sa buhay—pinatatahimik, walang kapangyarihan, sunud-sunuran sa isang ideolohiyang patriyarkal? Nakakatuwang sitwasyon ang mapapanood na kakikitaan ng ilang katotohanan tungkol sa pagiging babae sa lipunan.

Panglima, ang papel nina Lola Nidora, Tinidora at Tidora na sa tingin ko ay isang mahalagang dahilan sa tagumpay ng AlDub. Galing sila, lalo na sina Jose Manalo at Wally Bayola, sa tanghalan ng mga improbisasyon—kaunting direksiyon lamang, kung mayron man, at bahala na sila kung ano ang diyalogo nila, kung ano ang gagawin nila—di-pinaghandaaan, hinuhugot sa kanilang kaalaman bilang matagal nang komedyante. Ang husay nila ay hindi galing sa pormal na pagsasanay kundi sa sining ng pagmamatyag sa iba, sa paggaya, sa improbisasyon, sa angking *comedic instinct*.

Ang pagpapatawa nila ay batay sa mga pagkakamali, sa ilang sitwasyong puwedeng pagmulan ng katatawanan, sa pisikal na ginagawa nila—habulan, pagsasayaw, pagda-dubsmash, pag-akyat kung saan-saan, ang ugnayan nila sa mga bobong lalaking nakapaligid sa kanila. Higit sa lahat ang kani-kanilang kakatwang itsura—makukulay na wig, nakakaduling na mga alahas at pamaypay, mga damit na hindi mo mawari kung saan galing—ang husay nilang umarte kung saan inaantig nila ang damdamin ng milyong manononood—awa, galit, inggit, tuwa, pag-aagam-agam, lungkot at iba

pa. Sa kanila makikita kung gaano kayaman ang tradisyon ng *innovative comedy* na nakita na sa mga komedya, komiks (*Kenkoy*, *Kalabog en Bosyo*), bodabil (Dolphy at Panchito), at sa mga pelikula, radio, at telebisyon na nabuhay sa ganitong uri ng komedyang biseral, tulad ng *slapstick*, at hindi intelektuwal. Mabilis mag-isip, palaging handa, walang ensayo, humuhugot sa kasanayang nahasa sa ibang programa.

Pang-anim, ang papel ni Lola Nidora sa pagpapatuloy ng tradisyong didaktiko, lalo na sa unang ilang buwan, kung saan nagmumula sa kaniyang bibig ang mga aral na una nating natutuhan sa mga salawikain at sa mga tulang nangangaral nina Balagtas o Huseng Batute. Sa gitna ng gulo at masalimuot na sitwasyong pabago-bago, may isang di-matitinag na haligi na sumusuporta sa komunidad—ang serye ng mga aral tungkol sa pagmamahal, sa wastong paghihintay (sa tamang panahon), sa pangangailangang isipin ang iba bago ang sarili, sa paggalang sa mga nakatatanda, sa pagsagot sa mga pangangailangan ng komunidad, at higit sa lahat, ang busilak na pagmamahalan at mataas na pagpapahalaga sa kababaihan.

Kakaiba ito sa kung minsan ay mababang pagtingin sa ganitong uri ng pag-ibig na karaniwang wala sa mga *soap opera* at teleserye sa Channel 2 at Channel 7 na umiikot sa pangangaliwa, sa kawalan ng katapatan, sa mga problemang dala ng pagbubuntis ng isang dalaga o pakikiapid; o pananaw sa kababaihan na sa mga programang hawak ni Willie Revillame at maski nina Tito, Vic and Joey, at Vice Ganda, ay halos walang dangal, at nagbibilad ng katawan sa mga kasuotang nagpapakita ng maseselang bahagi ng katawan, sa mga malalaswang pagsayaw, at sa wari'y pagpayag sa kanilang komodipikasyon!

Pampito, nagbigay ang AlDub ng katapat na daigdig kung saan ang kababaihan ay nilalait, pinagtatawanan, na makikita mismo sa *Eat Bulaga* o *Wowowee* o *Showtime*; kung saan mahahayap at bulgar ang mga biro at pagpapatawa; kung saan ang lahat ng probema ay nabibigyan ng dagliang solusyon sa pamamagitan ng premyong pera o *appliance*, o bagong bahay. Waring sinasabi sa AlDub na nandirito ang *ideal*—na dapat lamang na hanapin nating sa tunay na buhay, kahit sa gitna ng katatawanan at libangan, at kalaswaan.

Pangwalo, dinamiko ang *segment* dahil puno ng aksiyon at pabagong-bagong emosyon; parang sumasakay sa *rollercoaster* na bubulusok sa

lungkot at lilipad sa halakhak, aarangkada sa matitinding biruan at babagal sa mga rebelasyon kung sino ba si Yaya Dub, kung ano ba ang kuwento ng pag-ibig ni Lola Nidora, kung saan nagmula ang kayamanan nila, at iba pang elemento ng naratibo na nabigyan na ng daan-daang komplikasyon upang panatilihin ang interes ng publiko. Mula sa mga epiko, awit, nobela, pelikula at komiks mahuhugot ang walang katapusang pagdaragdag ng mga sitwasyon, kahit na walang lohiko sa likod ng mga sitwasyon.

Pangsiyam, sa mga tauhan sa AlDub matatagpuan ang bersiyon ng babaeng inapi, ng salbaheng madrasta, ng matapat na mangingibig, ng tauhang hindi babae at hindi lalaki. Sa tatlong lola makikita ang pagpapatuloy ng tradisyon ng binabae, kung saan bagamat katawa-tawa silang tauhan, hindi nilalait. Ang tatlong artistang lalaki (mga padre de pamilya sa tunay na buhay) na nagkukunwaring mga lola, at walang interes na maging lalaki uli sa drama, ay bahagi ng komplikadong istruktura ng kasarian. Sa kanilang mga papel, pinayaman ng tatlong komedyante ang tradisyon ng kabaklaan sa kulturang popular.

Pansampu, mahalagang idiin ang paggamit sa kalyeserye ng parodiya, ang pinag-isipang panggagagad sa isang tao, pangyayari, o bagay upang lumikha ng espasyon kung saan ang nanonood o nagbabasa ay saksi sa pagtatapat ng orihinal na tauhan o sitwasyon na sadyang ginawang katawa-tawa sa pamamagitan ng panggagaya. Halimbawa, ang kalseyerye ay panggagagad sa palasak na teleserye nang walang katapusang iyan, dalamhati, at di-pagkakaunawaan. Komedyang, at hindi trahedyang, ang masusumpungan ng publiko sa serye.

Ang ilang tauhan tulad ni Ate Ging Ging ay panggagad sa tanyag na tauhan sa *Batibot*, samantalang si Gasgas ay isang katawa-tawang bersiyon ng police reporter na si Gus Abelgas. Ang tauhang si Frankie Arinoli ay batay sa tradisyonal na konsepto ng isang hambog na manliligaw, samantalang ang mga matapobreng lola ay patama o patutsada sa mga aroganteng donya sa pelikula at telebsiyon, tulad ng *character* ni Dely Atay-Atayan sa *John en Marsha*.

Panglabing-isa, ang oryentasyong “makamasa” at hindi elitista, na siya namang kinakatawan ng *Eat Bulaga*, ay pinatitindi pa sa paglulunsad ng serye bilang isang kalyeserye, mga pangyayaring nagaganap sa mga pook ng mahihirap—sa Tundo, Sampaloc, Malabon, Navotas, sa Caloocan—hindi sa mga mayayamang barangay sa siyudad ng Makati o San Juan, sa

loob ng *gated villages*. Kasama sa ispektakulo ang karaniwang tao—mga kapitbahay ng nagkapalad na mabunot ang pangalan para tumanggap ng sangkatutak na produkto, babae’t lalaking lubha ang tuwa na makikita ang mga sarili sa telebisyon, sumasali sa mga contest, nakikikanta sa mga hosts; sila ang mga maralitang nakukuha pang magsaya sa loob ng mga itinakdang minuto para sa *segment*.

Sa isang pananaw, ang kalyeserye ay makabagong “pasyon” na idinaraos sa mga kalye kung saan isinasabuhay ang aral ng pasyon—ang pagpasan ni Kristo ng krus tungo sa kaligtasan ng mundo. Ang kalyeseryeng ito sa sekular na daigdig ay isa ring paglalakbay, hindi ni Kristo, kundi ng haring mago, bitbit-bitbit ang mga kayamanang ipamamahagi sa masuwerteng ginang, isang maysakit na nagnanais lamang na umuwi sa Cebu, o sa anak na kinukulang ng pera sa pagpapagamot sa maysakit na magulang, o isang biyuda na ang tanging pangarap ay magkaron ng puhunan para magtayo ng maliit na tindahan.

Sa ganitong hindi gaanong maganda at mabangong kapaligiran, na madalas na naglalarawan ng madamdaming tagpo, sa ganitong tagpuan ng masisikip at mababahong kalye, ng mga sira-sirang bahay na tahanan ng mga taong nasa laylayan ng lipunan, na hindi nadadatnan ng tulong ng pamahalaan, na sinusuyo ng mga politiko sa panahon lamang ng eleksiyon araw-araw, idinadaos ang isang selebrasyon ng buhay, sa tulong ng *Eat Bulaga*. Waring ang mensahe ay huwag kayong mangamba, huwag kayong patalo sa puwersa ng buhay sapagkat may pag-asa pa sa kinabukasan. Malay ninyo kung kayo ang papalarin sa susunod—mga pansamantalang solusyon sa talamak na kahirapan at kawalang-katarungan sa buhay.

Isa itong dagliang solusyon na pag-aalis ng mga artista at *staff* sa isang pook ay maglalahong parang bula, puwera ang mapalad na maralitang tagalunsod na tumanggap ng libu-libong salapi, masasarap na pagkain, mga produktong tulad ng gamot sa ubo, bentilador, *cell phone*, at iba pa, na gawa ng mga *advertisers* na nagbabayad ng milyon sa *Eat Bulaga* upang ipagbili ang kani-kanilang mga produkto na inilalako upang pagtubuan.

Isang Pagbabalik-tanaw: Ang AlDub Bilang Produktong Materyal

Sa pagbabalik-tanaw, tinangka ng papel na hindi lamang ipaliwanag kundi idiin, nang walang gatol, ang ugnayang nagbubuklod sa partikular na programang AlDub at ang mga iba pang anyo sa panitikan at kulturang

popular. Ang sanaysay ko tugkol sa AlDub na nalathala sa *Rappler* nuong Oktubre 31, 2015 ay tugon ko sa panlalait at pag-alipusta sa programa dahil daw sa “kababawan” at kawalan ng halaga ng AlDub. Isang malaking kalokohan ang maghusga, na karaniwang ginagawa ng mga edukado daw at mayayamang wala namang alam sa pinagsasabi nila, at manlait sapagkat tinatangkilik ang AlDub ng milyun-milyong Pilipino, nakapag-aral man o hindi, mayaman o mahirap, dahil sa maraming dahilan. Sinikap kong isa-isahin ang mga dahilang ito, mula sa akademikong pananaw.

Hindi maaaring basta na lang ibasura ang ganitong aspekto ng kulturang popular sapagkat hindi makatwiran ang batayan ng negatibong paghuhusga. Ngayong naipakita ko na ang posibleng mga impluensiya ng ilang tradisyon mula sa panitikan at kulturang popular na nagsama-sama sa paglikha at patuloy na paglikha sa programa, inasahan kong mayroon na kayong konteksto sa pagpapaliwanag sa mga penomenon ng popularidad ng mga *love teams*, sa patuloy na panonood sa mga teleserye, sa mataas na sirkulasyon ng mga magasin at tabloid tungkol sa mga artista.

Bagamat hindi natin gaanong pinag-isipan, bahagi tayo ng dahilan sa pamamayagpag ng produktong komersiyal na nangangahulugan ng milyun-milyong tubo ng mga kapitalista. Tayo ang bumibili ng mga produktong ibinibigay sa mga suwerteng *contestant*—ang gamot sa ubo, ang *shampoo*, ang *soft drinks*, ang *biscuit*, ang *electric fan*, ang *phone card*, at marami pang tinda. Hindi dapat kalimutan na ang programa ay isang malaking operasyong pinagtutubuan ng Tape Inc. at ng mga kapitalista sa ating bansa. Hindi natin dapat kalimutan na mahalagang layunin ng programang tulad nito ay ang palakihin ang kita ng mga kapitalista sapagkat hanggang mataas ang *rating* ng programa, tiyak na dadami ang bilang ng mga *sponsor* nito. Kung kaya’t kailangang ipagpatuloy ng *staff* na maghabi pa ng mga kuwento at magpasikat pa ng mga artista na kababaliwan ng milyun-milyong Pilipino habang ang mga artistang ito ay nagkakamal din ng milyun-milyon hindi dahil sa galing sa pag-arte kundi dahil nakasali sila sa isang magaling na pormula ng palabas.

Ang AlDub at ang Panitikan: Ilang Implikasyon sa Pagsulat

May direktso ba at tahasang ugnayan ang programang AlDub at ang pagsulat ng panitikan? Wala akong nais na tukuyin na ganitong ugnayan sapagkat hindi wasto ang maglatag ng bunga at epektong koneksyon (*cause*

and effect relationship) sa dalawang anyo—isang palabas na pinanonood at mga akdang binabasa.

Sa kasalukuyan, walang gaanong mapaglalabasang magasin at dyurnal ang malikhaing mga nobela, kuwento at tula. Gayon pa man, patuloy ang pagsusulat ng kabataang manunulat ng kani-kanilang akda na isinasali nila sa mga likhaan sa UP, sa Palanca Awards, at ilan pang mga lathalain. Naging bahagi na ako ng mga komite ng hurado sa Palanca Awards, Surian ng Wikang Pambansa, Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, sa Pamantasang Ateneo de Manila, at Pamantasang De La Salle at iba pa, na sumuri sa maraming uri ng akda.

Masasabi ko na patuloy ang paglikha ng mga kuwento at nobela, at sanaysay sa Filipino at Ingles, na maipagmamalaki sapagkat mahusay ang pagkakasulat, malinaw na nahabi ang tema at tauhan, at sa maraming pagkakataon, inilabas ng mga akda ang tradisyon ng protesta na malaon nang mahalagang bahagi ng ating panitikan. Maraming nobela ang tumukoy sa iba't ibang uri ng karahasan sa bansa—sa mga pinsala sa minahan, sa mga trahedyang dulot ng baha at lindol, sa pagpapahirap sa mga magsasaka at mangingisda; ilan ang gumamit ng mga teknik ng *science fiction*, at ilan pa rin (lalo na yung isinumite sa patimpalak sa UP) na sumuyod sa mga karanasan ng mga Muslim bago at pagdating ng mga Kastila.

Ang problema, hindi nailathala ang ganitong mga akda, puwera na lang kung kukunin ang mga ito ng mga *publishers* at ilalabas bilang bahagi ng kanilang serye sa panitikan. Nailathala na ang *Ilustrado* ni Miguel Syjuco. Inilabas na rin ang nobela ni Eros Atalia, *Tatlong Araw, Tatlong Gabi* (2013) na nagwagi sa Palanca Awards. May iba ring nobelang inilabas ng Anvil Publishing tulad ng *Sweet Haven* (2015) ni Lakambini Sitoy, at UST Publishing House katulad ng *Super Panalo Sounds!* ni Lourd de Veyra.

Nangunguna ang Visprint sa paglalathala ng mga nobela ng kabataang manunulat told nina Bob Ong, Joselito delos Reyes, at Bebang Siy. Ilan sa iba pang manunulat sina Edgar Samar, Christine Bellen, Alvin Yapan at ilan pa. Sa mga akda nila ang ilan ay naisalin sa pelikula, tulad ng *Ligo na U, Lapit na Me* ni Eros Atalia, *Lumayo Ka Nga Sa Akin* at *ABNKKBSNPLAKo* ni Bob Ong. Patunay na nanatiling buhay ang panitikan, hindi na nga lamang ang panitikang sumikat sa panahon nina Macario Pineda o Lazaro Francisco, o Liwayway Arceo, ilang dekada pagkalipas ng digmaan.

Upang magpatuloy ang pagsulat ng akdang bubunuin ng mga kabataan, kailangang mahuli ng mga nobelista ang galaw, himig, kulay, at kilos ng kasaluyang henerasyon—ang kanilang mga interes, mga pangarap, mag kuwentong pinaikot sa mga kabatan—sa mga karanasan ng mag-aaral sa *high school* o sa kolehiyo at ang mga krisis sa buhay nila sa *ABNKKBSNPLAKo* ni Bob Ong, o ang *It's Not That Complicated* ni Eros Atalia, sa pag-iibigan ng mga estudyante at isyu ng seksuwalidad sa *Ligo Na U, Lapit na Me* ni Eros Atalia, at sa karanasan ng isang batang mamamahayag at ang mga nagbabagang isyu sa bansa sa *Tatlong Araw, Tatlong Gabi* ni Eros Atalia—militarisasyon, ang trahedya ng pagmimina, at iba pa, o sa buhay ng ilang kabataang miyembro ng isang rock band sa *Super Panalo Sounds!* ni Lourd de Veyra.

At sa kanilang pagsulat, gumagamit ang kabataang nobelista ng mga teknik galing sa makabagong panhon—kuwento na mala-dokumentaryo, maiikling kabanata at talata, maiikling mga pananalita, mabilis na pagpapalit-palit ng eksena. Gumagamit din sila ng mga tauhang pamilyar sa kabataan, at higit sa lahat, isang estilo sa paggamit ng Filipino na malutong, hindi masalimuot, kolokyal, madaling maintindihan, puno ng Taglish, *swardspeak* o ng jejemon, o kung ano man ang bagong kinalalokohan ng mga kabataan. Higit sa lahat, kapansin-pansin ang paggamit ng pagpapatawa na kung minsan ay nababahiran ng ironea at waring kawalan ng kaseryosohan.

Nakita na ang naturang mga sangkap na sa naunang henerasyon ng manunulat na kinabibilangan nina Lualhati Bautista, Fanny Garcia, Lilia Quindoza, Ricky Lee, Jun Cruz Reyes, Tomas Agulto, at ilan pang patuloy na nagusulat sa kasalukuyang panahon.

May isang penomenon na nagaganap sa panitikan at kulturang popular—ito ang paglitaw ng henerasyon ng manunulat, direktor sa telebisyon at sa pelikula (lalo na ng *indie films*) na karaniwang may mga degree mula sa unibersidad, nahasa sa pagsulat kundi man sa klase nila ay sa tulong ng higit na kilalang manunulat tulad nina Ricky Lee o Jun Cruz Reyes, nakakaalam ng mga makabagong paraan ng pagsulat o pagkatha, nakakabatid ng mga pangangailangang ibagay ang pagsulat sa teknolohiya ng pelikula, o telebisyon, at sa panitikan, mga akdang kakagatin ng publiko na karamihan ay mag-aaral.

Sa madaling salita, sa sabayang pagtutok natin ng pansin sa AlDub sa telebisyon at sa mga kaganapan sa panitikan at kulturang popular, makikita

natin na ang paglikha at pagkonsumo ng kahit na ano pang uri ng akda ay bumubuo ng isang higitang tanikala. Na ang lipunan ay kasama ang kultura; ang manunulat, ang kanyang akda; at ang publiko na nagbabasa o nanonood, ng akda. Ito ang mga kawing ng tanikalang ating mapag-aaralan upang ating mabatid kung ano-ano ang proseso sa paglikha ng kahulugan na may kabuluhan sa ating buhay bilang Pilipino sa ika-21 siglo.

Mga Sanggunian

- “Lea Salonga clarifies ‘kababawan’ tweet not about AlDub after fan outrage.” *Rappler.com*, 27 Set. 2015, www.rappler.com/entertainment/news/107228-lea-salonga-answers-criticism-tweets-aldub. Inakses noong 15 Abr. 2016.
- “Paano nga ba nagsimula ang aldub?” *GMANetwork.com*, 13 Ago. 2015, www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/532777/showbiz/chikaminute/paano-nga-ba-nagsimula-ang-aldub. Inakses noong 10 Abr. 2016.
- Chen, Heather. “‘AlDub’: A social media phenomenon about love and lip-synching.” *BBC*, 28 Okt. 2015, www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34645078. Inakses noong 11 Abr. 2016.
- David, Randy. “Dubsmash and Its Uses.” *Inquirer.net*, 23 Ago. 2015, opinion.inquirer.net/87842/dubsmash-and-its-uses.
- De Castro, Modesto. *Urbana at Felisa: Aklat na Katutunan ng mga Gintong Aral*. Aklatang Martinez, 1938.
- Del Mundo, Clodualdo Jr., patnugot. *Philippine Mass Media: A Book of Readings*. Communication Foundation for Asia, 1986.
- Hall, Stuart, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, at Paul Willis, mga patnugot. *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79*. Hutchinson, 1980.
- Guerrero, Rafael Ma., patnugot. *Readings in Philippine Cinema*. Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, 1983.
- Lo, Ricky. “Aldub fans hit Lea Salonga over ‘kababawan’ tweet.” *Philstar.com*, 27 Set. 2015, www.philstar.com/entertainment/2015/09/27/1504554/aldub-fans-hit-lea-salonga-over-kababawan-tweet. Inakses noong 15 Abr. 2016.

- Lumbera, Bienvenido. *Tagalog Poetry, 1570-1898: Tradition and Influences in Its Development*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 1986.
- Marcelino, Ramon, patnugot. *A History of Komiks in the Philippines and Other Countries*. Islas Filipinas Publishing, 1985.
- Reyes, Soledad S. *Ang Nobelang Tagalog, 1905-1975: Tradisyon at Modernismo*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 1982.
- , patnugot. *Lina Flor, Collected Works*. Anvil Publishing, 2000.
- . "Stumbling upon a magic formula." *Rappler.com*, 31 Okt. 2015, www.rappler.com/thought/leader/111175=part1-aldub-magic-formula.
- . "The AlDub experience, millions captivated." *Rappler.com*, 31 Okt. 2015, www.rappler.com/thought-leader/111198-part2-millions-captivated.
- Sabornedo, Lyza R. "10 Reasons Why Filipinos Love AlDub." *FAQ.ph*, 4 Set. 2015, faq.ph/10-reasons-why-many-filipinos-love-aldub. Inakses noong 11 Abr. 2016.
- San Diego, Bayani. "Split-screen TV fairy tale 'AlDub' hit in old, new media." *Inquirer.net*, 16 Agos. 2015, entertainment.inquirer.net/176591/split-screen-tv-fairy-tale-aldub-hit-in-old-new-media. Inakses noong 10 Abr. 2016.
- Tiongson, Nicanor G. *Sinakulo at Iba Pang Dulang Pangrelihiyon sa Malolos*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 1975.
- . *Kasaysayan ng Komedyang sa Pilipinas*. Integrated Research Center, De La Salle University, 1982.
- Tolentino, Rolando, at Gary Devilles, mga patnugot. *Kritikal na Espasyo sa Kulturang Popular*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 2015.
- Tomada, Nathalie. "What's in store for AlDub outside Kalyeserye?" *Philstar.com*, 9 Ene. 2016, www.philstar.com/entertainment/2016/01/09/1540579/whats-store-aldub-outside-kalyeserye. Inakses noong 20 Abr. 2016.

Transient Spaces, Transitory Relations: The *Accesoria* in Peque Gallaga's *Scorpio Nights* (1985)

Tito R. Quilling, Jr.

In the city, there are characters and stories that are often overlooked. From placid mornings to the midday chaos, lethargic afternoons and nocturnal calmness, the urban ambience sets the tone for its residents. In Metro Manila, some citizens occupy dwelling spaces temporarily, while others become long-time residents in the city. The changing times show the division in urban living: from bungalows in old residential areas, gated villages to the tenements in the inner city. Dwelling spaces are oriented according to our preferences, reflecting parts of ourselves. An individual's inclination for homing—a movement towards a favorable environment—is inherent. However, a transient is displaced from his/her preferred or original household. Despite the occupants' attempt to personalize the space, apartments represent the transitory state of habitation.

This paper explores the notion of transitory habitation, represented by a selected string of activities in Peque Gallaga's *Scorpio Nights* (1985). In the film, the *accesoria* and its inhabitants exhibit a sense of responsiveness to the space. The tenants' interaction with each other displays how experiences and memories co-constitute an attachment to the domestic space. In addition, there are encounters in the *accesoria* that revisit the indeterminate events in society at the time. Looking at the turnover of tenants and the apartment's condition, in what ways do the *accesoria* reveal the nature of its inhabitants?

Armed with experiences in theatre and film as an occasional actor, producer, writer, and production designer, Gallaga has been lauded for his

artistry. Working with Laida Lim-Perez in the production design for Eddie Romero's *Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?* (1976) earned him awards from the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) and Gawad Urian in 1976. In the same category, he won a second Gawad Urian for Ishmael Bernal's *Manila by Night* (1980) in 1980 (Jocson, Pareja, & Zafra). Although Gallaga has done works with varying themes, some of his films of similar nature include *Scorpio Nights*, *Virgin Forest* (1985) and *Unfaithful Wife* (1986).

While *Scorpio Nights* leans on the “*bomba*” tradition, Gallaga's film remains an outstanding work in Philippine cinema because of its notable cinematography and refined editing. For Bienvenido Lumbera, the film demonstrates Gallaga's rebellion against the orthodox methods of local filmmaking and displays skillfulness in his art as “a director against the strictures of censorship by government and producers” (“Peque Gallaga” 90). Under the stringent atmosphere of the Martial Law years, Gallaga circumvented the red tape on permissible subjects and themes. The Paco-born filmmaker expresses that “the artist is never fully in control of his material” and continues that “it is the nature of art that once the art is put out for the audience, the work of art becomes the property of the public and they begin to recognize and adopt qualities of the work of the artist may not have originally intended” (qtd. in Malonzo & Pangalanan). For Gallaga, a successful work of art effectively depicts the essence of human nature, one that can never be entirely captured because of its protean quality. As a recurring theme in cinema, human nature is often understated. However, it is more intricate, acting as a universal bond.

The Accesoría in the City

The 20th century saw Manila undergoing rapid urban development. One of the effects of industrial revolution necessitated a larger workforce, leading to the downpour of migrant workers to the commercial and industrial districts—Binondo, Quiapo, Sampaloc, Santa Cruz, and Tondo. With this influx, the demand for low-cost urban housing was filled in by the *accesoria*. Similar to tenement housing characterized by congested living spaces, these apartment dwellings were a chain of one to two-story units enjoined by parting walls, fitted with a separate doorway directing inhabitants to the communal areas, whose central area was a patio that greets the residents as they enter the apartment. Gerard Lico notes that

the floor areas of a unit would range from 40-45 square meters per storey, with a ceiling entrance of 2.7 meters and a narrow façade at an average of 3.5 meters. By tradition, Lico adds that one of the reasons of this skewed measurement was because the front area was of greater value compared to the ones whose entrances were farther from the street (168). Inside are one-room units called *viviendas*¹ rented out to lower-middle and working-class occupants who live in spaces with little to no privacy. Each *vivienda* has its own *zaguán*² (lobby) *sala*³ (living area) and sleeping quarters. To economize on the finances, amenities such as the *cocina* (kitchen), *latrina* (bathroom) and *azotea*⁴ (service areas) are centralized and open for the *accesoria*'s residents. These facilities are located on the ground floor along with spaces for laundry, drying, and lounging. Some apartments have a separate kitchen, including bathroom sheds, while those who live in larger apartments have a small yard at the rear of the house. While the structure of an *accesoria* was largely similar to the *bahay na bato*⁵ (stone house) of the elite. However, one feature particularly distinguishes the two houses.

The *accesoria* is devoid of an *entresuelo*⁶ (mezzanine)—the half-way point between the ground floor and the upper storey. Looking at the wood-and-stone combination of the *bahay na bato*, the former had noticeably scant ornaments. Lico relays that in some cases, the aesthetics would “appear only in the exterior grillwork, and occasionally, in decorative woodwork” (169). The resemblance between these houses reflects the degradation in taste according to Nick Joaquín, who laments the changes in Manila's domestic architecture between the 1900s and the 1930s. The grand homes of the Spanish period were characterized by its lofty rooms, the ornate furniture and designs, in contrast to the rickety structure and the soiled interiors of the *accesoria*, where the neglect seemed to echo the outlook of its transient occupants. Joaquín also mentions:

The change in our character shows in the shift of emphasis from the showplace sala (which, in today's houses, has all but melted into the dining room) to the more vital areas of bedroom, bath and kitchen. When we build now we build for our own convenience; we don't stint on the space we really use (like bedroom and bath) just to have as much space as possible for a sala that will stagger visitors, which was the basic principle of prewar architecture (232).

Following the war, urban reconstruction was one of the main undertakings of the government, starting from civic spaces such as administrative buildings and academic institutions. Alongside this restoration, homes of varying kinds became visible all over the city, as some dwelling spaces attempted to mirror the grandness of their predecessors. However, with the exodus of the old inhabitants out of Manila and into newer cities like Makati and Quezon City, among others, a few of these houses were quickly converted into transient homes. In this vein, the government's housing projects produced one-story dwellings of cement blocks connected to other houses, while others stand as single-detached cubic quarters. But the availability of lands continued to diminish.

The demand for alternative mass housing led to the construction of multi-story tenements which are elevated and expanded rowhouses. One of the most recognizable housing projects of the post-war period was ordered by the Marcoses for the construction of The Bagong Lipunan Sites and Services (BLISS) dwellings in Diliman, Quezon City. While these dwelling spaces follow the orientation of the *bahay kubo* (nipa hut) with an elevated ground floor and a communal area below, the industrial and generic look of these residences left out a sense of individuality for its residents. Rodrigo Perez remarks that “with the Filipino penchant for remodeling, many of these pitiable plain units have metamorphosed into charming examples of personalized architecture” (27). Such efforts in housing demonstrate one's innate sense of home even with transient habitation. But this reduced view for security and dwelling are also portrayed in another medium.

The Bomba Wave

In Philippine cinema, the “collapse” of the studio system in the late 1950s heralded a change in local productions as independent outfits stepped in. With their amassed net worth and network, some of the stars became producers. Without the fixed mills of the major studios, the immediate years produced films with lackluster technicals and kitschy stories. Continuing on to the 1960s and the 1970s, an influx of foreign films made an impression on the production values at the time. The spaghetti Western became the “Pinoy cowboy” while the “secret agent” films took pages out of the James Bond series. However, these were seen as poor

adaptations. Among these appropriations, the most popular were sex-oriented dramas, colloquially known as *bomba* films. Some of the major precursors to the Filipino variation include the films of Marilyn Monroe and pictures from the European sexual revolution in the 1960s featuring screen bombshells Brigitte Bardot, Sophia Loren, Anita Ekberg, Raquel Welch, among others.

Moreover, sex education films from Sweden, Denmark, and sex comedies from France, Italy, and London helped paved the way for pornography to cross the threshold onto mainstream cinema around the globe (Matilac and Lanot 84). In the Philippines, Ruben S. Abalos' *Uhaw* (1970) is credited as the first *bomba* film,⁷ which featured 10 sexual encounters and a long shot of a nude Merle Fernandez running. While these *bomba* films were seen as substandard works, they had a transcendent appeal, raking in AB and CD crowds. In terms of revenue, the formula to produce *bomba* films was an idyllic set-up. Nestor Torre remarks, "it did not take much money to make them—the only requirements were a camera, a room, a bed, and bodies willing to strip and clinch on it" (51). The quick turnover of these adult-themed dramas marred the caliber of films from the postwar studio system years. As the *bomba* wave expanded, there were a few differentiations as Rolando Tolentino maps out:

The genre can be categorized and periodized as follows: the *bomba* film (1970-Sept. 1972); bold film, wet look stage (1974-1976); bold film, daring stage (1976 to 1982); FF (fighting fish) films and pene films (1983-1986); ST or sex-trip films (1986-1992); and the TT or TF (titillating films) (1992-present) (237).

The deviations in the genre was because of the progression in showing nudity and depictions of sex—from drenched blouses ("wet look") to alleged full-on intercourses in *penekulas* (a portmanteau of penetration and *pelikula*). The Marcos administration was firm in keeping their view of a "New Society" immaculate. Through the Board of Censors for Motion Pictures (BCMP), there was a strict monitoring of films with critical subjects. Some were deemed acceptable for screening and those

that were considered seditious were subjected to ludicrous cuts. However, the BCMP's interference was not able to deter the audience's gusto for sex-oriented dramas.

Within the same period, there was an emergence of “socially-conscious” works from directors and screenwriters who were exposed to the aesthetics of “New Wave” cinema from European arthouse films which underscored the “film as art” movement. Some of the more prolific writers include Ricardo Lee, Raquel Villavicencio, Clodualdo del Mundo, and Mario O'Hara, while the works of the following filmmakers marked the “Second Golden Age” in Philippine cinema⁸—Eddie Romero, Lino Brocka, Ishmael Bernal, Marilou Diaz-Abaya, Laurice Guillen, Celso Ad. Castillo, Mike de Leon, and Peque Gallaga. These artists stood out from their peers by taking formal film studies and consequently mentoring the next generation of film artists. In conducting their workshops and classes, they reiterate the need to cultivate an understanding of Philippine society, social consciousness and to immerse themselves in the nationalist struggle.

The year 1985 was a turning point in the Marcos administration as the political and economic crises of 1983 (notably the Aquino assassination), became an “inescapable and eloquent context for the rapid proliferation of erotic representation” in film and in print (Parel 46). The institution of the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP) in 1982 intended to promote local works. However, the ECP was criticized for producing sex-oriented films as Martial Law came to a close in 1986. In its short existence, the ECP produced works which became classics such as Gallaga's *Oro, Plata, Mata* (1982) and Bernal's *Himala* (1982). Similarly, Lumbera notes how the establishment of the ECP permitted the Marcoses to “buy time” by offering pictures of pleasure and at correspondingly, exercising control on the masses and the local bourgeoisie (“Scorpio Nights” 222). While *bomba* films were included in the clampdown, these works became a significant vehicle for the administration in attempting to divert the public's attention from the tension-filled atmosphere.

The Cinematic Eye

This paper leans on phenomenology, defined as “the reflective study of the essence of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view” (Smith 305). In *Scorpio Nights*, the *accesoria*'s rooms, features, and

its effects on the characters are emphasized through this lens, by way of two specific strains. First, phenomenology in architecture integrates how the materiality of a structure and the atmosphere reveals the characteristics of a space. Condensing a premise from architectural theorist Juhani Pallasmaa, the senses are needed in experiencing both architecture and cinema, albeit visibility remains a priority.⁹ Working on the combination of one's sense and images, the second strand on the phenomenology of film puts forward that filmic images doubly function as the subject and the object of viewing, recognizing the audience's presence. In this vein, the works of media theorist Vivian Sobchack and cultural critic, Laura Marks similarly highlight that multi-sensory experiences in cinema allow the audience to engage with the film's components: from the sound to the production design.¹⁰

In cinema, the camera isolates certain images through framing, which enables the audience to focus on features that drives the narrative forward and those that bear much more significance than being mere spectacle. On this note, Gilles Deleuze mentions that the camera functions as "a mechanical consciousness in its own right, separate from the consciousness of the audience or the hero" (22). Yet the camera's eye also acts as a mediator between the film and the audience, portraying a reality on celluloid, where the two elements share a form of consciousness. Deleuze posits the existence of a filmic body that functions as a presenter of sort. Through this body, viewers are able to switch between perspectives of different characters, sometimes finding themselves and the film in unconventional locations and strange positions. Following the narrative as the systematized phenomena, the audience's point of view fuses with the camera's vision. In turn, this "eye" witnesses character development in various situations within. While there are limitations in how the cinematic eye recognizes a view, other production elements such as sound and set design assist in emphasizing the environment.

Looking at the opening sequence of *Scorpio Nights*, a full shot of the granite Binondo Church obstructed by power lines sets the atmosphere of the narrative. The succeeding intercuts show the interiors of a rundown *accesorio* and its immediate exterior: a woman pulls back her thin curtains as a *calesa* (carriage) in vivid red is pulled by an emaciated horse; a security guard in a blue uniform fixes himself on a small mirror, cutting to a person

walking past a murky *estero* (estuary)¹¹ as a welder toils away on a stack of iron while a couple of residents order a meal from an eatery on the trash-ridden sidewalk; a man frustratedly pries off a coin from his acoustic guitar and a delivery boy hauls an empty pushcart towards an off-screen neighborhood store. This rapid exchange of exterior and interior shots creates a symphony illustrating how urban residents characteristically start their day. In addition, the interior reflects the feverish energy of the industrial district with the inhabitants' constant movement.

On this note, Gaston Bachelard mentions that a domestic space and the energy of its inhabitants are able to merge as the house reflects the 'psychic state' of an occupant. Whether it's a single detached home or a congested apartment, the environment affects the inhabitants in their private moments as one's home projects the notion of "intimacy" (72), including privacy. Occupants tend to mimic the ambiance of the space they are in. Calmer spaces encourage a placid attitude while a frenzied environment produce harried individuals. In one's moments of solitude, the atmosphere continues to be influential, since an occupant is able to switch from one mood to another. In *Scorpio Nights*, there are a number of spaces inside the *accesoria* which define the characters' behaviors. In addition, these rooms and shared areas embody the collective consciousness of the occupants, witnessing their private lives and looking at their public selves.

The Foyer

The camera pans to the right and back, featuring the apartment's entrance hall filled with different activities—a clothesline hangs above the neighborhood teenagers playing basketball on a half-court area, a group of welders in one corner, two friends marveling at a new motorcycle, someone taking an item from the corner store/communal kitchen and joins a group of men playing *pusoy* while a man strums "The Boxer." This communal area allows the tenants to interact with each other at various times of the day, whether they choose to while away an idle hour by gossiping, doing chores, or acknowledging one another as they make their way to their own units.

In the film, the student boarder Danny (Daniel Fernando) is frequently seen descending the aged staircase from their dormitory to converse with Genio (Eugene Enriquez), the welder, or play cards with the

boys. Looking at this act, the descent indicates a detachment from privacy and deciding to commune. In the foyer, he sees the wife of the security guard (Ana Marie Gutierrez) who occupies the unit below their dormitory. One of the boarders (Pen Medina) expresses his annoyance for a fellow tenant, Elton (Carlos Balasbas), a drug user who constantly plays his guitar and seems to be unaware of his surroundings. But Elton calls out Danny on his alleged desire for the security guard's wife, which he quickly denies. Despite the number of tenants in the *accesoria*, the inhabitants follow a social order in a fundamental form. Some take on the persona that others perceive them to be while others do not follow the role ascribed to them. In one scene, an argument arises between a student boarder named Mike (Mike Austria) and a usurper, who quickly leaves the place. In an instant, the people in the lobby return to their activities, seemingly untroubled by the brief commotion (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Business as usual in the foyer; *Scorpio Nights*, Regal Films, 1985.

In an environment where people are used to seeing the spectacle vanishing as fast as it occurred, the occupants either extend the scene through questions, stories, or at times, overlook what happened by going on with their businesses. However, the foyer becomes a place where Danny relays his initial act of voyeurism to Genio who refuses to believe him. Their talk is interrupted by the wife who calls Genio, asking him to fix the hole in a metal basin. The sense of community is evident in how the occupants are amiable towards each other. Danny is entranced by the wife, but when Fely (Amanda Amores), arrives, Danny's attention is now on her. With the number of people in the foyer, it is customary to be constantly distracted by the other inhabitants. However, for Danny, his preoccupation with the wife occupies a significant part of his mind.

In Danny's string of visual intrusion on the downstairs couple, he is able to tread into their quarters. With the security guard (Orestes Ojeda) on his night shift; the wife is left alone, giving Danny the opportunity to sleep with the wife. Following his conquest, Danny proceeds to tell Genio about the act episode refuses to believe that Danny committed the act. He warns the student to be careful, but it seems that his word of caution vanished within the grimy perimeter of the foyer. In another scene, Danny's interaction with the security guard takes place in the lobby when he mindlessly steps on the hose that the husband is using and gets reprimanded. The husband is further annoyed when Fely who thinks he is conceited, snorts. But the husband is seen hosing off the children's feet, revealing his playful nature towards children. The husband is preoccupied and Danny approaches the corroding window of the ground floor unit where the wife is looking out. Seeing this contact, Genio bumps into Danny to subtly warn him.

The foyer witnesses a rather comical and fairly violent incident, when a scream from Fely's mother reverberates throughout the apartment, calling out for help to catch a Peeping Tom, who stumbles down the staircase as he escapes. The male tenants corner him and among the clothesline, they start beating him down. Genio joins the frenzy and confuses the men, giving the alleged voyeur a chance to pick up a wrench and swings at his attackers. The ruckus wakes the security guard, who gets his pistol and shoots the peeper in the thigh. The events turn around as the men stop their pursuit to get the boy bandaged. Among the audience, Danny is petrified by the security guard's act.

Looking at these events, the lobby has a multi-purpose function—as a source of news and entertainment, a lounge, a workplace, and as a silent trysting area (for Danny and the wife). As a mute spectator, it is in the foyer where Danny asks his roommates how much a ticket costs at the time because the price is hiked every month. This question is a jab at the inflation during the 1980s, while the other layer points to the clampdown of films by the administration. In this scene, we are reminded of the ECP which represents the government's series of projects to produce their own works that they find acceptable. Reflecting the suppression, Danny's inquiry is left unanswered.

There is a cautious tone in the foyer when Danny reminds his roommate, Romulo, of his anonymous visitor (a police or an agent by his manner of dressing), whose neutral expression can be read as either contemplating or apprehensive, indicating that Romy's participation in the demonstrations will leave his fate uncertain. On this note, as one of the student-characters, Romy represents the anti-establishment movements of the time, and those who are accused of being a member of the resistance often go underground. The boarders retire to bed, one of them expresses his excitement at getting to peep at the downstairs couple again. Another roommate castigates them for spying all the time, when their country is in disorder. Albeit quite sudden, this direct announcement is another critical point in the film since in the bulk of the narrative, only a few characters note their current struggles that mirror the turbulent Marcos times outside the apartment.

While the foyer looks at amiable interactions and hushed conversations, the walls beyond the lobby contain grim truths. On the other side the walls, the security guard practices pointing his gun with frenzied eyes, his location unidentified. Inside the ground floor unit, Danny and the wife are having rough sex. Returning to the lobby, the women gossip while doing their laundry, and a corner of the lobby is turned into a basketball court as the others bathe, oblivious to the imminent slaughter.

The Dormitory

As a pivotal space, the communal quality of the boys' dormitory acts as a screen to Danny's voyeurism. *Scorpio Nights* teases the viewer with parts of the apartment before entering a unit on the second floor. Inside,

a group of male student boarders are headed home for the summer break and Danny will occupy the room by himself. Before leaving, Romulo tells Danny that if anyone asks for him, he must not say anything. The dormitory now turns into a private room and Danny pleasures himself. However, he is interrupted by a loud knock on his door and an official-looking man is looking for his roommate, Romulo. Following through with the reminder, Danny replies that he has no idea of Romy's whereabouts. When Danny asks for the man's name, he does not reply. With tapered security measures, the space can easily be accessed by strangers. Moreover, tenants who are in good terms with each other are free to go inside other units (see Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. The dormitory, nearly empty and occupied; *Scorpio Nights*, Regal Films, 1985.

Inside the dormitory, Kale (Carlos Abresia), Genio's lover who tends the *sari-sari* store in the foyer, asks for a tablet from Danny to ease Genio's headache. Remembering Danny's birthday, Kale relays to the boy that those born under the Scorpio sign are lust-ridden characters. Kale ends

his visit by reminding Danny to be careful, but the boy remains skeptical about the warning. Despite being a marginal character, Kale reveals the encompassing theme of the film, delivering the most powerful line which illuminates the excessive sexual drive of Danny, the security guard, and his wife. This revelation occurs in the space which bears a semblance of home and projects a sense of privacy.

In another scene, Danny's roommates return and see the kettle he left burning on their bedside table while he spends a heated moment with the wife downstairs. Alarmed, they start putting out the flames and the entire compound panics. The poor condition of the apartment is susceptible to such accidents and the flammable materials (mostly aged wood and unfurnished concrete), stands as fuel to the potential conflagration. The fear of the inhabitants for their lives is instinctively followed by their fear of displacement. From their cramped dormitory, the distress expands throughout the apartment.

The Ground Floor Unit

Located directly under the boys' dormitory, the ground floor unit occupied by the security guard and his wife becomes a central space in the progression of events (see Fig. 3). In the opening scene, the security guard asks his wife if there will be a change in their diet of canned food, indicating their scarce income. This inquiry hints at the citizens' lack of necessities such as food, apart from decent living quarters. Every night, when the security guard leaves their unit for his duty, the wife is left alone and Danny repeatedly spies on her through a crack on his room's floor. The boy's initial observation of the downstairs couple fornicating becomes an obsessive habit, directed to the wife. As she paints her nails in dim lighting, Danny's eyes merge with the camera, traveling from her petite toes to her plump chest, and methodically observing her as she sensually takes a bite out of unripe mangoes. Is the wife if aware of the silent observation? But it becomes apparent that even in the privacy of their units, sexual tension remains thick.



Fig. 3. The ground floor unit, cramped but well-kept; *Scorpio Nights*, Regal Films, 1985.

Halfway through the film, the cracking of thunder and lightning sees a soaked Danny arriving at the apartment, who stumbles into the room of the downstairs couple. Hearing the door creak, the wife thinks that it is her husband entering and utters a reminder. Danny moves into the domain of the subject, physically intruding on the couple's domestic space, which the wife is oblivious to. Danny sees his object of desire up close, enclosed in a crimson mosquito net. A tracking shot follows, focusing on the supple body of the sleeping wife. Danny deceives her by mimicking the husband's routine before climbing into bed with her. Danny lifts the wife's dress and proceeds to enter her; in a similar manner as that of the security guard as she lies half-asleep. Within moments, Danny finishes and the wife turns over. He quickly heads back to his room, surprised at getting his hands on the wife. Danny wakes up as the security guard comes in and does his usual business, while Danny looks at them from the fissure. After turning

off the light, the husband makes love to his wife, who actively participates this time.

The changes between day and night, the presence and absence of noises specify moments of transitory pleasure. Looking at risks, Danny embodies a person who disregards any caution to pursue his addiction. Once more, Danny beds the wife and as he was about to leave, a hand grabs his wrist from under the mosquito net. Danny is initially surprised but gamely joins the wife back in bed. From feasting on her toes to picking her up and spinning inside the net, the tryst becomes rougher when the wife uses his belt to initiate their exchange of saliva, before ending their encounter.

As heavy rains seep through the apartment one night, Danny tries to keep the water out. Downstairs, the wife sits on a bare wooden bed, garbed in a thin robe among their drenched furniture. Danny comes in wearing a clear, plastic raincoat. They start fornicating amid the flashing and booming. In this scene, Pallasmaa's notion comes to mind that "the strongest and most pleasurable experience of home occurs during a heavy storm when rain beats against the roof, magnifying the feeling of warmth and protection" ("Identity" par. 61). The domestic space fulfills its primary role of providing shelter from the elements and the characters similarly find warmth in each other. In the morning, the husband tries to fix their ceiling with a tarpaulin while complaining to his wife that the house should be replaced with a new one. The husband's sentiment reflects how domestic spaces need to be reinforced to sustain the purpose of dwelling. However, with the limitations in one unit, the tenants need to be creative in using the space.

When Fely and Danny are invited to the ground floor unit to look at a dress, the wife uses this chance to get her hands on the student. As Fely tries on the wife's dress, she closes the curtains on the girl. In that window of a minute, the wife kisses Danny torridly and starts rubbing his crotch. But the act is cut short when Fely finishes getting into the dress and her husband returns. In a limited space, solid partitioning is not practical and the use of curtains allows a slight physical division, projects an occasional sense of privacy and is used as a mental separation.

Later that night, the wife loudly expresses her pleasure at Danny going down on her, but silences herself when the husband arrives. She hides Danny under their bed and pretends to be asleep as the guard moves

around their unit. Moments later, the flimsy bed creaks under the weight of the copulating pair. As the couple starts to doze off, the wife relays to the husband that someone was caught stealing the other day. She asks him what he would do if he catches a burglar, to which the security guard replies that he will shoot the bastard. The wife turns over with a devious smile on her face. Under the bed, the boy winces. This scene depicts Danny's helplessness, trapped inside the space of another tenant, where the danger lies in the discovery of an intruder in their unit.

The wife remains affectionate towards her husband. In one scene, as they laugh in between soft kisses and caresses, the security guard senses something is different with his wife and tells her not to cheat on him. When he comes home drunk, the security guard breaks down and repeatedly asks her why they cannot conceive a child. The husband's depressing realization points to the irony of guarding other people's houses and important establishments but is unable to sense the danger in his own. This interaction suggests that when opportunities are presented, the need for financial survival outweighs personal choices. In this scene, the oversexed characters are revealed to have empathy for their significant others, but lacks the concern and assurance for themselves. In their vulnerable state, they disclose their worries and fears inside their private space. After a moment of vulnerability, the husband discovers their affair. Towards the end of the film, he opens the door to their unit and sees them in the act. He observes them before emerging from the shadows with a pistol. The camera closes in, revealing the malevolence in his eyes, and he shoots them while they are in the middle of rapid pumping.

In-Betweens: The Bathroom and the Staircase

Majority of the rooms within the *acesoria* are shared or collapsed to maximize available space. In this vein, certain areas underscore the occupants' state of mind. While the bathroom allows solitude for the user, in the film, it is a communal space. Fely takes a bath, and Danny enters. They proceed to have sexual intercourse while covered in suds. While a comfort room is primarily a private space, the bathroom becomes an "in-between" space where despite being occupied, privacy is not retained. Instead of providing the occupants privacy, the user remains cautious. In the film, it becomes a trysting space, where there is no exchange of words.



Fig. 4. The staircase, the bathrooms, and the tenants; *Scorpio Nights*, Regal Films, 1985.

The steep, wooden staircase is also a transitional space—prompting a change in the mood or the sentiment on the tenants (see Fig. 4). Going upstairs indicates retreating into one’s private space while going downstairs shows openness to others. When Danny first watches the downstairs couple copulate, he sets himself halfway on the staircase, where there is a slice between the old beams and the walls inside the couple’s unit. While this area has poor lighting, it becomes a suitable way of concealing a peeping Tom. Also, the partitions between the rooms do not provide complete privacy. As the husband penetrates his wife, who is half-awake, Danny masturbates to the scene. Finishing in moments, Danny gets himself together and comes across an off-screen cat, who screeches at his kick and shakes him out of his stupor. The boy heads upstairs and returns to his reality. This sequence renders the staircase as an interlude to his sexual awakening. As the film progresses, it is on the staircase where he comes to a realization.

At one point, the boy continues his shadowy observation on the downstairs couple but quickly discovers their firm union. Next to the crack on their wall beside the staircase, Danny witnessing the saccharine exchange of the couple, as Genio observes him from a corner. The distraught boy starts crying and pounds his head on the grimy banister. Genio runs up to the boy and asks if he is jealous. Danny denies this and is left weeping on the staircase, prolonging his agony in the transitional space.

Two-as-One: The Ground Floor Unit and the Dormitory

With the ground floor unit and the dormitory being parallel to each other, the physical barriers are inefficient in fully enclosing their spaces in privacy. The high points in the film illustrate how the characters transcend these barriers. In Danny's first peeps on the couple's lovemaking, he catches the security guard entering the unit through a crack on the floor and the camera merges with Danny's viewpoint. The guard joins his sleeping wife, whose dress is askew several inches above her midsection. When the bedside lamp is turned off by the husband, Danny's surveillance on the couple is cut short.

In another sequence, the wife is seen lying on the bed, then puts on her robe haphazardly. She then caresses herself—from her legs to her stomach, shoulders, from her chest and to her neck. The wife stands up on the bed, gets a metal hanger and begins to search for the crack on their ceiling. In their dormitory, Danny sees the metal hanger jutting out from his floor and peeks. Seeing the wife touch herself, the boy gets aroused and pries off part of the wooden floor, large enough for his arms to stretch through. The wife reaches out then gorges on his fingers while pleasuring herself as Danny humps the floor. The physical boundaries between them are now removed and their repeated trysts led to heightened sexual games—a carnal circus—as demonstrated in their disregard for the structural limitations of their fragile units to satisfy their physical hunger.

Their physical contact is cut off at the husband's arrival, where Danny returns the cover on the gap and the couple proceed to copulate. The wife turns her gaze towards the crevice, to which Danny returns. He starts touching himself while holding a lamp in his right hand. The physical distance between Danny and the couple is non-existent, suggesting a three-way sex (see Fig. 5). The light on Danny indicates that the wife wants

to convince herself that the boy is her partner. But she asks for the light to be turned off. The wife's choice exposes her recognition of the extramarital affair. As a central element in the film, we see the tactile sense sustained in the narrative as seen in the continuous touching of one's body and grabbing another's. Recalling how Pallasmaa contends that "the eye collaborates with the body and other senses. One's sense of reality is strengthened and articulated by this constant interaction" ("The Eyes of the Skin" 41), as viewers, our eyes fuse with the camera, allowing us to switch between the filmic characters' viewpoints—from Danny to the couple and parts of the apartment as an omniscient viewer.



Fig. 5. An implicit *ménage à trois*; *Scorpio Nights*, Regal Films, 1985.

However, when the husband learns of their affair, the dormitory is no longer frequented by Danny, indicating his detachment from being a boy and into the ground floor unit, where he asserts his development. The security guard steps out of the shadow as his wife and Danny climaxes,

ending their affair with a blast (see Fig. 6). He finishes off Danny with another shot and touches himself before penetrating his wife, who is lying in her own pool of blood, half-dead. The wife takes her last breath as the husband thrusts into her. Moments later, he puts the gun to his mouth and pulls the trigger. The gunshot sends Genio running to the unit, screaming for Danny. There, he discovers a bloodbath. Genio's cry pierces the night, echoing throughout the dark alleys of Binondo.



Fig. 6. A gunshot is heard in the *accessoria*; *Scorpio Nights*, Regal Films, 1985.

The *Accessoria*: The Transient Space

Over time, the condition of the *accessoria* deteriorates with the constant turnover of tenants. While others maintain the quality of the space, some remain indifferent with their awareness of temporary habitation. In addition, the lack of financial resources and the landlord's unresponsiveness to the living conditions elevate the effort of preservation. In *Scorpio Nights*,

the apartment is occupied by marginal characters living in an unforgiving city: university students from a lower financial stratum, conmen, sexual deviants, and alleged substance abusers. Despite the periodic arguments, most of them look out for each other. The domestic space serves as their ground for their social consciousness, where their behavior and attitude are structured by the environment. The apartment projects a sense of home by fostering community spirit among people who are not tied by blood relations. In this line, I recall a remark from Pallasmaa, that:

Home is a projection and basis of identity, not only of an individual but also of the family. But homes, the mere secrecy of private lives concealed from the public eye, also structure social life. Homes delineate the realms of intimacy and public life (“Identity”).

The boundaries between public and private lives are underscored by the rooms, whereas the communal areas and the congested units are partitioned with fragile plywood. As if facing their visitors and neighbors, the corroded wrought-iron window grilles offer a lean sense of aesthetic. Living in an *accesoria* becomes similar to living in a shantytown, where privacy becomes a luxury, and the surroundings underline the inhabitants’ disregard for proper decorum as the structure is located in an unkempt district. While the house is seen as the world where people are able to create their own consciousness, the *accesoria* remains open to wear and tear. The apartment reflects a part of society often neglected, where timeworn structures are left to decay.

On another note, Sobchack’s assertion that the sense of touch transcends its meaning reflects how tactility is embodied in the film as an extension of one’s eye. As the camera’s eye goes through the lobby, the area is showcased through the number of people in the space, the coarse pavement drenched by washerwomen and the assortment of items (e.g. a *sari-sari* store and a welding shop), make it appear more packed. Without having to physically touch the areas of the house, one recognizes the tactile, olfactory, and auditory components of the film through these images. The eye is able to access more spaces and intrude on private moments. In addition, Marks puts forward that “voyeurism relies on maintaining the

distance between viewer and viewed [...] eroticism closes that distance and implicates the viewer in the viewed" (184). In particular, Danny's constant voyeuristic act demonstrates how the act of viewing is doubly carried out in the film because seeing is performed similarly by the film and the viewer.

Transitory Relations

Looking at the turnover of tenants and the apartment's condition, in what ways do the *accesoria* reveal the nature of its inhabitants? Even with its origins in the *bomba* tradition as a tool to dissuade the masses from martial law, *Scorpio Nights* has elevated itself by projecting a hint of neorealism by framing the story in Manila. In the film, there are instances where sex is highlighted as man's proverbial nature. However, as a central event in the narrative, sex was isolated from other realities. For Nicanor Tiongson, "the whole situation was actually crying out to be interpreted, but instead it showed sex as a phenomena, not as a symptom of larger, deeper structures" (qtd. in Parel 46). In observing the lack of connection between sex and societal struggle however, it can be argued that the excess in copulation performed by the characters was also a pretext for diverting themselves from the callous times outside. Looking at the *accesoria*, the structure functions as a shell where the transients find a respite from the feverish social order and turbulent political climate at the tail end of the Martial Law period.

Despite the polluted environment, the space has a sense of community where strangers look out for one another. While there are numerous tenants, only two quarters are featured regularly: the couple's room and the boys' dormitory. The downstairs room is partitioned with curtains to create a psychological division within the limited space while the interior of the dormitory projects masculinity through the posters of scantily-clad calendar girls promoting liquor. These aesthetics reflect the administration's repressive attitude towards sex (Cruz) by curtailing its presence to keep the Marcoses' immaculate concept of the "New Society"—a movement urging its citizens across social classes to work on mutual objectives in order to attain emancipation.

At street-level, the *accesoria* is decaying. The second floor is enclosed in old timber, the entrance to the apartment is a dreary double door and the outer stone walls are cracking. The foyer's walls are soiled concrete and the untidiness lessens its charm. Some parts have been painted over while

the exposed areas are covered with years of grime. In the film's rendering, the sordid combination of sweat, damp concrete, cigarette smoke, cooking oil, detergent powder, smoldering metal, and dust are familiar odors. A inhabitants' perception and experiences within domestic spaces are filled with particulars such as surfaces, colors, familiar sounds, and people. In *Scorpio Nights*, the camera functions as the audience's eyes in infiltrating the inhabitants' moments of privacy, and similar to Danny, the viewers now stand as voyeurs.

The characters used the rundown apartment as a stage for their deceptive games, which led to their grisly demise. With manslaughter as the film's exclamation point, it becomes a piercing depiction of some episodes in the city, where degradation is entwined with the rise of transgressive acts, from minor to heinous crimes. Cities are typically built to embody a nation's progress, but there are persisting challenges in urban planning (or the lack thereof). There is an overflow of transients, lack of adequate dwellings, disregard for city rules as well as authority figures and haphazard constructions.

A significant part of the narrative in *Scorpio Nights* illustrates the inhabitants' casual attitude in maintaining the space, until a storm and a fire nearly displaced them. Only then did they show any concern. The characters' sense of home is shown in their attempt to preserve the space. Regardless of the dreadful state of the *accesoria*, there are people who try to create a sense of home by putting in personal touches. With transient habitation, people are able to project their images of home by orienting it with their preferred colors, through spraying a room with familiar scents, and acquiring a few mementos. The attachment to one's home is co-constituted by decent and unkind experiences, by pleasant memories and unpleasant ones. More importantly, a semblance of home prompts a connection to the domestic space by recalling particular experiences, sensations, and remembering people who offer a sense of comfort, regardless of one's present location.

Notes

1. The term “vivienda” literally translates into “living place.” The Spanish usage denotes several meanings such as house, home, stay, room, floor, apartment, and dwellings.

2. In domestic architecture, a *zaguan* is a covered space near the entrance.

3. The living room of an *accesoria* and similar transient spaces are sometimes used simultaneously used as a dining room, a lounge area, and even sleeping quarters.

4. Traditionally, an *azotea* is the structure’s rooftop or a flat platform. In the *accesoria*, the function of an *azotea* changes at various times of the day. See Harris (2013).

5. Directly translates as “stone house,” a two-story structure which uses stone or masonry for the ground floor, while the upper story is enclosed in walls hewn from Philippine hardwood.

6. During the Spanish colonial period, the household help directs a visitor to the *entresuelo* who waits for the homeowner to allow him/her to proceed to the *sala* by way of the grand staircase.

7. See Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr.’s (1970) full review of the film *Uhaw* as compiled in Nicanor Tiongson’s (ed.) *The URIAN Anthology 1970-1979* (1980).

8. In the *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Film* (1994), the latter part of the 1960s until the 1980s was considered the “Third Golden Age” and lists down the aforementioned filmmakers. The preceding decades, 1950s-1960s were the “Second Golden Age” while the nascent years of Filipino cinema in the 1930s-1940s were already dubbed as the “First Golden Age.” This paper follows Joel David’s assertion as mentioned in *The National Pastime: Contemporary Philippine Cinema* (1990).

9. A detailed definition can be read in Pallasmaa’s *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (1996).

10. In Sobchack’s *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004), the influences of images on one’s senses correlates with Marks’s statement regarding how filmic images contribute to the representations of lives in *The Skin of Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (2000).

11. In populated districts, an *estero* is an inlet or tidal channel which functions as a drainage canal.

Works Cited

- Abalos, Ruben S., director. *Uhaw*. Adroit Productions, 1970.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas, Beacon P, 1994.
- Bernal, Ishmael, director. *Manila by Night (City After Dark)*. Regal Films, 1980.
- , director. *Himala*. Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, 1982.
- Cruz, Francis. "Scorpio Nights (1985)." *Lessons From the School of Inattention: Oggs' Movie Thoughts*, 24 May 2008, oggsmoggs.blogspot.com/2008/05/scorpio-nights-1985.html. Accessed 6 Sept. 2014.
- David, Joel. "A Second Golden Age (An Informal History)." *The National Pastime: Contemporary Philippine Cinema*, edited by Joel David. Anvil Publishing, 1990, pp. 1-17.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson, Athlone P, 1986.
- Del Mundo, Clodualdo Jr. "'Uhaw': Unang Bomba." *Pilipino Reporter*, 10 November 1970.
- Joaquín, Nick. *Culture and History: Occasional Notes on the Process of Philippine Becoming*. Solar Publishing Corporation, 1988.
- Gallaga, Peque, director. *Oro, Plata, Mata*. Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, 1982.
- , director. *Scorpio Nights*. Regal Films, 1985.
- , director. *Virgin Forest*. Experimental Cinema of the Philippines, Regal Films, 1985.
- , director. *Unfaithful Wife*. Regal Films, 1986.
- Harris, Cyril M. *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*. Courier Corp., 2013, pp. 38.
- Lico, Gerard. *Arkitekturang Filipino: A History of Architecture and Urbanism in the Philippines*. U of the Philippines P, 2008.

- Lumbera, Bienvenido. "Scorpio Nights: Buys Time for FM Regime (1985)." Tiongson, pp. 221-2.
- . "Peque Gallaga: The Compleat Cinema Artist in Twilight." *Re-Viewing Filipino Cinema*, Anvil Publishing, 2011, pp. 88-90.
- Malonzo, Isabella, and Bettina Pangalanan. "Peque Gallaga's *Scorpio Nights* as Cult Film: Exploring the Auteurist Perspective." Unpublished undergraduate thesis, University of Santo Tomas, 2012.
- Marcos, Ferdinand E. *Notes on the New Society of the Philippines*. National Media Production Center, 1973.
- Marks, Laura U. *The Skin of Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Duke U P, 2000.
- Matilac, Rosalie, and Marra Lanot. "Bomba." *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, Vol. 8: Philippine Film*, edited by Nicanor Tiongson, Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994, pp. 84-5.
- Pallasmaa, Juhani. "Identity, Intimacy, and Domicile: Notes on the Phenomenology of Home." *Arkkitehti-Finnish Architectural Review*, vol. 1, 1994, pp. 1-15.
- . *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Academy Ed., 1996.
- Parel, Tezza. "Eros and Experiment: Is the ECP 'Expanding the Parameters of Human Experience' or Promoting Sexism and Pornography? (1985)." Tiongson, pp. 40-9.
- Perez, Rodrigo III. "The American Colonial and Contemporary Traditions." *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, Vol. 3: Philippine Architecture*, edited by Nicanor Tiongson, Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994, pp. 25-69.
- Romero, Eddie, director. *Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?* Hemisphere, 1976.
- Smith, David Woodruff. *Husserl (The Routledge Philosophers)*. Routledge, 2007.
- Sobchack, Vivian. *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. U of California P, 2004.
- Tiongson, Nicanor, editor. *The Urian Anthology, 1980-1989*. Antonio P. Tuviera, 2001.

- Tolentino, Rolando. "Bomba Queens and National Development: A Genealogy of the Filipina Cinematic Body." *Review of Women's Studies*, vol. 9, nos. 1-2, 2001, pp. 236-49.
- Torre, Nestor U. "Classics of the Filipino Film." *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, Vol. 8: Philippine Film*, edited by Nicanor Tiongson. Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994, pp. 50-7.
- Zafron, Galileo, R. Jocson, and Lena Pareja. "Philippine Film: Artists and Organizations." *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art, Vol. 8: Philippine Film*, edited by Nicanor Tiongson. Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994.

E Ano Ngayon?: Pagbabaybay, Wika, Pagsasalin

U Z. Eliserio

Maglalatatag sa papel na ito ng teorya ng wika na ituturing itong isang di-biyolohikal na anyo ng buhay. Mula sa perspektibong ito, mabibigyan ng bagong kahulugan ang buhay mismo, gayundin ang reproduksyon, kamatayan, imortalidad, paggawa, at pakikipagtunggali. Ipepresenta ang teoryang ito sa pamamagitan ng pagpapaliwanag ng mga dominanteng pananaw tungkol sa pagsasalin sa Pilipinas.

May tatlong bahagi ang papel. Una, tatalakayin ang ugnayan ng pagsasalin at Filipino, ang wikang pambansa. Pangalawa, magbibigay ng mabusising pagbabasa sa librong *Translating the Sugilanon* ni Corazon Villareal. Pangatlo, isisiwalat ang kritisismo ng *Contracting Colonialism* ni Vicente Rafael ni Ramon Guillermo sa kanyang *Translation and Revolution*. Inilalantad ng pulitika ng pagsasalin ang kalikasan ng wika.

Ang Pagsasalin ng Rehiyunal na Panitikan

Bilang bahagi ng seryeng Panitikang Pilipino mula sa dekada nobenta, kasama sa layunin ng mga antolohiyang *Dulaang Hiligaynon*, *Panulaang Cebuano*, at *Panulaan at Dulaang Leytehon-Samar*on hindi lamang ang pagsasalin ng rehiyunal na panitikan tungo sa wikang pambansa, kundi ang paglikha ng wikang pambansa mismo. Tinangka ito ng mga editor at tagasalin sa iba't ibang paraan. Si Jaime Biron Polo, halimbawa, mula sa panitikan ng Leyte at Samar, tinangkang iabandona ang estruktura at

bokabularyong Tagalog. Kaya hindi isinalin “ang salitang *ca-ru-ca-ya-can* bilang *talakayan* (Tagalog) o kaya’y *pag-uusap* (Tagalog), isinalin ito bilang *pag-iistorya*” (Polo 26). Samantala, may dalawang dahilan si Don Pagusara sa pagpapanatili ng mga salitang Cebuano sa kanyang mga salin: sa interes ng tugmaan at retorika, dahil teknikal ang mga salita (halimbawa: “kulilisi”). Gayundin, may klaster ng mga salitang pinanatili niya sa orihinal nilang anyo, pero hindi siya nagbigay ng dahilan para dito. Kasama rito ang mga salitang “gugma” at “kasingkasing” (Pagusara xxii).

Pinakahayag si Rosario Cruz-Lucero sa kanyang politika ng pagsasalin. Pangunahing mga konsiderasyon para sa kanya, halimbawa, ang usapin ng kanon, pati na rin ang pagpapalawak ng estetika ng mga mambabasang hindi Ilonggo (i.e. iyong mga nasa sentrong Manileño/Tagalog) (Lucero 31). Tinutuligsa ni Lucero ang pagpasok ng mga salitang Ilonggo sa mga salin sa Filipino na “token” lamang ang estado, at ibinibida ang modernong tendensiya na magpasok ng mga salitang Ilonggo sa wikang Filipino kahit na hindi madulas (madulas para kanino?) ang salin, kahit may katumabas naman ang mga ito sa Tagalog. Estrategiya rin ni Lucero ang pagdaragdag ng salita sa salin na wala sa orihinal mismo. “Layon naman ng ganitong uri ng malayang pagsasalin ang pagpapaigting ng kontekstong kultural ng orihinal” (34). Halimbawa ni Lucero dito ang pagsasalin niya ng “sanduco” (itak). Hindi lang sa hindi niya ginamit ang “itak,” hindi rin niya ginamit ang “sanduco”! Ang ginamit niya ay “espading,” na itak na gamit sa pagputol ng tubo. Gayundin, pinanatili niya ang “tagbalay” imbes na isalin ito sa “tao po,” at ang sagot ditong “saka” ay hindi niya isinalin bilang “pasok” kundi “panhik” (ikumpara sa Villareal 114).

Gumagamit din si Lucero ng mga laping Ilonggo: “*ginakilala* sa halip na *kinikilala*, *nagahangad* sa halip na *naghahangad*, *nagakain* sa halip na *kumakain*, *ginsabi* sa halip na *sinabi*” (Lucero 38). Minabuti ring iniwasan ni Lucero ang pag-uulit ng mga pantig, katangian ng Tagalog pero hindi kinakailangang maging katangian ng Filipino. Itong huli ay rekomendasyon din ni Teresita Maceda (167; para sa kaniyang kritisismo sa mga salin ni Pagusara mula sa Cebuano, tingnan ang pp. 169-171).

Nilikha at patuloy na nililikha ang wikang pambansa. Malay ang mga tagasalin sa seryeng Panitikang Pilipino na tereyn ng tunggalian ang pagsasalin (Polo 27). Sagot ni Lucero sa mga magtuturing na “katawa-

tawa” ang uri ng Filipino na “naghahalo-halo”: “Naging kumbensyong pampanitikan . . . ang komikong promdi . . . na halo-halo kung magsalita. Komiko din ang dating ng mga ita, bakla, at lahat na itinuturing ng ‘urbanisadong’ lipunan na naiiba sa kanila” (36).

Paglikha ng Wika

Sisimulan ni Villareal ang kanyang libro sa isang anekdota. Maling-salin daw o miskomunikasyon ang “Hiligaynon.” Tinanong kasi ng mga Espanyol kung ano ang tawag sa taong kanilang nakaengkwentro sa Ilog Panay. Sagot sa kanila, “manog-ilig sang kawayan.” Inakala ng mga Espanyol na tumutukoy ito sa lahat ng tagaroon, imbes na sa mga nag-iilig lamang ng kawayan (3). Ang natutuhan ni Villareal dito, minsan hindi ang “tamang” salin ang nabubuhay. Maaari pa nating palawigin: nililikha ang mga pangalan, nililikha ang mga salita. (Ang “manog-ilig sang kawayan” ay naging “iligaynon” na naging “Hiligueynes.”) Maaari pa lalong palawigin: pagsasalin ay paglikha. Ang mabusising pagbabasa sa *Translating the Sugilanon: Re-framing the Sign* ay mailalahad ang mga argumento sa likod ng kabatirang ito.

Alinsunod sa postkolonyal na teorya, para kay Villareal, walang “English,” ang mayroon lamang ay “english,” o “englishes” (69). Gayundin, tinatanggihan niya ang tinatawag niyang “TagFilipino,” i.e. iyong Filipino na Tagalog lang naman talaga (103). Kinuwento niyang noong dekada 20 hanggang 40, may mga iskolar na ninais tanggalin ang mga salitang hiram mula sa Espanyol mula sa Hiligaynon (118-9). Ang wika, “Filipino english” man o ang wikang pambansa, ay nililikha. Ano-ano ang mga hakbang natin sa prosesong ito ng paglikha ng wika?

Inirerekomenda ni Villareal na balikan ang ating mga ugat (kahit hindi “atin” talaga) sa ating pagbuo ng bagong wika (6). Tanong niya, paano magsasagawa ng pagtanggì at subersyon sa kapangyarihan gamit ang salin (22, 28)? Nasasalat ni Villareal ang potensyal na kapangyarihan ng pagsasalin dahil, ayon nga kay Jakobson, lahat ng komunikasyon ay pagsasalin (27). Sa kanyang balangkas na gamit, ang semyotika, nauusig ni Villareal ang ideya ng isahang tumbasan sa pagsasalin, gayundin naitutulak niya ang nosyong walang hanggan ang pagsasalin (28). Kung gayon ang komunikasyon, ang wika mismo, ay nananatiling bukas, bukas sa interpretasyon at pagbabago. Kung gayon, ang ginagamit sa pang-aapi

ay maaaring gamitin sa pagrerebolusyon laban sa pang-aapi. Para sa mga mananakop, ang maling salin ay “mahinang pagbabasa,” pero para sa mga lumalaban sa pananakop, ang maling salin ay paglikha (43).

Ang nais ni Villareal ay “mapanlikhang poetika ng pagsasalin” (31), na kaniyang binigyang-kahulugan bilang “the translator’s resistance to the colonial network of power through variations in the translation act” (90). Bakit kailangan nito? Ang pagsasalin para kay Villareal ay usapin ng kapangyarihan (5). Ginamit ito ng mga Espanyol sa kanilang pananakop (18). Binigyang-diin niya, halimbawa, na hindi isinalin ng mga pari ang mga susing salita ng kanilang relihiyosong literatura, tulad ng “Dios” at “Espiritu (15; ikumpara sa Rafael 20-21). Gayundin, ipinaliwanag ang wikang Hiligaynon sa pamamagitan ng mga kategorya ng baralilang Espanyol (Villareal 19, 42; ikumpara sa Rafael 27). Sa ganitong paraan hindi naiintindihan ang mga katangian ng mga wikang katutubo. Binanggit ni Villareal na mas mabuting intindihin ang Hiligaynon sa lente ng “aspect” imbes na “tense” (tingnan ang 81). Ang mga usapin tungkol sa balarila ay nasa isip pa rin ni Villareal hanggang sa pagsasalin niya ng mga sugilanon papuntang Ingles. Ayon sa kaniya na ang problema ng “dangling” at “misplaced modifier” ay hindi matatagpuan sa Hiligaynon (77; ikumpara sa 32, 69).

Maiuugnay ang “pagbalot” na ito (ng Espanyol sa mga wikang Filipino) sa sinuring teksto ni Villareal, na nakasalin sa Hiligaynon pero ang simula’t dulo ay nakasulat sa Espanyol (15). Binabalot ng Espanyol ang wika at literaturang Filipino, sa ganitong paraan ay kinokolonisa ito. Ganito naman ang proyekto ng mga kolonisador kahit sa iba nilang sinasakop. Ayon kay Villareal, nang matutuhan ni Columbus ang salitang “cacique,” itinanong niya kung ano ang katumbas nito sa Espanyol imbes na ano ang kahulugan nito para sa mga katutubo (25). Hindi lang iyon, ginamit pa nila ang wikang katutubong Nahuatl para pahinain ang ibang katutubong wika (25-26). Maaari kaya nating iugnay ito sa kaso ng Tagalog, Filipino, at ang mga rehiyunal na wika sa Pilipinas? Babalikan ang isyung ito sa ibabang bahagi ng papel.

Ano ang mga katangian ng pagsasalin sa kolonyal na Espanya? Ayon kay Villareal, ito ay unidirectional (i.e. mulang Espanyol papuntang mga bernakular na wika, kasi tayo ang may matutuhan mula sa kanila, at wala silang kailangan mula sa ating mga gawa), gayundin ito ay dumadaan

sa censorship, at isa pa'y nalalathala sa Maynila, na siyang sentro ng kapangyarihan (21).

Ang proyekto ni Villareal ay pagsasalin ng mga sugilanon mula Hiligayon tungong Ingles at Filipino. Ano-ano ang mga taktika niya sa gawaing ito? Bagaman nakapagtataka sa unang sulyap, may saysay ang sala-salabat na diskusyon ni Villareal ng kultura, pulitika, wika, ekonomiya, kasaysayan, at pagsasalin. Narito ang kaniyang mga tanong sa pagsasalin: ano ang isasalin, papunta sa anong wika, ano ang tatanggalin, ano ang idadagdag (125)? Pero, bago ang lahat ng ito, ano nga ba ang pagsasalin?

Inilista ni Villareal ang anim na terminong Hiligaynon na mailalapat sa pagsasalin (32). Una, sa paggamit ng laping “gin” sa “ginbinisaya” (ginawang Bisaya), pangalawa ang “luad” (kopyahin, gayahin), pangatlo at pang-apat ang “hubad” at “lubad” (buksan), panlima ang “ginbiao” (ang “Biao” ay “spring”), at pang-anim ang “ginpahamtang” (matatag). Samantalang ang unang dalawa’y mas tradisyonal (i.e. isahang tumbasan) ang tingin sa salin, may espasyo para sa subersyon sa pangatlo hanggang pang-anim. May potensyal sa pakikipagtunggali.

Paano papaganahin ang subersibong potensyal na ito? Rekomendasyon ni Villareal, pag nagsasalin ng sugilanon, laging isipin ang mga espisipikong katangian ng wikang Hiligaynon, gayundin ang kasaysayan at kultura nito (32, 69). Kinonekta rin ni Villareal ang pagbabalik sa ugat na ito, ang historikal na pananaw, sa tatlong bagay, una, sa pag-intindi ng nilalaman ng sugilanon, pangalawa, sa pag-intindi ng anyo ng sugilanon, at pangatlo sa paglikha ng wikang pambansa, iyong Filipinong hindi lang basta Tagalog.

Halimbawa, sa kaniyang pagtingin sa mga “kamag-anak” na teksto ng sugilanon, naipapaliwanag ni Villareal ang aatakihin ng iba bilang “baduy” sa likha ni Jalandoni, ang “Si Anabella.” Ang imahen dito ng matiising nanay ay maiuugnay sa mga asal at relihiyosong literaturang bahagi ng pinagmumulang tradisyon ni Jalandoni (17). Ito ang kaso sa nilalaman, at siya ring kaso sa anyo ng sugilanon. Ang “sugilanon” ay may imahen o dating ng kumbersasyon o kwentuhan (13). Usapan habang nakatambay, kumbaga. Ang pagiging maluwag nito o episodiko ay ikinabit ni Jalandoni sa mga novena, na binubuo nga ng mga episodyong magkakaugay pero hindi maintindi sa kawsal na relasyon, imbes ay binibigkis ang mga ito ng tema (ikumpara sa 40, 87).

Isa sa pinakaimportanteng pinag-ugatan ng sugilanon (kasama na rito ang *composo*, *Almanake*, at *panglet* [14]) ay ang korido. Ang mga unang nobelang Hiligaynon (na dati'y sugilanon din ang tawag, bago naimbento ang terminong “sugilambong”), ay mga korido sa anyong prosa (37-38). Binibigyang-pribilehiyo ni Villareal ang jeneyalojing ito dahil mahalimuyak para sa kaniya ang subersyon ng anyo ng korido mismo (i.e. mas iigting ang pagiging palaban ng sugilanon pag inugnay ito sa palaban ding porma ng panitikan) (55).

Pero ano nga ba ang korido? Ito ang tinatawag na metrical romance. Sa Tagalog, hinati ito sa mga tulang may tig-aapat na taludtod bawat saknong, at tiglalabindalawang pantig bawat taludtod (*awit*), at ang tiglilimang taludtod bawat saknong, at tigwawalong pantig bawat taludtod (*korido*), pero ayon kay Villareal, sa Hiligaynon ay walang ganitong paghahati. Pinapaksa nito ang mga bisyon, aparisyon, adventure, romansa, pag-ibig, pangingidnap, pang-aakit, at chivalry; ilan sa mga batis nito ay kuwentong bayan at relihiyong literatura; at kasama sa mga katangian nito ang kumplikadong banghay, stock na parilala, paulit-ulit na sitwasyon at naratibo, stereotyped na imahen, at iyon na ngang “leisurely narrative pace” (39-40). Ang kasaysayan ng korido ay kasaysayan ng mapagpalayang salin at tunggalian para sa kahulugan. Tanong nga ni Villareal, nagkaproblema ba ito sa censorship dahil ito ay makasalanan, o dahil ito ay pulitikal (38, 48-51). Bukas kasi ito sa pag-aangkop ng manunulat, pagbabago ng mga mambabasang nagpapasahan, ito ay pambubulgar sa orihinal na teksto. Samantala, dalisay ang pagsasalin sa relihiyosong literatura (42). Ang mga kopya nito'y kadalasang walang nakalistang naglathala, at nagsalin, at kung mayroon mang nakasulat na awtor, pseudonym ang gamit nito. Samantala, kailangan ng mga relihiyosong literatura ng patunay na sila ay tama pagdating sa doktrina (44-45). Ang mga korido ay pinasukan ng mga elemento ng loa, at meron pa ngang pumapaksa sa isang kumain ng sobrang daming santol kaya natubol ang pagtae (47).

Bahagi rin ng pagtutol ng korido sa awtoridad ang pagbuwag nito sa nosyon natin ng Awtor. Ayon kay Villareal, mabibilang sa lumilikha sa korido ang mga sundalo, marino, pari, ladino, manunulat, mang-aawit (48).

Sa ganitong lente natutuligsa ni Villareal ang pagtimbang sa sugilanon gamit ang mga standard ng Kanluran (36, 61). At sa kanyang pagkwestyon sa standard ng “magandang pagsusulat,” kinukwestyon nya

rin ang standard ng “magandang pagsasalin.” Bukod sa pagsubok sunurin ang sintaks ng Hiligaynon sa kanyang pagsasalin dito sa Ingles, pinapasok din ni Villareal ang mga salitang itinuturing niyang hindi maisasalin, tulad ng “banig” at “kumpare.” Kasama rin dito ang pagtangkang isalin ang mga idioma (isinalin ni Villareal ang “Nakasukad na ako” bilang “The rice is ladled out now”), kahit na hindi “magandang Ingles” ang resulta nito (66-67, 69, 71). Ang “magandang Ingles” ay hindi “Maganda” (malaking titik M), i.e. walang Platonikong ideyal ng Ingles na siyang ituturo pag sinabing balikong anino ang mga pangungusap na likha sa salin ni Villareal. Inusig din nya ang fetisismo para sa ekonomikong estilo, at ipinagtanggol ang pag-uulit-ulit (85, 87). Malay sa kanyang layunin kung bakit nagsasalin, naipagtanggol ni Villareal ang literal na pagsasalin (117; para sa nosyon ng layunin at skopos sa pagsasalin, tingnan ang Vermeer 221-232).

Dahil nga’t hindi niya tinitingnan na nyutral na proseso ang pagsasalin, kinikilala rin ni Villareal ang pulitika ng Filipino. Halimbawa, binigyang-diin nya na humihiram ang *Diksiyonaryo ng Wikang Filipino* mula sa Ingles, pero hindi sa mga rehiyunal na wika (ang tinutukoy niya rito’y ang edisyong 1989; tingnan ang Villareal 101). Pinuri niya si Reynaldo Duque na nagsasalin mula Ilocano papuntang Filipino, na pinapalabas ang mga idioma, at salitang Ilocano, at hindi pinapaikli ang mga pangungusap para sundin ang batayan ng “magandang Filipino” (Villareal 106-7). Ilan naman sa mga estratehiyang ginamit ni Villareal sa pagsasalin mula Hiligaynon papuntang Filipino ay ang paggamit ng mga laping sa Hiligaynon at hindi sa Tagalog natatagpuan, paggamit ng mga salitang Tagalog na pinakamalapit sa salitang Hiligayon (halimbawa, “singhal” dahil “binghal” ang orihinal), paggamit ng noun phrase imbes na verb (“pag-unawa” vs. “naunawaan”), at pagpapanatili ng mga salita (kung “banig” ang nanatili sa Ingles, “handurawan” naman ang sa Filipino) (109, 113-5). Makapangyarihan ang pag-aaral ni Villareal, at ang mga implikasyon nito’y matatalakay sa kasunod na seksyon.

Mula sa Wika, Tungo sa Wika

Noong 2015, inis na inis ako pag nakakakita ng mga advertisement ng mga “supplementary products,” una dahil mapagsamantala ang mga ito (pampaputi ng balat, pampalakas di-umano ng sex drive), at pangalawa dahil nasa Ingles ang disclaimer nito sa dulo: “No approved therapeutic

claims.” Dahil nga mapanlinlang, naroon ang disclaimer para babalaan ang mga mamimili tungkol sa mga produktong ito. Pero dahil nasa wikang Ingles (wag nang isama pa ang lebel ng diskursong kailangan para maintindihan ang “therapeutic claims”), hindi rin nito napoprotektahan ang mga nanonood ng advertisement laban sa panloloko. Pero nitong 2016, sa wakas ay nagkaroon na ng Filipinong babala sa dulo ng mga patalastas: “Ang _____ ay hindi gamot at hindi dapat gamiting gamot para sa anomang karamdaman.” Sa wakas ay may tamang warning na para sa mga insecure (ginawang insecure) tungkol sa kulay ng kanilang balat at tindi ng libog. (Kulang na lang, ipagbawal ang mga walang kwentang produkto mismo.)

Habang hindi pa dumarating ang babala sa Filipino, dahil nga inis, isip ako nang isip kung paano ko isasalin ang “No approved therapeutic claims.” Hirap na hirap ako sa “therapeutic,” pero hindi rin ganung kadali ang “claims.” Ang solusyon pala, umigpaw sa lebel ng mga salita at isalin ang mensahe. (Ang naisip ko na kasing pinakamalapit ay: “Hindi ka gagaling dito.”) Narito kung gayon ang pinakasimpleng kabatiran ng Araling Salin, ang maaaring sabihin nating pundasyon ng pag-iral nito: hindi simpleng gawain ang pagsasalin. Kung maaaring humiram ng termino mula sa teoryang panliteratura, defamilyarisasyon ang Araling Salin ng pamilyar (di-umano) na penomena ng pagsasalin. Binubusisi nito ang pagsasalin, at hindi lang sa isyu ng tama ba o mali ang salin. Sa kaso ng halimbawa ko, ang isyu ay ang wika ng babala, ang orihinal nito ay Ingles. Hindi ito magiging problema kung marunong naman ang mga nakakapanood ng ad ng Ingles. Nakakapagtaka at nakakaasar nga na ang abisong magpapaalam sa kanila tungkol sa posibleng panganib ng produktong baka gugustuhin nilang bilhin ay nasa wikang hindi nila naiintindihan. Pumapasok na ngayon ang Araling Salin tila ba labas-sa-saling-paksa, ang impetus sa likod ng pagsasalin. Katulad din ng teoryang pampanitikan na hindi maiwasang paksain ang mga tila ba’y nasa labas ng literatura (pulitika, ekonomiya, kasarian, kapangyarihan), hindi maaaring pag-aralan ang pagsasalin nang hindi napapasok ang iba’t ibang usaping sa unang sulyap ay wala namang kinalaman dito.

Mula sa pagsasalin ng ad, pumunta naman tayo sa mas seryosong usapin ng kolonyalismo (bagaman, kung iisipin, may pagkakalapit din sa pagkalunos-lunos ang modernong pagpapatalas at pananakop ng mga

Espanyol). Mainam ditong banggitin ang pamumusong na matatawag (hindi ito ang ginamit na termino) ni Tomas Pinpin na inilarawan ni Rafael sa *Contracting Colonialism* (83). Iba ang estratehiya ni Pinpin sa kanyang librong di-umanong gabay para sa mga nais matuto ng Espanyol. Kaiba sa mga misyonaryong nagsisimula sa pagsasakategorya at pagpapakain sa Tagalog sa gramatikang Espanyol, imbes si Pinpin, nagsimula sa pagbibilang. Ang “isa” ay “uno,” ang “tatlo” ay “tres,” atbp. Ayon nga kay Rafael, posibleng walang hanggan ang paglilistang ito. Gayundin, sa ibinigay na awit ni Pinpin, alinsunod sa gawain ng mga ladino, may Tagalog na beryson at saling Espanyol, isinasakripisyo ni Pinpin ang “tapat” na pagsasalin para mailigtas ang tugmaan. Sa kaso naman ng isyu ng tamang laping (para sa “kasarian”) ilalagay sa salitang Espanyol, tiningnan ito ni Rafael sa lente ng “sugal.” Bahagi ito ng estratehiya di-umano na itinaturo ni Pinpin para madelay ang “shock” at sapak ng mga Espanyol. Kung anoman ang epistemolohikal na estado ng interpretasyon ni Rafael (totoo ba ito o paglalaro lamang ng isang privileged na ilustrado mula sa Cornell?), maaari nating hugutin mula rito ang isang mapagpalayang insight, bahagi ang pagsasalin sa tradisyon ng paglaban sa kolonyalismo sa Pilipinas. Natratransforma nito ang ating kasaysayan mulang kasaysayan ng pagkaapi (panahon ng Kastila, panahon ng Amerikano, panahon ng Hapon...), tungo sa kasaysayan ng pakikipagtunggali.

Kaso’y hindi rin maaaring wag pansinin ang ilan pang pagsasalang nagaganap. Isa na rito ang pagsasalin ni Rafael ng kasaysayang Filipino para sa audience na Inglesero, na alinsunod kay Zeus Salazar ay pwede nating tawaging “pangkaming pananaw,” as in, “Tingnan n’yo kami, meron din kaming subersyon sa lebel ng wika, resisting subjects din kami!”

Isa pa ay ang puntong inusig ni Ramon Guillermo sa *Translation and Revolution*. Inatake ni Guillermo ang implikasyon ni Rafael, gayundin nina Reynaldo Ileta at Floro Quibuyen, na kinailangan ng mga Filipino ang bokabularyong banyaga para makapaghain ng kritisismo sa kolonyalismong Espanyol (209). Sa isang email na isinama sa mga talahuli ng *Translation and Revolution* (256), sinagot ni Rafael ang kritisismo ni Guillermo at binigyang-diin ang mga estratehiya ni Pinpin na siya ngang diniskas ko sa mga unang talata. Tanggap naman ang punto ni Rafael tungkol kay Pinpin. Romantic pa nga ang paglarawan niya sa gawain ng huli na maaari nga raw isipin bilang “unceasing guerilla warfare.” Siyempre pa, hindi niya

masasagot sa isang email lamang ang makapangyarihang kritisismo ni Guillermo, na sinabing “the transcendentalizing impulse may in fact be more of an intellectualistic illusion. Sacrificing one’s life for some great and glorious idea like ‘God’ and ‘Nation’ are presumably much more dignified and excellent options for most intellectuals than dying for a miserable sack of rice on a dirt road in the middle of nowhere” (201).

Ang pagsasalin at Araling Salin at kultural na kritisismo ay tereyn ng tunggalian, at ang pinaglalabanan nina Guillermo at Rafael ay ang magiging dominanteng pagtingin sa rebolusyon at bayang Filipino. Gustong ibalik ni Guillermo sa lebel ng katawan ang usapan, pagkain muna bago mga ideya. Hindi sa hindi mahalaga ang mga ideya para kay Guillermo. Ang punto niya’y kadalasan ngang ipinagkakait ang yaman ng mundo ng mga ideya sa mga taong pinagkakaitan din ng pagkain.

Mainam nang ipasok dito ang diskusyon ng wika bilang di-biyolohikal na anyo ng buhay. May ikukumpisal ako. Hindi naman talaga buhay ang wika, biyolohikal man o hindi. Pero ang twist, di rin naman buhay ang buhay. Imbes, pareho silang makina. Konsepto nina Gilles Deleuze at Felix Guattari ang makina. Bahagi ito ng kanilang ontolohiya. Paliwanag ni Brent Adkins, naniniwala ang dalawa na hindi gawa sa magkakaibang bagay ang mga umiiral sa sansinukob (2). Walang saray sa metapisika nina Deleuze at Guattari. Ganito rin ang paliwanag ni Michael Hardt. Sabi niya, “The human, the machinic, and the natural are all one” (“Reading Notes on Deleuze and Guattari”). Totoo ba ang asersyon na ito? Para kina Deleuze at Guattari, hindi iyon mahalaga. O, mas mahalaga sa pagiging totoo ng isang ideya ang pagiging interesante o kamangha-mangha nito (82). Sa bawat asersyon imbes na “Totoo ba ito?” ang tanong natin ay “E ano ngayon?” Tunghayan natin, kung gayon, ang mga asersyon nina Deleuze at Guattari sa *Anti-Oedipus*:

Everywhere it is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts. The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth is the machine coupled to it. The mouth of the anorexic wavers between several functions: its possessor

is uncertain as to whether it is an eating-machine, an anal machine, a talking-machine, or a breathing machine (asthma attacks). Hence we are all handymen: each with his little machines. For every organ-machine, an energy-machine: all the time, flows and interruptions (1-2).

Pag kinabit ang makinang Pinpin sa makinang Rafael, nagkakaroon ng makinang gerilya/ladino. Pag kinabit ang makinang Rafael sa makinang Guillermo, ang produkto’y makinang polemiko. Pag hindi kinabit ang makinang bibig ng makinang tao, ang resulta’y makinang bangkay. Pag kinabit ang makinang manggagawa sa makinang kapitalismo, makinang pagsasamantala ang umiiral.

Nagiging maliwanag ang lahat gamit ang categoryang ito. Ang makinang tagasaling Villareal, pag kinabit sa Hiligaynon, ang produkto’y makinang “english,” o di kaya’y makinang wikang pambansa na hindi lang makinang TagFilipino. Nagbubukas din ito ng kritisismo. Sa kanilang introduksyon sa espesyal na isyu ng *Kritika Kultura* tungkol sa sanaysay na Filipino, itinanong nina Guillermo at Martin Villanueva kung, nasabi na ngang kay husay-husay ng Taglish at ng englishes, bakit hindi ito ginagamit ng mga postkolonyal na iskolar at manunulat (623-4). Ito rin ang pwedeng itanong kay Villareal, dahil pino o mahusay na Ingles naman ang gamit niya sa kanyang *Translating the Sugilanon*. Kaso ba ito ng kontradiskyon? Oo. Pero kailangan ding alalahanin na ang makinang si Villareal ay nakakabit sa makinang akademya, kung gumamit sya ng makinang Taglish para isulat ang kanyang makinang tisis masterado’y ang kinabit sa kanya’y makinang rejection, at tuloy nito’y kakabit sya sa makinang kawalan ng trabaho.

Hindi pa ito ang kaso ng makinang Filipino. Magpasahanggang ngayo’y nililikha at binubuo pa rin ang wikang pambansa. Bagaman mayroon na ring nagbabantay at tagapaghusga ng di-umano’y madulas na Filipino, hindi pa sila entrenched sa kapangyarihan tulad ng mga administrador ng Ingles. Ang oportunidad nina Lucero at Villareal noong dekada nobenta’y oportunidad pa rin natin ngayon. Syempre pa, maraming balakid. Nariyan halimbawa ang *WIKApedia* Booklet, na mula sa Presidential Communications Development and Strategic Planning Office, na nagsasabing “kumusta” imbes na “kamusta” ang dapat gamitin

dahil galing ito sa “como esta” na Espanyol. Dagdag pa: “Ang comadre ay naging kumadre, hindi naman kamadre” (59). E bakit hindi na lang “como esta” ang gamitin kung gayon? O, sa mas mahinahon na wika, walang batas sa korupsiyon (korapshon!!!) ng mga salita.

Ang nosyon ng tamang Filipino ay ipinaglalaban din ni Virgilio Almario, Pambansang Alagad ng Sining at kasalukuyang direktor ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino. Sa isang artikulong lumabas sa *Diyaryo Filipino* noong 1992, inatake niya ang suhestyon ni Teresita Maceda na, alinsunod sa paglalaping Bisaya, maaari nang sa Filipino wag na lang mag-ulit. Kaya, halimbawa, “pagmahal” na lang imbes na “pagmamahal” (Maceda 175). Problema para kay Almario ito, dahil nga iba ang ibig sabihin ng “pagmahal” (halimbawa, “pagmahal ng pagiging ina,” “pagmamahal ng pagiging ina”). Ibinigay pa niyang halimbawa ang “pagpupugay” (na pagbibigay pugay) at “pagpugay,” na ayon sa kaniya ay nangangahulugang “pagwasak ng dangal at puri” (Almario 33). Pero hindi naman ito problema sa lahat ng salita. Halimbawa na lang ang “pagmamaneho” at “pagmaneho.” Gayundin, inusig ni Almario si Consuelo Paz sa paggamit na “mey” at “kelangan,” na ayon sa kanya’y hindi nababagay pag “ang isinusulat ay tipong seryoso, gaya nga ng isang pambungad sa isang pormal na pag-aaral sa akademya” (29). Dalawang punto. Una, talamak ang paggamit ni Paz sa “mey” at “kelangan” sa kanyang *Ang Wikang Filipino: Atin Ito*, na pormal na pag-aaral sa akademya. Pangalawa, sa sanaysay ni Almario mulang 1992, ginamit niya ang “seryoso,” pero noong 1981 ay ipinahayag nya ang kanyang agam-agam tungkol dito, na baka ito’y likha ng mga “edukado.” Inilarawan nya ito bilang “kakuwanan,” kasama na ang “bentahe” at “responsibilidad.” Pagpapatuloy ni Almario, “hindi naman gaano gamitin ang mga ito sa ordinaryong usapan ng taumbayan at mas lumalabas sa sulatin ng mga edukado” (6, may diacritics ang “gamitin” at “sulatin” sa orihinal). Labing-isang taon pagkatapos, ginagamit na rin ni Almario ang “seryoso.” Marahil ay nakita niyang tanggap na rin ito ng mga karaniwang tao. At iyon din ang magiging tadhana ng mga inusig ni Almario tulad ng “obhektibo,” “panatisisimo,” at “aspeto,” isama na ang “konsistensi,” “palisi,” at “balyus” (40), at iba pang salitang inilagak nya sa impyerno gamit ang katagang “siyokoy” (32, 44). Mayroon bang batas ang korupsiyon? Hindi ba’t “shokoy” dapat ang pagspel? At ano ang gagawin natin sa “nanaman,” “niyo,” at “iba’t-ibang?”

Kumabit ang makinang “seryoso” at hindi ang makinang tamang Espanyol na “seryo.” Ang tanging standard sa katumpakan ng isang salita’y ang paggamit dito ng mga tao. Siyempre pa, may kapangyarihan ang mga institusyon. Pero kahit mamula na ang lahat ng guro ng wika sa kakasigaw, pag “isa’t-isa” ang ginagamit, “isa’t-isa” ang tamang baybay. Isa pa, ang mga institusyon din ay nagbabago ng isip. Noon “tama” ang “anu-ano,” ito ang itinuturo sa mga eskwelahan. Ngayon, “ano-ano” na (Almario 33). Alam ito ni Almario, kaya nga niya ipinagtatangol ang paggamit ng “titser” (41-3). Isang araw siguro’y iaabandona na niya ang “Filipinas” (16-7).

“E ano ngayon?” ang tanong nina Deleuze at Guattari. E ano ngayon kung makina ang wika? Marami itong konsekwenzes. May tatlo akong iaanderlayn. Una, ang pagtingin sa wika bilang makina ay nagpapalabnaw sa petisisimo natin sa orihen. Ayon kay Almario, dapat, “kontemporaryo” imbes na “kontemporaryo” dahil galing ito sa “contemporaneo” (44). Pagkakamali rin ang “pesante” dahil mistep ito sa kadenang nag-iisip na dahil “‘presidente’ ang Ingles na ‘president,’ ‘residente’ ang ‘resident,’ at ‘informante’ ang ‘informant,’ puwedeng isunod na pa-Espanyol ang ‘pesante,’ bilang salin ng Ingles na ‘peasant.’ Ang masama, walang ‘pesante’ sa Espanyol” (45). Dahil “pesante” na gamit ng karamihan sa pagtukoy sa mga pesante, hindi na mahalaga kung ito’y mali-maling Espanyol/Ingles. Pwede pa ngang ipagdiwang ang pagiging-nagmula-sa-mali-mali nito. Ang mahalaga ay sa kung ano na ito ngayon maaaring gamitin. Kaya nga walang problema si Villareal na kasama sa jeneyaloji ng sugilanon ang korido’t mga relihiyosong literatura. Ang mahalaga’y mahaylayt ang subersibong potenshal nito. Gayundin, hindi problema ni Guillermo na “galing sa labas” ang diskurso ng paraiso ang inilalapat ni Rafael sa rebolusyonaryong kaisipan ng mga Filipino. Ang mahalaga sa kanya’y ang nalilimin niyang nakapanghihinang resulta ng ganitong pagsipat, kundi man matatawag na nakapanlilinlang. Argumento nga ni Guillermo, alinsunod kay Lope K. Santos, “the material superiority of the colonial/neo-colonial war machine [!] could not have been defeated by any amount of strenghtening of the ‘loob’ and inner ‘liwanag’ though interminable oraciones and the ‘feeding’ of anting-anting. This lesson has been taught from the machine [!!] gunner’s post many times already in Philippines history” (208).

Pangalawang konsekwenz ng pagtingin sa wikang Filipino bilang makina: naiigpawan na ang isyu ng “esensya.” Ano nga ba ang ituturing nating salitang Filipino? Naigigiit ni Villareal ang pagpasok ng mga salitang

Hiligaynon sa wikang pambansa dahil malay siyang maraming salitang Hiligaynon ang mula sa Espanyol, na naging salitang Hiligaynon na. Ang itinuturing na salitang Hiligaynon ang salitang Hiligaynon. Ang itinuturing na salitang Filipino ang salitang Filipino. Wala ibang espesyal na katangian na nagbibigay ng eleveyted status sa “dalubhasaan” kumpara sa “kolehiyo.” Walang “pangit” na salita, walang “mali ang dating” o “nakakaasiwa.” Hindi siyempre ibig sabihin na gusto kong mas ginagamit ang “kolehiyo” sa “dalubhasaan” ay bawal nang gamitin ang “dalubhasaan.” Ibig sabihin lang, kailangan ding tanggapin ang pagpasok ng “kalej” sa ating bokabularyo. Mas maraming salita, mas mainam.

Nakahugpong dito ang pangatlong punto: bilang makina, hindi komunikatibo ang wika. O sige, hindi hindi komunikatibo ang wika. Pero hindi komunikasyon ang pangunahin nitong layunin o fangshon. Napapatunayan naman ito sa pang-araw-araw na buhay. Madalas hindi nagkakaintindihan ang mga tao, kahit pa pareho sila ng kasarian, uri, etnisidad, edad, relihiyon, at edukasyon. Hindi ito dapat tingnan bilang pagkakamali ng tao o kakulangan ng wika. Imbes, dapat itong ipagdiwang bilang pagpapamalas ng kakayahan ng makinang wika na lumawak pa lalo’t kumabit sa iba (i.e. hindi lang komunikasyon ang kaya nitong gawin). Ano nga ba ang kayang gawin ng wika? Ano ba ang hindi? Kaya nitong kumawala, magpaganda, maglaro, lumikha. Kaya nga kahit hindi (pa) naiintindihan ng mga Manileño ang “gugma” o ng mga Inglesero ang “banig,” mahalaga na ipasok ang mga salitang ito. Ang brut fakt ng kanilang pag-iral ang ipinararamdam. Naalala dito hindi lamang ang likhang-sining, kundi ang tao mismo. Ang makinang tao, na hindi dapat sukatin sa antas ng yaman o lebel ng pag-aari, na hindi dapat gamitin hanggang mamatay, na hindi nasa mundo para lang magtrabaho at maghirap. Mapipigilan ba nila ang ating paghihimagsik? Sunugin ang lahat ng puwedeng sunugin.

Mga Akdang Nabanggit

Adkins, Brent. *Deleuze and Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus: A Critical Introduction and Guide*. Edinburgh UP, 2015.

Almario, Virgilio. *Filipino ng mga Filipino*. Anvil Publishing, 2009.

---, patnugot. *KWF Manwal sa Masinop na Pagsulat*. Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2014. kwf.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/

MMP_Full.pdf.

Deleuze, Gilles at Felix Guattari. *What is Philosophy?* Columbia U P, 1995.
---. *Anti-Oedipus*. U of Minnesota P, 2000.

Guillermo, Ramon. *Translation and Revolution*. Ateneo de Manila U P,
2009.

Guillermo, Ramon, at Martin Villanueva. "Introduction." *Kritika Kultura*,
no. 26, 2016, pp. 618-25, journals.ateneo.edu/ojs/index.php/kk/article/view/KK2016.02632/2102.

Hardt, Michael. "Reading Notes on Deleuze and Guattari." *Duke U*,
people.duke.edu/~hardt/Deleuze&Guattari.html.

Lucero, Rosario. "Mga Tala sa Pagsasalin." *Dulaang Hiligaynon*,
pinagmatnugutan ni Rosario Lucero, Ateneo de Manila U P,
1996, pp. 31-40.

Maceda, Teresita. "Saling Pampanitikan sa Cebuano Tungo sa
Pagpapaunlad ng Wikang Pambansa." *Salin-Suri: Panimulang
Pagmamapa ng mga Larangan Pag-aaral ng Pagsasalin sa
Pilipinas*, pinagmatnugutan ni Galileo Zafra, Unibersidad ng
Pilipinas Sentro ng Wikang Filipino-Diliman, 2009, pp. 165-
76.

Quezon, Manuel III, patnugot. *WIKApedia: Balarila at Aralin sa
Filipino*. Presidential Communications Development and
Strategic Planning Office, 2015. [pcdsp.gov.ph/downloads/
WIKApedia_Booklet_2015_ed.pdf](http://pcdsp.gov.ph/downloads/WIKApedia_Booklet_2015_ed.pdf).

Pagusara, Don. "Ilang Paglilinaw sa Pagsasalin." *Panulaang Cebuano*,
pinagmatnugutan ni Erlinda Alburo, Ateneo de Manila U P,
1993, p. xxii.

Polo, Biron. Introduksiyon. *Panulaan at Dulaang Leytenhon-Samarnon*,
pinagmatnugutan ni Jaime Polo, Ateneo de Manila U P, 1994,
pp. 1-36.

Rafael, Vicente. *Contracting Colonialism*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 1988.

Villareal, Corazon. *Translating the Sugilanon: Re-framing the Sign*. U of the
Philippines P, 1994.

Flights and Fixations: Displacement and Urban Living in Isabelita Orlina Reyes' *Stories from the City*

Oscar Tantoco Serquiña, Jr.

In a world that enables individual or mass migrations, people have become more tolerable to various cultures apart from their own. People's access to technology and transportation has made exposure to and living in other countries a whole lot easier and swifter. Gone are the days when one group was left clueless about what was happening with another group. In this age of cultural and geographical crisscrossing, a group can now share the space that another group inhabits. This reality has resulted in the birth of different breeds of individuals across countries. Some of these individuals effectively work their way into the society in which they are birthed or relocated, while others find the act of confronting their fragmented situation and locating their position in the new environment very difficult.

Most of the time, this new environment is the city. The urban landscape serves as the backdrop, the main location, where private and public histories of uprooting, displacement, and alienation ensue. In the city, dislocated individuals come face to face with the differences they have as opposed to those of the natives of their surrogate country. In the long run, they realize that their body size, color, facial features, names, customs, beliefs, and language neither look nor sound the same as those that surround them.

Isabelita Orlina Reyes' first poetry collection, *Stories from the City*, addresses these concerns. It articulates the contemporary urban life as well as the tensions and contradictions that displaced Filipinos experience. In

this paper, my aim is to discuss how Reyes addresses deterritorialization, rootedness, the concept of home, and identity. I would like to identify the kind of dislocated consciousness operating in her poems. Furthermore, I would want to determine how Reyes depicts life in the city and approaches the subject of alienation.

The Stance of Displacement

According to Caren Kaplan, deterritorialization is the term “for the displacement of identities, persons, and meaning that is endemic to the postmodern world system” (188). In a world where territorial and racial demarcations are blurred, associating realities and identities to just one signifier has become hardly possible. Citing Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Kaplan states that in a postcolonial world, meanings and utterances have become estranged. The self can no longer be idealized in terms of essences. The individual has already been liberated from his or her static familiarities, inasmuch as he or she has been transported to other potential expressions, perceptions, and communities. Because the configurations of power and meaning in which people function are complex and remain in a state of flux, traditional notions of identity, culture, and language have already been destabilized.

People who are deterritorialized experience several identity crises. Since they are in a land that does not recognize nor prioritize their race, ethnicity, or nationality, some of them are forcefully pushed to the margins. But despite the oppressions and repressions they experience as minorities, most of them have no intentions of relinquishing their native selves. As much as possible, they stay true to their traditions. According to Victor J. Ramraj, these individuals are considered traditionalists, since they cling to their past and almost always valorize the memories they have of their native land. However, there, too, are those people who wish to acquire an identity considered not theirs. They are those who fully accept the new culture in which they are caught. Ramraj calls them the assimilationists, since “they have assimilated or integrated with their new environment, at the expense of their ancestral customs, traditions, languages, and religions. They are ‘less concerned with sustaining ancestral ties than with coming to terms with their new environment and acquiring their new identity” (217).

Although there are two contradicting approaches to the acceptance of one's self, what binds both traditionalists and assimilationists is their longing for home. To American feminists Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty, "'being home' pertains to the place where one lives within familiar, safe, and protected boundaries" (qtd. in Capili 137). Whereas some immigrants are accommodated in America and enjoy the fact that the majority recognizes them, the strains and pressures they experience on the whole cannot be denied. In fact, the small liberties given to them are mostly tokens that do not necessarily entail confidence about their subject positions. While they live a relatively comfortable life compared to their fellowmen in the homeland, most of these migrants are bereft of a sense of home within. Needless to say, their lack of security and safety is an issue that consistently bothers them.

Reyes shares these sentiments and undertakings. Her impulse to communicate the experiences of deterritorialized subjects is significant because "[she] know[s] what it is to be discriminated against, what it means to be fragmented and hybrid" (98). Fragmentation, displacement, and hybridity are her main concerns. In the poem "Saltwater Blood," the persona embarks on "a pilgrimage/ to the country of [her] childhood." At this stage of the poem, there are still no indicators that would help the reader identify the persona's current site as well as the place she references. Is she in America and just thinking about the Philippines? Or is it the other way around? What is certain is that the persona remains in two different worlds—one physical and another metaphorical—both at the same time. One is situated in current territory, while the other is in a different place and at a different time. The poem states:

Every night,
sleep takes me to *a burning*
beneath my callused soles
I can't walk
and I'm trapped between
the highway that follows
the coast of California,
and Roxas Boulevard
tracing Manila Bay

*A pumice stone
appears in my hand—
I know I must scrape off
the dead flesh
I rub too hard
and my heart quickens
as thin blue-green blood
oozes from a cut
I touch the wound and lick
my now sea-colored finger
for the taste of fish
The ocean begins
to pour from my mouth.*

The distinction between the italicized and the non-italicized texts is an evident feature of the poem. The non-italicized part shows the current situation from which the persona speaks, while the italicized part determines the dream-state where she transitions, albeit hazily, into becoming Filipino. In her sleep, restlessness dawns on the persona. She feels a burning feeling beneath her callused soles, which means, by mythical implication, that the persona has to begin her journey in order to reach her destination. However, the persona is quick to admit that “[*she*] can’t walk/ and [*she’s*] trapped between/ the highway that follows/ the coast of California,/and Roxas Boulevard/ tracing Manila Bay.” These lines fully explain the persona’s fragmentation and hybridity. Victor Turner calls people who are trapped in between two worlds as “transitional-beings” or “liminal personae.” They are in the process of moving from one cultural state of existence to another; such individuals are emotionally involved in the “centrifugal homeland,” but this attachment is countered by a thirst for a sense of belongingness to the current place of residence (qtd. in Ramraj 216).

Indeed the poem’s persona is at the threshold of exiting the old and entering the new. The pumice stone and the dead flesh that appeared in the dream are devices that signify the persona’s vague acceptance of her identity. Rubbing too hard, the persona scrapes the scab off, causing the wound to bleed once again. But this, to her, is not a reason to panic; instead, it is an incident that makes her heart quicken. Without any tinge of discomfort,

she touches the wound and licks her “*now sea-colored finger/ for the taste of fish*” until “*the ocean begins/to pour from my mouth*”. These images' points of reference are quite unclear in this part of the poem. While *sea* and *fish* are usually taken as native images, one can never be sure; after all, the poem ends on an ambiguous note.

Snapping out of her reverie, the persona says: “Slim fingers of Manila sun/ prompt me to open my eyes/ but I think I wake where the sea/ brushes the sand of Sta. Monica.” In these lines, the persona is positioned both in Manila and in Sta. Monica. To the persona, it is possible to be in two places at the same time. Cultural duality makes this possible. But while the persona fully knows where her homeland is, it seems that she cannot or does not want to stay there. There are certain images she misses in her motherland, but she can't surrender her affinity for her surrogate home. Ramraj elucidates on this condition: “Displaced individuals are ‘caught between two allegiances, two countries, two landscapes. Many try to turn their fractured psyches to their advantage, coping with their environment by constantly modifying and shifting their identities” (223).

In “Still between Two Cities,” Reyes' persona is caught in between the culture she has been told about her native country and the tradition that actually welcomes her upon returning to the Philippines. The persona's homecoming is replete with contradictions. In the first stanza, the persona recollects the New York terrain she knows:

My image of our neighborhood
in New York remains colored
by the burnt tones of autumn
that were backdrop to brick walls
and picture windows.
Across the street, the stationary
sold candy bars, fountain pens,
ice cream and comic books.
Most of the people I knew
were white and pink and cold,
so I'd take a bus to the library
where *I borrowed a language*
and imagined conversations. (emphasis mine)

Amidst these Americanized activities and urban images, the persona stays at a distance and positions herself in the middle of resisting and accepting the landscape. Despite being familiar with the nooks and crannies of New York's busy streets, the persona is aware that this is not the place where she belongs. By merely referencing the traits (white and pink and cold) of the people she knows, the persona distinguishes herself from them. Singling out these features is establishing a point of comparison. The physical differences between the persona and the Americans are conspicuous. This is emphasized even more when the persona refers to a language she borrows from the library. I suspect this is Filipino, and the "imagined conversations" are her attempts at understanding and practicing the twists and turns of the language.

The second stanza gives the readers a different timeframe. The persona now relocates to Manila, where she comes face to face with the city's "scrapers, shanties,/ pollution and burning summers." With wonder, she would often "stare at how the moon/ eclipses the night sky,/ how the rain efface the streets,/ how the wet markets house/ a dozen kinds of rice/ and all manner of fish." It is interesting how the beauty and clarity of New York in the first stanza is juxtaposed with the decrepitude of Manila found in the second. Does this foretell the persona's idea of refuge? When the cultural tensions inflicting the persona are factored in, the answer to this question becomes much clearer. She illustrates:

I never learned
the language well
from elders who waited
for my forehead on their hands,
first cousins and best friends
who came in various shades of brown,
or classmates who smirked
at my Queens accent.

Adjusting to another culture is never easy. In the stanza above, the persona pronounces the linguistic and social constraints distancing her from her relatives and friends. The first few lines of the last stanza show how language becomes a barrier to the persona's comprehension of Philippine

culture. She states: "I'm privy to their conversations,/ but miss the idioms." Dazed, the persona is forced to "step out/ onto the street and think [she's] lost." In this case, the persona experiences a double displacement: first in the host country (the US) she has come to know as home, and second in the homeland (the Philippines) said to hold her history but from which she remains alienated.

In the last stanza, the persona calls America "the city where I grew up" and the Philippines as "the city of my body." Between the two, she is not sure which is home. Attempting to find her roots, the persona goes back to the Philippines, only to go through another wave of remoteness. Coming home brings more harm and pain than comfort, as she can hardly ease her way into the life of her fellowmen. So what she does is "[wonder] which language can teach me/ what home means,/ and where it is." This standpoint echoes what Ramraj has noted: "In this state of transition, some respond ambivalently to their dual, often antithetical, cultures or societies. Some attempt to assimilate and integrate. For others the luminal or transitional state is too prolonged or too excruciating to cope with and they may withdraw to their ancestral identity or homeland, which is...both a cage and a haven" (217).

Stuart Hall explains that for most diasporans the return to the homeland is metaphorical (qtd. in Ramraj 215). Remembering home is a way to stay connected to their mother country. It is by speaking of memorable places of childhood, the fond memories of their relatives in the homeland, the delectable dishes they used to cook and eat, and the traditions they tended to enjoy and practice, among other things, that these diasporans keep themselves part of what Benedict Anderson calls an "imagined community." Indeed, recollecting the past becomes a coping mechanism. Most of the time these recollections, impressions, and expressions of home are rendered with deep nostalgia. Jose Wendell Capili says that a heightened feeling of displacement usually produces nostalgia for the homeland and for those left behind (10). For diasporans and displaced individuals, there is a tendency to call to mind the presence of a specific home in spite or maybe because of its absence. Homi K. Bhabha expresses this very well: "Being obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identity" (qtd. in Ramraj 217).

In the poem “The Price, Conversation 1,” for example, the persona thinks of Manila in the middle of America’s cold weather. While waiting outside her dormitory, the persona writes: “I stand by myself/ just outside the dormitory door;/ my chest shivers, my face stings./ I can’t tell the difference/ between the cigarette smoke/ and the vapor of my breathing/ that condenses in the cold./ But the way the lamp posts light/ the streets and gardens at night/ reminds me of my campus in Manila,/ so I smoke and freeze blissfully,/ until he comes out and joins me.” Moreover, the state of absence-presence is also evident in “The Price, Conversation 3.” In this poem, the persona walks into a novelty store and plays “a crooked cylinder of wood/ and listening to a sound like rain.” She then engages in a conversation with a “very polite and charming” salesman, who persuades her to buy a rainstick. He himself has bought one, “for dry quiet days and nights/ because rain is the sky’s music/ and he’s writing his own at home.” The persona is convinced and “leave[s] the store with a few dollars less/ and rattle[s] [the] rainstick in the mall.” Outside, with her new toy that reminds her of the sound and feel of Manila rain, she asks herself, “What did [the salesman] say that sold me?” To which she answers:

The music of the sky on dry quiet nights—
and I shake the rainstick a little harder:
it drizzles and showers,
pours and floods in Manila,
where my hours are seldom uneventful.

There are displaced individuals who accept their subjugation and there are those who reterritorialize if only to live their lives anew. The concept of reterritorialization, according to Kaplan, is “where we come to locate ourselves in terms of our specific histories and differences... a room for what can be salvaged from the past and what can be made new” (194-5). This is a process where one acknowledges the things that he or she does not know and unravels whatever he or she has feared, avoided, and ignored for a long time, and writing about deterritorialization and reterritorialization is important in making sense of our fragmented selves and in creating “a world of possibilities out of the experience of displacement” (198).

In the prose poem “Upon Returning to the University at 29,” Reyes introduces us to a persona who tries to relocate and reposition herself in her old university. However, no matter how much effort she exerts to salvage whatever is familiar, she still fumbles through the ever-changing terrain that surrounds her. She goes back to the university just “to ask for an address,” which implies that the persona is in search of recognizable territory. By relieving her own experiences in the university, the persona reterritorializes herself. In the following paragraph, the persona surveys the landscape, claims whatever little is remembered, and uncertainly confronts what is already new. She writes:

Numbers pinpoint places of destination for phone calls and mail, visits and any kind of connection. You traverse the grounds at 8 a.m. and note nothing about the campus is familiar except the sky, the road that looks like an abstract painting of shadows because trees and sun got together; nothing is familiar except sitting still for an hour and a half, and maybe or maybe not, learning something.

As the persona articulates her current sentiments in/about the university, her urban middle class sensibilities surface. Simplistic and reductionist perhaps because sheltered from the harsh realities tucked in the fringes of the city, she believes that social classes are only divided into two kinds: students and workers (“when all you understand about difference is defined by whether people wear uniforms or suits to work, and what bars they frequent in the evenings”). Furthermore, the persona finds it difficult to engage herself in talks about class, gender and race, as well as empathize with “everyone [who] is younger, even [with] the instructors who wear thick glasses and rumpled clothes.”

In her own native ground, where she expects to find safety and security, she is once again displaced. The images and emotions she sees and feels are not in synch with what she has expected, wished for, or imagined. Certainly, change breeds bewilderment to most returnees. In this poem, what the persona needs to remember is that “the notion of settlement... is a fictional terrain, a reterritorialization that has passed through several version of deterritorialization to posit a powerful theory of location based

on contingency, history, and change” (Kaplan 197). Clearly this is where the poem’s persona falls short: she has expected things to remain the same. The address that she’s looking for (“You end up explaining, over and over, how you simply returned to ask for an address.”) is no longer there; the people she relates to have already been out of the picture.

This is the milieu that Reyes’s personae inhabit. Now repositioned in the contemporary city, the personae have found a new location to explore. Corollary to this are the multifarious and multilayered encounters they will have with people outside their fields of experience—that is, beyond their urban middle class sensibilities. It is in the city where plurality is admitted, estrangement is intensified, voyeurism is practiced, and social divisions are highlighted. All of these are recounted in *Stories from the City*, as Reyes’s personae, now fully aware of their position as fragmented and displaced members of the metropolitan middle class, risk their way in and out of the urban environment.

The City Emerges and Stays

Now more than ever the articulation of what is deemed urban remains a topic of high interest. From architecture to sociology to anthropology to literature, scholars and critics have tried to understand people’s existence in the city by means of surveying the metropolitan landscape and delving into the social dynamics and material forces that distinguish urban living.

In his book *Urban Theory: A Critical Assessment*, John Rennie Short posits the theory that power and difference are the encircling frames for any understanding of the city (3). Cities are sites where a high sense of order and discipline is followed. Within this environment, there, too, is the pressure to uphold freedom in the face of individual and collective resistance and contestation. Power struggles and the desire for authority surely define the urban landscape. The question “Who’s in command?” is always raised. The answer to this question shall identify how regulations are made, and for or against whom are they made. Short points out that even the city’s layout—the streets, the positioning of buildings, traffic lights, the police interspersed across the terrain—is embedded with authoritarian values, which place and replace urban dwellers in a physical and metaphorical “system of boundaries and transgressions, centres and peripheries, surveil-

lances and gestures, gazes and performances” (6). This is the “geographical plexus” (Mumford qtd. in Miles, Hall, and Borden 211) in which they are trapped.

With all their promise, cities lure many people. As people from the countryside and from other parts of the world enter and choose to reside in the city, the urban landscape becomes more open to cosmopolitanism, otherness, and estrangement. Heterogeneity is definitely a metropolitan trademark. The city thrives in the various perspectives and actions that make it emerge and stay.

Without the contradictions people have, the city remains static. This, then, makes the city a site of plurality, where social, racial, and gender relations are witnessed and maintained. To quote cultural and literary critic Epifanio San Juan, Jr.:

By offering infinite possibilities of chance encounters, coincidences, fortuitous and accidental happenings, Manila generates the conditions for the individual subject disappearing and merging with the interplay of collective forces, social classes, in order to trace the path of his/ her personal identity. This also explains why the city is the principal arena where games, performances, tricks, and illusionary inventions of all kinds can thrive naturally. (157)

Thus, the city’s multiplicity serves as a potential symptom and consequence of alienation, oppression, and indifference towards others. The idea of plurality, then, turns into an ugly disguise of the uneven distribution of power and liberties among urban dwellers. Therefore, in comprehending the city, it is imperative to have a perspicacious eye in assessing urban spaces and practices where, according to San Juan, “individuals can conceal private selfish motives through stylized manners, conventional gestures, formulas of speech and thought” (155).

Reyes’ personae and poems are undeniably urbanized. In fact, Reyes admits this when she states that the personae of her poems “speak from within the city, and almost always, from a vantage point that implies a perspective of the city from a skyscraper” (95). In addition, her poems bear an “awareness of both the mundane and the startling in what hap-

pens around [her], and outside [her] immediate circle” (93). It is a tall order to examine how the city is imaged and imagined in her poetry collection and to identify what kind of consciousness is hidden or exposed in it.

In “Death in a Bright Red Car,” the persona is caught in the middle of a traffic jam between Ayala Avenue and an unnamed church. While inside the car, she finds time to “review her vision” and ponder upon her urban existence. She remembers her spot on top of a condominium unit, where she gets a relatively good view of the metropolitan skyline. She says: “I have a room of my own with a view/ of Manila from the 20th floor/ of the newest condominium building.” These enumerated portraits highlight the subject position of the persona. Deep inside she finds herself literally and figuratively above everybody else, as she is elevated from urban grounds and distanced from city’s troubles. This physical distance has the tendency to generate individualism and alienation. Michel de Certeau, in his essay “Walking in the City,” explains the detachment that such height brings to an urban settler:

To be lifted to the summit [of condominium units and other types of high-rise buildings]...one’s body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law: nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of...traffic. When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. (264)

In the poem’s second stanza, the frame shifts back to the persona. Now she sees street children doing their daily rounds in the streets. She wonders to herself “how [do] they see the city at night.” There is curiosity and condescension in the persona’s tone, which seems to emphasize the tension between her class and those of the young kids.

The persona’s alienation and individualism are even further amplified in the poem’s ending. The line “I puff on my stick of guilt, exhale an excuse” confirms the persona’s awareness of the troubles that exist in her surroundings. Despite this consciousness, the persona still prefers to be ex-

cluded from these conditions. Between perception and action, she chooses the former. Therefore, the “guilt” she employs prior to her “excuse” becomes a convenient way of asserting her urban middle class sensibilities. It’s as if feeling guilty is a shot at redemption. As much as she tries to sound sympathetic in the last two lines of the poem, the persona fails to grasp the plight of the street kids. By insisting that “they have their view, I have mine,” the persona succumbs to passivity and seems to forego reflexivity. In the poem’s final lines, the persona accepts her dominant position and, in a trivializing manner, says: “and we’ll die of pollution, anyway—/ they’ll just die a lot faster.”

The isolation that the persona feels is a symptom of urbanity’s notion of freedom. According to Georg Simmel, being in the city is having the chance to break with traditional society (qtd. in *Shorts* 35-36). In order to enjoy this opportunity, one resorts to self-entitlement. One also asserts himself or herself amidst the sea of anonymous faces. In the poem “2:45 P.M., 3rd St. Promenade, Sta. Monica,” Reyes gives us the image of an urban dweller who resigns herself to the fact that: “Along this promenade/ in the middle of the city,/ everyone is a passerby/ and no one cares/ about my habits.” Citing Simmel, Heinz Paetzold explains this standoffish attitude among urban settlers:

Metropolitan environments produce also the emotional reserve. Reserve is necessary for the metropolitan man to bear the anonymous crowds around him. The reserve against the others is paradoxically the basis for the individual’s freedom. Reserve does not mean that metropolitan man does not experience all the nuances of emotional life—sympathy, empathy, antipathy, etc.—but he has to hide behind a protective screen of reserve in order to survive. (213)

“Among the Signs” also carries this detachment from the urban space. In this poem, the persona serves as a mere spectator to all the gruesome signs of poverty and abandonment found in the lengthy streets of Manila. Like the persona in “Death in a Bright Red Car” who gets a glimpse of the happenings and inhabitants crowding the city outside her

car's window, the persona in this poem glances at the small portraitures that the metropolis cradles.

The reader is provided with various figurations of street-dwellers (vendors of tabloids, blind men with child guides, women with naked babies) who would “tap on [the persona’s] tinted window,/ [and] trade blank stares with [her].” Apart from the previous lines, the poem’s persona no longer says anything about these people. My hypothesis is that she has already reduced them into mere objects of the streets, whose life cycle revolves around the idea of mendicancy. Pity can no longer be accessed from the persona’s emotions, nor can sympathy be handily expressed. In the eyes of the persona, the city is dispersed in a constellation of gratuitous images that signify nothing but alienation (San Juan 163).

Only “a boy’s empty eyes” forces her to open the car’s window and buy “*sampaguitas* to hang/ on my car’s Sto. Nino.” Maybe out of superficial guilt or irritation, the persona then gives in to the insistence of the child. But this action—arguably a false sense of concern from the middle class, which assumes that the pain and predicaments of the poor may be alleviated through donations or other superficial forms of altruism—can hardly qualify as a significant contribution of the privileged to the less fortunate ones. Certainly, the persona’s comprehension of the city’s dynamics is limited and limiting, and her main response to other people’s agonies is dismissive and individualistic. While the persona’s buying a string of *sampaguitas* from the vendor assures the little boy of a modest meal during lunch time or a small amount of money to give to his parents, this act still cannot deny the persona’s conflicted attitude toward the kid and his ilk. Even the persona’s choice of words contains the imprints of her dismissal. Pertaining to the *sampaguitas* she bought, she says: “In the high noon heat,/ the whole flowers will wither/ and *mess up* my carpet./” (emphasis mine). Indeed, such pejorative usage casts in doubt the sincerity of the persona’s actions.

In the poem’s second stanza, the traffic light turns green, signaling the motion of the various transportation vehicles that populate the road. At the flyover’s crest, the persona finds herself “held up/ by cars slowing down/ because some man/ is shuddering in a puddle/ of his blood.” After witnessing the numerous images that preceded this harrowing instance, she barely feels anything towards the dead body, nor does she even bother

to feel the gravity of the ghastly goings-on in the city. Instead of taking part in the locomotion, the persona minds her own business and continues with the routine, now briefly disrupted, she subjects herself to daily. The persona expresses: “I curse,/overtake and watch/all of them covered/ by a gust of summer smog/ as they fade into/ my rearview mirror./”

This indifference is only understandable in light of city dwellers’ frustration towards occurrences that plague the city day per embittered day. These horrifying realities that unfold right before the very eyes of people dwelling in the city may yield two possible effects. First is the conception that the streets or roads are dangerous places where individuals of varying social classes—from the petty bourgeoisie to the proletariat to the lumpen—meet but not necessarily interact with one another. The streets may also be perceived as sites of killings, accidents, and other crimes. This notion definitely intensifies the dichotomies between the inside and the outside, the individual and the group, the self and the other(s). To remain safe, then, one has to avoid entering the public sphere, where unknown groups share a restricted space to move about, compete for survival, and employ variegated tricks and techniques for and against one another just to get by.

Consequently, this leads to an individual’s choice to isolate him- or herself from strangers, content him- or herself with the small area that he or she has (often inside a car or in a room), and protect and prioritize his or her own well-being above anyone else. Because of the appalling circumstances around him or her, an individual sets aside his or her concerns for the society and brings the material conditions that he or she experiences to the level of the mundane. It’s a kind of automatization—or what Viktor Shklovsky refers to as habituation—that operates here. Since individuals have gotten used to this kind of actuality, they are hardly moved or rattled by such ominous truths.

This is the case of the persona in “Among the Signs.” Inasmuch as she is always exposed to the sight, not only of beggars, vendors, little boys who unstoppably tap on her window and beg for alms, but also of dead bodies found under broad daylight, she seemingly could not care less if she encountered something or someone crude on the streets. The poem’s ending, however, is an attempt at salvation. She says:

A little guilty,
I make the sign of the cross and promise:
before the 6 p.m. mass,
I will light two candles—
for those who've died
and those of us who haven't.

These lines echo the middle class guilt the persona is experiencing. Like some members of the middle class who cling to the conveniences of religion, the persona leaves everything to the Divine. While this can serve as a compassionate gesture towards those who suffer in their day-to-day battles, this remains a defeatist effort to understand the city's maladies. Deleuze and Guattari state that people have different privileges and different compensations for their positions in the field of power relations (qtd. in Kaplan 191). Though originally pertaining to displaced individuals, Deleuze and Guattari's statement may also be applied to the positionality of urban dwellers. In the poems of Reyes, the various personae would often gawk at the sites, people, and occasions enveloping them. Their gaze serves, borrowing the words of Kaplan, as "a form of theoretical tourism... where the margin becomes a linguistic of critical vacation, a new poetics of the exotic" (191).

The poem "The Company I Keep" articulates the urban dweller's perennial existentialism, where the *I* becomes the universe's central focus. In this piece, the persona's insomnia serves as the source of all her rumination on life, love, and the cityscape. It begins with the persona facing her computer, with the cursor blinking at her, as she waits for the words to gush forth from her. She writes: "The cursor blinks at me, waiting/ for the next word that will signal/ I know the difference/ between what is real—the scent of you/ still hanging upon my sweater—/ and what, a trick of memory." These lines show that the persona is in a private moment where she tries to clarify what to her is true and what is fictive. The compulsion to differentiate between the two is not clear at this stage, though one may ask what constitutes the "real" and what is considered "a trick of memory."

In the second stanza, the persona admits her self-imposed "solitary confinement" and her awareness of the traces of transience, violence, and restlessness outside her sliding door. Her solace brings forth the memory

of “the rituals/ practiced by the night:/ the wordless death of neon lights,/ the fading sputter of cars, a shot/ fired from some distant gun, a siren,/ and then the quietness that always follows.” Here once again is the city that does not sleep; the city as a site for all the wickedness one could conveniently dismiss. Once the scene of the crime is cleaned up and the victim is another name added to the list of casualties, while the suspect still remains to be a shadowy character prowling the alleys of the city, there will always be that insistent gap—“the quietness that always follows”—in between the grim certainties of the everyday and the mystified representations being offered by the city. There will always be that tension between what people know about the hostilities happening around them and what seems to be the pretentiously placid countenance of the urban landscape they inhabit.

De Certeau argues that “escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible” (265). Such superficiality pushes the urban dweller to problematize and deal with his or her own anxieties first. The movement of one’s vision is inward and the main preoccupation is that of individual passage. In the last stanza of the poem, where the virtual space is still as empty as the company that the persona keeps, the urge to be alone remains: “I’m keeping the cursor waiting/ but all I can think of is how/ it takes the evening forever to sleep.”

Conclusion

Reyes’ poetry collection articulates the situation of individuals who grew up in a culture and society not theirs. Uprooted from their homelands, the personae of the poems encounter problems such as alienation and lack of belongingness. As a hybrid of Filipino and American values, customs, and beliefs, they experience conflicts, tensions, and ambivalences towards themselves and towards other people. Now recognizing their difference, they feel the need to belong to the crowd that speaks to them and with whom they are willing to speak. This then motivates them to engage in a constant search for their identity and home. But this does not come easily; the fragmentation of their psyche and their inability to locate themselves almost always get in the way of this longing. On the one hand, they desire for their homeland, where they wish to meet their relatives and fully blend

with people whose names, skin color, body size are akin to theirs. On the other hand, however, they also want to remain in their surrogate country, where their manners, attitudes, and accent are accepted and never frowned upon. In her essay, "Neon Lines," Reyes puts it quite well: "The [personae of my poems desire] an American lifestyle in Manila" (105).

As shown in the poems above, Reyes' personae are "transitional-beings" caught in the middle of here and there, East and West, the city where they grew up and the city in which their bodies fit. This makes choosing between these dichotomies not possible at present. But if we were to follow Kaplan's claim, then identifying these personae's notion of "home" is a whole lot easier. According to Kaplan, "a desire to be and feel 'at home' is examined in light of who and what made the conditions of security and contentment possible" (192-3). By juxtaposing her representations of America and the Philippines, Reyes has expressed her more favored location. While the former is portrayed with so much life and color, the latter is depicted with grimness and ennui. While New York is brimming with fondness and excitement, the streets of Manila are teeming with street children, vendors, traffic jams, and numerous incidences of death. The personae of these poems are by all means conflicted by their ideas of home and the harsh realities governing that specific home.

In the Philippines, these personae settle themselves in the city as an inevitable part of the middle class. In the city, they experience another bout of displacement. They have a hard time reconciling what they have expected from their old country and what they actually see in the streets and experience in the company of their relatives and classmates. Such estrangement coming from these personae produces a blasé attitude towards the urban environment. As a consequence, their knowledge of the city is one-dimensional, largely because it is highly contingent on what these personae see below their condominium units, or from the partial view they get from their car's window. This kind of elevation transforms Reyes's personae into voyeurs. In De Certeau's words, this distance that these personae have "transforms the bewitching world by which [they were] 'possessed' into a text that lies before [their] very eyes. It allows [them] to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and Gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more" (264).

So if the city were text and Reyes its reader, then the interpretations would be a straightforward pronouncement of middle class sensibilities. In general, the small portraiture of the city presented in the poetry collection are captured through the eyes of urban dwellers whose main fixations are the small lives and bright neon lights found outside their sliding doors. So one has to ask: what has Reyes accomplished as a poet? What has *Stories from the City* achieved, in the short history of Philippine urban poetry?

While the poems have lucidly recorded what the poet and critic J. Neil Garcia calls, in his blurb for the book, “the verities attending contemporary urban existence,” I think they have fallen short in communicating a sensitivity and tenderness towards those who are not only displaced but also marginalized in the city. Though Reyes can be considered successful in creatively putting across the lives of the urban middle class, a lot of things still need to be written about the metro’s images and scenarios that remain unseen and unexplored. With the poems she presented, Reyes has covered only one aspect of the urban life. She has still yet to enter the city’s realm that is, in the words of E. San Juan Jr., “a diabolic snare or trap for innocent, virtuous [people]” (155).

For to be in the city is to roam the streets, to interact with its people of varied classes, to smell and breathe the scent and stench of its landscape, and to immerse in both its pulchritude and decrepitude. Roland Barthes is instructive in this regard: “The city can be known only by an activity of an ethnographic kind: you must orient yourself in it not by book, by address, but by walking, by sight, by habit, by experience; here every discovery is intense and fragile, it can be repeated or recovered only by memory of the trace it has left in you” (qtd. in Miles and Borden 196). Perhaps this is the cause of the displacement of Reyes’s personae. Whether in Manila or in New York, they have resisted touching base with the conditions that enfold and characterize their subjectivity. Rather than interrogating the prevailing ideologies that control the city’s structure and the psychic patterns of life (San Juan 164), all of which are the very same factors that undermine their position in the society as deterritorialized beings, Reyes’s personae have opted to look inward, hermetic and solipsistic as they may seem, shunning or maybe totally severing themselves from the history, culture, and other material forces that constitute the urban space in which they are implicated. Reyes’s personae may benefit from what bell hooks calls “a particular way of

seeing reality,” that is, a perspective that looks from the outside in and from the inside out, as well as focuses its attention on the centre and the margin (qtd. in Kaplan 187). After all, this arguably is the most viable way to be free and to tell stories in the city, in the nation, and in the diaspora.

Works Cited

- Capili, Jose Wendell. *Bloom and Memory: Essays on Literature, Culture and Society*. University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2002.
- Barthes, Roland. “‘Center-City, Empty Center’ and ‘No Address.’” Miles, Hall, and Borden, pp. 195-6.
- De Certeau, Michel. “Walking in the City.” *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy, Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 264-73.
- Kaplan, Caren. “Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse.” *Cultural Critique*, vol. 6, 1987, pp. 187-98.
- Miles, Malcolm, Tim Hall, and Ian Borden, editors. *The City Cultures Reader*. Routledge, 2000.
- Mumford, Lewis. “The Monastery and the Clock.” Miles, Hall, and Borden, pp. 121-4.
- Paetzold, Heinz. “The Philosophical Notion of the City.” Miles, Hall, and Borden, pp. 204-20.
- Ramraj, Victor J. “Diasporas and Multiculturalism.” *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction*, ed. Bruce King, 214-229. Oxford U P, 2000.
- Reyes, Isabelita O. *Stories from the City*. U of the Philippines P, 1998.
- San Juan, Epifanio Jr. *History and Form: Selected Essays*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 1996.
- Short, John Rennie. *Urban Theory: A Critical Assessment*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Quelling Disarray and Inscience: Altruistic Thralldom and Subject Formation in “The President of the Tribe” and “Sam-it and the Loom”

Jan Raen Carlo M. Ledesma

This essay is an exploration of the postcolonial notions of “White Love” and its attendant effects that are made manifest in the positive and negative formations of the characters’ dispositions in two short stories in English: Rony V. Diaz’s “The President of the Tribe” and Lina Espina-Moore’s “Sam-it and the Loom.” Diaz’s and Espina-Moore’s short fictions can be viewed as texts that incite contingencies concerning one of the most prevalent issues of postcolonial theory—culture clash—which, with its accompanying ideology, empowers and deems itself superior to the other.¹ Capitalizing on the lenses of postcolonialism, this paper also advances the theory that civilizing love and the (un)interrupted dedication to it are at the core of these two stories. With these as springboards, the dichotomy and binaries of resistance and docility are tackled in this paper by delineating and analyzing the characters’ struggles and their subject positions.

Postcolonial theorists and critics have claimed that colonialism was universalizing in its assumptions about culture and modernity, and that this was the prime source of oppression of non-white peoples (Bush 87). This paper also recognizes that the “universalizing approach” of colonial powers differ in that they can either be actualized through a full-fledged colonial rule or cloaked through informal imperialistic strategies. In further examining the idea of “White Love,” Diaz’s and Espina-Moore’s short fictions are specifically chosen for their particular specifications,

relations, and dramatization, shaded with the notions of extraneous control and economic profiteering, as they uphold the essential matter of the reclaiming and reconditioning of spaces and places, particularly with the case of Agnes MacDougal, counteracted by the very refurbishment of a linkage between the indigenous (the Mangyans and Mang Aping in Diaz's "President"). The resistant descriptions support the resurfacing groundwork of the postcolonial contention whereby the indigenous faction is further upheld in a domain that is systematically degraded by the entrance of the symbols of imperial annexation and formation. Meanwhile, the pronouncement of the integrity of culture support the concept of beneficent subjection in the foreground of Espina-Moore's "Sam-it." The elevation of the character and disposition of Sam-it is a means of upraising the social and cultural preferences and conventions of the colonizers² where the idea of appropriation becomes a central notion in the relationship of Mrs. Matilda Allen (as the master) and Sam-it (as the servant). In consonance with the idea of highlighting the idea of "White Love" in the texts, the postcolonial concerns of reclaiming, assertion, resistance, and appropriation also form the groundwork of this critical undertaking, as these concepts serve as the springboard for the critical projections of altruistic thralldom and subject formation. In particular, the interaction of the characters with the colonizers underscores the concepts of servility and formation.

The notion of colonial warfare is at the very core of Diaz's and Espina-Moore's short fictions, but such warfare seems counteractive, for it is rendered as the kind of police action that disguises the true imperialistic character of the quelling of the disorder on the islands (which occurred because of the subversive agendas of the native citizens). In that regard, this paper will attempt to address the following points: how the main characters (the Mangyans, Mang Aping, and the young native Igorota Sam-it) see their subject positions in the arena where both civilizing love and benevolent bondage are promoted and upheld; how the stories convey the junctions of an outlook of altruism and comity and the constraining but dynamic fixtures of regulation and cultivation; and how altruistic thralldom and the seizure of the native subjects become reciprocally fortifying en masse.

On “White Love”

Diaz’s and Espina-Moore’s short fictions in English substantially reflect the agenda of and reactions to the agenda of an altruistic bondage underscoring allegories of the following concepts: benevolent assimilation; the convergence of fervor, cultivation, and indoctrination; the prospect of both fathering and mothering, leading to the asservation of development, progression, and character on the part of the colonized (effected by Mrs. Allen as seen in the character of Sam-it); and the projection of hostility (Mang Aping and the Mangyans) towards the ennobling mission of colonization upheld by the colonizers (Agnes MacDougal).

The critical concepts of hostility, exploitation, mutual ill will, assertion of development, spiritual upbringing, and mutual commitment are borrowed from Vicente Rafael. In his “White Love: Census and Melodrama in the US Colonization of the Philippines” (19-51), he says that the high aim of colonization is a kind of a moral and spiritual labor on the part of the colonizer (as shown by Agnes MacDougal and Mrs. Allen, respectively), and the indifference and hostility of the natives (Mang Aping) towards such spiritual-moral mandate, as well as its acceptance of appropriateness and refinement of character (Sam-it), breaks the myopic view on colonization. The texts, coming from such a vantage point, can be viewed as projecting the prominent notion of Orientalism—that white bodies are civilized bodies, and they exemplify the ideals of imperial masculinity.

However, the stories seem to present a different side of this imperial dominance, because in both narratives, it is the white female characters (Agnes McDougal and Mrs. Matilda Allen) who are presented as the very emblems of imperialism. This is important because they represent civilizing love, projecting the notion that they perform a metaphorical “infanticide” on their subjects. They can therefore be seen as the very women who partake in a vision of a modern empire, and are on equal footing with their male counterparts:

The emancipation of white women and their relative freedom in a civilized and modern society was favorably contrasted with the drudgery, subservience, and patriarchal oppression of colonized men and women (Bush 85).

Gender becomes a key notion in rendering an empire that is humanitarian in nature and disposition, and the two short stories significantly break the image of the stereotypical masculine imperial superiority by associating the following concepts with these female characters: applied science, advancement, initiative and the conservative and traditionalist values of financial prudence, sensitivity of mental discernment, sound judgment, and the creation and adherence to the very ethics of work and duty. The stories place these characters in a clear and perfect disposition to spread the blessings of white love and benevolent bondage to their subjects—something necessary for their specific formations and actualization. In upholding such a sympathetic undertaking, these female characters have truly won the regard and warmth of the colonized. As Rafael asserts:

... [B]ecause colonization is about civilizing love and the love of civilization, it cannot be absolutely distinct from the disruptive criminality of conquest. The allegory of benevolent assimilation effaces the violence by construing colonial rule as the most precious gift that ‘the most civilized people’ can render to those still caught in a state of barbarous disorder (21).

The respective relationships that Agnes McDougal and Mrs. Matilda Allen forged made a significant mark in the locale where the stories are set. This in turn can be viewed as gearing towards the notion of a permutable phase and platform of self-governance or autonomy. The character that is imbued with the authority for self-rule, veering away from the consternations and trepidations of Western imperial sovereignty, only achieves fruition by way of a symbiotic relationship with a colonial master who sets the pace, fundamentals, and good ideals of discipline, domestication, indoctrination, cultivation, and willpower. Simply put, the very zenith of colonial direction and governance, particularly referring to that of self-governance and subject formation, can be achieved and considered a success when the very subjects themselves have learned the ways of colonizing themselves.

Looking at the characters in the stories, one can say that they are truly composed of contradictory and discrepant qualities, which can be seen as an attestation to how the Mangyans, Mang Aping, and Sam-it lacked the confidence and frame of mind to control and govern themselves in their own particular domains:

Self-government is a form of character. It follows upon the long discipline which gives people self-possession, self-mastery, and the habit of order and peace. . . the steadiness of self-control and political mastery. And these things cannot be had without long discipline. . . . No people can be “given” the self-control of maturity (Wilson 52-3).

“The President of the Tribe”

Altruistic Thralldom

Diaz’s “President” is the story of Mang Aping, the Tagalog leader of the Mangyans working as lumberjacks. Mang Aping exploits the Mangyans, tasking them to gather things like beeswax, honey, rattan, almaciga, and basil. The hard work of his people enables him to earn a great deal of money. He can be described as outlandish, with an air of mystery even as he exhibits spitefulness, severity, and ruggedness. His people respect his power, but are depicted as reserved and unassertive as to how their *presidente* upholds the law:

His improbable power over them has been attributed variously to bizarre qualities: magical charms, Mangyan blood, primitive cruelty, abnormal virility and so forth. None of the laborers has been able to account accurately for his power. The only thing they know is that he is the only Tagalog who can live for weeks with the Mangyans. Hence, their ability to define him completely has transformed him into an object of mystery. Sometimes Mang Aping would go to the sawmill to get drunk on rum. The workers are respectful and diffident. Not one of them has deliberately courted his friendship. So he remains alienated, arrested by the force he holds in himself, imprisoned

by his secret power over that wild forest tribe. They call him *presidente* (Diaz 39).

Such is the status quo for the lumberjacks of the Abra de Ilog Lumber Company. This situation is changed, however, when Mang Aping finds a threat to his power in the person of a white woman, who is armed with the objective to make tremendous changes to the banal and squalid village:

There was therefore real occasion for astonishment when one of the company trucks turned down from the dirt road and followed the slender foot trail that led to the Mangyan settlement. The Mangyans rushed to meet the truck. Mang Aping remained seated on a log before the fire. The truck stopped a few meters away from the fire. The driver, a white woman, and a Filipino boy got off. The driver walked toward Mang Aping. “Mang Aping,” he said. “This woman told us that she wants to live here for a few weeks” (39).

Agnes MacDougal, a Methodist missionary, is the emblem of a colonizing project that is neither enslaving nor exploitative, but felicitous; her presence and intentions are geared toward the betterment of the Mangyans. She does this by winning their allegiance to the aristocratic ideas which constitute the higher civilization of mankind (Rafael 21). MacDougal is the ultimate symbol of altruistic thralldom in this story, and in her we find the blurring of the vehemence of seizure and control. In conjoining fervor and devoutness, MacDougal’s projected benevolent bondage exalts the colonizer, because it liberates the colonized (the Mangyans) from their former way of life with Mang Aping. She becomes the avenue by which the idea of “imperialistic infanticide” is promoted in the story as she is holistically armed in performing this duty. She both affects and effects grand changes in the physical, spiritual, and moral facets of Mang Aping’s turf. She is depicted as the mother who successfully faces the tall order of fashioning the Tagalogs from her colonial vision of perfection and felicity. This is the kind of altruistic dominion that is completely different from the administration of Mang Aping:

The white woman was able to win the trust of Mangyans. She had an inner compulsion that seared those about her into obedience. After two days, the Mangyans had accepted her presence among them and they were freely consulting her. Somehow they were able to understand each other. The woman and the boy had put a makeshift clinic before one of their tents. She attended to the skin infections of the Mangyans, which were mostly cases of acute ringworm, by applying ointments and antiseptics. She also dispensed purgatives to the worm-choked children. Once she refused to let three Mangyans go to work because they were suffering from Malaria (Diaz 42).

Rafael says that the link between benevolence and discipline was made possible through the representational practices that recast Filipino appearance (23). The renewal and reorganization of the Mangyans as colonial subjects prescribed that they become more accessible to the people like MacDougal who claims to have moral ascendancy. The subjects of “charitable bondage” can easily be identified, apprehended, and subjected to an orderly and populist pedagogy. Whether it is in the field of public health, public order, or basic education, MacDougal’s actions are the very enunciation of the ideology and practicality of colonial power. By making the Mangyans visible, the benevolent supervision is transformed into a potent act of vigilance and circumspection, setting the limits of colonial identities within the borders of the state:

When the woman threatened to report him to the mayor, Mang Aping was forced to give in. The three Mangyans looked at the woman in disbelief. In their fever-bright eyes, Mang Aping thought he saw the glint of recognition (Diaz 42).

Civilizing love is seen in how Mang Aping shares in the blessings enjoyed by the Mangyans in the settlement, which are the result of MacDougal’s dynamism. The altruistic thralldom and its all-inclusive nature are affirmed by this scene from the story that features the fleshly

desires of men as well as moral and ethical dimensions of their acts. The Mangyans, under the supervision of MacDougal, experience what it means to be liberated from Mang Aping's exploitation and oppression. The result of this altruistic thralldom is made manifest as Mang Aping personally observes the changes that have transpired in his own domain:

The Mangyan women were very cooperative and they helped her clean the settlement. Latrines were constructed and the Mangyans were instructed on their use. At first, they were amused but when they saw that not only the woman and the boys but also Mang Aping used the holes, they followed their example. Her energy has really transformed the settlement. Mang Aping noticed that the Mangyans were now more careful; some of them were even quite decent-looking. But what amazed Mang Aping was the personal neatness of the woman. Even after performing the most strenuous tasks, she managed to remain neat and calm (42-3).

The character and disposition of MacDougal as a Methodist are instrumental in supporting Diaz's short fiction as an allegory of the postcolonial concept of "White Love," as her beliefs and behavior have improved the lives of the Mangyans. Christian perfection and social justice are the basic tenets of the faith of the United Methodist Church, and she embodies these in her respect for the Mangyans, her devout fulfillment of religious and social obligations, her missionary zeal and charity, and her service to the poor and vulnerable. She confronts Mang Aping as she tries to persuade the Mangyans to embrace the Methodist faith and believe in salvation through God, sanctification, and social justice. Her religion becomes an auxiliary avenue where altruistic thralldom in the story is further emphasized:

"This is for you," she said. "This will explain our work." The booklet was called Brown Gold and there was a picture of a man surrounded by short people in G-strings on the cover. "You see," she said. "Some people search for yellow

gold. We search for brown gold. Our aim is to save the souls of these people. They have a desire to worship and we want them to worship the true and living God and to bring them to His Word. She paused. "What is your religion?" she asked. "I am a Catholic," he answered. "But you won't object if we try to convert the Mangyans here?" (42)

The United Methodist Church strongly condemns slavery, inhumane imprisonment, punishment, and social injustice. MacDougal's efforts to convert the Mangyans now slowly displaces Mang Aping from the reins of power. She then becomes the mother and teacher willing to aid the Mangyans in their transformation:

That evening the Mangyans gathered around the white woman, who had brought out a number of picture books. She explained to them the significance of the Biblical pictures in her flatly accented and drawling Tagalog. The Mangyans could not understand her but they eagerly examined the pictures in the book. Mang Aping watched congregation from the window of his hut. He could feel the slow displacement of power in the settlement (44).

Her gender also plays an important role in promoting the thought of compassionate servility. The image of a woman greatly supports the idea of infantilization. In her case, she takes on the role of a mother faced with the challenging responsibility of changing the lives of the Mangyans and putting an end to Mang Aping's exploitation of them. As the mother of civilizing love, she must show love for her children and confront the current order. In this regard, the Mangyans seemingly cannot possess themselves; they can only be possessed by the Other (Taft qtd. in Rafael 22). This is seen in how she lovingly disciplines the Mangyans:

"Mang Aping," he said. "This woman told us that she wants to live here for a few weeks." That startled Mang Aping. "What? Who sent her?" The white woman came forward. She had a letter in her hand. She confronted and said in

Tagalog, “You must be Serafin Ramirez. I am a missionary. I have come to give medical aid to these people.” She spoke with a drawl but she made herself understood. The Mangyans had gathered around the fringe of the island of light. They formed a shadowy wall around them as they naively stared at the woman. The woman looked around and addressed them: “My name is Agnes MacDougal. I’ve come to help you” (Diaz 40-1).

Unyielding Subject Formation

The most remarkable displaced character in Diaz’s “President” is Mang Aping. In the story, he functions as the antithesis of Agnes MacDougal whereby he breaks the myopic view of the workings of her imperial love. Mang Aping decides not to venerate the religion of the white woman, and does not reciprocate her kindness. By doing so, he becomes the insurgent who is focused and driven to make war against the liberalist agenda of the Methodist missionary, and to whom a gift could become an insult. He demands that MacDougal leave the place and petitions her to recognize his self-proclaimed autonomy. He is the very symbol of resistance, deep-seated ill will, and an exploitative way of living, as portrayed in this confrontation scene:

“I mean you are not safe here,” Mang Aping repeated stupidly. “Go back to Bulalacao. Find yourself another tribe.” “Mr. Ramirez,” the woman said firmly, “my job here is not finished and I am quite capable of looking after myself. I don’t see the danger that you speak of. These people are very friendly. Now if you are worried because I thwarted your scheme to cheat these people...” Mang Aping cut her short. “This is not what I meant. You’ve made me look...” He caught himself; he stopped abruptly and turned his attention to the pump (45).

The mutinous Mang Aping appeared to have misinterpreted the pure aims and purposes of the American imperialist project, and thus he had planned to attack the civilizing love of the colonizers (i.e. MacDougal). A

certain kind of violence underwrote the allegory of benevolent assimilation, and as Rafael says, this measured use of force was deemed consistent with the protective objective of colonization (21-2):

He managed to his back at them: "I'll show you who is leader here!" They spat on the ground and left him. The woman saw what happened but she did not know what to do. As Mang Aping was picking himself up, she ran to him. "Are you hurt?" she cried. "What happened?" "I told you to leave. Go away!" he shouted. He pushed her brusquely aside as he strode toward his hut. He could feel his hands trembling. Darkness enveloped him. He stumbled into his hut. He was sweating (Diaz 46).

Violence and resistance are part and parcel of the package of civilizing love—they complete the picture of imperialism toward which hostility is inevitable. A natural aspect of colonization, culture clash and vehement opposition—as executed by Mang Aping toward the end of the story (as he remains defiant in the face of MacDougal's "intrusion")—are ways of avowing his insurgent and unyielding subject position. Mang Aping must uphold his aggrieved masculinity and power. He fulfills this at the end of the story as he forces himself on (and disgraces) MacDougal:

He advanced silently. When he was beside the cot, he lifted the mosquito net gently. He was now stiff with desire. The rustle of the net woke the woman. She started up but Mang Aping seized her by the shoulder and pushed her down. Mang Aping cupped his hand over the woman's mouth. She was now moaning. He leaned forward and hissed at her face. "I have to do this, you understand. I have to show them." His predatory fingers picked at the buttons of her dress. The woman's slaver oozed through his fingers. Slowly, almost tenderly, he heaved his body and mounted her (46).

This is Mang Aping breaking the notion of the “invisibilization” of the “White Love” of MacDougal. This forms a great part of colonial positionality where the Other can never accept absolute displacement from his own domain of authority. Resistance in subject formation in this story affirms the idea of Otherness where the leader figures are divided into two irreconcilable categories. It is MacDougal who occupies the role of the Self: she is ordered, good, and rational in her tactics of promoting the agenda of altruistic thralldom, utilizing the United Methodist Church as a springboard for benevolence toward the Mangyans. The Other, typified by the mysterious and domineering Mang Aping, is chaotic, evil, irrational, and resistant—and this leader of the old order manages to reclaim political dominance through masculine force.

“Sam-it and the Loom”

Altruistic Thralldom

Espina-Moore’s “Sam-it” begins with the titular character, a young Igorota, whose weaving skills are honed at the women’s workshop. Her supervisor, Miss Jean Brown, subsequently helps her find employment with the Allens, an American couple also living in Baguio. Mrs. Matilda Allen introduces Sam-it to various Christian practices. When Mrs. Allen dies, Sam-it—whose husband Dakyon has since left her because she was unable to bear him children—finds refuge among the members of the Episcopalian Church, which was constructed by the Americans as a place of leisure and relaxation. Its Mission Workshop can be seen as a space of domestication, because it apparently capitalizes on Sam-it’s skills by instructing her to weave on the more elaborate loom of the Ilocanos. She quickly turns into a celebrated weaver, utilizing variegated designs that have become a hit with the tourists.

Altruistic thralldom has, as its concomitant outcome, a shared commitment between colonizer and colonized. According to Rafael, American women who wrote in and about the Philippines during the early part of American colonial rule redefined and imbued colonialism with a sense of the sentimental and domestic (69). Spirituality then becomes a vital element of the altruistic thralldom in this story, seen in how the “omnipotent” Mrs. Allen becomes the avenue for Sam-it’s transition into a domesticated woman:

Mrs. Allen was indeed a kind mistress. Perhaps, Mrs. Allen knew when Dakyon came to see Sam-it. He came while Sam-it was bathing the dogs in the garden. He stood at the other side of the hedges. He said he wanted her to live with him again. Sam-it said, "Go away, Dakyon, go to the black hills where the spirits drink the blood of foolish men." But when Dakyon left, she cried. Then Mrs Allen came into the garden and said, "If you will be happy with your husband again, then go back to him and your people. But first you must be married in the Christian way" (Espina-Moore 28).

The domesticating act in Espina-Moore's story is seen as an act of commitment—of adhesion and loyalty to the American masters. Subjects had to be formed and nurtured in all spaces, be they in the public sphere of the Episcopalian Women's Workshop or in the private realm of the American couples like the Allens.

As regards the notion of entrepreneurship, Miss Brown leads the young Igorota to the Allens because Mrs. Allen is a good woman and an excellent mistress. If her employment with the Allens becomes reproachful, Sam-it is given the freedom to return to the Mission Workshop. Mrs. Allen then becomes the potent impetus for Sam-it's physical and spiritual development born out of altruistic thralldom and "White Love."

Servile Subjection Formation

In fashioning an ideal domestic domain, the body becomes a central focus and element for the colonial master, Mrs. Allen, who upholds the discourse concerning the female body—that it should be regarded as a temple of decency, modesty, and morality to project order and decorum in the colonial scheme of things. This is applicable most especially when referring to Igorots who are commonly perceived as bawdy by the colonial master. The servant becomes a copy of the domesticated white body while at the same time appearing radically different from and distant from her own body (Rafael 24). Thus Mrs. Allen fashions and forms her own subject from her own colonial mindset as seen in this passage:

Mrs. Allen gave Sam-it her first American dress. It was a midi blouse with a pleated skirt which reached down to the ankles. She had white cotton stockings and tennis shoes to go with it. The shoes felt very heavy on her feet, but she wore all these with pride to services on Sundays. Under the dress, she wore a muslin slip and under the slip, muslin bloomers. This was as it should be, Mrs. Allen said (Espina-Moore 28-9).

Mrs. Allen also allows Sam-it to hear the compliments of visitors to show the latter how she has been splendidly trained as a servant (who prepares biscuits, tea, and ginger cookies), which in effect makes Sam-it a proper and commendable symbol of hospitality:

Sam-it was Mrs. Allen's housemaid. She was the only one left among the many. But she had learned many things from Mrs. Allen who was now grown strange in her ways. In the earlier days, guests complimented Matilda Allen. Mrs. Allen would in turn call Sam-it to hear for herself the guests' pleasure because Sam-it had prepared them. But Mrs. Allen had taught her these and many other things, too (27).

Mrs. Allen is Sam-it's pathway toward a more civilized life. As a housemaid, Sam-it reflects the unparalleled housekeeping skills of her mistress. One can then see the Igorota's transition from her primitive ways to a domesticated literacy:

It was time for tea. Sam-it, the Igorot girl, knew by the slant of sunrays that filtered through the tallest pine at the west end of the garden. Yes, she knew how to tell time by the clock. Mrs. Allen had taught her that (27).

But Mrs. Allen was not only Sam-it's "mother"; she was also her teacher. The laid-back act of reading, which is also controlled by Mrs. Allen, is another sign of altruistic thralldom and of subject formation:

But Mrs. Allen had taught her these and many other things, too. Even to read. Meaning reading more and better, because she had gone to school in La Trinidad Valley when she was a little girl. She learned reading, writing, arithmetic in English. She also learned how to do plain sewing on cotton samplers. Why, she even owned two books which she read time and again: *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Little Women*. Mrs. Allen had given them to her. In them she came across and wondered at the pleasing sounds of such words as rainbow, moth, marshes, loneliness (27).

Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and Kate Douglas Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* are some of the literary works that Sam-it treasured. It is to be assumed that these books were chosen by Mrs. Allen for their indisputable content and characters for they particularly offer prudish and proper models to emulate for the young Sam-it.

As seen in the interaction between Sam-it and Mrs. Allen, the domiciliary acts were infused with the elements of spirituality so as to further emphasize the solidity and comprehensibility of the colonial agenda. As an exemplification, Mrs. Allen instructs Sam-it on the dignity and sanctity of Christian marriage when she learns of Dakyon's plan to win her back. The link between benevolence and discipline is clear in the scene where Mrs. Allen makes Sam-it wear American clothes during Sunday service—in effect, showcasing her vigorous and potent performance in subject formation. Reputability and honorableness in white American middle class society are manifested by having a solid grip on domesticity in both public and private spheres.

At the end of the story, Sam-it is seen as a truly domesticated woman—one now liberated from her native Igorota way of life. As the servile subject, she secures and defines her positive spiritual subject formation when she gives her gratitude to the spirit of her departed masters, the Allens. In this last scene of the story, Mrs. Allen's strong religious influence of Mrs. Allen on Sam-it's life is striking:

Not long after that, when Sam-it brought in Mrs. Allen's morning tray, she found her dead. Mrs. Allen's eyes were slightly opened. So Sam-it stood in her line of vision and sang "Rock of Ages." "You gave me a loom. You gave me a home. You and Mr. Allen are good spirits. Mr. Allen, you did not take another woman because Mrs. Allen could not bear you children. You even came to escort her to the spirit world..." (32).

To echo Rafael, the colonial dominance of Mrs. Allen in Sam-it's life is a powerful ground for showing that the notion of altruistic thralldom can lead to a transitional stage of self-rule, as evidenced by the actualization of Sam-it's new identity as a domesticated, refined woman (22). The self that rules itself can only emerge by way of an intimate relationship with a colonial master (Mrs. Allen) who sets the standard and practices of discipline to mold the conduct of the colonial subject (Sam-it). This is the very fruition of the ideology of altruistic thralldom linked with the idea of discipline as the notion of "self-government" becomes the outcome of a servile subject formation. Sam-it and Mrs. Allen's relationship further stresses the consolidation of love and discipline, for Sam-it's character eventually changes as a result of her long spiritual apprenticeship under Mrs. Allen. The altruistic thralldom is then seen to ennoble the colonizer, Mrs. Allen, as it liberates the colonized Sam-it (23).

Conclusion

By and large, Diaz's and Espina-Moore's short stories in English substantially capture the very imaging of benevolent bondage and subject formation in their manifold aspects. Civilizing love is presented as a kind of police action in "President" and supports the hostile response of the uncouth (Mang Aping) to the light and love offered by civilization. On the other hand, the notion of altruistic subjection does not possess a myopic view in Espina-Moore's "Sam-it," where spirituality is used with domestication to emphasize the colonial design of things, as shown in the naïve fashioning of the young Igorota by Mrs. Allen.

The stories themselves bear the full weight of colonialism in all its various conceptualizations and understanding where we can notably

see how the voyeuristic and colonial gaze can be rendered as a moral imperative that entailed the “felicity and perfection of the Filipino” people through the “uninterrupted devotion to those noble ideas which constitute the higher civilization of mankind”—neither enslaving nor exploitative (Rafael 21). The very juncture of colonial inculcation and altruism was traced through the actions of the natives (colonial subjects) that greatly diversify their appearances in the network of freehearted police work and investigation. The reformation of the Mangyans, Mang Aping, and Sam-it as the recipients of “altruistic thralldom” reinforces their visibility in the benevolent colonial field—assuring their receptiveness to their colonial masters like Agnes MacDougal and Mrs. Matilda Allen.

Through the masters’ unceasing and perspicuous surveillance in native territories, the subjects of benevolent bondage were easily singled out and handed over for their participatory and civilizing tutelage. As seen in the stories themselves, whether in the fields of public order or public health, education, social injustice, or commerce, the supervision of altruistic thralldom upheld by the very promise of “mothering” dynamically sustained the articulation of colonial rule both at the practical and ideological heights (Rafael 23).

With the subjects of the two short fictions in English assuring their openness and receptiveness to the feminine colonial administrators of benevolence, altruistic supervision has proven to be a potent means of superintendence and guardianship, disclosing the boundaries of colonial identities and extremities within the bounds by which they operate.

Notes


1. See Charles E. Bressler’s *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice* (1999).
2. Consult Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin’s *The Empire Writes Back* (1989).

Works Cited

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back*. Routledge, 1989.
- Bressler, Charles E. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Prentice Hall, 1999.
- Bush, Barbara. *Imperialism and Postcolonialism: History: Concepts, Theories, and Practice*. Routledge, 2014.
- Diaz, Rony V. "The President of the Tribe." *Upon Our Own Ground: Filipino Short Stories in English 1956 to 1972 (Volume II - 1965 to 1972)*, edited by Gemino H. Abad, U of the Philippines P, 2008, pp. 38-46.
- Espina-Moore, Lina. "Sam-it and the Loom." *Cuentos: An Anthology of Short Stories*, New Day Publishers, 1985, pp. 27-33.
- Legasto, Priscelina Patajo. "Introduction: Discourses of 'Worlding' and Philippine Postcolonial Studies." *Philippine Post-Colonial Studies: Essays on Language and Literature*, edited by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo & Priscelina Patajo-Legasto. U of the Philippines P, 1993, pp. 3-17.
- Rafael, Vicente L. "White Love: Census and Melodrama in the U.S. Colonization of the Philippines." *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, Duke U P, 1993, pp. 19-51.
- Villarba-Torres, Anna Christie K. "Domesticity, Spirituality and the Igorota as Mountain Maid." *INTER: A European Cultural Studies Conference, 11-13 June 2007, Norrköping, Sweden*, edited by Johan Fornäs and Martin Fredriksson, Linköping University Electronic Press, 2007.
- Wilson, Woodrow. *Constitutional Government in the United States*. Columbia U P, 1921.

Transgressions and Transformations: Queer(ed) Spaces in Metro Manila as Rendered in Philippine Gay Poetry *from English and in Filipino*

Ralph Semino Galán

According to Aaron Betsky in his seminal book, *Queer Space: Architecture and Same Sex Desire*, two qualities that characterize queer space is its transgressive and transformative nature. This essay examines the subversive and protean aspects of queer spaces in Metro Manila as they are rendered in Philippine poetry *from English and in Filipino*. The queer spaces that are explored in this paper include places traditionally identified as homosexual havens/heavens, like the gay bar, the bathhouse and the backroom, as well as heteronormative places that have been queered by the presence of gay men, like the cinema and the fitness gym.

In theoretical and pragmatic explorations of queer identity and politics, spatiality is a major area of concern, in the sense that coming out is construed for the most part as a process that involves an expansion of one's personal space. The act of coming out, especially for male and female homosexuals belonging to conservative heteropatriarchal families, is usually depicted in gay and lesbian literature and film as the queer subject's emancipation from the stifling confines of the proverbial closet, and his/her eventual flourishing in the more welcoming and less claustrophobic enclave or ghetto (depending on one's perception) of the gay bar in its various manifestations.

The gay bar as the quintessential queer space, therefore, becomes the focal point in the formation and development of all sorts of queer identities, for it is the one place where gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals

affirm their various subjectivities as psychosexual beings. (One must never forget that Stonewall Inn, where the politicized gay liberation movement in America began, is actually a gay bar—a combination of gay tavern and recreational bar—located on 53 Christopher Street in Greenwich Village, New York, New York.) Queer citizenship with its concomitant political awareness is often acquired in the gay bar, as Filipino-American gay anthropologist Martin F. Manalansan IV correctly observes: “For many lesbians and gays, this space evokes a sense of community and solidarity.” And indeed, prior to the establishment of such LGBT advocacy groups, such as the Gay Liberation Front and Queer Nation, the gay bar served as the hub of gay culture and identity, one of the few tolerant, if not indulgent, spaces where people with same-sex orientations and gender-variant identities could openly socialize.

Queer Theory and Queerness

Queer Theory as a poststructuralist and postmodern mode of inquiry begins with the notion that the hegemonic heterosexual dichotomy of male and female, and its concomitant gendered qualities of masculine/feminine, must be dismantled to free individuals from the shackles of sexual determinism. Assailing the homophobic and patriarchal foundations of heterosexuality and heterosexism, “it aims beyond lesbian and gay rights philosophies to study other so-called perverse, deviant, and alternative sexualities,” and its objects/subjects of study primarily focus on “transgressive phenomena such as drag, camp, cross-dressing, and transsexuality, all of which highlight the nonbiological, performative aspects of gender construction” (Leitch 25).

Originally a pejorative term implying that homosexuals are strange, odd, or curious, “queer” has been recuperated by the LGBT to proclaim their collective pride in their lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered identities. The advent of the word’s resignification can be traced back to the establishment of the American LGBT advocacy group Queer Nation in March 1990. British gay activist and oral historian Ian Lucas gives an account of the organization’s political agenda:

Queer Nation built activism based on sexual identity—
not just lesbian, gay or bisexual, but queer. Queer was used

as an in-your-face catch-all designer label. Its shocking tone caught some of the violence shown against lesbian and gay communities in America, and threw it right back. It was also a call to queer nationalism—a community that confronted homophobia and had collective responsibility for dismantling the power of ‘the closet’ (14).

Due to the extensive media exposure of Queer Nation in the 1990s, queer has since become the umbrella term under which gay, lesbian, transgendered, bisexual, and all other alternative forms of gender categories can flourish. Morally flexible, queer even embraces “‘perverse’ sexual identities, communities, and practices” (Oswell 163), including male, female and transsexual prostitutes, sadomasochists, and body piercers.

Defining Queer Spaces

Since the centrality of the gay bar in queer identity and politics is of utmost importance, an investigation of queer spaces must begin logically with a definition of this heterotopia of “sexual” deviation, a heterotopia of deviation being a site where, according to Michel Foucault, “individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed.” From the Western perspective, a gay bar by definition refers to any “drinking establishment that caters to an exclusively or predominantly lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) clientele, the term “gay” being used as an all-encompassing adjective to describe the diversity of the LGBT and queer communities. As such the term “gay bar” covers a wide variety of watering holes: boy bar, drag bar, leather bar, lesbian bar, dyke bar, etc.

The Philippine Gay Bar

In the Philippine context, a gay bar has a more specific signification; it refers to a queer space whose main attraction are the macho dancers—gyrating “straight” men clad in the skimpiest of denim shorts or the sheerest of bikinis. The Philippine gay bar, therefore, is more similar to the Western notion of a go-go bar or a strip joint which feature muscle men as performers instead of sexy women, though in the US and in Europe the habitués of such places are straight women and not gay men.

But the Philippine gay bar is also characterized by the fact that these macho dancers also double as callboys—sex workers whose body parts can be fondled or whose entire bodies can be hired for a sexual encounter by a customer for the right price. It is therefore implicit that the Philippine gay bar does not only offer titillating entertainment; such a queer space is also involved in the thriving flesh trade of the Third World.

In my unpublished essay, "Homosexuality and Religious Subversion in the Poetry of J. Neil C. Garcia," I took note of the aforementioned writer's penchant for using Roman Catholic imagery and Biblical narratives to articulate the Filipino homosexual's predicaments and predilections. "A-12" from Garcia's first poetry collection, *Closet Quivers* deploys the cosmogony myth of Adam and Eve to depict the spectacle of a "big night" in a now-defunct notoriously seedy gay bar called Adams Twelve, which was located right across Isetann Department Store along Claro M. Recto Avenue.

In "this revisionist/ show," the traditional roles of the key players in the cosmic drama that unfolded in the Garden of Eden are subverted. The first woman gets transformed into a cross-dressing man ("Eve is a transvestite lipsynching floozy/ with heavy ball earrings and torch singing neck,/Adam's apple lodged telling in her throat."/); the Devil is reduced to a circus freak ("Satan is a she-devil eating fire from a spit/on which roasts the fat of lost boys."/); the mighty cherubim guarding the gate of the paradisiacal garden become gay men wearing office attire (Angels in tie are queer in their ministering/ to every clap and whistle and screech./); and Adam, aside from being replicated in the beginning of the show ("Adams, twelve, bikinied, in a row;"), turns ambiguous at closing time as "Eden's sweet landscape renews/ a pact apocryphal in a dance/of Adams, twelve, naked, in a row—/ like serpents charming the first Paradise."

Garcia alludes to another Biblical garden scene in "From Gethsemane," a poem from his second book of verses religiously titled *Our Lady of the Carnival*. In contradistinction to "A-12," "From Gethsemane" portrays the "Softsell, hardsell, in that order" that occurs on a slow night in an unnamed gay bar during the Lenten Season: "Maundy Thursday and you go to a gay bar alone." The pimp (euphemistically referred to in gay bars as "the floor manager") whose name is Fernan proffers his stable of human studs, highlighting each callboy's best attribute—be it exceptional

physical endowment or consummate sexual prowess—by pointing it out to the poem’s persona (who strangely refers to himself in the second person singular form, due perhaps to his built-in Catholic guilt). Fernan also informs the “you” persona of the rates of exchange: “Bar fine is a hundred. Upstairs room ditto./ Service is two-fifty, fixed. Ante ups with/ one’s kinks.”

Since the persona appears to be not interested with his initial offerings, Fernan “threatens” to present his top male prostitute whom he describes as “the best ever,/ mildly exciting, but beautiful like the movie star/ who plays Christ in the season’s passion films./” Garcia thus casts the call-boy as Jesus Christ, the “floor manager” as the treacherous disciple Judas Iscariot, and the seemingly guilt-ridden “you” as a homosexual Roman soldier in a queer form of mystery-cum-morality play:

Embraced by some kind of scriptedness
you enact a role strangely familiar. In the garden.
Love betrayed in a kiss. He seems to know
he too belongs in this passion’s play for warmth
on a night black as pain. As you lead him out to die,
Fernan, unrepentant till it is too late,
bites his earring. Caught between the lips of redemption
it glints still more brightly
than any thirty pieces of silver can.

The Gay Bathhouse

The gay bathhouse, whose genealogy can be traced back to the Roman baths, contains amenities ranging from shower rooms and swimming pools to fitness gyms and locker rooms; sauna rooms (both wet and dry) to video and karaoke rooms; restaurants and wet bars to discotheques and performance spaces; individual cubicles and communal darkrooms to dungeon rooms (replete with whips and harnesses) and other spaces catering to all kinds of homosexual fetishes.

In Metro Manila, the most popular bathhouses are Club Bath (the oldest existing gay establishment of this sort) in F.B. Harrison corner Valhalla Streets, Pasay City, and Club Fahrenheit (the best equipped) in E. Rodriguez corner Hemady Streets, Quezon City.

But despite the plethora of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile stimuli these homosexual sensoria have to bestow on its members, the persona in Ronald Baytan's "Bathhouse Blues" from his first book of poems *Queen Sings the Blues* does not experience sensual/sexual bliss during his nocturnal visit to such a place. For although the bathhouse promises a moveable feast for the gay man's delectation ("All around me,/ Men strut naked/ Save for white briefs,/ Neon trunks,/ Torn green towels/ About their waists.//"), this offering of virile pulchritude is not for everyone, certainly not for the aging homosexual in some neglected spot:

He wears his woes
On his wrinkled face.
Though he smiles his best,
Love or lust will not find him
On this island where
Youth and beauty conspire.

Using iconography from Oriental religion and mythology, he delineates the desirables ("the Ramas in our midst,/ Celestial creatures ignorant/ Of despair") from the undesirables ("The chest only Siddharta/ Buddha should possess,/ The body of Ganesh/ The glass ruthlessly mirrors.//") among whom he belongs, and never the twain shall meet. Thus, out of hunger and desperation, they devour one another's misshapen bodies, with this realization:

Dark cannot right
Our cursed bodies.
In the end, the only thrill,
And real dread, is swallowing
Our grief in horror,
In silence.

Another perspective of this homosexual sensorium is Carlomar Arcangel Daoana's unpublished poem "To the Bathhouse" and its obvious parodic allusion to Virginia Woolf's experimental novel *To the Lighthouse*, which depicts in the stream-of-consciousness style this site of sensual and sexual gratification as an impressionistic queer space:

rooms ordered in rows, steam,
the flickering sign of exit,

I enter you like a spy feigning
unfamiliarity with the sharp turns

and the small maze, the stairs
ushering me to more cells,

plunged in red light.

But even as the persona overcomes his initial qualms by making eye contact with a potential partner (“I/ assess the gaze of the chosen one, //”), he is also very much aware that despite his salacious satisfaction (“what else/ can I feed on that equally fulfills? //”) the encounter can be nothing more than a one-night-stand in a prurient place: “the hive is alive with fevers,/ wilds oats, the animal need. //”

The Gay Backroom

Based on a dictionary definition, a darkroom or dark room is a dim or pitch-black chamber, sometimes located in a nightclub, gay bathhouse or sex club, where sexual activity can take place in the lascivious shadows. When located in a bar, a dark room is also known as a backroom (because of its location) or a blackroom (because it is bereft of light).

Cine Café typifies a Filipino queer space in the heart of Quezon City that has undergone not a few transformations due to its former clientele’s lack of loyalty, and the fact that high culture is difficult to market while casual sexual encounters (often performed in the anonymous dark) sell like hotcakes, or should I say beefcakes. Originally conceptualized by bar owner Rune Layumas, an “indie” filmmaker (even before the term was actually coined), as a venue for the screening of art films, as well as an alternative setting for poetry readings and photo exhibits, Cine Café has degenerated or developed (again, depending on one’s perspective) into a popular sex joint replete with a blue room (a viewing area featuring pornographic movies) and a stickily shadowy backroom, where anything and everything promiscuous could happen in its perpetual dusk.

Dedicated to gay poet and very close friend Ronald Baytan, my own poem “Backroom Love” from my first chapbook of verses titled *The Southern Cross and Other Poems* subverts the notion that gay men in Metro Manila are only preoccupied with mindless sex. Using metaphors and images associated with Romantic and Victorian poetry, like the lighthouse and the sea, the moonstruck persona of the poem actually seeks among the “shapes and shifting silhouettes” inside the backroom of Cine Café the possibility of a true encounter with the beloved. After foraging “inside its seemingly seam-/ less ocean of darkness,” in the end, “very late at night,/ just before the inevitable// coming of the light,” the besotted persona will “copulate with shadows/ and call it love.”

Queered Public Spaces

As a noun, the term “queer” has come to mean any movement promised by acting in reference to something outside of itself. It has become a name (noun—nominal) whose referent is the thing-ness of dissonant sexual identity. In this sense, “queer” functions as a sign which, while it could be open to the play of signification, nonetheless arrests that play in the service of a given category.

As a verb (to queer), however, the term can signify an action of putting “out of joint,” unsettling, destabilizing the very terms by which something comes to be something in the first place. As a verb, queer retains a sense of time which keeps it in motion conceptually and at least in principle prevents it from any form of grounding in a moment of its own ‘now.’

Public spaces, mostly heteronormative places in a patriarchal society like the Philippines, have been transgressed, transformed, and appropriated by Filipino gay men, for their specific sexual purposes, into queer spaces. Two of these spaces are the cinema and the fitness gym.

The Cinema

Movie houses per se are not necessarily queer spaces, but legitimate places of audiovisual entertainment, whether the film being shown is for general patronage or for adults only. But even the most posh of theaters can be transformed into a queer space by the presence of a single gay man who tries to fulfill his homosexual desire (by design or because of desperation,

it does not really matter which) inside the cinema's protean and tolerant darkness. However, derelict movie houses in depressed but accessible downtown areas in Metro Manila, like Cubao or Recto, are notorious for being havens/heavens for promiscuous gay sex.

In Eric Gamalinda's "Slow Cruise," a phallus-shaped poem from his second poetry collection titled *Lyrics from a Dead Language*, Filipino homosexuals are described as "desperadoes" in the double sense of their being renegades (albeit sexual) as well as desperate:

Roaming the third-run theaters
these lonely men
run into each other,
seek their broken sex
in the apex of importunities,
and in their loneliness renew
the vampire in them,
the one rebuffed by dust,

Gamalinda's portrayal of Filipino gay men in the first stanza alone is anything but flattering: they are plagued by solitude and incapable of solidarity ("these lonely men"); homosexuality as the "broken sex"; utterly deplorable in their search for a quickie in the cavernous dark of the rundown cinemas ("the apex of importunities"); and monstrous ("the vampire in them"). In the second stanza he continues to enumerate other negative qualities. In the end, he concludes that "love is a raw wound,/ some kind of stigmata:/ hard time for saints," thus reducing Filipino homosexuals into martyred subjects incapable of improving their psychosexual subaltern position in heteropatriarchal society.

In contrast to Gamalinda's depressing poem, Nestor de Guzman's "Sa Paglugar" from his first book of verses *Mula sa Cine Café* provides the third-rate theater-going gay persona of his poem with some form of agency by making him inquisitive about the goings-on inside the ramshackle movie houses of Cubao, Quezon City to avoid all sorts of danger. Before he indulges in his sexcapades, the persona first asks pertinent questions from those who are more experienced and knowledgeable what to expect from a cinema he is visiting for the first time:

Unang punta ko sa lumang sinehang ito.
 Bagaman di bago sa akin ang kuwento
 at gawain sa katulad na lugar,
 minabuti kong magtanong-tanong muna.
 Puwede kayang gumawa rito?
 Baka may manghuhuli?
 May umiikot bang guwardiya?
 Baka sa kalagitnaan, may lalapit,
 maninita, mangingikil?
 Nagpapabayad ba ang mga lalaki,
 o sila-sila, pagandahan lang?

The persona then provides a series of vignettes of the usual episodes between the law and the homosexual denizens inside these sleazy theaters: New Frontier (“*sinisita ng guwardiya/ ang mga tumatayo sa likod,/ ... ‘Bakla o callboy lang ang tumatayo diyan.’/”*); Quezon 2 (“*nasa kalapit akong upuan,/ malapit sa screen, nang sitahin ng guwardiya/ ang dalawang lalaking naghahalikan.*”); Star (“*isang lalaki/ ang nangulit sa isang bakla/ para sa karagdagang bayad./ Mula sa ituktok ng balcony,/ halos tumakbo ang bakla pababa,/ pinalalayo ang nakasunod sa kanya.*”). In the end, the persona affirms his position as a witness, a homosexual voyeur or some new form of *flâneur*—a botanist of the queer fauna inside these rundown cinemas: “*Sa loob ko noon, nasa lugar ako,/ sa tamang lugar./*”

The Fitness Gym

The fitness gym is another heterosexual locale—generally the habitat of serious bodybuilders and fitness buffs—appropriated by certain gay men, gym bunnies and their admirers, as yet another queer space.

In Nicolas Pichay’s “Karnehan” from his first poetry collection *Ang Lunes na Mahirap Bunuin*, the fitness gym is depicted as a typical meat market for the gay persona, like most queered straight spaces, since “The purpose of queer space is again ultimately sex: the making of a space either for that peculiar definition of the self as an engine of sexuality or for the act of sex itself.”

The poem begins with some observations on the routine sights and sounds inside a typical gym: a man's reaction after weighing himself (*"Magtitimbang. Ihahambing ang katotohanan./ Nakangiti o papadyak depende/ sa layo o lapit sa/ anyong ninanais."*); pseudo-macho bantering (*"Pareng George—' babati sa/ halos araw-araw na kasabay sa malayong biyahe ng/ pagpapaganda ng katawan."/*"); riding a stationary bike (*"Sabay sakay sa bisikletang/ walang pinatutunguhan."/*"); and other strenuous activities usually associated with physical fitness. The persona admits that the gym is his favorite place because of the visual pleasure he derives from secretly ogling the muscular men who are working out in his midst (*"Dito ko nasisipat ang/ sanlaksang kalalakihang nagbabanat/ ng buto."/*"), whose body parts he devours with his eyes (*"mga umbok ng dibdib;" "tabas ng likod;" "mapintog na pandesal/ na ani ng kaniyang tiyan"*).

In between exercises, while the persona catches his breath, his head engorged with blood (*"malaking tarugo ang ulo kong/ puno ng dugo."/*"), he glimpses the object of his desire lifting weights while sprawled on the bench press, the guy's pubic hair visible where the thighs meet the crotch, the guys legs being spread apart like the letter V. But this is not what excites the persona, since he is more interested with the bead of sweat about to drip from the guy's armpit: *"Bubulong itong parang bubuyog habang/ namumuo, nanginginig mula sa kanyang kilikili."/* The persona wants to scream "Wait!" for he wants to catch it with his parched tongue as if it were a drop of rain being received by cracked hands (*"Upang idaop ang aking dila/na parang bitak-bitak na mga palad/ na sumasalo sa unang ambon/ ng Mayo."*).

After their eyes meet in a mutual glance, his potential catch approaches the persona, gives him a provocative smile, and makes a loaded comment: *"Ang sarap ng pawis mo, a."* With the gasping guy's slim waist level with his line of vision, the persona cannot help but notice the sweat stains on the guy's sleeveless shirt, the rippling in the guy's abdominal muscles. Swallowing his saliva, mouth tangy with desire, the persona returns the guy's friendly greeting with a burgeoning smile (*"Manunukli ako ng/ nangangamatis na ngiti."/*), and that is when their conversation truly begins.

By Way of a Conclusion

As rendered in Philippine gay poetry *from* English and in Filipino, queer spaces (like the gay bar, the bathhouse and the backroom) and queered straight spaces (like the cinema and the fitness gym) appear to be excitingly liberal and liberating places, for they allow homosexuals to explore and express their psychosexual selves. Through transgressions and transformations, the gay personae of the poems have subverted the dominant heteropatriarchal space by carving out, sometimes under the very noses of straight people, various heterotopias of deviance. The gay personae have also freed themselves from the shackles of the debilitating limits imposed on them and their desires by heteropatriarchal society, through the performance and performativity of their multifarious forms of alternative sexualities and sexual practices. From the stifling confines of the proverbial closet to the more commodious gay bar and other expansive queer spaces, Filipino gay men indeed have traveled far and wide.

Works Cited

- Baytan, Ronald. *The Queen Sings the Blues*. Anvil Publishing, 2008.
- Betskey, Aaron. *Queer Space: Architecture and Same-Sex Desire*. William Morrow, 1997.
- Cruz-Malave, Arnaldo, and Martin F. Manalansan IV. *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism*. New York UP, 2002.
- de Guzman, Nestor. *Galing Cine Café*. Lambana Press, 2005.
- Foucault, Michel, and Jay Miskowiec. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1986, pp. 22-27. *The John Hopkins University Press*, doi:10.2307/464648.
- Galán, Ralph Semino. *The Southern Cross and Other Poems*. National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2005.
- Gamalinda, Eric. *Lyrics from a Dead Language*. Anvil Publishing, 1991.
- Garcia, J. Neil C. Garcia. *Closet Quivers*. Kalikan Press, 1992.
- . *Our Lady of the Carnival*. U of the Philippines P, 1996.
- Leitch, Vincent B., ed. "Introduction to Theory and Criticism." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. W.W. Norton &

- Company, 2001, pp. 1-28.
- Lucas, Ian. *Outrage! An Oral History*. Cassell, 1998.
- Manalansan IV, Martin F. *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*. Duke University Press, 2003.
- Oswell, David. "True Love in Queer Times: Romance, Suburbia and Masculinity." *Fatal Attractions: Re-scripting Romance in Contemporary Literature and Film*, edited by Lynne Pearce and Gina Wisker, Pluto Press, 1998, pp. 157-73.
- Pichay, Nicholas B. *Ang Lunes na Mahirap Bunuin*. Publikasyong Sipat, 1993.

A Different *Jihad*: Autobiographical Narratives of Three Philippine Muslim Women Writers

Jhoanna Lynn B. Cruz

I started writing this paper more than twenty years ago, though I did not know it then. At that time, I was a young and over-eager college lecturer taking up my master's degree. The first National Conference on Muslim-Christian Women's Dialogue was held in De La Salle University, Manila in 1994. It was a strange ocean of nuns in habits, women in *hijab*, and teachers from the Religious Studies department. I do not remember why I was there, except that I was curious. I took away only one thing from that event: that the veil is not obligatory for Muslim women in the Philippines, but that they choose to wear it because they believe women's hair is a source of temptation for men. I must admit that I scoffed at the idea, being a liberal Christian and a feminist.

Nine years later, I was asked to do a book review of the bestselling memoir, *My Forbidden Face, Growing Up Under the Taliban: A Young Woman's Story*, written by Latifa, a twenty-one-year-old woman whose family had fled Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. Thus continued my informal and sporadic education in the status of women in Islam. Although again, I must admit that my attitude toward what I then considered my Other was still uncomprehending, and at worst, disdainful. The book cover of a woman wearing not just a veil, but a *burka* (the head-to-toe veil with only a meshwork peephole to see through) was evocative of this obscurity surrounding Muslim women. The Muslim woman's experience seemed so different and distant, and I did not feel the urgency of understanding it.

I was guilty of what Marnia Lazreg long ago described as “the difficulty researchers have in dealing with a reality with which they are unfamiliar” (85). Even feminist scholars commit this injustice when they focus only on the *suras* concerning women, particularly the ones saying that women should obey men; thus fetishizing what they view as oppression from their own perspective. Writing about how Islamic women in Algeria have been (mis)represented, Lazreg explains that this paradigm

[...] preclude(s) any understanding of Algerian women *in their lived reality*: as subjects in their own right. Instead, they are reified, made into mere bearers of unexplained categories. Algerian women have no existence outside these categories; they have no individuality. What is true of one is true of all; just as what is true of Algerian women is also held to be true of all women deemed to be like them over the space generously defined as the “Muslim world” or the “Arab world” (94-95).

Seen in this light, good intentions to urge the Islamic woman to free herself from a patriarchal institution we do not understand are revealed as misguided self-righteousness. It is an injustice we do to ourselves too as feminist writers and scholars from the Asia-Pacific region. Yet, to a certain extent, this “worlding” of the Other could not be helped.

On the other hand, nine years ago, due to personal circumstances and decision, I moved to the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, where majority of the Philippines’ Muslim population resides. And I’d like to think that this has lifted the veil from my eyes, so to speak. Kit Collier’s country situationer in the contemporary sourcebook *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia* (2006) states that there are approximately four million Muslims in the Philippines, mostly concentrated in southwestern provinces of Mindanao, where they are continually evolving what is known as the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, established in 1990 in efforts to end the decades-long *jihad* for Muslim liberation. While they comprise only four to five percent of the Philippine population, Philippine Muslims have been hard put to define a “collective Islamic

identity.” Collier confirms that this difficulty stems from “tribal loyalties based on ethno-linguistic distinctions” (64). A shared religion and history of struggle have not unified our thirteen Muslim tribes with different cultures and languages.

I live in Davao City, which hosts a Muslim minority in specific enclaves. Teaching in the state university has introduced me to different kinds of Muslim students, particularly women, very few of whom wear the *hijab*. As a matter of fact, I know that some of them purposely wear “normal” attire in order not to draw attention to their so-called Muslim identity. Some of them even wear clothes that would be considered “lewd” and *haram* or forbidden in their culture. It is their individual stories of courage that have prompted me to take up my old challenge of understanding my Other. I wondered if I were now ready to truly see the Philippine Muslim woman as an individual, not just as a symbol of women’s oppression. And the only way to undertake this project was by listening to their own voices in their autobiographical narratives.

By studying three Muslim women writers’ autobiographical narratives, this paper aims to show how each woman struggles to assert her individuality against the patriarchal demands of how Islam is interpreted and practiced in the Philippines. It examines how Pearlsha Abubakar, Janesa Mariam Ladjiman, and Diandra-Ditma Macarambon have taken various risks to subvert the Islamic culture they belong to, in both their lives and in their writing. And yet by choosing to remain within the Muslim community, they have also remained subject to its hegemony, which has thus resulted in a divided self.

I am guided in particular by Shari Benstock’s framework on the study of women’s autobiographies, which asks, “How do the fissures of female discontinuity display themselves, and what are the identifying features?” (1047). She explains that “autobiography reveals gaps, and not only gaps in time and space or between the individual and the social, but also a widening divergence between the manner and matter of its discourse” (1041). The self-disclosure in the narratives can be studied in the light of what is not said; the speaking subject aims to locate herself within her life and her community, but is also dislocated or decentered by her own efforts to articulate her position. As Benstock notes, the self only *appears* to be organic. Harnessing the tools of poststructuralism, she suggests examining

the following elements: “representation; tone; perspective; figures of speech; even the shift between first-, second-, and third-person pronouns” (1048) in order to reveal the “fissures of female discontinuity” in a text. This reading strategy allows a feminist reader like me, who presumes to be an empathetic observer, to illuminate the “relation between the psychic and the political, the personal and the social, in the linguistic fabric” (1048). In this manner, I hope to be able to contribute to the evolving discourse on women in Islam as it is practiced in the Philippines.

While it is true, as Lazreg warns, that “a feminist engaged in the act of representing women who belong to a different culture, ethnic group, race, or social class wields a form of power over them; a power of interpretation” (96), I would like to add here that what I aim to do is less of an interpretation, and more of an “explication” in its Latin sense of “unfold, set forth,” as I do not presume to know these women writers or Islamic culture more than they do. In a manner of speaking, I have also taken a risk in undertaking this project, one that I hope will create more opportunities for understanding rather than discord.

My title, “A Different *Jihad*,” suggests that the Philippine Muslim woman writer’s efforts to write her life is not simply a matter of examining her memories in relation to whom she has become, but is part of a larger religious and cultural context in which she struggles to belong. The word “*jihad*” literally means to endeavor, to strive, to struggle, and to fight. “It can mean the personal struggle to make oneself a better Muslim through prayer and fasting, and by acquiring a deeper knowledge of the faith... It can also mean fighting against injustice, ignorance and oppression through preaching and *writing*” (Fealy 353, emphasis mine). *Jihad* is further classified into the “lesser *jihad*,” (*jihaadun asgharun*) which refers to armed struggle or holy war, and the “greater *jihad*,” (*jihaadun akbarun*) which “entails struggling against one’s own personal desires, such as greed, lust and vanity” (353). In these senses, women share the same *jihad* with Muslim men. The difference, I posit, arises from the woman writer’s two-step with the Islamic culture. She pushes against its borders to see how far it might stretch to accommodate her individuality, then when she feels the strain, she pulls back towards the center of its protection. This retreat leads to the decentering of her articulated self. As Adamson discovers in her anthropological study of Javanese Muslim women, when gender

identities are challenged, especially within relationships, it “simultaneously (disrupts) one of the most subjective ways of knowing oneself and one’s place in an otherwise unstable world” (8), thus causing what she calls “gendered anxiety.” But the risks for these women writers I study are not merely discursive; they are real.

Pearlsha Abubakar: Along the Path of Piety

I begin with Pearlsha Abubakar, who, among the three, occupies a privileged position, having been born, raised, and educated in Metro Manila, the capital of the country. She has been a fellow in two national writers workshops, has won a prestigious Philippine literary award for her fiction, and has been published in two landmark anthologies of Muslim writing. Born to Tausug parents who have been living in exile from their home in Sulu, she describes herself as a “decadent urbanite” who often had arguments with her father about “his conservative worldviews— that women and men have divinely-defined roles, for instance.” In an essay entitled “No Dowry, No Cry,” first published in a now-defunct website in 2000, and reprinted in May this year in the *Dagmay* literary journal of the Davao Writers Guild, she writes about her subversive decision to marry R, a Christian.

Initially, she presents herself as an unseemly Muslim woman, with a “skimpy dress on that merely flattened out whatever curves remained in my ectomorphic body. I didn’t have a veil on...” She also reveals a somewhat derisive attitude towards her family name “Abubakar,” which suggests “automatic cross references to Abu Sayyaf, Camp Abubakar, and Abubakar Janjalani (we are not related, by the way).” These references have negative connotations in the Philippine setting, bringing to mind acts of terror perpetrated by the renegade *jihadist* group Abu Sayyaf. She brings home a Christian who wants her hand in marriage, despite knowing that, according to her father, “back in Sulu, a Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim was downright unthinkable.” What’s worse, R was poor and did not have anything to offer as a dowry.

Abubakar goes on to explain her knowledge of the Islamic rules in her community: “A dowry could actually be anything from a million pesos to a prayer mat, depending on the man’s ability to pay and the woman’s capacity to reciprocate his affections. If the woman is not particularly smitten with the

man, her family raises her dowry to a level that is sure to turn the poor suitor away.” She adds that “not only does it serve as compensation for the parents for raising a marriageable maiden; the dowry is also a security blanket for the wife if the marriage leaves her cold.” Here, we see that Abubakar appreciates the power gender dynamics in Islam as it is practiced in the Philippines: the woman does have a say in whom she wants to marry; and if the marriage does not make her happy, she can give it up. Islamic law prohibits forcing a woman to marry; whether she is a virgin or a matron, her consent must be sought (Naseef 89). As for dowry, the Qur’an says “Wed them with the permission of their own folk and give them their *mahr* according to what is reasonable” (4:25 in Naseef 174). Thus, it must be paid to show the husband’s commitment to his responsibility toward his wife. Yet the Prophet also said, “When you marry, do so even with an iron ring” (176).

After Abubakar and R are wedded in a traditional Muslim ceremony called *kawin*, in which the man is cleansed and baptized, then asked to recite the Islamic prayer, *Al Fatiha*, her dowry is set officially at Php50,000 and one sheet of gold. This was a huge sum of money at that time, so the poor groom is incredulous. The essay ends with: “I left him to ponder the question as I sang Jennifer Lopez’s “Love Don’t Cost a Thing.” When she refers to this song, Abubakar shows her stand against the practice of *mahr*; she identifies with the Western ideal of love. Some of the lyrics of the song say:

Even if you were broke
my love don’t cost a thing...

All that matters is that you treat me right
Give me all the things I need that money can’t buy

When I took a chance, thought you’d understand ...
so you’re trying to buy what’s already yours ...

She gives the new husband hope that it does not really matter whether he has the funds to pay the dowry or not. They are already married, after all. We can assume that she will subvert the culture by accepting this marriage even without a dowry, which is a risk she is taking in the name of love. And sex. Elsewhere in the essay, she admits, “We were

so in love, we just couldn't wait another day. And we definitely wanted to have sex any time, any day without my father scowling at us at the back of our minds."

On the other hand, let me draw attention to how the female subject is dis/located. Abubakar says:

I also saw the whole situation as a test; if R. were nonchalant about this whole dowry business and about Islam in general, then maybe he couldn't be that serious about me. I had inherited my religion and my surname from my father, and I wanted R. to realize that if he were going to love me, he also had to love the assortment of strange people I loved, since I did not subscribe to the you-and-me-against-the-world school of relationships.

In this passage, she reveals that she is on the same side as her father on the matter of the dowry, as well as the prohibition against mixed marriages. Not only does the man need to pay the dowry, he has to do it to pass a "test." The metaphor she uses suggests that in order for the non-Muslim to deserve marriage to a Muslim woman, he has to embrace the Islamic family and culture to which she belongs, strange though it may be. Because she does not believe in "you-and-me-against-the-world," something has got to give. And in this case, it is the non-Muslim. In fact, when the *kawin* ceremony is held, he is ritually baptized into the religion. He does not have a choice.

Moreover, she admits, "I wanted to get married right away to appease my father." She explains that in the Philippines it is considered a sin for a Muslim woman to enjoy the company of man who is not her relative or husband. Thus, marriage will make her a righteous Muslim woman. In a way, she knows that her father's protests are only superficial, because she is actually doing the right thing.

A particularly poignant moment in the essay is when Abubakar admits that "Islam was the scaffold that supported my otherwise ambivalent relationship with my father." She uses the scaffold as a metaphor for the role that Islam plays in her family. I assume she means it as "a temporary structure for holding workers and materials during the erection of a build-

ing,” in which case she pushes against the rules, revealing the power of the religion as temporary and precarious. And yet, a scaffold also refers to “an elevated platform on which a criminal is executed, usually by hanging,” in which case she judges herself as having done something unlawful and thus must be punished with death.

Five years after, Abubakar publishes a short sequel in the anthology *Children of the Ever-Changing Moon* (2007). It is a letter to her father; it is one of reconciliation, not just with her father, but with her Muslim self. Initially, she asserts her stand against her father’s request for a second wedding, a grand and traditional one in their hometown, which will also mark the groom’s conversion to Islam. She asks her father to stop asking for this, as it will not likely happen.

She adds that in her process of growth as a person, she discovered “not religion, but art. Music. Poetry. Literature” (3). She further distances herself from her father and the Islamic culture by sharing that “prayer for you is five times a day and *khutbah* on Fridays. Prayer for me is every time I play the piano, compose a song, and write an essay.” Reading this would have broken her father’s heart, as prayer or *salawaat* is one of the pillars of Islam. But she also apologizes to him for this: “Sorry that I have to live that life differently from what you’d envisioned for me” (2).

On the other hand, the letter also aims to appease her father. She assures him that she is still a dutiful Muslim wife and mother. “Your grandchild will be fine. He’ll know all the paths, and I’ll show him the ways. R and I are good” (4). These, in fact, are the obligations of a Muslim wife: obedience to her husband, reproduction, and “increasing the numbers of the Muslim nation” (Naseef 197). It is said that the spiritual education of children is an obligation of the mother; she is expected to teach them the fundamentals of faith, as well as be a good example (237). Perhaps Abubakar here tries to reach a compromise with her father and the culture that he represents. She may not be a good example of the practices, but at least she is raising her child with knowledge of the religion so he would not become a lost soul.

Lastly, she assures her father that she is in a state of greater *jihad*: “that’s the challenge I’m constantly battling, the challenge to overcome myself... Overcoming through surrendering—how beautiful it is! Someday I might just find myself along that path” (4). Here, she says what her father wants to hear—that one day, she will stop resisting her Islamic identity; that she will “surrender” her subversive notions, give herself up. And then

she will finally become a beautiful Muslim woman, one who has overcome a long and worthy *jihad* despite her seemingly unconventional approach. *Inshaa'llah*.

Janesa Mariam Ladjiman: A Plea for Help

Of the three writers in this study, Janesa Mariam Ladjiman is the youngest, having only graduated from college in 2012. She finished a Bachelor of Arts in English, major in Creative Writing, cum laude, in the University of the Philippines Mindanao. And yet, among the three, her individual accomplishment as a female Muslim writer is most significant. To complete her degree, she needed to write a book-length manuscript as a thesis; she chose to write personal essays exploring her struggles as a Muslim “in the borderline,” because she had thought she was “a Muslim (with) many questions about her religion but who didn’t want to start finding answers” (xii). She admits, though, that in the process of writing her thesis, she discovered that she did not want to step outside the borderline because she did not want to give up her family and her identity as an Islamic woman. She claims, “I love who I am” (xii). That is, she loves who she thinks she is in relation to the Islamic culture she belongs to. She also reveals in her preface that “Writing was my way of making that hazy road I had been walking through all this time, a bit clearer.” She wrote eight essays, each about an aspect of Islam, plus a preface, and titled her collection, *Outside the Masjid* (2012).

I discuss here the essay “Five Deadly Sins,” which has been published in *Dagmay Literary Folio*, which comes out in print in the local daily *Sun. Star Davao* and is also available online at dagmay.kom.ph. The essay revolves around what Ladjiman defines as five deadly sins: Gluttony, Pride, Greed, Lust, and Boasting. And yet the reader soon realizes that she is not really writing about the above sins per se, but only of her disobedience or resistance to the pillars and rules of Islam, particularly in regard to prayer.

One cannot help but admire the candor and the courage of this writer, who dares to risk the ire of the Muslim community in her admission of her failings. Ladjiman begins her essay by admitting that she does not perform the prayer or *sambahayang* five times a day: “I do it five times a month when I have the time, or at least once every three months.” Not only does she claim that she does not have time to pray, she also confesses that “the

sambahayang is one of the things that I readily sacrifice to attend to other things I consider more important.” But what could be more important than prayer for a Muslim? Prayer is obligatory because it is meant “to fully realise spiritual contact with God” (Hooker 95); it is a “reminder of God’s presence” (96). The Qur’an states that “prayer is a duty incumbent on the faithful, to be conducted at appointed hours” (4:103 in Naseef 121). Thus, it is tantamount to sacrilege when Ladjiman writes that “it seems that when it is time to pray, all of a sudden I remember that I have other things to do. Sometimes, I tell myself that I have to go to school or I have assignments to do or I have somewhere else to go. I know that all of these are mere excuses but I don’t really care.” It is possible that other Muslims share the same attitude towards prayer, but they will not dare say it, or publish it.

She further narrates that when she was twelve, her mother taught her the *wudhu*, or the ritual of cleansing the body before praying. She remembers having many questions about the process: “I wondered why it had to be done three times. Will it make any difference if I skipped one act and proceeded to the next one? What would happen if I only did it twice?” But she did not dare ask her mother directly. She describes the ritual as “punishment” and as “torture.” At nineteen, she does know how to perform *wudhu* and *sambahayang*, but she does not practice them. She ends this section by comparing *sambahayang* to “walking around school in heels and with a big bag of stones.” It may make her look good, but it is a burden, a source of suffering.

In the section entitled “Gluttony,” Ladjiman tells us about a time when she dared eat a slice of bread after she had performed *wudhu*, and her mother commanded her to perform the ritual again to prepare for a visit to the *masjid*. But by the time they arrived at the mosque, the prayer had begun. So the young Ladjiman was not allowed entry; she waited for her mother outside the *masjid*. This is what the title of the collection refers to literally. “I sat there for almost an hour eating and drinking what satisfied my hunger”—seemingly as a way to get back at the culture that did not make any sense to her—and which her mother only expressed as: “Just follow what I tell you. I only teach you what good Muslims do.” She ends this section with no remorse: “I don’t regret eating that slice of bread because I know it would have been much better than joining the ceremony and praying to Allah that the Imam make the *sambahayang* faster.”

The second sin, “Pride,” focuses on her travail of preventing coming into contact with a male tricycle driver after having performed *wudhu*. In this section, her impiety is inadvertently caused by the driver, who was ignorant of her need to stay clean. She seems eager to be pure enough to perform *sambahayang*, but the narrative later reveals that she is only avoiding contact with the man because she “did not want to go about the same ritual,” which suggests that her consternation was only a matter of ritual, and not of reason or faith.

In the third section, “Greed,” Ladjiman expresses her concerns about why Muslim women are seated at the back of the *masjid*, while the men are in front. Her mother explains that “women are more capable of ‘concentrating’ than men.” But the child admits that “I didn’t understand what she meant because whenever I stepped into the mosque, I immediately felt drowsy and sleepy.” Islamic scholar Abdul-ati explains that the segregation of males and females in a mosque does not imply rank: “If men mix with women in the same lines, it is possible that something disturbing or distracting may happen. [...] The result will be a loss of the purpose of prayers, besides an offense of adultery committed by the eye, because the eye—by looking at forbidden things—can be guilty of adultery as much as the heart itself” (*Jannah.Org*). On the other hand, feminist scholar Dagher finds an *Hadith* in which the Prophet once said, “Three things corrupt prayer: Women, dogs, and donkeys.” (*Light of Life*). Further, she mentions a saying attributed to the Prophet: “I think that women were created for nothing but evil.” Thus the child’s questions about whether Allah loves boys more than girls have some weight. But as usual, the mother refuses to discuss it further.

In a scatological turn of events, the child experiences stomach discomfort during prayers, but her mother refuses to give her leave to go to the toilet. Thus, Ladjiman ends up praying “intently to Allah to make the ceremony faster for [her] suffering to end. [She] prayed even harder that [she] won’t poop in [her] underpants because [she] was wearing a white *luko*.” Yet in the midst of her gastrointestinal despair, which all of us have experienced at some point or other, she also has a moment of lucid rebellion: “I wondered if Allah heard my prayers because about one hundred other people were praying all at the same time.” This, again, is a dangerous question to ask because it seems to doubt the omnipotence of Allah.

The fourth sin, “Lust,” begins with another reference to the segregation of the sexes in the mosque. Her mother explains that women have to sit behind the men so that the men will not be tempted. But she fails to enlighten the girl about what “tempting” means, perhaps because of her reluctance to discuss sex. Temptation or *fitnah* is central to many rules surrounding Muslim women, e.g. covering the *juyubihinna* (bodies, faces, necks and bosoms) with the *hijab* (Naseef 110). This practice has been interpreted as a means of protecting women “from any potential threat to her honour and dignity” (107). Dagher maintains, however, that the Prophet has said “I fear no temptation that would befall my people but for the temptation of women and wine” (*Light of Life*), which firmly assigns a negative role to women.

On the other hand, this section in Ladjiman’s essay is not about the *hijab*, but about her brazen decision to attend a Christian worship session, and even enjoy it because of the music, singing, and dancing. She dares voice out that she would love to be invited again, which is tantamount to being converted. The section ends with: “If only praying in my religion were like this, I would go to the mosque and pray as often as I could. I do not understand why we pray the way we do.” On one level, it is only a hypothetical statement, but on another, it is a betrayal of her religion’s practices.

In the last section, “Boasting,” Ladjiman further reveals her uneasiness with Islamic rituals, which always make her sleepy at best, and resentful at worst. “It is a language so alien to me that whenever I hear the *Imam*, my mind starts to wander. I am there but my mind is somewhere else. No matter how hard I try, I can’t concentrate. Sometimes, I spend the hour sitting there, listening but not understanding a single thing... Nothing makes any sense.” As a child, she boastfully demands that “*Imams* should make sure that everybody can understand what they are saying.” Once again, she dares to voice out what many Muslims probably experience but do not express—the incomprehension and frustration during congregational prayers in Arabic.

In 2011, at a writers’ workshop in which Ladjiman was a fellow, one of the senior panelists asked, “Are you ready for the risk of publishing your essays?” He even gave the famous example of the fatwa on Salman Rushdie. She was dumbfounded because at that point, she admitted, “Before the workshop, it was only the fear of being rejected by the panelists. But

after, it was both the fear of being rejected by the panelists and all the other Muslims out there, including my own family” (xiii). It is true that those of us who write essays are often more concerned with what is going on inside us than how our writing will be received by the public. But as Ladjiman herself admits, her subversive essays have actually shown her the way back to Islam.

For instance, the essay is titled “Five Deadly Sins,” which seems to give the essay a pontifical tone, as though it meant to preach about how to avoid these so-called sins. It is an allusion to the Christian concept of the “Seven Deadly Sins,” and the reader thus expects perhaps an Islamic version. But reading closely, one notices that the sections labeled with the names of the sins are not exactly about the identified sins. Thus, the title and sections function as red herrings, meant to confuse or disarm the reader, who must now struggle to make sense of the essay’s strategies. On the other hand, this ambiguity may also be rooted in the writer’s own confusion about what constitutes a “deadly sin” in her own religion as it is practiced by her family and community. Her narrative is peppered with her frustration about not being able to understand why something must be done or not done in Islam, as well as her inability to ask her mother for clarification for fear of her anger. She ends her essay with, “Allah knows how much I want to understand the Muslim language, if only to feel what most Muslims in the *masjid* feel when praying. In this way, I will finally belong.” This essay is actually a plea for somebody to help her understand.

Moreover, when she sees her mother crying while praying, she says, “She listened to the Imam, bowed her head, and cried. I did not want to distract her from crying. When I looked at every woman I see inside the *masjid*, I felt like I was the only person who did not understand what was going on around me.” This seems to highlight the alienation she feels and her lack of appreciation for the spiritual experience. Piety in a woman is highly valued in any religion. It has been said that a pious Islamic woman “will easily be moved to tears because of God. Her heart will easily cry and moan because of the sins she has committed” (Tuskan qtd. in Fealy and Hooker 277). Ladjiman writes, “I want to feel what Mommy feels whenever she is inside the *masjid*.” This sentiment establishes the hegemony of the Islamic culture over her—the only way for her to be moved to tears is to acknowledge one’s sinfulness. In a way, she does not need to understand,

she only needs to feel guilty for not being the best example of piety, which, essentially, has to do with obedience to God and his prophet, and later, to her husband (277).

So what are the deadly sins in Islam? One will not find the answer in this autobiographical narrative.

Diandra-Ditma Macarambon: To Say *Bismillah*

I met Diandra-Ditma Macarambon at the Taboan Philippine International Writers Festival in February in 2013. She was in a panel on gender and writing in which I delivered a keynote address. I had not read her work because she was quite new to the literary scene, having attended a National Writers' Workshop only the previous year. When it was her turn to speak, I noticed that her introductory paragraphs were unusually long, as if she were stalling. Then when she finally got to her point, I understood the delay. After a deep breath and a long pause, she said, "I am a woman-loving woman. So, yes, that's where the apprehension was coming from and now I've actually said it, I can officially start my talk." There was an audible gasp from our small audience of about twenty. I am certain that none of us in that audience had ever seen a Muslim lesbian in the flesh. Macarambon herself said it was unthinkable: "Most people in my community don't even recognize the existence or even the concept of a woman-loving woman! I don't need to talk about how the religious take this kind of lifestyle or choice because I'd say all of us know about that already. In fact, if you really think about how people in my community take this, you'd arrive at the conclusion that the word Muslim and the word lesbian or gay just don't go together! So, what does that make me?"

I must admit that meeting Macarambon was quite the turning point in my twenty-year journey of trying to understand the Muslim woman. I just knew that her particular story of womanly courage had to be listened to. When I asked her for her work, she submitted a story, explaining that she was not really out as a lesbian. She said she only gathered the courage to come out during the Iligan National Writers' Workshop and at the festival because she felt safe in the company of people who would not judge her: "I liked how it felt, being able to tell everyone what and who I really am. But, as to the world outside the literary world, I'm afraid I'm not as thrilled about coming out."

When I published her story in the *Dagmay Literary Folio*, I asked her if she preferred to use a pseudonym to protect her family, which comes from royal Meranao lineage. But she bravely allowed me to print her real name, saying that she can always excuse herself, if necessary, by claiming that it is fiction (as many women writers have done before her). But I am presenting her story, “The Right Choice,” in this paper as an autobiographical narrative. As Carolyn Heilbrun once defined it: “to write a woman’s life: the woman herself may tell it, in what she chooses to call an autobiography; (or) she may tell it in what she chooses to call fiction” (11). Macarambon has admitted to me that the story is “semi-autobiographical.” Yet each time I speak about her work in public, I need to be conscious that she is still in the process of coming out to her family, and that I need to protect her “semi-secret.”

Told by an unnamed first-person narrator, the story begins with a woman preparing for her wedding. However, by the end of the narrative, she is seen spending her honeymoon night throwing up in the toilet. The narrator describes everyone as happy about the wedding, except, of course, her. What makes this story different is its conflict: the narrator has given up her lesbian partner for this marriage. On their last meeting, Macarambon writes, “I couldn’t eat as I felt my insides churning with every bite. I wanted to throw up... She looked at me with imploring eyes. I held her in my gaze for a few seconds as I felt something build up at the pit of my stomach. But, I kept staring. Not answering.” It is this “something” that bothers her the entire wedding day and which finally finds release on her wedding night. It is how her body expresses her lack of acceptance of the transaction that she has had to swallow in order to do what is right for a Muslim woman. It sits at the pit of her stomach, or her gut, which knows what is right for her as an individual. Her lesbian partner implores her to say “no,” suggesting that she recognizes the Islamic rule that a woman cannot be forced to marry; she must give her consent. Her silence is taken as consent (Naseef 89). Thus, all the narrator really has to do is to say no. Her partner mutters, “Do what’s right,” which suggests that the right thing to do is not to get married without her true consent. She is not even asking the narrator to choose her; although readers can assume that if she does not marry the man, she will be able to continue her lesbian relationship. When the story ends with her finally throwing up, the message is that she does not accept what she has done. But of course, it is too late.

But what does Islam actually say about lesbianism? Macarambon says in her speech: “I don’t need to talk about how the religious take this kind of lifestyle or choice because I’d say all of us know about that already.” She takes it for granted that it is considered a sin in every religion. On the other hand, according to Faris Malik, in an essay about queer sexuality in the Qur’an and *Hadith*, the verses that are used to prohibit homosexuality refer to acts of “indecentcy” or “lewdness” (*fahishah*), which are not defined specifically, and which also apply to heterosexual couples. He adds, “in order for someone to be convicted of the offense, four eyewitnesses have to testify to it, which seems to indicate some sort of public act” (*Born Eunuchs*). Thus, some liberal Muslims accept homosexuality as long as erotic behavior is not displayed publicly. Elsewhere, however, prohibitions against illicit intercourse are read in relation to sex outside of marriage, which may certainly cover homosexual relationships (Naseef), but it has to do specifically with sexual intercourse. May we infer that if two women want to be in a long-term relationship, they can do so as long as they do not have sex? The matter continues to provoke debate and further studies. Yet “the feminist and reformist argument (is) that *shar’iah* should be put in its historical and social context, as this would make other and more progressive interpretations of the Qur’an possible” (Jivraj and de Jong), making same-sex relationships permissible.

But should Macarambon feel threatened by having written this “lesbian story?” Has she put her family to shame? Definitely not, considering all the narrative strategies she uses to promote the hegemonic stand on lesbianism. First, the story begins at dawn, before light, as the narrator looks out a window: “It felt like *Ramadhan*, the peace and quiet. I continued looking into the dark, seeing nothing. I shivered in the cold.” The peace she refers to here is artificial; it is cold, and she is not seeing, she is in the dark. To prepare for the wedding, she takes a bath, which she describes as: “I felt my life, as I knew it, being washed away. Whatever tears and protests I had were drowned by the strong stream from the shower.” This is the appropriate attitude for an Islamic woman to take, much like the *wudhu* or cleansing ritual described by Ladjiman. *Wudhu* cleanses one of iniquities and prepares one for communion with God. This shower, which washes away her life as she knew it, is symbolic of baptism.

In addition, we are told that when the narrator and her lesbian partner part ways, she drives off, not knowing where to go: “I just drove

round and round the city. Truth is I had no confidence to go far. I had no confidence to go out of the city just like that. I was not one for that kind of adventure.” It is thus revealed that she will not go against the Islamic culture. She owed it to her mother, especially, who had struggled to keep the family afloat after the father’s untimely death, and who successfully arranged this “ideal” marriage. “This was all her work,” the narrator reiterates, reminding herself to be grateful. As she and her groom walk down the aisle, she clings to him, “as though [her] life depended on it” because it really does, as a Muslim husband is tasked to take care of every need of his wife and children. In exchange, she will obey him.

By the end of the story, it is night, and she stares at her reflection, tearful that “it is no longer [her] face; it is a face [she doesn’t] recognize.” When she is effaced, it actually signifies the Islamic ideal earlier referred to by Abubakar in her letter to her father as the beautiful surrender that is the goal of each person’s greater *jihad*. It is the ideal state of “*Bismillah*” — giving one’s life completely over to Allah. As Wahiduddin explains, “To say *bismillah* is to humbly offer one’s self as a vehicle for the glory and majesty of The One” (Shelquist). Thus, the title of the story, “The Right Choice,” actually refers to the choice she has made, to sacrifice her personal desires for her family, her community, and her God.

In a Philippine study of Islamic jurisprudence and women’s rights, Mejia contends that what makes the laws patriarchal are the interpretations of the Qur’an and Sharia, as well as the socio-political aspect of the religion. Yet she also finds that “A major feature of Islamic jurisprudence is that its laws may change to adapt to the change of time, place and/or circumstance. *Shari’ah* recognizes the dynamism of societies; societies differ in place and time” (9). This gives gender activists in Islamic countries hope in continuing the struggle for more equitable interpretations of the law. The first openly queer American Imam Daayiee Abdullah adds that “culture supersedes religion and dictates how religion and religious laws are imposed. I think the work of [...] queer Muslim activists has helped people better understand that what they’ve been taught is a cultural manifestation of what the Koran means” (Rathod). Thus, as in hermeneutics, the Qur’an is a site of struggle for signification. As Macarambon herself bravely declared in her speech: “That is why I am here! I would want to be a voice. A voice for those who are too afraid to be themselves... A voice for those who are like me, who’ve hidden how special they are because of this fear

of judgment and intolerance. I would like to be a voice for these people. I know that I am not alone in this struggle.”

Indeed she is not alone. Pearlsha Abubakar, Janesa Ladjiman, and Diandra Macarambon represent three Islamic voices in Philippine literature that have courageously sung their heart’s desires in the midst of the danger of reprisal. While I have shown how their voices have been overpowered by the louder chorus of the culture they belong to, it does not diminish their achievement of speaking up against what they do not understand or what they question about the Islamic culture. Their voices ring true and loud nonetheless, proving that there is not only one *jihad*, and that each of us is called to find our own way to win it.

Works Cited

- Abdul-Ati, Hammuda. “The Status of Woman in Islam.” *Jannah.Org*, www.jannah.org/sisters/statuswomen.html. Accessed 9 May 2013.
- Abubakar, Pearlsha. “Letter to my Father.” *Children of the Ever-Changing Moon: Essays by Moro Writers*, edited by Gutierrez Mangansakan II, Anvil Publishing, 2007, pp. 1-4.
- . “No Dowry, No Cry.” *Dagmay Literary Folio*, 27 May 2013, dagmay.kom.ph/2013/05/27/no-dowry-no-cry.
- Adamson, Clarissa. “Gendered Anxieties: Islam, Women’s Rights, and Moral Hierarchy in Java.” *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 80, no. 1, 2007, pp. 5-37. www.jstor.org/stable/4150942.
- Benstock, Shari. “Authorizing the Autobiographical.” *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, edited by Robyn Warhol and Diane Herndl, Rutgers, 1991, pp. 1040-57.
- Dagher, Hamdun. *The Position of Women in Islam*. *Light of Life*, 23 Apr. 1997, www.light-of-life.com/eng/reveal. Accessed 25 Apr. 2013.
- Fealy, Greg, and Virginia Hooker, editors. *Voices of Islam in Southeast Asia: A Contemporary Sourcebook*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2006.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn. *Writing a Woman’s Life*. Ballantine Books, 1988.
- Jivraj, Suhraiya, and Anisa de Jong. “Same-Sex Relationships between

- Women and Islam.” *Safra Project*, 2003, www.safraproject.org/sgi-samesexrelationshipsbetweenwomen.htm. Accessed 6 May 2013.
- Ladjiman, Janesa Mariam. “Five Deadly Sins.” *Dagmay Literary Folio*, 29 Apr. 2013, dagmay.kom.ph/2013/04/29/five-deadly-sins.
- . “Outside the *Masjid*.” Unpublished undergraduate thesis, University of the Philippines Mindanao, 2012.
- Lazreg, Marnia. “Feminism and Difference: the Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria.” *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1988, pp. 81-107. doi: 10.2307/3178000.
- Macarambon, Diandra-Ditma. “The Right Choice.” *Dagmay Literary Folio*, 20 May 2013, dagmay.kom.ph/2013/05/20/the-right-choice.
- . 5th Taboan Philippine Writers Festival, 9 Feb. 2013, Dumaguete City, Philippines. Speech.
- Malik, Faris. “Queer Sexuality and Identity in the Qur’an and Hadith.” *Born Eunuchs*, 1999, www.well.com/user/aquarius/Qur’annotes.htm. Accessed 6 May 2013.
- Mangansakan, Gutierrez II, editor. *Children of the Ever-Changing Moon: Essays by Moro Writers*. Anvil Publishing, 2007.
- Mejia, Melanie P. “Gender *Jihad*: Muslim Women, Islamic Jurisprudence, and Women’s Rights.” *KRITIKĒ*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2007, pp. 1-24. www.kritike.org/journal/issue_1/mejia_june2007.pdf.
- Naseef, Fatima Umar. *Women in Islam: A Discourse in Rights and Obligations*. Sterling Publishers, 1999.
- Rathod, Sara. “America’s First Openly Gay Imam Reflects on Orlando Massacre.” *Mother Jones*, 14 Jun. 2016, www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/06/first-openly-gay-imam-orlando-massacre. Accessed 2 Aug. 2016.
- Shelquist, Wahiduddin Richard. “Bismillah al rahman al rahim.” *Wahiduddin’s Web*, 3 Jan. 2008, wahiduddin.net/words/bismillah.htm. Accessed 15 May 2013.
- Warhol, Robyn, and Diane Price Herndl, eds. *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Rutgers, 1991.

Benigno P. Ramos, “Poeta Revolucionario”: Ang Responsibilidad ng Makata sa Gitna ng Krisis ng Ordeng Kolonyal

E. San Juan, Jr.

Ang ginawa namin ay aming pagmamanahan... Nagpasiya kaming maghimagsik, bumalikwas at buwagin ang pusod ng kapangyarihan. Sigaw namin: “Kami’y mga Sakdalista...Walang pagbabangong nabibigo. Bawat isa’y hakbang sa tumpak na direksyon.

—Salud Algabre, isang lider ng rebelyon, 1935

Sino ka’mo? Benigno Aquino? Hindi po, Benigno P. Ramos, ang manunulat. Tuwing mababanggit ang pangalan ng makata sa usapang pampanitikan at talastasang pangkasaysayan, laging sumisingit ang bintang o paratang na siya’y naging traydor sa pagkampi sa puwersang Hapon noong Pangalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig. Maselang paratang iyon. Mauungkat na naging kasangkot si Ramos sa KALIBAPI (Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Pilipinas), kung saan ang partidong GANAP na binuo niya ay bumangis sa kasukdulang yugto ng Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig (Taylor 106). Umiwas siyang malitis sa People’s Court dahil (ayon sa ilang ulat) pumanaw siya sa larangan ng pakikihamak.¹

Sa anu’t anoman, tiyak na ito’y bagong balita sa mga salinlahing isinilang at lumaki nitong huling hati ng siglo 1900—maliban sa ilang dalubhasa’t apisyonadong bihasa sa pananaliksik sa katakomb ng mga lumang aklatan.

Hindi naman nag-iisa si Ramos sa predikamentong gumipit sa maraming kababayan. Kasangkot niya roon ang mga bantog na politikong Jose P. Laurel, Claro Recto, Benigno Aquino, Sr., Manuel Roxas, at iba pang oligarkong ilustrado. Sinasabing kompositor si Ramos ng himno ng KALIBAPI. Bukod dito, dokumentado rin na si Ramos ay isa sa mga nagtatag ng MAKAPILI (Malayang Katipunan ng mga Pilipino), organisasyon ng militanteng kabataang nagsikap guluhin ang pamamahala ni Laurel at hikayatin ang mga taong sumanib sa mga umuuring na Hapon. Binigyan ng armas ang grupo nina Ramos at Heneral Artemio Ricarte noong huling dako ng taong 1944. Sinasabing namatay si Ramos nang bumagsak ang eroplanong ginamit niya sa pagtakas sa lumulusob na tropang Amerikano noong 1946.² Di kusang napuputol ang kumbersasyon sa ganitong haka-haka, mga opinyong nagbubunsod sa pagkamangha at makulit na pag-uusisa.

Kung masusing paglilimiin, sa loob ng panlabas na isyung pampolitika—ang responsibilidad ng kolonisadong subjek/ahente—ay nakaluklok ang usapin ng relasyon ng katotohanan at kabutihan. Dinadaliri dito ang oposisyon ng kabutihan ng bayan at katotohanan ng buhay ng bawat isa. Narito ang hamon: isasa-isantabi ang lahat upang lumaya ang buong lipunan, o upang makamit ang ginhawa’t kasaganaan ng sarili. Sa krisis na lumukob sa bawat Filipino paglaho ng pag-asang maililigtas ang soberanyang sinupil ng Estados Unidos, humarap ang dilema kung ano ang dapat piliin: tagumpay ng sambayanang inalipin, o kagalingang pansarili? Sa panig ng indibidwalistikong ideolohiya ng demokrasyong kolonyal, kagandahan at aliw ang dapat idulot ng sining at ibang gawaing kultural. Sa panig naman ng kilusang makabayan, ang hustisya’t kasarinlan ng sambayanan ang dapat gawing pangunahing layunin sa ibabaw ng lahat. Sa ibang salita: kaluwalhatian ng pansarili versus ginhawa’t kasaganaan ng komunidad. Paano nilutas ang kontradiksiyong ito sa buhay at sining ni Ramos? Kung hindi nalutas, paano kinilala’t binuno ito? Isang maikling pagsubok na imbestigasyon lamang ang ihahain dito, kalakip ang ilang mungkahi sa maparaang pagsisiyasat sa tema ng diyalektika ng ideya at praktika sa larangan ng kulturang pampolitika sa ating bansa.

Samantalain ang Pagkakataon

Umpisahan natin sa ilang palatandaang hayag at laganap. Sa buntong ng datos na nakatambak sa Internet, halimbawa sa Wikipedia, masusulyapan ang ganitong impormasyon tungkol sa makata.

Sumilang sa Bulacan noong 1892, si Ramos ay naging guro, makata (“Ben Ruben” ang isang sagisag niya), organisador, empleyado sa serbisyo sibil, at mamamayang kontrobersiyal. Hinirang siyang magsilbi sa Senado noong 1928, sumali sa Partido Nacionalista, at napalapit kay Manuel Quezon, ang makabuluhang politikong aktor noon. Isang importanteng pangyayari ang naganap noong 1930: umaklas ang mga estudyante sa Manila North High School laban sa isang mapanglait na gurong Amerikana. Nagalit ang gobyerno. Inusig at pinarusahan ang mga makabayang aktibista. Sinuportahan ni Ramos ang mga estudyanteng sumalungat sa utos ni Quezon na pumanig sa Amerikana. Dagling resulta nito: ipinatanggal si Ramos sa tungkulin niya sa pamahalaan. Isang mapait na bunga iyon ng pagbuklod ni Ramos ng sariling bait at kolektibong kapakanan. Malinaw na nailarawan dito ang mga puwersang mapagpasiyang nagtatakda ng takbo ng kolonisadong lipunan at ng tadhana ng buong sambayanan, sampu ng kapalaran ng isang abang manunulat.

Hindi nagluwat, walang atubiling inugitan ni Ramos ang daloy ng kasaysayan. Dagling naglunsad siya ng isang pahayagan noong Oktubre 13, 1930. Ang kaniyang peryodikong *Sakdal* ay tambuli ng masang manggawa’t magbubukid. Bukod sa paninindigan sa hustisyang panlipunan at pagkakapantay-pantay, nanawagan ito sa kagyat na kasarinlan ng bansa. Kaakibat niyon ang pagtutol sa panukalang panatilihin ang base militar ng Estados Unidos ayon sa mga kasunduang nilagdaan ng mga oligarkong burokrasya sa susog ng administrasyon sa Washington (Richardson 166-7). Lumago ang mambabasa ng *Sakdal*, naging popular ang mga panawagan at diskursong makabayan nito. Samakatwid, nabuksan ni Ramos ang larangan ng tunggalian ng samot-saring lakas upang gumana roon ang mapagpasiyang interbensiyon ng malikhaing guniguni.

Isang mapangahas na hakbang ang sumunod. Sa gitna ng hidwaan nina Quezon at Osmena hinggil sa Hare-Hawes Cutting Act noong 1933, itinatag ni Ramos ang partido *Sakdal*. Matagumpay ang kanilang pagsisikap. Sa halalang idinaos noong 1934, tatlong kandidato nila ang nanalo para kinatawan sa Kongreso, isang gobernador ng Marinduque, at

ilang posisyon sa pangasiwaang munisipal sa lalawigan ng Laguna, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Rizal at Cavite. Nakatitik sa kanilang mga karatula ang ganiring mga islogan na tumutugon sa krisis ng panahong iyon:³

Ibagsak ang mapaniil!

Babaan ang buwis ng lupa.

Alisin ang nagpapayaman sa Katungkulan.

Kasarinlan ang aming hangad at hindi ang pagsakyod.

(Constantino 368-9)

Walang dudang napukaw ng organisasyon ni Ramos ang sensibilidad ng madla, ang konsiyensiya't damdamin ng masa. Mabilis ang reaksiyon ng Establisimiyento. Sumikip ang espasyong demokratikong nakalaan para sa mamamayan. Naghunogs ang trato ng burokrasyang kolonyal sa paglago't paglakas ng Sakdalista. Nang magkampanya sila laban sa plebisitong gaganapin upang aprubahan ang Konstitusyon ng Komonwelt, pinaratangan silang "seditious," lumalabag sa batas. Maraming kasapi ang nabilanggo, at tuloy pinagbawalan ang pagboycott sa eleksiyon. Umigting ang panggigipit at pandarahas, walang tigil na pananakot, upang masugpo ang rebolusyonaryong inisiyatiba ni Ramos.⁴

Hinala ng lahat na estratehiyang kontra-rebolusyonaryo ang plano ng kolonyalismo. Hindi nagtagal, pumutok ang tinitimping galit ng mahigit 26,000 kasapi ng partido sa kanayunan. Hatinggabi ng Mayo 2, 1935, 150 armadong pesante, hawak ang mga tabak at paltik, ang nagmartsa sa munisipyo ng San Ildefonso, Bulacan; ibinaba ang bandila ng Estados Unidos at itinaas ang bandilang Sakdalista. Kumilos ang mahigit 60,000 miyembro sa Laguna, Rizal at Cavite, at iba pang lugar. Sa komprontasyong sumaksi, ginamit ng gobyerno ang armadong dahas na humantong sa pagmamalupit ng Konstabularya. Sa katanghalian ng Mayo 3, itinala ng mga peryodista ang natagpuan: mahigit na 57 Sakdalista ang patay, ilandaan ang sugatan, at 500 kasapi ang ibinilanggo (Agoncillo at Guerrero 418-19).

Nakarekord na sa panahong iyon, wala si Ramos sa Pilipinas. Nasa Hapon siya upang humingi ng tulong; dahil sa aklasang naganap, hindi siya nakabalik—isa siyang ipinatapon ng Estados Unidos—hanggang Agosto 28, 1938. Sa pagbabalik niya, nag-iba na ang sitwasyon sa Komonwelt. Sa payo ng mga kasama, itinatag ni Ramos ang partidong Ganap upang

lumahok sa eleksyon ng 1941, ngunit siya'y dinakip at ipiniit sa bintang na sedisyon. Tila lumang tugtugin ang naulit. Tumagal ang paglilitis hanggang parusahan si Ramos noong Disyembre 1939 sa salang rebelyon at nabilibid hanggang sa pagsakop ng Hapon noong 1942.

Naitala na ang pagkasangkot niya sa KALIBAPI at MAKAPILI, na tila siyang nagwakas sa unang yugto ng pakikipagsapalaran ni Ramos. Ngunit anong kahulugan ang madudukot sa siwang ng mga nagsalabit na pangyayaring tiwalag sa malay at kontrol ng isang tao na humubog sa kaniyang pagkatao at kongkretong katayuan sa lipunan? Bakit makabuluhan ang buhay at nagawa ni Ramos sa pagsulong ng ating mapagpalayang pakikibaka? Bakit kailangang basahin at unawain ang kaniyang sinulat?

Nagsalimbayang Agos

Sa punto de vista ng naitalang datos, ano ang ating mahihinuha? Anong leksiyon ang mahuhugot kung ang pagbabatayan ay itong mababaw na paglagom? Si Delfin Tolentino, Jr. ang namumukod na iskolar na nag-ukol ng masinop na pagsusuri sa mga akda ni Ramos, palibhasa'y siya ang matiyagang pumatnugot sa kauna-unahang kalipunan ng mga tula ni Ramos, *Gumising Ka, Aking Bayan!* Napakahalaga ng naisakatuparan ni Tolentino. Kuro-kuro niya sa wakas ng kaniyang "Paunang Salita": "Kung may mabigat na aral ng kasaysayan ng panulaan ni Benigno Ramos, matatagpuan ito sa pahiwatig na ang masigla't matipunong mga tula ay maaari lamang magbukal sa katotohanan at katwiran: kapag ang makata ay nalihis ng landas at sumalungat sa makatwirang hangarin ng mga tao, ang kaniyang panulat ay unti-unting papanawan ng sigla, mauunsyami, hanggang sa hindi na muling daluyan pa ng mga titik na may kabuluhan sa kaniyang panahon" (xxxiii). Paglimiin natin ang obserbasyong nabitiwan habang tayo'y nagsusumikap umigpaw sa kasalukuyang krisis ng globalisasyon.

Kung tutuusin, isang palaisipan ang naimungkahi ni Tolentino. Kasanib siya sa grupo ng mga pantas tulad nina Plato at Tolstoy na sumusukat sa halaga ng sining sa istandard ng katotohanan at katwiran. Ngunit sa makabagong panahon, sa kapaligirang nahahati sa interes ng iba't ibang uri o pangkat, walang pamantayang lumalakdaw sa pangangailangan ng mga uri. Kaninong katotohanan at katwiran? Ang kabuluhan ba ng mga dula ni Shakespeare o tula nina Vladimir Mayakovsky at Pablo Neruda

ay nag-uugat sa “makatwirang hangarin ng mga tao” bagamat repleksyon iyon ng mga nagtutunggaling puwersa sa lipunan? Paano matutuklasan ang “makatwirang hangarin” at masusubok kung tunay na makatwiran iyon? Sa pagsabog ng kosmolohiyang sinusunod ng sangkatauhan, tulad ng mga batas ng imperyong Romano, o ang sistema ng paniniwala ng Kristiyanidad na laganap sa Kanluran, problematiko na ang simpleng pagtatambalan ng sining at moralidad. Namagitan na ang salapi, komoditi, pagpapalitan ng produkto sa pamilihan; alenyasyon at reipikasyon ang namamayani. Ideolohiya ng magkakahiwalay na grupo ang umuugit sa buhay, hindi na pangkalahatang pangitain o unibersal na pananaw-sa-mundo.

Halos lahat ng mga gumaganap sa intelihenteng talakayan ay magkasundo sa halaga ng mapagbuong komunikasyon. Magkakaunawaan kung may larangan ng diskursong sasalihan ng lahat. Sa pakiwari ko, kung tatanggapin natin ang larawang ito, mas malinaw at maagap nating maihihimay ang masalimuot na ugnayan ng sining at lipunan. Kung magkakasundo tayo sa isang materyalistiko’t historikal na perspektiba, maipaliliwanag kung bakit si Ramos, makatang ipinagbubunyi ng lahat, ay di tuwirang maisasaisantabi na isang taong naligaw ng landas, wika nga. Mababatid din natin na ang pagkamalikhain ng birtud niya ay bunga ng kaniyang progresibo’t mapagpalayang simulain. Samakatwid, hindi kababalaghan ang sining niya’t politika sa partikular na konteksto ng mga taong 1935-1946. Maari din nating siyasatin at suriin ang katangian ng sining niya bago nabuhos ang lakas at panahon niya sa Sakdalistang kilusan. Ihahain natin ang ating saliksik sa madla upang maging tema ng pagpapalitang-kuro tungkol sa pagyari ng hegemonyang nasyonal-popular na napasimulan ng 1896 rebolusyon, at ngayo’y pinasisigla ng kilusang demokratikong pambansa sa buong kapuluan.

Engkuwentro’t Pagkilala

Sa mga antolohiyang umiiral, matatagpuan ang ilang tula ni Ramos na laging nakalakip bilang halimbawa ng matandang panulaan. Sa bantog na *Parnaso* ni Abadilla, tatlong tula ang kasama: “Ano Pa?” “Ang Bahay ng Diyos,” at “Ang Kayumanggi” (Abueg 132-4). Sa pangkat ng “Ilaw at Panitik” (1916-35), maitatanghal si Ramos na isa sa mga awtor na may “kamalayan sa pagbabago ng panahon.” Ayon sa kritikong Pedro Ricarte, si Ramos ay tumuligsa sa “superpisyalidad ng relihiyong kumpormista” (sinipi

ni Abueg 31). Tumutol siya sa gawing pagpipilit itanghal bilang modelo ang mga banyagang awtor (Victor Hugo, Blasco Ibañez) sa pagpapanatili ng masunuring oryentasyon ng diwa (Lumbera 311). Nakahanay si Ramos sa iba pang makatang lumilihis at bumabalikwas tulad nina Jose Corazon de Jesus, Narciso del Rosario at Pedro Gatmaitan.

Hindi kakatwa ang lalim at sigla ng kamalayang mapanuri ni Ramos. Sumusunod siya sa tradisyong mapanghamon nina Rizal, Marcelo del Pilar, Isabelo de los Reyes, at mga kapanahon niyang manunulat sa pangkat ng Aklatang Bayan, kabilang sina Lope K. Santos, Faustino Aguilar, Severino Reyes, Amado Hernandez, atbp. Sa kalipunan nina Lumbera, apat na tula ni Ramos ang naisama. Makatas ang pagtingin ni Lumbera kay Ramos: *“Ramos, in his early works, showed himself to be a highly innovative poet with a natural concern for the oppressed but inarticulate... Whatever political errors he might have committed during the last part of his career, Ramos deserves to be accorded his due as a fine poet who, at an earlier point in his life, had set aside formalistic experimentation to make his poems easily accessible to the masses in whose service he had placed his art”* (115-16). Sa opinyon ko, matinik at matalas pa rin ang mga akdang nailathala noong dekada sa pagitan ng Komonwelt (1935) at giyerang pandaigdig (1941).

Tulad ng pagkilatis ni Tolentino, nakapupukaw ang obserbasyon ni Lumbera. Nasapul niya ang palagiang isyu sa kritika. Makatarungan ba na dapat tumiwalag sa problema ng politika ni Ramos upang mabuting maparangalan siya bilang mahusay na makata? Salungat ba ang kapinuhan ng porma o ayos (pormalistikong estetika) ng tula sa programang pampolitikang itinaguyod ni Ramos? Paano natin malulutas ang suliranin ng etika at sining, ng moralidad at aliw ng kagandahan? Magkatugma ba ito o talagang magkasalungat? Ano ang politika ng sining? Bakit kailangang itagubilin na di dapat sipatin ang lahat sa bisa ng pampulitikang timbangan? Sa kabilang dako, ano ang silbi ng sining hiwalay sa araw-araw na buhay ng karaniwang tao?

Nakatanikalang Pagsubaybay

Sa naghaharing komentaryo sa panulaan, wala halos pumapansin sa panitik ni Ramos—kabilang siya sa mga etsapwera. Tila isang *pariah* na iniiwasan ng lahat. At maliban kina Lumbera, Almario at Tolentino, tahimik ang akademya at publiko kung mababanggit si Ramos. Kinulapulan ng

stigma o tatak na “huwag pakialaman” sanhi nga ng kaniyang pagkalulong sa gilas ng imperyong Hapon. Sa malas, maingat bagamat patago ang pagpapaimbabaw ng etiko-politikang sukat kung katuturan ng sining ang nakataya. Hindi bunyag ito pero lantad ang moralistikong pagpisil at paghatol. Maidadag na ang pormalistikong estetika, tinaguriang sining-para-sa-sining, ay instrumento ng dominanteng status quo, kung titiyakin kung paano kumakain at nagsasaya ang mga alagad nito.

Ikumpara natin ang ganitong pagtingin sa mga kapanahon ni Ramos. Isang matapat na indeks ang puna ni Julian Cruz Balmaceda sa tanyag na panayam noong Hulyo 28, 1938. Isingit natin ang ilang pangyayari noon. Pinalaya na ni Presidente Quezon ang mga nabilanggong lider ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas. Tuluyang nagsikap sina Crisanto Evangelista at mga kasama na magtayo ng *prente popular* laban sa pasismo (Hapon, Aleman, Espanyol, Italyano). Sa pagsanib ng Partido Sosyalista ni Pedro Abad Santos, nagbalikatan ang magsasaka’t manggagawa, mga maliit na burges, at nasyonalistikong negosyante, sa isang nagkakaisang hanay (*united front*). Maligalig at mapanganib ang lumalalang sitwasyon sa Asya noon.

Bumalik si Ramos noong Agosto 1938 mula sa Hapon kung saan siya napahimpil dahil sa insureksyon noong 1935. Hindi niya narinig ang puna ni Balmaceda tungkol sa kanilang “pagkamapaghimagsik” (kapiling si Pedro Gatmaitan) batay sa paglikha ng “tulang imposible.” Nagawa nila ito dahil sila’y “tila nagdaan sa isang panahong naggirian at nagpataasan ng panaginip sa panunula” (127). Sinipi ang limang taludtod ng tulang “Katas-diwa”:

Sa dinsul-dinsulang puno ng binatis ng mga pangarap
sa mala-tambilong na silid-silirang ala-alapaap
ng katas-diwa ko ng lumuhog-magtampong tila bahid-ulap
sa dikit-tala mo na dalampasigan ng lahat ng hirap
ng abang buhay ko, ay nagsusumamong ulol, baliw, hamak (48)

Mapapansin na taglay ng mga taludtod ang alingawngaw at balisang pagmamadali ng panahon noon. Sapagkat lumilihis sa nakagawiang padron ng pagtutugma’t pagbibilang ng patinig at katinig, inayawan ni Balmaceda ang “mapangahas na kabaguhan,” na sa kaniyang opinyon ay hindi natularan

at “biglang-biglang nasugpo” (128). Nasugpo, sa gayon, dahil walang ibang sumunod isapraktika ang prinsipyo ng pagbabagong inilunsad nina Gatmaitan at Ramos alinsunod sa kodigo’t disiplina ng globalisadong palengke ng literaturang nakalimbag, pati na ang komersyalisadong radyo at pelikula. Tinutukoy dito ang pagbabago ng pamamaraan, hindi paksain o kalamnan.

Ang teknik ni Ramos ay hindi pambihira. Sa pag-uulit ng pantig sa prase o parirala (sa lingwistika, *morphemes*), umiigting ang konotasyon ng salita. Ang repetisyon o pag-uulit ay katangiang katutubo sa awit. Batay sa saliksik sa pilolohiya’t antropolohiya ni George Thomson, ang awit sa paggawa na kapiling ng mga gawain sa bukid, bahay o pook-sanayan ay may dalawang sangkap: ang koro o *refrain* at improbisasyon. Sa koro mararamdaman ang enerhiya o lakas ng katawan, ang udyok o hibo ng damdamin, na siyang umuugit at nagbubuklod sa kilos ng maraming tao. Ang paulit-ulit na sigaw ay sumasagisag sa kolektibong diwa, habang ang paglangkap ng mga sinkahulugang salita ay paghiwatig ng saloobin tungkol sa ginagawa (Thomson 25-9). Isiningkaw ni Ramos ang obhetibong pangyayari at suhetibong dalumat sa mga salitang ginitlingan, halimbawa:

Ngunit tantuin mong yaring mala-gintong tikas-makaaraw
ng nipis-dumaling tabas-dinalitang bangkay-lamig-hukay
ng hinimig-murang sa mala-alamat na aklat-dalisay
na aking pag-ibig, ay ga-bughaw-langit na di mapaparam.
Naririto akong kilos-hindi-sawi kahit namamahay
sa dinagat-luha, sa-hirap-buhawi, sa saklap-libingan (48)

Masisipat na ang estilistikong paraan ay tandisang diyalektikal. Malasin ang matagumpay na pagdurungtung ng saloobing personal at obhetibong pangyayari. Sa siniping huling saknong ng “Katas-diwa,” isinadula ang indayog ng pagsabay ng komunidad (sa *refrain*) at makata, sampu ng mala-mahiyang ritwal ng muling pagkabuhay at kaganapan. Mistulang sinalamangka ang alapaap ng katas-diwa na naging “ga-bughaw-langit na di mapaparam.” Matalisik ang paghabi ng taludtod, ritmo, imahen at retorika ng dalityapi/liriko upang maipahayag ang damdaming siyang humuhubog ng panibagong sitwasyon (Thomson 22-4). Hindi paglalaro sa

tunog ng patinig/katinig kundi tahasang rebolusyon sa ating pakikitungo sa ating daigdig ang nilalayon ng makata.

Kakatwa ang inobasyong eksperimental ni Ramos kaya umangal ang mga matandang tinali. Hindi makabago iyon dahil kahawig ng istruktura ng mga katutubong awit, ng talindao at pabinian.⁵ Hindi naman kataka-taka ang pag-iral ng modelong hango sa Kanluran—dala ng mga Kastilang prayle na siyang nagpakalat ng gramatikang base sa Latin (mula sa *Vocabulario* nina Noceda at Sanlucar, *Memorial* ni Francisco de San Jose, abtp.). Samakatwid, hindi talagang katutubo. Nakapangingibabaw pa rin ang nakaugalian, ang panggagad sa sinaunang balangkas at haraya ng panulaan. Ipinagtibay ito ni Iñigo Ed. Regalado, kasapi din sa Aklatang-Bayan, sa kaniyang lekturang “Ang Panulaang Tagalog” na binigkas noong 18 Agosto 1943, panahon ng pananakop ng Hapon. Idiniin ni Regalado ang regla at panuntunang nahugot sa matandang panulaan. Hindi “sampay-bakod” iyon, manapa’y “mayaman sa kagandahan, nahihiyasan ng mga talinghaga, sagana sa indayog ng pag-iisip at kinapapalooban ng nakapagpapaheleng bunga ng lirip at ng mga ginawa” (203).

Mapapansin na masipag maghalungkat ng mga lumang tula sina Balmaseda at Regalado, ngunit ang mga categoryang pinuri ay halaw sa Griyego’t Romanong teorya na inilapat sa kolonyang lipunan. Tunay na hindi katutubo o nilikha ng mga taal na kayumanggi. Bukod sa pagdakila sa banyagang kultura, di man lamang sumagi sa isipan ng mga kagalang-galang na pantas na hinubog ng kasaysayan ang kultura. Sa gayon, nababago at nagbabago ang lasa’t pagpapahalaga ng sining sa bawat kabihasan. Lubhang tanda ng ignoransiya, kundi pagsamba sa dayuhang idolo, ang ipinagpipilitan nina Balmaceda at Regalado.⁶ Samantala, bumubuhos ang mga pangyayari sa likod ng mga utak ng pantas. Mulat sa daloy ng kasaysayan, sinikap ni Ramos na itugma ang musika’t tema ng tula sa himig ng mga kontradiksiyon ng mga nag-aawayang sektor sa lipunan at sa larangang internasyonal.

Di Pantay & Walang Tugmang Pag-inog

Mahirap maintindihan ang anumang bagay kung hiwalay sa kinalalagyang lunan at panahon. Nais kong isusog na kailangan ang isang makasaysayang pagsusuri, isang konseptualisasyon ng halagang nakapaloob sa daloy ng kasaysayan. Ang katuturan at kahulugan ng sining

ay kalakip sa ayos ng produksyong sosyal sa bawat yugto ng kasaysayan. Ang ayos at proseso ng produksyon ang talagang saligan ng kaisipan, saloobin, damdamin, gunita't pangarap ng bawat lipunan. Maiging matatarok ang puno't dulo ng anumang gawa o praktikang kultural kung nakaugnay ito sa kabuhayan, sa relasyong sosyal ng mga grupo sa isang tiyak na yugto ng kasaysayan.

Ipuwesto natin si Ramos sa sitwasyon ng sambayanan noong 1911-1914 hanggang sa dekadang 1926-1936 kung saan bumulas ang kaniyang panitik. Mailalagom rito ang ilang datos tungkol sa pag-unlad ng kilusang manggagawa't magbubukid. Itala natin ang pagtatag ng Congreso Obrera de Filipinas noong Mayo 1, 1913, sa pamumuno ni Hermengildo Cruz, isang beteranong unyonista na naging katulong ni Isabelo de los Reyes sa pagbuo ng Union Obrera Democratica noong 1901.⁷ Lumaban ang Congreso sa panlilinlang at pandaraya ng imperyalismong Amerikano sa pamamagitan ng Kawanihan sa Paggawa na itinatag noong 1908 (kasabay ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, na tagahubog ng mga mentalidad ng kolonisadong burokrasya).

Maigting na tunggalian ang nasaksihan sa dekadang 1910-1920 bukod sa bakbakan ng elitistang partido Demócrata at partido Nacionalista. Kasabay ng pagputok ng rebolusyong bolsheviko sa Rusya, sumilang ang unyon ng magsasaka sa Bulacan (probinsya ni Ramos) noong 1917, at ang Anakpawis sa limang bayan ng Pampanga noong 1919. Matulin ang mobilisasyon ng mga magbubukid na humantong sa pagdaos ng kongreso ng Kalipunan ng Manggagawa at Magsasaka sa Pilipinas noong Agosto 1922. Dahil sa pag-unlad ng manupaktura sa buong kapuluan, tumaas ang bilang ng sigalot sa pagitan ng puhunan at trabahador: buhat 1,880 obrerong umaklas noong 1912, mahigit 16,289 trabahador ang lumahok sa 83 sigalot noong 1918 (EILER 70). Noong 1921, dalawampung libong mangggawa ang nagwelga sa pabrika ng sigarilyo, sa daungan sa Iloilo, sa mga trosohan sa Negros Occidental, at sa mga asukarera sa Pampangga at Laguna. Pinanday at nahasa ang mga galing sa pagkakaisa't pakikibaka ng liderato ng mga unyon sa mga welga sa perokaril at transportasyon, sa pabrika ng niyog, sa Manila Gas Company, sa pagawaan ng pagbuburda sa Maynila, at sa mga kiskisan ng palay sa Nueva Ecija. Noong 1927, sumapi ang Congreso sa Red International of Labor Union at nakuhalubilo ang liderato sa mga kasamang galing sa Rusya, Tsina, Indotsina, Europa at Amerika. Noong Agosto 26, 1930, itinatag ang Partido Komunista ng

Pilipinas (PKP) mula sa pagkapatiran ng Federacion Obrero de Filipinas at Katipunan ng mga Anak-Pawis sa Pilipinas. Noong Disyembre 1933, habang nililitis ang 16 lider ng PKP, 4000 manggagawa ang nagprotesta't nagmartsa sa Korte Suprema at bahay ng Amerikanong Gobernador-Heneral. Ito ang kapaligirang umalalay at nagtakda ng kabuluhan sa panitik ni Ramos.

Bakas ng Pakikipagsapalaran

Balik-tanawin natin ang itinineraryo ng indibidwal na protagonista. Nakatahi ang hibla ng buhay ni Ramos sa hinabing narasyon ng ating himagsikan. Nang iniluwal siya, kababalik lamang ni Rizal mula sa Europa upang itayo ang *Liga Filipina*. Hingi nagluwat, humalili ang Katipunan ni Andres Bonifacio at sumiklab ang rebolusyon laban sa Espanya. Kasapi ng Katipunan ang magulang ni Ramos. Nagbinata siya nang nasugpo na ang sandatahang puwersa ng Republika at nabitay sina Sakay at mga kasamahan noong 1907. Sandaling nagturo si Ramos sa Pandi, Bigaa, Bulacan. Nabilanggo siya ng 24 oras dahil sa pagtuligsa sa isang pari doon. Lumuwas siya sa Maynila, nagsulat para sa *Taliba*; at noong 1911 nagkaroon ng trabaho sa isang lingguhang magasin, *Renacimiento Filipino*. Lagi siyang gutom; naisulat niya ang kaniyang kahirapan: “walang inumin kundi tinta lamang, pluma ang tabako, acero’y tinapay” (Terami-Wada 428).

Panahon iyon ng Sedition Law ng 1902: ipinagbawal ang mga akdang bumabandila ng nasyonalismo—mga dula nina Aurelio Tolentino, Juan Abad, atbp. Nasentensiyahan si Tolentino ng pagkabilanggo habang buhay; noon na lamang 1912 pinatawad siya ni Gob. Forbes. Mapanganib ang magdiskurso’t tumalakay ng paksa tungkol sa kasarinlan at demokratikong karapatan, o bumatikos ng korupsiyon sa gobyerno. Nang akusahin ng *El Renacimiento* si Dean Worcester sa tanyag na editorial, “Aves de Rapina,” sinakdal ang editor at pabliser noong 1908. Humigit-kumulang sa dalawampung tula ni Ramos ang nailathala sa nasabing lingguhan bago siya lumipat sa peryodikong *Ang Bayang Filipino*, na pag-aari ni Manuel Quezon. Peryodista siya noong 1913-1917. Tiyak na nabahiran si Ramos ng matapang na pagtatanggol ng kapwa peryodista, bukod sa pagmulat sa kabulukan ng sistemang kolonyal/kapitalista kung saan ang burokrasya ay instrumento ng makapangyarihang oligarko sa kanilang kapakanan.

Mapanlinlang na ipokrisya at mapagkunwaring asal ng kolonyalismo ang araling natutuhan ng makata.

Samantala, maraming alitan at insureksyon ang yumanig sa buong kapuluan. Kabilang dito ang sedisyon ni Ruperto Rios sa Tayabas noong 1903, ni Papa Isio sa Negros, ang Pulajanes sa Leyte at Dios-dios sa Samar. Nakasindak sa awtoridad ang kilusan ni Felipe Salvador noong 1906-1910; nang bitayin si Apo Ipe, ipinagbunyi siya ng *El Renacimiento* bilang isang sundalong rebelde (Agosto 13, 1910 isyu). Ipinarangalan din siya ng makatang Jose Corazon de Jesus na mas marangal kaysa mga opisyal sa gobyerno (Constantino 269-70). Naisatitik ni Ramos ang dalumat ng mga kasama sa huling saknong ng “Mga Agam-agam” na handog sa Kaarawan ng Paggawa, Mayo 1, 1911, bago pa sumabog ang 1917 rebolusyon sa Rusya:

Ang pigil ng sama’y nasa dakong huli,
at kung sa ngayon ma’y laging nagwawagi
asahan at bukas nama’y mga api
ang magtatagumpay at hindi na imbi.

Maitatampok dito na ang pangunahing temang nananalaytay sa karamihan ng mga tula ni Ramos ay pagbabago, metamorphosis ng kapaligiran, pagbabagong-buhay. Kaakibat nito ang damdamin ng pakikiramay at tiwala sa katuparan ng pangarap, ng katuparang inaasam-asam, bunga ng magkabuklod na pagsisikhay ng sambayanan. Sinikap niyang bakahin ang mapanghamig na indibidwalismong ideolohiya ng kompetisyon sa negosyo. Sinubok niyang iugnay ang kapalaran ng mga sawing magbubukid sa petiburgesyang sirkulo ng mga kawani sa gobyerno’t karaniwang manggagawa sa lunsod. Resulta nito ang sinasabing magaspang, hindi pino, salungat sa nakamihasnang hilig at panlasa, ang sining ni Ramos. Ebidensiya ito ng mabisang pagdalumat niya sa masalimuot na kapaligirang sinusuri niya.

Pagtawid sa Bangin

Tunghayan natin ang lakbay ng historya. Naglaho ang lumang orden ng merkantilismong imperyo ng Espanya, humalili ang kapangyarihan pinansiyal ng industriyalisadong burgesya sa Estados Unidos. Nagapi ang rebolusyonaryong tropa nina Luna at Sakay ng makabagong teknolohiya’t

logistics ng kapitalismong sistema. Subalit sa halip na paunlarin ang ekonomiya, pinalala pa ng bagong panginoon ang piyudal-agrikulturang kaayusan sa dalawang paraan. Noong 1909, ipinataw ang patakarang “*free trade*” ng Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act; sa gayon, natigil ang anumang tangkang industriyalisasyon. Sa larangan ng edukasyon at burokrasya, inihiwalay ang sektor ng gitnang-uri upang hirangin bilang empleyado ng mga aparato ng estado, militar, at kawanihan.

Sa kapwa ideolohikal at sosyo-politikal na maniobra, nahati ang lipunan sa nakararaming mahirap (pesante at manggagawa) at mayayaman (negosyante-komprador, may-lupa). Hindi natuloy ang pagwasak sa malalaking asyenda; nagpatuloy ang pagsasamantala ng uring cacique at inquilino. Nahawakan ng mga korporasyong Amerikano ang malalaking lupain para sa tabako at asukal, habang pinabayaan ang mga cacique na umupo bilang alkalde o mga opisyal sa probinsiya, at kinatawan sa Asembleang itinatatag noong 1907 at ng Komonwelt noong 1934.⁸

Sa unang tatlong dekada ng kolonisasyon ng Estados Unidos, sumidhi ang paghihikahos ng mga magsasaka, ang mayoryang anak-pawis sa kanayunan. Unti-unting naagnas ang paternalismong saligan ng ugnayang kliyente-patron. Naging malupit ang mga katiwala ng panginoon, at tuluyang naduhagi’t nagdusa ang mga magbubukid. Sumabog ang rebelyon sa buong kapuluan sa pagitan ng pagsuko ni Aguinaldo hanggang pagkilos ng Sakdalista. Tumindi ang mga gulong kasangkot ang Iglesiang Watawat ng Lahi, ang mga Colorum sa buong kapuluan, ang Santa Iglesia ni Felipe Salvador, at ang insureksiyon ni Pedro Kabola sa Nueva Ecija at ni Pedro Calosa sa Tayug, Pangasinan. Dahil sa panggigipit ng mga usurero at sakim na panginoong maylupa, bukod pa sa pinsalang iginawad ng masungit na panahon at iba’t ibang sakuna, lumubha ang lagay ng maraming nakikisama, isang kabalintunaan sa gitna ng mabiyayang kalikasan at dating mabighaning panorama ng ilog, parang, lambak, gubat at kabundukan. Gayunpaman, sa pagdaralita, walang nangungulila, salamat sa laganap na damayan sa harap ng sawing kapalaran. Hindi naglaho ang pag-asa ng masa para sa maluwalhating kinabukasan.

Bihasa na sa pakikipagbuno sa suliranin ng sambayanan, natuto si Ramos na tumiwalag sa gayuma ng tradisyon at konserbatismo ng kapanahon. Kaiba sa “Ang Balintawak” ni Regalado o “Ang Bundok” ni Lope K. Santos, na nakatutok sa kariktan ng kalikasan, masisinag sa anyo

ng kalikasang isinadula ni Ramos ang damdamin at karanasan ng mga taong namumuhay sa malikhaing pakikitungo sa mundo (Angeles, Matienzo at Panganiban 80-1). Samakatwid, gumanap ng simbolikong papel ang dalumat sa kalikasang naikintal sa “Bulkan” at “Bagyo,” halimbawa. Ngunit hindi rekonsilyasyon ng tao at kapaligiran ang inilarawan doon kundi ang tensiyon sa pagitan nito. Lumalabas na hindi simbolo kundi alegorikong karanasan na pinagmulan ng “aura.”⁹ Ngunit ang penomenang ito ay dominanteng pagpapahayag ng isang mundo kung saan ang mga bagay-bagay ay natanggalan ng kahulugan, o naalisan ng espiritu, napalayo sa awtentikong kabuhayan. Natuklasan ni Ramos na naligaw siya sa kagubatan ng kapitalismong parasitiko sa nabubulok na bangkay ng ordeng piyudal, patriyarkal at bulag na pagsunod sa utos ng simbahan.

Sinubok din ng makata na buhayin ang kalikasan na ginawang komoditi o kasangkapan ng kapital. Sinikap niyang pukawin ang kaluluwa nito at gawing kamag-anak o karamay sa tunggalian ng mga nagsasamantala at pinagsasamantalahan. Isang ultimatum ang hagupit ng makata, isang babala sa mga may kapangyarihan na may taning ang kanilang pagmamalabis. Inihudyat ito sa estilong melodramatiko:

Kaya't tumigil na. Sukat na ang sabing kayo't mga hari't
pawang talosaling,
Sukat na ang wikang kayo'y malalaki at may maliit na talu-
talunan,
Sukat na! Sukat na! Kaawa-awa kayo! Sa mundo'y tahimik,
subalit may bulkan,
May bulkang panghughog sa utak at diwa ng pantas na gurong
sapat ikamatay,
May bulkang nunuga! ...

Ano nga ba ang sadyang ipinahihiwatig ng ingay at usok ng bulkang sumasabog? Patalastas ba iyon ng diyos o bathala, o mahiwagang espiritung tiwalag sa lipunan? Hindi, ang bulka'y sagisag ng komunidad, isang sandatang may adhika o mithiing makatao.

Anupa't ang bulka'y isa pang galamay na kinalalamnan ng
madlang pithaya,
Isa pang haligi na naglalarawan ng mga pagtangis sa
pamahid-luha,
Isa pang sagisag na kakikilanlan ng mga punyaging
tuwina'y sariwa,
At sa buong mundo ay namamaraling: "Ang Sangkatauha'y
may nasang lumaya." (3-4)

Sa tulang "Bagyo," bukod sa payo't pangaral, isang maramdaming
ritwal ng pagsamo ang maririnig. Kahawig ng mga dasal upang humingi
ng biyaya't ginhawa sa makapangyarihang espiritu ng kalikasan, ang
panawagan ng makata ay hindi personal kundi kolektibong hinaing.
Kadalasa'y nasasalanta ang biktima ng lipunan, kaya daing ng makata na
magbago ang bagyo't magdulot ng hustisya at magpakita ng katarungan:

Nariya't marami
ang nangarapat na iyong handugan
ng taglay mong galit ... ang angaw na diwang pawang nangangamkam,
ang pusong maghapo'y walang iniisip kundi ang paraan
ng lalong madaling ikapapaluklok sa yaman at dangal,
ang ngumunguya na'y hamig pa nang hamig na di naghuhumpay,
namumuwalan na'y ayaw pang bitiwan ang supot na taglay:
iya'y mga duming dapat nang itapon sa pusod ng panglaw.

Uli-uli sana'y
kung ihihinga mo ang iyong damdami'y
huwag ang bubungan ng mga mahirap ang pangingisihin,
huwag ang butas nang mabasa't matuyo ang butas-butasin,
huwag ang sira nang dumuyan-mabuwal ang sira-sirain,
huwag at kung ikaw'y talagang may galit na di mapipigil
gibain mong lahat: mayama't mahirap ay pagparisin
huwag kang magtira at makikita mong kita'y pupurihin.

Inilathala ang tula noong Hulyo 1911, taon na inilunsad ang Republika ng Tsina. Apat na taon na ang nakalipas nang magkaroon ng Asambleya noong 1907, at limang taon pa bago maipasa ang Jones Law noong 1916. Sa panahong isinulat ni Ramos ang tula, kahuhuli pa lamang kay Felipe Salvador, ang rebelde sa Bulakan at Nueva Ecija. Napatay na si Papa Isio sa Negros noong 1907, ngunit ang mga Dios-dios sa Samar ay hindi napatahimik hanggang 1911. Rumaragasa pa ang bagyo sa buong kapuluan, at patuloy pa rin ang pagputok ng bulkang muling pagagalitin ni Ramos sa Oktubre 1930 sa kaniyang tulang “Gumising Ka, Aking Bayan!” Armadong tayutay ang ipinaindayog ni Ramos. Ipagpapalit niya ang buhay niya, magbangon lamang ang bayan upang labanan ang “berdugo,” ang “anak ng mga Huday.” “Masawi man ako ngayo’y malugod kong tatanggapin / kung sa likod naman nito’y babangon ka, Bayang giliw!”

Ang matalinghagang estratehiya ng makata ay nakasandig sa pinagtiyap na mga karanasang nadarama at hibo ng diwang sumasagitsit doon. Naulit ang paglalaro sa alegoryang paggagalaw sa kalikasan sa bisa ng “pathetic fallacy” noong 1936, pagkaraan ng madugong tagpo sa Cabuyao at sa Sta. Rosa. Sa tulang “Kidlat sa Tag-araw,” ibinabadya ng makata ang nalalapit na pagtutuos, isang apokaliptikong patalastas: “Nakaguhit ngayon sa langit ng bayan ang talim ng kidlat / Na sa mga taksil ay masamang huday” (213). Alingawngaw ito ng buhay sa “Asyenda,” taglay ang musika ng paghihimagsik na tumutunog na noon pang 1929-30: “Ang bawat sigaw mo ay nagiging kulog / ang bawat hibik mo ay nagiging unos. / Kapanalig ang kalikasan na nagdudulot ng kulog, kidlat at iba pang sandata.” Mapapakinggan din ang magkahalong inip na pagdududa, ngitngit, at pag-aalinlangan sa rason ng lumang orden: “Diyos man sa langit kung mayr’on ngang Diyos / sa kaapihan mo’y dapat nang kumilos!” (172). Mararamdaman na hindi ito daing kundi artikulasyon sa sindak at pagtutol sa karumal-dumal na kalagayan ng bayan.

Metamorphosis ng Guni-guni

Sa pagitan ng ideyang sumibol sa ulirat ng makata at pagsisiwalat dito, hindi tuwirang maikikintal ito sa malay ng mambabasa o nakikinig. Kailangan ang medyasyon ng nadaramang bagay. Kailangan ang metapora, palahambingan, simbolo o pigurang makamumulat o makahihikayat. Sa romantikong sensibilidad, ang kalikasan ay nagkakaroon ng balintunang

mukha: nakakabighaning hiwaga ng mga espiritu, o mabangis na simbuyong kumakatawan sa kilabot ng mga pagbabagong nangyayari (sangguniin ang analisis ni Fischer 175-7). Matutunghayan din ito sa paghawak ni Ramos sa piling salik ng kalikasang kasalukuyang naghuhunos mula sariwang halimuyak sa nayon tungo sa usok, ingay at kasukalan ng lungsod. Mahihinuha rito ang isang gabay sa pagtarok sa proseso ng transisyon mula piyudal-tributaryong antas ng produksyon tungo sa burokrata-kapitalismong kalakalan.

Re-Imbensiyon ng Pamana

Laki sa kulturang Kristiyanong bagamat (tulad ng mga Propagandista) kritikal sa pang-aabuso ng simbahan, kinasangkapan ni Ramos ang mga ideya't damdaming minana sa mga ninuno. Tulad ni John Milton, ang may-katha ng *Paradise Lost*, ginamit ni Ramos ang mitolohiya ng Bibliya at binigyan ng ibang kahulugang ironikal. Kung mabisang komunikasyon sa madla ang hangad, kailangan ng makata na pumagitna sa diskursong alam ng lahat: ang pasyon ng Kristong taga-ligtas at talasalitaang gamay ng mambabasa. Pakay ng makata ang pagmulat, pag-udyok at paghikayat sa madla. Ngunit hindi mensaheng didaktiko ang adhika ng makata. Nais niyang ibunyag ang ipokrisya ng alta-sosyedad, tulad ng ginawa ni Kristo sa templo na inupasala ng mga bangkero, o sa komprontasyon niya sa mga Pariseo't Sanhedrin. Tinuligsa ng Mesiyas ang katiwaliang naghahari, ang pagkukunwari't kahungkagan ng sistema. Satiriko-propetikong mithiin ang pumapatnubay sa makata.

Maidiriin na nakalubog ang sining ni Ramos sa kumplikadong interaksyon ng luma at bagong praktika ng kabuhayan. Nailahad na natin na di naisulong ang tunay na sekularisasyon at modernisasyon ng bansa sa ilalim ng bagong kolonisador. Nagpatuloy ang kapangyarihan ng simbahan, sampu ng mga ritwal, doktrina, ugali't gawi. Di natinag ang mga pamahiin at alamat, mitolohiya at sagisag ng Kristiyanidad. Lantad ang pagbubulgar ng ipokrisya at katiwaliang labag sa moralidad sa mga tulang "Ang Bahay ng Diyos" at "Bagong Hudyo, Bagong Kristo" kung saan ginamit na lente ang turo ng Mesiyas upang matuklasan ang katotohanan sa buhay, hindi iyon dogmatikong kuwadrang siyang pinakamabisang pamamaraan ng makata.

Sa pagpihit ng pangatlong dekada ng Amerikanisasyon, binabagtas pa ni Ramos ang landas mula sa kanayunan tungo sa kalunsuran, tungo sa

komodipikasyon ng kaluluwa. Matinik ang salungatan ng dalawang sistema ng produksyong kapwa umiiral: ang produksyong piyudal versus pabrika't pamilihan ng kalakal. Problematiko ang pagpapatakbo sa dalawang makinang ito. Laganap ang sintomas ng awayan, gulo, ligalig, kadalasa'y humahantong sa karahasan at barbarismo.

Dapat ilagay ang kritika sa gitna ng mga pangyayaring natukoy. Bagamat makabuluhan ang pagpapaliwanag ni Virgilio Almario na ginagad ni Ramos ang tradisyong saligan ng satiriko't mapang-uyam na akda nina Rizal, Plaridel (*Dasalan at Tocsohan*), pati na ang panunuluyan, di tumpak ang sabihing “nagkaroon ng magandang papel ang alagad ng batas at pamahalaan” sa dulo (*Pag-unawa* 263). Mapagbiro ang himig sa huli, at tigib ng psumala ang balangkas ng tulang “Ang Matanda.” Sa kabila ng inaasahan, magkahalong parusa at kabutihan ang nangyari sa pagsalikop ng dalawang naratibo: ang kawalan ng makataong simpatiya sa sosyedad at ang di-sinasadyang paglapat ng batas laban sa palaboy (mga taong walang tahanan) sa rehimeng kolonyal. Sa malas, pambabaligtad sa modo ng parikala ang naisakatuparan sa imitasyong natukoy na may bahid didaktiko't mapanuto.

Panukalang Taliwakas

Utang sa sipag at kabatiran ni Almario ang pagtatampok kay Ramos bilang pinakamakabuluhang manlilikha sa pangkat ng Aklatang Bayan, na binubuo ng henerasyon nina Lope K. Santos, Faustino Aguilar, Inigo Regalado, Amado Hernandez, atbp. Sampung tula ang isinama niya sa antolohiyang *Walong Dekada ng Makabagong Tulang Pilipino*. Hinawan niya ang landas na tinahak ni Tolentino sa pamamatnugot ng tinipong mga tula ni Ramos. Wika ni Almario na “makulay ngunit kontrobersiyal ang buhay” ni “Ben Ruben,” ang paboritong alyas ni Ramos. Pahabol pa niya: “...hindi pa rin gaanong natataya ang kaniyang papel sa kasaysayan at panulaan...Noon pa’y binansagang siyang “*El Poeta Revolucionario*” dahil sa kaniyang matatalim na tuligsa sa kapangyarihang Amerikano at korupsiyon sa hanay ng mga pulitikong Pilipino. Nalalapatan niya ang ganitong kaisipang mapanghimagsik ng pambihirang inobasyon sa tugma at sukat upang mas maluwag na maisakatuparan ang pagtula.... Bukod sa makalipunang diwa, maraming maaaring pulutin sa halimbawa ni BRR ng reporma sa tula para umangkop ang balangkas sa daloy ng

isip” (*Balagtasismo* 375-6). Naitala rin ni Almario ang eksperimentasyon ni Ramos sa paghabi ng sukat sa “Kahabag-habag,” na hindi “parodya sa kinasadlakang lusak ng Balagtasismo” (114-6). Pawang karapat-dapat ang papuring iyon, lamang nakalutang sa pagdidili-dili ito at kailangang isilid sa kuwadrang pangkasaysayan.

Subukan natin ang komentaryong pahapyaw na baka makatulong sa maiging pag-unawa ng motibasyon ng makata. Ang tinaguriang “tulang imposible” ni Valeriano Hernandez Peña, ang paglulubid ng mga salita ni Ramos, ay kahanay ng ethos o klima ng sensibilidad sa dalawang dekada ng kolonyalismong Amerikano. Hindi parodya ng kumbensiyonal na taludturan kundi repleksiyon ng *Zeitgeist*. Mabilis, maligoy at magulo ang komplikadong pagtatagisan ng mga uri’t sektor ng lipunan. Masasagap ito sa bugso’t pagmamadali ng ritmo sa “Katas-Diwa” o sa ritmo ng “Ibig Kong Makita.” Padaplis lamang sa kontekstong ito ang makikita sa kuro-kuro ni Almario sa *Balagtasismo Versus Modernismo* sanhi sa empirisismo’t duwalistikong lohika nito.¹⁰

Sa dagsa ng mga ipinasok na pagbabago ng budhi’t dalumat ng mga sinakop, lalo na ang pagpataw ng Ingles bilang midyum sa edukasyon at gobyerno mula 1908, nagipit ang manunulat sa Tagalog. Nabulabog di lamang ang pangkat ng Aklatang Bayan pati rin ang Ilaw at Panitik, na kapwa pinatnubayan ng makabansa at mapagpalayang layunin. Sa pagpasok ng bagong teknolohiya ng pelikula’t radyo, unti-unting naglaho ang kultura ng balagtasian at sikolohiya ng tulang pabigkas. Ayon kay Almario, si Ramos ay isa sa mga ulirang haligi ng institusyong balagtasian ngunit hindi bulag na alagad (*Balagtasismo* 59-60). Nahalinhan ito ng kulturang nakalimbag, ng komoditi o nabibiling mass midya (tingnan ang tulang “Makata”)—ang mediyasyon ng industriyalisadong komunikasyong pag-aari ng korporasyon o pribadong negosyo. Tiwalag ang makata sa kaniyang awdyens. Namagitan na ang salapi, pamilihan, lihim na maniobra ng komoditi-petisismo. Ginawang kalakal lahat: damdamin, pangarap, seks, isip, panaginip. Walang hindi maipagbibili.

Naranasan ng sensibilidad ni Ramos ang bigat ng Amerikanisasyon. Ang organisasyon ng burokrasya (mula 1901 hanggang 1920) ay tanda ng madaliang kapitalisasyon ng mga aparatong pang-ideolohiya ng Estado. Itinakda ng Payne-Aldrich Act ng 1909 na mananatiling agrikultural ang ekonomiya. Sa malayang pangangalakal, ang Pilipinas ay magiging tambakan ng mamahaling produkto ng Amerika at taga-panustos ng mga

hilaw na materyales at murang produkto tulad ng asukal, kopra, abaka, tabako, atbp. Pananatilihin ang sistemang piyudal sa kontrol ng mga kasike't kumprador/komersiyante, sa tulong ng oligarkong partido nina Quezon, Osmeña at Roxas simula 1906.

Tumagos sa muni at kalooban ng makata ang transpormasyong naganap sa kapaligirang sosyo-ekonomiko. Sandaling nagturo si Ramos sa elementarya sa Bigaa; utang niya sa karanasan doon ang kakayahan sa retorika at pedagohiya. Simula 1911 naman, nagsulat siya sa lingguhang *El Renacimiento* hanggang sa paglipat niya sa *Ang Bayang Filipino* (si Quezon ang pabliser) noong 1913 (Tolentino xvii). Noong 1917 hanggang 1930 nang sapilitang ipagbitiw siya, naglingkod siyang tagasalin sa Senado. Ang katungkulang ito ay makahulugan: isang tulay si Ramos sa pagitan ng mga wika, tagapagtawid ng mga diskurso't kabihasnan. Naunawaan niya ang halaga't silbi ng wika bilang tagapamagitan ng politiko't ideolohiyang adhikain. Katunayan, nasanay na siya sa kabatirang iyon nang maganap ang kaso laban sa editor at pabliser ng *El Renacimiento* noong 1908. Ang “mayamang pangungusap at pihikang pagkukuro” ni Ramos—papuri ni Rosauro Almario sa kakayahan ni Ramos—ay nabuhos sa pagtatanggol sa mga estudyante't kawaning umaklas laban sa rasismo ng Amerikano (Terami-Wada 429). Nasubok at napagtibayan ang lakas ng pangungusap at pagkukuro sa pagtalsik ni Ramos mula sa Senado sa utos ni Quezon.

Masasalamín ang mga kontradiksyong mapagpahiwatig ng mga pangyayaring naitala sa itaas sa tulang “Panulat.” Mapanganib ang literatura bilang sandatang magagamit ninuman para sa kagalingan ng lipunan o kapahamakan nito. Nasa sa kongkretong sirkunstansya ang determinasyon ng halaga ng anumang likhang-sining. Lubos na hinala't pagbabaka-sakali ang mapipisil sa dalawang saknong na ito:

Di ko kailangan ang ikaw'y gamitin
kung sa iyong katas ang Baya'y daraing,
ibig ko pang ikaw'y tupuki't tadtarin
kaysa maging sangkap sa gawaing taksil.

Di ko kailangang ikaw ay magsabog
ng bango sa landas ng masamang loob,
ibig ko pang ikaw'y magkadurog-durog
kaysa magamit kang sa Baya'y panlubog. (166)

Hindi panatag ang loob ng makata na mapagtitiwalaan ang panitik na kusang maglilingkod sa kabutihan ng tao. Wala siyang tiwala sa estetika ng “sining para sa sinig” na maskara lamang ng mga imbi’t tampalasan. Mapusok ang nais ng makata na magamit ito sa kapakanan ng busabos, upang masugpo ang mga mapagsamantalang uri—panginoong maylupa, komprador, burokrata-kapitalista:¹¹

Kailangan kita sa gitna ng digma
at sa pagtatanghal ng bayaning diwa;
Hayo’y ibangon mo ang lahat ng dukha!
Hayo’t ibagsak mo ang mga masiba! (166)

Laro ng Rahuyo

Walang pasubaling ang komitment ni Ramos ay katalik ng mapagpalayang kilusan ng masa. Binigyan ng ibayong sigla ang tradisyong pedagogikal o mapangaral na katungkulan ng panitikan na nagmumula pa kina Balagtas hanggang sa mga Propagandista. Kasiping ng mga trabahador sa bukid o sa pabrika ang manunulat bilang isang manlilikha, o tagayari ng mga mapapakinabangang produkto. Ang tula ay isang produktong dapat magsilbi sa pagtataguyod ng kolektibong proyekto. Halimbawa ang mga tulang “Alaala,” “Ang Ngiti ni Dora,” “Bayani,” “Gunita sa Lumipas,” “Filipinas,” “Bonifacio,” at halos 75% ng kalipunang inedit ni Tolentino.

Kaalinsabay ng gayong layon, mapupunan ang pangangailangan ng aliw, saya, tuwa sa karikitan at galing ng produktong nilalasap ng madla. Halimbawa ang mga maramdami’t madulang “Kahabag-habag,” “Ang Kurus ng Puso,” “Patawad,” atbp. Malimit, ang “ako” na balatkayong figura ng makata ay maskara ng mapandamay na budhi, ang tinaguring “social ego” o “affective manifold” ni Christopher Caudwell (246). Naisasakatuparan ang dalawang motibasyon ng klasikong poetika: *dulce et utile*. Naganap iyon sa ritwal ng balagtasang at iba pang kolektibong pagkakataong nilahukan ng mga kapanahong manunulat. Napalitan ang publikong lugar ng komunikasyon ng mapag-aring pagkonsumo sa kalakal; nalusaw ang publiko sa magkahihiwalay na kaakuhang pawang nagumon sa sariling kasiyahan.

Sa sangandaang ito ng ating diskurso, nais kong isingit ang suliranin ng di-singkronisadong daloy ng kultura/ideolohiya at kabuhayan. Sa

binansagang “vulgar Marxism,” ang baseng pang-ekonomya ang siyang pangunahing nagdidikta sa laman at hugis ng kultura/sining. Kung susundin ito, dapat wala nang paghanga ngayon sa lumang trahedya nina Sophocles, Shakespeare, Ibsen, atbp. Ngunit naipayo ni Karl Marx na ang pagsulong ng sining/kultura ay hindi laging tuwirang nakaangkla sa produksyong materyal ng lipunan.¹² Sa ibang salita, taglay ng likhang-sining ang relatibong kasarinlan dahil sa di-laging magkatugma ang proseso ng guniguni o kamalayan sa kapaligiran, sa takbo ng masalimuot na relasyong panlipunan.

Sa katunayan, walang dogmatikong proposisyong makasasapol sa komplikadong ugnayan ng iba’t ibang himaymay ng organikong operasyon ng bawat lipunan. Naipaliwanag na itong maigi ni Max Raphael sa pagsaad na *“economic life does not produce anything directly of itself. It merely determines—within the terms laid down by the particular sphere itself—the manner in which the pre-existing thoughts are transformed and evolved”* (79). Sa partikular na larang ng peryodismo’t publikong ritwal ng balagtasang, kaakibat ng kanilang transaksyong diyalektikal, maitataya ang katuturan at bisa ng mga akda ni Ramos. Namamagitan sa bawat salita ang mitolohiya ng Kristyanidad, kaakibat ng minanang pamahiing pagano at makabagong elemento ng siyensiya at teknolohiyang lagang sa sistemang industriyal. Huwag din kalimutan na sa rehimen ng kapitalismong global, ang halagang-palitan (*exchange-value*) o salapi, ang dominanteng determinasyon, kaya balewala ang kalidad, halagang-gamit (*use-value*), o buod na birtud ng sining.¹³ Ito ang paliwanag kung bakit puspos ng kontradiksyon ang matatagpuan sa bawat tula na nilulutas sa isang magayuma’t minsa’y nakagugulat na resolusyon. Samakatwid, hindi ang resolusyon ang importante kundi ang representasyon ng problema sa mararanasang paglalarawan.¹⁴

Dagdag pa, ang institusyon ng nilimbag na babasahin, na tumalukbong sa institusyon ng balagtasang, ay may diyalektikal na interaksyon sa sistema ng edukasyon at burokrasya. Sa masaklaw na pag-usisa, kalakip ang mga institusyong ito sa aparatong ideolohikal ng estadong ipinundar ng Estados Unidos. Mula sa dinamikong proseso ng mga praktika sa institusyong nabanggit umiigkas ang diwa’t damdamin ng makata. Ang kalabuan ng pag-unlad ng buong lipunan ay mailililaw kung isasangkot ang totalidad ng kongkretong detalye’t determinasyon sa isang takdang yugto ng kasaysayan sa lipunan. Samakatwid, ang panulaan ni

Ramos ay makikilatis at matitimbang kung ilalagay ito sa yugto ng krisis ng pagsugpo sa huling pagtatanggol nina Ricarte at Sakay hanggang sa pagbuo ng Partido Nacionalista noong dekada 1920-1930.

Ang krisis ay sumulpot sa kasukdulan ng rebelyon noong dekada 1930. Naisiwalat na huwad ang angkin ng Partido Nacionalista na sila ang kinatawan ng sambayanan; sa halip, lumantad na magkatunggali ang mayamang politikong namamahala ng Komonwelt (sa ilalim ng imperyong Amerikano) at ang tunay na kapakanan ng nakararaming mamamayan. Naibilad ang matining na kontradiksiyon ng masang inaapi at ilang uring umaapi.

Maiging naisadula itong etikal-moral na posisyon ng makabayang intelektuwal sa mapagbironing siste sa “Pag-ibig na Sawing-sawi” (inilathala noong Agosto 30, 1930) at sa “Ibig Kong Makita.” Taglay ng mga adka ang himig, retorika at imahen ng pasyon at literaturang pamagpanuto, magkahalong dalit-puri at mapanuligsang dalumat:

Ibig kong makita ang pamahayagang hindi nasisilaw
sa mga anuns’yo at sa mga Apong makapangyarihan;
ibig kong makita ang hukbo ng mga manunulat diyang
hindi magkakasya sa mga papuri upang makalugdan;...
ibig kong makita ang bayang dakilang pangarap ni Rizal,
ang bayang may budhi at di natatakot sa mga dayuhan! (162)

Inilathala noong Febrero 1929, itong “Ibig Kong Makita” ang tila pahimakas ni Ramos sa institusyon ng Batasang nagkupkop sa kaniya bilang kawani, sa tangkilik ni Quezon. Itiniwalag siya sa kaniyang pagtalima sa tanawing iginuhit niya rito, mga pagnanais na hindi pansarili kundi sa ngalan ng buong komunidad. Ang *persona* ng makata ay tambuli ng magkabuklod na damdamin at hinagap ng nakararami, patibay na ang buod ng indibidwal ay hindi maibubukod sa praktikang sumasagitsit sa dinamikong proseso ng ugnayang panlipunan, ang buong aktibidad ng lipunan sa bawat tiyak na yugto ng kasaysayan (Marx at Engels 29-30). Sa dagling salin, tinig ng sambayanan ang maling hinala ng marami na iyon ay nangungulilang boses ng makata sa gubat. Sa balik-tanaw, maigting na magkasanib sila: ang “ako” ng makata ay mahigpit na katalik ng “tayo” ng sambayanan sa diyalektika ng rebolusyon.

Balangkas ng Teorya, Katas ng Praktika

Sa aking palagay, ang dalisay na pagbabagong naipasok ni Ramos ay masasaksihan sa indayog at tekstura ng mga imaheng nakapaloob sa tulang “Ang Kurus ng Puso,” “Kahabag-habag,” at marami pang iba. Kakaiba’t nakamamanghang pagtuhog ng iba’t ibang salita ang mapapansin, ngunit hindi nalalayo sa indayog at masinsing pagsusunod ng makakaibang tunog na tatak ng kumatha ng *Florante at Laura*. Ibang paksa o laman, ngunit kahawig ang dating ng bigkas. Pasaring ng iba na “magaspang ngunit madamdamin” (*Taludtod* 68) ang pagtula ni Ramos, hindi matamis, kalkulado, malamukot o malamyos tulad ng kaniyang mga kapanahon. Walang bale ang mga pang-uring ito kung hindi isasaalang-alang ang istruktura’t pakay ng tinig na nangungusap sa tula.

Isaisip natin ang kategorya ng diskursong sinusuri. Siyasatin kung ang hirit at tudla ay nakatumbok sa indibidwal na sitwasyon ng maraming protagonista. Himayin ang mga antas ng kontradiksiyon. Sa tulang “Ang Ngiti ni Dora,” dalawang saknong ang naiukol sa paglalarawan ng ngiti ni Teodora Alonso nang isilang ang bayani. Sa malas, ito’y partikular na detalye sa mukha ng ina, mistulang mimetiko o simpleng pagkopya ng hitsura ng tingin. Ngunit kung paglilimiin, higit sa pisikal na detalye ang masisinag sa matingkad na paghahambing sa estropang sumusunod:

Ngiting isang langit ang idinudulot nang buong-pagsuyo,
ngiting purgatoryo ang handa at laan sa diwang palalo,
ngiting kadalasa’y magtampong-sumamo,
umayaw-umibig, magalit-manuyo,
lumayo-lumapit, mangdahas-bumiro,
Ngiting kamayangan na tuwa’t ligaya ang iniaalo
sa pag-uumusok, na di naglulubay, hindi naghihinto
ng buong damdamin, buong-buong diwa, buong-buong puso.
Lidayway ng araw kung nag-uumagang hindi naglalaho,
anag-ag at sinag na laging kasama’t kalagu-laguyo
ang sila-silahis, ali-aliwayway na may kulay dugo,
alu-aluningning ali-alitaptap na pakitang-tagto,
na minsang dumagsang parang tinatabo,
parang sinasalok upang mailuwal sa loob ng pintong
kinaroroonan ng libong parusa’t paghamak na lalo. (26-7)

Lumilitaw na ang ngiti ay okasyon ng sari-saring hinuha, damdamin, hagilap, isip at layon. Lumalagpas ang bugso ng paghanga sa taning ng pagpupugay sa isang tao, humihigit ang enerhiyang naibuhos dito para lamang dakilain ang ina ni Rizal. Umaapaw ang hibo't udyok ng damdamin, higit pa sa alegorikal na haraya ng ina sa tradisyon o ng inang hinubog ng mga militanteng peminista.¹⁵ Hindi ideolohiyang maternal ang tema rito kundi ang pinagsasamantalang uri ng mga pesante't magsasaka, na itinuring na babae sapagkat diumano'y wala silang lakas upang umugit sa pagpapaunlad ng kanilang kabuhayan.

Pagnilayin natin na nabihag ang Inang Pilipinas ng imperyalismong Amerikano. Nagahis, naghihinagpis, at umaasang ililigtas. Naipunla sa malay ng makabayang awtor ang nasang sagipin ang inang humihibik, kahawig nina Joselynang Baliwag at mga kapatid sa ilang kundiman. Masidhing daloy ng damdamin ang masasalat sa mga tulang ukol sa nasawing babae, nagkahiwalay na mag-asawa o nabigong sintahan, tulad ng “Nasilaw sa Dilim,” “Ang Marapat Gawin,” “Ako’y Natatakot,” “Himala,” “Patawad,” “Nasawi” at iba pa. Sa dalawang tulang lumabas noong 1911 sa *Renacimiento Filipino*, ipinatalastas na ang makata’y siyang tutubos sa biktima ng karahasan:

Oo, asahan mo na sa pagkasilaw sa nakitang dilim,
at sa di mo talos na takbo ng palad na iyong daratni’y
alalahanin mo ang di mapaparam na aking hinaing:
magpakasawa ka sa buhay na bago na ngayo’y inangkin,
at kung malanta ka’y naririto akong laan kang kupkupin
laan kang iimis sa langit ng buhay. Kita’y tutubusin. (18)

Kasangkapan pa rin ang relihiyosong mito ng taga-pagligtas na nakaluklok sa komunidad na nakikiramay at handang sumugod upang tumubos:

Oo, maging Kristo. Maging mananakop ng nangagkasala,
ng nangababagabag sa laot ng palad, ng nangagdurusa;
kaysa maging pataw ng pagkapalunging dulot ng nauna,
ng isang naghudas sa kimkim na puri ng iyong asawa.
Huwag manghilakbot ang budhi mong taglay sa pag-alimura
ng balat-sibuyas nating kapisanang sa iyo’y tatawa;

ang mata'y pikit: taglayin sa diwa ang isang pag-asa
na lalong dakila ang nagsisibuo ng nangapapaka
at ang sumasagip sa nangalulunod ay taong kapara
ng anak ng Diyos na nagbigay-tawad sa kay Magdalena. (20)

Makitid at mababaw ang hinuhang personal lamang ang pagninilay, hinaing, sumpa't pangakong naikumpisal dito. Lampas sa sikolohikal na antas, sumisingaw ang konotasyong etikal-moral sa pakikipagkapwa. Sumasaklaw ito sa kagipitan at kahirapang dinaranas ng mga pamilya, na kaagapay ng krisis sa pamumuhay ng sambayanan. Bunyag ang pampulitikang ambil sa trahedya ng buong komunidad na siyang masustansyang tema ng sining ni Ramos.

Hindi Sapat ang Interpretasyon Lamang

Naibadya na sa itaas ang alegorikong estratehiya ni Ramos. Nais kong igiit muli ang argumento ng kritika ko. Ang kontradiksiyon ng indibidwalistiko-burgesyang pananaw at anti-imperyalistang pakikibaka ng nagkakaisang-hanay ng mga kolonisado ay nagtakda ng porma't estilo ng mga tula ni Ramos. Sa mala-romantikong pakiusap sa isang sinusuyo o matalik na kaibigan, inalagaan ang pagkakaisa ng komunidad. Tumagal ito hanggang 1930.

Nang matuklasan ang sumisiglang kilusan ng mga magbubukid nang itatag ang partido Sakdalista, naging entablado ng makata ang kinamihasnang padron upang itaghoy ang malalang pagdurusa't pambubusabos sa kababayan sa mga tulang "Asyenda," "Independence Congress," "Mayayaman," "Ang Sawi," "Galit," "Naniwala Ako," at mga tulang inilathala sa *Sakdal*. Sa ika-anim na kaarawan ng pahayagang nabanggit, ipinagdiwang niya "Ang Guro ng Lahi." Talinghagang ginamit ang "inang nagtuturo sa anak na mahal" ng "gintong kaisipan" upang di mapaglalangan ng "mapagkunwaring pinunong tulisan." Natanaw ng mamamahayag ang tagumpay, ang "bukang-liwayway...kapag narinig na ang putok ng bulkan / iya'y hudyat nitong ating Kasarinlan!" Kaagapay ang kalikasan sa mobilisasyon ng sambayanan.

Patuloy ang tagisan ng lungsod (balwarte ng kolonyalismong kapital) at kanayunan (pagtutulungan ng mga kasama). Pambansang demokrasya pa rin ang mithiing pumapatnubay sa imahinasyon. Maari pang isandata

ang tradisyonal na mito, alamat, awiting-bayan, ritwal. Kasabwat pa rin ang kalikasan ng makata't sambayanan, hindi pa nabubulid sa alyenasyon at reipikasyon sa pabrika't burokrasya. Sumisingit pa rin sa puwang ng palabiro't mapang-uyam na banat sa ipokrisya ng mala-burgesyang sosyedad ang malambing o malamyos na tinig sa "Pagkakaiba," "Ang Payo," "Huwag Kang Lumuha," at sa matimping pamimighati sa "Walang Hanggan." Ang malungkutin at malambing na salamisim ay nagkaroon ng publikong ambil at intonasyon.

Marahil bunga ito ng praktika sa balagtasang, duplo, karagatan, at iba pang maligayang pagdiriwang. Makalipunang dalumat at sensibilidad ang namamayani sa kulturang katutubo. Matutukoy na ito'y testigo sa naimungkahi kong alegoryang pambansa ang naisakatuparan ng panulat ni Ramos. Patunay ito sa talinghagang pangmadla na ipinanukalang lente para sa panitik ng mga inalipin at sinakop, sa binitawang proposisyon ni Fredric Jameson: *"Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society"* (320). Samakatwid, di man tangka o akala, laging kasapakat at karamay ang manunulat/intelektuwal sa makabayang pakikibaka para sa kalayaan at kaunlaran. Nagbubuhay ang kaakuhan o kasiyaan ng indibidwal, ang partikular na halaga, mula sa pusod ng ugnayang panlipunan, pakikipagtulungang unibersal.

Hindi maitatatwa na kasangkot ang sining sa digmaan ng mga uri't bansa sa lipunang sinakop. Dito sandaling maisusulit ang problema ng paghingi ng tulong sa Hapon ni Ramos simula pa nang itatag niya ang partidong Sakdalista. Kabalik at si Ramos ng nasyonalistikong pagsisikap na sinimulan ng Katipunan at ipinagpatuloy nina Isabelo de los Reyes, Lope K. Santos, Crisanto Evangelista, at Pedro Abad Santos sa bandila ng kasarinnan at sosyalismo.¹⁶ Lumaban siya sa kolonyalismong Amerikano at oligarkong alipores nito, ang liderato nina Quezon, Osmena at Roxas. Liberasyon ng bansang Pilipinas ang adhika ni Ramos, katubusan ng masang manggagawa't magbubukid ang pumatnubay sa kanya bilang tao at manlilikha. Sa gayon, hindi siya traydor kundi bayani ng lahi.

Bago ko wakasan ang panimulang saliksik na ito, nais kong sipiin dito ang isang tulang itinuring na modelo ng "Kung Tuyo na ang Luha mo, Aking

Bayan” ni Amado V. Hernandez. Iyon ang tulang “Huwag Kang Lumuha” ni Ramos na lumabas noong 1929-30, sa panahong naging biktima siya ng aristokratikong administrasyon ni Quezon. Subalit ang hantungan nito ay hindi tahimik na pagtitiis tulad ng mga hibik at hikbi sa mga kundiman. Ang tunguhin ay isang babala, banta ng paghihiganti. Maitanong pa: anong aral ang mahuhugot dito bukod sa batas ng pagbabago, kabaligtaran, balighong galaw ng mundo? Masdan ang diyalektikang agos ng pangungulila’t pakikipagtulungan, indibidwalismo’t pakikibahagi—ang tagisan ng sakim na mananakop at mapag-arugang anakpawis, ng proletaryo’t kapital. Paradigmatikong estilo ni Ramos ang nakalarawan dito:

Di mo ba nakitang nang ikaw’y matuwa
ang lahat ng tao’y natuwa ring pawa?
Di mo ba nakitang nang ikaw’y lumuha
wala isa mang lumuha’t naawa?

Ang mundo ay talagang ganito kailanman
mabuti sa lugod, ilag sa may lumbay;
habang nagwawagi ay magkaibigan,
habang nalalagpak ay binabayaan.

Habang mayaman ka’y Diyos ka ng lahat,
habang nasa p’westo’y pagkasarap-sarap;
ngunit sa sandaling ikaw ay mabagsak
pati kawani mo’y di na mahagilap!

Kaya ang mabuti habang may tagumpay
magpakasawa ka sa kaligayahan,
patawarin mo na ang sangkatauhan,
sabugan ng tuwa ang nangalulumbay.

At pagdumating na ang araw ng lungkot,
pag ikaw’y lumagpak sa dati mong tayog,
huwag kang lumuha, kunin mo ang gulok
at patayin mo na ang buong sinukob. (181)

Paglalogom: Transisyonal na Gahum

Batay sa katibayan ng kaniyang panulaan, hindi bumaligtad si Ramos sa kaniyang panatang isatinig ang budhi't damdamin ng madla. Hinagap niyang siya'y wasto sa kaniyang pagpapasiyang magpatuloy sa kaniyang naumpisahan. Hindi niya ipinagkanulo ang esensiya ng kaniyang pananalig sa kolektibong kapakanan ng masa, hindi niya tinalikuran ang pangarap na tubusin ang inang bayan sa pagkasadlak. Tulad nina Laurel, Recto at iba pang nasyonalistikong liderato ng Komonwelt, sumunod siya sa pansamantalang taktikang pakikitungo sa Hapon sa panahon ng digmaan na diumano'y may pahiwatig na pagsang-ayon ni Quezon.¹⁷ Hindi niya lubos na naintindihan na ang pasista-militaristang nasyonalismo ng Hapon ay hindi katugma sa mapagpalayang prinsipyo ng rebolusyong Pranses, o maski na ang pilosopiya ni Sun Yat-sen sa isang tula niyang may epigraph: "*Christ died to make men holy / Let us die to make men free*" (85). Nadala siya ng propaganda ng "Co-Prosperity Sphere," ng himok na ipailalim ang identidad na partikular ng Pilipino sa Asyatikong unibersalidad.

Maraming kababayan ang sumasamba sa unibersalidad ng globalisasyon ngayon, isang pagkakamaling hindi naiwasan ni Ramos. Maikakabit sa kaso ni Ramos ang taludtod na ito mula sa tulang "Dili-dili": "Magandang lalaki: Kung nagtaksil ka ma'y di rin nagmamaliw / ng gawang pag-ibig ang pinagtaksilang bayang maramdamin" (50). Bukas na suliraning pampulitika pa ito hanggang ngayon na dapat talakayin sa isang historiko-materyalismong paraan. Kung hindi, marahil alimura't kaululan lamang ang mapapala. Sa kalakarang konsensus sa kritika, walang pag-aalinlangang si Benigno Ramos ay "*poeta revolucionario*." Isa siya sa mga magiting na mandirigmang makabayan na naghandog ng matalim, mapangahas at maalindog na sandatang mailalapat sa proyektong hanggang ngayon ay ating ipinaglalaban sa siglo ng terorismong digmaan: ganap na kasarinlan ng Pilipinas, hustisyang panlipunan, demokrasyang pambansa, dignidad ng bawat mamamayan, mapagkalingang pakikitungo sa kalikasan, at masaganang kinabukasan sa sangkatauhan.

Mga Tala

1. Tingnan ang *The Fateful Years: Japan's Adventure in the Philippines 1941-45* ni Teodoro Agoncillo (1965) at *Four Aspects of Philippine-Japanese Relations 1930-40* ni Grant K. Goodman (1967).
2. Silipin ang Paunang Salita ni Delfin Tolentino, Jr. sa *Gumising Ka, Aking Bayan!* ni Benigno Ramos (1998).
3. Ito ay ayon sa *US and the Philippines* na inakda ng Labor Research Association (1958).
4. Basahin ang *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* ni David Sturtevant (1976).
5. Tingnan ang *Panulaang Tagalog* nina Epifania Angeles, Narciso Matienzo at Jose Villa Panganiban (1972).
6. Hinggil sa historya ng panulaan, konsultahin ang “Mga Katangian ng Tulang Tagalog” ni Lope K. Santos sa *Poetikang Tagalog* na pinagmatnugutan ni Virgilio Almario (1996).
7. Konsultahin ang *The Union Obrera Democratica: First Filipino Labor Union* ni William Henry Scott (1992).
8. Ito ay ayon sa *American Neo-Colonialism* ni William J. Pomeroy (1970).
9. Sa turing ni Walter Benjamin, “*the experience of aura is based on the transposition of a social reaction onto the relationship of the lifeless or of nature to man*” (sinipi ni Jameson 77).
10. Kahawig ng pormalistikong sipat ni Agoncillo sa *History of the Filipino People* (1970).
11. Sangguniin ang *Lipunan at Rebolusyong Pilipino* ni Amado Guerrero (1971).
12. Tingnan ang “Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy” mula sa *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, na pinagmatnugutan nina Lee Baxandall at Stefan Morawski (1973), pp. 134-35.
13. Suriin ang *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx* ni Mikhail Lifshitz (1973).
14. Tingnan ang “On Literature as an Ideological Form” nina Etienne Balibar at Pierre Macherey sa *Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader* (1996).

15. Konsultahin rin ang “Imahen ng Inang Bayan sa Kundiman ng Himagsikan” ni Teresita Maceda (1995) at ang *Alinagnag* ni Rosario Torres-Yu (2011).

16. Ihambing sa *Communism in the Philippines: An Introduction* ni Alfredo B. Saulo (1969) at “Dionisio Macapagal: A Rebel Matures” ni Brian Fegan (2000).

17. Tingnan ang *Philippine Collaboration in World War II* ni David Joel Steinberg (1967).

Mga Sanggunian

Abueg, Efren. *Parnasong Tagalog* ni A.G. Abadilla. MCS Enterprises, 1973.

Agoncillo, Teodoro. *The Fateful Years: Japan's Adventure in the Philippines 1941-45*. R.P. Garcia Publishing, 1965.

Agoncillo, Teodoro, at Milagros Guerrero. *History of the Filipino People*. R.P. Garcia Publishing, 1970.

Allen, James S. *The Philippine Left on the Eve of World War II*. MEP, 1993.

Almario, Virgilio. *Balagtasismo Versus Modernismo*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 1984.

---. *Taludtod at Talinghaga*, pinagmatnugutan ni Romulo Sandoval, Aklat Balagtasyana, 1985.

---. *Pag-unawa sa ating Pagtula*. Anvil Publishing, 2006.

Angeles, Epifania, Narciso Matienzo, at Jose Villa Panganiban. *Panulaang Tagalog*. Limbagang Pilipino, 1972.

Balibar, Etienne, at Pierre Macherey. “On Literature as an Ideological Form.” *Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader*, pinagmatnugutan nina Terry Eagleton at Drew Milne, Blackwell, 1996.

Balmaceda, Julian Cruz. “Ang Tatlong Panahon ng Tulang Tagalog.” *Mga Lektura ng Kasaysayan ng Panitikan*, pinagmatnugutan ni Galileo Zafra, Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2013.

Caudwell, Christopher. *Illusion and Reality*. International Publishers, 1937.

Constantino, Renato. *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*. Tala Publishing Services, 1975.

- Ecumenical Institute for Labor and Research (EILER). *Manggagawa: Noon at Ngayon*. EILER, 1982.
- Fegan, Brian. "Dionisio Macapagal: A Rebel Matures." *Lives at the Margin*, pinagmatnugutan ni Alfred McCoy, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 2000.
- Fischer, Ernst. *The Necessity of Art*. Penguin Books, 1963.
- Goodman, Grant K. *Four Aspects of Philippine-Japanese Relations 1930-40*. Yale U P, 1967.
- Guerrero, Amado. *Lipunan at Rebolusyong Pilipino*. Lathalaang Pulang Tala, 1971.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form*. Princeton U P, 1971.
- . "Third-world Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism." *The Jameson Reader*, pinagmatnugutan nina Michael Hardt at Kathi Weeks. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Labor Research Association. *U.S and the Philippines*. International Publishers, 1958.
- Lachica, Eduardo. *Huk: Philippine Agrarian Society in Revolt*. Solidaridad, 1971.
- Lifshitz, Mikhail. *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*. Pluto Press, 1973.
- Lumbera, Bienvenido. "The Literary Relations of Tagalog Literature." *Brown Heritage*, pinagmatnugutan ni Antonio Manuud, Ateneo de Manila U P, 1967.
- Lumbera, Bienvenido, and Cynthia Nograles-Lumbera. 1982. *Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology*. National Bookstore.
- Maceda, Teresita. "Imahen ng Inang Bayan sa Kundiman ng Himagsikan." *Ulat sa Ikatlong Pambansang Kumperensya sa Sentenaryo ng Rebolusyong 1896*, U of the Philippines Baguio at Benguet State U, 1993.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. "Theses on Feuerbach." *Selected Works*. International Publishers, 1968.
- . *Marx and Engels on Literature and Art*, pinagmatnugutan nina Lee Baxandall at Stefan Morawski. Telos P, 1973.
- Panganiban, Jose Villa, at Consuelo Torres-Panganiban. *Panitikan ng Pilipinas*. Bede's Publishing House, 1954.

- Pomeroy, William J. *American Neo-Colonialism*. International Publishers, 1970.
- Ramos, Benigno. *Gumising Ka, Aking Bayan!* Ateneo de Manila U P, 1998.
- Raphael, Max. *Proudhon Marx Picasso*. Humanities Press, 1980.
- Regalado, Iñigo. “Ang Panulaang Tagalog.” *Mga Lektura sa Kaysaysayan ng Panitikan*. Komisyon ng Wikang Fillipino, 2013.
- Richardson, Jim. *Komunista*. Ateneo de Manila U P, 2011.
- Saulo, Alfredo B. *Communism in the Philippines: An Introduction*. Ateneo Publications Office, 1969.
- Santos, Lope K. “Mga Katangian ng Tulang Tagalog.” *Poetikang Tagalog*, pinagmatnugutan ni Virgilio Almario. Sentro ng Wikang Pilipino, 1996.
- Scott, William Henry. *The Union Obrera Democratica: First Filipino Labor Union*. New Day Publishers, 1992.
- Steinberg, David Joel. *Philippine Collaboration in World War II*. U of Michigan P, 1967.
- Sturtevant, David. *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940*. Cornell U P, 1976.
- Taylor, George E. *The Philippines and the United States: Problems of Partnership*. Frederick Praeger, 1964.
- Terami-Wada, Motoe. “Benigno Ramos and the Sakdal Movement.” *Philippine Studies*, vol. 36, no. 4, 1988, pp. 427-42.
- Thomson, George. *Marxism and Poetry*. International Publishers, 1946.
- . *The Human Essence*. China Policy Study Group, 1974.
- Tolentino, Delfin Jr. “Paunang Salita.” *Gumising Ka, Aking Bayan!*, ni Benigno Ramos, Ateneo de Manila U P, 1988.
- Torres-Yu, Rosario. *Alinagnag*. University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2011.

The Contributors

JHOANNA LYNN B. CRUZ is a Palanca award-winning writer who teaches literature and creative writing at UP Mindanao. She completed a Master of Arts in Language and Literature and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, both with high distinction, at DLSU Manila. Her first book, *Women Loving: Stories and a Play*, was published in 2010 by DLSU and Anvil Publishing. Cruz is president of the Davao Writers Guild and Regional Coordinator for Eastern and Southern Mindanao in the National Committee on Literary Arts. She currently makes her home in Davao City with her partner, their two children, and three cats.

CARLOMAR ARCANGEL DAOANA is the author of four collections of poetry, with *Loose Tongue: Poems 2001-2013*, published by the UST Publishing House in 2014, as the most recent. His poems have been anthologized in the *Vagabond Asia Pacific Poetry Series*, published by Vagabond Press in Australia. He received First Place and Second Place honors in the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature in the English Poetry category for his collections, “The Elegant Ghost” (2012) and “Crown Sonnet for Maria” (2013), respectively. A regular columnist for the Arts and Culture section of the *Philippine Star*, he teaches at the Fine Arts Department of the Ateneo de Manila University.

Si **U Z. ELISERIO** ay nagtuturo ng popular na kultura sa Departamento ng Filipino at Panitikan ng Pilipinas sa UP Diliman. Meron siyang MA sa Pilosopiya at PhD sa Malikhaing Pagsulat mula sa UP. Awtor siya ng *Bayaning Lamanlupa*, *All Will Be Revealed*, at iba pang libro. Natanghal na ang kanyang mga dula sa Cultural Center of the Philippines bilang bahagi ng Virgin Labfest. Bisitahin siya sa www.ueliserio.net.

RALPH SEMINO GALÁN, poet, literary and cultural critic, translator and editor, is the Assistant Director of the UST CCWLS. He is an Associate Professor of Literature, the Humanities, and Creative Writing in the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters. He has a BA in English (Major in Literature), *magna cum laude* from the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology and an MA in English Studies (Major in Creative Writing) from UP Diliman. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Literature in the UST Graduate School. His poems in English and Filipino have won prizes in the *Philippine Panorama* (1993) and *Home Life Magazine* (1998) poetry contests. He has been published in numerous national and international anthologies and literary journals. His first book, *The Southern Cross and Other Poems*, was published by the NCCA in 2005 as part of its UBOD New Authors Series. His most recent books, *Discernments: Literary Essays, Cultural Critiques and Book Reviews* (2013) and *From the Major Arcana* (2014), were published by the UST Publishing House.

JAN RAEN CARLO M. LEDESMA is an instructor of literature in the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters. He is currently working as the Editorial Assistant in the UST Office of the Scholar-in-Residence. He also worked as a writer in the UST Office of Public Affairs, contributing articles to *Academia*. His research interests include postcolonialism, gender studies, queer diaspora (intersections of postcolonial and queer theories and studies), and green studies/ecocriticism. He earned his BA in Literature, *magna cum laude* from UST and is currently finishing his MA in Literature at the UST Graduate School.

TITO R. QUILING, JR. received his bachelor's degree in Literature with an Outstanding Thesis award from UST in 2011, and has an MA in Media Studies, major in Film, from the College of Mass Communication, UP Diliman, where he was awarded Best Thesis for Graduate Studies in 2015. As an undergraduate, he was a three-time delegate to the annual De-Centralized Asian Transnational Challenges [d'CATCH] documentary-exchange program in Bangkok (2009), Chiba (2010), and Manila (2011). He has presented papers in national and international conferences, and has been a fellow in the 2nd Thomasian Writers' Workshop, the 5th UST J. Elizalde Navarro National Workshop on the Arts Criticism in 2013, and Kritika 2015, among others.

SOLEDAD S. REYES has written/edited over twenty books on various aspects of Philippine literary studies—the novel, the short story, poetry, theory and criticism, women’s writing, and popular icons and artifacts. She has also translated Tagalog novels and short stories by Antonio Sempio, Macario Pineda, and Rosario de Guzman Lingat. She received the A.L. Becker Southeast Asian Literature in Translation Prize in 2016. She is Professor Emeritus at the Ateneo de Manila University.

E. SANJUAN, JR., currently professorial lecturer at Polytechnic University of the Philippines, is Emeritus Professor of English, Comparative Literature and Ethnic Studies, from several US universities. He was previously a fellow of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute, Harvard University, and Fulbright Professor of American Studies, Leuven University, Belgium. His recent books are: *Learning from the Filipino Diaspora* (UST Publishing House), *Filipinos Everywhere* (DLSU Press), *US Imperialism and Revolution in the Philippines* (Palgrave) and *Between Empire and Insurgency* (UP Press).

OSCAR TANTOCO SERQUÍÑA, JR., teaches at the Department of Speech Communication and Theater Arts at UP Diliman. He holds an MA in Comparative Literature from the same university. His critical essays have been published in *Humanities Diliman*, *Philippine Humanities Review*, *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies*, and *Kritika Kultura*.

The Editors

JOYCE ARRIOLA, CCWLS Resident Fellow, is a scholar and critic. She is the author of *Postmodern Filming of Literature: Sources, Contexts and Adaptations* (UST Publishing House, 2006), which won the 2007 National Book Award for Film/Film Criticism; and of numerous papers read in national and international conferences, and published in reputable national and international journals, including the ISI-Indexed *Southeast Asia Research* of the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies. She is a Full Professor of the UST Graduate School, and the Faculty of Arts and Letters, and has won several awards, including the Outstanding Alumni Award of the UST Graduate School. She is the Director of the UST Research Center for Culture, Arts and the Humanities (RCCAH).

MA. AILIL B. ALVAREZ, CCWLS Resident Fellow, is a literary critic. She is the author of *Slivers of the Sky: Catholic Literary Readings and Other Essays* (UST Publishing House, 2016), which is a finalist at the 2017 National Book Awards for Literary Criticism/Literary History in English. Her critical essays and poems have been published in literary journals such as *TOMÁS* and *Dapitan*. She was a writing fellow of the UST CCWLS Summer Writing Workshop, and the UST Varsitarian J. Elizalde Navarro National Workshop for Arts Criticism. She is Assistant Professor of literature and the humanities in the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters, and the Director of the UST Publishing House.