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AND INVESTIGATION IN THE HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES**

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Publication Guidelines

Sɪʟʟɪᴍᴀɴ Jᴏᴜʀɴᴀʟ welcomes submission of scholarly papers, research studies, brief reports in all fields from both Philippine and foreign scholars, but papers must have some relevance to the Philippines, Asia, or the Pacific. All submissions are refereed.

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Manuscripts of up to 10,000 words, including tables and references, should conform to the conventions of format and style exemplified in a typical issue of Silliman Journal. Documentation of sources should be discipline-based. Whenever possible, citations should appear in the body of the paper, holding footnotes to a minimum. Tables must be held to a maximum of five. Pictures or illustrations will be accepted only when absolutely necessary.

All articles must be accompanied by an abstract of 200 words and keywords of not more than ten words, and must use gender-fair language.

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Manuscripts should be submitted electronically in one Microsoft Word file (including title page, figures, tables, etc. in the file), preferably in RTF (.rtf). Figures and photos must also be attached to the email in .jpeg. Please send one copy of the manuscript as an e-mail attachment, with a covering message addressed to the Editor: sillimanjournal@su.edu.ph

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"Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. You are all learners, doers, teachers."
- Richard Bach, *Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah*

"When you want to teach children to think, you begin by treating them seriously when they are little, giving them responsibilities, talking to them candidly, providing privacy and solitude for them, and making them readers and thinkers of significant thoughts from the beginning. That's if you want to teach them to think."
- Bertrand Russell

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
- Margaret Mead

"There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest."
- Elie Wiesel

Welcome to the first issue of Silliman Journal for 2017. The first full-length article has to do with "Institutionalizing Local Narratives" with literature teacher Andre Soluta and her research team's collection of folk stories from local residents of Dumaguete City, Philippines. Any one of the resulting themes—"origin of barangay name, community spirit (with themes of peace and harmony, respect and trust); rhythm of daily life in years past (with themes of prayerfulness and hard and simple but happy life); war experience (with themes of cruelty, survival, courage, and patriotism); and ghosts and supernatural creatures (with themes of woman ghost or enchantress and malevolent creatures)"—provide rich and riveting narratives, most of the tales you would be hearing (or reading about) for the first time. Andre recommends, and I am in total agreement, using these materials in classes in our elementary schools.

Next, Carljoe Javier examines how the superhero genre has been used in post-9/11 culture, particularly in American superhero comics and Filipino superhero films. In American superhero comics, Carljoe shows how the superhero genre has been utilized to regain a sense of control and security after the traumatic events of 9/11 and then turns a critical

eye to Filipino superhero films produced in the same time period. In this paper, Carljoe says that where "the Marvel comics attempt to engage current events and contemporary social and political concerns, the Filipino superhero films employ narratives that introduce their heroes." Reading these as origin stories, the paper examines the discourse they create, exposing how the Filipino superhero removes power and control from viewers and marginalizes its already impoverished characters." Thus, Carljoe shows important differences—revealing the issues and concerns of each culture, and "perhaps more importantly how the two cultures create very different discourse with the genre."

In the third article, Leni Garcia of DLSU-Manila, gives us a background of Samuel Bak, the Holocaust survivor-artist whose works are displayed in Europe and in the United States. Leni tries to show that "although Bak's art is rooted in his experiences of the Holocaust, it extends them by pointing the spectator to a kind of reconciliation with the constant disintegration of the world that has been 'wounded by the Holocaust'" and that "Bak joins the Zen masters in their practice of active engagement in the world while training the mind to see the world as it is."

Fourth, Maria Mercedes Arzadon of UP Diliman highlights hyper-vigilant parenting in public schools, otherwise known as hyper-parenting, bulldoze parenting, and helicopter parenting, assuming that teachers as parents are supposed to be able to more skillfully negotiate "in the educational realm given their forms of capital and knowledge of the various forms of curriculum." Prof. Arzadon suggests that critical pedagogy entails "deconstructing orthodoxy to reveal the real foes, to demand that the state reclaims its stewardship over its youth's education, and to regulate the predatory market" making "schools more meritocratic, safer for children, and less prone to inequity."

In the next article, Zeny Sarabia Panol and Rose Baseleres collaborate on the project "Activism in the Philippines: Memorializing and Retelling Political Struggles Through Music", stating at the outset that "the soundtrack of Philippine political and social activism tells of a centuries-old cultural heritage that has been and is still used collectively and individually to recall, memorialize, contemporize, mobilize, and remind the nation of its fighting spirit and its resolve never to forget the ultimate sacrifice of its heroes." The authors then analyze protest songs

in an attempt to highlight "the role of music in the political awakening of Filipinos through the years and explore the intersection of memory and music as a medium of political activism and mobilization."

Then, Mark Anthony Quintos of UP-Los Baños suggests a theoretical understanding of the sociology of suicide—pre-Durkheim, Durkheim and contemporaries, and the interpretivist paradigm—then proposes a new framework to explain suicide from the perspective of criminology.

This issue then digresses to another topic, that of information communication technology (ICT), particularly a look at how some 50 rural women residing in Luna, Apayao, Northern Philippines applied what they learned from a digital literacy training offered at their community center. This was their first exposure to ICT and the experience was found advantageous not only to the women but to their families as well. Particular areas for application included community projects, education, health and nutrition, entrepreneurship and livelihood, and safety and security.

In the final full-length article, Gina Fontejon Bonior takes us to the public school setting, discussing literacy as well, from the perspective of teachers because "the success in the implementation of any educational innovation is influenced by teachers' social dispositions and ability to navigate through the complexities of enacting the program in their local contexts." Gina's study was thus an attempt at exploring how teachers change and are changed as they implement effective literacy instruction. Narratives of eight teachers at an island in Southern Philippines revealed that their dispositions are impacted by their personal histories and deeply ingrained social, cultural, and spiritual capital.

REVIEW SECTION

The lone contribution to the Notes section is entitled "Peace and Justice: The Islamic Way" by religious studies teacher Lily Apura who attempts to clear up the misunderstanding and ignorance about Islam. The lone contribution to the Review Section is by literature teacher Ian Casocot who reviews John Jack Wigley's Home of the Ashfall (2014), saying that this publication feels very much like a continuation of Wigley's first book, Falling into the Manhole. Ian describes reading Wigley as falling "under the stealthy spell of a born storyteller."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The teaching-learning process is highlighted in many of the papers in this issue. Indeed, the role of the teacher is vital—from the classroom to the community, from suicide to activism. As Haim Ginott has said: "I've come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate. It's my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized."

Margaret Helen F. Udarbe
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Institutionalizing Local Narratives: Community History and Lore for Primary Grades in Dumaguete City, Philippines

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This paper presents the gathered folk and historical narratives from the thirty barangays in Dumaguete City, Central Philippines contributed through the oral history method by 36 elderly natives of Dumaguete when asked to share popular local folk stories and significant events in the area within living memory as well as to recommend narratives in and about the locality that should be passed on to the young as part of their elementary school learning.

Using thematic analysis, the study was able to establish the following common topics and themes running through the local narratives gathered: origin of barangay name; community spirit (with themes of peace and harmony, respect and trust); rhythm of daily life in years past (with themes of prayerfulness and hard and simple but happy life); war experience (with themes of cruelty, survival, courage, and patriotism); and ghosts and supernatural creatures (with themes of woman ghost or enchantress and malevolent creatures).

The quality of the topics and themes drawn from the study's data proves that local narratives are a very rich source of materials for the mother tongue-based History, Culture, and Values classes in elementary schools.

Keywords: local narratives, community history and lore, culture-based learning

INTRODUCTION

The June 2012 implementation of DepEd Order No. 74, s. 2009 known as Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) is seen as a positive development in the Philippine educational system inasmuch as this order requires that the medium of instruction in Grades 1–3 should be the pupils' mother tongue. A rationale for MTB-MLE has been provided by UNESCO (2012):

> "Children who receive a strong educational foundation in their mother tongue are in the best position to move forward with confidence, to learn other languages, and to make a contribution to their societies' future. Strengthening early education helps to equip young people and communities with sufficient knowledge, capacity, and self-confidence to engage in decision-making about development and to protect their rights." (p. 39)

Kadel (2010) explains that MTB-MLE is also known as "'first-language-first' in education" because children are initially instructed in their first language (L1) and, later on, in additional languages. This type of education "helps linguistically marginalized communities bridge to the broader society, allowing them to acquire the national language without losing their own identity" (Kosonen, 2009, in Kadel, 2010).

For Benson (2004), mother tongue-based bilingual (or multilingual) programs are tremendously advantageous to young learners since "the affective domain, involving confidence, self-esteem and identity, is strengthened by use of the L1, increasing motivation and initiative as well as creativity." Skutnabb-Kangas (2009) also points out that one positive aspect of MTB-MLE is that it builds on the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) of children and, thus, they will not be "sitting in the classrooms the first 2–3 years without understanding much of the teaching" which is often the case if the first language is not used as medium of instruction. In other words, children are relieved of the "double burden of learning both the language and the content all at the same time" (quoted in Granali, 2013) because "their own language enables young learners to immediately construct and explain their world without fear of making mistakes, articulate their thoughts, and add new concepts to what they already know" (Nolasco, 2010).

Given the documented advantages of MTB-MLE, the implementation of said DepEd Order makes "Education for All" more achievable to the country's minority groups who are marginalized because of their languages. However, it has also created a need for classroom materials using different Filipino languages. Informal interviews with primary grade teachers handling the Cebuano-based classes in the public elementary schools of Dumaguete City and at the private Silliman University Elementary School revealed that they all found preparation of instructional materials in the vernacular to be very hard and stressful. In light of this, the digital stories[1] of compiled local narratives from within Dumaguete City presented in institutionalized Cebuano – the final output of this research project – will be offered for use in Grades 1–3 classrooms in the locality.

This article presents a thematic analysis of the gathered oral narratives – mainly, local history and lore – since the research team[2] has established that there is still very little written account about the various Dumaguete communities as well as the fact that, on their own, there is much to be learned from these narratives.

ORAL HISTORY AND STORYTELLING

Oral history is a "democratizing concept of history" in that it is focused on "the ignored (or 'historiless') strata of the society, reflecting more on the small history (microhistory), individual experiences, history written 'from below', the everyday dimension, etc." (Weber, n.d., p. 1). Before the 1970s, history was mainly written from elite perspectives. But, with the social movements on equality and justice for all in the 1970s and 80s, oral historians started paying attention to 'history from below' aimed at foregrounding the experiences and voices of those who have traditionally been absent or 'hidden from history' (Rowbotham, 1973 in Smith, 2008). In other words, "'history from below' seeks to take as it subjects ordinary people and concentrate on their experiences and perspectives, contrasting itself with the stereotype of traditional political history and its focus on the actions of 'great men'…" (The Institute of Historical Research, 2008). Presenting as historical accounts their experiences and perspectives is appropriate given that "the real record of history is found in the lives of ordinary people who lived it" (Texas Historical Commission, n.d.). Also, these oral accounts are "valuable as sources of new knowledge about the past and as new interpretive perspectives on it" (Shopes, n.d., p. 3).

One challenge often hurled against oral history is the "accuracy of memory as a historical source." According to Green (1971, in Smith, 2008), people experience the same things differently, so there should be more leeway in the acceptance of the subjectivity of memory. In fact, these subjectivities of memory are actually advantageous in that "oral histories could provide historians with new ways of understanding the past, not just in what was recalled, but also with regard to continuity and change in the meaning given to events" (Portelli, 1979, in Smith, 2008). The unreliability of memory understandably makes oral history, which relies on a 'dialogue' between interviewer and interviewee/narrator, "not the best method for obtaining factual data, such as specific dates, places, or times, because people rarely remember such detail accurately…. It is the best method to use, however, to get an idea not only of what happened, but what past times meant to people and how it felt to be a part of those times" (Texas Historical Commission, n.d., p. 2).

As a method, oral history is also problematic in the sense that it is often interchanged with oral tradition, a body of narratives (stories, songs, sayings, etc.) among a group passed down through the ages while the former "involves eyewitness accounts and reminiscences about events and experiences which occurred during the lifetime of the person being interviewed." But the recollection of past events and experiences cannot be totally disengaged from storytelling in that

> When we ask people to talk about the past, we are asking them to tell us stories from memory. When they do, they often select and emphasize certain features while minimizing others. People do this to personalize their stories for the listener, to make the story relevant to today, or to make sense of their experiences. It is human nature to use stories to explain things. (Texas Historical Commission, n.d., p. 2)

Allen (1992, in Shopes, n.d.), a folklorist, explains that storytelling is a natural aspect of oral history, hence, the significance of oral history lies not in its ability to present facts but, rather, in its "attempt to create a collective consciousness of what is important…. Whether a given story is factually true or not is not the point; rather, its truth is an interpretive truth, what it stands for, or means" (p. 10). In other words, "these stories form the cultural,

mythological, and historical fabric to daily life," according to Cunsolo Willox, Harper, and Edge (2012). The authors maintain "storytelling… should be respected as a way of sharing lived experiences, exploring personal beliefs and values, and discovering place-based wisdom" (p. 7).

Clearly, oral history and storytelling are closely intertwined focusing on ordinary people's recollections of their lived experiences. Both are part of most peoples' sociocultural heritage and also an effective means of communication by and with the very young. Oral narratives[3] are, unfortunately, rarely utilized in today's classrooms. This article argues that there is much to be gained in institutionalizing oral narratives starting from the primary grades.

LOCAL ORAL NARRATIVES

Setting and Key Informants

The key informants in this study were mainly elderly natives of Dumaguete while those who came from other places (mostly from neighboring areas) had been permanent residents of the city for 30 or more years as of 2013 when the interviews were conducted. Most were within the 60–90 age range with more than one-third of them already in their 80s.

The team aimed to interview two informants from each of the Dumaguete City barangays, but this was not fully realized because we were not able to meet some of those whose names were given to us because of either their illness or their being away visiting their children. At least two also refused to be interviewed, with one claiming that he no longer trusted his memory to recount the past well enough to contribute to our project. Moreover, we only had one key informant from each of the barangays comprising the city's commercial district (specifically Poblacion 3, Poblacion 4, Poblacion 5, and Poblacion 6) because there are now very few residential houses in the area and many establishment owners are not from Dumaguete or have not stayed in the city long enough to consider it home.

Common Narrative Topics and Themes

The team asked each key informant three main questions: 1) What folk stories are commonly known in the locality and variations of these stories, if any; 2) What events in Dumaguete within living memory are considered significant

in the locality?; and 3) What oral narratives in and about the locality should be included in the community's elementary school curriculum? Analysis of the gathered oral narratives yielded the following common topics although the last two were not mentioned as often as the first three: 1) origin of barangay name, 2) community spirit, 3) rhythm of daily life in years past, 4) war experience, and 5) ghosts and supernatural creatures. It is notable that almost all the key informants considered their replies to the first two questions as also their answers to the third one.

Origin of barangay name. All the informants considered the origin of their barangay (then called barrio) name as part of the community lore and should, by all means, be handed down to the succeeding generations. Their barangay-naming narratives validate Aldecoa-Rodriguez's (2000) claim that most such narratives in Negros Oriental and Siquijor, in general, and Dumaguete, in particular, were short and exhibited the characteristics of legends and myths. Analysis of the oral narratives gathered showed that the legends surrounding the names of barrios often centered on a prominent community marker – object, site, a group, popular community activity, or even, a purported communal trait – the name of which was adopted or adapted by the barrio. For instance, the supposedly unusually big *Balugo* tree; the solitary *Piapi* tree; the actively flowing springs — "*Junob*[non] *gyud*[4] (truly full of springs)"; the *Kantil* or small body of water that shoots up; *Daro* (plow or till the soil) as the main activity of community members since the area was one vast *darohan* (farm); the tower by the beach that was the lookout place (*Bantayan*) of community members guarding against attacking pirates and other invaders; and the abundant *Bagacay* bamboos surrounding the cemetery.

Other barrio names alluded to these individual markers as well. Buñao, allegedly the Spaniards' mispronunciation of the Visayan term *bugnaw* (cold), described the drinking water that used to be drawn from the communal well. The name *Bajumpandan* is also attributed to the colonizers who supposedly got curious about the unfamiliar good smell wafting from the houses during their initial foray into the barrio. The natives explained their practice of lining their pot with Pandan leaves when cooking rice to give it good flavor and smell. Henceforth, the foreigners recorded the place as "*kini may baho man sa Pandan* (this place has the scent of Pandan)" prompting people to start calling the place with a contraction of the phrase. In a similar vein, *Cadawinonan* was coined in reference to the earliest settlers

in the area who migrated from the neighboring town of Dauin ("originally, it was *Cadauinanon*") while the name *Camanjac* alluded to the *manhak* birds perpetually swarming the barrio's thick bamboo trees.

The name *Talay* recalled how the houses of old – mainly located beside the road – were in one straight line formation *("gatalay ning mga balay")*, and *Tabuk-tubig*, then the trading center for farm produce from various parts of the province, could be reached from Dumaguete, through the Banica River *nitabok sa tubig* ('they crossed the water'). *Mangnao* alluded to the need for people to wash their hands (*"adto mi manghunaw"*) after gathering *"saksak"* (variety of nipa that thrive on fresh water) that grew robustly in the area, and *Banilad* referenced the mats, originally spread by the road for drying corn and rice grains but were swept away by the flood. When the water subsided, the mats were found tumbled all over by the fence *("nasablay didto's alad")*. *Looc* described how the place was surrounded by water or located within water (*"murag na-look, nasulod* (seemed to be choked, isolated)"). On the other hand, one version of the origin of Barangay Motong's name recalled the act of harvesting coconuts (*mamutong*), which abounded in the place.

From among the gathered narratives, there are three barangays named after a purported common trait among the barrio folk. The other version of the origin of Motong goes *"kay pareha sa manok nga mag-mutong ang mga tawo diri* (just like the fighting-cocks, the residents here were easily provoked)." Similarly, Batinguel got its name from the popular notion that people in the area were hot-tempered (*initon ug ulo*). The third barrio, Candau-ay, got its name because *"sige ra'ng ga-away,* dyotay rai sikil mag-away dayon (people here were constantly fighting, simple misunderstandings/disagreements could easily lead to clashes)."

Two barrio-naming narratives could be considered urban legends. One of these is the narrative on Cambagroy (now renamed Barangay Poblacion 6), which sounds generic. The informant shared that there was a party that had an American visitor named Mr. Roy. While he was walking away, the people shouted, *'Come back, Roy'*. From then on, the place was known as Cambagroy. Conversely, the narrative on barrio Luke Wright (now renamed Barangay Poblacion 2) appears to be purely fictional and exhibits the Filipino penchant for making puns. The place was obviously named after Luke Edward Wright, the American Governor-General of the Philippines who served from February 1904 to April 1906, but the legend goes that Luke Wright, a foreigner, was someone who actually stayed in the area and

is known to everyone. His popularity was mainly because of his peculiar walking habit: *"Whenever he walked by, he was always on the right side of the road."*

The narratives on the names of four other barrios, meanwhile, show the origins to be more in the realm of myths than legends since supernatural elements are featured in each narrative. Barangay Bagacay is eponymous to the specific variety of bamboo that surrounded the cemetery located in the barrio. The *bagacay* supposedly warded off the malevolent creatures *abat, balbal, and kaskas*[5] from preying on the just dead.

Even more dreadful than the malevolent beings was the supernatural creature that lent its name to Barangay Taclobo. This gigantic shell locally called taclobo brought death to anyone passing by while it was opening because it was enchanted.

In contrast, the supernatural characters that feature in the narratives of Bantayan and Calindagan are believed to be divine and dedicated to guarding the people against outside attackers. Both narratives are likely variations of the same myth about a mysterious woman patrolling the beach considering that the two barrios share the same stretch of beach. The Bantayan version speaks of how the woman ghost suddenly appeared from nowhere to help the men at the watch tower defend their place when invaders were approaching. The woman was believed to be St. Catherine, the designated patron-saint of Dumaguete. The Calindagan version presents either a woman astride a gigantic white horse or a half-woman, half-horse creature constantly patrolling the shore on the lookout for pirates coming to kidnap girls working in haciendas. Accordingly, she would gallop or make her horse gallop *(galindag ang dagan)* to warn people that pirates were coming in, so they should hide. The informant emphasized that the community considered the horse-riding woman more believable than the half-woman creature and was convinced that she was actually St. Catherine doing her patron-saint duties.

It is noteworthy that the names of the barangays generally memorialize a positive aspect of the place except seemingly those that comment on a general trait of the barriofolk. However, a closer examination of these latter narratives reveals that these traits, in fact, had been given a positive spin by the natives. Thus, being *mutong, initon ug ulo,* and *sige ra'ng ga-away* are seen in the sense of being brave and fierce serving notice to outsiders not to belittle or take the barrio folk for granted. This meaning was implied

by the Batinguel informant when he said, "it was generally known in town that those from Batinguel were fearless and did not accept defeat." As well, given that myths are meant to impart lessons, the narrative involving the deadly enchanted *taclobo* could very well be the natives' expression of the importance of environmental awareness; that all should be mindful of the environment, so it would not cause them harm in return.

Most of the markers are no longer prominent or, even, totally gone today. But since these are memorialized in the barrio names, even those markers that might have been more grounded in fiction than fact continue to be part of the community lore. That the community elders have passed these on to their descendants is validation enough of their veracity. Thus, although the Barangay Balugo informant admitted not knowing the exact location of the purported Balugo tree, he did not doubt its previous existence explaining he got this Balugo tree story from three local elders. Similarly, the Barangay Piapi informant had not actually seen the Piapi tree but heard from old folks that its stump was still in Purok Anduhaw. The constant referencing of elders/ancestors by the informants is indicated in rejoinders such as "I heard from my parents"; "that was what the old folks claimed"; and "based on what I heard from my grandparents" as well as in the expression "kuno (it was said/claimed)"). Acknowledging their elders is understandable inasmuch as the latter are the keepers and passers of community oral knowledge/records to the younger generations (Hanson, n.d.).

Equally important about this "oral footnoting" is its emphasis on the fact that "oral tradition is a collective enterprise. A narrator does not generally hold singular authority over a story. The nuances evident in distinct versions of a specific history represent a broader understanding of the events and the various ways people have internalized them. Often, oral histories must be validated by the group. This stems from the principle that no one person can lay claim to an entire oral history" (Hanson, n.d., p. 2). Rather, it is community property. Given that embellishments happen in the retelling of the narrative, the existing variations of the barrio-name narratives should, thus, be regarded positively because these indicate that the oral tradition in the area is continuing to this day.

Community spirit. *"Storytelling was something done at home. But for entertainment, people got together with other community members."* This statement by another informant expresses the more private and serious nature of storytelling—parents/grandparents handing down oral knowledge

to their descendants—compared with the entertainment and fun the natives derived from socializing with the community. At the same time, it speaks of the importance they accorded these community bondings.

The informants readily mentioned *baile* as the number one means of socialization in the past not only within their respective communities, but also all throughout the entire town (*"They'd go to dances held in other barangays"*). The dance events were often organized to celebrate fiestas or for pure social bonding, so these were an entire community affair.

The *baile* was not a purely young adult affair. According to several informants, parents would often accompany their daughters to the dance and young women would not attend without permission from their parents. At the dance, a young man also sought approval from the former first before dancing with their daughter. Showing respect to the parents extended to how the partners conducted themselves on the dance floor: *"No dancing to 'sweet' or slow music; only cha-cha and ballroom because the elders would be angry if partners embraced each other while dancing."* The young woman was escorted home as well after the dance.

Asking permission from the young woman's parents was not simply part of the "baile-baile ritual" but was in keeping with the people's prevailing customs and attitudes at that time. Respect for elders was a sacred tradition that the young solemnly observed: *"every time we saw old people, we always showed our respect by touching the back of their hand with our forehead"*; *"We accorded all our elders high respect, whether or not we personally knew them."* Such attitude made it easy to maintain peace at the bailehan given that the community regarded these dances as respite from a hard day's work and a place to start friendships. Consequently, the frequency of holding the *baile* – a night event held in both public and private spaces that could last up to the wee hours – was never an issue to the townsfolk because it did not disturb their peace.

An informant described the common setup of a public *baile*: *"The entrance fee was only 20 centavos. The dance, which started at seven in the evening, was held under the coconut trees using Petromax (Coleman lantern; for lighting). Attendees could wear anything as long as it was clean."* On the other hand, the more formal private dance events were held inside big houses and provided guests with dinner and snacks although the entrance fee was much steeper at two pesos per guest.

If their elders had the *baile* for socialization, the children had games

like *dagan-dagan, bulan-bulan, tubig-tubig*[6]. Like *bulan-bulan* or *tubig-tubig, dagan-dagan* – a group game that required everyone to run away from the designated catcher because once caught, one would be declared out of the game – was often played on the beach or on streets during early evenings. Several informants shared that, at times, the adults were with the children especially when the moon was out. Everyone converged on the streets up to the beach and played because there were no vehicles then. Thus, these games were also a community affair given the fact that Dumaguete had no electrification during most of the 1960s, so the more private entertainment provided by television was yet to be enjoyed by people in the area.

Another constant theme that ran through the narratives on community spirit was the peace and harmony prevailing among the barrio folk. At some point in their individual recollections, most informants harked back to the halcyon days expressed commonly as rarity of *mga buluyagon* (people with bad attitudes), absence of *gubot* (conflicts), and real closeness (*suod kaayo*) of neighbors.

A contributing factor in and a consequence of the peace and harmony among the Dumaguete natives in the past was their complete trust in each other. The statement, *"before, there were no walls and fences so it was easy to traverse places"* could be taken as both literal and figurative; there was freedom to move around the "unfenced" community since "everybody (knew) everybody." Like the straightforward routes, community relationship was open and trusting. The absence of physical and symbolic barriers between and among the community members was further elucidated by another informant: *"Back then, windows and doors were not closed… Neighbors all knew each other, so anytime, we could go to each other's houses and talk about what was happening in our lives. We supported each other."*

The unanimous fondness for those "good old days" among the informants is not surprising because the feeling awakens as well as reinforces one's sense of community; one who has no such fond memories will not feel as connected. It is, therefore, understandable when an informant totally blamed outsiders for disrupting the idyllic state of his community: *"these days, those who bother (us) are outsiders."* The desire to preserve a positive perception of the community is part of the function of the key informants as keepers of oral knowledge given that "the sense of community is integral to the oral tradition" (Boyer, n.d., p. 1).

Rhythm of daily life in years past. From the 1930s to the late 1960s, Dumaguete was still sparsely populated, and community members lived

relatively far from each other compared to today's houses standing only several meters from each other. It had neither electrification nor running water system, so people used Petromax or simple burning lamps at night for lighting and sourced their drinking water from wells and springs that were still very pristine. Most washed their clothes and took a bath in the Banica River or in the Buñao Creek, both of which were also clear and unpolluted then. One informant recalled a more innocent and fun time when taking a bath in the river was a group activity for children after helping their elders in the fields:

We used to take a bath there; there were always many children bathing in the (Banica) river. After planting corn, we would take a bath as relaxation and because there were no faucets then. Even if our nipples were showing/perking up (sign of puberty), we were not embarrassed taking a bath because there was no malice (among us). We also washed our laundry in this river.

People on the other side of town, instead, used the big creek in Buñao. As one informant shared, *"If my mother needed to do the laundry, we came to the creek, which was still shallow and clear. We also took a bath here early in the mornings (before going to school)."* But for swimming during holidays and weekends, Dumagueteños went to the beach by the boulevard.

Dumaguete natives then also had to walk most of the time since machine-operated vehicles were still a rarity; only *tartanilla* (horse-driven carriage), caromata and rayos (both are carts for loading heavy farming products usually pulled by carabao), and bicycles were the modes of transportation seen around town. One informant expressed the inconvenience of not having a readily available ride especially to young people because they could not readily roam around. Another revealed that this lack of transportation made her want to quit school because she had to walk a long distance every day to go to school, but her mother would not hear of it.

The absence of basic services and transportation system, however, made life much simpler for the townsfolk because *"People would go to the market, church, recite the rosary then go back home. At 6:00 pm, families would observe the Angelus, have dinner, recite the rosary, then rest. We were home by that time because there was no one else about town."* Another informant said that his family's nightly devotion included prayers to various saints highlighting

the fact that the natives' prayerfulness emanated from their strong Roman Catholic faith. The town generally retired early except when there was a *bailehan* to go to or the moon was full and the community came out to play.

The religious rituals encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church created a distinct and consistent tempo in the rhythm of the natives' everyday lives. Aside from the prayers held among family members, there were also the public ones that engaged everyone in town at specific times each day. An informant described the pattern:

> *There was this religious practice in the past when every 12 noon, the church bells would ring or the fire alarm would sound to remind people that it was prayer time. But at 6:00 pm, during the Angelus, everyone/thing was at a standstill; moving only after the bells have tolled. Everyone prayed; some, even, knelt…. They also observed public praying in the mornings.*

After their religious obligations, retiring early for the day was quite ideal for a townspeople whose main source of living was farming, which the informants termed either "pamaul," "pangdaro," or "pang-uma," producing mainly corn. Many farmers also planted sugarcane, various vegetables (bell peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, string beans, paliya), and rootcrops for both their own consumption and the local market. For some communities, their main livelihood was to raise coconut trees for copra while some men got paid as "tuba-gatherers" or coconut-harvesters. Copra was sold commercially to be turned into other products while *tuba* – coconut wine – was either sold fresh or fermented as vinegar. Retiring early meant being able to wake up early so as to perform these agricultural activities avoiding the scorching midday sun.

The Daro informant stated that, while his community was waiting for the sugarcane to grow, members busied themselves with making bricks and clay stoves, an industry for which the barangay is still known although only a handful of families are continuing this tradition today. In his words, *"I started making bricks when I was just six years old. Up to now, we are still making them. The women usually made clay pots/jars while the men made bricks because the clay pots were not as heavy as the bricks to make… Presently, there are only six families involved in brick-making."*

In contrast, the Looc community was and, still is, dependent on the seaport and not on farming. The residents back then earned their money by

risking their lives daily: *"We used to sell smuggled goods from Jolo. We jumped from the ship after getting our goods. The police would just seize the goods if we got caught."*

In this case, Looc residents were an exception since most in town came from farming families ("Nagtubo mi sa pagpamaol") who did not have much in life (*"I've experienced walking to school barefoot; most of my contemporaries did as well; slippers were a luxury then since these were fashioned from rubber-tires"*). It is therefore not surprising if the image that constantly emerged from most of the informants' recollections of their growing-up years was that of someone who lived a relatively hard life being obligated to help with the day-to-day needs of the family by strict, disciplinarian parents.

The hard part was always associated with their farm work (*"After finishing Grade 4, children were already made to help their parents weed in the farm"*) or household duties particularly fetching water and gathering firewood. What made these duties doubly hard was the long distances they needed to walk to accomplish them, but like their parents' strict rules, these duties were willingly accepted as integral part of their daily lives. The following translated recollections from the informants expressed their daily hardships but, at the same time, their unquestioning obedience to their parents' wishes:

— *We went straight home after school to help our parents while other kids were still out playing with marbles and rubber bands. But my father had been unceasingly lecturing us not to imitate the other kids who kept playing because we had obligations at home.*

— *When we were still small, we were not free to roam around because our parents would scold us. We could only go out if we were already done with our work. From school, I usually lugged home some wood for our firewood. Cooking rice was my task while my sibling had to carry the water we fetched from the well by hanging the water containers to a bamboo pole that he placed on his shoulders. There were no faucets then.*

— *We were always selling kangkong in huge bundles. I also sold candles. I grew up without my father so my mother and I did all the faming.*

To cope with their physically-challenging duties and the discipline imposed by their parents, the young devised ways so their duties would become lighter ("*We would try to finish our assigned duty – to either sweep, clean or cook – so we could play. We also helped each other, so we could all go and play*"). And they also tried to make their long walks more fun and less tiring by talking and telling each other stories. They played games, too, like the *kayokok or dakpanay*[7] and made a sport of hitting bats hanging on coconut trees using slingshots. Doing their duties together and bonding with their friends, consequently, made them able to take their day-to-day lives in stride and were much happier in the process.

To emphasize that they felt very satisfied with their upbringing, some informants stated their wish for today's youth to emulate the way they regarded their own parents ("*to also be fearful of their parents out of respect and love*"). This way, the former will learn the good values their elders lived by ("mag-amen"; "mag-good morning") instead of "mag-sige na lang ug TV, computer." In other words, the informants perceived today's young as quite disrespectful to their elders and lazy for not helping with household chores.

The informants' perception that their generation had better values than the one at present is to be expected because, according to Kabira, "oral narratives have always been a reflection of a people's worldview at any particular time within their dynamic and changing social spectrum" (cited in Orina et al., 2014, p. 201). Such subjectivity cannot, however, ignore the fact that the informants' happy growing-up memories and their values of old promoted their connectedness to and rootedness in their community. One summed up this general feeling of contentment with their lives when he opined, "*No one wanted to go abroad back then,*" which was obviously in comparison to the troves of Filipinos who joined the trend of going abroad, beginning in the 1980s, believing that they can only fulfill their dream of a better life if they worked outside the country. Many of these expatriates have since opted to stay in their new country permanently and come back to their native land only occasionally.

War experiences. All the 36 key informants shared narratives on their growing-up years and community bonding but only about one-third of them (13 out of 36) recounted their experiences during World War II. This is explained by the fact that only the informants who were already in their late 70s and 80s in 2013 (oldest interviewee was 92 years old) could

possibly have had some personal remembrances of the war that happened in their midst. However, not all those in this age bracket chose to speak about the war. Be this as it may, the gathered narratives in this section reflect the common themes associated with war and wartime stories, wartime situation and survival of innocent civilians, atrocities committed by aggressors, and courage and patriotism of the locals.

In any war, civilians always find their lives drastically altered. This truism is manifested once more in the stories told by informants who were already old enough to understand what was happening when the Japanese Imperial Army invaded Philippine shores. An 81-year-old informant recalled that the outbreak of war in the Philippines happened on December 8 (but did not mention year) and ended in July of 1945. He was in Grade 4 then, but he and the other children suddenly found themselves on extended vacation when all schools were ordered closed. When schools resumed, pupils found that their curriculum had changed: they were now required to learn the Japanese Katakana. Similarly, an 84-year-old informant revealed that she learned "a lot of Japanese, including the Katakana, during the war." Aside from being required to learn enough of Nippongo to be able to communicate with the Japanese soldiers, the townspeople were expected as well to learn the common Japanese custom of bowing to show respect to authority.

Initially, the presence of the Japanese was not resented by some Dumagueteños because the previous batches of Japanese soldiers who camped in the area were good and kind, sharing their food to the locals. But when food rations became scarce, the invaders changed – *"they became hot-tempered"* – and took out their predicament on the townsfolk. The locals have truly become victims of war with the Imperial army curtailing their freedom such as imposing many restrictions, putting up barricades and demanding Filipinos to show passes, and ordering them to get down their houses for inspection. One member of each household was also conscripted to render various services for the Japanese army such as *"manually transporting sand and gravel"* for construction purposes.

Not being able to move around freely and being in constant fear for their lives, Dumagueteños could no longer go about their workaday lives, thus, began to experience food shortage. One informant relived these difficult times:

> *I was still young and it was a painful experience to be surrounded*
> *by the Japanese. It was very difficult to move about because the*

Japanese were closely guarding us. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon we would already go to sleep. We could not also go out because if the soldiers saw children, they would surely kill us. That time when the arrival of the Americans was nearing, it seemed I would go deaf from the sound of airplanes circling above. We would run away. We would just eat raw banana blossoms because we could not even go near the sea (to fish); it was being guarded by the Japanese.

Some of the men were forced to go out after dark to look for food for their hungry families (*"My father traveled to Oslob by pumpboat to get some food since he had a brother there. He would leave in the evening to avoid being tracked by the Japanese"*) while some decided to evacuate their entire families to Dauin or Siaton passing through the steep Mt. Talinis because the Japanese had not penetrated these areas yet.

The tragic consequences of war were put squarely on one female informant's shoulders when, as a teenager, she was forced to take on the responsibility of her family's survival needs. As recounted:

During the war, we helped our parents. We worked so we could eat because corn and rice were scarce. The first time we evacuated, while crossing the Ocoy River, my older sibling slipped and got pierced; he suffered a hemorrhage and died. It was a time of utter confusion and chaos. I had to think and find means of getting food since I had become my mother's right hand. All she knew was to weave.

Natives who found themselves having to serve both the Japanese and the American – who have landed in Dumaguete by then – armies were also constantly risking their lives for they faced being declared a traitor by either side. One informant told of his grandfather, a barrio official, who was arrested by the American soldiers (part of the United States Army Forces in the Far East, commonly referred to as the USAFFE by the people) for being mistakenly thought of as having delivered to the Japanese soldiers two of their spies. He would certainly have been killed by the Americans if not for the many people who vouched that he had actually been helping the Americans in the past, providing them food rations regularly.

Aside from their own harrowing experiences, some of the informants were also witness to atrocities committed by the Japanese aggressors on

others. The cruel acts perpetrated on the natives included punishments that ranged from being forced to stand for a long time to being stripped naked and made to endure the heat of the sun or, worst, to being killed.

Among the casualties of war, women and children are often the most traumatized for life if they are lucky to survive. The oral narratives of the informants reiterated the victimization of children and women with the innocent children being murdered seemingly for sport ("I witnessed how a child was thrown up then was struck by a bayonet") and with the girls and women being raped as part of the "spoils of war" ("They would take and rape beautiful maidens and kill them afterwards") or "as a weapon because it destroys communities totally" (UN Human Rights Website, n.d.). One informant cited the case of the beautiful Amigo sisters – from a rich and prominent family in Dumaguete – who were both raped and then killed by the Japanese soldiers as proof of the latter's cold-bloodedness.

The Japanese aggressors further terrorized the people by displaying in public how ruthlessly they disposed of lives especially those who committed – imagined or otherwise – transgressions against them ("That time when the airport was bombed during the Japanese Period, the spies who gave the information to the Americans were killed by the Japanese. They were executed at the Boulevard") or by demonstrating their total disregard for the natives' religious and cultural institutions (no proper burial for those killed). Below are excerpts from the translated recollections of the informants illustrating utter inhumanity committed in the name of war:

> — The Japanese were really cruel then. We watched how three people were chained together. While digging their own graves, they were struck by the soldiers' bayonets and thrown into the shallow pit with legs and heads not completely buried; That night relatives took the body of a neighbor who was among those killed and buried him properly. The victims were completely innocent, according to the people. The Japanese were just perhaps really cruel.

> — The Japanese killed some people who happened to pass by them on their way to look for food. They just covered the bodies with coconut leaves; the stench of the decomposing bodies spread all throughout Piapi. They just left the corpses like garbage there.

That time, which lasted around four years, was really a terrible, cruel time…

— There were Filipinos who were coming down from the mountains. They were gunned down by the Japanese whom they met at the crossing of Palinpinon. The dead were buried in a mass grave then covered with a big stone.

— At Silliman, there was the *kimpitay*[8] —-a torture apparatus, where the victim got literally pressed as a form of punishment.

The atrocities of war cause the victimization, traumatization, and death of untold numbers of people. But these extreme situations also bring out courage and patriotism in others. Some of the shared narratives demonstrated examples of how some Dumagueteños defied the Japanese soldiers (*"There were those who would roll up their passes just like cigarettes to avoid getting caught or having it confiscated by the Japanese"*) or how others courageously faced the prospect of yet another death (i.e., getting drowned) to escape the aggressors (*"Harvesting clams was prohibited that time but then, there were those who defied the order… They ultimately swam towards the island of Siquijor rather than face death in the hands of the Japanese"*).

The acts of bravery and sense of community and country are often the only heart-warming stories that come out from people caught in war zones. From the informants' narratives, it was revealed that the church played a role in helping the townsfolk avoid danger. They understood that if the Cathedral bell was sounded not at prayer periods, it was meant "as a warning that *there were* Japanese airplanes," so everyone should hide to avoid falling bombs. One female informant, who was 14 to 16 years old during WWII, revealed that she and her brother were directly involved in helping the USAFFE by passing on information about the boats docked at the port. She described their ingenious manner of spying for the US soldiers:

At low tide, I would go to the beach and gather shellfish, shrimps taking note of the boat/s at the wharf. I would describe the wharf to my brother and he sketched it as a message for the USAFFE. And we hid the message in our underwear so that we wouldn't get caught. The message would then be hidden in a tube on a tree,

and so the people from the mountain would know the news here.

The war finally ended in July of 1945, and one of the informants was there to witness the ending of Dumaguete's "own wartime." That day, the natives did not know that the war was already over, so some families were still starting their evacuation to Siaton. Then suddenly, *"We saw that the Japanese were jumping into the boat, and soon after, the American submarine emerged; we cheered and clapped our hands instantaneously."*

"To understand war, you have to hear from the folks who experienced it first-hand," according to Dan Clayton, a History professor at Regis University who teaches the course Stories from Wartime (in Veasey, 2013). Though there were not many of these narratives shared by the key informants in this study, those that were told were enough to piece together a picture of Dumaguete during the Japanese invasion; how the war shackled the natives' lives and brought them terror and tragedy as well as how they banded together to fight and survive. Clapping to show their relief that the war had ended seems too underwhelming a response but, in a sense, quite fitting for a suffering townsfolk wanting only to get back to the old pattern of their prayerful and simple lives.

Ghosts and other supernatural creatures. Among the sets of common narratives gathered from the informants, stories about ghosts and supernatural creatures had the lowest number (10). Four of these narratives are connected with the name of respective barangays so have been included in the section on origin of barangay name. As already pointed out, the story of a woman ghost helping guard the Bantayan and Calindagan shores against invaders is associated with St. Catherine, Dumaguete's patron-saint. The Bantayan informant said that St. Catherine was believed to be holding a very big bayonet when patrolling, while according to the Calindagan informant, the saint summoned bees (*"she'd raise her hands, then a swarm of bees would come"*) to cover the island so pirates would not see it.

There is, however, a spin to St. Catherine's story that reflects Filipino irreverent humor at the expense of the Catholic Church. The Banilad informant claimed that, during the Dumaguete fiesta… windows would be lighted up by nightfall *"to guide St. Catherine on her way to see St. Agustin."* The joke here is that St. Catherine's night prowlings were not purely meant to patrol the beach guarding against invaders; at times, she went to visit her boyfriend, Saint Augustine. Considering that this story borders on the

sacrilegious from the Roman Catholic standpoint, it is safe to assume that it is quite contemporary reflecting the changing attitudes and mindset of people who are no longer as deeply religious as the townsfolk before the 1970s.

As to be expected, the Bagacay barrio name origin is associated with the cemetery and "mga dili ingon nato (*those beings who are not like us — the malevolent and enchanted beings*)." The cemetery is also the setting of many ghost stories among Filipinos. Often such stories involve pretty women in white – hence, dubbed the "white lady" – or black haunting the cemetery road and often flagging down motorists but then suddenly disappearing to the bewilderment and terror of the driver. A version of this woman ghost story, with a humorous twist, was shared by the Bagacay informant:

> *The story goes that once a baile was held in Dumaguete. By midnight, two ladies, who were said to be both very beautiful and dressed in black, appeared and hailed a tartanilla. The ladies told the kutsero to bring them home to Bagacay… Upon reaching the crossing to the cemetery, the ladies alighted, handed over their fare, then turned into skeletons. The frightened kutsero drove away as fast as he could. After a while, he alighted to repair the tartanilla and mumbled, 'I was so frightened.' Unexpectedly, the horse replied, 'Me too.' So, both of them ran for their lives.*

The comic element drowns out the "horror" in this ghost story so it becomes more funny than scary. It also puts on display magic realism— "combining realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them" (Faris & Zamora, 2004)—with a distinct Filipino brand.

Another version of the woman ghost narrative, connected with Talay, focused on a woman enchanter/ghost, sometimes appearing as a dog, who haunted a part of the national road (an accident prone area) that ran through the barrio: "*It was told that there was a woman or dog who would cross the road. Then in the hospital, people would say, 'Ah, this happened in Talay again'.*" In this story, the woman would purportedly appear from nowhere and suddenly cross the street causing serious accidents or even claiming lives of motorists.

Among the informants, ghosts are not included in "*mga dili ingon nato*", a phrase meant to describe other supernatural creatures. The latter

commonly resided in trunks of big tall trees or hovered on top like the *kaskas*, according to one informant who used to help his father climb coconut trees to harvest the coconuts. The *kaskas* were a constant presence at night but these creatures were not able to harm the informant and his tuba-drinking friends because "*…we constantly burned coconut leaves to frighten away the kaskas because it is said that there were many of them in olden times, and they were so vicious.*" Two other informants mentioned the talisay as inhabited by "mga dili ingon nato" with one of them saying that talisay trees found in their area had been the resident of one such creature: "*The being would fall in love with a woman but would soon fall out of love upon learning that his object of desire was already married or has a boyfriend.*"

Some supernaturals also resided in a big tree in Taclobo, supposedly containing their palace. The informant described two types of these creatures – the *engkanto* and the *kantasma* or *kapre* – and how they lured humans to their kingdom:

> *Those engkanto—enchanted beings—are the ones living in that large tree. You can't see them and they won't show themselves to you. We get frightened because we are so short, and they are very tall and big. If they want to appear to you, they would appear as beautiful creatures. If you're lured to their tree, you won't be able to come back anymore.*

> *The one called kantasma—phantasm or now known as kapre— would stand on the tallest tree, smoking… I had a cousin whose husband went near a mango tree. Their son went after him because he went into a very beautiful carriage wherein a very lovely lady was sitting. In old stories, this would be considered fantasy. But when the mango tree was cut down, the cutter died; there were enchanted beings living in the palace inside the tree.*

In the preceding narrative, the description of the supernatural creatures fits those found in common Filipino myths: residing in big trees, big and tall, and have the ability to disappear/appear at will and change their appearance. The woman-as-enchantress theme is also included in the narrative luring gullible humans.

As earlier pointed out, the reported comingling of malevolent supernaturals with nature seems mainly to teach humans to respect nature, which provides many of their survival needs. In this context, one cannot fault informants who want to entrust these supernatural stories to their descendants to ensure the protection of their environment.

The rich narratives presented in this section prove that the ordinary Dumagueteños who have been rooted in their own land for 60 years or more do have their own worthwhile stories to tell. Most of their stories reflect how connected they are to their land and community. Coming from farming families and being farmers themselves, they have relied on the land during their entire lives spending many hours every day working on it. Often, their only break is to go bonding with the community; otherwise, they retire early and rise early to perform their common-life rituals all over again. From the narratives could also be pieced together an image of the Dumaguete native in yesteryears: someone who has a strong sense of community, respectful, trustworthy, prayerful, attuned to the environment and accepting of the supernatural, and overall, leading a hard, simple, but nevertheless happy life.

CONCLUSION

The push to include oral narratives, particularly local history and lore, in the MTB-MLE curriculum is validated by the rich data gathered in this study. The lived stories of the elderly members of the community offer valuable sources of classroom materials for mother tongue-based History, Culture and Values Education subjects in the primary grades within the locality inasmuch as these are narrated in Cebuano and the pupils can easily relate to them being certainly familiar with some of the local markers and personages mentioned. Having a personal connection with what they are learning in school makes the young not only more motivated to participate in the discussion, but also more articulate and confident in expressing themselves. Consequently, as already pointed out, they become better learners.

But the implications of institutionalizing local narratives go beyond the classroom's four walls and academic achievements of pupils. Local narratives can help mold the children to be more aware and appreciative of their own culture and people as well as provide children a sense of ownership of the folklore and history of their locality. Such feeling of ownership, in turn, can give these children a sense of rootedness in the place that eventually will

hopefully translate to them being more socially- and culturally-involved community members. After all, the past gives ample proof that strong and vibrant communities/nations often arose from a united and socially- and culturally-conscious citizenry.

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NOTES

1   In The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling, Robin (2006) explains how digital storytelling (DSt) – "combining the art of telling stories with a variety of digital multimedia, such as images, audio, and video" – can be an instructional tool for teachers and, at the same time, an effective learning tool for students. Teachers can use digital stories as either an "anticipatory set" to get students interested in the lesson that is about to be presented or a "hook" to connect a new material with information/knowledge that is already known. Using digital stories can also help simplify abstract concepts and/or enhance lessons.

2   Jennifer Eve A. Solitana and Joan C. Generoso were the principal interviewers while Hermie Larong-Gomonit was our videographer/photographer.

3   This term will, henceforth, be used to mean both oral histories and oral traditions as done by renowned anthropologist Bruce Miller (in Hanson, n.d., p. 3) instead, of creating a dichotomy between the two.

4   Quoted statements of key informants are all translations from the original Cebuano Language; use of Cebuano terms/statements has been kept to a minimum for the sake of convenience and brevity.

5   These creatures are often taken as one and the same. They are believed to prey on the dead as well as on human heart and liver of the newly-born.

6   Bulan-bulan and tubig-tubig are one and the same game – a game of chase under the moon using water as markers. Commonly done during full-moon and water was used to draw a huge circle (since watermark would stay longer even when players stepped on it), marking the boundary between the guardia (chaser/catcher) outside the circle and the kontra or people confined inside. The goal was for the guardia to catch the kontra without stepping inside/beyond the watermark. Chasing the people around the periphery of the watermark, the catcher stretches one's arm in an attempt to tap the enemies. Once tapped, an enemy was considered caught. As punishment s/he would either become the new guardia or be out of the game. Any player who stepped or went outside the circle would also be out of the game.

7   A Visayan group game composed of two equally-numbered teams with the leader from each team trying to catch members from the other team to add to his/her team. The team that has more members is declared the winner.

8   This word could also be a play on Kempeitai, Japan's dreaded military police force deployed in its Occupied Territories during WWII.

The Superhero in Post-9/11 Marvel Comics and Filipino Film

Carljoe Javier

This paper explores the use of the superhero as a symbol and how it comes to represent a culture's morals. By focusing on the specific time period of post-9/11, it makes a comparative reading of the mainstream expression of superheroes in American and Philippine cultures, thereby building discourse on both the superhero as a symbol and its use in expressing each culture's moral values.

Keywords: Superhero, comics, 9/11, Filipino film, Marvel Comics

INTRODUCTION

The superhero has been a fundamental part of many people's childhoods. But after a certain age, they are abandoned or even made an object of ridicule and embarrassment. One accusation is that the superhero is merely the manifestation of the adolescent male power fantasy, where the puny underdog turns into a muscular man in spandex beating up their bullies and getting the pretty girl. All of this points to the common belief that superhero comics are "of necessity formulaic, masculinist, melodramatic, and morally reductive" (Hatfield, Heer, & Worcester, 2013, Introduction). Though there are a good number of comic books that suffer from those flaws, the entire genre, across media, offers many other readings and opportunities for discourse.

This paper will examine how the superhero genre has been used in post-9/11 culture. The popularity of the genre in this time period provides for much content that can be studied. The paper will study American superhero comics and Filipino superhero films to see the directions that the genre has taken with the two cultures in question.

In studying American superhero comics, this paper will attempt to show how the filter of the superhero genre invites a popular audience to engage in complex discourse. In particular, it will examine a number of major Marvel comic events after 9/11. The paper will explore the ways that contemporary political issues are adapted and interpreted in these comics. Through an examination of these comic books, the paper will show how the superhero genre has been utilized to regain a sense of control and security after the traumatic events of 9/11.

After establishing the trend in mainstream American superhero comics, the paper will study trends in mainstream Filipino superhero movies. The change in medium being studied occurs because it is in Filipino mainstream film and not comics that the superhero has appeared.

The paper will turn a critical eye to Filipino superhero films produced in the same time period. It will question Filipino interpretations of the superhero. Where the Marvel comics attempt to engage current events and contemporary social and political concerns, the Filipino superhero films employ narratives that introduce their heroes. The paper will read these as origin stories. It will examine the discourse created by these origin stories, exposing how the Filipino superhero removes power and control from viewers and marginalizes its already impoverished characters.

By studying the superhero genre in these two contexts, the paper will show important differences. The differences found would reveal the issues and concerns of the culture and perhaps more importantly how the two cultures create very different discourse with the genre.

MARVEL'S POST-9/11 COMICS

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 have reframed the way that we view the world. Moulton (2012) says:

> 9/11 was unlike anything that had ever happened before. It defied comprehension or description. A disaster of its magnitude hadn't

seemed possible in the pre-9/11 world—at least, it hadn't seemed possible in the real world. The explosions and a ruthless enemy with seemingly limitless power felt more like a comic book, movie, or novel than cold, hard truth. The only metaphors that seemed to do it justice—the only words that came close to describing the horror of that day—came from the realm of fantasy. But 9/11 wasn't fiction. It was harsh, terrible reality that shook the very foundations of the United States and forever changed the world. (p. 1)

Grant Morrison (2012) explains that the terrorist attack was something that had been imagined many times in film and comics. He enumerates a number of scenes in comic books that he and his contemporaries wrote weeks and months before 9/11 that portrayed hijacked planes crashing into buildings. Superhero comic creators had been imagining it, and after it happened, superhero comic creators used the filter of their genre to address the event and its aftermath (ch. 22).

Superhero comics, at their best, operate on the level of metaphor. Douglas Wolk (2007) explains, "Superhero comics are, by their nature, larger than life, and what is useful and interesting about their characters is that they provide bold metaphors for discussing ideas or reifying abstractions into narrative fiction" (ch. 4).

We can see this at work in a number of significant superhero books from this time period. This paper will look briefly at some highlights from a few books: Amazing Spider-Man #36, The Ultimates, and the event comics Secret War, Civil War, and Secret Invasion. We will be discussing the texts in chronological order. Rather than applying in-depth analyses on each of these books, this paper will point out significant scenes, panels, or lines that show how these books attempt to address, question, or reframe issues arising in post-9/11 America.

Superhero comics portray the events through the filter of the genre, but they also apply genre conventions which help the readers reestablish a sense of control and understanding.

Terry Kading (Laughlin, 2005) explains the relevance of the superhero comic to a reading of 9/11:

The superhero comic, in response to 9/11, provides a distinct medium from which to reflect on and explore the fears, insecurities,

and varied individual reactions generated by the attacks. On the one hand, there is the ability to recapture the terrifying and horrific images of 9/11 through vibrant colors and striking detail, a style that has been perfected through decades of expressing the dramatic action between superheroes and supervillains to date. On the other hand, there is room to present commentary on thoughts, emotions, and insights as the events unfold, thus rendering a novel appreciation of 9/11 and the post-9/11 environment. Through this medium, we are first able to view 9/11 from the vantage of a superhero, allowing for an unusual but respectful retrospective on that violent day and placing the events of 9/11 against the experiences of beings who thought they had seen everything. (p. 219)

Kading further states that perhaps it is apt to examine the events through the lens of the superhero because the 9/11 attack can be classified as an act of supervillainy (pp. 215–217).

We first examine Amazing Spider-Man #36 (Straczynski, Romita, & Hanna, 2011), a comic book that was written to directly address the 9/11 attack. It is also one of the most widely cited comic books in relation to the events.

Before going directly into the comic book, we look at the importance of choosing Spider-Man as the character through which we witness the event. While his popularity, as the most recognizable of Marvel's superheroes, would have definitely been a factor, his position among Marvel's superhero pantheon is also telling and adds meaning to the book.

The Marvel Comics universe has numerous divisions and modes of classification. This can become convoluted, and a lot of it is the province of the fanboy. For the purposes of this paper, we will go into a short discussion of power levels. Superheroes can be grouped according to their power levels, and these power levels usually dictate the kinds of enemies that they will be fighting. For example, Marvel has cosmic-level heroes like Thor, Hyperion, The Hulk, and the Silver Surfer. These characters can fight aliens and engage in intergalactic conflicts.

Spider-Man is considered a street-level hero. His powers, while substantial, are most apt to handling street thugs and super-criminals who attack New York. He might face more powerful enemies, but these usually involve him joining a superhero team-up. Further, Spider-Man, despite

having superpowers, remains an extremely relatable character because of the everyday problems that he deals with, like having to come up with rent money and juggling work and relationships. It is from this more human and relatable perspective of Spider-Man that we are retold the story of the attacks.

Smith and Goodrum (2011) point out that, through reenacting the events within the superhero narrative, a healing process can occur. The reenactment allows the reader to relive the trauma but to reframe the trauma so that, in the process of retelling, the understanding of the narrative can be rewritten. Through the conventions of the superhero, the element of control over the event, or at least of ongoing events, can be inserted (pp. 488, 490).

In the aftermath of the events of 9/11, there was a struggle to understand why it happened. This is reflected in the opening page of the comic book, as Spider-Man looks down at the crash site from across town and holds his head in his hands, and we read the captions, "Some things are beyond words. Beyond comprehension."

To further the sense of disbelief and inability to process, we get the exchanges of the next two pages. Two civilians are running, and they scream to Spider-Man, "Where were you?!" and "How could you let this happen?" He answers:

> How do you say we didn't know? We couldn't know. We couldn't imagine. Only madmen could contain the thought, execute the act, fly the planes. The sane world will always be vulnerable to madmen, because we cannot go where they go to conceive of such things.

The comic book expresses confusion and disbelief until Spider-Man gets to the site. Once there, he joins the rest of the relief workers, the "true heroes." From here, we get the different ways in which heroism was enacted that day, from the relief workers in the wreckage to the passengers of Flight 93.

The book is never triumphalist. It explores the depths of sadness that are inseparable from the event. In fact, it has been faulted for including supervillains among those mourning. But Grant Morrison (2012) explains the relevance of villains like Dr. Doom, who one would have expected might have perpetrated such an attack, "…here, he was sobbing with the best of them, as representative not of evil but of Marvel Comics' collective shock, struck dumb and moved to hand-drawn tears…" (ch. 22).

The book ends with a sense of overcoming and expression of internal strength. There is a rousing speech about rebuilding. This is the reframing; after having reenacted the horrors, it gives the reader a sense of power and strength: "They knocked down two tall towers. Graft now their echo onto your spine. Become girders and glass, stone and steel, so that when the world sees you, it sees them. And stand tall. Stand tall."

We find similar expressions of solidarity in Captain America by John Ney Rieber and John Cassaday (2002). Captain America is the most overtly patriotic of popular superheroes, and he is often used to display the best of the American Dream and what is has to offer. Cap will appear in a number of iterations throughout this paper, as different creators utilize him to make their statements about 9/11.

The Rieber/Cassaday Captain America supposedly embodies the need to overcome tragedy and the need to return to the American dream and American values. He is from a poor neighborhood. Through persistence, hard work, and technology, he becomes a superior individual who fights for good and follows an unwavering moral code committed to the ideals of the founding fathers. While Cap defends a Muslim man from attackers who have singled him out because of his religion, we get these captions:

> We can *hunt them down*. We can scour every *bloodstained trace* of their terror from the Earth. We can turn every stone they've ever *touched* to dust, and every blade of grass to *ash.* And it won't *matter.* We've got to be *stronger* than we've *ever* been—as a *people.* As a *nation.* We have to be America. Or they've *won.*

These issues of Spider-Man and Captain America, written in response to 9/11, show the positive response to the traumatic event. These issues redefine the battleground. It is not on the battlefield that the supervillainy of Al Qaeda will be defeated. It is a war of values and belief systems. It is important to take note that these books are not championing the tenets of neoliberalism, deregulation, unchecked capitalism, and all of these other ills of modern America. Rather, they are referring to the American values represented by the superheroes.

Captain America's introduction in The Ultimates (Millar & Hitch, 2002–2003) best reflects this desire to return to classic values. Set in an alternate universe, almost the entire first issue is focused on Captain America

fighting in World War II. At the end of the issue, he averts a missile attack but is lost after it detonates. He is believed dead but is frozen in ice, and his body is preserved. In succeeding issues, he is found and revived in a post-9/11 world.

What we can take from this is that there is a focus on the Greatest Generation. The comic book connects the contemporary American narrative with that of the last generation when America was fighting on what was unarguably the side of right. Since WWII, America has been mired in various morally ambiguous military conflicts such as the Vietnam War, Iran Contra, American involvement in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and the first Gulf War. This book skips all of this, reinstating the overtly patriotic Captain America in the present so that he is unscathed by America's morally ambiguous past choices.

While *The Ultimates* recasts Captain America and attempts to highlight his being a symbol of moral right, the rest of the book treads darker territory and becomes a questioning of the military initiatives undertaken by the United States after 9/11.

We see in the earlier books that we were dealing with street level heroes and the sentiments of overcoming a great tragedy. Here, we get a portrayal of the United States once it takes upon itself the role of world peacekeeper, imposing its will on other countries. It justifies developing weapons and defense systems by saying that it is the only way to protect the country. It is telling that The Ultimates, a government-funded team of superpowered individuals, are referred to as Persons of Mass Destruction.

In *The Ultimates*, massive budgets are devoted to assembling a team who can fight off any kind of superpowered threat that might arise. There is no threat at the moment, but the past attack is used to fuel fears and funding for the project. Thor, portrayed here as a political activist, initially refuses membership to the group, sending his recruiters away by saying:

> Oh it matters not whether you are wearing capes or combat boots, little man. You are all just thugs in uniform who will smash any threat to a corrupt status quo. Go back to your paymasters and tell them that the Son of Odin is not interested in working for a military industrial complex who engineers *wars* and murders *innocents*. Your talk might be of supervillains now, but it is only a matter of time before you are sent to kill for *oil* or *free trade*.

Thor's tirade, while couched in a superhero monologue, is familiar in idea and expression. We have heard this before, we know of this stance, and we understand the distrust of the military industrial complex. It is only more pointed and entertaining when coming out of the thunder-god's mouth. While we might have become inured to the chants of political protest, the framing of this discourse in this form makes it novel and easier to engage.

The superhero becomes a mouthpiece of 9/11 rhetoric, and through the interactions between the characters, we are provided various perspectives. Thor is represented as a European liberal hippy. He addresses Nick Fury, a career soldier who represents America's interests, which are militaristic in nature. Fury is accompanied by Bruce Banner, a meek scientist who relies on the US military for funding. Science and technology are under the dictates of the military. It is the lefty militant who takes a stand.

Two events occur which lead to Thor's joining the Ultimates. First, the US president doubles the country's international aid budget. The second is that Thor and Iron Man, portrayed as a military profiteer, become friends because of a common interest in alcohol and women. One might question then if this reveals opportunities for collaboration or if it portrays the cooptation of dissent.

A larger irony reveals itself through the first story arc of The Ultimates. The public is constantly questioning the funding being devoted to the group. This funding is provided under the assumption that this group will protect the US against any supervillain level threats. It is regularly stated in the book that government funding for the organization is massive, allowing them to rent an island off of Manhattan as their base and to keep more than 20,000 personnel on staff. Part of this funding is channeled into black-ops missions. Even the public team, made up of the famous superheroes, is unaware of those black-ops missions.

The lead superhero team is not fighting any supervillains. In a fit of jealousy and rage over his girlfriend dating someone else and his constantly being embarrassed by other members of the team, Bruce Banner transforms himself into the Hulk and rampages through New York City. He attempts to justify his actions by saying that, by having the rest of the team fight the Hulk, the public will see how necessary the funding is. The threat that the Ultimates are supposed to fight winds up coming from their ranks. The Hulk murders thousands of innocents. But through PR work and a calculated cover-up, no one ever finds out that it was the Hulk. They get their funding with no questions asked.

This can be read as a cynical take on how the United States manufactures its own threats. Evidence has been found that implies Osama Bin Laden and many other terrorists around the world received training and support from the CIA and other American military groups. One might also connect this to the US's invasion of Iraq in 2003 because they had supposedly found weapons of mass destruction. Fabricated or misrepresented data would lead to funding that would enable even more war and destruction.

The Ultimates might be about a superhero team, but underneath the big action romps that made it appealing to readers is a critical look at America's militaristic response to 9/11.

The comics published right after 9/11 called for a moral response to the attacks. We see in The Ultimates and the next few books that we will examine military and policy responses that would lead to paranoia and distrust.

In *Secret War* (Bendis & Dell'Otto, 2004), Nick Fury, director of the global peacekeeping force S.H.I.E.L.D., presents information to the president that supervillains are being funded by a foreign backer, the Prime Minister of the fictional country of Latveria. As such, he argues, they are no longer criminals, but rather, they are terrorists being funded by the Latverian regime. He advocates that the president authorizes a decisive attack in retaliation to the terrorist attacks.

The event features a number of issues that are reflective of post-9/11 concerns. First among these is the question of torture. The information connecting the Prime Minister to the American supervillains receiving funding is obtained through torture. The question of the acceptability of torture as a method of intelligence gathering would be a major point of contention, especially as evidence of atrocities such as those committed at Abu Ghraib surfaced.

In the context of the superhero genre, we see characters regularly beating each other up and sometimes even killing each other. We are also accustomed to comedically intricate torture devices, like in James Bond movies. But the torture in the first issue of Secret War is portrayed with such viciousness and sadism that one is given pause. We are not accustomed to seeing this kind of realistic brutality, even in the context of a genre where many conflicts are resolved by violence.

The victim is already beaten and bloodied when we are brought to the scene. His interrogators loom over him. They smile and laugh as they beat him. He begs for them to stay away, but they grab hold of him, put him in an arm-bar,

and then smash him against a wall until he gives them the information they want. Through the writing and art, the comic book conveys the brutality of torture. It replaces the fantastically rendered fight sequences or goofy death traps with a stripped down, almost mundane interrogation room. It gathers force from the apparent hopelessness of the victim and the sadistic glee that the interrogators express. This could be read as an attempt to show that no one, not even a supervillain, deserves to be tortured.

The next issue that the comic book raises is that of the preemptive strike. The president denies Fury's request. In response, Fury decides to push through with the strike anyway. Making reference to 9/11, he says, "It's happening again! It's all happening again. They have the information, they *have* it! They know *who* and they—irrefutable evidence in their hands as to who their enemy is…and they are going to sit on it and do nothing." He assembles a team of superheroes without telling them what their mission is. And he launches a preemptive strike against the Latverian regime, targeting their Prime Minister.

This could be reflective of the United States' decisions to invade both Afghanistan and Iraq. Both operations were preemptive strikes targeting leading officials. Fury argues that he is only acting to protect the American people. He adds that the strike is their only choice because, "That's the language that they understand." He believes that there is no recourse but violence.

A year after the strike in the book's narrative present, the heroes who were involved are attacked in their homes. Then, New York City is subjected to a large scale supervillain attack. All of this is in retribution for the strike. It would not be difficult to find similarities between this and the terrorist attacks that have followed in both the United States and other parts of the world. Preemptive strikes were undertaken with the belief that they would prevent further attacks. But we are not sure if these actually prevented attacks or served as provocation for new attacks.

We can observe in this comic book a clear movement away from the black and white, clearly drawn lines between good and evil which we have come to expect from superhero stories. The questions raised in Secret War reflect serious questions about the United States' War on Terror.

If *Secret War* was critical of the military approach and foreign policy, Civil War was a gigantic event that would shift the focus to the question of what America is supposed to stand for.

Civil War (Millar, McNiven, & Vines, 2006–2007), published from 2006–2007, begins with a tragedy that echoes 9/11. A group of wannabe superheroes mishandles an encounter with a group of villains. It results in one of the villains detonating, killing all the heroes and villains in the encounter, as well as all people within his gigantic blast radius, which includes an elementary school. This prompts a backlash against superpowered individuals, and in response, the US Congress enacts the Superhuman Registration Act (SRA). The SRA divides the superhero community, as some willingly register, revealing their identities and taking a government salary.

Others refuse to register, most notably Captain America, who decides to fight the SRA, as he sees it as a curtailment of freedom.

Some characters suffer from revealing their identities. One of the reasons for the secret identity is to protect those close to you from possible retribution. Because Spider-Man reveals his identity, the mafia kills his Aunt May.

Beneath the convoluted story of *Civil War* is the basic question of how much of our civil liberties are we willing to sacrifice for security. *Civil War* sees the superheroes of the Marvel Universe divided along the lines of the SRA.

While the comic book creates a dividing line between the characters, it also shows the different moral positions of the characters. For example, Iron Man, who works with the US government on military projects, sides with the government. He has a public persona, and he stands to gain from a formalized system of registration and government funding. Reed Richards/Mr. Fantastic recognizes how wrong forcing registration might be morally, but he believes his work is in science not politics, so he accedes to government demands. Sue Richards/The Invisible Woman leaves her husband Reed and joins the resistance because it is what she believes is morally right. Spider-Man is one of the few street level characters to join the Pro-Registration side. Most of the street level characters operate as vigilantes and do not want their identities revealed. They fight villains because it is what they believe is right. They do not want a government paycheck for doing so. Spider-Man joins the Pro-Registration movement initially because he is an employee of Iron Man. Spider-Man has always been portrayed as having financial troubles, and his job working for Iron Man had afforded him a way out of those troubles. He rationalizes that, if the government and his boss have supported the Act, then it must be what the American people want.

It is a common trope in superhero comics for superheroes to get into fights with each other out of misunderstandings. But in no other book has the divide between them been based on principles and moral positions as they are in this one. Civil War can be read as a critique of The Patriot Act and Homeland Security, in the way that those too ask for citizens to give up their civil liberties for security.

Finally, we look at Marvel's *Secret Invasion* (Bendis, Yu, Morales, 2008), published in 2008. In the comic book, a space-shifting race of aliens called the Skrull invades Earth. What is notable about this is that the Skrull have sleeper agents already embedded among the superheroes on Earth. The story is simple compared with that of *Civil War*. The comic book focuses on the struggle to find out who is human and who is Skrull.

What we can focus on is the sense of paranoia that the book explores. This can easily be read as a reframing of the heightened tensions within America, with lines not only drawn by race and class, but also as the country was divided between Red and Blue states.

It is also interesting that part of the Skrull's invasion is religious. All their announcements to the public as they attempt to assimilate Earth into their empire are ended with the phrase, "He loves you so much." One could read this to be a commentary on the way that religion has permeated the discourse of public and political affairs.

The most poignant moment that explores issues of religion and belief comes from the character Hulkling, who is half Skrull. The dialogue can be read to represent a variety of backgrounds. Of course, one could immediately think of Muslim extremists, but then, this could be turned around and used to address Christian religious fundamentalists or even some of the methods practiced by the American military: "Even with what little I know about my heritage, I know this is not what the Skrull Empire stands for. This was extremism. This was terrorism."

A captured Skrull replies, "Tragedy has decimated our people. Our planets no longer exist. Our faith was our last chance." One could easily connect this statement to that of various extremists and terrorists, regardless of religion. It echoes powerfully in the extent of their defeat. As is expected in stories in the genre, the superheroes win, they repel the alien invasion, but scenes like this deny a sense of triumph.

Based on the comic books discussed, we can see that the superhero genre was utilized to examine contemporary issues. The filter of the

superhero genre allowed readers to approach key concerns, reframing them through the metaphors and conventions of the superhero. This helped to make the issues clearer and helped to make a space for critical discussion of the important ideas and values.

If one were to engage the questions in these books, like preemptive strikes, the curtailment of civil liberties, or religious extremism, directly, the debates would quickly be heated and would most likely be left unresolved. The filter of superhero comics creates aesthetic distance from which we can approach these issues.

FILIPINO SUPERHERO FILMS SINCE 2000

Filipino comics do not have a similar tradition of mainstream superhero comics dominating the market. While we do have comic heroes, attempts to bring them back to mainstream publishing in the early 2000s, with new interpretations of Darna and Lastikman, did not lead to ongoing series. Independent comic creators continue to explore the possibilities of the genre, but they do not have the large scale reach to make them comparable with American superhero comics.

However, we find the superhero genre being utilized in the medium of film. Emil Flores (2005) notes that the glut of Filipino superhero films was most likely because of the popularity of Hollywood superhero films (p. 24).

Beginning in 2000 with Bryan Singer's *X-Men* and, as of this writing, peaking with Joss Whedon's *Avengers* which stands as one of the highest grossing films having broken the billion-dollar mark, American superhero films continue to occupy prime space in Hollywood release calendars as tent pole films. Moulton (2012) connects the events of 9/11 to the rise of the superhero in American mainstream culture. Because of the traumatic event, the audience was looking for heroes that would figuratively represent them and their world. This has led to superhero movies, TV shows, the revival of the comic book industry after its bust in the 1990s, and even an attempted Broadway musical based on Spider-Man (p. 5).

As a result of successful Hollywood superhero films in the early 2000s, mainstream Filipino film attempted to adapt the genre for local viewers. These films were targeted at a popular audience, as evidenced by their mostly being released during the Metro Manila Film Festival. Filipino superhero movies of the time period appropriate the iconography and imagery of the mainstream

American superhero genre while incorporating supposedly Filipino beliefs and the loose formula of the family-oriented action–comedy blockbuster MMFF film.

The films that this paper will examine are *Captain Barbell* (2004), *Fantastic Man* (2003), *Gagamboy* (2004), *Lastikman* (2003), *Super Inday and the Golden Bibe* (2010), *Super Noypi* (2002), and *Wapakman* (2010).

This paper's contention is that, while these films fall within the formula and traditions of Filipino mainstream filmmaking, their appropriation of the superhero as a character is limited to iconography. These films do not use the superhero genre to struggle with concepts of power and responsibility or to engage with contemporary concerns.

It is important to take note that the different traditions between the American comics and Filipino films necessitate very different discussions. The American comics discussed in the previous section are built upon decades of history. The characters are part of a universe that readers are already familiar with. Thus, putting a character in a specific situation can create more meaning because of the familiarity that the readers have with the character. This could be seen in the earlier discussions of Spider-Man at the site of the fallen towers or when Captain America was introduced to a post-9/11 world.

The Filipino films of the 2000s do not have the same luxury of history to build upon. They were all introducing new characters. Even the films with characters that had appeared before, Captain Barbell, Lastikman, and Super Inday and the Golden Bibe, were all reboots. As a result, all of these movies provide origin stories for their characters. It is from the perspective of the origin story that we will assess these films. We will ask, what do these superhero origin stories reveal about the way that Filipinos think about superheroes? We can also gather the underlying themes that the films express through a critical reading of their appropriation of the superhero.

What is most noticeable is that these films remove the important themes of the superhero genre: human agency and choice towards overcoming great odds or overwhelming foes. Instead, they feature superheroes who wind up as oppressors of the oppressed.

In Peter Coogan's (n.d.) definition of the superhero, he states three important characteristics: Mission, Powers, and Identity (ch. 1). While the Filipino superhero movies feature powers and identity, the mission aspect is missing. This paper argues that the mission is the crucial element that makes the superhero a superhero.

As an example of the Marvel superhero origin story, we can look at Amazing Fantasy #15 (Lee & Ditko, 2012) which features the first appearance of Spider-Man. He is bitten by a radioactive spider during a school field trip, bestowing upon him spider-like powers. Having grown up without much money, he uses his powers to make money by joining a wrestling bout and making a TV appearance. He watches a thief escape, and this thief winds up killing his Uncle Ben. After he captures the thief and realizes that he could have prevented Uncle Ben's murder, he comes to the conclusion that "With great power there must also come—great responsibility!"

This exhibits the power and responsibility aspect of the superhero's prosocial mission, if rather pointedly. The superhero gets a power and chooses to use it for good. From that first appearance, the central themes of Spider-Man stories have revolved around the "exploration of the relationships of power and the obligation to use it correctly" (Wolk, 2007, ch. 4).

When we examine the Filipino superheroes in the films Captain Barbell, Lastikman, Super Inday and the Golden Bibe, and Super Noypi, we find that these films remove the decision to become a superhero from their characters. What leads them to becoming "superheroes" is a deity assigning them powers. Fantastic Man does not acknowledge a god as overtly but still acknowledges fate having a hand in assigning the powers. On the other hand, while Wapakman and Gagamboy do not have a supernatural force leading the characters, they have comic books dictating to the characters.

We can look at each of the films and identify how they address the character's choice in becoming a superhero or lack thereof. We can observe that these films will follow the convention identified by Emil Flores (2005). He states that Filipino superheroes are chosen, based on their purity or piety (p. 28). With the exception of the characters in Super Noypi, the characters come from the lower class of society and can be thought of as belonging to the oppressed or api.

The most glaring example of this would be Inday of Super Inday and the Golden Bibe. She is a poor country lass whose adoptive mother dies. As she journeys to find her real mother in the city, she takes work as household help, serving as a nanny. While there, she is oppressed by the household help who has been there longer. She puts up with all kinds of abuse, particularly from a fallen angel and tiyanak who are searching for

someone to bestow powers upon. They put forward their criteria for being a superhero:

1. Magandang kalooban.
2. Matapang at handang isugal ang buhay para sa kapwa at handing magsakripisyo para sa iba.
3. Walang galit ang puso. Handang magpatawad sa mga nagkasala sa kanya.
4. Kailangan tanggapin niya ng buong puso ang pagiging superhero.

We can take note that most important is "magandang loob." This we will see is defined as willing to tolerate rude behavior. In a series of scenes that follow Super Inday's journey to the city, the fallen angel and the tiyanak do things like trip her, accuse her of stealing, and insult her in a number of ways. She bears it all, and based on this, they come to the conclusion that she has "magandang loob." Then, they begin to follow her around.

The rest of the film has Inday being followed around by these two as she deals with the mundane work of being household help and fights off monsters. When she fulfills all of the requirements, she is bestowed powers which she can use to fight the enemy.

The fourth requirement, of accepting the role of superhero, is interesting in that it implies choice. But then, the entire narrative has pushed the character to a point where she has no choice but accept. She has been placed in dangerous situations and will not have survived without the powers that were being bestowed. After her charges are kidnapped, she is told of her destiny, and she accepts the powers so that she can rescue them.

We take note here that these powers are given by the fallen angel. These powers come from god, and it is implied that she may only use them for good. While it might seem that she has a choice in accepting superhero powers, it is clear that she has no choice in how to use them because of their divine origins. The fallen angel's return to heaven and the tiyanak's entry into heaven hinge on her decision to be a superhero as well. The forces driving her decisions are external more than internal.

Another character whose powers come directly from god is Lastikman. It is interesting that this film employs the conventions of origins similar to Marvel comics. He is a nerdy kid who is bullied in school. Lastikman's

father is an astronomer who dies when the boy is young. His mother is an environmental activist who dies during a protest. He goes walking in the forest, and a meteor crashes. It hits a rubber tree and the debris hits him, giving him stretching powers.

Then, the film leaves these traditional superhero conventions and introduces god as the force influencing the meteor crash. Lastikman's father's ghost appears to him in a dream the night after the accident. The father says, "Matagal kong ipinakiusap kay lord na sana'y matupad sa'yo ang pangarap ko at teorya. Kita mo naman pinagbigyan tayo. Kailangan nga lang gamitin mo yang kapangyarihan mo sa kabutihan. Wag mong gagamitin sa kasamaan at kapilyohan dahil kung hindi babawiin yan ni lord. Sige ka."

Captain Barbell does not attribute its character's powers to god. Instead, it points to a sentient nature. A stone falls from space and is buried in the ground. It stays in the ground, but when the world needs saving, nature causes it to surface in the form of a barbell. And nature finds a way for the barbell to be found by the right person. This chosen person should have "tibay ng dibdib" which we might think is courage, but I think also refers again to the sense of "loob" similar to Super Inday.

In this case, the human persona, Enteng, is a poor older brother who works as a janitor at a gym. He is bullied by people and put down regularly. Still, he works hard, struggles, tries to make ends meet, and takes care of his siblings. He finds the barbell after he is bullied by people at the gym.

When the Captain Barbell persona speaks to Enteng, he puts forward some rules. Captain Barbell is meant to defend the oppressed and fight for justice. And the barbell is never to be used for evil. The poor person who is api is the person most deserving of powers.

Fantastic Man is interesting in that it features a character actively looking to get powers and become a superhero. Prof. James is a nutty professor who wants powers, but it is his assistant Fredo who gets the powers from an archeological site of apparently alien origin. Here, the character is chosen, as an orb meant to represent the powers goes into him and not his boss.

After they realize the extent of Fredo's powers, these two characters sit and think. At first, Prof. James wants the powers transferred to him. Then, the two characters come to the conclusion that there must have been some bigger reason that Fredo was chosen. Fredo, before acquiring powers, is shown as bumbling and an everyman. They surmise it is this that qualifies

him to become a superhero. Of course once he has powers, Prof. James makes it clear that Fredo has no choice but to be a superhero.

When we look at the characters of Super Noypi, we can see that they do not have any choice in acting as heroes. The movie kicks off with a character from the future telling them that, if they do not act, then a tyrant will take over and control the country. We take note here that, among these films, it is only Super Noypi that features characters from the upper economic classes.

We can compare Super Noypi with The Runaways, a post-9/11 Marvel Comics series that features a similar central idea. Both works are about teenaged characters who are the children of superpowered individuals. In both cases, the teenaged children inherit their parents' powers.

The crucial difference between the two sets of characters is the parents. The Runaways find out that their parents are actually a group of supervillains. They make the decision to run away from their parents and to do good deeds and right wrongs to make up for what their parents have done.

The characters of Super Noypi are the children of heroes, and they are asked to take up the roles that their parents used to play. As is explored in a number of the character conflicts, the film deals with these characters coming to terms with who their parents were and doing what their parents want them to. For example, one of the main characters, Ynigo, is a jock who does not want to study. His father is a politician who wants him to focus on school, insisting that Ynigo has a legacy he must inherit. It is revealed that his parents are aswang, and so he is one too. He embraces both his aswang powers and the pressure that his parents had placed on him.

The characters of Gagamboy and Wapakman are not chosen in the way that the other characters are. They are also poor and bullied. They work as an ice cream vendor and a plumber, respectively. What is interesting is that, even though both of these are new characters, both films show their characters sitting down and reading comics about Gagamboy and Wapakman, so they decide to copy the comics.

There is more of an element of choice with these characters, but it seems that, with their knowledge of the comics, they seem to have no choice but to fulfill what they have read. It is interesting that these are original characters that had no comics or movies before the film. The comics that they find of themselves are clearly plot devices to move the characters towards the decision of becoming a superhero.

The superhero's choice to do good is such an important element of the

superhero narrative. One of its functions is to make the superhero relatable. It puts power in the hands of the reader by saying that they have a choice. Readers are free to speculate what they would do if they had powers, and their exploration of the idea leads them to wanting to make the same choice as the heroes they read about. The element of choice communicates to the reader that, given the right circumstances and the right choices, he too would be a superhero.

Removing the element of choice means that not everyone can be a superhero. The way in which superpowers are earned glorifies the narrative of poverty in these films. It is the poor, the downcast, the meek, the weak, the bullied, the oppressed, and the api who god will reward with superpowers. And they must use them for good. What is interesting too, with these films, is how good and justice are defined.

We can understand a lot about a superhero by the kinds of villains that he fights. The Fantastic Four are always fighting Doctor Doom, an aristocratic dictator. Superman's villain is Lex Luthor, a capitalist-industrialist who does not care about people and is driven by hubris and vanity. Spider-Man's great nemesis Green Goblin is a rich scientist who conducted and profited from unethical experiments. The great supervillains are oppressors, usually richer and more powerful than the superheroes who face them.

Considering that the Filipino superheroes we have discussed so far have decided to do good and fight for justice, the kinds of enemies that they have are interesting. Though their enemies all perpetrate evil deeds, their social backgrounds and proximity to the heroes show that the Filipino superhero might actually be an instrument of oppression himself. We will once again examine each film.

Super Inday's enemy is the witch Ingrid, who is the fiancée of Inday's boss. We find out that Inday's boss also happens to be her father.

Ingrid is from the province and the lower classes. She climbs the social ladder using demonic powers, placing herself in a position where she can transcend those circumstances and take financial power. Inday earns her position in the social hierarchy by striking down the social climber, saving her father from Ingrid.

We see the most pronounced class conflict in Super Noypi. As mentioned earlier, the superhero team members are from the upper classes. They wind up fighting and killing Diego, who was the mechanic for their parents. Their parents killed his wife many years previous and took Diego's

child, raising her as their own. Diego's vengeance marks him as a textbook supervillain, but his relationship to the superhero children and their parents makes for an uncomfortable subtext. The employee who sees the unfair position of his employers and attempts to rise up against them is imprisoned and ultimately killed.

Gagamboy's nemesis was his former coworker. The two are shown in the opening scene competing to sell ice cream. Both characters are poor, but where Gagamboy is fortunate to swallow a magic spider that bestows spider powers but does not change his physical appearance, his nemesis swallows a cockroach, changing him so that he looks like one. He goes by the moniker Ipisman.

Gagamboy has few scenes outside of its main setting, a squatters' area. All the characters are stuck in poverty. Ipisman's background is made all the more tragic as we are shown scenes of him receiving letters from his poor parents asking him for more money. Where Gagamboy's issues are courting the pretty girl and his scenes are always played with lightness, we can find more tragedy in his enemy. We see here, though, two characters stuck in the same kind of poverty, fighting against each other. Along with Ipisman, every other character that Gagamboy fights is from the same poverty-stricken area.

Lastikman's enemy is his former student. Stryker starts out as a student who is bullied but who tries to do good because he idolizes Lastikman. One of his bullies dresses up like Lastikman, and the group beats and maims Stryker. He is driven mad at the thought of his favorite superhero betraying him, so he becomes a supervillain.

The class divide here is reversed, because Stryker is from the upper class—which allows him to afford the gear for his supervillainy—but we see a power divide because of Lastikman's having been his teacher. After a murderous rampage, Stryker realizes that he has gone too far, and he winds up getting himself electrocuted.

One cannot help but feel that there is no justice in this character's death. All the character does through two acts is play sidekick and fanboy, and then after being beaten and handicapped, he goes insane and becomes a supervillain. In his final moments, he realizes that he has been misled. This makes for a compelling character, but it also makes Lastikman lame and puts into question why he would be fighting such a poor and oppressed character.

Fantastic Man fights what is supposed to be an alien. But for the most part, that alien occupies the body of his librarian-girlfriend Helen. In the same sequence where Fantastic Man gets his power, the alien inhabits Helen. She

spends most of the film in the hospital, until she rises with a fetish for skimpy clothing and an undirected need to commit violence.

After a few scenes fighting the alien in Helen's body, the alien takes its own form and fights Fantastic Man. Still, it is worth noting that he has to fight someone in close proximity to him and someone who is from a similar social class.

Wapakman and Captain Barbell are interesting because that which gives them powers also gives powers to their enemies.

Wapakman gets his powers from exposure to a magical scientific formula. When the container of the formula explodes, two other characters are exposed. In an earlier scene, he was embarrassed at his children's Parents Day event by a firefighter and his kids' teacher. Both the firefighter and the teacher become villains for him to fight.

The fireman gets caught in a fire. Wapakman manages to save other people, but the fireman turns into a molten man. Wapakman fights and captures him. The teacher catches her boyfriend with another woman. She screams and that kills the cheating couple. Wapakman fights and captures her, too.

The circumstances that turn them "evil" do not seem unsympathetic, and that brings into question what the creators of these films consider is the dividing line between what makes one good or evil. It is quite possible that this all goes back to "loob" and one's "dibdib" and not other external factors that shape a character; which means that if one receives powers, one is either meant to be good or evil.

Where this becomes even more problematic is when we look at the villains that Captain Barbell faces. The same magic space rock that gives Captain Barbell his powers also gives villains powers. One could question at this point why nature can take the time to make sure that only a worthy person finds the barbell, but random people can run into other fragments of the space rock.

There are three main villains in Captain Barbell. The big boss, through some convoluted storytelling, happens to also be Enteng's long lost father. He is a fire-breather at a circus. He has trouble making ends meet, and he goes on a rampage after his boss refuses to give him a little more money.

Fighting someone who is poor and oppressed has been common among most of the heroes. But a reading of Captain Barbell's minor villains reveals something more disturbing.

The first villain, Dagampat, is a taong grasa. He saves a child from being hit by a car. When people see him carrying the child, they assume that he is

trying to kidnap the kid. They proceed to throw things at him and beat him. Beaten to near the point of death, he lies down to die among rats, where it also happens that the magic rock has landed. He becomes rat-faced and goes on a murderous rampage. Captain Barbell shows up and kills him.

The next villain is Freezy. First, she is shown being harassed by her boss. She fends off unwanted advances. Then she is raped, frozen in a block of ice, and dumped in the river. She is revived by a magic rock, and she returns to exact her vengeance on men who are "masyadong mainit." Captain Barbell smiles while he twists her wrists and freezes her into submission.

What we can gather from the portrayals of villains is that almost all of them are just as oppressed and api as the heroes, if not more so. The decision to become a villain is often made out of desperation. It seems that the characters have no other choice than to be the villain.

We can observe then that, in both the creation of heroes and villains, Filipino superhero movies deprive their characters of choice. They rarely, if ever, have the freedom to do anything other than what has been dictated or chosen.

Considering that the adaptations made are telling of culture and thinking, then we can observe that these films advocate the maintenance of the status quo. They pit the oppressed and poor against each other. For characters meant to fight for justice, it is the immediate threats, often very similar to the heroes themselves, that they fight.

What gives these characters the moral righteousness to beat up their enemies is that they are chosen. It is what they are meant to do. This is a frightening mentality if we consider this a metaphor for how these films are telling us to think about justice and fighting for good. In conversations with Emil Flores (2005), the idea has emerged that this is indicative of folk Catholic belief. It is the belief in "tiis" and in "ang diyos na ang bahala" where being meek and kind-hearted will have their own rewards. In effect, they are telling us that it is only those who are appointed by a higher power, those who are chosen, that have a right to fight for justice. This goes against the assertion of the traditional superhero narrative that we can all be heroes.

It is clear then that while the superhero genre at its best puts power and control in the hands of its readers or viewers, Filipino superhero films since 2000 subvert this. They remove choice and free will from their

viewers, advocating meekness and waiting for powers to be handed to you because of your kind-heartedness.

CONCLUSION

In comparing the ways that the superhero genre has been employed to tell stories in two different cultures, we have come to see both opportunities for creators to put control in the hands of their audience or to wrest that control from them. We see that while there might be a homogenous view of the superhero as being about spandex, capes, and outlandish adventure stories for kids that there are many ways to read superhero stories.

It has been interesting to take note of the drastic difference in the way that the two sample groups of texts are willing to engage contemporary issues and concerns. The Marvel Comics have all but named the actual political issues. The thinly veiled discourse has been fertile ground for exploring pressing issues. Filipino superhero movies on the other hand have been decidedly situated in the realm of fantasy, telling origin stories that support the api narrative that one might find in telenovelas and mainstream movies.

It is worth questioning whether we should expect Filipino superhero movies to be different. If all that these films are meant to do is entertain or if all they are doing is reflecting our culture and beliefs, then we might say that they have done what is expected of them. Most of these films did respectably in terms of ticket sales. And though this researcher might disagree with the api narrative, it is one that resonates throughout Philippine culture.

However, because of the decision to utilize the superhero genre, the filmmakers have taken a genre that allows for more than mere entertainment. The superhero genre is a rich space for discussing great ideas in big, explosive metaphors.

Based on what has been presented here, a number of future studies can be undertaken. One would be tracing back to the earliest Filipino superhero films to find if this lack of choice is part of the tradition or if it entered at a specific point in history. Another would be to examine the development of the Filipino superhero in other media, such as television and komiks. Tracing that development from the point when Filipino creators started creating superheroes would also reveal much about how

superheroes have been represented in our culture. Tracking Filipino superhero developments against American superheroes would also be a fruitful study, because of Filipino presence in both komiks and mainstream American comics.

While this paper comes to some conclusions about American and Filipino superheroes since 9/11, it hopefully leads to much more study and discourse in the field of superhero studies.

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Broken Pears:
A Reading of Samuel
Bak's Art[1]

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This paper tries to show that, although Bak's art is rooted in his experiences of the Holocaust, it extends them by pointing the spectator to a kind of reconciliation with the constant disintegration of the world that has been "wounded by the Holocaust." As noticed by interpreters of his works, instead of painting a more direct representation of the Holocaust, Bak uses (iconic) symbols. This is the reason that Bak's works can reach out to something more universal and is not completely tied down to the specific event of the Holocaust. His paintings have shown the world crumbling, decaying, and falling apart—apt illustrations of the Zen practice of realizing the world as devolving into original nothingness. Yet, it has also hinted at some hope, not in portraying the world becoming better than it is but by questioning assumptions about it and by blurring binary oppositions in one's perceptions about the world. In this way, Bak joins the Zen masters in their practice of active engagement in the world while training the mind to see the world as it is.

Keywords: Samuel Bak, Holocaust Art, Buddhism, Zen

A SURVIVOR-ARTIST

In 2001, Samuel Bak published his memoirs, Painted in Words, where he starts the narration of his life with his childhood days, moving from a level of affluence to a life in the Jewish ghetto during World War II. He was born in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania), on August 12, 1933 to Mitzia and Jonas Bak and four grandparents who doted on him. They lived a

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1   This paper is based on an updated research done for a conference paper delivered in the 8th DLSU Arts Congress.

comfortable, middle-class life until 1941, when the Germans occupied Vilna, after which all of Bak's grandparents were killed. In September of the same year, the Vilna Jewish community was deported to the ghetto. Samuel and his mother escaped the crowd of Jewish people being herded into the ghetto. They walked the small alley ways, pretending to be taking a leisurely walk, as they headed to the residence of Mitzia's aunt, Janina Rushkevich who, marrying the son of the Archbishop of Warsaw, converted to Christianity many years earlier.

Aunt Janina took mother and son in, in spite of the dangers, and hid them in her house, avoiding suspicion by significantly cutting her helper's work hours. She then brought Samuel and Mitzia to the Benedictine Convent near her house where she was educated in the Catholic tradition and where the nuns were fond of her and highly respected her family. The then Mother Superior, Marija Mikulska, took them in and hid them in the roof of the convent. It was here that Samuel's father, Jonas, and other family and friends later on reunited with them.

At the convent, Samuel was taught Christianity as a safety measure while his innate talent for drawing and painting was nurtured. They lived a hidden but bearable life, coming down at night for their hygiene and other leisure when it was safe for them to do so. Later on, however, the Gestapo suspected the Benedictines of hiding Jews, and the nuns and priests were sent to the labor camps while the military sequestered the convent for their operations. The hiding family eventually found their way out of the convent, onto the street. Again blessed with luck, they came across a group of Jews, going back to the ghetto from a work camp. The camp workers immediately surrounded the family and gave them yellow stars to pin on their clothes. Unnoticed by the Gestapo, the family was deposited safely in the ghetto.

Here, Samuel continued drawing, painting, and sculpting, with everybody contributing whatever paper, pencils, paint, and clay they could find. In March of 1943, fellow members of the ghetto, the poets Avrom Sutzkever and Szmerce Kaczerginski, becoming very fond of Samuel, showcased the boy's works in a ghetto exhibit. Samuel was 9 years old. Later on, feeling that the ghetto was about to be liquidated, the poets entrusted the Pinkas, a notebook that kept the official record of the Jewish community, to Samuel, in the hopes that he would survive, and the records with him. Samuel used every blank page and margins of the Pinkas to draw on. He carried this with him everywhere until he had to escape the camp later on.

Jonas, Samuel"s father, was able to get himself and his family moved to the Herres Kraftfahr Park or HKP labor camp shortly before the Vilna Ghetto was liquidated. But on March 27, 1944, a children's Aktion—an SS procedure where all the children are gathered and then shot—was launched at the camp and Samuel escaped this as his parents hid him under a bed in their apartment. Fearing that the parents who lost their children would tell on them, the family planned an escape. Mitzia was able to leave the camp first, going again to her Aunt Janina for help. Samuel was later on put in a sack of sawdust that his father carried as he worked and was deposited outside the camp, through a window. He was then fetched by a Christian woman who brought him to reunite with his mother. By this time, the Benedictine nuns were returned to the convent, and once again, Mother Superior Marija Mikulska took Mitzia and Samuel in and hid them, even with the Germans occupying the convent, until their liberation by the Russians. Jonas Bak, however, was one of the camp workers who were shot dead before the liberation of Vilna in July, 1945.

Being originally Polish citizens, Mitzia and Samuel journeyed from Vilna to Lodz and then to the American-managed Landsberg Displaced Persons (DP) Camp in Bavaria where they stayed three years before taking a ship to the newly formed Jewish nation of Israel in 1948. It was in this DP camp that Mitzia met and later on married Samuel's stepfather, Natan Markowsky. In 1947, later to be known as Israel's founding father, David Ben-Gurion visited Bavaria, and an exhibit of Samuel's art was organized for him.

All throughout their long sojourn, Mitzia would work and save everything to buy paint and paper for her son. She would also employ several art tutors, always in search of a better teacher. While at the DP Camp, Samuel went to Munich to study under Prof. Blocherer and became entranced in German expressionism which was then filling up the Munich museums. He would carry a lot of his works from Landsberg to Israel aboard the ship, Pan York.

In Israel, Samuel went to Bezalel Academy of Art and Design before doing his military duties. After that, he went to Paris for the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, exhibited in Rome, in Pittsburg, and in Venice, before returning to Israel in 1966. But he moved to New York after that, then to Paris again, and Lausanne in Switzerland before finally settling down in Massachusetts.

The Pinkas Samuel carried with him through his journey of survival was preserved in a glass panel in a museum in Vilna. He visited Vilna in 2001 and since then would return to his hometown every now and then. He is still a prolific painter, painting hundreds of projects at a time, returning to old ones after months and working on some for years. His paintings are exhibited in Europe and in the United States. Some of his works are permanently displayed at the Pucker Gallery in Massachusetts, while some, including videos of his work processes, are available online through the Facing History and Ourselves site, being used in a curriculum that teaches about the Holocaust and other genocides.

HOLOCAUST ART

The coinage of the term "Holocaust Art" was inevitable in the aftermath of World War II. Like Samuel Bak, many of those who survived the concentration camps were professional artists who wrote and painted through their ordeal and who continued to find the need to do so even more after liberation. Even those who perished left a legacy of their creative spirits on the walls of their cells or barracks and in the ghetto and their poetry in notebooks and scraps of paper hidden behind bricks, under makeshift beds or low ceilings. The horrors under which these works were created and the memory of the experience that continually trigger their creation set them apart from other kinds of art, and they have to be specified by a particular term. "Holocaust Art," therefore, unlike other kinds of art, is not based on a movement or technique but relates itself to a very concrete experience of history. It has been defined as art "that is about the Holocaust, that is, the intentionality or content of which includes reference, direct or indirect, to the Nazi project of humiliation, deprivation, degradation, and extermination against the Jews and other marked groups (Pickford 2013, 3).

Any discussion on Holocaust Art brings to mind Adorno's pronouncement that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric"[2] (Adorno 1997, 34). Many have interpreted Adorno as referring to the problem of representing the evil of the Holocaust. Holocaust representation in art runs the risk of trivializing the experience of the Holocaust—by "speaking" the

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2   The context of this oft-quoted statement of Adorno is "Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today…" (in "Cultural Criticism and Society, Prisms, 1997, 34). He was referring to the act of "artistic production that reproduces the value of the society that generated the Holocaust" (Richardson, 2005, 1).

"unspeakable"—or of sublimating it: there is something inappropriate in the thought of deriving pleasure through poetry, for instance, based on the suffering of others. Thus, the allusion to Adorno's words in Bak's words: "After the Shoah, people wondered if art could go on existing, if it could still be produced…my answer was clear. The question itself is an expression of tragic dismay, and it triggered more paintings" (Bak, Samuel Bak, Gallery 3, http://chgs.umn.edu/museum/responses/bak/gallery3.html accessed February 26, 2017).

Bak's works, given the circumstances in which he created them and the spirit in which he continued to create them, have always been considered "Holocaust Art." This paper, however, does not intend to problematize Bak's art as "Holocaust Art." Instead, it intends to offer a reading of these works that move away from the usual parameters in which they are interpreted. It claims that Bak's works, although undoubtedly rooted in Holocaust experiences, go beyond specifically Holocaust-related themes and display insights into the nature of existence as essentially disintegrating. In this sense, Bak's paintings articulate the basic Zen view that the world continually devolves into nothingness. While this paper makes no assumptions about Bak's intentions when he paints or about his knowledge of Eastern philosophies, it attempts to interpret his images as an artist's insight about the world and show how they may remain relevant even to generations that have been fortunate to miss the Holocaust.

In a lecture Bak gave at the International Colloquy about the Holocaust and the Arts held in October of 2002 at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, he said that his paintings "are responses to the miracle of [his] survival…a compulsive need to give meaning to the miraculous fact of [his] survival" (Bak, "Speaking About the Unspeakable"). Bak admits that earlier on in his career, he was reluctant in referring to his themes as Holocaust-related, because pegging it on that might also limit the meaning and, therefore, the reach of his work. But over time, it appears that he has come to terms with this and is now open to the idea that the "indelible experience" he had might be the sole inspiration for his work. But he claims, "[t]he creative process is a matter of such complexity that conscious intentions often eclipse subconscious needs. This question must remain open" (Bak, "Speaking about the Unspeakable," emphasis supplied). This is the cue this study takes as it offers a reading of Bak's works.

ILLUMINATIONS: THE ART OF SAMUEL BAK

The images described and discussed below are taken from a catalogue called Illuminations: the Art of Samuel Bak.[3] Fourteen out of the 28 paintings included in this catalogue have been randomly chosen for this study. Unlike other catalogues that are mostly on a theme, and therefore include similar images, Illuminations give a wide range of themes that Bak has taken up in this painting career. It also covers the collection that has been donated to the online educational organization, Facing History and Ourselves[4] and has the propensity to be more widely known.

Although Bak's paintings have been described as "Surreal" and "Postmodern," he clarifies that, unlike surrealist art, his images do not come from dreams and that his visions are rooted in the events of the 20th century (Bak, "Speaking about the Unspeakable"). It is easy to see that Bak's paintings have the common element of ruins, most of the time in the form of rubble, suggesting a catastrophe as well as the passing of time. But even in rubble-free images, the paintings always have an element of brokenness, of destruction and decay, like leafless trees, treeless hills, crumbling walls, and worn out objects. There is, however, always an element of contrast. The desolation in the images of ruin are often contested by their background or even just by the serenity suggested by the work's title.

For instance , the title and the clear blue sky of Under a Blue Sky, often interpreted as representing the children that perished in the Holocaust, show a stark contrast to the images of broken teddy bears. This painting points to the loss of childhood, or innocence, of death (Langer 2010, 32). Stuffed toy bears are often made of fabric and other soft materials. Yet here, they are made of stone and strewn about, broken in pieces. But despite this, the sky remains blue and bright. One wonders if the visual statement is one of irony or hope. Similarly, the broken stone moon, with pieces floating away into space and the storm-blown trees may be strong images of violence, in the Study after Nocturnal A. But the chess pawn, standing like a human person with a head that alludes to the image of the earth as seen in space, beautifully lit by the sun, gives the feeling of serenity amidst the fleeting activities of the day, taken stock off in the nocturnal hours.

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3   Langer, Lawrence. 2010. "Illuminations: The Art of Samuel Bak: Collection at Facing History and Ourselves." Brooklyn, Massachusetts: Facing History and Ourselves. Retrieved from https://www.facinghistory.org/For-Educators/Educator-Resources/Resource-Collections/Illuminations/Introduction-Professor-Lawrence-L-Langer February 26, 2017.

4   (https://www.facinghistory.org/ with a page on Samuel Bak's works in https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library?search=Samuel%20Bak).

Under a Blue Sky, 2001, *Oil on canvas, 18 × 24" (Illuminations, 2010, 33)*
Under a Blue Sky shows images of stone teddy bears, worn-out, broken, dismembered, thrown about the ground, piling up against a blue sky. In the distance, green hills provide a stark contrast to the tragic fates of the broken toys.

Study After Nocturnal A, 2000, *Oil on Canvas, 25.5 × 19.75" (Illuminations 2010, 41)*
A stone chess piece appears to contemplate the waning of the broken stone moon like a pensive human being, in *Study After Nocturnal A*. Its dome "head" resembles the earth, highlighted by some light from behind. It stands amidst trees that seem to have been devastated by a storm. The fiery light that seeps through the trees dissolves into the blue sky.

In the same manner, Sanctuary and The Cup was Full both use the image of the boy from the Warsaw Ghetto (Langer, 2010, 7), a photograph that has become an icon in Holocaust imagery, showing a young boy holding his hands up in surrender to a Nazi soldier. Bak says of this image that it is "inexhaustible," associating him with his namesake, Samek Epstein, a childhood friend who was murdered in the Holocaust. Bak returns to this image in a series of paintings, as if trying to exhaust the image and his memory of his friend (Bak 2001, location 5033/75%). But in this pair of paintings showing images of the crumbling stone body of the Warsaw Boy, a face of another boy, whole and seemingly well and curious, peeps from behind. It is as if both paintings express Bak's sorrow over the child that was lost (both in himself and in Epstein) and his gratitude for or his incomprehension about his survival.

The Cup was Full, 2007, *Oil on canvas, 24 × 20" (Illuminations, 2010, 27)*
The Cup was Full shows a face of a boy behind a crumbling altar-like wall of stones. Disembodied arms are held up, as if belonging to the boy. On the shelf are worn out boots and a cap. Among these, a cup lies on its side, handle broken, with a spoon lying by it. The sky is grayish blue, neither bright nor dark.

Sanctuary, 1997, *Oil on canvas, 20 × 20" (Illuminations 2010, 29)*
Sanctuary shows a monument-like structure made out of bits and pieces
of a mannequin-like body, with hands pierced, propped on either side of
a stone head that has crumbled, held up as if in submission to whatever
punishment comes next. Behind it, propped higher, is a stone head of
a similar boy, framed in broken pieces of wood and stone. Around the
structure are dying plants and almost leafless trees. Mountains rise in
the distance in a late afternoon sky.

Like these paintings, there is also something inherently positive in
Reconstruction, a kind of rebuilding after something old has been taken
down. But destruction is its prerequisite. In this painting, the towers are being
built out of old books, but the blank pages that form their backdrop speaks
of something fresh, a new beginning. The Hebrew letters that spell the word
"Midrash"—rabbinic teachings—look toward a new narrative, seemingly
hopeful that the destruction of the past will serve as a lesson learned for future

generations. (Langer, 2010, 8) The same can be said about Recovered, where the words "Still Life" could refer to the art movement, appropriate for the pear that symbolized the usual fruit arrangements for still life paintings (Langer, 2010, 48). But it could more meaningfully refer to a life that is recovered and, therefore, could become dynamic again, that is, not "still" anymore. Or perhaps, that life can still go on, even after the devastation it had to go through: there is still life in the aftermath of the Shoah, even though what is left behind to deal with are now broken and old, showing signs of decay.

Reconstruction, 2001, *Oil on canvas, 20 × 16" (Illuminations, 2010, 15)*
Two towers rise behind a structure of piled up old papers and books in Reconstruction. In the background are pages of blank papers or canvas, on the largest of which is a Hebrew word, Midrash. On the foreground, more paper lie about. On the right side are some cardboards, on one of them, half the Star of David appears, adjacent to a black half circle.

Recovered, 2005, *Pastel and Gouache on Paper,*
13 × 13" (Illuminations 2010, 49)
Against a bright background, Recovered shows odd items, including a
pear, propped against an old, chipped wall, with a torn label that says
"Still Life," although the word "Still" is partly obscured. A wooden bar
crosses the wall from behind.

On the Road, Camp, and At Rest more directly portray the narrative
of the Jewish plight. On the Road alludes to the perennially wandering Jew
without shelter, symbolized by the roofless house on wheels, with broken
stone keys that cannot anymore unlock what needs to be opened (Langer,
2010, 16). Camp is Bak's image of the Vilna ghetto a symbol of the Jewish
community decimated by the War (Langer, 2010, 11). And At Rest is a
representation of another Jew journeying, carrying his cross (Langer, 2010,
30). All of the images in these paintings, despite their barrenness, still carry

positive messages. The title "On the Road" speaks of an openness of being on the way. The clear skies give a positive avenue. In Camp, two candles tower over all the remains, lit and undefeated. In At Rest, the tree-cross has strong roots, accompanied by an equally strong alternative, vibrant with life.

On the Road, 1992, *Oil on canvas, 21.25 × 25.5" (Illuminations, 2010, 17)*
A roofless house on wheels stands on a hill of ruins, with huge broken stone keys scattered around it. *On the Road* has a bright sky and a mountain in the distance is visible against it.

Camp, 1992, *Oil on canvas, 16 × 13" (Illuminations, 2010, 19)*
A monochromatic painting, Camp shows in earth colors the ruins of a village
(or a ghetto), its walls forming the shape of the Star of David, amidst a stony
hill. Two lit candles rise in the middle of the destroyed buildings, against
boards propped up high that also form the shape of the Star of David.

At Rest, 1996, *Oil on canvas, 30 × 16"*
(Illuminations, 2010, 31)

A man seated on a chair in travel clothes, holding on his lap a bucket where a strange tree grows out of, and whose roots pierce it. The tree is leafless, forms a cross with its branches, and is wrapped in iron bands, connected by iron rods, with an arrow-like figure jutting out on top. *At Rest* shows a traveler seated on a chair, his right boot is off his foot, and his bundle on the ground by his side. To his right is another chair with a tree growing from the ground through its seat. This tree, in contrast to the traveler's, is vibrant with leaves. The scene is sectioned off by a low wall. Beyond are tree tops, and a grayish blue sky.

About Time shows faces in the ruins of wood and stone, seemingly giving a lecture to or discussing with the half-buried, broken stone man. It reminds one of philosophers or sages of the past, involved in an argumentation over important issues. Amidst the ruins, however, a couple of trees still stand tall, and a well-working chimney spews smoke into the sky (Langer, 2010, 24). Is the latter a symbol of the gas chambers or does it stand triumphant with the few remaining trees? After Durer, on the other hand—Bak's homage to his indirect mentor, Albrecht Durer—shows an angel looking depressed and as Bak himself describes him, "[t]he angelic figure of Durer's great Melancholia, in a soldier's greatcoat" (Samuel Bak — Gallery 3,). But the ruins that surround him, his frustration and disappointment, are themselves set within a larger, brighter scenario of the ocean, at once a source of destruction and life, under, once again, clear

blue skies. Unexpected Visitors suggests similar sentiments, given the real, live bird on the wing of a stone one. Which one—the iron bird or the real one—is unexpected, one will have to guess. Perhaps the constructed birds are symbols of bomb-releasing planes during the war, and thus symbolize death, and the live bird, life. Or the latter the sweet release of death itself, after a life of toil. Whichever reading is given is a response to the uncertainties the contrasting elements in the work suggest.

About Time, 1999, *Oil on canvas, 20 × 30" (Illuminations, 2010, 25),* About Time shows a ruined statue of a man, half buried in rubble. The statue faces a huge tree in the background, fallen and sawed into big pieces. Around the statue, as if conversing with him, are mosaics of faces mounted on pieces of wood. A disembodied hand is propped up, as if in the middle of a lecture.

After Durer, 2007, *Pastel on paper, 25.5 × 19.5" (Illuminations, 2010, 53)*
After Durer shows an angel seated among the rubble of a ruin, by the
sea. The angel has his head on his left arm, looking tired, asleep or
dispirited. The sky seems bright. The mountain far away is distinctly
visible in the horizon.

Unexpected Visitors, 2000, *Oil on Canvas, 20 × 20" (Illuminations 2010, 35)*
Unexpected Visitors show ruined constructions of birds in stone and
metal lying about a brick wall, surrounding a pair of hands, presumably
from a disassembled timepiece, that are bent and rusting. Ruined trees
appear from behind the wall, with a few leaves sprouting around broken
branches. A real bird is perched on the wing of one of the constructed
birds, seemingly pecking at it.

Pears figure in many of Bak's paintings. He has substituted the proverbial
(Biblical) "apple" with it and refers to it as the "fruit of wisdom. The fruit
given to Adam and Eve that made them lose the world" (Bak, Illuminations
(video) 17:02–17:53). According to Lawrence L. Langer (2010, 38), Bak
saw "something vulnerable, almost human about their form…they became
thoughts in search of thinkers, coded messages, questions without answers,
parables of our human condition." In the foreground of Falling Memorial,
against the crumbling stone pears, is a fresh pear, protected by a piece of
white cloth, a stark contrast to the wasteland depicted all around it. The fall
of the memorial is not absolute, for there is something that can triumph

over the inhospitable environment. Here is a pear that can actually be eaten, that can sustain life. Envelope, on the other hand, reveals something new amidst the death of something old and worn out, reminiscent of the snake's shedding of its skin. The image accepts that things come to an end, but they are also always renewed.

Falling Memorial, 2002, *Oil on canvas, 20 × 16" (Illuminations, 2010, 37)*
Falling Memorial shows huge stone pears crumbling, atop an altar-like structure amidst rubble of what seem to be stone flesh of other pears as well. A fresh pear is on the ground before the altar, cradled in a white cloth. In the background, something burns. Dark smoke rises but the sky shines bright in the distance.

Envelope, 1989, *Mixed Media on Paper, 25.5 × 19.75" (Illuminations, 2010, 43)*
A pear is drawn in Envelope as peeling away. But inside, showing through the tears and spilling out of the original, huge pear, are fresh pears. The disintegrating pear appears to float against a bright, clear sky.

It is very evident, that Bak's themes always carry with them the sense of loss and suffering. He (Samuel Bak — Gallery 2,) says of his paintings:

> … most of my paintings, even the most abstract, echoed my past trauma. They always suggested destruction, erosion and annihilation. I couldn't help it; whatever I painted seemed to arise from the tragic sediments of the Shoah. Yet — did the world need more images of pain? The authentic documentation of the Holocaust provided us with images so shattering that no art could rival their power. I felt that my own images, answering to my need for letting them surface, nonetheless asked for a certain transfiguration.

This "transfiguration" is what allows Bak to refer to the suffering of the Holocaust without showing what was actually there. He (Bak, "Speaking the Unspeakable") says, "If I had to define my art's language and style, I would situate it in allegory and metaphor." This works so well in his paintings that no matter how easily relatable his images are to the horrors of the Holocaust, they also point to something more general and aspire to the universal: this is the fact of the human condition. Things crumble, things change, things get broken. But there is, in each portrayal of these themes, a desire to repair without a promise that things can be or will be repaired. Bak asks, "have these efforts managed to transform the world's wreckage into a viable reality?" ("Speaking the Unspeakable") He hopes so.

Yet, this "hope" is not an uncritical hope. In his memoirs, Bak wrote that, in his paintings, "he imagined abused angels. Chess pieces…involved in games without rules. Huge fruits…in various stages of reinvention…pears in the form of hovering planets—metaphors of a world without explanations. *My paintings carried no answers, only question*" (2001, location 6542/97%, italics supplied).

ZEN, ART, AND THE PAINTINGS OF SAMUEL BAK

The crumbling images in Bak's paintings, especially of the pears that he loves so much, bring to mind the characteristics of wabi-sabi art. "Wabi" is a Japanese term that refers to loneliness and sadness, while "sabi," to the state of being old and withered (Gold, 2004, 16). It is art that moves away from

conventional forms of beauty and encourages it in ordinary, even normally considered "ugly" things. At the foundation of its aesthetic ideal is a shared worldview with Zen Buddhism. As such, wabi-sabi is closest to the art of the Japanese tea ceremony. From tea utensils to the minimalist decorations in the teahouses, wabi-sabi is captured in bamboo vases that leak, in driftwoods that decay, in tarnished iron kettles and unglazed and chipped teacups. "Wabi sabi embodies the Zen nihilist[5] cosmic view and seeks beauty in the imperfections found as all things, in a constant state of flux, evolve from nothing and devolve back to nothing" (Juniper, 2003, 1).

Zen is one of the forms of Buddhism that developed in Japan (Chinese Ch'an). Kalupahana (1997, 167), tracing the transformations in the teachings and practice of Buddhism from its early beginnings in India through its travel through China, and to Japan, shows that Zen is mostly an offshoot of the Madhyamika–Yogacara syncretism, two Mahayana schools that became quite popular in China. It claims to be a "special tradition" because it places itself outside the textual tradition that other forms of Buddhism are founded. It rejects the text or any kind of verbalization of Buddhist teachings for it is "not founded on words and letters," and emphasizes emptiness (Suprun, Yanova, and Nosov, 2013, 50).

Basic to Buddhist teachings is the understanding of the workings of causality, which explains the coming to be and the dissipation of things. Our ignorance of this causes our suffering. The Arthaviniscaya Sutra says, "… Having heard the characteristics of the truth of suffering—impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and absence of self—and not understanding them [causes other kinds of ignorance to arise" (2002, 75). Since things arise and pass away because of causes and conditions, things are therefore impermanent, nonsubstantial, and unsatisfactory (troubled or causes suffering).

Impermanence refers to the state of things in this world as always changing. Nothing in the world ever stays the same. In fact, as soon as things arise, they are also already beginning to dissipate. This includes the "self" which is second-nature to us to believe in. Since our birth (arising) depends on some conditions, we, too, change and eventually pass away; thus, the idea that there is no "self" or nonsubstantiality or emptiness of things and selves. Nothing stands on its own. Nothing endures. Unfortunately, this runs counter to our tendency to be attached to things or experiences ("grasping"), thinking them to be permanent. The result is suffering ("trouble" or

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5   "Nihilist" here must be taken in the Zen context of "things going back into nothingness" as they decay and die.

"dissatisfaction") (Kalupahana, 1997, 36–41):

> Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, separation from what is pleasant is suffering, association with what is unpleasant is suffering. What one desires and searches for, if it is not obtained, is also suffering. In brief, all the aggregates of clinging are suffering. This is the Noble Truth of Suffering. (Arthaviniscaya Sutra (VI), 2002, 13)

The cure to this suffering, therefore, is the proper understanding of the nature of the world as empty (that is, no independent substance), continually arising from and devolving into nothingness. To accomplish this, Zen Buddhism[6] employs koans, "…a brief saying, question, story, or a snatch of conversation that a student of reality takes up and examines" (Tarrant, 2005, 24). Two of the well-known koans include: "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" and "If you see the Buddha on the road, kill him." (Tarrant, 2005, 24). Another tells of the monk Tung-shan who asked, "Who is the Buddha?" and the answer given was "Three chin of flax." These pieces of conversations are meant to shatter ordinary views in order to bring the would-be practitioner to enlightenment.

Since the main task of Zen followers was to overcome the limitedness of their consciousness, the first stage in executing it will be to intellectually grasp the reasons for this limitedness. One of the most important reasons for the limitedness of consciousness is our verbal, logical, sign-based mode of reflecting and comprehending Reality. With the aid of concepts one delimits Reality by applying a kind of virtual, conceptual grid of coordinates to it, but it is impossible to exhaust the nonfinite with the finite.

> "We spent the whole day debating Zen. What can be learned from our debate?" Isan asked. Kyozan drew a line in the air.

> "If you showed this to someone else, he would not understand," said Isan. (Blais [Blyth], 2001, p. 244). (Suprun, Yanova, and Nosov, 2013, 53)

The point of koans is to destroy mental structures that perpetuate binary

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6   That is, specifically the Rinzai or Lin-chi tradition.

thinking and introduce the view of Emptiness. Koans are meant to shock so that the complacent mind will start asking questions. Zen encourages doubt and treats all students' questions as questions about enlightenment (Tarrant, 2005, 25). In response, a Zen teacher "often made no rational sense yet possessed a strangely compelling quality…the words would work away in the mind, gradually drawing the student out of a limiting view he or she held" (Tarrant, 2005, 26). Like wabi-sabi art that stands in contrast to the usual conceptions of beauty and puts together simple, natural, and organic things as decorations to serve as reminders of the constant journey into nothingness, in this way, koans nudge the ordinary "grasping" mind and free it so that it can contemplate emptiness.

THE QUESTIONS OF SAMUEL BAK

As a "painter of questions",[7] Bak shows not the usual perception of the world that has been "fixed" after the Holocaust. He paints images of destruction, or devolution, or a world that has been marred by the past and is continually disintegrating. Bak seems to have shed his illusions about a perfect world and tries to show the world as it really is. Lawrence L. Langer (2010, 5–6) says of Bak's images:

> We fight wars to establish peace, we purge peoples to create ethnic "purity," we strive for reconciliation after the most unimaginable massacres, and we seek justice after deeds so unjustifiable that surviving victims are left bereft at the slow progress toward that impossible goal. By assaulting our perception with elegantly composed images haunted by an aura of decomposition, of pictorial scenes whose edges seek to burst through the frames containing them, of creatures in diverse stages of disintegration and buildings clinging to formal outlines while simultaneously threatening to collapse into a pile of rubble, Bak recapitulates the tensions that constitute the disturbing diet we are obliged to consume virtually every day of contemporary life. His work urges—or more precisely, compels—us to cast off the consoling bonds of myth and legend and to look at the scarred features of

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7   This phrase is the title of Jon W. Sparks write up on "Illuminations: The Art of Samuel Bak" retrieved from http://www.commercialappeal.com/lifestyle/samuel-bak-exhibit-painter-of-questions February 26, 2017. Bak also refers to himself as such.

modern history—and not only the history of the Holocaust—until we begin to recognize that the apparently surreal content of his canvases represents not a flight from current reality but a venture into the caverns of its deepest disquietudes (emphasis supplied).

It is in this sense that one could offer a Zen-inspired interpretation of the art of Samuel Bak. His works are like visual koans that make us feel uncomfortable and shake us from usual notions that keep us deluded, until we open ourselves to an alternative view that admits of change, of uncertainties, of both the light and the dark. Bak's images show opposites: clear sky and desolate land, crumbling walls and a figure that is saved from its disintegration, blue skies and broken toys, blue waters and a disheartened angel. But between what seem to be opposites are a wide range of possible views to take. This "dual vision," according to Langer (2010, 7) "is one of the principal legacies of [Bak's] art. Its philosophical implications have scarcely been recognized." His view is critical and always unmasking what most would want to hide or ignore. It is, perhaps, here that he pours in what he referred to as "hope": that in his painterly questionings, people would become critical of their own views, start asking questions, and become aware of what the world has become and the roles they have to take if they are to repair it. Personally, he sees his art as

> …an expression of pain and loss, [but] is also the pleasurable product of an artist's desire for accomplishment, the material evidence of a mental journey. The world I depict is clearly postcataclysmic, but my art is also the therapeutic response to a personal search for serenity, beauty and balance. Had I not feared to sound presumptuous, I would have said that art is the vehicle of our hope for human betterment. (Samuel Bak — Gallery 3,)

This is where Bak's survival lies all along. Through his art, these critical images that never stop interrogating, he has opened himself to the fact of the world's constant disintegration, its falling into emptiness. As Langer (2010, 48) observes, "Bak is less committed to beginnings and ends than to uncertainties…" It is a constant reminder that nothing is for certain, and yet, through this openness to accept the chaos, to affirm the wounds of the

past, we can hope and act to reconstruct the world. Bak's paintings are a call to awareness, to snap out of complacency, and see the world as it is, and if possible, to stir up the decision to walk the way of compassion in order to heal it. It is, as he himself wrote in his memoir, his tikkun haolam, "the repair of the world" (2001, location 5023, 74%).

SERENITY AMIDST DISINTEGRATION

Although nobody would want to deny that Bak's art is "Holocaust Art," a term that has not been without complications in the field of Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art, his images have served as metaphors that point to something beyond and more than the facts of history. In this, it may be said that his works transcend the usual boundaries built around "Holocaust Art."

This paper has attempted to show that apart from the usual readings of Bak's paintings, one can also relate it to the basic teachings of Zen. The predominance of disintegration in Bak's images and their usual setting in serene backgrounds bring up the interplay of the positive and the negative, the light and dark, which operate in the world in a cyclic process. One could see in these, not just laments about the past or a mere lip service of hope for the future, but the awareness and the acceptance that the world has been marred by something "unimaginable" and "unspeakable" and it is the way that it is. It falls, it crumbles. In presenting his images, Bak hopes to make his viewers snap out of the daze that makes them believe that the world is whole again and that we are all safe.

The fact that Bak himself admits that his paintings are questions makes him closer to the Zen masters who pose incomprehensible questions or give seemingly nonsensical answers to their disciples, and to wabi-sabi artists who make of their creations a reminder of the nature of the world. His hope, it seems, lies in the possibility that his questioning paintings will awaken the same awareness in his audience as these Zen practitioners tried to instill in their students, and from there find a path for a healing of the world. But this "healing" is not to be a once-and-for-all solution to the dangers in the world, but a continuing effort to do a tikkun in terms of understanding its basic nature as emptiness: nothing stands alone and everything that happens is a product of conditions that we ourselves, in our connectedness, cause. Seen this way, Bak's paintings, like Zen koans, may be a way to attain enlightenment, through both light and darkness.

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Killing for the Grade

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Using Bourdieu's concepts of social reproduction, this study examined parental involvement of teachers in the context of "academics arm race" (Demerath, 2009). This study assumes that teachers as parents are supposed to be able to negotiate more skillfully in the educational realm given their forms of capital and knowledge of the various forms of curriculum. Lareau (2003) cited in general terms that parents' occupational and educational statuses influence parental involvement. The specific sociohistorical–economic context in the Philippines is marked by hyperinflating educational market, dwindling educational budget, and the meager teacher salary. This context plus the honor and award system of the public school system reproduces a certain hypervigilant parenting that will ensure access to quality yet affordable education for their children. Critical pedagogy offers an alternative vision of resistance and cultural production through the formation of communities, collaborative efforts, and reimagining of identities. Critical pedagogy would also entail deconstructing orthodoxy to reveal the real foes, to demand that the state reclaims its stewardship over its youth's education, and to regulate the predatory market. Such moves will make schools more meritocratic, safer for children, and less prone to inequity.

Keywords: parental involvement; social reproduction; Critical Pedagogy; academic competition

INTRODUCTION

Describing the increasing intensity of parental involvement, this study's interlocutors described their actions to influence the teachers of their

children starting with giving subtle verbal suggestions, then giving gifts, then it escalates to pushing and harassing, and finally, "killing." This paper attempts to analyze why, how, and for what purpose such "killing" occurs.

A hypervigilant type of parenting has been examined in both popular and scholarly papers calling it with several names: hyperparenting, bulldoze parenting, and the most popular, helicopter parenting. The hovering of parents, thus helicopter parenting, over places where their children are, in primary school where they attempt to negotiate with teachers about their children's grades and up to the workplace where parents would go to the extent of discussing with employers about their adult children's pay and benefits, is amplified further by the parents' use of technology like mobile phone which is now dubbed as the "electronic umbilical cord."

Demerath (2009) situates such "academic arms race" which he observed in his ethnographic study of a high school in America as a means to secure admission to competitive colleges. With such parenting patterns, a new growth industry has emerged marked by test review services, hiring of coaches and specialized consultants, and even college preparation camps. Such parenting pattern is distinct among middle-class parents, specifically professional middle class (Nelson, 2010).

This cultural logic of parenting among middle-class families is described as concerted cultivation that is based on a "professional" view of parenting, something that working-class and poor parents are unable to do (Lareau, 2003).

> …both Black and White middle-class parents, and mothers in particular, routinely scanned the horizon for opportunities to activate their cultural capital and social capital on behalf of their children. By shrewdly framing their interventions in ways that institutions such as schools and public and private recreational programs found compatible with their organizational processes, parents could gain important advantages for their children. These benefit children to be developed in every way in order to "enhance their future possibilities. (ibid)

Using Bourdieu's frame, my study attempts to describe and analyze the parental involvement in the context of schooling, specifically focusing on teachers described as people of authority and gatekeepers. I will analyze how

parental involvement is mediated by the deployment of forms of capital that are exclusively available to teachers, analyzing it in the broader context of societal structures and forces that may be unique to the Philippine context. To generate data, I interviewed separately two (female) parents, one of whom is a teacher of a science high school. I also interviewed a small group of teacher-parents in an online message board. I also analyzed written policies of the Department of Education regarding the selection of honor students. Using case study method, I put together the information to craft a holistic description of the case. For this paper, I identified emerging and recurring themes and categories that would respond to the research objectives I formulated.

To practice reflexivity, I had to become aware of my own habitus as a middle-class professional parent and, at the same time, an educator. I acknowledge my tendency to normativize middle-class parenting and also my sense of anxiety about the future of my children because of the increasing cost of living in the Philippines.

This study starts with an attempt to locate the phenomenon theoretically and present the objectives of the study and the means to gather and analyze data. The second part provides a general profile of the parenting involvement of a teacher-mother whom I am calling Precy. The next section will be a presentation of three emerging themes which I entitled, "I Know the Curriculum (Explicit, Implicit, and the Extracurricular)," "Guarding the Decimal Points," and "Hyperinflating Educational Market." The fourth part is to identify forms of resistance against the orthodoxy imposed by the state and the market. The final section includes a conclusion and some personal reflections.

THE TEACHER-MOM

Precy[1] is a high school science teacher in a small town in Pangasinan. She is in her mid-30s and married to an accountant who works in Manila. They have two children — Marian, nine years old at grade four level and Jeremy, seven years old and in grade two. Both of their children belong to a SPED class for gifted children. I came to know Precy through a common friend whom I asked to refer me to a teacher who is also a parent of an honor pupil. Jeremy is the top student in his class of gifted students.

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1   This is a pseudonym. I am not using the real names of my research participants.

Precy said that she studied her two children very closely until she finally discovered the best way to support Jeremy's study habits. She said that, while Marian wants to be closely supervised and be told what to do, what works best for Jeremy is to be given more freedom and space. Precy's system of supporting her children's schooling work is quite regimented. She imposes some rules like children can watch television and use the computer only when she is at home. The tablets can be used only during weekends. The moment she comes home, she would immediately inquire about the assignments and projects her children need to work on. Homework is done right after dinner. The children are also required to read a book every night.

When she knows that she has to be out of town to attend a conference, for example, she would ask her husband to file a leave to supervise their children"s school work. She is thinking that, in the future when her children go to college, they would study in a good school in Manila like University of the Philippines or Miriam College. Though most parents in her town would send their children to Baguio for college education, Precy chose Manila since her husband is there to guide their children. During Card Day which entails a teacher–parent conference, Precy would file a leave so she can go to her children's school to receive their report card and discuss concerns with the class adviser.

Her son, Jeremy, has been getting the top honor award since Kindergarten, but now, his position is being threatened by the coming of a new pupil, Ryan. He was the first honor pupil in his previous school. Precy said that Ryan comes from a well-off family since his father is a seaman and his mother is a doctor. She does not want her son to be disadvantaged and be dislodged from his current position due to unfair treatment. She related about her own experience in grade school when she knew all the while that she was counted among the top honors in her class. However, when recognition day came, she was placed at a much lower rank. She cried a lot when she discovered what was done to her. She reasoned that such injustice happened to her because her parents were not a teacher, a mayor, or a congressman. She described her parents as poor and ordinary vendors. Now, as a teacher, she makes sure that she treats her students fairly no matter what their social status is.

I KNOW THE CURRICULUM (FORMAL, HIDDEN, AND THE EXTRACURRICULAR)

Precy's general parental involvement typifies Lareau's description of a middle-class parent. However, her approach of studying the learning style of her children and imposing a regimented study period at home reflects her professional training as a teacher. She admitted that her knowledge of the finer details of the new K-12 curriculum is another advantage.

The curriculum has three forms — the explicit or formal curriculum, the extracurricular activities, and the hidden curriculum. Dewey would refer to all of these as the "collateral curriculum" (Massialas, 1996). The curriculum guides, courses offered, syllabi, tests, and statements of teachers of what they want to be learned are manifestations of the explicit curriculum. The implicit or hidden curriculum is reflected in the "incidental interaction between students and the physical, social, and the environments of the school." The extracurriculum is seen through various activities like sports, clubs, governance, and the student newspaper (Sadker & Sadker, 2001).

Bourdieu described children coming from the "dominant class" as more school ready and are more likely to succeed in school because there is a continuity between the kind of speech, style of social interaction, and aesthetic orientation at home and that of the school. The content of the lesson including the way it is taught is already familiar to them. In contrast, for children from the working class, the school will be alien and hostile to them (Goldthorpe, 2007). Such correspondence of the home and the school is described by social reproductionist theorists like Bowles and Gintis, Apple, Anyon, and Giroux as the "hidden curriculum" which is meant to reproduce social inequality (Kentli, 2009). Hidden curriculum was first popularized by Philip Jackson. He established that grade school pupils "learn to live with 'crowds,' 'praise,' and 'power.'" Many of the rewards and punishments given are based on mastery of the hidden curriculum, but they are presented as if they are the results of academic achievement (or mastery of the explicit curriculum) (cited in Massialas, 2003). Part of the hidden curriculum is acquisition of survival skills, the most important of which involves relating with authorities like teachers. Associated with it are expressions like "apple polishing the teacher" and "teacher's pet" (Massialas, 1996). The hidden curriculum can be also analyzed in the microsocial structure of the classroom — the rules and authority of the teacher, teacher–student relationship, the

language, materials, and systems used by the teacher (Kentli, 2009). Middle-class parents and children would align themselves with the gatekeeping processes, attempting to discover the "rules of the game" that would prove to be advantageous to the children (Lareau, 2003).

Precy admitted that being a teacher places her at an advantageous position as a parent because she knows the curriculum including the grading system. She cited how she assisted Jeremy with the new learning area of the K-12 curriculum—the Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE). This new approach proves to be extra challenging because she has trained her children to be more proficient in English and Filipino, a requirement of the old curriculum. Now with the new K-12 curriculum, Jeremy has to demonstrate proficiency in writing in Ilokano (the language of learning in her school district). To fulfill the school work for MTBMLE, Precy had to use Google a lot for translation and language resources. She would ask her mother for support, especially in translating difficult Ilokano words. She is happy that Jeremy is now able to write in Ilokano.

Precy and the other teachers I interviewed stressed the value of supporting their children with their assignments, projects, and extracurricular activities. Precy emphasized that the moment she enters the house in the afternoon, the first thing she would find out is if there is something that she needs to buy from the market. The market closes early in the afternoon, so she has to make sure that her children have what they need for their school projects. She works closely with her children as they do their homework in the evening which would sometimes last until 11:00pm. The academic load for the gifted classes is often very heavy. At one time, Marian had to do 10 book reviews in two weeks. Precy came up with some sort of an idea organizer to make it easy for her daughter to complete her assignment. It was a pedagogical device that teachers use in scaffolding learning. At one time, she found that Marian had dozed off without completing her assignment and so she did it herself, copying the penmanship of her daughter.

Guarding the decimal places

Participation in extracurricular activities is counted for the computation of grades that will determine one's rank in the honor roll. Pupils will be ranked using the 7–3 point scheme, 7 points for academic performance and 3 points for cocurricular activities (Luistro, 2012). The intention of

including cocurricular activities is to ensure that pupils develop holistically. The Department of Education (DepEd) has come to call these activities as "cocurricular" to show how they are to complement the formal curriculum. Cocurricular performance covers the achievement of the candidates at all levels (school, division, regional, national, and international) in five areas: a) Contests and Competitions, b) Student Leadership, c) Campus Journalism, d) Officership and Membership, and e) Participation or Attendance (ibid).

Teacher Belle, who teaches in a science high school, says that parents are very keenly involved in guarding the computation of points in cocurricular activities. She thinks that computation of academic performance is often beyond question and so it is in the allocation of points in cocurricular activities that is subjected to parental scrutiny. If, for instance, a group earned a certain number of points in a contest, the school would equally divide the points, so each one gets a fair share. She concluded: *"Kaya medyo masalimuot po magcompute ng honors. Mas maganda kung solo category contests po kasi solo po ng bata ang points"* (So it is complicated to compute grades for ranking for honors. It is better if it is a solo category contest because the child gets all the points).

She detailed below how the school strives to avoid conflicts with parents.

"Usually to avoid complaints from parents, we are very careful in distributing our activities. *Ayaw po naming may magsabi na may pinili po kami o '"inaalagaan"'* (We do not want that people will say that we have special preference or we are giving special treatment.). So far, this has worked for us. We have not received any complaints."

In addition, we make it a point to have a conference with the parents of the top 20 students of each year level, especially on the 4th quarter *kasi po kung minsan yung top 10 ay nalalaglag pa sa* honors (because sometimes the top 10 fall off from the honor list). During the teacher–parent conferment, we lay out all the records so that the grades of each child are clearly understood and they see how the numbers are computed. And so they cannot complain that we are not transparent, etc. We even let them compute.

The many DepEd policies that came out about the guidelines on the selection of honor students cover specific points in the selection process that become the source of tension and controversies. For this paper, the author selected DepEd Order 22 s. 2003, DepEd Order 6 s. 2005, DepEd Order 74 s. 2012, and DepEd Order 36 s. 2016 to review how the policy on selection of honor students has been expanded and has become too detailed to solve potential conflicts. The following are few of the many changes:

- In 2003 and 2005, the computation of grades for academic excellence shall be up to two decimal places, but in 2012, it was changed to three decimal places.
- Beginning in 2005, the allocation of points for cocurricular activities has become more defined, specified for every level, every type of event, position, and extent of participation. In 2012, it was required that certified true copies of all documents and evidentiary requirements must be submitted and validated.
- In 2003, there were no specific guidelines for the honor selection committee, except that it is to be headed by the principal. In 2005, it was qualified that any teacher who is related within the second degree of affinity or consanguinity to any honor candidate cannot join the committee. In 2012, the rule regarding degree of affinity/consanguinity is applied to all members of the committee. There should also be three members of the selection committee from the teaching staff. The approval of the list of honors can be done by the principal and/ or school division superintendent. Furthermore, the candidates for honors and their advisers must be present during the selection process.
- In 2003, the filing of protest shall be settled at the division level. In 2005, it can be filed at the principal's office by the candidates and their parents/guardians and be settled at the district (elementary) and division level (secondary). In 2012, settling of protests should be done by the selection committee.
- In 2018, the policy for awards and recognition for K-12 has totally changed the former system. Forced ranking of individual awardees was minimized with the awarding of honors to any pupil who reached the average grade range for a given category (highest, high, with honors). However, the computation of grades became more complicated because of the new categories of award and the inclusion of evaluation from

peers (This K-12 awarding system was not yet enforced during data gathering).

Precy said that she felt worried with the coming Ryan because he could potentially threaten her son's top ranking in the class. She felt that, because she might not be able to meet the financial requirements of certain cocurricular activities, Jeremy might lose the race. She is also aware that teachers can be vulnerable to "under the table" transactions. She said that, to ensure fairness, she might have to ask Jeremy's teachers to redo the computation of grades when needed.

THE HYPERINFLATING EDUCATIONAL MARKET

Jeremy has been able to participate in cocurricular activities, specifically math competitions, up to the division level. Precy said that she had to provide all the support Jeremy needed like hiring a math coach when the contest reaches the division level. At the school and district levels, Precy can still manage to do the coaching. Teacher Belle mentioned that math coaching fees can go up to 400 pesos per hour. While other regular pupils in the school are provided free textbooks, pupils in the SPED gifted class are required to buy their own textbooks. The textbooks plus the materials for projects and the amount spent for cocurricular activities add up to the financial burden of parents. A costume for a dance competition, for example, would cost at least 1000 pesos.

Precy has found ways to monitor the activities of her son's competitor (Ryan), and she has become aware that Ryan's parents have been sending Ryan to a nearby city to undergo Kumon math tutorial. She was contemplating about the cost of the next competition that her son and his competitor would join. Her coteachers said that she should apply for a loan from GSIS so that she has some money to spend for the competition. As she and her husband think about the future educational needs of their children, her husband is suggesting the idea of going abroad to work as an Overseas Foreign Worker (OFW).

Teacher Belle described the extreme measures and forms of manipulations that parents had to do like giving gifts and harassing the teacher as means to secure their children's higher education. She said: "... *patayan talaga sa grades kasi ang aming top 10 historically po ay napapapunta*

talaga sa top schools with full or half scholarships kaya gusto talaga nilang makasama sa honors ang mga anak nila" (…people "kill" for the grades because historically our top 10 honor students end up in top schools with full or half scholarships that is why they want their children to be included in the list).

This observation about the ultimate intention of parents seems to align with Demerath's (2009) observation about how "academic arms race" is linked to the students' aspirations for college. In the American setting, the desired goal is to enable children to land into Ivy League universities.

However, the educational economics in the Philippines, especially among the families of teachers, is slightly different. The goal is simply to ensure that their children get quality education at an affordable price. Teacher Cely, another teacher I interviewed, expressed the financial difficulty of sending her children to school, given her meager teacher salary. She is supporting her children singlehandedly since she and her husband have separated. She is trying her best to give all the support that she could give so that her children would qualify in a state-supported science high school and, later, in a state university. Teacher Cely chose such schools because of the high quality of instruction, and these are the only schools she could afford to pay. She found out one day that most pupils who qualified in a nearby science high school had to undertake classes in some choice review centers, charging at least 1000 pesos per session. She could only afford to send her son to take four review sessions. She is aware that other parents are able to pay for more sessions. To compensate, she developed her own regimen to prepare her son for the science high school screening process. Her son cooperated, but both of them got sick and had to undergo medications.

Such intensity of parental involvement can be situated in a particular socioeconomic structure. Many authors wrote about parental anxiety as linked to economic uncertainties and decreasing wealth of the middle class.

Thailand and Malaysia are allocating 40% and 28%, respectively, of total public spending to education, allotting 7.4% (Malaysia) and 4% (Thailand) of their GDP for education, as reported by UNESCO. In contrast, the Philippines spends only 17.2% of total public expenditure and only 3.3% of the GDP on education (Del Rosario-Malonzo, 2007). The decreasing state support to state-run educational institutions and increasing privatization and commercialization of education are because of the deregulation of all industries, including higher education institutions. Republic Act 7722 (Creating the Commission of Higher Education) grants autonomy to private institutions, so they can easily increase

tuition fees. According to CHED's data, tuition fees from 1998–2006 increased by 119.49%. For a given period, the yearly increase is almost 15%. The ever-inflating tuition fees have been dramatized by the bankruptcy of preneed industries in the year 2005 (Olea, 2007).

The deregulation of industries and allowing market mechanisms to steer prices of goods and services were presented as the means to improve quality of services at a lower price. However, what has happened in the Philippines is the opposite. A classic case is how the deregulation of the energy industry failed to lower the price of energy because energy companies, instead of competing against each other, have formed a cartel. And so there seems to be complicity between the market and the state at the detriment of the citizens/consumers.

The state due to the pressure of western financial institutions has clipped its regulating power and has virtually "abandoned" the Filipino families to the merciless forces of the neoliberal market. As a result, families are left to their own resources and have to compete fiercely with each other over the dwindling resources available. In addition, they have to pay more for review centers and services of tutors and coaches. They also have to deal with emotional and health-related cost due to burnout and exhaustion.

Teachers, short of economic capital, would leverage their cultural and social capital to provide quality education to their children. The details about the cultural capital of teachers are a guarded secret. Precy said that she knew the workings of the curriculum but she would not talk about the details. They would describe such knowledge in vague terms like "helping" (with quotation marks). One teacher narrated that she knows of a teacher-adviser who gave her child a 99% grade in homeroom, but she qualified that such happens once in a blue moon. Most teachers would cloak their advantageous position by resorting to the rhetoric of teachers as overworked workers, too exhausted, and cannot spare time to help their children at home. The privileged position of the teacher and the perception of politicking in the selection of honor students have created a tension and sense of distrust between parents and teachers. The changes in the policy of selection of honor students allude that the tension and controversy is a national phenomenon. One teacher said that their children have to work harder to prove that they deserve the ranking that they get. The following exchanges expose the struggle further:

> **Teacher 1:** *I am worried because my child will be in grade 5 next year and I am the adviser of her class. Although I know that I am fair*

and honest, I am also thinking what other parents might think. I do not want to hear that my child received the first honor because I was the teacher.

Teacher 2: *It is better if they place my child in another section. I want to be proactive and avoid malicious talks. My child will be the one to suffer if trouble erupts (magkagulo)…my child had such experience in the past and it took a while before he recovered. By God's grace, my child is still excelling in school.*

Teacher 1: *Kaya nga po malamang di na ako adviser ng section 1 next year. Ayoko namang ibaba po ng section anak ko. Ako na lang po (Most likely I will relinquish my role as class adviser next year. I do not want to place my child at a lower class section. I will just be the one to suffer).*

Such adversarial actions seek to reproduce the unquestioned given: that teacher-parents and parents are competitors and adversaries, fighting fiercely to grab their share of scarce resources. Neoliberal policies, with their emphasis on choice and individual responsibility, have reinforced an independent action that seeks to make the correct "choices," to minimize risk and ensure positive outcomes. And one's choice carries it with a new set of responsibilities (Cuchiarra, 2013).

RESISTING THE "DOXA" AND EXPOSING THE REAL FOES

Bourdieu calls such unquestioned given as the "doxa" or the "orthodox" belief that is often "below the threshold of discourse and opinion." It is something unspoken and demands "unconscious submission to the demands of social order" (Crossley & Roberts, 2004). The role of critical pedagogy is to challenge such orthodoxy, exposing that, in the scheme of things, the real fight is not parents vs. teacher-parents. The real adversary is the state and the market. The state has abandoned its role as the steward of the educational needs of its subjects and become complicit to the profit-hungry and predatory educational market. The state and the market have set up the parents not only to "kill" each other but also to "kill" their children by subjecting them to a punishing regimen, allowing the logic of the market marked by cut-throat competition to invade their home and lifeworld. The

intense competition which requires the deployment of various capitals also excludes the poor who do not have access to such capitals thus reproducing inequality.

However, the parents and teachers are not completely willing subjects. Practicing their agency, they used compelling cultural resources like childhood memories to reimagine their identities as teachers and parents in new "figured worlds" (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998). Precy, reflective of her own childhood experience of injustice, made a vow that she will give the grade that every student deserves, no matter what his/her social class is. When she receives a pasalubong like chocolates from an OFW parent, she would remind the student, *"Walang bearing sa grade ito, ha"* (Let me remind you that this has no bearing on your grades). And reflecting on her son's plight as he competes with a more privileged classmate, Precy said that, in case her son loses, she would remember that an honor award is not the only measure of one's intelligence. Teacher Cely said that, as she sees the resources that well-to-do families have to boost their children's academic performance, she has come to recognize the value of top performing students who come from poor families. She has come to admire them more because they are able to perform well despite of the lack of educational resources. Teacher Belle talked about parents who are genuinely concerned about other children not their own. They would offer their cars and drive the children to places to do their research work. Other parents open their homes for groups of pupils who are working on their research or projects. Teachers offer their services for free tutorial work, and they find ways (like utilizing the profit earned from the canteen) to finance the travel cost of students who will join competitions at various levels.

CONCLUSION

I have used the term "killing" to demonstrate the intensity of competition in schools. I have heard of many bizarre stories about what parents and students would do to get ahead, but I have not heard of any actual act of killing. The closest probably was this incident in a science high school where pupils mixed poison in the drinking water of a classmate. Writing this paper has made me remember some painful memories about competition. I came from a small private elementary school, but for high school, I qualified for the top section of a laboratory high school of a state university. My classmates were mostly

valedictorians from various public schools. I remember the horror of seeing how my classmates would backbite just to get ahead. I eventually asked the school to transfer me to a lower section. For a long time, I thought that such was a loser's choice.

This study made a modest effort to analyze parental involvement of teachers. Using Bourdieu's concepts of capital and social reproduction, this study revealed that teachers as parents are supposed to be able to negotiate more skillfully in the educational realm given the set of capital and knowledge of the various forms of curriculum. Lareau (2003) mentioned in general terms that parents' occupational and educational status influence parental involvement. This paper situates such dynamic in the specific context of the work and professional training of teacher-parents. The specific sociohistorical–economic context in the Philippines — hyperinflating educational market, the dwindling support from the state, and the meager teacher salary — all reinforce a certain hypervigilant parenting that will ensure access to quality yet affordable education for their children. However, teacher-parents are not alone in the pursuit for quality and affordable education as other parents are also competing for the same access. Reproducing the distorted social structures would entail parents, teachers, and nonteachers to play their role as adversaries and competitors. However, critical pedagogy offers an alternative vision of resistance and cultural production through the formation of communities, collaborative efforts, and reimagining of identities. Critical pedagogy would also entail deconstructing orthodoxy to reveal the real foes, to demand that the state reclaims its stewardship over its youth's education, and to regulate the predatory market. Such moves will make schools more meritocratic, safer for children, and less prone to inequity.

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Activism in the Philippines: Memorializing and Retelling Political Struggles Through Music

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After all these years, is there a Filipino who is not moved by the stirring melody and lyrics of *Bayan Ko?* Indeed, the soundtrack of Philippine political and social activism tells of a centuries-old cultural heritage that has been and is still used collectively and individually to recall, memorialize, contemporize, mobilize, and remind the nation of its fighting spirit and its resolve never to forget the ultimate sacrifice of its heroes. From colonial times to the People Power Revolution, Filipinos have demonstrated the ability to combat oppressor propaganda music with equally compelling protest songs.

    Using ethnographic and content analysis, this research is an attempt to illuminate on the role of music in the political awakening of Filipinos through the years and explore the intersection of memory and music as a medium of political activism and mobilization. As sites of resistance, these politicized lyrical relics are appropriately part of many of the country's national public holiday commemorations to this day and scored lastingly in the musical memory of activists including the authors who clamored for change during the turbulent Martial Law regime.

Keywords: Philippine protest music, politicized Filipino songs, music and political resistance

INTRODUCTION

Political activism has a soundtrack. And the Philippine struggle against oppression, injustice, poverty, inequality, and abuse of power through the centuries is no exception. In fact, the soundtrack of Philippine political activism goes beyond the chants at rallies such as *Ibagsak ang pyudalismo; ibagsak ang imperyalismo* (Down with feudalism; down with imperialism). Indeed, activism in the islands has a large trove of revolutionary songs that Filipinos as a nation and as individuals use to remember and retell the saga of political engagement and radical change.

Filipinos, no doubt, love to sing. Just consider the popularity of the *karaoke*, singing contests, and musical variety shows, and you will agree that the love of music is in the Filipino DNA. From the timeless *kundiman* and other indigenous music to the revolutionary and protest songs, to the ubiquitous Western tunes, Philippine musical genres are as diverse as the language groups in the archipelago.

Centuries of colonial struggle generated songs that ignited and sustained the revolution against Spain and the United States. The political activism eloquently and oftentimes poignantly expressed through songs continued in later decades. For instance, radical agrarian and labor movements in the 1930s used music to recruit, organize, and boost morale (Rodel, 2002).

This paper invites readers to embark on a musical journey that chronicles and shows how the Filipino nation used words and music as potent instruments of resistance, political education, and social indictment (Caparas, 2004). While samples of the songs that defined various historical periods will be analyzed, focus will be on the anthems of the student protest movement of the sixties through the nineties that led to the People Power Revolution, which eventually toppled the Marcos dictatorship. Particular attention will be given to the message and why the lyrics not only resonated, but also galvanized Filipinos to action. Authors will likewise consider how these songs as archives of a nation's life are used to memorialize the political struggles of several Filipino generations.

Using ethnographic and content analysis, this work hopes to illuminate on the role of music in the political awakening of Filipinos through the years and explore the intersection of memory and music as a medium of political activism and mobilization. According to Cohen (1993), ethnography injects the social dimension of music in the construction of meanings around or through

the music. The ethnographic perspective extracts the web of relationships that intersects the economic, political, and social realities of everyday life. As such, the use of ethnography and content analysis allows this study to ask not only what the meaning of Philippine protest music is, but also for whom the music holds meaning.

Both authors were student activists. Imbued with the idealism of their youth, they participated in the student protest movement at different locations in the country. This paper will attempt to do two things: 1) excavate a revolutionary past to show how protest music reconstructs the political and social condition of the Filipino nation at different historical moments and 2) explore the instrumentation of protest songs to memorialize the events and people who lived through the challenging, radical experiences. It is Philippine history and political memorial set in music with the added ethnographic experience of the authors.

Gilbert (2008) investigated how music functions as a "mediator of memory" and argued that it is "one of the most important media through which ideas and attitudes of the past are constructed and shared" (p. 109). Focusing meanwhile on music's role in the formation of collective memory and collective action, Eyerman (2002) proposed a model of culture that treats music as "political mediators."

This study argues that Philippine political and protest songs are potent cultural and memorial artifacts as they contain lyrics that provoke both thought and melodies that stir the emotions. The research draws from Hutton's (1993) concept of "moments of memory" as many of these songs are repeated over the airwaves and sung at commemorative events in present-day Filipino society.

By examining the relationship between protest music and memory, this study ventures into a rather neglected scholarly territory especially in the Philippines where music is a rare topic of research (Concepcion, 2015). This is where this initial peek into the role of Philippine songs in many of the country's political struggles, and the message in these songs might make its modest contribution.

Frith (1984), when unpacking rock and the politics of memory, did not claim that "music has fixed meanings or values." He wrote, "Like all mass media, it depends for its effects on its context, the response of active audiences, and more obviously than the other media, it also depends on memory. Music is such a powerful trigger of remembered emotion that it is probably more widely used for nostalgic reasons… The politics of musical memory — the

struggle to determine what the music meant then, why that matters now is complicated…" (p. 68).

In discussing the reappearance of *Hasta siempre* in her musical memory, Cohen (2013) also attested to the potency of melodies than words and noted that a politicized musical culture accompanied the 1953–1959 Cuban Revolution. Massad's (2003) historical survey of songs about Palestine from 1948 to the 1990s, on the other hand, revealed that the songs expressed and reflected the changes in the Palestinian struggle. The ditties for example shifted from themes about Arab unity fighting for liberation and the return of refugees to depictions of oppression under Israeli rule or in exile.

At the nucleus of Bruggemann and Kasekamp's (2014) investigation is the multifaceted functionality of Estonian song festivals. According to the researchers, these music festivals, as part of the "narrative template underlying Estonian cultural memory," were a "powerful ritual of political mobilization" (p. 259) that served different goals during the Tsarist era and after Estonia's independence.

Using interviews, surveys, and fieldwork, Bryant (2005) examined an anthology of revolutionary songs called *Zhandi xinge* to analyze the collective memories of China's Cultural Revolution. The research found that, after so many years, the songs still live in the memories of the Chinese respondents; that the songs are remembered in varying levels of emotional attachment; and that, despite the negative discourse about the Cultural Revolution, the songs evoke nostalgia and reflection.

In Haiti, Fleurant (1996) focused on the song of freedom called Vodun that carried themes promoting hope, justice, liberation, equality, unity, and peace. Because of Vodun's centrality in Haitian life, Fleurant concluded that the song "summarizes the very soul of the Haitian people" (p. 129) and attributed music's role in making the Haitian population among the world's most politicized despite the country's high illiteracy rate.

The potential and capacity of musical lyrics as modes of resistance and as a cultural and historical artifact are at the heart of this exploration of Philippine protest music from colonial times to the 1990s. To accomplish this, a selection of 56 political songs representing historical eras was analyzed. This sample was drawn from over a 100 Filipino political or protest songs that the sparse literature seemed to indicate.

POLITICAL SONGS IN VARIOUS PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL MOMENTS

A. Colonial Times and the *Kundiman*

Colonization of the islands began with the arrival of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. For three centuries, Filipinos endured Spanish injustice, corruption, and abuse committed by the institutional powers of the state and the Catholic Church. The pervasive regime of repression kindled the flames of resentment among the colonized, which found expression first with the reformist approach of the Propaganda Movement and culminated with the Philippine Revolution of 1896. Popular culture, despite the thought control machinery of the Spanish government, was very much a part of the wave of sociopolitical change that Filipinos fought for.

According to Caparas (2004), the *kundiman* of the late 19th century became a patriotic vehicle during the Philippine revolt against Spain. The *kundiman* is a love song or a patriotic song that generally expresses lamentation, a longing, a plea, or sorrow. Its message is influenced by the culture of the times and the temper of the Filipino. The often-plaintive love songs were mostly written in Tagalog and associated the undying love for a woman with the love of the Motherland, a love and desire for freedom worth dying for.

The centrality of the *kundiman* as a revolutionary armament is best exemplified in the work of Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. Rizal's nationalism did not only manifest in his novels and essays, but also in song, particularly the *kundiman*. This leader of the Propaganda Movement featured the kundiman in his book, *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not) and wrote the melancholic *Kundiman* ni Rizal, where he lamented the country's oppression under Spain, exhorted Filipinos not to surrender and to be willing instead to shed blood for the country. This song, like Rizal's two famous novels, was used by the Spaniards to build a case against him.

Admittedly, *Kundiman ni* Rizal accepts that freedom is lost, that happiness has died, and the nation's tongue and heart may be silenced because of long years of oppression and neglect by the colonizers.

> *Tunay ngayong umid yaring dila at puso*
> *Ang bayan palibhasa'y api, lupig, at sumuko*
> *Sa kapabayaan ng nagturong puno*

Paglaya'y nawala, ligaya'y naglaho
Tunay ngayong ligaya'y naglaho.

However, this kundiman refuses to dwell on the loss and subsequently declares with certainty that the joyful sun shall rise once more and Filipinos will strive to liberate the conquered nation. Only then will the Filipino identity return for the whole world to see.

Datapwa't muling sisikat ang maligayang araw
Pilit na maliligtas ang inaping bayan
Magbabalik man din at laging isisilang
Ang ngalang Pilipino sa sandaigdigan.
At laging sisilang ang ngalang
Pilipino sa sandaigdigan.

From hopefulness, Rizal's kundiman makes a discernible change in tone as illustrated in the succeeding lines that speak of the Filipino's willingness to die to redeem the beloved Philippines. The song further guarantees that, until the nation's destiny of freedom is attained, the yearning for peace will persist.

Ibubuhos namin ang dugo'y ibabaha
Nang matubos lamang ang sa Amang lupa
Hanggang 'di sumapit ang panahong tadhana
Sinta ay tatahimik, tutuloy ang nasa
O, bayan kong mahal
Sintang Pilipinas.

Source: Filipinas Heritage Library, 1997.

Rizal's famous kundiman shared eminent status with another musical composition titled, *Jocelyn ng Baliuag* that reportedly fired the patriotic sentiments of the Filipino revolutionaries in the struggle for liberation from Spain. *Jocelyn* became so popular among the revolutionaries of Bulacan, a province south of Metro Manila, that it is widely considered as the "*Kundiman* of the Revolution." Composed in 1898, this patriotic hymn disguised as a courtship song was dedicated to the beautiful woman, Josefa

"Pepita" Tiongson y Lara. Some historians believe that "Pepita" was used to symbolize the image of the Motherland or Inang Bayan.

Other songs of the revolution include the following: *Alerta Katipunan, Marangal na Dalit ng mga Katagalugan, Halina, Sa Magandang Silangan, Mula ng Mauso ang Damit ng Kundiman, and Canto de Patriotico de Maria Clara. Marangal na Dalit ng mga Katagalugan* was commissioned by national hero Andres Bonifacio in 1896 and is the first national anthem of the Philippines (http://malacanang.gov.ph/75729-songs-of-the-revolution/). Bonifacio, founder of the *Katipunan,* decided that the only way the country would gain independence from Spain was through a revolution.

The *zarzuela*, a Spanish form of musical theater, flourished in the Philippines and is one exemplar of a contested genre where production of meaning could go the way of either the oppressor or the oppressed. It became *sarswela* in what Fernandez (1993) described as the process of "indigenization and transformation." She wrote, "The *sarswela*, a theater born of Spanish parenthood but grown Filipino, thus explored, documented, and synthesized the Philippine quest for liberation from bondage. Mirroring a culture and its consciousness, it in turn created a culture and a consciousness" (p. 341). During the revolution, this Spanish form of light opera "extolled anticolonialism and independence" (Lockard, 1996:165).

While history books that talk about the Spanish colonial period rarely if at all include the music that accompanied the Filipino fight against oppression, the absence is ameliorated by the existence of contemporary resources such as the Filipinas Heritage Library and *sarswela* performances in Philippine theaters as well as in other local events including town fiestas. The digital space has also provided unprecedented access anytime, anywhere to revolutionary songs dating all the way back to the Spanish times.

For example, the Presidential Museum and Library has an online repository of 10 songs of the revolution. The authors, using SoundCloud, listened to these songs that were composed way before they were born and were at once transported to historical places and times they read during their school years. Such an acoustic experience today brings to life a nation's past, instills pride in the courage of compatriots who fought and died for the nation's freedom, and rekindles an appreciation of the rich

cultural heritage in music that helped sustain the Philippine Revolution against Spain with songs of love for the Motherland. It certainly reminded the authors of their own political activism.

The fact that one of the authors listened to these songs a continent and more than a century away speaks to the replication of the "tensions and ambiguities between the local and global" in the virtual geography where music legacies now reside. Cohen et al. (2015) note that, regardless of its location, the presence of this music in the "heritage discourses we create to commemorate and recollect our shared pasts should not be overlooked" (p. 10).

The Filipinos did succeed in extricating the country from Spanish domination, but the first Philippine Republic was short-lived. A change of colonial masters occurred in 1898 when the United States took control of the islands. American rule lasted until 1946. In quick succession, the Americans dismantled the Spanish feudal system and established an economic order that gave them full rights to the country's resources while implementing its doctrine of benevolent assimilation.

Just like the Spaniards, the Americans left a legacy of cultural influences except that Filipinos vigorously embraced American pop culture. Such impressionable willingness threatened to decimate Filipino musical genres and obfuscate cultural identity. Fernandez (1989) decried what she described as U.S. cultural imperialism and satellization: "…It is not only that American films, canned TV programs, music, comics, and popular literature are so well entrenched in Philippine life today; but also that these mass-mediated cultural products are so patently built on the American plan…" (p. 492). Other Filipino scholars disagree seeing instead nationalist and populist content in Philippine music thereby showing broadly the dynamics of culture as disputed spaces where divergent views on meanings and values exist simultaneously.

Amidst the tug of war between the indigenous and foreign, local and global, not only was Filipino music resilient, it once again proved to be a mighty weapon in the nonviolent arsenal against American colonial control hence sustaining the nationalistic tradition that grew during the Spanish revolutionary period. The *sarswelas* and *kundimans* survived the American onslaught thanks to the preservation and training efforts of the University of the Philippines, a public educational institution founded by the Americans (Rodel, 2002).

According to Castro (2011), Filipino composers during this period "hid seditious messages in their productions through symbolically archetypal characters, costuming, and props that contained references to the Filipino flag" (p. 30). Many of these *sarswela* characters sang against the exploitative American occupation.

The ingenious political instrumentation of the sarswela is testament to a people's determination to expose and protest against injustice, which a grateful nation remembers in many ways through commemorative events honoring heroes such as National Heroes Day and restaging of the *sarswela*s. In modern-day Philippines, this lyrical genre is contemporized with the inclusion of current issues and vignettes of everyday life (Orosa, 2013).

Some prominent examples of politicized Philippine music during the American regime include *Gumising Ka Kabataan* (Wake Up Youth) and *Babaeng Walang Kibo* (Passive Woman). The rousing lyrics of *Gumising Ka* urge the youth to unite, change the course of Philippine history, and fight to end poverty and abuse:

> …*Pagkakataong mabago kasaysayan ng Pilipino*
> *Heto na naman tayo ngayon ba'y makikiisa sa samasamang pakikibaka*
> *upang baguhin ang takbo ng ating bayan*
> *Na pinagsasamantalahan ng mga sinungaling…*

Bridge

> *Para mawala ang kahirapa't pang-aabuso*
> *Hindi magpapaloko sa mga lumang pangako*
> *Kaming magbabangon sa dangal ng Pilipino…*

The last line of the bridge also talks about reviving Filipino dignity.

Similarly, *Babaeng Walang Kibo* called women to assert their rights and to suffer no more in what might be considered as the early beginnings of the women's movement in a country where older generations of women enjoyed chivalrous treatment from men and held the purse of the household.

The Americans responded to the rising tide of discontent and patriotism with more oppressive laws and censorship, which naturally

led to a bountiful harvest of protest songs. Composer and scholar Ramon Santos wrote, "works such as *Tanikalang Ginto* (Gold Chain) and *Mabuhay ang Pilipinas* (Long Live the Philippines) by Juan Abad, *Pag-ibig sa Lupang Tinubuan* (Love of the Motherland) by Pascual Poblete, and *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow) by Aurelio Tolentino are but few of the works whose authors and producers were severely punished and censured by the American colonial government" (in Castro, 2011:27).

B. Postcolonial Period

When the Philippines finally gained independence in 1945, the culture of resistance as expressed through music continued as the postcolonial period saw that the political, cultural, economic, and military restraints of American imperialism remained. It was difficult to ignore, for example, the presence of U.S. military bases until 1992 that concretized the imperialist hold and powered the nation's protracted struggle for freedom.

Consequently, music written during this period did not reflect the euphoria expected of a newly independent nation. Shortly after the Americans took over as colonial masters, Filipino composers were asking themselves what role must music have in nation-building (Castro 2011:24). The music produced during this era consequently reflected "nationalist aspirations of sovereignty" (Castro, 2011:27).

Not all of the nationalist composers focused on liberation from colonial domination. Others sought liberation through a different process. Francisco Santiago (1889–1947), dubbed as the Father of Philippine Nationalism in music, was likewise a proponent of "Filipinism in the arts." Filipinism, Castro (2011: 32–33) expounds, is a result of Filipinization, "a process by which culture would be made more Filipino in order to counter the effects of colonialism and further a stronger localized identity." Noted for his haunting *kundimans*, Santiago's musical approach is reminiscent of Rizal's literary strategy of promoting his country through "excellence in his works."

Among the more influential nationalistic Filipino composers of the postcolonial era was Lucio San Pedro (1913–2002) who composed in the Romantic style. His music "evokes a sense of nostalgia and spiritual connection to a simpler, less chaotic Philippines" (Castro, 2011). His

popular lullaby *Sa Ugoy ng Duyan,* (The Sway of the Baby Hammock) is "more haunting than sweet," with a metaphorical symbolism of the nation's past.

Ugoy, for instance, pines for the yesteryears when a baby in a hammock is lulled to sleep with the saccharin song of a beloved mother.

> *Sana'y di magmaliw ang dati kong araw*
> *Nang munti pang bata sa piling ni Nanay…*
> *Nais kong maulit ang awit ni Inang mahal*
> *Awit ng pag-ibig habang ako'y nasa duyan.*

The lullaby then recalls that, in the mother's bosom, life is heaven-like; where the stars stood guard while the baby is sound asleep.

> *Sa aking pagtulog na labis ang himbing*
> *Ang bantay ko'y tala, ang tanod ko'y bituin*
> *Sa piling ni Nanay, langit ay buhay*
> *Puso ko'y may dusa sabik sa ugoy ng duyan.*

The child then tells the mother that he/she wants to sleep again in the same hammock.

> *Nais kong matulog sa dating duyan ko, Inay…*
> *Oh! Inay.*

(http.//www.metrolyrics.com/sa-ugoy-duyan-lyrics.html)

Every June 12, the Philippines celebrates *Araw ng Kasarinlan or Araw ng Kalayaan*, ("Day of Freedom") to mark its independence from Spain in 1898. Kawit, Cavite holds a yearly commemorative act with the flag raising at the Aguinaldo Shrine and the reading of the Philippine Declaration of Independence. Aside from fireworks, many cities observe this day with parades and the singing of patriotic songs. Connerton (1989) has argued that societies have repetitive rituals through which collective memories are formed. Along these lines, Wilson (2006) in parsing the relationship of music and collective memories of the Kikuyu, pointed out the reconstruction of specific events, leaders, and crisis when singers

perform the songs hence connecting the past to the present.

The annual commemoration of Independence Day on June 12 always starts with the singing of the national anthem, *"Lupang Hinirang"* (Chosen Land/Land of the Morning). Its lyrics speak of a patriot's fervent love for his native land and his readiness to give his life to defend her from invaders. The anthem romanticizes the natural beauty of the countryside of a land so dear and holy to be the birthplace of noble heroes. The anthem ends with a solemn pledge to live one's life in defense of one's country and people.

> *Bayang magiliw, perlas ng silanganan*
> *Alab ng puso sa dibdib mo'y buhay.*
> *Lupang hinirang duyan ka na magiting*
> *Sa manlulupig di ka pasisiil.*
> *Sa dagat at bundok sa simoy at sa langit mong bughaw*
> *May dilag ang tula*
> *At awit sa panglayang minamahal*
> *Ang kislap ng watawat mo'y tagumpay na nagniningning.*
> *Ang bituin at araw mo'y kailan pa may di magdidilim.*
>
> *Lupa ng araw ng luwalhati't pagsinta*
> *Buhay ay langit sa piling mo…*
> *Aming ligaya na pag may mang-aapi*
> *Ang mamatay ng dahil sa 'yo…*

Source: YouTubePH Lupang Hinirang w/ lyrics

THE SIXTIES AND THE SEEDS OF RADICALIZATION

From the revolutionary songs of the Katipunan to the songs sung by the New People's Army, the Filipino protest music deals with poverty and oppression as well as anti-imperialism and independence. A typical example was during the American era, as Jose Corazon de Jesus created a well-known protest entitled *"Bayan Ko"* (My Country), which calls for redeeming the nation against oppression, mainly colonialism, and also became popular as a song against the Marcos regime.

The 1960s witnessed a revival of nationalism and patriotism, especially

among the youth and students in the Philippines. However, it was during these decades that Filipino protest music became aligned with the ideas of Communism as well as of revolution. The "Great Proletarian" cultural revolution in China stirred new interest in Marxism–Leninism–Maoism study with emphasis on lessons from the Chinese Revolution. National democratic organizations such as the *Kabataang Makabayan* and other groups began to see the need for a renewed armed struggle based on Mao's strategy of "protracted people's war."

Filipino protest music, as a result, took on a darker hue when it aligned with the ideas of revolution and Communism. Wedum (2013) asserted that, although Filipinized, these revolutionary songs were inspired by the teachings of Mao Zedong and Bertolt Brecht. Set in martial beat, dozens of such songs were churned out of this era. They were usually brief stanzas carrying identical messages that attempted to convince Filipinos to take up arms against the abusive rulers. As an example, three of these songs are discussed here.

In eight short, repetitive lines, *Ang Masa* (The Masses) drumbeats the people into believing that they are the real heroes and creators of history.

> *Ang masa, ang masa lamang*
> *Ang siyang tunay na bayani.*
> *Ang masa, ang masa lamang*
> *Ang siyang tagapaglikha.*
> *Ang masa, ang masa lamang*
> *Ang siyang tagapaglikha!*
> *Ang masa, oh, ang masa…*
> *Tagapaglikha ng kasaysayan.*

Another song of the same genre, *Ang Linyang Masa* was reportedly taken from Mao Zedong's Mass Line. It is a simple yet powerful reminder that "power emanates from the people." As if to overemphasize this message, the main lyrics of four short lines are sung repeatedly for effect.

> *Sundin ng buong tatag*
> *Ang linyang pang masa…*
> *Mula sa masa, tungo sa masa*
> *Ito ang ating patnubay!*

From these revolutionary tunes, one song became more popular than the rest of the crop. *Makibaka, Huwag Matakot* (Struggle, Don't Fear) became the anthem of militant groups during the decades of the 1960s and the 1970s as student activism started to sweep across campuses throughout the country.

Reading in between the lines, the song reflects the social reality at the time, when the people's endurance of an abusive government was severely tested. The song was a call for daring action that appealed more to the young generation, who were willing to take risks to transform the social order.

Makibaka, huwag matakot
Harapin ang kahirapan.
Magkaisa at lumaban
Nang makamtan ang tagumpay.
Magpakatatag, huwag matakot
Nang mapalaya ang bayan
Hanay natin ay tibayan
At durugin ang kalaban.
Magpakatatag, huwag matakot
Nang mapalaya ang bayan
Sa mga pagpapakasakit
Kahirapa'y pangibabawan
Nang makamtan ang tagumpay
Makibaka, huwag matakot!

Source: PADEPA Online, 2010

As a sophomore journalism student and senior reporter of the college paper when Martial Law was proclaimed in the Philippines, one of the researchers used to sing *Makibaka* with other militant students. It was the anthem sung to start every teach-in and clandestine discussion groups that she joined. She was one of the protesters who sang this rousing song at countless street rallies and demonstrations. They sang forcefully, feeling every word, with their right arm's clenched fist held above their heads and their other arm holding a placard. *Makibaka* was also in the repertoire of militant songs that her group, the *Samahang Demokratiko ng Pilipinas,*

presented at a cultural presentation. She was among those placed on house arrest by the Philippine Constabulary (PC) when the university was padlocked by government authorities.

Her fiancé, then editor of the campus paper whose staff of student writers were mostly members of militant groups, was among those arrested by the military on mere suspicion of rebellion. The PC charged that the editorials he wrote for the campus paper were too critical of the Marcos government. Under Martial Law, there was no freedom of assembly and expression. About his surreal experience in the stockade, the researcher's fiancé reminisced: "We were placed in a crowded, stinky cell that smelled of human beings who did not bathe for many days. The room was warm during the day and cold at night. There was not enough food to go around. For those of us who were far from our families and did not have relatives in the city, no one brought us supplies for personal hygiene. We, the political detainees, were put in the same cells for criminal offenders."

Some songs in this decade, apart from being confrontational in their messages, likewise emphasized the youth's responsibility to have a deeper study of the prevailing social realities and how best to respond to them. "Know your enemy" seems to be the underpinning message of such songs like *Papuri sa Pag-aaral* (In Praise of Studies).

Aside from admonishing people to study freedom, Papuri, actually zeroes in on the need to get rid of wrong thoughts and oppose falsehoods so the country will be free.

Magsimula ng pag-aaral
Tayong mga kabataan
Hindi pa huli ang lahat
Pag-aralan ang kalagayan
Ng ating lipunan.
Iwaksi maling kaisipan
Nang mapalaya ang bayan.

Bridge
Magsimula, magsimula
Kailangang malaman lahat
Dapat maghanda ngayon.
Makisalamuha ka sa masa

Manggagawa't magsasaka
Sa pagbabago ng lipunan
Kailangang magkaisa!
Magsimula tayong kabataan
Patatagin kalooban
Panahon na upang wakasan
Pangbubusabos ng dayuhan
Tayong inaapi
Tayong nilulupig
Sa liyab ng sulo tayo ay susulong
Kailangang maghanda ngayon…

Source: PADEPA Online, 2010

In addition to allaying fears and exhorting the youth to take bolder actions, some militant songs were outright incendiary in their messages. The most popular of these songs was *Imperyalismo Ibagsak* (Down with Imperialism), the favorite chant of Red-leaning student groups like *Kabataang Makabayan. Imperyalismo* confidently proclaims that justice will prevail and those that viciously exploit will fall as long as people are united in the fight for an autonomous future.

Natitiyak ang pagkabagsak
Ng mga uring mapang-api
Na sa atin ang katarungan
Magkaisa at lumaban
Upang lumaya ang daigdig
Magkaisa, magkaisa

There's strength in numbers, the chant continues, and that abused laborers and farmers must raise their collective voice and revolt against the world's enemy — American imperialists.

Ang nakararami tiyak na
Magwawagi, magwawagi
Ang bisig ng uring api
Manggagawa't magsasaka

Kaya ngayon, sama-samang
Kabakahin ang nang-aapi
Ibagsak, ibagsak
Ang kaaway ng buong daigdig
Makibaka, huwag matakot
Durugin natin ang kaaway
Na marami nang inutang na dugo.
Ibagsak, ibagsak ang
Imperyalistang Kano!

Source: PADEPA Online, 2010

Indeed, from the militant tunes of the *Katipuneros* to the rousing songs of the New People's Army, Filipino protest music documented the poverty, oppression, anti-imperialism, and the national struggle for independence (Wedum, 2013).

THE SEVENTIES: *PINOY* MUSIC AND NEOCOLONIALISM

Early in this decade, a distinct style of *Pinoy* music developed blending rock, folk, pop, and jazz sung in Tagalog rather than English. This type of music employed various lyrical content to appeal to different Filipino sensibilities, particularly the urban youth (Lockard, 1996). *Pinoy* music emerged against a backdrop of political ferment percolating in many quarters of Philippine society that were increasingly radicalized following the declaration of Martial Law on September 22, 1972. The now infamous Proclamation 1081, ostensibly declared to stem the tide of Communist infiltration and the unrest in college campuses as well as the growing insurgency of the National People's Army, was used in reality as a legal cover to plunder the country's economy through crony capitalism. It also systematically stifled press freedom and ushered an era of flagrant abuse of human rights under the dictatorship of then President Ferdinand E. Marcos.

As a child of the Martial Law years, *Pinoy* music arguably captured the dialectics of contested spaces as some perceived it as the "conscious attempt to create a Filipino national and popular culture and overcome the completely unsophisticated déclassé image of the escapist Tagalog imitations of U.S. pop music known derisively as *bakya* ("wooden slipper")" (Lockard, 1996:166).

Because the music's appeal defied class boundaries and mourned the travails of a developing nation, some nationalists regarded it as an antidote to neocolonialism.

Filipinos at this time were fed a steady diet of government propaganda built around Marcos' *Kilusang ng Bagong Lipunan* (New Society Movement). According to Concepcion (2014), Marcos deftly used music as a vital component of the state's cultural apparatus consequently accomplishing two things: maintain his despotic grip of the country and conceal his ambition for unbridled and perpetual rule. He commissioned songs such as *Bagong Pagsilang* (Rebirth); Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa (One Nation, One Spirit); *Masagana* 99 (Prosperous 99); *Magandang Pilipinas* (Beautiful Philippines); and *Tayo'y Magtanim* (Let us Plant) to promote various aspects of his social engineering program and his vision of a new Philippine society.

Not all of Marcos' New Society initiatives, however, were bad as the country could have definitely used a more productive agriculture sector. It was the brutality of the means to the end that many Filipinos found unquestionably intolerable. Subsequently, an equally formidable cache of protest songs became the countervailing force against this government-sanctioned flow of propaganda music illustrating once again that popular culture is a site of struggle that Filipinos navigate to make sense of their political circumstances.

The students were at the forefront of the protest movement in the seventies. In what was called the *Sigwa ng Unang Kuwatro* (First Quarter Storm), students led a series of demonstrations and marches against the Marcos government. Led by student leaders of the University of the Philippines and joined by laborers as well as students from other Manila universities, the Storm ended violently as the military's use of force was met with Molotov cocktails and pillbox bombs.

Both authors were students during the Martial Law years; one was in college, the other was in high school. They joined various protest activities, distributed what was considered "subversive" materials, held "conscientization" seminars to bolster the ranks with new recruits for the "liberation" cause, and sang or chanted at meetings and rallies. Demonstration cultures, Rosenberg (2013) said, have "significant aesthetic elements, such as music" and quoted Joan Baez saying that "politics would be very unrealistic in the streets unless it involves music. The music pours from the soul, especially in times of crisis" (p. 179). Philippine mass demonstrations in the lived experiences of the authors during the seventies were no exception.

Gimenez-Maceda (1985) noted that, because overt political action was obviously dangerous and for some who dared, fatal, "the song became the alternative press for raising issues glossed over or suppressed by government-controlled media" (p. 29). An archetype of such a song is Jesse Santiago's *Huling Balita* (The Latest News), which condemned the arbitrary arrests by the military and the mysterious disappearance of dissidents. At the University of the Philippines, Diliman, a hotbed of student activism, a features writer of the campus newspaper, Lean Alejandro, disappeared with no trace. One of the authors, who recently graduated from college, was at the UP-Diliman campus for her graduate degree when this happened. She learned to keep her head down as the classrooms swarmed with plainclothes military spies.

> *Narinig n'yo na ba ang huling balita*
> *Tungkol kay Mang Kardo, isang manggagawa*
> *May ilang buwan nang siya'y hinahanap*
> *Ng mga kaibigan, mga kamag-anak…*

The next stanza captures a wife's long and desperate search for her husband, who did not come home after joining a protest rally.

> *May ilang beses na si Aling Marina'y*
> *Nagtungo sa kampo't kuwartel ng pulisya*
> *Ilang listahan na ang kanyang tiningnan*
> *Ngunit di Makita ang hanap na pangalan*
> *Nakapagtataka, nakapagtataka…*

Another example of the "alternative press" protest music is Paul Galang's *Pira-pirasong Balita* (Bits and Pieces of News). Galang's work is an exposé of the many evils of Martial Law society: police corruption and its victims — Manila's jeepney drivers, who braved the pollution and traffic congestion to eke a living only to be forced to bribe police to avoid arbitrary violation citations.

> *Pag may pulis sa ilalim ng tulay*
> *Mag-ingat ka baka hulihin ka*
> *Kahit ikaw drayber na walang sala*
> *Kung wala kang panglagay ay titikitan ka.*

Pira-pirasong Balita also talked about the shameless pretense shown by the ban on gambling while jai-alai, cockfights, horse races, and floating casinos abound.

> *Bawal daw ang magsugal*
> *Ito raw ay illegal*
> *Ngunit pag may jai-alai*
> *At mayroon floating casino*
> *May sabunga't karera ng kabayo…*

Then the song condemned recruiting agencies that duped poverty-stricken families, who often spent their lifetime savings or even sold their home, farm, or *carabao*s (water buffalos) to pay placement fees for jobs in the Middle East.

> *May manggagawa pinangakuan ng pag-asa*
> *Trabaho sa Saudi Arabia kailanga'y magsuhol ng pera*
> *Na pambayad sa ahensiyang nanloloko lang pala*
> *Bandang huli bigo ang pag-asa*
> *Natangay pa ang pera inipon niya.*

A number of musical luminaries were at the center of the resurgent culture of resistance during this period: Heber Bartolome, Florante, Freddie Aguilar, Jesse Santiago, and Asin, to name a few. Bartolome founded the protest band, Banyuhay. His first composition, *Oy Utol, Buto't Balat Ka Na'y Natutulog Ka Pa* (Hey Brother, You're All Flesh and Bones and You're Still Sleeping), might be the earliest protest song during Martial Law. It vocalized the pain of hunger, fear, and oppression; decried the complacency of Filipinos rebuking them for doing nothing in the midst of their suffering (Gimenez-Maceda, 1985).

> *Kay hirap ng tumatawa kung hungkag ang iyong tiyan*
> *Kay hirap ng mangusap kung bibig mo'y may tapal*
> *Kay hirap ng mabuhay kung kalagaya'y ganyan*
> *Kay hirap ng lumaban kung takot ka sa kalaban.*

> *At kung tayo'y nanahimik*
> *Huwag kayong magalit*
> *Ang dapat sa atin ay tawaging mga gago.*

In his other composition, *Awit Ko*, Bartolome confronted the perils of imperialism and used the clenched fist of a child as a metaphor of rebellion against the indignities Filipinos experienced in their native land (being mistaken as a wild pig for instance by U.S. military):

> *Noong tayo'y pinanganak*
> *Ang kamay nakakuyom*
> *Habang umiiyak.*
>
> *Yao'y pagtutol sa kinagisingan*
> *Isang bayang uto uto*
> *Sa mga dayuhan.*
>
> *Ako'y Isang Pinoy*
> *Ako'y tao, ako'y hindi*
> *Isang baboy-damo.*

Awit Ko ends with a call for change:

> *Kayong lahat pakinggan n'yo*
> *Itong mundo'y humihingi*
> *Ng pagbabago.*

The song that catapulted Bartolome into the Philippine musical stratosphere, however, was his *Tayo'y Mga Pinoy* (We're Filipinos). Released in 1978, it is a deprecating reminder that Filipinos are not Americans; that they are from the east with brown skin and less prominent noses but that there's no shame in being a Filipino:

> *Tayo'y mga Pinoy, tayo'y hindi Kano*
> *Huwag kang mahihiya na ang ilong mo ay pango…*

His earlier work was followed by social commentaries set into music but with more subdued protestations: *Buhay Pinoy* (Filipino Life) tackled poverty and overpopulation in a deeply Catholic country where artificial birth control was a sin; *Nena* denounced economic conditions that became personified in the sad plight of a prostitute and *Pasahero* (Passenger) dealt with Manila's suffocating traffic jams and overcrowded public transportation.

Another well-regarded entertainment icon in the Philippines is Florante de Leon or simply Florante. He pioneered Pinoy folk rock and influenced other popular singer-songwriters such as Heber Bartolome and Freddie Aguilar. He hit stardom with *Handog* (Offering). His other songs, *Ako'y Isang Pinoy* (I Am A Filipino) and *Digmaan* (War) are now considered classics. Indeed, patriotism runs in every lyric of *Ako'y Isang Pinoy*, which unequivocally declares being Filipino in heart and mind, by birth and by language.

> *Ako'y isang Pinoy sa puso't diwa*
> *Pinoy na isinilang sa ating bansa*
> *Ako'y hindi sanay sa wikang mga banyaga*
> *Ako'y Pinoy na mayroong sariling wika.*

In the chorus, Florante echoes a deep desire for the nation's freedom.

> *Bayan kong sinilangan*
> *Hangad kong lagi ang kalayaan.*

Florante's militancy is clearly evident in *Digmaan* (War). The song recognizes the difficulties of war and the dissonant reluctance to use violence and the need to fight for freedom and end oppression.

> *Laban sa kalooban ko man akoy handang handang lumaban para sa ating kalayaan*
> *Ngunit bakit ang minimithing kapayapaan ay daraanin sa digmaan makamtan lang ang kalayaan*

His more defiant Laya (Freedom) proclaims the breaking of the chains of imprisonment.

> *…Dati-rati ang isipan ko'y alipin lang*
> *Isip ng banyaga ang aking kinagisnan*
> *Aking pinutol ang tanikala*
> *Upang ang isip ko ay lumaya…*

Freddie Aguilar, on the other hand, is an eccentric folk-rock singer songwriter whose humble origins underpinned his early songs. When he mounted stronger challenges to social injustice through his Mindanao and *Mga Bata sa Negros* (Children of Negros), the media soon called him the "Bob Dylan of the Philippines" (Lockard, 1996). Mindanao talks about the long-running Christian–Muslim conflict in the third largest island group in the country. Mindanao has a large Muslim population that wants to secede as government continued to ignore their problems/struggles.

> *Mula nang magka-isip ay nagisnan ko ang problema*
> *Hanggang sa kasalukuyan, akin pang Makita*
> *Tuloy pa rin ang digmaan*
> *Kalat ang kaguluhan sa Mindanao…*

In 1978, Aguilar surged to legendary status as a musician not only in the Philippines but internationally with his *Anak*, an autobiographical account of a prodigal son (Philippine Music Registry: http://philippinemusicregistry. com.ph, Retrieved Feb. 12, 2016). The following lines depict how the son lost his bearings and is mired in vices; he then approaches his mother first, who asks why and what happened?

> *Nagdaan pa ang mga araw*
> *At ang landas mo'y maligaw*
> *Ikaw ay nalulong*
> *Sa masama bisyo*
> *At ang una mong nilapitan*
> *Ang iyong inang lumuluha*
> *At ang tanong nila ANAK*
> *Ba't ka nagkaganyan?*

Aguilar then introduces the desire for independence from parental control. Given the sociopolitical conditions of the country, the activist or

insurgent can arguably interpret this as a subtle but resonant eagerness for national freedom.

> *Ngayon nga malaki ka na*
> *Nais mo'y maging Malaya*
> *Di man sila payag*
> *Walang magagawa.*

Unlike Bartolome's Beatle-influenced rock music, Jesse Santiago aligned himself with the Western folk traditions. His *Halina* (Come) is both a woeful narrative and a plea to act in the face of injustices committed against the victims of capitalism as particularized by Lina, a factory worker; the exploitation of farmers like Pedro Pilapil under an obstinate feudal system and the dispensability of slum dwellers such as Aling Maria's family, who were evicted from their homes so hotels for tourists can be built.

Lina is a casualty of Marcos' antilabor and investor-friendly policies. During Martial Law, many union strikes and mass demonstrations by students, farmers, and factory workers were summarily met with deadly military force.

> *Si Lina ay isang magandang dalaga*
> *Panggabi sa isang pabrika ng tela*
> *Sumapi sa union, sumama sa welga*
> *Biglang nagkagulo nawala si Lina*
> *Nang muling Makita, hubad at patay na.*

Pedro Pilapil, on the other hand, dramatizes the exploitation of impoverished farmers and the rampant land grabbing by the rich and powerful. In Pedro's case, he was shot to death defending his farmland.

> *Isang magsasaka si Pedro Pilapil*
> *Walang kaulayaw kundi ang bukirin*
> *Ngunit isang araw may biglang dumating*
> *Ang saka ni Pedros kanilang inangkin*
> *Tumututol si Pedro't siya'y nabaril.*

When Marcos' dictatorship launched its beautification campaign, the song reveals how the urban poor living in squatter colonies were rendered homeless or relocated to far and often undesirable areas. Then, Bartolome goes to the heart of the matter and states that the real purpose of such campaigns was to conceal from the tourists the widespread poverty in the country. Aling Maria is indeed reminiscent of the squatters in Manila's garbage dump called Smokey Mountain.

> *Sina Aling Maria'y doon nakatira*
> *Sa tabi ng isang bundok ng basura*
> *Ngunit isang araw binuldoser sila*
> *Sapagkat darating ang mga turista*
> *Nawalan ng bahay ang isang pamilya.*

Santiago's "portraits of oppression" (Gimenez-Maceda, 1985) rivet in a tender lullaby called Meme Na. This heart-wrenching hymn is about a guerilla father's farewell to his child as he joins the militant struggle for national liberation. It assures listeners that the promise of a better tomorrow, of a happier life of freedom, makes the personal sacrifice worthwhile.

> *Tayo ngayo'y dumaranas*
> *Ng sanlaksang hirap*
> *Ngunit hindi maglalaon*
> *Sasagana ang bukas.*
>
> *Paalam na, o mutya ng aking pagmamahal*
> *Ako'y magbabalik, hintayin mo sana*
> *Sa aking pag-uwi tayo'y liligaya.*

Even love songs became "conscientization" tools. Asin's *Himig ng Pag-ibig* (Love's Hymn) prompts audiences to think as it blended love with awareness of the social realities around them.

> *Tulad ng ibong malaya ang pag-ibig natin*
> *Tulad ng langit na kay sarap marating*
> *Ang bawat tibok ng puso'y kay sarap damhin*
> *Tulad ng himig na kay sarap awitin.*

Formed in 1977, the Asin folk-rock band is said to be the first group that fused indigenous instrumentation into their music. Because their songs reflected the political issues during Martial Law, some of their recordings were confiscated and labeled as subversive.

This sampling of political melodies in seventies Philippines excludes the countless protest songs that Ceres Doyo (2012) talked about in her article, "Songs of Protest, Songs of Love." These are the music in *Ibong Malaya* (Prison Songs), a collection of songs political detainees wrote, recorded, and sang while incarcerated in Camp Bagong Diwa and Militant Songs, which according to Doyo might be recorded by the radical singing group, Patatag.

BAYAN KO: ANTHEM OF THE ANTI-MARCOS MOVEMENT IN THE EIGHTIES

This decade was mired by an escalation of disgruntlement and opposition not just on campuses but all over the archipelago as the Marcos dictatorship tightened its stranglehold on the country. The assassination of opposition leader, Senator Benigno Aquino, brought the simmering decade of discontent to the boiling point of defiance that eventually led to the People Power Revolution in 1986, also known as EDSA 1 (Epifanio de los Reyes Avenue), and the expulsion of the Marcos family. Aquino came back from exile in 1983 and was gunned down in the tarmac of the Manila international airport that now bears his name.

Bayan Ko (My Country), a melancholic ballad written by Jose Corazon de Jesus and set to music by Constancio de Guzman in the 1920s saw a phenomenal revival. The version sung by Freddie Aguilar became the anthem of EDSA 1 (Caparas, 2004; Jimeno, 2008) although it has been a long-time staple of the underground student protest movement (Lockard, 1996). This song deserves prominent treatment because of its durability and mainstream appeal as an artifact of protest tracing all the way back to the nation's fight for independence during the American occupation. The authors consider this song as the reservoir of all the substance and zeal of their own youthful activism. To this day, the song resonates and reverberates through the echo chambers of their mind and life as if it was only yesterday that they shouted *"Makibaka, huwag matakot"* (Fight, do not fear).

Noel Cabangon, one of the more well-known musicians of this decade, attributes the secret to *Bayan Ko's* longevity to "the purity and universality

of its message." Its melody is so Filipino, he thinks, which embodies the laments of a people longing to be free (Jimeno, 2008). When heard and sang today, this song has the same effect on the authors, perhaps colored now with nostalgia yet is as moving and inspiring of patriotism and the yearning for freedom from the country's unshakable political turmoil and social inequities.

It is not hyperbole to say that every Filipino would know Bayan Ko and of course *Lupang Hinirang* (National Anthem). *Bayan Ko* is a moving homage to a people's thirst for freedom and love of country as metaphorically represented in the image of a bird crying in a cage bereft of its inherent ability to fly.

> *Ibon mang may layang lumipad*
> *kulungin mo ay umiiyak*
> *Bayan pa kayang sakdal dilag*
> *Ang di magnasang makaalpas!*

The first two stanzas express love of country describing it as the land of gold and flowers; a beautiful country that foreigners find so alluring that they seize it for themselves.

> *At sa kanyang yumi at ganda*
> *Dayuhan ay nahalina*
> *Bayan ko, binihag ka*
> *Nasadlak sa dusa.*

The resulting enslavement reduces the country into a nest of tears and indigence.

> *Pilipinas kong minumutya*
> *Pugad ng luha ko't dalita*

Bayan Ko, however, concludes with a hopeful note that the country will eventually become free.

> *Aking adhika, Makita kang sakdal laya.*

It would seem that the turbulence of the Marcos regime would mean a drought of original sociopolitical songs, but ironically, it spawned such Filipino pop music greats as Joey Ayala, Inang Laya, and the very popular APO Hiking Society. Joey Ayala is a darling of the student activist movement. A native of Bukidnon, in the southern island group of Mindanao, Ayala was a former newspaper journalist. His 1982 album, *Panganay ng Umaga* (Firstborn of the Morning) contains songs that limned images of exploitation, i.e., *Mga Ninuno* (Forebears) and environmental degradation, i.e., Agila (Eagle).

On the feminist front, *Inang Laya* (Mother Freedom) composed of Becky Demetillo Abraham on vocals and Karina Constantino David on guitar, loomed large. In 1989, they recorded *Atsay ng Mundo* that conveyed how much drastic change was needed for the country's emancipation. The rather inflammatory feminist tone in Babae is abundantly clear. The song invokes the names of Gabriela (Silang), the first female leader of the Filipino independence movement from Spain; Teresa (Magbanua) also known as the "Visayan Joan of Arc" for her historic and gender-bending role in the *Katipunan*; Lorena (Barros), who founded the *Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan* (Free Movement of New Women); and Liliosa (Hilao), the first reported case of a student activist killed while in detention during Martial Law. By joining the national liberation struggle, these women recognizably challenged cultural norms on the role of women.

Inang Laya is also the composer, lyricist, arranger, and musician of Titser, which bemoans the plight of Filipino teachers, who must sell an assortment of everyday goods to supplement meager salaries. After a 15-year hiatus from the musical scene, the duo composed Macliing, a dirge for the murdered *Kalinga* chieftain, who fought against the Chico River Dam construction that would have inundated *Kalinga* ancestral lands.

The following songs were originally featured in the album, Alab 1896–1996 (Alay sa Laya ng Bayan) by HASIK (Harnessing Self-Reliant Initiatives and Knowledge, Inc.) with *Inang Laya's* Demetillo-Abraham and Constantino-David: *Marangal na Dalit ng Katagalugan* and Canto Patriotico De Maria Clara.

Composed by Julio Nakpil in 1896, *Marangal* was the first National Anthem of the Philippines. It was eventually replaced by the *Marcha Nacional Filipina*. Canto Patriotico, on the other hand, was written by Jose Rizal. The song's origin was one of the characters in his novel *Noli Me*

Tangere. In 1893, Nakpil composed another version of Maria Clara, giving it the title Amor Patria.

Moving on to more contemporary times, the Apolinario Mabini Hiking Society or simply APO turned professional in 1974. Their protest songs were often used in opposition rallies and mass demonstrations. The trio composed of Boboy Garovillo, Jim Paredes, and Danny Javier also staged the concert series *EtonAPOsila*, a pun on the phrase *"Eto na, pusila!"* "Here he is, shoot!" in the Visayan vernacular, obviously referring to Benigno Aquino's assassination (Philippine Music Registry). They also composed *Hindi ka Nag-iisa* (You are Not Alone), a hymn of solidarity and revulsion over Aquino's murder.

More importantly, Jim Paredes penned *Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo* (A Filipino Gift to the World) for the 1986 EDSA or People Power Revolution. Regarded as the psalm of triumph over the repressive Marcos regime, the song's lyrics were reportedly embedded on the wall of Our Lady of EDSA Shrine on the first anniversary of the revolution. The song's refrain shares with the world the successful way Filipinos changed their circumstances by uniting as a people and convinces listeners that truth, freedom, and justice can be attained without bloodshed.

> *Handog ng Pilipino sa mundo,*
> *Mapayapang paraang pagbabago.*
> *Katotohanan, kalayaan, katarungan*
> *Ay kayang makamit na walang dahas.*
> *Basta't magkaisa tayong lahat.*
> *(Mag sama-sama tayo, ikaw at ako)*

Indeed the Filipinos overthrew the Marcos dictatorship by stopping tanks with bare hands, praying, and singing along EDSA, a main thoroughfare in Manila flanked by two military camps. The chorus is a précis of what the People Power Revolution was all about: the momentary erasure of the dichotomies between the rich and poor, nuns, priests, and soldiers, who bonded together in the poetic carving of a slice of paradise on earth as expressed in the following:

> *Masdan ang nagaganap sa aming bayan.*
> *Nagkasama ang mahirap at mayaman.*

Kapit-bisig madre, pari, at sundalo.
Naging Langit itong bahagi ng mundo

The song's bridge cautions Filipinos not to allow darkness to descend again in the country and to always remember that every voice should be heard as we are all siblings in God's eyes. Paredes infused a religious slant, which undoubtedly added to the song's appeal and is quite clever given that the Philippines is predominantly Catholic. Besides, the church through its clergy played a visible role in the regime-changing EDSA event.

Huwag muling payagang umiral ang dilim.
Tinig ng bawat tao'y bigyan ng pansin.
Magkakapatid lahat sa Panginoon.
Ito'y lagi nating tatandaan

Interestingly, the nationalistic fervor that swept the country did not seem to diminish the Filipino's love for American music. Tie a Yellow Ribbon soon became the opposition's theme song to mark the homecoming of Senator Aquino. It shared the airwaves with original politicized popular music composed and sung by Filipinos. If at all, the nation of enduring contradictions once again shows that the process of sense making does not necessarily follow a linear pattern. Filipinos found new meaning in the American song to fit the prevailing political reality calling to mind what Frith (1984) said about music's contextual value. Corazon Aquino, Ninoy's widow, also began wearing yellow, and the color became a counter emblem to the blue that Marcos used in his New Society campaign.

1990S: THE RISE OF THE UNDERGROUND ROCK

The late 1980s and early 1990s marked the beginning of the era of the underground rock bands that played protest songs or "progressive" music. This decade saw the rise of legendary folk musicians such as Susan Fernandez-Magno and *Buklod* as well as punk bands like The Jerks, Betrayed, and Urban Bandits, who openly criticized those in power.

Aside from being an activist-singer and academic, Susan Fernandez-Magno was known for her protest music, especially at the height of Marcos' authoritarian reign. An alumna of the University of the Philippines, Magno

first gained prominence as a performer during anti-Marcos rallies in the first half of the 1980s earning her the monicker "the voice of a protest generation." However, it was Magno's forceful rendition of *Babae Ka* that established her as the "voice of the feminist movement." *Babae Ka* was released as a track in her 1990 album, *Habi at Himig* (Severino, 2009).

The song's first stanza points out the many ironies and contradictions in being a woman: coveted, prized, worshipped, and defended. Yet a woman is also a prisoner of her beauty and her own circumstances.

> *Babae ka, hinahangad sinasamba*
> *Ipinagtatanggol ikaw nama'y walang laya*
> *Ang daigdig mong laging langis ang tahanan*
> *Ganda lang ang pakinabang sa buhay*
> *Walang alam.*

Moreover, a woman is a victim of social injustice. She does not get the same privileges and opportunities as a man. Indeed, societal conventions often underestimate her real worth.

> *Ang pinto ng pag-unlad*
> *Sa iyo laging nakasara*
> *Harapin mo buksan mo*
> *Ibangon ang iyong pagkatao…babae ka!*
> *Kalahati ka ng buhay kung ikaw kaya'y wala*
> *Saan ang buhay ipupunla?*

Time and again a woman has proven her resilience by rising above the vicissitudes of life. She can be the lowly domestic helper in Hong Kong but she can also lead a nation's bloodless revolution and banish a dictator.

> *Pinatunayan mong kaya mong magpa alila*
> *Ngunit kaya mo ring magpalakad ng bansa.*
> *Dahil sa akala ay mahina ka*
> *Halaga mo ay di nakikita.*
> *Bisig mo ay sa lakas ang kulang*
> *Ngunit ang tinig mo ay maging mapagpasya.*
> *Upang ikaw ay lumaya, lumaya ka!*

Babae…Pinagpala ang ganda ng daigdig
Na sa iyo nagmumula!

Among the progressive rock bands in this decade, *Patatag* was composed of activist singers who banded together in 1984 and wrote as well as performed their own songs. They were described as "a music ensemble that lent voice and rhythm to the struggles and hopes of fellow Filipinos." Among their more well-known performances were *Bayan Naming Mahal* and the plaintive *Wala Nang Tao sa Santa Filomena* (No One Is Left in Santa Filomena).

But the social problems that restive student militants rallied against in the previous decades persisted. Government officials are still guilty of corruption and abuse of authority. Poverty, unemployment, and prostitution are still rampant. Added to these are the agrarian problems and the increasing militarization in some places in Mindanao. Tribal groups are dispossessed of their lands without proper compensation. It is a recurring sad story when Filipinos are caught in the crossfire between government troops and rebel forces in Mindanao; when people are forced to leave their homes because they have been deprived of their property and livelihood.

Wala Nang Tao sa Santa Filomena (No One Is Left in Santa Filomena) paints an unsettling imagery of desolateness. After everyone has fled the town, only a lone swallow is seen flying over the place.

Nag-iisang lumilipad ang langay-langayan
Anino niya'y tumatawid sa nanunuyong palayan
Tanging sagot sa sigaw niya ay katahimikan
At kaluskos ng hangin sa dahon.

The swallow surveys the empty huts below wondering who will harvest the golden grains that now bend under the weight of sadness. Why has no one said goodbye?

'Sang ikot pa, huling sulyap mula sa ibabaw ng bayan
Mga kubong pinatatag ng lupa at kawayan
Paalam na, paalam na ang awit ng langay-langayan
Nguni't walang nakasaksi sa palayo niyang lutang.

Indeed, no one is left in Santa Filomena. Not even one to receive the gifts of the earth.

The rice stalks look forlorn as if waiting for the hand with the sickle.

Pagka't wala nang tao sa Sta. Filomena
Walang aani sa alay ng lupa
Nakayuko ang palay, tila bang nalulumbay
Tila bang naghihintay ng karit at ng kamay.

Fruits are ripening on the branches. They are plucked by the wind and simply tossed on the ground. Their sweetness sucked by the sun. No one cares to gather the seeds to be planted.

Nahihinog ang bunga ng mangga't bayabas
Pinipitas ng hangin at sa lupa'y hinahampas
Sinisipsip ng araw ang tamis at katas
Iniiwan ang binhing umaasa.

The rains come to bring hope for renewed life, watering what once was parched earth and dried up river beds. For every seed that sprouts, there is a promise of a new beginning. But all these may be in vain:

At pagdating ng tag-ulan sa pinaghasikan
Upang hugutin ang buhay mula sa kamatayan
Muling dadaloy ang dugo sa ugat ng parang
Subali't ang lahat na to'y masasayang.

There is absolutely no one left in Santa Filomena; no one came back to gather the golden grain. The stalks are now bent in surrender; as if offering their lives to the power of the sickle held by a clenched fist.

Pagka't wala nang tao sa Sta.Filomena
Walang aani sa alay ng lupa
Ang palay ay nakayuko, tila bang sumusuko
Naghahandog ng buhay sa karit at kamao.

Distraught, the lonely swallow flies and cries searching for familiar faces and voices to dispel the deafening silence. Where are you, people? Why do you cower in fear? Come back and take a stand. Hear the swallow's lament!

> *Lumilipad, sumisigaw ang langay-langayan*
> *Nasaan ka at bakit ka nagtatago taumbayan*
> *Panahon na, panahon nang balikan ang iniwan*
> *Dinggin natin and tangis ng abang langay-langayan*
> *Dinggin natin ang tangis ng abang langay-langayan!*

Aside from *Patatag,* people who joined rallies during the 1990s would listen to songs by *Tambisan sa Sining* or watched Danny Fabella sing their compositions. Among *Tambisan's* patriotic ballads are *Araw ng Manggagawa* (Laborers Day), *Awit ng Kalayaan* (Song of Freedom), *Awit ng Pag-Asa* (Song of Hope), *Awit ng Proletaryo* (Song of the Proletariat), and *Ay, ay Aping Manggagawa* (Enslaved Laborers). *Tambisan* is the composer, lyricist, musician, and singer of these songs (http://philippinemusicregistry. com.ph).

There's no doubt that protest songs, or as some would call it "progressive music," will forever leave its score in the history of original Pilipino music. The staying power of protest music can be seen today not just in the digital space but in revival concerts such as the University of the Philippines' College of Music *Mga Awit Protesta* held as part of the regular monthly concert series. In his account of this revival concert, Maranan (2013) wrote, "the program notes described this tradition as encompassing the themes of resistance against colonialism and oppression, struggle for independence and social justice, and lays down the beginnings and trajectory of Philippine protest songs from the *Katipunan* and the Revolution of 1896 to the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship and all the regimes that succeeded it."

CONCLUSION

It becomes abundantly clear as one weaves through this study that Philippine protest music confirms what the scholarly literature has documented — that politicized songs, as sites of resistance, have an integral role in the formation of collective action and collective memory. Protest songs

are cultural, historical, and memorial artifacts whose varying roles and significance in many of the Filipino struggles transcend the boundaries of time and space.

Indeed, the Filipino playlist of politicized music has a long tradition as this research has clearly shown. From the Philippine Revolution against Spain to the People Power Revolution, Filipinos have demonstrated the capacity to combat oppressor propaganda music with equally compelling protest music.

The Philippine experience indicates that music can be used as an escape from the ruthlessness of colonial rulers or a homegrown despot but it can also be subtly or directly employed to resist repressive hegemonic structures. Filipinos, for instance, have utilized imaginative and often unpredictable ways to circumvent the controls of those in power from the use of characters and props in sarswelas, metaphors, and symbolisms of freedom and love of country in many protest songs to the assigning of new meanings or interpretations of otherwise nonpolitical, harmless music such as the popular American song, Tie A Yellow Ribbon.

A sizeable proportion of the sample of Philippine songs analyzed were social commentaries on the plight of the poor and dispossessed, political and religious conflicts, and the abuses of the colonial and Martial Law years. The songs spoke truth to power and emboldened Filipinos to act through peaceful or violent means. All told, the soundtrack of Philippine political and social activism is a paradoxical tale that perhaps is expected of disputed turfs where meanings of songs are constantly negotiated on multiple sides of the power struggle for the nation to survive, adapt, and free itself from centuries of tyrannical regimes.

More important, these songs form a cultural heritage that is used collectively and individually to recall, memorialize, contemporize, mobilize, and remind the nation of its fighting spirit and its resolve never to forget the ultimate sacrifice of its martyrs. Appropriately, these lyrical relics are part of many of the country's national public holiday commemorations to this day and the politicized musical memory of activists including the authors who clamored for change during the tumultuous Martial Law years.

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Towards a Push–Pull Theoretical Understanding in the Sociology of Suicide: Revisiting What We Know and What We Can Explore

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The increasing prevalence of suicide in the Philippines necessitates the utilization of various disciplines to understand the phenomenon. This article attempts to contribute to this endeavor from a sociological perspective. The paper starts with a review of the wealth of theories that Sociology has to offer in explaining suicide from centuries past to the present, covering pre-Durkheimian theories all the way to Durkheim's contemporaries and those coming from the Interpretivist paradigm. The paper then proceeds to propose a new framework with which to explain the phenomenon borne from the synthesis of two theories not of suicide but rather of criminology: Agnew's General Strain theory and Hirschi's Social Bonds theory.

Keywords: Suicide, Sociology, Self-harm, Deviance, Suicidology

INTRODUCTION

The idea of death has long been a recurring fascination of people. Regarded as the one constant of human life, people's preoccupation with death has been expressed through several human constructs. Various art forms such as the painting Deathbed by Edvard Munch, the poem Thanatopsis by William Cullen Bryant, the musical piece Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss, and the film The Seventh Seal by Ingmar Bergman are just a few of the famous creative works dedicated to the idea of human mortality. The plethora of religious ideologies dating back to premodern societies to those

that have survived to this day's modernized reality all propose a perspective on death, the sanctity of life, and its aftermath such as Hinduism's death and reincarnation and Christianity's concept of heaven and hell as people's destinations after one's life on Earth.

Perhaps of greater practical importance than art and religion is the massive effort exerted by human societies all throughout history in trying to stem the advance of death. Various technologies have been developed in the past centuries in order to keep death by starvation, sickness, accidents, and interpersonal violence at bay. Various medical procedures and drugs have been developed to extend human life. One cannot help but marvel at the great death-defying technologies under development in recent years such as stem cell treatment and artificial organs ranging from limbs to vital organs such as kidneys and the human heart.

This obsession with keeping one's self far away from death's door makes the phenomenon of suicide, or the deliberate attempt at cessation of one's life, all the more interesting as a subject of inquiry. Society's perception towards death by suicide is not constant temporally and spatially. There are periods in a society's history when suicide is tolerated. Two examples of this tolerance towards suicide is the Ancient Chinese culture's approval of suicide as a form of revenge with the expectation that it shall cause embarrassment for the object of the suicidal act and Ancient Japan's regard of harakiri as an honorable practice. Nevertheless, societal attitudes towards suicide are generally negative (Clinnard & Meier, 2011). This may be due in part to the dominance of Abrahamic religions – Islam, Christianity, and Judaism – with doctrines that espouse the sanctity of life and the view of the cessation of human life as something which only their respective supreme beings can decide to do. This belief in the so-called "sanctity of life," after all, can be argued to have originated from human society's long struggle for survival in an often harsh environment that directly threatens either human life or humanity's means of subsistence. For example, in a typical ancient hunting and gathering society, only one or two children are expected to survive despite the average fertility rate of seven children per woman. The high death rate made it necessary for societies to adopt a value for life in order to avoid extinction (Weeks, 2012). As centuries went by, technology has allowed a reduction in death rates. Nevertheless, the cultural valuation of life remained.

SUICIDE IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RECENT YEARS

From the onset of the new millennium up to the present, the Philippines has had its share of high-profile cases of suicide. For example, in 2001, former television actress and beauty queen Ma. Teresa Carlson allegedly leaped from the 23rd floor of the Platinum 2000 apartment building in Greenhills, San Juan down to her demise. The event gained national attention after rumors spread that, prior to the alleged suicidal act, Carlson attempted to have an informal meeting with the then-president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who is godmother to one of Carlson's children. Stories were abuzz of Carlson's fall from a happy life to misery after being married to her husband, former Ilocos Norte Rep. Rodolfo Farinas and being a battered wife (Lo, 2001).

In 2003, the spotlight was shifted away from Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago's political and intellectual prowess to her parenting capabilities when her youngest son, Alexander Robert "AR" Santiago, was found dead with a gunshot wound to the head in an apparent act of suicide (Mendez & Adraneda, 2003). Described by his own mother during his burial to have "suffered in silence," Senator Defensor-Santiago attributed AR's decision to commit suicide as a result of bullying — a routine interview required for applicants to UP Law was used by the UP Faculty to attack Miriam through her son, with questions such as "What is your reaction to the charge that your mother is insane?".

In 2005, the last president of the now defunct Urban Bank, Mr. Teodoro C. Borlongan, was found dead with a gunshot to the left temple of the head in front of the graves of his parents at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City (Alquitran & Torres, 2005). It is believed that the reason for his suicide is a recent loss in a legal battle. Aside from being unable to clear the legal charges filed against him in court, Mr. Borlongan was said to have been in dire financial straits during the time, to the point that his residence at Green Meadows, Quezon City was under forfeiture, and he found himself unable to pay the tuition of his children at Ateneo de Manila University.

Probably one of the more controversial suicides of the decade, Roger Lawrence "Rod" Strunk ended his life by jumping from the 2nd floor balcony of his hotel in Tracy, California in 2007. This was more than half a decade after Strunk was one of the two suspects accused of the murder of renowned Filipina actress, Nida Blanca, who was stabbed to death in 2001. The fall from the hotel's balcony was declared as a case of suicide after authorities

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found no evidence that anyone else was with Strunk at the time of his demise (GMANewsTV, 2007).

In 2009, the attention of news reporters was focused on fellow news broadcaster Mario Teodoro Failon Etong or commonly regarded as Ted Failon after his wife, Trinidad Arteche "Trina" Etong, succumbed to a head wound obtained from a gun shooting incident believed to be an attempt at suicide, though suspicions of foul play were in the air after the evidence from the scene had been cleaned up by the household help (Meruenas, 2009).

In 2011, the senate investigation into allegations of graft and corruption in the Armed Forces of the Philippines was rocked by the shocking news that, during the span of the senate inquiry, the former Chief of Staff who eventually became the secretary of the Department of Defense, DILG, DENR, and Department of Energy (Evangelista, 2011) killed himself. Similar to the aforementioned case of Mr. Borlongan, Reyes shot himself while in front of the grave of his parents. The reason for the suicide is believed to be the pressure and dishonor brought about by the senate inquiry involving him as one of the potential offenders.

Probably one of the most recent and very controversial cases of suicide with an impact on school policies was UP student Kristel Tejada's suicide by drinking silver cleaner at her home in Tondo (Punay, 2013). Fellow students, especially those from her school system, University of the Philippines, were in outrage after learning that the apparent reason why Tejada committed suicide is because of being denied the chance to continue her pursuit of a bachelor's degree from the university due to not being able to pay the matriculation, which started a dramatic increase in 2007. A similar case of suicide, this time by a 16-year-old student named Rosanna Sanfuego, happened two years later (Dullana, 2015).

Finally, in 2015, news broke out when 18-year-old Liam Madamba committed suicide by jumping from the 6th floor of the Dela Rosa carpark in Legazpi Village, Makati City after the lad was accused in the school where he was enrolled of plagiarism — an offense greatly frowned upon at the school (Brizuela, 2015). In this same year, a case of mass suicide was reported in Manila wherein a Filipino–Taiwanese family of five including the husband, wife, two sons, and one daughter were found dead – all by poison – in their respective rooms in the household. The cause, according to a suicide note left at the scene, was the failure of the family's business (Alquitran, 2015).

Most recently, the death of the daughter of acclaimed artist Nonie

Buencamino became headline news in the country after she was found dead inside the Buencamino household in what appeared to be suicide by hanging (Corrales, 2015). An alleged suicide note in the form of an entry in the popular social networking site, Tumblr, which was claimed to have been left by the suicide victim circulated around the World Wide Web days after her demise. Among other things, the alleged suicide note made references to sentiments allegedly felt by the victim about gender identity and the country's "queerphobic" culture (Bonoan, 2015).

The abovementioned cases comprise only a small number of the total number of suicide incidents that has happened over the years. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has identified suicide as a major social problem that claims a life every 40 seconds. It is the 15th leading cause of death for 2012 all over the world, accounting for around 800,000 deaths worldwide yearly, with South East Asian regions comprising a third of the annual rate, and the 2nd if the cohort in focus is the youth population aged 15 to 29 (Vila, 2014).

THE CHALLENGE OF UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE: LAY THEORIES, STIGMA, AND POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Yet what do we really know of suicide? Typically, the appearance of a new high profile case of suicide is followed by scrutiny of the suicide victim's personal life and family. People from various sectors of society will give their unsolicited analysis as to why the victim attempted to take his or her own life. The rise of social media usage in recent years has increased the quantity and spread of these "lay theories" of suicide. These so-called lay theories are comprised of assumptions about suicide such as the following statements (Caruso, n.d.; Knight, Furnham, & Lester, 2000):

1. Those who express an interest in committing suicide do so to garner attention.
2. Those who express the intent to die through suicide are unlikely to kill themselves.
3. Suicide is an event that occurs without any warning signs.
4. There is nothing that can be done once a person has decided to commit suicide.
5. Suicidal tendencies are a sign of mental illness or craziness

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6. Those who attempt suicide are weak people.
7. Those who plan to commit suicide do so to blackmail or manipulate other people.
8. The youth rarely think of committing suicide because they still have their whole life ahead of them.
9. Those who attempt suicide are people who are lonely or depressed.
10. Most people who commit suicide do not believe in a god.
11. The increase in suicide today is due to the lessened influence of religion.
12. People who talk about suicide do not really go through with suicide.

The most recent case of high profile suicide mentioned in this paper also provided a glimpse of how people make attributions about why the victim committed the act. In Julia Buencamino's suicide, several netizens tried to pore over every various detail they could find about the victim. One of the things given considerable interest is the artworks of the victim which some described as "dark." A friend of the author even opined in a social networking site that she thinks that, because the victim likes to draw artworks with predominantly black colors and "dark" designs, she must have been possessed by a demon which resulted in her suicide.

Although these lay theories do not always oppose actual scientific knowledge about suicide, many of these analyses often feature popular misconceptions about the phenomenon as well. These misconceptions serve only to give the general populace a distorted understanding of what pushes people into acts of deliberate self-harm that ultimately lead to their death.

The challenge of understanding suicide also extends to difficulties of gauging its prevalence. The incidence rate of suicide could even be greater than it is reported to be. The problem is not all suicide-related deaths are identified properly. This is because of its nature as a highly stigmatized cause of death. In the Philippines, for instance, the dominance of Christian ideology can be held as the reason for the stigma associated with suicide. This has been cited by Michael Tan (2007) as one of the major impediments to getting a clearer picture of suicide in the country. There are potential sanctions not only for the person who committed suicide. In Roman Catholicism, for example, victims of suicide are traditionally refused their last sacramental rites inside the church before being buried. This is because the act is considered to be a highly offensive practice for the Roman Catholics

— following a line of thought that dictates that only the supreme deity has the power to grant life and therefore the only one who has the right to end it. Furthermore, the stigma of the act is associated with the family of the victim. The family unit is blamed, in whole or in part, for the victim's decision to end his or her life. For reasons such as this, incidences of suicide are denied and reported instead as accidental deaths or even deaths by asphyxia or cardiac arrest. This has resulted in a lack of definitive knowledge on how prevalent deaths by suicide are in the country.

The barrier to an actual understanding of suicide as a phenomenon is not limited to religion. Perhaps as a product of an age of political correctness, there have been concerns within the academe of "triggering" the students. Triggering is the setting off of people's memories that remind them of the events of their original traumatic experience. These "triggers" could come in the form of any stimulus received through sight, smell, touch, hearing, or taste. The fear of inadvertently triggering the students and causing them "undue distress" has resulted in some schools omitting the discussion of suicide from their respective syllabi even in Sociology classes (Selvarajah, 2015). This curricular development is all the more surprising when one considers that Sociology used Durkheim's study of suicide as a social phenomenon as one of its foundations as a formal discipline.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that death by suicide is indeed happening and there is a need to understand the phenomenon. The challenge to explain the causes of the phenomenon of suicide and predict its occurrence has been taken on by scholars from different fields. Though the phenomenon is often considered as a topic under the domain of Psychology – perhaps because of many cases of suicide oftentimes being associated with depression – there have been several efforts to theorize about suicide in the disciplines of Biology, Anthropology, Economics, and Sociology. Suicide is a phenomenon of great historical importance to Sociology. As previously mentioned, it was in a classical study of suicide that Emile Durkheim argued to the scientific community that what was perceived to be a social problem answerable only by Psychology can be explained by the then-proposed discipline of Sociology.

Sociological theories on suicide have approached the phenomenon in two ways: a positivistic approach and an interpretivist approach. The positivist theories, comprised primarily of ideas inspired by the Durkheimian perspective, form the bulk of sociological theories on the phenomenon, with

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there being at least a dozen different theories proposed over the span of more than a century. These theories attempt to identify the social factors that are correlated with suicidal risks. These are discussed in this paper.

TARDE'S AND MASARYK'S THEORIES OF SUICIDE

The earliest known social theory of suicide is that of Gabriel Tarde in 1880 — almost a decade earlier than Emile Durkheim's supposed groundbreaking study on the phenomenon. Tarde's theory of imitation had been a rival to Durkheim's own theory as well as the Lombrosian biological theories of deviance during the last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century (Hayward, Maruna, & Mooney, 2009). However, though he was allied with Durkheim in criticizing the biological theories of the Italian school of Cesare Lombroso, Durkheim proceeded to criticize Tarde's imitation theory as well. The end result is a Tardian theory buried in unpopularity and discussed in a most seldom manner. Even when it is discussed, it is often in passing while the focus still rests on Durkheimian theory.

In Tarde's theory, he proposed that suicide could be explained by his imitation hypothesis (Abrutyn & Mueller, 2014). He suggested that cases of suicide would cluster together in an area as a result of people being exposed to suicidal behavior and would consequently be more predisposed to suicide. In particular, people who are suffering from personal distress would be more likely to commit suicidal acts if exposed to others who have succeeded or, at least, tried committing suicide.

Another precursor to Durkheim is a Czech-Slovakian by the name of Thomas G. Masaryk. His theory has been given very minimal attention in the past century just like Tarde's because of the popularity of Durkheim's theory. In his own theory back in 1881, Masaryk recognized the importance of religion as the main basis of morality for the members of a society (Lester, 1997). He noted that the loss or decrease in the centrality of religion in societal life has resulted in a loss of societal regulation, social disorganization, and a feeling of unhappiness in people leading to mental illness and abnormal acts, including suicide. As such, he argued that the decrease or total loss of religiosity in people is to be blamed for an increase in suicide rates. In addition to this, Masaryk held a negative view of modern education. He claimed that modern education destroys people's religious beliefs without offering a replacement to the ethical gifts of religion and its ability to provide

a satisfactory perspective in life. This consequently leads to a higher tendency for suicide.

Unlike Gabriel Tarde's theory, Thomas Masaryk's emphasis on the weakening of the regulative functions of a social structure – in this case, religion – bears a significant similarity with Durkheim's own arguments on how the state of social structures can induce people into suicidal behavior.

DURKHEIMIAN THEORIES OF SUICIDE

Durkheim's theory of suicide in 1897 is arguably the best known of all sociological theories regarding the phenomenon, with much of the succeeding theories inspired by this classical theory. In his discussion of the social facts that influence people into committing suicidal acts, Durkheim identified four types of suicide which differ in their degrees of (a) social integration, which binds people into society through the social norms and values of the group, and (b) social regulation, which restricts people's behavior by prescribing specific goals and the means to attain these goals (Pickering, 2001; Ritzer, 2010). These four types of suicide according to Durkheim are as follows:

Egoistic suicide. This kind of suicide is brought about by insufficient social integration among the members of society. People feel isolated and become predisposed to suicide.

Anomic suicide. This kind of suicide is brought about by a lack of social regulation in society due to rapid changes with which people are hard-pressed to adapt to. In their confusion, people find it hard to make rigid distinctions between prescribed and proscribed behaviors.

Fatalistic suicide. This kind of suicide is brought about by high social regulation in society, leading to a person's perception of being trapped without any form of escape except through suicide.

Altruistic suicide. This kind of suicide is brought about by high social integration in society which convinces people that there is nothing wrong with dying if it means the betterment of society.

What is noteworthy about Durkheim's theory is the emphasis on the point that too much or too little social integration and social regulation is dangerous and could lead to greater risks of suicide. In other words, the relationship between integration, regulation, and suicide is U-shaped. The key, therefore, is finding a degree of moderate integration and regulation for people.

Durkheim's theory became the basis for the sociological understanding of suicide after its publication, beating out other social theories which were proposed during those years as a response to the increase in suicide rates following the industrial revolution. In fact, it took more than three decades before a new social theory on the phenomenon of suicide was proposed.

Regarded as a student of the Durkheimian tradition, Maurice Halbwachs' thesis in 1930 regarded suicide as an indicator of the moral health of society (Travis, 1990). He posited that the reason for the increase in suicide rates is brought about by urbanization which weakens social ties among the people because of urbanization's tendency to attract people from different cultures. The lack of a strong unifying collective consciousness, if Durkheim's concept is to be used, brings about a feeling of social isolation which, in turn, predisposes people to acts of suicide. This argument that an element of modernization is bringing about an increase of suicide is not entirely new. It has been a premise utilized by Thomas Masaryk before. However, there is a notable difference in what particular element of modernization is to blame. Whereas Masaryk blamed the rise in modern education and the subsequent loss of religious regulation, Halbwachs focused his attention on urbanization and its effect on the relationships of society's population.

Almost three decades after Halbwachs, Henry and Short proposed their own theory in 1954 which has been described by Douglas (2015) as one of the most ambitious theories of suicide. The "ambitious" description is because of its attempt to explain two aggressive human behaviors instead of just one: suicide and homicide. In other words, Henry and Short's theory centers on the discussion of people's aggressive behavior and its tendency to be manifested towards other people (homicide) or towards one's self (suicide). People's aggressive behavior, as Henry and Short posited, is influenced by their frustration which, in turn, is suggested to be economically-based. In Henry and Short's theory, increases in frustration would lead to an increase in aggression. The object of this aggression or whether it would be towards other people (homicide) or towards one's self (suicide) is dependent on whom the person attributes the cause of the frustration to. Henry and Short further posited that the direction of this attribution is dependent on the person's social status (Wray, Colen, & Pescosolido, 2011). People with low social status are more likely to attribute their frustrations to the external environment and would, therefore, lash outwards through homicide. People with high social status, on the other hand, are more likely to attribute their frustrations

to their own failures and would, therefore, direct their aggression inwards through suicide. It is necessary, however, to note that these manifestations of aggressive behavior could be mediated by the strength of the person's social relations — with the effect that people with strong social relations would not have high risks of aggression despite their frustration.

Another theorist criticized Henry and Short's theory on homicide and suicide for being inaccurate. In 1958, Gold argued that, though Henry and Short are correct that frustration can indeed lead to aggression, it is not the frustrated individual's status that is most important to consider. Instead, Gold argued that the social status of the individual's parents is more important. This is because the way by which one deals with frustration, including the way and direction by which this frustration is expressed, is a by-product of the socialization that a person receives from his or her parents, the socializing agents of the person's formative years (Douglas, 2015). People from families with high social status are more often socialized to express their frustrations inwards, whereas people from families with lower social status are more often socialized to express their frustrations outwards.

During the same period, three other theories were proposed that could potentially explain the phenomenon of suicide. In 1960, Gibbs and Potterfield proposed their Status Change theory (Douglas, 2015). This theory started with a critique of Durkheim's work, with the two theorists arguing that Durkheim was ambiguous in his discussion of social integration. Gibbs and Potterfield looked into the potential relationship between social mobility and suicide. They proposed that change in social mobility, be it an upward or downward mobility, is related to an increase in suicide risk because of the change in the person's social milieu which he or she now has to contend with — with downward mobility resulting in a greater increase in suicide risk than upward mobility. This theory seems to appear as nothing more than a rephrasing of some of the basic premises of Henry and Short's theory. However, aside from the element of social mobility, another element that is emphasized in Gibbs and Potterfield's theory is social ties. The connection of these two elements is as follows: the change in a person's social mobility, be it upward or downward, may cause a weakening of the person's social ties. Even if it does not, the change will nonetheless cause a feeling of frustration (if mobility is downward) or tension (if mobility is upward) that predisposes the person to commit suicide. The only deterrent to this would be the person's social ties which could regulate the person's behavior. However, since these

social ties have been weakened or are already weak from the start, these social ties are incapable of regulating the person's actions and keeping the person from committing suicide.

Shortly after proposing the Status Change theory, Gibbs partnered with Martin to propose another way of explaining suicide in 1964. Instead of putting the focus on social mobility, Gibbs and Martin focused on changes in the social roles of the individuals instead. Gibbs and Martin argued that people's tendency for suicidal behavior is a result of the statuses they hold and the consequent difficulties encountered in fulfilling the various social roles which they are expected to fulfill as part of their status, especially when the roles have incompatible expectations (Fernquist, 2009). In other words, the risk of suicide is influenced by the role conflict which people experience. For example, an individual could have an occupational status with role expectations which he or she is expected to devote time and effort to fulfill. However, aside from this occupational status are other statuses with varying role expectations such as being a son or daughter and/or wife or husband and/or father or mother which the individual must also perform. As the individual encounters greater difficulty in fulfilling his or her accumulated role expectations, the risk of suicide becomes greater for the individual. Gibbs and Martin also posited that possession of statuses which are uncommon or considered outside the norm of society is likely to increase the risk of suicide. Examples of these are the statuses of being teenage mothers or fathers, being both the father and mother of a household, or being the sole breadwinner at a very early age.

SOCIOLOGY OF SUICIDE AT THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY AND THE START OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Dr. Steven Stack, a social scientist who dabbles with the sociology of deviance with suicide as a core focus, proposed two new ways in understanding suicide in the 1980s. Stack proposed a new way of looking at the connection between religion and suicide — a connection which had previously been discussed by theorists such as Masaryk. Stack's Religious Commitment theory differs from the other theories that emphasize the capability of religion in deterring suicidal behavior by suggesting that it is not religiosity that deters the religious individual from committing suicide. Instead, the real deterrent lies on specific aspects of a religious

belief (Stack, 1983). For example, the Christian beliefs that Jesus walked on water, Jesus turned water into wine, Jesus can heal the sick, and Jesus was resurrected on the third day after dying on the cross are argued to have no deterring capabilities against suicidal behavior whereas a belief in heaven and hell – the latter of which is regarded as the place where those who would die by committing suicide would be placed for all eternity – would have an effective deterring capability against suicidal acts.

Stack proposed another factor that influences suicide during the same period. Following the importance given to social ties by the earlier theories, Stack argued that one of the important factors that predispose people into suicidal behavior is migration. Specifically, migrants are more likely to commit suicide than the natives. The rationale behind this premise is that those who recently migrated would likely have to leave their close relatives and friends behind in their area of origin. These relatives and friends serve a dual function: they serve as a support network for the individual while serving a regulatory function for the behavior of the individual as well. The loss of these networks in the migrant's area of destination makes them more susceptible to suicidal thoughts and behaviors especially when met with difficult circumstances in their new community of residence (Stack, 1980).

In 1989, Pescosolido joined the throng of social theorists who made a connection between religion and suicidal behavior. Similar to many of the sociological theories on suicide, Pescosolido's network theory of suicide gave importance to religion's relationship with suicidal behavior. However, unlike Masaryk who focused on religiosity itself as the deterrent for suicide or Stack who focused on particular religious beliefs, Pescosolido took the position that the focus should be on the networks or bonds of friendship that were borne from religion. The importance of religion, therefore, is not on the doctrines that espouse the sanctity of life and evil of suicide or its moral claims as a whole but rather on its capability to provide a venue for fellow religious persons to come together and form bonds of friendship (Lester, 2000). Pescosolido also suggested that this relationship between religious networks and low suicide rate is more defined in areas which have been historical hubs of religion or the areas where the religion first started or spread because these areas have religiously-embedded structures like schools, hospitals, and social clubs which would help enable coreligionists to come together outside of their religious services.

The next theory in this review is not strictly a sociological theory but, rather, a social psychological theory of suicide. Nevertheless, some of its elements bear similarities to the other theories, albeit with a different appreciation of how these elements are interrelated with each other and how they can predispose people to suicidal behavior.

Joiner's Interpersonal theory of Suicidal Behavior in 2005 is one of the most recent theories which attempt to predict the phenomenon. Though this theory is presented more as a psychological theory, its utilization of social factors as one of its main elements rather than a focus on internal mental processes makes it more in line with the subfield of social psychology rather than strictly psychology. According to O'Connor and Nock (2014), Joiner's theory is distinct from the psychological theories on suicide because while earlier psychological theories attempt to explain why suicidal motivations or thoughts of suicide occur in people, these theories are limited in explaining why these thoughts are translated into actual suicidal behavior.

In the Interpersonal theory of Suicidal Behavior, Joiner posits that suicidal behavior is a function of three factors: (1) thwarted belongingness, (2) perceived burdensomeness, and (3) a sense of fearlessness.

Thwarted belongingness is Joiner's concept to describe an individual's perception or feeling of being alienated from others. This is usually characterized by statements such as "I feel alone", "I don't feel that I belong", and "I feel like I am not important to others" and is brought about by the person's lack of strong social ties. Perceived burdensomeness, on the other hand, is an individual's perception that one is more of a burden than a being of any importance to one's family and friends and that one's loss would be more beneficial to these significant others. Joiner posits that, as these two factors increase, the individual's desire to commit suicide also increases. However, this alone would not be able to compel the individual to actual suicidal behavior. This is where the importance of the third factor, a sense of fearlessness, comes in. This element is characterized by an individual's ability to overcome the instinct for self-preservation or, in other words, fearlessness in the face of death which translates into an acquired capability for suicidal behavior. This capability, Joiner stated, is developed through higher pain tolerance due to involvement in traumatic and/or painful experiences such as verbal and physical abuse.

SYNTHESIS OF THE POSITIVIST THEORIES OF SUICIDE

From the theories discussed, the following assumptions about the social phenomenon of suicide can be derived:

The family unit and peers are important because attachment to these social ties provides an integrative function which may curb the threat of suicide among individuals. The individual's relationships with his or her relatives and peers are important support networks against suicide ideation and attempts. It must be noted that, aside from the integrative function, the family unit also serves a regulatory function on an individual's behavior. However, it is necessary to keep in mind that regulation is a double-edged sword: too little regulation and too much regulation on the individual's behavior could both predispose individuals to greater chances of suicide. Furthermore, it is not necessary for these social ties to be actually weak. The mere perception of individuals that their ties to these people are weak or, in other words, they do not always feel a strong sense of belongingness is enough to significantly contribute to their suicidal tendencies.

Just like the family and peer social structures, the religious social structure also serves as a protective factor against suicide. However, it varies among theorists whether this protection is brought about by the moral restraints of religiosity itself, belief in certain religious ideas, or because of the social networks built during religious gatherings that serve as support for the individual. Further analysis of Masaryk's anxiety with the loss of religiosity shows that his perceived problem actually lies with the loss of people's subscription to the normative values of society, with which the religious structure is supposed to reinforce in people's consciousness. Therefore, the loss or weakening of people's hold on normative values is a predisposing factor for suicide as well. It should be noted that the fear of modern education as a factor to suicide appears to be grounded on the fear that secular education will be devoid of normative beliefs in the sanctity of life. The fear of the secular was, after all, one of the streams of thought in reaction to the twin revolutions of the 19th century which was the backdrop of the theory's formulation. Perhaps, it was unable to account for the fact that modern education would be supplied in part by religious institutions.

Meanwhile, whereas the traditional structures of family and religion are protective against suicide, the so-called structures and processes of modernity in the form of modern education and urbanization are thought

to predispose people to suicide. For modern education, this is because of its capability to diminish a person's religiosity without substituting any moral restraints to people's behavior on its own. Meanwhile, urbanization is feared to weaken the social ties of people in society. Modern education, therefore, weakens the regulation of people's behavior while urbanization weakens the integrative functions.

The issue of societal integration is not limited to family, peers, and religion. Rather, societal integration into the general community is theorized to be a protective factor against suicide. As Stack would contend, greater length of time staying with one's community – and the longer temporal opportunity it provides to build relationships with other members of the neighborhood – is a protective factor against suicide. Social status is also believed to have a bearing on people's predisposition for suicide. People who are in relatively high standing in society or are raised by a family who are relatively well-off are said to be more likely to commit suicide, especially in times of economic troubles and weakened social ties. There is also another perspective that believes that suicidal tendencies are not necessarily more associated with high status. Rather, the real trigger of suicidal behavior is the conflict between the various roles that people are expected to fulfill in society, especially when the roles are not commonly expected to be fulfilled by the cohort from which the individual comes from. For example, teenage mothers or youth who are forced to work even when they should be in school are more likely to feel the stress of having to fulfill several roles, thereby making them more susceptible to suicidal thoughts and possibly suicidal acts.

A recurring element that can be observed in most of the theories is the importance of integration or social ties. This is perhaps understandable given that many of the theories used the Durkheimian theory as their foundation. Even Masaryk, who predated the Durkheimian theory, sang a similar tune to the Durkheimian and what may be described as neo-Durkheimian theories — including, even, the social psychological theory of suicide posited by Joiner. It is notable that the only theory which can be described as an outlier to all of these is that of Durkheim's old rival, Gabriel Tarde. Whereas Durkheim emphasized integration and regulation, Tarde hypothesized that the main point lies in the process of imitation — with people being predisposed to suicide if the people they frequently interact with attempts the act. This disagreement is not surprising, given that the two

theorists disagreed during their time, and it is precisely this disagreement on what a science of society should focus on – Tarde's focus on components of social interaction versus Durkheim's focus on social structures – that marked the dimming of Tarde's career and fame as a social scientist.

A summary of the sociological theories of suicide discussed in this chapter is provided in Table 1 along with a summary of their main idea(s).

Table 1. Summary of sociological theories of suicide and their main idea(s).

THEORY	MAIN IDEA(S)
Tarde's Imitation Theory	People can be influenced into committing suicide through imitation.
Masaryk's Theory of Suicide	Suicide is a by-product of the decline of religion in society which leads to loss of moral restraints and meaning of life.
Durkheim's Classic Theory of Suicide	Suicide is brought about by extremely high or low levels of social integration and social regulation.
Halbwachs' Theory of Suicide	Suicide is a by-product of urbanization which leads to feelings of social isolation.
Henry and Short's Theory on homicide and Suicide	In times of economic instability, individuals with high and low status both experience frustration, with the individuals with high status expressing their frustration-induced aggression against themselves for failing and individuals with low status directing their aggression towards other people because of a perception that society was unjust to them.
Gold's Theory on Homicide and Suicide	Similar to Henry and Short's; but with the premise that the social status of the person's parents who socialized the person on how to handle one's frustration as being more influential than the individual's own social status.
Gibbs and Potterfield's Status Change Theory	Change in people's status in society due to social mobility results in feelings of either frustration or tension, making people more susceptible to committing suicide.
Gibbs and Martin's Status Integration Theory	Role conflict which is experienced as a result of having several, oftentimes conflicting, social status leads to suicide.
Stack's Religious Commitment Theory	Only a select few aspects of religious belief are deterrents of suicide. In particular, only those who deal with the supernatural sanctions of committing suicide and the suggested result of this act in one's welfare in the afterlife.
Stack's Theory on Migration and Suicide	Migrants, especially those who migrated only recently, have weaker social ties in their area of destination. This lack of a strong network that can serve as social support and regulator predisposes them to a greater threat of suicide.
Pescosolido's Network Theory of Suicide	It is neither the religious beliefs nor religiosity itself that deters suicide but the potential existence of networks of friendship which were created among the coreligionists.

Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicide	Experiences of social isolation or thwarted belongingness, perceptions of being a burden to others, and a sense of fearlessness brought about by one's traumatic experiences while interacting with other members of society lead to suicide.

THE INTERPRETIVIST THEORIES OF SUICIDE

As mentioned previously, sociological theories on suicide could also operate from the interpretivist paradigm of Sociology. The interpretivist theories criticize the positivistic theories for their preoccupation with causalities of suicide. Instead, the interpretivist theories attempt to understand the meanings or reasons which people attach to the act. The interpretivist paradigm's contributions in the discussion of suicide are of equal importance with the positivistic theories discussed in this paper. This is because they are based on a different set of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions which allow them to discuss a different aspect of the phenomenon. The positivistic theories' focus on the identification of causal relationships of suicide limited their view of the phenomenon to an etic perspective — in other words, the contribution to the understanding of suicide as a phenomenon is limited to that of a detached outsider trying to see what led people to deliberately cause the termination of their lives. These interpretivist theories, on the other hand, offer a chance for an emic perspective — or a view on suicide coming from those who actually tried to commit the act. These theories would shed light on the reasons for suicide identified by the suicidal persons themselves, regardless of whether these reasons would hold true in an objective reality.

Just as the positivist approach to suicide was due in large part of Durkheim's classic study of suicide, the interpretivist approach started out with Douglas' criticism of Durkheimian theory because, as Douglas claimed, the usage of vital registries and statistics in the understanding of suicide – which is the primary method of choice of positivistic sociological suicidology – only allows a researcher to know suicide rates but leaves him completely uninformed with the actual reasons for the suicidal act (Douglas, 1966). Even when theorists would propose a relationship between various social variables and suicide, this is an imposition of the researcher's own assumptions on why suicides happen without giving any voice to the person who committed suicide. Therefore, he proposed that the focus should not be on the statistics of suicide as cross-tabulated with various socioeconomic variables from which

theorizing will then be founded on. Rather, the inquiry should dwell on the suicide notes where people's reasons, founded on their appreciation of their own social reality, are often written. After meticulously poring over suicide notes, Douglas was able to identify four themes of the social meanings people ascribe to their acts of suicide:

Suicide as transformation of the self — repentance suicide. This theme pertains to reasons given by people for their acts of suicide that imply an act of repentance for having done something wrong.

Suicide as transformation of the soul — escape suicide. This theme pertains to reasons given by people for their acts of suicide which suggest that their current circumstances in life have left them a feeling of being trapped with no other recourse but death.

Revenge suicide. This theme covers reasons left in suicide notes which imply that the act of suicide was committed with the expectation that one's death would hurt other people and, in doing so, the person would attain vindication. This line of reasoning is very similar to the old Chinese practice of committing suicide to leave a feeling of guilt and/or shame to another person.

Sympathy suicide. This is often found in attempted suicide. This theme pertains to messages that imply a cry for help, very much akin to the typical lay theory that suicidal acts are actually meant to signal a person's need for emotional help.

Baechler's work in 1980 was inspired by Douglas' initiative to approach the study of suicide in a manner different from the Durkheimian tradition. He proposed his own typology of social meanings of suicide which greatly resemble that of Douglas' but has an additional type which was unaccounted for by the latter. Baechler's typology is as follows:

Escapist suicides. Baechler considered this theme as comprising of suicide notes which give three kinds of reasons for suicide: a) flight from an intolerable situation, b) response to a grief/loss, and/or c) self-punishment. This is very similar to Douglas' Repentance and Escapist suicides.

Aggressive suicides. This pertains to reasons for suicide which suggest that the act was done as a) a form of vengeance with the goal of ascribing guilt and/or shame to someone, b) crime suicides or those with the intent to take other people as collateral damage in the suicidal act, c) blackmail suicides with the aim of compelling someone to give in to one's demands or to compel someone or others to treat the person better, and d) appeal suicides or suicidal acts as appeals to sympathy. This theme covers Douglas' Revenge and

Sympathy suicides.

Aside from these two themes which already cover Douglas', Baechler proposed two more themes:

Oblative suicides. This type pertains to acts of suicide which are explained as acts aiming to achieve a particular purpose, be it an act of altruism to save or benefit others or achieve a more desirable state such as reuniting with loved ones who have already passed away.

Ludic suicides. These are suicides committed that are not always aimed at a successful cessation of life. This pertains to suicides undertaken just to test and showcase one's courage as a form of a game, such as in Russian Roulette.

Following Douglas' and Baechler's typologies of suicide, Taylor's typology of suicide in 1982 was constructed with the idea that meanings of suicide are based on two elements: (1) the degree of certainty/uncertainty that people have about themselves and others and (2) the intended subject of the suicidal act (Gunn & Lester, 2014).

Submissive suicide. These are characterized by an inner-directedness (in other words, the intended subject is the person himself) and a certainty in what one is doing. These are suicides which suggest that the person committing the act has given up on life because of problems beyond the help of other people, usually because of terminal illnesses.

Thanatation suicide. These are characterized by inner-directedness but without a certainty of what one wants to do with one's life. Suicides which suggest that the person is not certain about whether or not they should live but they nevertheless attempt suicide.

Sacrifice suicide. These are characterized by outer-directedness and a certainty of what they are doing. The person who commits the suicidal act intends to put the focus of the suicide towards another person as a form of vengeance.

Appeal Suicide. Similar to Sacrifice suicide, the person intends to put the focus of the suicide towards another person, but the person is not certain if he or she should push through with deliberately ending his or her life. This is exemplified by suicides marked with a message where the person wonders if people would miss him or her once he or she is gone.

A tabular summary of these three typologies would allow for an easier way to identify the differences and overlapping themes of these three theories. This is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of the interpretivist theories of suicide.

DOUGLAS' TYPOLOGY	BAECHLER'S TYPOLOGY	TAYLOR'S TYPOLOGY
Repentance Suicide	Escapist Suicide	
Escape Suicide		Submissive Suicide
Revenge Suicide	Aggressive Suicide	Sacrifice Suicide
Sympathy Suicide		Appeal Suicide
	Oblative Suicide	
	Ludic Suicide	
		Thanatation Suicide

SYNTHESIS OF THE CURRENT SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF SUICIDE

From the quantity of theories presented, it can be deduced that sociological interest in suicide as a phenomenon was maintained over the centuries, though there are periods when the interest waned. Furthermore, the wealth of theories is focused predominantly on the positivist, Durkheimian approach. This may suggest two things about the Sociology of suicide: first, despite the fact that a century has already passed since its publication, sociologists still cannot get past the classical theorist when it comes to explaining this particular social reality. Furthermore, the lack of interpretivist theories relative to the number of positivist theories speaks of the predominant nature of Sociology in general and of the subfield of Sociology of suicide in particular. This may also be partly due to the methodological burden of interpretivist approach to suicide that often entails the analysis of suicide notes — an artifact that is only available to approximate one in every three suicides (Coffey, 2012).

It is also noteworthy that, while the positivistic and interpretivist theories of suicide differ in their philosophical underpinnings and are even critical of each other, the main ideas of the positivistic and interpretivist theories of suicide have overlaps. It is already previously noted that the three interpretivist typologies of suicide have overlaps with each other, but the types of suicide identified in these interpretivist theories also bear notable similarities with the positivistic theories. Douglas' Repentance suicide and Baechler's Oblative suicide bear similarities with the Durkheimian Altruistic suicide. Furthermore, Douglas' Sympathy suicide and Taylor's Appeal suicide are similar to Durkheim's Egoistic suicide. Even Baechler's

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Aggressive suicide has some elements found in Durkheim's Egoistic suicide. In addition to these, Douglas' Escape suicide and Baechler's Escapist suicide have similar elements of Durkheim's Fatalistic suicide. Finally, Baechler's Ludic suicide and Taylor's Thanation suicide have overlaps with Durkheim's Anomic suicide. This means that the remaining types of suicide from the interpretivist theories which are difficult to reconcile with the positivistic theories are Douglas' Revenge suicide and Taylor's Submissive and Sacrifice suicides.

BEYOND THE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF SUICIDE: A LOOK AT THE GREATER REALM OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE

The previous parts of this article have already made manifest the wealth of sociological theories on suicide. It might still be prudent, however, to visit the sociological theories which deal not specifically with suicide but with crime and deviance in general, of which suicide would also fall under.

Robert Merton proposed a theory in 1957 that considers suicide as just one of the potential deviant actions which people may do as a response to the frustrations encountered in society. Merton's Social Strain theory posits that, for every society, there is a set of culturally legitimate goals and a corresponding set of culturally legitimate means to attaining these goals (Ritzer, 2010). While members of society will recognize the culturally legitimate goals and will try to achieve these, they often encounter "strains" as a result of the frustrations and injustices experienced due to the institutionalized inequalities in the opportunities to attain these. Using these elements of culturally legitimate goals and means as the basis, Merton proposed that people in society could be classified into five types based on their adherence to the culturally-legitimate goals and their access to the legitimate means and their responses. These five types are the following: (1) Conformists, (2) Innovators, (3) Ritualists, (4) Retreatists, and (5) Rebels.

The Conformists are those who continue to believe in the culturally legitimate goals of society and try to attain these goals through the culturally legitimate means. Innovators are those who have rejected the culturally legitimate means and have adopted alternative methods in order to attain the culturally legitimate goals of society. The Ritualists are those who perform the culturally legitimate means of society as if it is part of their daily ritual.

They do this even though they do not really believe that they will successfully attain the culturally legitimate goals of society or even aim to attain them. The Retreatists are people who reject altogether the culturally legitimate means and goals and seek instead to withdraw themselves from society. Finally, the Rebels are those who reject the culturally legitimate means and goals of society and actively try to propose, or impose, a new set of goals and means for society to subscribe to.

While Robert Merton's Social Strain theory is not specifically designed to explain suicidal behavior, it does account for the phenomenon as an example of what a Retreatist would do in response to being unable to achieve the culturally-legitimate goals of society. It is also noteworthy that one of the most important goals in society is socioeconomic success, and in Merton's view, one potential response to a person's failure to attain this goal is retreatism through suicide. This premise bears similarities with the theories of Henry and Short and of Gold.

In the last decade of the 20th century, Robert Agnew made a new strain theory to explain deviant behavior. This theory is not specifically formulated to explain suicidal behavior like the original Mertonian Social Strain theory; instead, Agnew's General Strain theory (1992) attempts to explain the predisposing factors for deviant behavior in general. Even though Merton's Social Strain theory is well regarded as the contemporary appreciation of the Durkheimian tradition, Agnew criticized Merton's Social Strain theory. In Agnew's argument, he recognized that Merton's Social Strain was able to identify one of the main sources of strain in a person's life but it is unable to account for all the possible sources of strain which may push a person into committing acts of deviance. As such, he proposed a General Strain theory which was designed to account for the perceived weakness of Merton's own Strain theory.

According to Agnew, there are three types of strain which might predispose people into deviant behavior (1992). These three are as follows:

Failure to achieve positively-valued goods. This pertains to the traditional Merton concept of social strain wherein the person is unable to achieve the culturally-legitimate goals, resulting in a disparity between achievement and aspirations. This is made even more strenuous when the person arrives at the realization that his or her aspirations are not only unreachable at the present but are instead never within his or her capability to achieve. An example of strain under this typology is the failure to achieve

high monetary rewards in one's life or failure to finish one's aspired level of education.

Removal of positively-valued stimuli. This second type of strain is brought about by experiences of loss in a person's life. This, Agnew argued, is most pronounced during the earlier half of the person's life. Included in this typology are strains brought about by a loss of loved ones and dissolution of valued relationships such as break-ups and divorce.

Confrontation with negative stimuli. The third type of strain is also regarded by Agnew as most pronounced during the earlier part of a person's life. Exposure to negative experiences is viewed to have a powerful impact on the future of a person. Examples of strains in this type are experiences of child abuse and bullying, be it verbal or physical in nature.

Another theory during this period that is worth discussing is Travis Hirschi's Social Bonds theory (1969). Travis Hirschi's Social Bond or Social Control theory is a theory in Criminology. One of the notable arguments of Hirschi's theory is that several of the theories in criminology are flawed by their fundamental premise — while other theories assume that it is necessary for criminal motivation to first be created in the person before he commits a crime and that the focus of inquiry should be on identifying the factors which contribute to the creation of this criminal motivation, Hirschi argued that this could be approached conversely. Instead of looking at what pushes people into becoming criminals, studies can look into what keeps people from becoming criminals. In other words, instead of trying to ascertain what factors make people deviant, one can assume that people are capable of being deviant from the start and look into what keeps them within the boundaries of societal norms. He then argued that what keeps people from becoming criminals are the control mechanisms or social bonds in society.

For Hirschi, people's decision to commit criminal behavior is influenced by four factors that keep people living in accordance with societal norms. These four are, in Hirschi's words, (1) attachment, (2) commitment, (3) involvement, and (4) beliefs. While criminal behavior may allow the person to achieve the desired benefit, he or she refrains from doing so because it might entail sacrificing or losing the four factors — all of which are assumed to be ascribed importance to by the person.

Attachment to significant others. For Hirschi, the emotional closeness of people to the other members of society, particularly the family and, to a lesser degree, other agents in society such as peers and the school, limits the

tendency of people to commit crime because doing so would risk jeopardizing these interpersonal relationships. The greater the emotional closeness the person has to his or her family and friends, the lesser the likelihood that the person would be willing to sacrifice losing these attachments. As such, these attachments to significant others serve as a form of indirect control on people's behavior. People would think twice about committing socially unacceptable acts in fear of disapproval and of potentially disappointing their significant others.

Commitment to traditional types of action and goals. As a person continues to live as part of a society, he or she becomes increasingly committed to the achievement of conventional goals of that society. Examples of these goals are the attainment of higher education, getting married and having one's own family of procreation, and getting a job. For Hirschi, as the person achieves more of the conventional goals or becomes closer to achieving them, he or she will not risk losing or jeopardizing them all by becoming a criminal. Out of the four bonds, this is the element that serves as the most rational social bond. It operates under the social psychology of sunk cost.

Involvement in traditional activities. There are several socially-prescribed activities which a person can be involved with in every society. As the person becomes more involved with these prescribed activities, they would have fewer chances of planning and executing criminal behavior because of sheer lack of time. It operates under the old adage, "idle hands are the devil's playground".

Subscription to normative beliefs of society. This element operates under the sociopsychological premise that people's attitudes are influential in people's behavior. Belief in the values prescribed by society makes one less likely to commit behaviors that contradict these normative values. When these normative beliefs are weakened, people's tendency for deviant behavior increases.

Hirschi's assumption is that criminal offenders and delinquents lack these four interrelated bonds of society, whereas those who are noncriminals are in possession of these and are not willing to risk losing or breaking these bonds.

Though Agnew's and Hirschi's theories were formulated for and applied in crime and delinquency, it may be possible to utilize the elements and assumptions of these theories to the understanding of the phenomenon of suicide.

A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK ON SUICIDE BORNE OUT OF STRAIN AND BONDS

Agnew's and Hirschi's theories, when combined, produce an interesting push–pull theory that can be applied to the understanding of suicide. A conceptual framework borne out of the combination of these two theories is presented in Figure 1.

This framework will have two main independent variables: the strains which push people into suicide and the social bonds which pull people from suicide. The "strains" in this framework include the three types of strain which Agnew argued might predispose people into deviant behavior (1992): (1) Failure to achieve positively-valued goods, (2) removal of positively-valued stimuli, and (3) confrontation with negative stimuli. In addition to the types of strain identified in Agnew's theory, negative internal state is also included as part of the factors that increase the chances of suicide. Negative internal state here pertains primarily to two things: a negative or low evaluation of one's self-worth (self-esteem) and symptoms of depression — both of which have been noted in previous studies to be associated with suicide but are not clearly accounted for in Agnew's existing formulation of his theory. These strains and the negative internal state are expected to push people into the direction of suicide ideation and, eventually, suicide attempt. Meanwhile, the other element of the framework, the "social bonds", is expected to reduce people's chances of suicide. These social bonds are borrowed from Hirschi's theory: (1) Attachment to other members of society, (2) Belief in the normative values of society, (3) Commitment to the traditional actions and goals of society, and (4) Involvement in traditional societal activities.

The idea here is that, while the strains increase people's chances of committing suicide, the social bonds lessen people's suicidal tendencies. The presence of strains will increase people's chances of suicide ideation and, if the strains are very powerful, even of suicide attempt. The presence of social bonds, on the other hand, reduces people's tendency for suicide ideation and suicide attempts. It is possible that, in the presence of both strains and social bonds in a person's life, these two elements will interact: the strains will increase people's tendency for suicide while the social bonds will keep them from suicide. However, when the social bonds are insufficient to deter the strength of the strains, then the person starts to contemplate about suicide. Hence, the element of suicide ideation is produced. This suicide ideation is

expected to eventually progress to the stage of being actual suicide attempts when the strains felt by the person become increasingly stronger while the social bonds that keep the person's behavior in check become increasingly weaker. It must be noted that these strains and social bonds serve more as proximate factors to suicide. In light of this, the person's environment is also included in the framework to account for the distal factors that can indirectly lead to suicide. This includes the person's socioeconomic environment (accounting for factors such as economic boom and bust, urbanization, and globalization), cultural environment (accounting for factors such as bigotry and intolerance towards members of minority and deviant groups as well as collectivism or individualism among cultures), natural environment (accounting for factors which may be aversive to persons such as disasters and catastrophes), and institutional environment (such as laws that can impede or accelerate people's acquisition of desired goals).
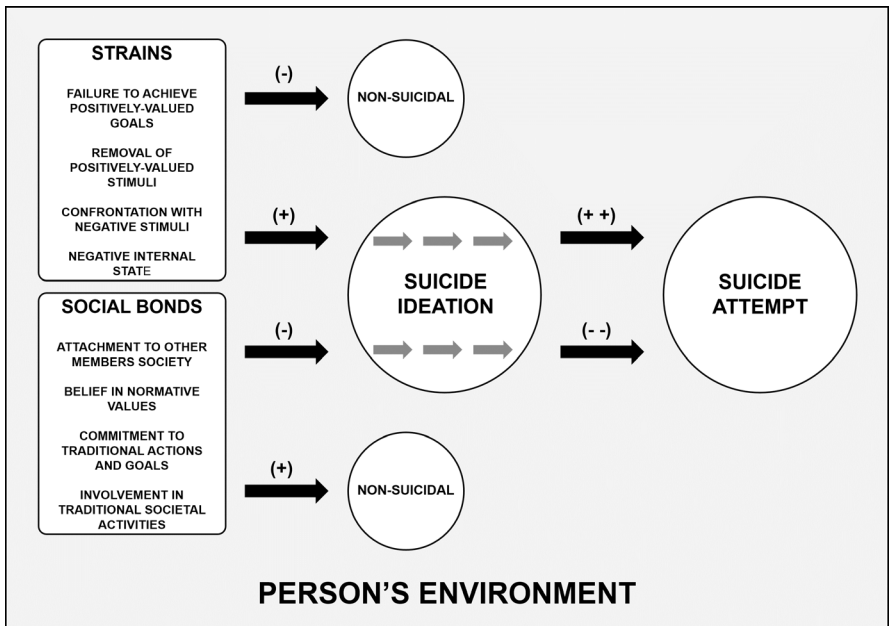

Figure 1. Theoretical framework produced from the combination of elements from Agnew's General Strain theory and Hirschi's Social Bonds theory as applied to suicide.

This new framework is noteworthy because it will be able to accommodate many of the ideas of the previously discussed sociological theories of suicide. The existing sociological theories of suicide gave attention to aversive

factors such as "frustrations", "tensions", and role strains. These can all be accounted for in the strains of the proposed framework. Even the reasons of sickness, loss, and feelings of being in intolerable situations are accounted for in the strains of the framework. Furthermore, these strains could serve as the catalyst to the sense of fearlessness identified as a necessity in Joiner's theory. On the other hand, the element of attachment to other members of society accounts for the salience of social ties in Durkheim's, Gold's, Stack's, Joiner's, and Pescosolido's theories. Masaryk's, Durkheim's, and Stack's theories are also accounted for in the element of belief in normative values. The elements of commitment and involvement lend greater nuance to the appreciation of the societal integration and regulation given importance to by the Durkheimian theories. Even Halbwach's urbanization (which, given today's society, might more accurately be regarded as globalization) and the economic instability salient in theories such as that of Henry and Short are also accounted for in the person's environment.

CONCLUSION

This paper reviewed the preexisting sociological theories of suicide from both the positivist and interpretivist perspectives as well as the general sociological theories of crime and deviance. From this review, it was able to synthesize many of the ideas of the previous theories and propose a new push–pull theoretical framework with which to understand the phenomenon of suicide. The necessity now is for empirical studies to be conducted to test the merits of this framework.

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Digital Literacy Enhancement of Rural Women in Luna, Apayao, Philippines

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The study determined how women in Luna, Apayao who attended the digital literacy training at the Community e-Center from 2011 to 2013 applied what they learned to themselves, their families, and their communities. Data were gathered from 50 rural women from May 19 to June 1, 2014 using a self-administered questionnaire, key informant interviews, and secondary documents. The research was guided by the Technological Determinism Theory of Marshall McLuhan (1962).

All of the trainees were married, with mean age of 42 years and college or postgraduate holders. Majority had jobs, mainly teachers, and were members of organizations such as the Parents–Teachers Association. To gain access to the Internet, they used portable broadband/DSL or visited the e-Center. Half of them used the Internet for only 1 to 2 hours per week. Majority gained knowledge on ICT operations such as how to use MS Word, MS PowerPoint, Facebook, email, and MS Excel.

The women gained self-confidence as this was their first exposure to ICT. The advantages to their families included facilitating academic assistance to their children and getting connected with their family members abroad, some of whom were OFWs. Lastly, they applied their training in community activities and projects, specifically in education, health and nutrition, entrepreneurship and livelihood, and safety and security. Only one mentioned agriculture, sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk management, youth empowerment, and governance.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

"With the 'information' or 'knowledge' society, development strategists now see the need for developing countries to adapt ICTs as a potential force not only for creating new economic growth opportunities but also for enhancing political participation of citizens and strengthening of democratic processes" (Ramilo, 2002). Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) "have great promise to reduce poverty, increase productivity, boost economic growth, and improve accountability, and governance" (World Bank, 2012).

For women in the rural areas, especially, ICTs offer immense possibilities for reducing poverty by providing income-generating opportunities, overcoming women's isolation, giving women a voice, improving governance, and advancing gender equality (Kuga Thas et al., 2007). There is a need to empower women as they constitute about half of the total population in the world, yet 70% of the world's disadvantaged are women (Action Aid, 2006 in Sudweeks et al., 2010).

As early as 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 called for the empowerment of women through enhancing their skills, knowledge, and access to and use of information technologies. It also included a strategic objective: increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.

Hence, during its 47th session in 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women for the first time directly focused on the issue of ICT and the empowerment of women. That same year, in 2003, no less than the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan gave a statement to the World Summit on the Information Society, Geneva, 10 December on the need to empower women by their inclusion in ICT programs (UNDAW, 2005).

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, 2003) stressed: "We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end,

we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end."

Since then, a range of ICT models and systems has been used to support the empowerment of women all over the world. Evidences are showing that ICTs have improved women's access to information, provided new employment, created new class of women entrepreneurs, and improved their access to government (Nath, 2001; FAO, IFAD, and World Bank, 2008). In Asia and Africa, ICTs have also helped women in agriculture (Pade et al., 2006); empowered Indian rural women by enhancing their knowledge on agriculture, health, and nutrition (Sulaiman et al., 2011); created significant difference in marginalized women's survival through freedom of information, communication, and mobility in the Thailand–Burma border (Ferenil, 2010); improved productivity, health, business, access to education, and the valuation of women labor in Zimbabwe (Matangi et al., 2013); and helped women gain more confidence level, more self-esteem, self-awareness, and dignity in Bangladesh (Laizu et al., 2010).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the Philippines, the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 2001–2004 (NEDA, 2001) states that "technology is the foundation of the Philippine's future economic development and the Philippines shall use ICTs to leapfrog into the new economy." The Internet in the Philippines was first made available in 1994. As of September 30, 2011, more than 30,000,000 people use the Internet in the country accounting for 33% of the total population (Internet in the Philippines, 2013).

To connect women in rural areas with the 'global village', former Mayor Betty C. Verzola[1], the first lady mayor of Luna, Apayao advocated for the establishment of the Community e-Center as a pilot project in the town in 2004.

Luna was formerly a 6th class town torn by problems of insurgency and violence and which was the literal battleground for the National People's Army (NPA) and the military for decades. It is in this municipality where Marag Valley is located, once dubbed as "No Man's Land" because of three barangays cradling insurgents.

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1   Betty was mayor from 1998 to 2007, interspersed with her husband from 2007 to 2008 and again from 2010 to 2013. She died in a car accident in 2013, but the project is continuing under former Vice Mayor Josephine Bangsil, who survived the car crash. These excerpts were interviews with her from 2010 to 2012 when she was still alive.

Being strategically located, Mayor Betty realized that Luna had the potential to become the center for government services and business in the province of Apayao. Her vision was for the Luna e-Center to serve as a competent provider of modern ICT services that would contribute to the betterment of the quality of life of the townsfolk of Luna and Lower Apayao and as part of the local government unit's eGovernance Program.

She bought one computer unit in the mid-1990s where her staff learned the basics of computer procedures and operations.

During one of the meetings called by the National Computer Center (NCC), which she attended, she learned of their project in establishing community e-Centers to pilot municipalities which were willing to put up counterpart funds and facilities. Believing that an e-Center would be beneficial to the people of Luna, the mayor lobbied with the NCC that Luna was an ideal site for one e-Barangay. In 2004, the municipality of Luna, Apayao was identified by the NCC as a recipient of the eLGU or Jumpstarting Electronic Governance in the Local Government Units mandated under the eCommerce Act of 2000. The municipal office received four units of personal computers, 3-in-1 printers, and web cameras.

In October 2004, the Luna Community e-Center was established at the Municipal Library located at the second floor of the municipal hall. There were yet no telecommunication land lines to support the e-Center. Hence, Luna's LGU subscribed to satellite Internet connection from a private ISP.

To promote the e-Center's use by the public that had no prior exposure to computer facilities before, the mayor's office offered Internet services, encoding, research works, and printing to the public for free.

On August 8–9, 2005, the Computer e-Center Orientation and Participatory Rapid Field Appraisal was participated by representatives from all sectors of the community. The Community e-Center was formally launched on 17 October 2005, and a Business Planning workshop was held on 20–23 February 2006.

The formal launching of the center was celebrated on October 17, 2009 on the occasion of the 76th Luna Founding Anniversary with no less than the Executive Director of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines and officials of the NCC as guests (former Mayor Betty remained as political adviser from 2008–2010).

Mayor Betty pushed for the opening up of opportunities for women empowerment by again lobbying that Luna should be included in the

NCC's program on the Philippine Digital Literacy for Women Program (PDLWC). She firmly believed that "women can help transform and develop communities." She committed to train 100 women of Luna, Apayao for empowerment. She herself became a trainee.

She also provided an initial funding of PhP50,000.00 appropriated from the Gender and Development Fund (GAD) in 2011 Supplemental Budget. After that, Mayor Betty gave the center the appropriations in its annual budget totaling PhP 1,802,100 in 2010 and PhP 425,590 in 2011. As the e-Center has the motto of "Service Above Profit," it generated only a third of the budget as income.

Further, Mayor Betty housed the e-Center at the ground floor of the Luna municipal hall just adjacent the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO). The e-Center is equipped with 16 computer units and is manned by an engineer, the Information Technology Officer, and technical assistants such as computer graduates of the Apayao State College (ASC). Serving as trainers/coaches are the Information Technology Officer and eight personnel of the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO) (Agustin, personal communication, 2014).

Trainings are usually held at the e-Center every Friday. With the limited number of computers, however, the training is conducted in batches with nine participants per batch. The first wave of training was conducted on September 27–30, 2011 where participants were mostly OFWs and members of the Luna Women Welfare Federation (LWWF). To date, eight batches of trainings have been conducted, producing digitally literate 101 women and 8 men.

Despite the e-Center having been operational for years, this study is the first formal documentation on the project since its implementation. Hence, it is also the first research on the effects of the digital literacy training or its benefits on the women participants and on community development in Luna, Apayao.

Findings on the operation and accomplishments of a pilot e-Center can be used as input into how to manage the project more effectively and efficiently as well as guide other similar future e-Centers in the country, especially those managed by local governments.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to determine how the women in Luna, Apayao who attended the digital literacy training at the Community e-Center applied what they learned to themselves, their families, and their communities. Specifically, the study aimed to 1) describe their ownership, access, and use of ICT; 2) discuss the knowledge they gained from the digital literacy training; and 3) discuss some applications of their digital literacy training.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The research was guided by the Technological Determinism Theory of Marshall McLuhan, which he first proposed in 1962 (McLuhan, 1964). In essence, Technological Determinism Theory states that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, and act and how our society operates as we move from one technological age to another (from tribal to literate to print and to electronic).

Because of such changes, technology can drive human interaction and create social change. The ICTs can bring transformative shifts in society. This concept focuses on the effects and/or impacts that ICTs have on users, organizations, and society (Ccit205, 2014). A basic precept is that all technology is communication, an extension of ourselves that allows us to reach further through time and/or space; hence, technology can empower.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Through ICT, women's capacities can be 'extended,' and technology would shape them into newly 'empowered' women with more capabilities. Figure 1 shows the variables studied to prove such premise of the Technological Determinism Theory.

The independent variables are Internet access and use (ownership, access, and frequency of access) and the women's enhanced digital literacy from the training at the Luna e-Center. Digital literacy could be gauged by the women's enhanced knowledge about ICT. The intervening variables are the women's sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, education, income, training, organization, etc.).

The aim of the digital literacy project is to 'capacitate' the digital literacy

of the rural women and see how this is applied to themselves, their families, or their communities.
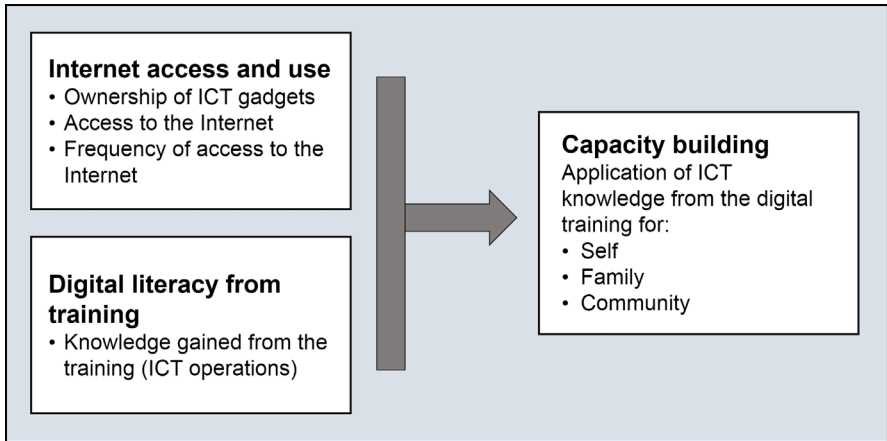
METHOD

A survey was done to "collect quantitative information about items in a population from at least a part of the population as basis for assessing the incidence, distribution, and interrelations of phenomena as they occur in the lives of people" (Librero, 2009).

LOCALE AND TIME OF STUDY

Data were gathered from the women trainees from May 19 to June 1, 2014 in Luna, Apayao. Apayao belongs to the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). Luna is geographically situated in the northern part of the province of Apayao. It is approximately 1475 km direct distance from Pamplona, Cagayan in the northwest. It is bounded by the Abulug River on the south, by the provincial boundary on the north, and by the unknown creeks below the steep side of Cordillera on the west (Figure 2).

The municipality covers 60,604 hectares with 22 barangays. Of the 22 barangays of Luna, 20 barangays were classified as rural as of 2006. Luna itself, had been a 6th class municipality until 2008 when the government leadership under the Verzolas transformed it into a second class municipality (NSCB, 2015).

The respondents came from 13 barangays of Luna: Bacsay, Bucao, Cagandungan, Capagaypayan, Calabigan, Dagupan, Lappa, Poblacion,

Quirino, San Isidro Norte, San Isidro Sur, San Sebastian, and Turod. Hence, almost all the barangays of Luna were represented. Except for Poblacion, where the municipality of Luna is located, and San Isidro Sur, which was considered urban in 2006, all the 11 other barangays were classified as rural (Figure 3).

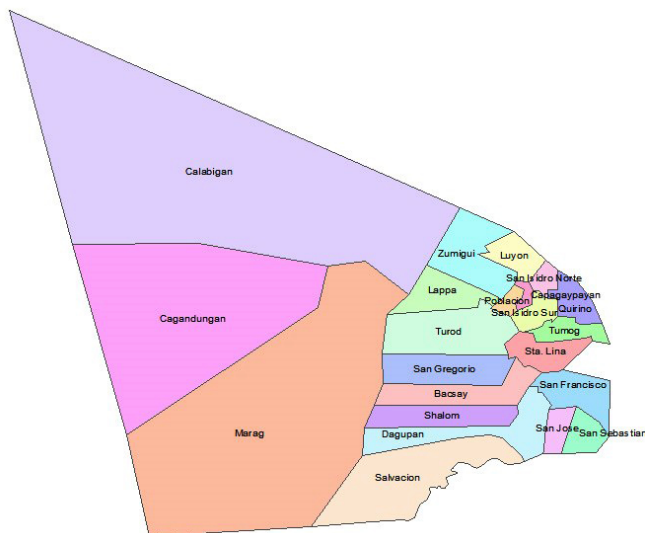**Figure 2.** Map of the Philippines showing the location of Apayao.

Figure 3. Map of Luna, Apayao showing the barangays.

Source: www.lunaapayao.gov.ph

RESPONDENTS AND SAMPLING

A survey was done among 50 purposively sampled women who attended the Digital Literacy Training at the Luna Community e-Center from 2011 to 2013. The complete list of 101 trainees was secured from the Head of the Office of the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO) of Luna, Apayao. Only those contacted by cellular phone (if available) who signified that they were willing to participate in the research as well as share their experiences were included.

Key informant interviews were chosen for a more in-depth interview: two teachers; a senior citizen; Luna e-Center's coordinator, training staff, and technician; and the Luna, Apayao's mayors (past and present).

DATA GATHERING

Data were gathered from May 19 to June 1, 2014 using a self-administered questionnaire and key informant interviews. For some questions, they were asked to rate their perceived digital literacy on a Likert-like scale of 1 to 5 with 5 as the highest.

The interviews cited here with Mayor Verzola at various dates from 2010 to 2012 happened before she died during the times the researchers' family visited Luna, Apayao and her office. Back then, she was already sharing stories and pictures of her lobbying efforts and milestones with the e-Center in Luna and how women 'used and became empowered' by ICT.

To document the experience of the Luna Community e-Center, secondary documents were secured from the Luna e-Center.

DATA ANALYSIS

The survey answers were presented using descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages. The interviews with some of the women trainees and other project stakeholders such as those in charge of the community e-Center and the past and present mayors supplemented the quantitative data with explanations and discussions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Profile of the Women Trainees

All of the 50 trainees were married and with mean age of 42 years. Majority have finished college education (36) and postgraduate degrees, with most of them finishing education. About a third of the women have work, with majority of them working either as teachers in elementary or in high school. Majority also have organizations (42), mainly the Parents–Teachers Association (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of the profile of the women trainees.

PROFILE	NUMBER (n = 50)
Civil status	
Married	42
Single/separated/widow/er	8
Age	
Range: 31–75	
Mean: 42.08	
Education	
High school	9
Vocational/Associate	3
College undergraduate	2
College graduate	36
BSc/AB	26
MS/MA	9
PhD	1
Membership in organization	
Member	42
Top organizations	
Parent–Teachers Association	14
Barangay LGU	9
Mothers Association	5
Women's Welfare Club	4

ICT Ownership and Access of Women to the Internet

The 50 women trainees owned cellular phones (49), laptops (23), or desktops (7). Almost half of them (20) had their own broadbands to connect to the Internet (Table 2).

To gain access to the Internet, majority of the respondents used broadband/DSL (28), or they visited the e-Center in the municipality of Luna (14). However, almost a quarter (11) still had no access to the Internet. So far, only three used their cellular phones (android or smart phones) to gain access to the Internet.

As to the frequency of accessing the Internet, half of them (25) used the Internet for only 1 to 2 hours per week, while only about a quarter (13) used the Internet for 3 to 4 hours per week. This is actually a low figure compared with the 4 hours and 25 minutes spent by the average Internet user each day or the more than 6 hours spent on the World Wide Web by Filipino Internet users (WeAreSocial report cited by Dizon, 2015).

This is understandable as prepaid broadbands are also expensive to the average wage earner. As they were working, they also could not always go to the e-Center that offered cheaper rental per hour. In the e-Center, the charge was PhP 15 per hour, while the only other computer shop with only two computers in the town charged PhP 25 per hour. Nevertheless, some of them said that this was much better than in the past where they had no access to the Internet at all and had to use snail mail, or they had to visit other offices personally in the other towns.

Table 2. ICT Ownership and Access of Women to the Internet.

ITEMS	FREQUENCY (n = 50)
Ownership of ICT gadget	
Cellular phone	49
Laptop	23
Broadband/DSL	20
Desktop	7
Access to the Internet	
Broadband/DSL	28
e-Center	14
Cellular phone	3
No access	11

Frequency access to the Internet (hour/week)	
1–2	25
3–4	13
5 hours or above	9
Cannot determine	3

Note: Multiple answers.

Knowledge Gained from the Digital Literacy Training at the e-Center

The training course covered five modules, with self-practice activities conducted after every module. These modules included Module 1: Introducing Computers and Operating Systems; Module 2: Introducing Internet and Email; Module 3: Introducing Word Processing; Module 4: Introducing Spreadsheets; and Module 5: Introducing Multimedia.

The knowledge gained from the training at the e-Center in Luna, Apayao involved learning ICT operation skills such as the following: 1) MS Word (40); 2) MS PowerPoint (34); 3) Facebook (33); 4) email (27); and 5) MS Excel (25). These were needed to enhance their roles as educators especially in improving their lessons and teaching and even preparing their reports and publications. For the LGU participants, the basics of word processing was needed whenever they drafted barangay ordinances, resolutions, letters, development and investment plans, and other documents.

Many of the respondents also learned how to use PowerPoint and Excel because as teachers, they sometimes had to present their lessons using PowerPoint in class. Some schools without LCD projectors often just used their laptops or desktops to present PowerPoint to their students. They also learned how to use Excel to help them in the computation of their grades in class.

The women also learned how to do basic computer operation such as printing (24) and scanning (12). For specialized software, many of the women (12) also learned how to do basic layout. Some of these layouts were in Word, and these were usual handouts for students (Table 3).

As for social media, majority of the respondents gained knowledge in using Facebook. According to them, they used Facebook to connect with their colleagues in other offices. Most often though, they used Facebook to socialize with friends and connect with their relatives abroad. Most of the

citizens in Luna, Apayao have one or two relatives working or living abroad, especially in Hawaii, where the first Ilocano migrants went as farm laborers. Only one, however, was using Instagram or Twitter.

Table 3. ICT operation learned from the digital training at the e-Center.

ICT OPERATION	FREQUENCY (n = 50)
MS Word	40
MS PowerPoint	34
Facebook	33
Email	27
MS Excel	25
Print	24
Scan	12
Lay-outing	12
Web browsing/surfing	11
Adobe Photoshop	7
Video maker	7
Chat	1
Skype	1
Instagram	1
Twitter	1

Note: Multiple response

Other Sources of Knowledge on Digital Literacy

As for their other sources of knowledge or computer literacy, an equal number mentioned friends (19) and self-study (19). This was followed by the e-Center (17), family members (12), and work colleagues (5) (Table 4).

Some of the friends were actually colleagues also in school or at work who patiently guided them step-by-step on the procedures of how to operate some of the computer programs. Family members also helped them learn these programs, especially their teenage children who were in high school or college.

Nevertheless, the trainers as well as the technicians (usually engineers) at the e-Center still played a big role in enhancing the learning process of the women. Hence, the e-Center was mentioned by 17 of the women learners. Family members also helped them learn these programs, especially their teenage children who were in high school or college. In fact, some of the

women teachers admitted that it was their teenage children who used to prepare their PowerPoint and other presentations until they learned to prepare these themselves. If they were rushing though, they confessed that they still asked their children to help them accomplish the presentations since the latter were more adept and faster in producing these materials.

Some of them also mentioned work colleagues as these were the people they worked with everyday and could ask from time to time about some of the computer procedures which they may have forgotten from the training at the e-Center.

Table 4. Other sources of knowledge on digital literacy.

TRAINERS	FREQUENCY (n = 50)
Friends	19
Self-study	19
e-Center	17
Family members	12
Work colleagues	5

Note: Multiple responses.

Application of the Knowledge from the Luna e-Center

Majority (26) said that they were able to apply what they have learned from the e-Center digital literacy training, while 18 answered 'sometimes'.

As to the application, almost everyone cited the application to themselves (36), to families (20), and to their communities (24) (Table 5).

Table 5. Application of ICT learning by the women trainees.

ITEMS	FREQUENCY
Applied what was leaned	
Yes	26
Sometimes	18
No	6
Application	n = 44
Improve myself	36
Improve community	24
Improve family	20

Note: Multiple responses.

IMPROVE THEMSELVES

The perceived improvement of self is understandable if we consider that this may be their first exposure to ICT. As the trainers said:

> The training, indeed, is a venue of introducing the technology to those who have zero knowledge of computer operation and of familiarizing those who have very little know-how. With the training, we were able to sense the eagerness of the 'technophobics' or the so called 'computer illiterates'.

In fact, since the e-Center was a new concept and a new facility being offered by the LGU, the staff could explain it best as being an Internet café, which was more popular in urban areas such as Tuguegarao, Cagayan. Hence to attract the first users, the e-Center offered initially free Internet services, encoding, research works, and printing to the public. Perhaps, the fact that it was the only Internet and information facility in the locality also attracted subsequent users.

Hence, training enhanced the women's self-confidence and gave them that 'wonder of new discovery.' A retired stenographer confessed that she was hesitant to attend the training for senior women at first because she was 'wondering what did that machine have to do with her?' After the training, however, she realized that the computer actually made stenography much easier for her typing. Hence, she became convinced that "we must keep up with modern technology."

Aside from self-confidence, there were practical benefits. One said that she used to "travel at least two hours to reach the nearest Internet café and spend not less than 300 pesos just to send reports or documents through email." Now, she could do it with less effort and money without travelling.

IMPROVE THEIR FAMILIES

Many of the respondents (30) also cited advantages of learning ICT to their families. For instance, they were relieved a bit of the burden as they could help their children in making researches, term papers, and assignments. The Internet facilitated this work for their family.

The e-Center also connected families, especially those with OFW

members. Before, a relative of an OFW had to travel for a day going to an Internet café and can only spend an hour or so talking to her spouse through VOIP. Hence, the e-Center provided a more convenient and ready venue for contacting loved ones and family members. The MPDO even shared that "many friendships and reunions have also been made at the e-Center" such as Facebook pals and online dates.

The senior women also felt loved and cared for because they get connected with their families. An account in the journals of the e-Center read thus:

> Dr. Salud Barroga, 75 years old, used to come to the e-Center almost every day to seek assistance from the center staff. Her children had given her a laptop, but she doesn't know how to use it. 'Hindi na ako nalulungkot mag-isa dahil mayroon akong ka-Facebook. I can communicate with my children who reside in the USA, Japan, and Australia — anytime, anyplace, and anywhere.'"

IMPROVE THEIR COMMUNITIES

Of the 24 who said that they have applied their training in community activities and projects, they cited the fields of education (8), health and nutrition (5), entrepreneurship and livelihood (2), and safety and security (2). Only one mentioned agriculture, sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk management, youth empowerment, and governance (Table 6).

Education. As expected from a majority of teacher-respondents, 8 were able to apply what they learned in their profession. Many of them used the word processing software Microsoft Word to type their lessons or letters and other documents. For the LGU participants, they were taught the basics of word processing since this is widely used especially in the drafting of barangay ordinances, resolutions, letters, development and investment plans, and other documents.

Many of the respondents also used PowerPoint and Excel to prepare and present their lessons. They also used Excel to help them in the computation of their grades in class. Hence, the processes in academic procedures became streamlined, more efficient, and hopefully, also fairer.

The Community e-Center also became "a major hangout among students and professionals doing researches in the absence of a library

equipped with up-to-date reference materials." Hence, the physical distance of Luna, Apayao and relative remoteness were transcended by the Internet and access to modern learning resources that could not be bought or brought to the town.

As there were also LGU employees, the Basic Computer Literacy Training for LGU employees, conducted in partnership with the Apayao State College — IT Department, enhanced their computer application skills for office productivity and efficiency. This was part of the outreach program of the e-Center that taught ICT literacy to government employees from both local and national government agencies. Mayor Verzola aimed for a 100% computer literate workforce to enhance the delivery of basic services. Hence, every employee became equipped to deal with transactions even outside Luna, Apayao in the digital age.

Some benefits accrued to the staff of the e-Center, too. Because of the good evaluation of their performance, some of them were granted scholarship grants to e-Center Academy, equipment grants, and participation to the exchange program. Hence, the incentives and continuous trainings also helped professionalize these IT personnel as partners in the educational sector of the town.

Most important, probably, is that they gained the foundation or a stepping stone to higher academic ambitions. With the confidence of gaining skills in the use of the computer and the Internet, some of the teachers 'dared' to enroll at the Open Universities for Distance Learning. They believed that the e-Center could provide them that venue for their online studies. As the trainers said: "Communication here and abroad was made easier and faster—for the employees, students, farmers, businessmen, religious leaders, and relatives of OFWs." Such could potentially improve the educational competence of the educators in the town and enhance their professionalism as a vital sector in community development.

Health and nutrition. Five of the women mentioned using what they learned from the ICT training for proper health and nutrition.

As many of them were teachers and mothers at the same time or they belonged to the Mothers Association, Women's Welfare Club, Barangay Health Workers, or Barangay Nutrition Scholars, they researched about certain topics from the Internet. They learned about healthy foods, alternative foods, and recipes as well as preparation of nutritious but low-cost foods. They used these ideas for their own families. Most importantly, they shared

these ideas to their fellow mothers or women clubbers in the community during meetings.

Also, as there was only one hospital in town and it was located quite far from the barangays, some of the women researched on some practical medications or the scientific basis of some sicknesses or diseases from the Internet. This way, they did not have to travel far to get some opinions from the doctors or medical practitioners.

Entrepreneurship and livelihood. Two of the women cited entrepreneurship and livelihood. The concept of the operation of the e-Center itself was a good example of entrepreneurship with service. In fact, the motto of the e-Center was 'Service Before Profits.' Nevertheless, from 2007 to 2009, the e-Center generated PhP517,443 or almost half a million pesos from the use of various clientele.

The MPDO staff also mentioned a related benefit that may be considered under livelihood. They related that, during the time when the GSIS e-card for government employees was being implemented, employees from municipalities of Lower Apayao and those from Cagayan and neighboring provinces had to come to the e-Center to activate their membership and loans. Hence, it was during that time, they said, when almost everyone realized the importance of having a community e-Center in town.

The MPDO staff also mentioned that the e-Center has become a hangout of visiting tourists in Luna. They said: "Sometimes, many visitors hardly believe the existence of such facilities in a place on this part of Cordillera. Amidst high mountains, our community is connected to the world."

The women learners with family members who were OFWs also benefited. The e-Center served as the access point for their communicating with their employers abroad or with potential employers. For the teachers, they used the e-Center as access point to search for potential opportunities for capacity building such as scholarships or trainings outside Luna, Apayao.

Such was the impact of the e-Center on the community's potential livelihood that Mayor Verzola (a trainee herself) had been invited to share Luna's best practices on LGU Economic Enterprise showcasing the management/operation of the Luna e-Center as a local enterprise on July 26, 2011 at the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG), UP Diliman. This gave honor to the town, improved its image and representation, and increased its chances to win other awards as a town in the future.

Safety and security. Two women learners also mentioned the safety and security effects on their children and on some of the e-Center staff who happened to be their relatives albeit twice removed. One mother said that her children no longer needed to go outside the town and spend so much money to access the Internet, do research work, or scan and print. She just advised her children to go to the e-Center, and she assisted them to accomplish these works. Hence, she felt that this ensured the safety of her family members.

Putting this in the context of the community, more community members no longer had to go out of town, but they did their business right in the town, hence ensuring their safety.

Another relative of the e-Center staff said that, because of the e-Center, the staff of the IT Unit/Center was able to get plantilla positions in the Municipal Office. The LGU created a plantilla position of IT Officer I who manned the IT Unit/e-Center. Hence, this enabled the career growth of the e-Center personnel and the IT profession in the town. This also opened up the recognition of the IT profession in a predominantly agricultural town that esteemed doctors and lawyers as having the highest positions.

Governance. While only one respondent mentioned improved governance, the researchers would include other inputs from the key informants from the e-Center.

Digital literacy revolutionized government service delivery, according to Mayor Verzola. "Electronic copies of government reports of NGAs in the locality are sent through the e-Center which is located few steps away from their offices, thus beating submission deadlines is no longer a problem for these NGAs."

Reporting and communication to higher offices became faster for the national agencies and offices located in Luna. There was also a closer coordination with various national agencies and other institutions, most particularly with the philcecnet.

Luna e-Center has trained interested individuals from various sectors of the community. At the time of the survey, it has trained 110 barangay officials (Punong Barangays, Secretaries, Kagawads), 115 LGU employees, 35 farmers, 40 OSYs, 15 women, 20 religious workers, and 15 teachers. It had also conducted a series of training workshops on basic computer operations to barangay officials particularly the Punong Barangay secretary and treasurer and other interested barangay officials. The training aims to equip and capacitate barangay officials with basic computer knowledge and

operations essential in office functions and records management.

In one Internet Applications Training for Municipal officials, the most senior SB Member was amazed how ICT could help them in their legislative functions, said one e-Center staff.

As the MPDO attested: "The e-Center, which is now at the ground floor of the municipal building, continues to provide ICT services vital to the public and has become a tool in promoting good local governance."

Agriculture. One respondent mentioned applying what she learned from the e-Center in agriculture development for the community.

The e-Center has launched a program: the establishment of the Farmers' Assistance Corner (FAC). This program was an offshoot of the recently conducted series of Farmers' Class in the 22 barangays of Luna, spearheaded by the Municipal Agriculture Office.

The conduct of classes started immediately upon the end of the cropping season, the most convenient time for farmers for such activity. During the said farmers' classes, the role of ICT in agricultural production and development was explained by the Community e-Center Manager and the Municipal Agriculturist, giving emphasis on farmers ICT resources, production technologies, technical advisory services on farming technologies, and marketing services.

Recognizing the vital role of farmers in the economic and social development of the community, Mayor Verzola supported the establishment of a Farmers' Assistance Corner (FAC) at the Luna Community e-Center. The FAC serves as the help desk for all farmers. An Agricultural Technologist, who is an expert in providing technical assistance in availing online services relative to agriculture, is readily available to man the FAC. Two computer units at the e-Center are devoted to be used by farmers. The center's services can be availed of for free by farmers. The FAC may be considered a customized version of a Farmers Information and Technology Center (FITS) under the Techno Gabay Program of the DOST-PCARRD.

As Mayor Verzola said:

If farming is a way to sustain life for the people of Luna, with the advancement of ICT, farmers must not be left behind and remain confined in the rice fields for they truly serve as the backbone of the nation. May these farmers have a way to seek help and assistance in a place we call our own…the Luna e-Center.

Table 6. Application of knowledge learned from the
  training for community development, n=24.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	f
Education	8
Health and nutrition	5
Entrepreneurship and livelihood	2
Safety and security	2
Agriculture	1
Sustainable development	1
Climate change and disaster risk management	1
Youth empowerment	1
Governance	1
No answer	2

Note: Multiple responses.

CONCLUSION

The women trainees on digital literacy were capacitated in the sense that they were able to apply what they have learned in the digital literacy training to improve themselves, their families, and their community. The training enhanced their self-confidence and gave them that 'wonder of new discovery' as this was their first ICT training. The advantages to their families included facilitating academic assistance to their children and getting connected to their family members abroad, especially for the OFWs. Lastly, they were able to apply their training in community projects and activities, specifically in education, health and nutrition, entrepreneurship and livelihood, and safety and security.

The educational impact of the e-Center was the most apparent. Some of the teachers 'dared' to enroll at Open Universities for Distance Learning as they have gained confidence in using the Internet, and they believed that the e-Center could provide them a venue for online studies. As for health and nutrition, many of them researched on these topics from the Internet and shared it to students or friends/neighbors. For entrepreneurship and livelihood, the e-Center became a hangout for visiting tourists in Luna and an access point for the OFWs communicating with their employers abroad

or with potential employers. Lastly, they felt a sense of safety and security that their children could use the e-Center for research rather than travel to other farther places for an Internet café.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Sustain access by hardware and software. In 2010, a satellite disk of Globe had been set up in Barangay Turod of Luna, Apayao that made signals accessible to some residents of the place. Hence, they could access from their homes as long as they were located near the disks. Hence, together with the broadbands, this can decentralize dependence on the e-Center. Private computer shops can be encouraged as competition can lower the price of services.

2. Screen well the trainers. Part of the success of the e-Center was because it had well-trained, well-educated, and credible experts (computer science graduates, engineers, etc.) as trainers. They were also very patient with the adult learners. Students in computer science can also be tapped to assist the users of the e-Center computers.

3. Continue capacity building for other stakeholders and the trainers. Family members helped the women learn these programs, especially their teenage children who were in high school or college. Hence, the children could also be participants in the trainings. The trainers can also undergo retooling and updating on their knowledge and skills to be better trainers.

4. Engage family members. Family members seem to be sources of information and 'teachers' themselves on the operation of some applications in the Internet. Hence, the role of family members must also be strengthened.

5. Maintain the collegial, respectful, and fun atmosphere of the training center. The staff members of the e-Center were considered to be 'relatives' of the women. They would say "Anak, help me with this please." And the staff would also address them as "Uncle", "Auntie," or "Kabsat" (brother/sister). Hence, in a sense, there was no formal and strained trainer–trainee relationship, but it was more like family members assisting each other.

6. 6. Ensure security measures against cybercrime. The technician/s assigned in the e-Center often still had to assist the women in opening

their emails and in helping send replies. In fact, the technician knew the email passwords of some of the women. While the trust was there, it may also be timely for the LGU to ensure the privacy of the users and to ensure that the women divulging such information may not be victims of cybercrimes such as identity thefts or online thefts.

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Tales from the Field: Teacher's Habitus, Capital, and Agency in the Enactment of a Literacy Program

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The success in the implementation of any educational innovation is influenced by teachers' social dispositions and ability to navigate through the complexities of enacting the program in their local contexts. This assumption is informed by the practice theory as formulated by Bourdieu (1977, 1981) who emphasized the importance of one's personal history in explaining human action. Bourdieu further posited that, while humans have the "ability to act upon and change the world," one's agency may be constrained by structures in a given social field.

This study attempts to explore how teachers change their world and how they are transformed as they implement an Effective Literacy Instruction (ELI) in an island in Southern Philippines. Corollary to this, the study aims to explore the dynamic interplay between teachers' habitus, their economic, social, and cultural capital and the structures that mediate the effective implementation of the ELI program. Data were collected through 30-to-40-minute telephone and personal interviews with eight participants, most of whom were in the training that I conducted as lead instructor of the program. The teachers' narratives focused on their development as literacy educators as well as their successes and challenges in implementing the program.

The narratives revealed that teachers' dispositions are impacted by their personal histories and deeply ingrained social, cultural, and spiritual capital. Employing these, they position themselves in stances of power within the social field to ensure that the ELI program becomes a potent vehicle for the advancement of their advocacy for literacy education.

A social field is a "locus of struggles" (Bourdieu, 1975, p. 19) that represents a network of positions (Bourdieu, 1972)…. The position an agent occupies on a field creates self-evident rules that determine his potential cruising radius, i.e., the limits of social mobility within a social field (Bourdieu, 1972). …Fields are places of power relations where practices of agents are not arbitrary. —**Walther, 2014, p. 9**

The Philippines has been the recipient of several local and foreign funded initiatives aimed at improving literacy education, especially in the basic education sector. Among the most recent programs of the Department of Education is a literacy improvement program in the Mother tongue, Filipino, and English, which in this study, is called Project ELI (Effective Literacy Instruction). The estimated cost of the three-year program is $23.5M primarily sourced from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID website). Given the cost of the program, it is imperative that close monitoring on its implementation at the field level be conducted. Often, the evaluation of programs such as this is done quantitatively: the number of regions served, teachers trained, children with improved literacy skills, and as well as number of facilitators and local lead instructors trained. Qualitative approaches focusing on teachers' experiences as they implement the program in their local contexts are often not systematically conducted and reported. Such exploration would shed light on the mediating factors in the implementation of the program. This study attempts to do this using narrative inquiry to explore how teachers change their world and how they are transformed as they implement a mother tongue-based literacy instruction program [hereafter Project ELI] in an island in Southern Philippines. Corollary to this, the study aims to explore how teachers position themselves in the social field to exercise their agency when faced with structural constraints in order to achieve program goals.

This paper presents the findings of the investigation in three parts. First, it briefly discusses Bourdieu's Theory of practice by discussing the four interrelated elements that explain one's practice, i.e., habitus, capital, field, and practice (1972, 1977, 1981). Then, it describes the method of data collection, including my participation in the project. Finally, it describes the recurrent themes on how teachers transform their immediate contexts and how they are transformed as they engage in program implementation. These themes are then interpreted using Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. The assumption of the study is that the success of educational programs in the field level is influenced, to a great extent, by teachers' history and social dispositions, as well as their ability to navigate through the complexities of enacting the program in their local contexts.

In Rex and Nelson's (2004) ethnographic study on How Teachers' Professional Identities Position High-Stakes Test Preparation in Their Classrooms, they observed that, contrary to the pervasive belief that teachers are resigned to use much of their resources to prepare their students for the high stakes tests, they did not always allow the system to dictate content and pedagogical decisions. In fact, they delegated testing to secondary status. Rex and Nelson therefore reiterated that

Teachers' definitions of professionalism did not answer to any national or institutional standard. They were a unique blend of personal values, beliefs, learnings, and dispositions, part of what Bourdieu (1977) terms a "habitus." The judgments teachers make about who their students are and what they need, as well as decisions about what and how to teach, are mediated by and expressions of their habitus, which continues to evolve and to accommodate new experiences…. (p. 1291).

The influence of one's habitus to literacy teachers' practices was also demonstrated in a study of two Moroccan Adult Literacy Educators as reported in the article Teaching as social practice. In this report, Erguig (2012) noted that, despite national and local structures that constrain the implementation of the literacy program, teachers strategically employ ways of prevailing since they "identify with their students" and share their history and aspirations. Drawing from their students' deep religious beliefs, the literacy teachers emphasized the importance of literacy acquisition among Muslim women as they explained to them that they live in "an increasingly textualized world and [that] as Muslims… literacy is important for a good understanding of the teachings of Islam and an effective performance of their religious duties."

Jones and Enriquez (2008) had a similar observation in their study on the four-year journeys of two literacy educators from their preparation in a teacher education institution to their classroom practice, where they found that "Bourdieu's constructs of habitus, field, and capital were useful to better understand when, where, and why teachers take up critical literacy practices across time and context." The authors further argued that "teacher education pedagogy is merely a point of contact and a point of departure for learners and that nuanced, long-term readings of teacher education students' improvisations of habitus reveal the interplay between their formal learning and their personal, social, political, and other formal educational experiences" (p. 145).

THEORETICAL TINKERING

The study of practice has become popular in anthropological and sociological studies in the last decades of the twentieth century. In fact, in her review of the theories in anthropology since the sixties, Ortner (1984) posited that "practice" is the central theme of anthropological theory in the 1980s and that the trend continues to this day. Investigations on the practice range from daily routines to more highly structured activities such as experiments (Pickering, 1995), disciplinary cultures (Knorr-Cetina, 1999), and pedagogical regimes (Warwick, 2003), among others (in Rouse, 2006, p. 499). Although there are variable constructions of practice in these studies, Ortner argued that

> "The modern versions of practice theory appear unique in accepting all three sides of the…triangle: that society is a system; that the system is powerfully constraining; and yet that the system can be made and unmade through human action and interaction" (Ortner, 1984, p. 159).

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, which may be considered as a Grand Theory in the sense that it has been used to "explain human nature and conduct" (Skinner, 1985, p. 1) and is "generic in nature and can be applied to different circumstances and areas of research" (Reckwitz, 2003, in Walther, 2014, p. 7), is anchored on four concepts, the interrelationships of which is illustrated in the equation:

[(habitus) (capital) + field] + practice

Habitus, according to Bourdieu, is composed of history-grounded "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures…" (1990, p. 53 in Rouse, 2014, pp. 506–507). As a product one's history, one's habitus "produces practices in accordance with the schemes engendered by history" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 82). The habitus is durable but evolving and is continually adjusted to the current context and reinforced by further experience (Mayrhofer, Meyer, & Steyrer, 2007).

Bourdieu posited that one's habitus is acquired through primary socialization, i.e., within the family during one's childhood, and through

secondary socialization, i.e., internalized through schooling and from other life experiences. He further argued that one's primary habitus is "rather stable" and is "linked to the parents' social position in the social space." Therefore, the primary habitus is about 'internalizing the external' as the parents' modes of thinking, feeling, and behaving that are linked to their position in the social space are internalized in the children's own habitus (Walther, 2014, p. 13). The primary habitus is "embodied history and internalized as second nature and so forgotten as history" (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 56), thus it continually impacts the development of the secondary habitus. Drawing on Bourdieu (1977), Walther (2014) emphasized that habitus is "the strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" within a given social field (p. 13).

As a product of primary and secondary socialization processes, one's habitus is impacted by one's economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital. For example, one's access to "good" schools is predetermined by his/her parents' economic status (money), as well as the constellation of social relations, "the network of actual or potential resources that can be legitimized by the family, group, or class membership [social capital]" (Bourdieu, 1986). The cultural capital is a durable system of dispositions and represents one's entirety of intellectual qualifications or human capital (Bourdieu, 1986 citing Becker, 1964; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1985, in Walther, 2014, p. 10). Enduring access to economic, social, and cultural capital allows for both the tacit and explicit recognitions by others of one's power, transforming them into one's symbolic capital.

This is summed up by Walther (2014) when he said that the notion of symbolic capital is related to honor and recognition. It is not an independent type of capital within itself but rather consists in the acknowledgment of capital by the entirety of the peer competitors on a specific field (Bourdieu, 1997).

Thus, on a social field, economic, social, and cultural capital are converted to symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1972) that is "worthy of being pursued and preserved" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 182). The process of recognition of symbolic capital reflects the system's assumption about the usefulness of capital, thus depending on the rules of the field. Symbolic capital reflects the external and internal recognition, i.e., the value accorded by the system and its actors (Doherty & Dickmann, 2009). As Sartre (1948, p. 98 cited in Bourdieu, 1966, p. 873) argued: "There are certain qualities that emerge only through the judgment of somebody else" (p. 10). This is shown in the Figure 1.
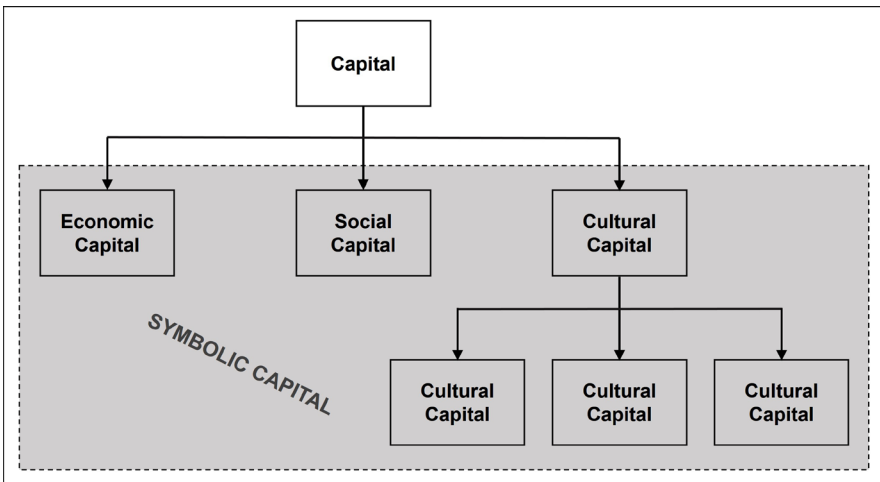
Figure 1. Bourdieu's types of capital (based on Bourdieu, 1972, Hermann, 2004)

Source: Walther, 2014, p. 11

This dynamic interplay between one's habitus and capital takes place in a social field. The social field is "based on a historically generated system of shared meaning" (Iellatchitch et al., 2003, p. 732). It is a "locus of struggles" (Bourdieu, 1972, p. 19) that represents a network of positions, and the position that an agent occupies on a field "creates self-evident rules that determine his/her potential cruising radius, i.e., the limits of social mobility within a social field" or what Bourdieu (1972) calls "doxa". Each field values particular capital, and one's ability to position himself/herself to gain access to or employ his/her economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital determines the extent to which s/he can negotiate through the power struggle and meet his/her goals (Walther, 2014).

There are, however, limits or constraints to an agent's "potential cruising radius." For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 108), agents are "bearers of capitals and, depending on their trajectory and on the position they occupy on the field, they have a propensity to orient themselves actively either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution." Bourdieu further posited that "human behavior is strategic rather than rule or norm conforming" (Rex & Nelson, 2004, p. 1320). Drawing from Bourdieu (1997), Jones and Enriquez emphasized that agents may "wield power over their actions in social situations, as well as influence various fields of practice." However, while "individuals make

choices, they do not choose the principles of these choices" and are therefore strongly influenced by structure (Özbilgin & Tatli, 2005, in Wacquant, 1989, p. 45) within a given social field. While "habitus brings into focus the agency end of the equation, field focuses on the structural part" (Grenfell & James, 1998).

In sum, Bourdieu's equation: [(habitus) (capital) + field] = practice illustrates the "dialectic relationship between structure and agency that is manifested in the habitus." Walther (2014) sums this up in his analysis of the equation. Drawing from Bourdieu and Passeron (2000), Walther reiterated that habitus is a system of structured structures that are predisposed to act as structuring structures. On the one hand, the habitus is the result of social structures, more precisely of the social class (doxa) and the rules of the game on the field that have been internalized. On the other hand, the habitus also structures practices and reproduces social fields (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000) since individual strategies and practices as products of positions and rules inevitably assure the economic and social conditions for reproduction (in Walther, 2014, pp. 13–14).

This study employs Bourdieu's theory of practice as it attempts to make sense of how teachers in a given social field are transformed and transform their world as they implement a literacy program.

REIFYING TEACHERS' LIVED EXPERIENCES THROUGH NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Narrative inquiry may be traced back to the 18th century, but it was only in the early 20th century that it started to be taken seriously as a research method with the Russian formalists' study on myths and fairy tales. Today, narrative inquiry is viewed as a research methodology encompassing "a variety of research practices ranging from those that tell a story of how individuals understand their actions through oral and written accounts of historical episodes" (Riessman, 1993) to research that "explore certain methodological aspects of storytelling" (Richardson, 1997). It is often associated with studies on the lives and lived experiences of the participants, a method called phenomenology. Narrative inquiry may take the form of "storytelling, snapshots of past events that are linked thematically," or as "the interconnectedness and meanings of seemingly random activities that social groups perform as part of their daily living" (p. 124).

In the chapter "Narrative Approaches" in the Handbook of Reading, Alvermann (2000) contended that narrative inquiry's merits lie in the fact that this methodology goes beyond the traditional positivist stance and explores the more interpretive posture enabling participants' voices to be heard in a way that is familiar to both participants and researchers as well as the readers of the research findings. However, this method of inquiry has been criticized in terms of what is called 1) the crisis of subjectivity and self-alienation; 2) the crisis of legitimation; and 3) crisis of representation.

To address the first issue, subjectivity and self-alienation (the potential for self-revelations as well as ethical concerns regarding the extent to which participants engage in decision-making about the telling of their stories), narrative researchers practice specific methodological strategies such as researcher's reflexivity, "acknowledging the politics of personal knowledge and potentially alienating aspects of the self-story," and enabling participants to advance their agency in the telling of their story.

The second issue, crisis of legitimation (truth claims), questions the trustworthiness of the research process and product. Any truth claim, however, is situated. Poststructuralists posit that "truth and validity claims reflect historically determined values and interests of different groups… and reality is mediated by conceptual schemes (Kant), ideologies (Marx), language games (Wittgenstein), and paradigms (Kuhn)." Truth claims are mediated by language, and language is not neutral. Since people tell their stories from their subjective realities, they may fabricate their stories but not with the intent to deceive but "with the desire to make their fictions realities" (Alvermann, 2000).

As for the third issue, crisis of representation, narrative researchers posit that, "because we can never suppress ourselves in the texts we write (or read), we in fact create the persons we write about." Writers bring their subjectivities into the text, and the readers interpret the text through their own lenses. Thus, "readers and writers conspire to create the lives they write and read about" (Denzin, 1989). To address the perceived inadequacy of written texts to depict lived experiences, some narrative researchers present their data through various modes of presentation, e.g., dramatic reading of interviews, sociological telling, film making, and other forms of performance. Drawing on Derrida (1979), Denzin, however, posited that, "by its very nature, performance relies on language to mediate experience." Language, by its nature, is unstable, so there is no such thing as "clear, unambiguous

statement of anything, including an intention or a meaning" (Denzin, 1979). Since all written output and performance are mediated by language, and language is always "inherently unstable, in flux, and made up of the traces of other signs and symbolic statements," the search and use for more means of representation must continue. Among them is a systematic exploration of practices through narrative inquiry.

THE "I" IN REFLEXIVE DYADIC INTERVIEWS

In this study, eight Grade 1 teachers in a three-day teacher training on effective literacy instruction in the mother tongue, Filipino, and English shared their experiences on their first year of implementing the program. The training was part of Project ELI, which aims to help one million children develop reading proficiency through technical and material support. The three-year program, which commenced in 2013 and ends in 2016, is launched in two regions in the country. I decided to join the program as consultant/lead instructor for one of these two regions, because 1) I felt that my engagement will further legitimize my position as a reading specialist and 2) I speak the mother tongue in the areas covered in the region. I sought the consent of the Project ELI chief consultant for me to conduct a study on the program through participant interviews and was granted permission to do so.

Upon receipt of letter of consent, I sent ten text messages to prospective participants, which I randomly selected from the attendance list of forty participants in the cluster that was assigned to me as lead instructor in a three-day training in October 2014. Of the ten, seven texted or called back, expressing their willingness to participate in the study, most of them saying that it was a gesture of gratitude for my participation in the program. The eighth participant, a Grade 1 master teacher who was also selected as DepEd lead instructor, was interviewed in person during one of the trainings in the region. All of the participants in this study are teaching in the various districts in an island province in southern Philippines and have been recipients of the program for about a year now. The training that I had with them was their second, the first being done in May, where I was also among the lead instructors. All of the participants are females, and their average teaching experience is 14 years, the longest being 22 years, and the shortest was 6 years.

All of the participants were asked to recall their experiences in three

areas: 1) their own literacy experiences when they were in their early grades, 2) highlights of their teacher education training, and 3) their experiences as implementers of Project ELI. The interview schedule used was composed of loosely framed questions. The questions I asked typically began with the phrases like Tell me about… Kumusta man ang imong… (How was your… experience?) What do you recall about your…? What comes to mind when you think about…? The purpose of using loosely framed prompts was to ensure that the interviewee was not led towards any particular direction or orientation during the dialogue. These unstructured interviews (Weiss, 1994) were conducted in a span of two weeks.

It must also be noted the interviews were reflexive, dyadic (Ellis, 2004), which focuses on the interactively produced meanings and emotional dynamics of the interview itself. Though the focus is on the participant and her or his story, the words, thoughts, and feelings of the researcher are also considered, e.g., personal motivation for doing a project, knowledge of the topics discussed, and emotional responses to the interview. Even though the researcher's experience is not the main focus, personal reflection adds context and layers to the story being told about participants.

Despite the strategies in place to ensure that the interviews would have less of me and more of the participants, I often wondered how much of what the teachers said were framed by the fact that I was one of the lead instructors of the program. Although my contributions to the unstructured interviews were primarily back channeling, clarifying, or synthesizing their thoughts, I was aware that my contributions to the discourse may have influenced the coconstruction of their stories and tried as much as possible to restrain myself from expressing my opinions or thoughts on the subject of discussion.

The decision to conduct this study has not been easy. First, I was concerned about the extent to which my participation in Project ELI would color the voices of the teachers whose experiences of engagement and resistance I wanted to describe in the study. In fact, I thought of shifting to another topic or choosing another project even as I had already started conducting the interviews, after having realized that it was impossible for the participants to talk about the project without being aware that the other interlocutor on the line was one of the lead instructors that conducted the ELI trainings. Yet I was reminded of Alvermann's response to the criticisms related to the crisis of legitimation and the crisis of representation, where

she said that "any truth claim… is situated," and the validity of truth claims and that one's perception of reality is mediated by conceptual schemes (Kant), ideologies (Marx), language games (Wittgenstein), and paradigms (Kuhn). In fact, the writing of the research report is mediated by language, and language in itself is not neutral. What one can do is declare his/her positionality at the onset of the report writing, so the readers are informed of the subjectivities of the writer. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) advanced a similar position when they introduced the concept of sociological reflexivity, where the researcher "recognizes the historical and disciplinary context that shapes his/her thinking" (in Joy, Sherry, Troilo, & Deschenes, 2006, p. 345).

PROJECT ELI: THREE-PRONGED AIMS IN THREE YEARS

Teacher's professional development is influenced by their personal histories and the constellation of systems that constrain their possibilities for engagement and with whom they constantly negotiate their identities. As a professional development opportunity for Grades 1–3 teachers in two selected regions in the Philippines, Project ELI has at least three main features. First, it provides teacher training on effective literacy instruction. Second, it provides the teachers with a detailed revised teacher's guide (RTG) for all the units, based on the DepEd K-12 curriculum. Third, it provides the teachers with two main resources to implement the RTGs: colorful big (story) books of stories produced by a publishing house noted for publishing award-winning children's literature and small leveled readers (graded according to the child's reading level). The big books, which are selected by a team based on themes identified in the DepEd K-12 curriculum, are read by the teacher, using a protocol grounded on research in reading instruction. Teachers provide prereading activities where 1) unlocking of difficult words and phrases is done interactively; 2) motivation questions are asked to activate needed schema, and motive questions are raised to set a purpose for reading the text; 3) Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) is facilitated during the reading of the story; and 4) engagement activities deepen children's understanding of the story. The Read Aloud activity usually happens within the first two days of instruction in a ten-day instructional sequence anchored on a theme. In the succeeding days, the lessons focus on word and language study; students' reading of the leveled readers designed based on the readability level of the intended readers; and

activities that demonstrate reading–writing connection, with emphasis on composing typically based on the preceding activities and on the unit theme. The strategies used in the ten-day instructional sequence is informed by the principle of Gradual Release of Responsibility, where teachers initially model effective and efficient reading practices through the read aloud activities to student engagement in interactive discussion with the teacher and peers, to pair reading, and eventually independent reading of the leveled readers and writing activities.

Since the teacher does the storytelling or reading, she is encouraged to read with gusto in order to develop positive attitude towards language; literacy; literature, vocabulary, listening, and reading comprehension skills; phonological awareness; and phonics. These are among the fourteen domains of literacy that are emphasized in the revised teacher's guides (RTGs). Within the context of Mother tongue-based Multilingual Education, teachers are also taught how to use bridging so that the child's first language is viewed as a resource rather than a constraint for children's literacy development in the mother, Filipino, and eventually in English language. The goal of the program is improved literacy instruction so that literacy development of one million children may be enhanced.

ON TEACHERS' HABITUS AND MODES OF PREVAILING[1]

In light of Bourdieu's position that one's predispositions and actions are impacted by one's personal and social history, I asked the participants to talk about their personal and professional lives, particularly their development as readers and literacy educators. Although a few of the teachers had little recollection of their own beginning reading or literacy experiences, the majority recalled having exciting classes, where teachers spent their lunch breaks or after school classes conducting remedial classes for struggling readers. In her retirement age now, Participant 1 recalled that her Grade 1 teacher "used a different strategy, but they were good; we learned to read." Similarly, Participant 4 recalled being taught how to read using phonics materials. "I was a leader in class. I remember my favorite book is Henny Penny. My experience in school was good and rewarding." Meanwhile, Participant 8 reiterated that it was her Grade 1 teacher who inspired her to become a teacher herself. She said:

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1   The term modes of prevailing were coined by Dr. Eufracio Abaya and mentioned in one of his lectures in EDFD 321, UP Diliman, Quezon City.

My Grade 1 teacher was my favorite teacher. She was so patient. She was so dedicated to her work. She would spend lunch break in school tutoring struggling readers. After lunch, we had storytelling time. Then, those who need help have reading practice with little teachers. I was a little teacher in her class…. My teacher had two things within reach: book and bunal [stick]. The choice was easy to make. My Grade teacher went home at 6 PM. In January, all of us were already readers. We could decode, and if the text was in the mother tongue, we could comprehend most of it…. I can't forget my Grade 1 teacher. She tells us stories; we had lots of fun activities….

Some participants also recalled having rich literacy experiences at home. Participant 7 said: When I was a child, my mother and grandmother used to buy Story Books for me. I grew up reading and being read to.

Bourdieu talked about primary habitus being learned at home and being an "embodied history and internalized as second nature" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 56) and therefore defines one's dispositions and the development of the secondary habitus. It appears that the teachers' primary habitus in terms of early literacy experiences at home and in school provided the proper impetus for their roles as reading/literacy educators. Moreover, most of the participants recalled having had excellent teacher training experiences. In fact, a few graduated from universities with strong teacher education component. Participant 8 said:

My training for teaching is quite good. I graduated from the Cebu Normal University. Our student teaching had 2 parts. For two months, we do it in the laboratory school.

Then, we went off campus…. This was in our extension site in Tagbilaran City. My favorite teacher there was my student teaching mentor…. She was very meticulous about our LP, so we learned a lot. She taught us the importance of discipline.

Those who did not undergo teacher education training in a normal university or in well-known colleges reiterated that, despite the limitations in terms of economic resources, their school trained them well. Participant 6 explained:

I finished BEEd in… a small community college in our town…. It is not a well-known school but we were well-trained…. They hired public school master teachers, and they were very good at teaching us how to make instructional materials. They shared practical tips on how to teach in the elementary school. My student teaching experience prepared me to teach in public schools. When we applied and did our teaching demonstration, I realized that we were not behind [compared to other applicants].

Indeed, it is not the reputation of the school that mattered to most of the participants but the level of commitment of their supervising teachers and what they take away from their student teaching experience. Participant 5 said:

Our program was good, even if we were not in a very good school because we had lecturers from Lyceo (Xavier). In student teaching, we taught in two public schools and then in the lab school in our college. My student teaching experience was in Pinyahan, in a very remote barangay of pineapple plantation workers. I was teaching kindergarten. It was a challenge and also rewarding because I was the very first to teach the children and the community is so grateful to me for what I was doing. The community gave us a warm welcome.

Teachers' professional identities are shaped by their habitus, which structures the interplay between their commitment to Project ELI and the constraints and challenges they need to address to affect the change they want to implement. The habitus of the teachers consists of the constellations of literacy experiences at home and in school as they were growing up, extends to their development as teachers in the teacher education institutions, and is continually reconstituted as they navigate through teaching as an enterprise. In fact, all of the participants emphasized their commitment to literacy education and to ensuring that the children learn to read before they move on to the next grade level. When asked what they believe is an effective teacher, all of the participants said that s/he would be one who is able to make her students read before the school year ends.

It is noteworthy that teachers' commitment to literacy education did not emanate from the participants' engagement in Project ELI. It is drawn from a personal advocacy, a sense of professional accountability, and a deep sense of spirituality. Participant 3 said:

> It is rewarding to be a Grade 1 teacher. In my experience, for some children, it is their first time to hold a pencil, because there was no kindergarten before. It makes you feel so happy inside knowing that they will carry that all their life — the ability to read and write.

This sense of mission was also demonstrated by Participant 4 when she said that "the kids are the rewards; when you can let your pupil read at the end of the year, that is something." This same participant reiterated that this level of commitment is grounded on her belief in God, who will keep an accounting of what she had done with the job that she was granted.

It appears that this spiritual capital, which is valorized in this strongly Catholic island province, is the primary force that impacts teachers' decisions and actions. In fact, it may be said that the teachers' habitus is deeply grounded on their spirituality, and most of the actions and decisions they make are influenced by this sense of spirituality. The teachers' spirituality is a potent symbolic power that transforms their being and frames the trajectories of their becoming. This is clearly illustrated by Participant 8 when she said: "Maybe, our inspiration to become better teachers stem from our values. Our island is deeply spiritual. Catholicism here is so deeply rooted. Most teachers are also active in church. I am the lector during the mass in our church every Sunday." This participant narrated that, when she had a disagreement with a colleague, it was impossible not to reconcile as soon as possible since teachers meet in church on Sundays. The church serves as an extension of the school as teachers often talk with some parents about their children after the mass.

I am wondering myself if I had subconsciously used this spiritual capital during the trainings to forge commitment among the participants. I was certainly aware that the island is staunchly Catholic, and part of the practice in every training was the opening and closing prayer as well as the prayer before meals. In this context, I caught myself telling the participants that, if we truly believe that all of us are created in the image of God, we cannot

look at a child and take him/her for granted. I believe I said this, knowing that the participants will take those lines seriously as it has symbolic power given their habitus. The participants' religiosity/spirituality is a structure that structures my actions. In turn, my actions structure the participants' dispositions.

In and through this dynamic interplay, we attempted to align each other's intentions and position ourselves in stances of power to realize our goals. As lead instructor, my goal is to ensure that teachers return to their stations not only with head knowledge of the domains of literacy and principles in effective literacy instruction but also with a resolution to deepen their commitment to realize program goals, and I knew that the most effective way to do this was to invoke our shared faith in God. Indeed, our habitus is a "structured structuring structure" that facilitates agentive moves so we could realize our goals and modify the social field to address our concerns.

Among the main concerns of the participants is the late arrival of the revised teachers' guide. In the midst of these constraints, teachers use their economic, social, and cultural capital to advance their advocacy. They exploit relevant resources that they have accumulated in previous trainings; they sought financial support from the schools' MOOE[2] fund or used their personal finances; and they sought support from their social networks including their administrators. Moreover, they use local knowledge and ways of knowing so that the lesson objectives are met despite structural constraints. The teachers know the rules of the social field and their roles in it and exploit their symbolic capital to address their concerns. This is demonstrated in Participant 2's actions:

It is supposed to be the big book on Higala nako ang Bulan (My Friend, the Moon). What I did was I asked the children if they saw the moon last night and the few nights before, because the timing was perfect as it was full moon. Then, we talked about the full moon, what they saw, what stories they heard about it, and what they think about the moon. I made a story about the moon based on the discussion guide questions in the revised TG. I did an impromptu dramatization, like a monologue so the children will

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2   Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) refers to the Allocations of Schools to the Respective Implementing Units based on the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001.

enjoy it. I also made a related leveled text for the children to read. I just wrote it on a manila paper so everyone could read it. Is that OK, ma'am? [Laughs].

Another participant used a short text about the moon from an illustrated science book and used it as springboard for the activities indicated in the revised teachers' guide. The eight participants reported eight different ways of "making do" and making sure that the essential objectives for the day's lessons are met despite the absence of materials. Moreover, they texted or called other teachers within their district to discuss what might be done to address the concern. Some teachers called their DepEd master teachers citing that they were, after all, paid to provide technical support to Grade 1 teachers within the district. Others asked the master teacher when they could meet for the Learner Action Cell (CELL), which is designed for teachers within particular identified clusters to discuss concerns related to the implementation of the revised teachers' guide and to help each other prepare their weekly plans and instructional materials.

This was revealed by Participant 4, who is also a master teacher:

Other teachers in the district asked me what to do. I am a master teacher, so they refer to me. I told them that as long as the target skill is addressed, it is OK to use another story. As master teacher, I am expected to provide technical assistance to other teachers. So, when other Grade 1 teachers texted me, I replied and told them how I do it. It is part of my job; we have load for it, as Grade 1 teacher adviser. As for the LAC, I already submitted a proposal to the district office.

Participant 8, who is also a master teacher described how the teachers organize to provide support for each other. She stated that, in their district, they already started meeting as a LAC and decided that they pool their resources and make similar or exactly the same instructional materials so that there is uniformity or similarity in the implementation of the project. She noted that the ELI-revised TGs are well conceptualized and "han-ay" (well-organized), but its effective implementation requires the preparation of several instructional materials, which some teachers had difficulty doing. The LAC meets regularly where teachers brainstorm on what and how to prepare for the succeeding weeks. She explained:

For example, for Week 23, we made a uniform weekly plan and we prepared the IMs [Instructional Materials] together during the LAC. We assigned people to make the materials for day 1, 2, and so on. …After we discussed and agreed what IMs to prepare for each day in week 23, we assign specific teachers to make the materials for a particular day. If your group is assigned to day 1, you should reproduce all the materials for all the teachers in the district. Naturally, you would do your best to prepare really good materials since it would be embarrassing to share haphazardly done materials with other teachers…. We choose to be proactive rather than keep on complaining that there are too many materials to prepare. Part of the expenses we get from the MOOE, but we add from our own pocket. We also have a separate log… which we could readily give to the supervisor or principal or the ELI monitoring team.

Clearly, the teachers were aware of the rules in the social field and their roles in it. Moreover, they strategically deploy the various forms of capital to meet their objectives as literacy educators, and given the symbolic capital that is accorded to their professional identities and the sociocultural and spiritual capital, they are able to transform constraints into resources that contribute to the advancement of their advocacies as literacy educators.

ON SYMBOLIC CAPITAL AND TEACHERS' AGENCY

Bourdieu (1972) posited that an agent's socioeconomic and cultural capital is converted to symbolic capital when it is seen as "worthy of being pursued and preserved." This may be observed in the teachers' narratives on the reasons why they prevail despite potentially constraining structures. When asked why they went to such length to ensure that the ELI program is implemented effectively and consistently in their local schools, the teachers mentioned at least four reasons.

First is the visibility, support, and recognition given by their administrators. Participant 8 said that their district has a supervisor, who models excellent work ethics and often told them that, once they are already a part of DepEd, "magpakitang-gilas na mo kay makon-sciensa ta ana dili tarungon tudlo mga bata, exacto tag sweldo" (they should flaunt what they got as teachers, as they will be stricken by their conscience if they do not do

their jobs well when they are well paid). In a similar manner, the teacher in an island about two hours by motorized outrigger boat from the mainland emphasized that they were driven to prepare for their classes because of her supportive principal and colleague. Participant 6 said:

> I work harder now. I am more inspired. Maybe because my principal is really good. Maybe because our preschool teacher is really good. We do interphasing all the time.
>
> We share experiences about the children. We also share instructional materials. We work together, so I can follow up on her tasks/output. I feel good that we have strong administrative support.

Similarly, Participant 5 reiterated that the constant monitoring of the agency facilitating the program as well as the provincial supervisor tasked to coordinate Program ELI has inspired the teachers to ensure that the program goal for effective literacy instruction is met. She said:

> I like [ELI] because it does not end with the training. You have the materials, then you have DepEd support. Ma'am F, the division supervisor for Filipino and Mother Tongue, visits us. Also, some ELI staff came to visit. One of them also demonstrated how to read the big book and process the discussion. Dr. F went to visit a school where there were some concerns regarding the teacher that affected the implementation of the program….

The second source of motivation to prevail for the program despite several structural constraints is the teachers' personal and professional advocacy to help children imagine a future that is much better than what they have. This is exemplified by the following:

> I promised to give the child my heart. I had one who was so smart, but so poor. She was so poor. When I asked her what she wants to be, she said: Mauwaw ko mangandoy ma'am, kay pobre me kaayo. [When I asked her what she wants to be, she said, "I am ashamed to dream because we are so poor." I was so moved because she was teary-eyed as she said it. I told her if she studies hard, she can make it, because high school education is free, and she work her way

*through, just like me. She said she wanted to be like me. I helped her
with her basic needs…. I met her once because she won in an essay
writing contest, and I was there. It was a wonderful feeling…. Our
time here is limited, so if you give, you must give all* (Participant 4).

This strong personal commitment is also reflected in the participants'
positive attitude towards the implementation of a DepEd program that
is unique to the island, the Agak (support another by walking with him/
her) initiative. In this island province, teachers are encouraged to choose at
least one student and to "adopt" the child by providing his/her basic needs.
This ensures continuous attendance in school and effective instruction for
one child who needs the most help. I initially thought that this is an added
burden to the teachers, but most of the participants expressed appreciation
for this initiative. Participant 8 said:

*I volunteered to 'Agak' eight children. Every teacher is encouraged
to take care of at least one child. They are asked to choose the one
needing the most help. They provide the child's basic needs, and
support the child in terms of tutoring and emotional/psychological
concerns.). I provide their breakfast and lunch; I buy them clothes
and other basic needs. …I tell them that I will do everything within
my capacity so they will not be absent or drop out of school.*

The third reason why teachers mobilize their capital to ensure the
effective and efficient ELI implementation is their deep gratitude for having
been the recipients of a well-organized project that valued the crucial role of
the teachers. In fact, all of the participants mentioned that Program ELI is
the first of its kind where the trainings were held in resort hotels which are
often only accessible to tourists and business people. Participant 3 reiterated
what the other interviewees also mentioned. She felt that she was valued
by Program ELI. She said: …teachers should do their best because we are
provided everything. The trainings were good, and the venue was very,
very good. This is the first time in my 25 years of teaching that I attended a
training in a place like the Plaza, and The Tropics. We are given importance
by the program. We feel that our contribution is valued. In the past, we
only had our trainings in classrooms, and we were not even provided
travel reimbursements. All of the teachers noted that they felt appreciated

and valued by ELI, and this was demonstrated not only by the comfortable accommodation but also by the fact that the program has kept its promise of providing the resources necessary to implement the program, regardless of how remote the location of their schools were. According to Participant 1 who has been attending trainings for 22 years now, ELI is "one of very few trainings where materials needed are really provided. In the past, they just train the teachers, promise them that materials will follow, but no such materials arrived."

The fourth and perhaps the most compelling source of their motivation to transform the world for the better is the teachers' spirituality and religiosity, which is a powerful component of the teachers' habitus, enabling them to negotiate with potentially constraining structures. Participant 5 said: "Some teachers say that they will only work commensurate to how much they are paid. That's not right. As for me, I had a covenant with God. I promised God that if I pass the LET, I will do my best as a teacher. It is difficult not to keep your promise to God." This study sets out to explore how teachers advance their agency to realize ELI program goals. What it discovered is that inasmuch as teachers understand the goals of the program, i.e., improved literacy skills for one million children, their commitment to effective literacy instruction is driven not by Program ELI but by their deep sense of spirituality, i.e., the recognition that God has gifted them their careers and bestowed upon them the responsibility to do the best that they can for the best interest of the children under their care. This is demonstrated in the strategic ways teachers employ to address several challenges and constraints during the first year of their engagement in the program.

HUSHED LINES: INSTANCES OF DEPARTURE FROM THE PROJECT ELI

All of the participants modified the revised teachers' guide and departed from the Program ELI ten-day instructional sequence in response to local needs and circumstances. They integrate pedagogical strategies learned in previous trainings, incorporate topic and used materials from the old DepEd teachers' guide, "skip" activities and competencies which they feel not appropriate for their children at this level of their literacy development, and employ local ways of knowing to facilitate literacy instruction in their classes. Participant 8 described what most of the teachers did:

After the training in May, I did not start implementing it in my classes right away. I told Dr. F [supervisor in charge of ELI implementation monitoring] that I cannot start with the program immediately because most of my children were nonreaders. The majority could not yet identify the letters of the alphabet. The revised TG for Grade 1 has assumptions that are not true to my children. So, in the first 8 weeks, I used the Early Childhood Development (ECD) program of DepEd, which focuses on Reading Readiness. …I cannot rush the children…

As agents of transformative change in literacy instruction, teachers act strategically to facilitate learning among the children, even if this means departing from the ELI program instructional plan. Teachers enact these strategies almost instinctively, having taught reading for at least a decade. Indeed, "the social actor is the 'socialized agent' whose strategies are 'more or less automatic' and practical 'and not the projects or calculations of any conscious mind'" (Bourdieu, 1990:62). What is even more interesting is that they articulated their concerns to their "superiors" and were able to convince them that such departures were in fact contributing to the success of the program.

This is interesting to me as lead instructor since we were reminded during our trainings to maintain the fidelity of the program and ensure consistency and uniformity in presentation of the concepts, principles, and strategies that program ELI espouses. This has been the subject of discussion among several lead instructors, who made modifications on the power point presentations to make the discussion of the topics more explicit and more appropriate to our prospective applicants. We often joked that we were infidels. On the other hand, we also emphasized during the trainings that the revised teachers' guide is a guide and should not be viewed as the ultimate, absolute formula for literacy instruction since teachers know their children best and are better informed on how best to achieve the day's objectives given their local contexts. In fact, departures from the revised teachers' guide were reported by all the teachers. Participant 1 said:

I did not follow the revised TGs because I consider the readiness of the children. If they have a hard time grappling with the materials, I have to prepare them for it. But I am concerned if someone

will observe. I hope they will understand when we explain the modifications we made. We often wonder if the consultants are acquainted with the realities in the barrio. We were happy that you shared your experiences with us. When you did that, we were assured that you knew what we go though as teachers in remote communities.

The participant was referring to my own narratives of teaching in the barrios which I shared with them during the closing program in the November 2014 training. Personally, I believe that the training we conducted would be futile unless teachers realize the importance of what they do to the lives of the children. So in addition to invoking their faith in God as a source of commitment and advocacy for effective literacy instruction, I told them about how my Grade 1 teacher contributed to my literacy development, etched in me the hunger to read, and opened for me endless possibilities for upward socioeconomic mobility. I told my story from my heart and it drove many of the participants, including me, to tears. In the same training, I also shared my experience of volunteer teaching in a barrio school, where I had 78 students, about 20 of whom had to stand behind the last row of seats, and how I employed my social capital, i.e., my network of acquaintances and relatives as well as my cultural capital, i.e., my position as volunteer teacher from the US and professor in a local university to seek audience with barangay officials and the municipal mayor and get desks for my students.

All of the teachers commented that, although they saw that the activities were generally well-conceptualized and that the colorful big books for the read aloud were effective in drawing children's interest, they felt the need to modify, exclude, or substitute some of the activities outlined in some of the lessons. Participant 8 commented on the unrealistic illustrations on a big book and described how she addressed this concern:

We noticed that the illustrations in some of the big books are too creative, like abstract paintings. I was thinking, since these are for children, the pictures should be more realistic. …The children had a hard time with those abstract illustrations, and they need much visual support to understand the story… The big book about the market… I noticed that the illustrations of the public market showed that it was so clean and organized, which is not true in

*our flea market. I think that was not very realistic. The illustrations
did not match the crowded, hot market implied in the story. The
TG says the market was "makipot [narrow]," but the illustrations
show a neat, well-arranged market, so I downloaded from Youtube
a video of a real market that is similar to what was described in the
story. That evoked a lively discussion among the children.*

Some districts modified the weekly plan introduced during the training.
In fact, during the last day of the November training, some groups already
proposed alternative weekly plan formats which they believe would serve
its purpose more efficiently, i.e., as a quick guide that outlined the activities
and the domains targeted during the week. As lead instructor, I proposed
that they go by the ELI format. On the other hand, I took digital images
of the format that the cluster agreed would serve their purposes and sent
it to the Program ELI literacy consultant. I have not heard from her since
then; however, what I discovered in the interviews is that participants in at
least one district had already used their proposed format and another was
planning to do the same. Participant 2 narrated:

*We are currently using the weekly plan introduced by ELI, but we
are seriously thinking of modifying it because [the ELI plan] has
too many questions that need to be answered, and too many pages
to refer to. We could use that time to prepare the IMs. As for the
Weekly Planning Matrix, in our district, we are planning to come
up with a format that works best for us. We will ask our principal
and supervisor if we could use the same format as our log, where we
have Objectives, References, and Materials.*

The strategies teachers employed to address material constraints
exemplified the teachers' agency over potentially constraining social
structures. This is consistent with what Coldron and Smith (1999) said
in discussing the relationship between agency and structure, where they
emphasized "the importance of agency over social structure and argue that
the choices that teachers make constitute their professional identities." What
is apparent in the narratives is that the teachers have always been committed
to ensuring that each pupil in her class learns to read. Moreover, since Project
ELI has publicly recognized and generously supported its commitment

to making the Filipino child read, the teachers' symbolic capital has been strengthened, and what they used to do on a personal level, using personal funds, is now granted structural support.

CONCLUSIONS

On habitus, agency, and transformative change

Human agency enables transformation (Abaya, 2014, lecture notes). This is shown in this study that seeks to explore how teacher participants in a literacy instruction program transformed their world and how they are transformed through their practice. Indeed, the transformation of the teachers' social fields, their literacy classrooms, the school, their district, the island province, and Project ELI is impacted on teachers' personal histories, i.e., their primary habitus as beginning readers at home and in school; and their secondary habitus, which includes their development as literacy educators in the teacher education institutions and in their workplace.

All of the teachers share their students' struggles since they have personally experienced the complexities and difficulties of learning how to read and write in contexts where economic, social, and cultural capital are suppressed by powerful structures and opportunities for socioeconomic upward mobility are scarce. Thus, as literacy educators, their roles do not begin nor end with Project ELI's human and material resources or with the program's goal of improving the lives of one million children through the development of improved literacy skills. Their roles begin and end with the child and her/his imperative needs. All of the teachers emphatically talked about how the DepEd province's "Agak" program is closely intertwined with their role as literacy educators. If one wants a child to develop positive attitude towards language, literacy, and literature, they have to be afforded the privilege of coming to school. In the context where children are forced to be absent to take care of younger siblings or work in the farm, the teacher often takes it upon herself/himself to provide for the child's basic needs such as providing breakfast or snacks and other basic necessities. This is an element that is not articulated nor explicitly supported by Project ELI but is crucial in the effective implementation of the program.

In the social field, the teacher's economic, social, and cultural capital may only be converted to powerful symbolic capital when they are perceived as "worthy of being pursued and preserved" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 182).

Symbolic capital "reflects the external and internal recognition, i.e., the value accorded by the system and its actors" (Doherty & Dickmann, 2009). This is the case with Project ELI. The program is valued by teachers. In fact, it has been part of their enduring personal, professional, and spiritual advocacy, and they are only too happy to see how it is valued by the Department of Education and given the recognition and generous support given to it by external sources of funding. Thus, despite their concerns and thoughts on how the ubiquitous, strategic labeling of all the materials as "a gift from the American people" might influence their students' perception of the powers that continually influence their identities, they resolutely state that they do not and will not allow any hidden agenda to get in the way of their goal, which is to ensure that their students learn the basic literacy skills outlined in the K-12 program for Grade 1. Most of the teachers feel that literacy empowers their children and that, when they develop literacy skills, they shall also be empowered to position themselves in stances which serve their best interest, despite the dominant and domineering sociopolitical structures in the social field, including foreign powers that may influence their thoughts and actions through programs like Project ELI. If the classroom, the schools, and the district were to be the social field where Project ELI is enacted, the teachers' habitus and agency as actors for transformative teaching wielding the symbolic power to modify structural constraints, hold great promise for the goal of improved literacy education.

At the end of the day, teachers do not think about Project ELI or any national program or any external funding support for the program. They think about the children and their responsibility to help make them read. Their decisions and actions are deeply grounded by a constellation of personal and professional histories and advocacies, of personal values and learnings, and of a deep, enduring faith in God whom they believe will keep an accounting of what they have done with the tasks that they were set to do. These constitute the teachers' habitus, the system of dispositions that "produces practices in accordance with the schemes engendered by history" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 82), and enables social actors as agents to "cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). These tales from the field reflect how teachers' personal and professional identities and the structures that they confront everyday help weave their imagined communities for the children in their local contexts.

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BIONOTE

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Peace and Justice:
The Islamic Way

Lily Fetalsana-Apura

Islam like all religions is a social construction. It has more similarities in Biblical religion than Christians realize. At its heart is the aspiration for social justice and peace.

"A blessed life, that is the essence of shalom -- the Hebrew word for peace— is ideally and may ultimately be everyone's goal in living. Interestingly the Arabic word for peace *"Salam"* also means not just lack of want and freedom from disease, but a state of being at peace with one's self and the world. *Salam* means more than the English word peace. The word Islam derives from this word.[1] Used by Muslims to greet each other, *"Al-Salamu 'alaykum"* ("Peace be with you!"), *salam* connotes "well-being, wholeness, health, and felicity."[2] Islam in fact, claims affinity with the Jews and Christians.[3] Along with Jews, Christians, and Muslims cherish Hebrew Scripture figures such as Moses, Abraham, and the prophets. Muslims regard Jesus of the New Testament as a prophet.

There is however so much misunderstanding and ignorance about Islam, which has served to fuel fear and prejudice. The Spanish and American

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1   What is meaning of the word "Islam"? April 28, 2012 available@ www.islam-muslim.net/what-is-meaning-of-the-word-islam.

2   John Corrigan et.al., Jews, Christians, Muslims A comparative Introduction to Monotheistic Religions (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 134.

3   Johannes P. Schade ed.-in-chief, Encyclopedia of World Religions (Concord Publishing. Foreign Media Group: 2006) p. 681.

colonizers and the Philippine government policies towards the Muslims have taken advantage and reinforced this negative view of Muslims. Being in the position to grant shalom, the Christian majority in the Philippines is responsible for the plight of the minority Muslims in Mindanao. We Filipino Christians must learn to make peace, if we must faithfully witness to the Gospel we preach – the gospel of Shalom.

But what is the Islamic idea of justice? What will it be like for Muslims and Christians in Mindanao when the Bangsamoro is finally realized?

First step in the agenda of being a peacemaker is to genuinely take interest in our brothers and sisters in the south – to know their faith and what it means to them. We must go beyond superficial knowledge of Islam and be free from willful ignorance – a step towards the appreciation of Islamic faith and its role in the realization of peace for Muslims and Christians alike in Mindanao and the Philippines.

II. FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS

A monotheistic faith like Judaism and Christianity, the basic faith of Muslims is stated in the confession, "There is no god but God; Muhammad is the messenger of God."[4] God, regarded as the sole Creator, Lord, and Sustainer of all, requires surrender, as one of the praise passages in Quran declares: "Allah! There is no god (ilah) save God (Allah), the alive, the Eternal."[5] All creation being God's creation is "interconnected to each other and to God."[6] Humans were created "to live in righteousness and to surrender to God's lordship" guided by their fear of God.[7] They will be called to account for their actions in the Day of Judgment where the righteous will be sent to heaven or the gardens and the wicked to hell.[8] "(A)dam ("from earth") in the Qur'an" was created as a steward of the earth, but like the Adam in the biblical story, Adam with his mate disobeyed God and they were expelled from the garden.[9] Henceforth, humans had to struggle against temptation and to strive to live in righteousness. Yet it was human beings who accepted the "trust" from God, which Muslims understand to "mean God's exhortation

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4   Ibid., p. 809.
5   Zayn R. Kassam, Introduction to the World's Major Religions Vol. 5 Islam (Westport, Connecticut/ London: Greenwood Press: 2006), p. 38.
6   Ibid. p. 36.
7   Ibid., p. 37.
8   Ibid., p. 37, 41. Like Christians, some Muslims understand heaven and hell literally while others understand it to mean being with God or being separated from God (See p. 41.)
9   Ibid., pp. 38-9.

to human beings to create a just social order on earth."[10] Muslims believe in free will, and that human beings have been bestowed with the capacity to make the right choice.[11]

The acknowledgment of God's existence and appreciation of God's goodness compel humans to voluntarily surrender to God's will by "placing one's trust entirely in God – Islam, and taking the attitude of a "'abad," one who serves God with utmost humility in all dimensions of human existence."[12] One who has surrendered to God is called a Muslim.[13]

These beliefs are based on the authoritative Scriptures of Islam particularly the Qur'an, together with the other recorded sayings and actions of Mohammad (Hadith) and other writings related to the Quran.[14] These have become the basis for the Shari'ah, the code of law for Muslims.

Muslim religious life revolves around the five pillars of Islam which are obligatory practices for all Muslims: the declaration of 'There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet', praying 5 times a day, giving of money to the poor, fasting during Ramadan, and as able, doing pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.[15]

Expounding on Muslim spirituality, a Filipino Muslim scholar, Jainal D. Rasul, Sr. says that for Muslims, God is the one and only reality, "the ultimate nature of reality"… and "man, in reality partakes of the blessings of God, and a heavenly life begins to dawn on Him even on this world."[16] This can be equated with the Christian statement pertaining to God as one "…in whom we live and move and have our being."[17] The understanding of the being of God is similar with the Hebrew understanding of God as "Hayah" the be verb called "Hua" or "He" in the Qur'an which means "…an existence or being."[18] This understanding is supported by a passage from the Quran which is translated in English, "And He is God, there is no God but He to Him belong all goodness , beauty and truth (lit. praises) from beginning to end and the order is His toward Him you (Mankind)returning".[19]

Islam recognizes God's goodness in all of God's work. Goodness

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10   Ibid.
11   Ibid.
12   Ibid., p. 40. The same word also means servant in Hebrew.
13   Ibid.
14   Ibid., pp. 42 ff.
15   Ibid., p. 48.
16   Jainal D. Rasul, Sr., *Still Chasing the Rainbow* (Quezon city Philippines, FedPil Publishing, 1999, 2002), p. 42-43.
17   Acts 17:28.
18   Ibid.
19   Ibid., p. 44. Emphasis added.

is understood to be God's nature.[20] Though one, God is believed to be a dynamic being seen in the dynamism of the creative and living processes.[21] God is also understood as the "vital principle" which bestows life and makes human beings alive spiritually and materially.[22]

Muslim understanding of creation does not contradict evolution. The story of which is almost similar to that of the Old Testament is not taken literally. Adam is understood as the "man who has become conscious, civilized and able to bear the burden of moral and spiritual responsibility."[23] It is to human being that the "trust" was given. This gift along with self-consciousness defines human beings' place in the universe – " the search for the ultimate nature of reality itself."[24] It is this part of human being that acquires knowledge and it is knowledge of the ultimate reality that nourishes one's spirit/soul. Muslims consider death as an extended sleep from which a person will reawaken to full consciousness again.[25]

III. ISLAM IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

A. Freedom of Religion

Islamic beliefs as summarized above present no conflict with the establishment of a just and peaceful society in the context of religious plurality as in the context in Mindanao. Al –Ustadz Abdulrafih H. Sayedy, a University of the Philippines Professor of Islamic Studies, claim that Islam teaches Muslims to respect people of other faiths, noting that Muslim communities first established by Muhammad were multi-racial and multi-religious.[26] Muhammad made agreements with Christian and Jewish tribes and offered them protection in the expanding Muslim state.[27]

Even at the peak of the Islamic power Islam faith was not imposed. A report from this period as quoted, noted that in Islamic lands "…not only Muslims but also Christians and Jews enjoyed the good life…. these sophisticated city dwellers debated on such subjects as the nature of God,

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20   Ibid., p. 46.
21   Ibid., pp. 47-48.
22   Ibid., p. 49.
23   Ibid., pp. 51-53.
24   Ibid., p. 53.
25   Ibid., p. 59.
26   Al –Ustadz Abdulrafih H. Sayedy, "Islam In a Multi-Religious Society" Understanding Islam and Muslims in the Philippines ed. by Peter Gowing (Quezon City: New Day Publishers: 1988), p. 2.
27   Zayn R. Kassam, Ibid., p. 12.

the intricacies of Greek philosophy, or the latest Indian mathematics."[28] Muhammad paved the way for peaceful co-existence among the diverse groups through a charter that enshrined the freedom of religion with such provisions as:

> "1) The Jews who attend themselves to our commonwealth, shall be protected from all insults and vexations; 2) They shall have equal rights with our own people, to our assistance and good offices; 3) The Jews of the various branches, and all other domiciles in Medina shall form with the Moslems one composite nation; 4) They shall practice their religion as freely as the Moslems."[29]

Deference in treatment were extended to Christians and Jews, what Muslims call People of the Book, though not to those having other religions or what were generally called pagans. But religious freedom itself, is guaranteed by the Qur'an as Sayedy further quotes "(T)here is no coercion in religion" and "(U)nto you, your way and unto me my way."[30]

One of the most misinterpreted verses in the Qur'an that has been used on one hand by Muslim fundamentalists as basis for separation and rejection of pluralist societies, and on the other hand by non-Muslims as reason for futility of making peace with Muslims goes:[31]

> "Believers, take neither Jews nor Christians for your friends. They are friends with one another. Whoever of you seeks their friendship shall become one of their number."

From the Christian point of view such verse has equivalents in the Christian Scriptures, and is justifiable from a newly established religion that is a minority among religions, particularly towards Christians who are known for proselytizing even competing against other Christian groups.[32]

Another passage cited by Schwarts reads: "Slay the idolators wherever you find them. Arrest them, and life in ambush everywhere for them."

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28   Ibid., p. 16.
29   Sayedy, ibid., p. 2.
30   Ibid.
31   Stephen Schwartz, The Two Faces of Islam (NewYork /Toronto: Doubleday, 2002), p. 18.
32   A similar passage in II Corinthians 6:14 ff. says: "14Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God..."

Schwartz however clarifies that, this was spoken in the context of an attack against the Muslims, by the people of Mecca, even after Muhammad and the Muslims have already left Mecca for Medina. The Muslims were greatly outnumbered with only over 300 fighters against 1,000 attackers. They had no other alternative but to defend themselves. In victory two courses of action were considered whether to execute the prisoners or release them after payment of ransom. Mercy prevailed and those whose relatives could afford the ransom were released, others were allowed to win their liberty through teaching 10 Muslim children to read and write, and those too poor to pay for their ransom were released without payment. Only two of the army's leaders were executed.[33]

This passage hardly compare with the many verses in the book of Joshua which narrates what Joshua has done to the Canaanites (Joshua 10:26, 28, 37, 40 etc.) or the violence of the imprecatory Psalms (Psalms 5, 10, 17, 35, 58, 59, 69, 70, 79, 83, 109, 129, 137, 14).

B. Shari'ah: The Islamic Rule of Life

While Islam religion may be compatible with plurality in religion in a given society, the granting of religious freedom to Muslims in a secular government is a complicated process. The Philippines is a secular government that guarantees freedom of religion. The Philippine Constitution in Article III, Section 5 – Freedom of Religion so states: [34]

> *"No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights."*

This provision on one hand guarantees the separation of church or religion and the state, the freedom to embrace a religion or any religion, and to practice it. It follows that Muslims in Mindanao should be free to embrace and practice Islam. But fundamental to Islamic faith is the absence

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33   Ibid. pp. 21-33.
34   The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines Published: February 11, 1987. Latest update: January 9, 2012 10:11 pm. Available @www.gov.ph/the-philippine-constitutions/the-1987- accessed August 23, 2016.

of distinction between religious and secular aspects of life.[35] In Mastura's words:

> "*The concept of Dar –ul Islam (household of Islam) demands that the state authority manifest and reflect Islamic principles and Ideals. That is why most Muslims think that to be truly Muslim is to have an Islamic state.*"

Islamic Law is based on Islamic religion. It is governed and implemented by religious leaders who at the same time also lead in religious and political aspects of the society. All laws pertaining to governance and civic life is a part and parcel of the Islamic faith. Islamic law, known as the Shari 'ah, is considered "the framework of ultimate reality and the ethical guidance"[36] for Muslims. It covers all aspects of life, including the social and political spheres. As Rasul states, "Muslim law restrains or regulates the conduct of a Muslim from cradle to the grave."[37] Muslims cannot conceive of a way of living apart from the revealed way. This is the reason for the insistence of Muslims in Mindanao for autonomy to be able to fully live following the precepts of Islam, a right enshrined in the Philippine constitution. Muslims scholars have derived such law from the following sources: The Qur'an; the Hadith or prophetic traditions; the Ijma, consensus of the community; and Qiyas, reasoning by analogy.[38]

The Shari'ah have been divided by Muslims scholars into five categories as detailed by Rasul: [39]

> "*(1) Beliefs (Itiqad/six articles of Islam); (2) Moralities (Adab) or moral excellence or virtues; (3) Devotion or worship (Ibadat) as expressed in the five Pillars of Islam; (4) Transaction (Muammallat) on sale, dower, inheritance, custody and guardianship; and (5) punishment (Uqubat) relating to theft, adultery, etc.*"

With an idea of the Articles of Islamic law, short descriptions of the basic contents of the law categories above should suffice for the purpose of

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35   Michael O. Mastura, "The Philippine State and the "secularized" Muslim Concepts: Aspects and Problems" in Understanding Islam and Muslims in the Philippines, ibid., p. 130.
36   Rasul, ibid., p. 171.
37   Ibid.
38   Ibid.
39   Ibid.

this paper. On the second category on morality, the love of God is considered to be the most important of the virtues, which have been defined as those which as a general principle are good for individuals and the society.[40] Relative to this is the general rule of freedom except for those that have been prohibited in the Shari'ah.[41]

On the Transaction laws (*Muammallat*) summary by a Muslim states:[42]

"*Muamalat* is a set of rules (fiqh) related to worldly matters such as   business/trading/commerce transactions, lending and borrowing contracts. *Muamalat* also involves the rules regarding the social interactions between human such as marriage, inheritance (*waqaf, faraidh*) and other human activities.

Muamalat nowadays, is always associated to economics and finance since these elements are the key for happiness in this world and hereafter."

"As a Muslim, we believed that all the wealth on this world are belonged to Allah. Humans are only the appointed trustees to manage and distribute the wealth among them. Humans are encouraged to seek wealth through knowledge and skills given by Allah."

An example of a regulation in business transactions included in the Shari'ah laws is the prohibition of the production and sale of unlawful materials like liquor, pork meat, stolen goods and of materials that have no use.[43] The application of Shari'ah in global market as explained by John Renard aims at ensuring, "…social equity and to keep the profit motive subordinate to a higher principle."[44]

Some criminal offenses have fixed punishments in the Shari'ah for instance: murder, theft, adultery. Islamic justice demands capital punishment for premeditated killing, mutilations for theft, and stoning for adultery. Unproven accusation of adultery is however punishable with 80 lashes.[45]

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40   Hasbullah Mohamad, Moral Principle of Vice and Virtue In Islam, September 24, 2008 available @ ungss.blog-spot.com/...principle-of-vice-and-virtue-in.html
41   Ibid.
42   Muamalat in Islam? Wednesday, January 26, 2011 available @ muamalat-islam.blogspot.com/2011/01/muamalat.html
43   Ibid.
44   John Renard, 101 Questions and Answers on Islam (New York, Gramercy Books: 1998), p. 138.
45   Dr. Mohsin Tariq Mandiwala, Studying Islam: Philosophy of the Concept of Punishment in Islam September 06, 2005 available @http://www.studyingislam.org/articletext.aspx?id=1012.

These measures are understood as hudud, a consequence for transgressing the boundaries set by God and to deter crime and encourage moral conduct.[46] Crimes deemed committed against the society therefore have what may be considered severe consequences.

Yet, Islamic ethics cannot be equated to legalism. True piety is expressed in righteousness and righteousness in piety. As a passage quoted from Islamic jurisprudence states:

> "It is not righteousness (brr) that ye turn your faces toward east or west; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day, the angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in worship (salat) and regular in almsgiving (zakat), to fulfill the promises you have made; and to be firm and patient in pain and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God- fearing."[47]

IV. Social Justice in Islam

Since Islam views the whole creation as having emanated and is sustained from and by the will of One God, it follows that the whole of creation is interconnected forming a harmonious order. Thus humanity and nature is an essential unity. Humanity before the creator is "equal and constitute one single fraternity." [48] Hence there is equality for all in Muslim law, with the same penal and civil laws for Muslims and non-Muslims. The difference lie in the personal law which is only applied for Muslims and those who would want their case to be decided on the basis of the Shari'ah.[49]

Social Justice in Islam is established on the foundation of human conscience and the social sphere, through the law. [50] It therefore seeks to bring human consciousness in conformity with the will of God, yet at the same time it has instituted laws that ensure the compliance in the social sphere. Giving of money to the poor is a matter of conscience and one of the

46   Ibid.
47   Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1989), p. 420.
48   Sayedy, Ibid., p. 1.
49   Ibid., p. 3.
50   Sayed Kotb, Social Justice in Islam trans. By John B. Hardie (Washington D.C. , American Council of Learned Societies: 1953), p. 69.

five Pillars of Islam, but at the same time obligatory poor tax is imposed as sanctioned in Islamic law.[51]

The Islamic idea of social justice gives precedence to the rights of the community over that of the individual. Yet it is mindful of the different individual gifts and is careful to allow the full realization and enjoyment of such gifts. Therefore it does not require compulsory economic equality as communism does, but makes sure that such gifts would go beyond the individual to benefit the whole community, and ensures that individual gifts and abilities will not be used to oppress others.[52]

This principle is evident in the concept of property. Kotb, in his book Social Justice and Islam published in English by the American Council of Learned Societies says:

> "The fundamental principle is that property belongs to the community in general; individual possession is a stewardship which carries with it conditions and limitations. Some property is held in common, and thus no individual has the right to possess. A proportion of all property is a due which must be paid to the community, in order that the latter may disburse it to specified individuals of its own number; these constitute cases of need which may thereby be remedied so that the community may preserve its health."[53]

Wealth is considered in Islam as a community's vital energy that can corrupt and destroy when in excess and cause hatred and want among those who lack it. The ideal way is for healthy flow of wealth for the use and well being of the whole community.[54]

Some economic practices prohibited in Islam include monopolies, usury considered more serious than adultery,[55] wasteful spending,[56] exploitation, profiteering, and destitution.[57]

In Islam human physical and spiritual desires are understood to be in harmony with the fulfillment of well-being. To quote Sayed Kotb: [58]

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51   Ibid.pp. 73-4.
52   Ibid., pp. 25-27.
53   Ibid., p. 110.
54   Ibid., p.108.
55   Kotb quotes Mohammad who says: "(A) pennyworth of usury which a man uses knowingly is worse than thir-ty-six acts of adultery." Ibid., p. 121.
56   Luxury houses is called by Mohammad as houses of Satan. Ibid., p. 129.
57   Ibid., p. 130.
58   Ibid., p. 24.

Islam looks at man as forming a unity whose spiritual desires cannot be separated from his bodily appetites, and whose moral deeds cannot be divorced from his material needs. It looks at the world and at life with all-embracing view which permits no separation or division.

Thus, in Islamic view, life consists of mercy, love, help, and mutual responsibility between Muslims in particular and between all human beings in general.

Hence all aspects of life, spiritual, physical and socio-political is within the sphere of God's rule, made manifest in the precepts of the religion. Islam demands that everyone and everything be under the rule of God, and such be not limited to a certain race or nation. It seeks to place the whole of life and created order under submission to God.

To achieve this, Islam gives stress to the principle of "mutual responsibility in all its various shapes and forms. …between a man and his soul, between a man and his immediate family, between individual and society, between one community and other communities, and between one nation and various other nations."[59] Each individual has the responsibility to care for the community through mutual help and the practice of "honesty and uprightness" and of "putting an end to evil-doing which he sees".[60] Consequently each individual will be held responsible for the evil in the community and the whole community receives blame for complacency in evil. It is also the responsibility of the community to take care of its weak and the poor. As quoted by Kotb the Qur'an says; "(I)t is not for you to refuse to fight in the cause of Allah and in defense of the weak, men, women, and children." Another passage goes; "(H)e has no faith in Me who sleeps replete, while his neighbor beside him is hungry , and he is aware of the fact."[61]

VI. Women in Islam

Constituting approximately half of the world's population, the status of women in any religion and in Islam in particular is very important. Known as a patriarchal religion, centered on revelation to a male prophet, the way women are regarded and their position in society are important considerations in social justice and equity. Further there is a popular notion that Islam has not been very good to women. A section on women is of

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59   Ibid., p. 56.
60   Ibid., p. 62-63.
61   Ibid., pp. 64-65.

fundamental importance to getting a comprehensive view of social justice in Islam.

Below are some of the passages in the Qur'an pertaining to women.

"Whoever does good works, man or woman, and is a Believer – such shall enter into Paradise and shall not be wronged one jot." Surah "Then their Lord answered them: I shall not waste the work of anyone of you who works, male or female; you belong to one another."

These passages are cited by Kotb as basis for claiming that there is equality between men and women in Islam.[62] Yet men get a double of the women's portion in inheritance. Further men serve as overseers of women, and the witness of a man is equal to the witness of two women. [63] Kotb thinks this is justified as it is the men's responsibility to support the family, even the needs of the wife herself. Biological and psychological differences were cited by Kotb as the justification for men's superiority, citing the fact that women were restricted for most of their lives in family responsibilities predisposing them to being emotional, unlike men who accordingly were more inclined to reflection and thought.[64]

Other passages in the Qur'an pertaining to women gives them the right to marry only with their own consent, prohibition of infanticide (both male and female), right to education, and the responsibility to pay poor tax. [65]

In the Philippines, the Muslim Code allow pre-nuptial property agreements, divorce with both the husband and wife having the right to ask for it, on the following grounds: "…desertion, lack of support, cruelty, sexual impotence, incurable diseases harmful to the family," and permits polygamy for men but not more than four on condition that the person seeking to do so "...can deal with them with equal companionship and just treatment as enjoined by the Islamic law as first ground, and only in exceptional circumstances as second ground." [66]

Muslim scriptures, and religious teachers recognize equality of the sexes

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62   Ibid., p. 50.
63   Kotb quotes the Qur'an passage which says "Men are overseers over women because of what Allah has bestowed on His bounty on one more than the another, and because of what they have contributed on the way of wealth." Another passage also quoted by Kotb states: "The same is due to women as is due from them; but men have precedence over them."
64   Ibid., p. 50.
65   Ibid., pp. 52-53.
66   Rasul, p. 198-99. Childlessness for example can be a reason for seeking to have a second wife.

as the ideal for the society. Yet as the foregoing discussion demonstrates, life is not in its ideal state and historical reality and cultural practices give rise to conceptions that have become fixed laws. This is certainly true for Islam as it is also true for Christianity and other religions.

V. Summary and synthesis

The fundamental Islamic idea of the society -- a society under the rule of God, has so much in common with the Biblical idea of the Reign of God that works towards shalom. Human responsibility in keeping their part of their relationship with God is understood as the fitting response to God's grace that will ensure the enjoyment of the full blessings of being under the rule of God. Islam in fact, takes the Judeo-Christian faith further in conceiving of a social construction for the Islamic values and teachings to be realized in the world.

Qur'an the sacred book for the Muslims and the Muslim traditions like the Christian Bible and Christian traditions have passages and historical precedence that are capable of being interpreted in support of violence, and hatred. But the central message of Islam is submission to God as a requirement to social justice and peace. Similarly passages that are prejudicial to women can be found in the Islamic Scriptures as is also the case in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

This paper shows that Islam makes it harder for Muslims to disregard and not practice their faith. That cannot be said for Christianity that has left it to the individual conscience to practice the ethical precepts of the faith. Both make room for those who differ. Christianity in recognizing the validity of knowledge outside of the faith as a check for the excesses of religion recognizes its own fallibility. Islam makes no provision for that.

One problematic issue against Muslim governments is the fact that freedom and toleration of other religions may not be as expected as they are in pluralistic Christian nations. The uniqueness of the situation of Muslims in the Philippines then can help serve as a paradigm in the quest for peaceful co-existence between and among religions.

The world needs alternative communities that live the values of its faith as alternative to a world under the manipulation of the richest and most powerful. In it, the poor and the weak have no place. Standing in solidarity with the Muslims in the southern Philippines is to stand for the establishment

of shalom as Muslims have been marginalized and they themselves aspire to be a community of Shalom.

If Christians can be as tolerant and as kind to the controversial texts, beliefs, and practices in other religions particularly Islam; as we are, with those of our own, knowing that for the most part, it is not the religion itself that is at fault but its adherents, it will be a more peaceful world.

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The Moments in Memory in Jack Wigley's *Home of the Ashfall*

Ian Rosales Casocot

The thing about John Jack Wigley, author of Home of the Ashfall (University of Santo Tomas Press, 2014), is that to read him is to fall under the stealthy spell of a born storyteller. However, you are starting out on the whole enterprise of reading, you will inevitably be taken in by that inimitable voice—part dramatic, part humorous—usually reserved for campfire stories or gossip. That voice has the bewitchment of hooks.

This was also the case with Mr. Wigley's first book, Falling Into the Manhole, and of which his sophomore effort feels very much like a continuation. And thank God for that, because in that first volume of collected memoir, we got compelling stories about Mr. Wigley growing up only a few meters away from Clark Air Base, where he was the illegitimate offspring of an American G.I., and soon learning to deal with the hardships of biracial existence and growing up being called "mestisong bangus," among other things. That particular biographical detail was what led him to write in the first place, which means that issues of race is very much a part of his writerly identity. "I have never read any memoir that reflected my own story," he told me once.

That story includes an incisive critique about our collective love affair with everything America—and in "American Visa," one of Ashfall's essays, Mr. Wigley sets about anatomizing the desperation we fall into lining up for

the titular "prize" in the U.S. Embassy. He brings an earthy awareness to the politics and the humiliation of the whole affair, this impossibly one-sided devotion we have to America.

There is a way of reading his first and second books, which is to think of the volumes as the linked novel of Mr. Wigley's life, each essay in them a standalone chapter of an unfolding Dickensian existence. Or, if you like your cultural references local, each one an episode in the dramatic teleserye on his life.

Beginning in Manhole, there is, of course, the Miss Saigon-worthy story of Asian mother and American father, a G.I. who soon leaves for America, but not without leaving traces of hopes and resentment in a son he has not seen. There are also the insights—mostly funny, sometimes sad—into the teaching life. Then, there are, finally, the loves and consuming passions of Jack's life: his DVD collection, music, Nora Aunor, Meryl Streep, beauty pageants, and the finally young man who broke Jack's heart. Much of the first book is about growing up poor but plucky in the concrete maze of Angeles City—with the slight assurance that being the bright boy in class can lead to a brighter future—a theme continued in the second book. "You could be President of the Philippines one day," his mother tells little Jack in Ashfall's first essay "Getting Lost."

Indeed, Ashfall can be said to be an elaboration of the themes of the first book—but this time around, there is a sure hand defining an arc to the narrative. Three essays into the book, and we know that we are getting Philippine literature's equivalent of Pedro Almodovar's All About My Mother. The best of the essays is a distillation for the uncommon grace Mr. Wigley's mother has gone through, and endured—from the harried life of being a single parent, to the painful battles of the dementia that ultimately claimed her life.

These highlights, among others, resonate in Mr. Wigley's own story, ostensibly the subject of the book. In the title essay, Mr. Wigley's flagging determination to reach his hometown in the middle of the lahar deluge after Mt. Pinatubo's eruption is challenged by his mother's display of nonchalant fierceness at the end of the tale. By the time we get to "Mother's Passing," we have come to know Mr. Wigley's mother so fully, his grief over her death becomes our own.

And yet, the book—while glowing with maternal tribute—is also very much about a search for a father. In "Peering Through the Window," the

tale of a bus trip to the mother's hometown becomes a quiet contemplation about the unexpected pangs of longing for a father figure. And in "The Fancy Dancer," the story of an impromptu dance set to the tune of "One Way Ticket" in the rundown streets of Angeles becomes more than an attempt to humanize the surface of the city's sleaze; it also provides a kind of a coda for the book's search of a father. We see this theme more acutely in "Departures," Mr. Wigley's reflections on the Oscar-winning Japanese film of the same title, which ultimately becomes a meditation on fatherly absence.

One must take note of the narrative whiplash that occurs regularly in his essays. You think Mr. Wigley is talking about one thing specifically—and then you realize he's actually leading us to a revelation of a different sort. This is clearly demonstrated in "The Admired Classmate," where Mr. Wigley rhapsodizes the memory of an impeccably dressed, well-spoken classmate in grade school, only for us to be amused by the twist in their shared fate. But this tendency is more subtle in such pieces as "The Choice," where he seems to recount the joyful occasion of a class excursion—only to spring on us a dark, sad punch coming from out of the blue.

Yet, despite the seriousness of his themes, Mr. Wigley remains a funny storyteller. His punchlines, often punctuating a heart-rending tale, are both deadly and welcome, as if to remind us that there is a certain freedom in choosing bemusement as a stance, and accept life for the cruel comedy that it is.

What Mr. Wigley has accomplished in the end is being a connoisseur of moments in memory. His words are succulent pieces of life's all-seeing videogram, and the pictures that he takes for us become universal images of our own recollections. How does he know, for example, that many of us usually pretend we are watching a movie when we peer out of bus windows? His unique life becomes, in his telling, the tantalizing mirror to our own experiences—and that's the very province of immersive literature.

Cover Art *"Study After Nocturnal A" by Samuel Bak*
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