



SILLIMAN JOURNAL

VOLUME 56 NUMBER 3 | JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015

**A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO DISCUSSION AND INVESTIGATION
IN THE HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES**

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IN THIS ISSUE

Lily F. Apura
Victor Aguilan
Rolando T. Bello
Allan B. I. Bernardo
Stella Concepcion R. Britanico
Ian Rosales Casocot
Feorillo A. Demeterio III
Josefina T. Dizon
Caroline Duque-Piñon
Gabriel Jose T. Gonzales, SJ
Gail Tan Ilagan
Gwee Li Sui
Rowell D. Madula
Renato G. Maligaya
Maria Luisa A. Mamaradlo
Alana Leilani C. Narciso
Jeffry Ocaj
Myla June T. Patron
Renante D. Pilapil
Maria Ana T. Quimbo
Lope B. Robin

The Silliman Journal is published quarterly under the auspices of Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Philippines. Entered as second class mail matter at Dumaguete City Post Office on 1 September 1954.

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ISSN 0037-5284

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Silliman Journal
Silliman University Main Library
6200 Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental
Philippines

Issues are also available in microfilm format from

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Michigan 48106 USA

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Or go to the SILLIMAN JOURNAL website at www.su.edu.ph/sillimanjournal

Cover and book design by Rigel Dela Cruz Suarez
Cover Artwork by Ana Lacson
Printing by SU Printing Press, Dumaguete City

SILLIMAN
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Contents

- 13 Editorial Notes**
Margaret Helen Udarbe-Alvarez
- 19 The Ecological Crisis and the Reformed
Theology of Creation: An Analysis**
Lope B. Robin
- 43 A Heartbroken God Deals with Rebellion:
Towards a Theology of Calamity Based on the Flood Story
(Genesis 6:5-9:17)**
Lily F. Apura
- 61 Gay Comrades: Historicizing the Communist Party
of the Philippines and its Sexual Struggle**
Rowell D. Madula
- 93 The Image of Japan in the Philippine Periodical
La Solidaridad (1889-1895)**
Renato G. Maligaya, Maria Luisa A. Mamaradlo,
and Feorillo A. Demeterio III
- 123 The State and Challenges in Securing Land Tenure and
Property Rights in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Philippines**
Stella Concepcion R. Britanico, Josefina T. Dizon, Rolando T. Bello,
Maria Ana T. Quimbo, and Caroline Duque-Piñon
- 145 In Search of Lessons: What Students Look for in Stories**
Alana Leilani C. Narciso
- 165 Towards a Tradition of Sillimanian Literature**
Ian Rosales Casocot

READERS FORUM

- 191 Introduction to the Readers Forum**
Myla June T. Patron

- 193 Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: Social Psychological Dimensions of Socioeconomic Inequalities in the Philippines**
Allan B. I. Bernardo
- 217 From Institutions to Persons? Responding to Bernardo**
Renante D. Pilapil
- 223 From Social Consciousness to Radical Political Action: A Response to Allan B. I. Bernardo's Social Psychology of Poverty**
Jeffry Ocay
- 229 On Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: The View from Mindanao**
Gail Tan Ilagan and Gabriel Jose T. Gonzales, SJ
- 237 The Privileged and the Poor: Friends or Foes?**
Victor Aguilan
- 241 Broadening Psychology Discourses on Poverty and Connecting with Conversations on Social Change**
Allan B. I. Bernardo

NOTES SECTION

- 251 Poeticising Love**
Gwee Li Sui

SILLIMAN
JOURNAL



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Publication Guidelines

SILLIMAN JOURNAL 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.

SILLIMAN JOURNAL is especially receptive to the work of new authors. Articles should be products of research taken in its broadest sense and should make an original contribution to their respective fields. Authors are advised to keep in mind that Silliman Journal has a general and international readership, and to structure their papers accordingly.

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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.

SILLIMAN JOURNAL likewise welcomes submissions of “Notes,” which generally are briefer and more tentative than full-length articles. Reports on work-in-progress, queries, updates, reports of impressions rather than research, responses to the works of others, even reminiscences are appropriate here.

SILLIMAN JOURNAL also accepts for publication book reviews and review articles.

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

The Editor will endeavor to acknowledge all submissions, consider them promptly, and notify the authors as soon as these have been refereed. Each author is entitled to one complimentary copy of the journal. Additional copies are available by arrangement with the Editor or Business Manager before the issue goes to press.

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*“For good ideas and true innovation,
you need human interaction, conflict,
argument, debate.”*

– **Margaret Heffernan**

*“I never let politics get personal. You can
have the most intense, heated debate
on issues, and so long as you keep it on
issues, you can go out and have coffee
afterwards and you’re good friends.”*

– **Phil Crane**

*“The adequate study of culture, our own
and those on the opposite side of the globe,
can press on to fulfillment only as we
learn today from the humanities as well
as from the scientists.”*

– **Ruth Benedict**

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Editorial Notes

Welcome to Silliman Journal’s third issue for 2015. If you are searching for something new to debate about, you’ll find plenty in this issue.

Our first paper is by Silliman University Divinity School Dean Lope Robin whose thesis is set in the context of numerous natural disasters taking place around the world in recent years—what he refers to as an “ecological crisis”—and the theology of creation espoused by the Protestant reformer John Calvin. Robin says that Calvin had a strong contention that God cares for all creatures, but that Calvin failed to emphasize human responsibility towards the world of nature in ensuring that creation will continue to serve its purpose as originally intended by God. Robin suggests for one, therefore, reclaiming and promoting subsistence agriculture. More revolutionary, however, he calls for doctrinal change, for a re-articulation of Calvin’s thought (finding it wanting) in order to produce a contemporary model of Reformed theology of creation that is relevant and responsive to the sad state of the natural world. Indeed, Robin adds, every generation of theologians must write their own theology for their own time and place.

Lily F. Apura similarly writes about “A Heartbroken God”—towards a theology of calamity based on the flood story in the Old Testament book, Genesis. Lily’s own thesis is based on the Old Testament understanding that natural calamities are acts of God in judgment of a world that has turned

against God, “transforming a corrupt world towards wholeness and well-being,” although, Lily adds, “not without pain and grief on God’s part.” This argument is debate number two in this SJ issue.

For our third article, and referring to Philippine revolution, Rowell Madula of De La Salle University-Manila, writes about “Gay Comrades” in efforts to historicize the Communist Party of the Philippines and its sexual struggle. In writing about the history of Philippine revolution as a history of contradictions, Rowell highlights the sexual struggle experienced by members of the Communist Party and how the Party responded and resolved this “contradiction”. This is debate number four.

Fourth, the academicians Renato Maligaya, Ma. Luisa Mamaradlo and Feorillo Demeterio III, analyze writings of Filipinos to determine how Filipinos viewed Japan over a century ago. It is a timely discussion in the midst of Asianization and globalization and as we increasingly look to our neighbors in the Asia-Pacific region—formalizing agreements and establishing vital links.

Closer to home, Stella Britanico and colleagues describe the challenges in securing land tenure and property rights in Southern Philippines. The issue has to do with ownership and concerns migrant groups (who possess land titles) and indigenous peoples (who have a tax declaration). The authors acknowledge what they refer to as “contentious” issues in protected area management and suggest information campaigns, equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, and collective action, among other initiatives.

The sixth article is borne of classroom experience in literature instruction—a study that began with the simple question: “What do you look for in stories?” Alana Narciso indicated that students explicitly look for lessons in stories, suggesting that literature teachers should constantly provide opportunities for ethical engagement and confrontation.

Our final full-length article is also one on literature, this time on the writings of Sillimanians. Realizing that Visayan literature is largely missing from the nation’s literary history, Ian Casocot began looking into the literary history of Silliman University (located in the Visayas, or Central Philippines), stating that it “established Dumaguete as an important place in the Filipino literary geography”. Ian argues that there indeed exists a “Sillimanian” tradition of writing. And this, to say the least, constitutes debate number seven.

READERS FORUM

In an SJ issue in 2006, we began the tradition of a Readers Forum whereby a submission to SJ is sent out to others to critique and essay. In this particular issue, we have chosen the article by the Filipino psychologist Allan Bernardo entitled “Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: Social Psychological Dimensions of Socioeconomic Inequalities in the Philippines.” SJ associate editor Myla Patron introduces you to both the article and the essays. I acknowledge with gratitude both Allan and the readers of his paper for their thoughts and insights. In particular, the readers are philosophy professors Renante Pilapil (of Ateneo de Davao University) and Jeffrey Ocaj (of Silliman University), psychologists Gail Ilagan and Fr. Gab Gonzales of the Ateneo de Davao, and the theologian-philosopher Vic Aguilan of the Silliman University Divinity School.

NOTES SECTION

The lone contribution to the notes section, “Poeticizing Love,” is a talk that the Singaporean poet-writer Gwee Li Sui gave to a Silliman audience. Gwee Li Sui gives an account of writing love poems, producing drafts for a book on love poems, intertwined with his own personal experiences of love (found and lost). In this essay, he refers, in fact, to his book of love poems, *One Thousand and One Nights*, as his “happy-sad book.” His essay is both poignant and personal.

REVIEW SECTION

Also a lone contribution to the review section, Matthew Oseka critiques Anne Burghardt’s *Salvation – Not for Sale* (2015), a collection of essays put together to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The board of editors and staff of the Silliman Journal acknowledge with gratitude the continued support of Silliman administration and especially the contributors to this issue, by way of manuscripts and review. I wish to thank the Office of Information and Publication of Silliman University for

coming to the rescue, offering their services to the SJ for production and publication.

Research and publication are poor cousins to the instruction and even extension responsibilities of the academic. But one has to ask what a faculty member is teaching in the classroom if it were not a product of research. There is increased interest in research endeavors, therefore, and the problem now becomes making the connection from research implementation to the published product. Writing bridges the disconnect. Joyce Carol Oates said, “The first sentence can’t be written until the final sentence is written.”

I leave you to try and figure that one out.

Margaret Helen F. Udarbe

Editor

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JOURNAL



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The Ecological Crisis and the Reformed Theology of Creation: An Analysis

Lope B. Robin

Divinity School, Silliman University

This paper examines the Reformed Theology of Creation as espoused by one of the leading protestant reformers John Calvin. For Calvin, creation primarily serves as a means of God's revelation. That is, through creation the human being obtains knowledge of God and experience the goodness of God. This is so because the world of nature discloses the majesty, power, and the graciousness of God. Moreover, Calvin underscores that God nourishes and sustains both the human and nonhuman creatures through creation. In this sense, Calvin's position suggests the upholding of the integrity and well-being of creation for it to continue to serve its intended purpose as willed by God. As such, Calvin has a strong contention that God cares for all creatures. However, he failed to emphasize human responsibility towards the world of nature in ensuring that creation will continue to serve its purpose as originally intended by God.

Keywords: creation, creator, revelation, contemplation, knowledge, majesty, goodness.

INTRODUCTION

The frequency of natural disasters that are taking place around the world in recent years reveals that, indeed, the entire humanity is seriously threatened by ecological crisis. Among the manifestations of ecological crisis are long droughts, devastating typhoons, and heavy rains resulting in massive

flooding. The current ecological crisis has resulted in natural disasters that have claimed human lives, livestock, and properties across the globe. Based on the Philippine experience, thousands of Filipinos have perished and millions of residents have been displaced due to massive flooding across the country in recent history.

Nevertheless, the reality of the unabated ecological deterioration that has resulted in devastating natural disasters in recent history has also generated growing concern from different individuals and institutions around the world, joining hands in addressing the problem. However, a viable solution can only be put in place when the roots of the problem have already been identified. Looking closely at the unabated global ecological deterioration, it cannot be denied that the human being has played a major role in this present phenomenon. As Indian theologian WatiLongchar points out, “Every person wants to control and manipulate the land and its resources threatening the rhythm of the universe.”^[1] But it does not end there. Inasmuch as theological conviction shapes one’s practice or action,^[2] it cannot be discounted that the unabated devastation of the natural world has some theological root.

Along with this, American ecofeminist advocate, Marti Kheel points to the Genesis account of creation as having a large share of guilt for what has happened to the world of nature.^[3] In this account of creation, God gives the human being the privilege to have dominion over other creatures (Genesis 1:26). Indeed, critics of Christianity’s traditional creation theology like the ecofeminist advocates posit that the human attitude towards the natural world is shaped by the notion of human superiority over nonhuman creatures. There is no question that Christianity is the most influential factor in the propagation of the notion on human superiority over nature. Indeed, the Judeo-Christian tradition has provided a solid theological foundation for human domination and subjugation over nature.

Even evangelical theologians acknowledge that the Genesis account of creation has provided theological justification to human being’s domination and subjugation of nature. American eco-feminist theologian, Rosemary Radford Ruether describes the privilege given to human being as “the

1 WatiLongchar, *Returning to Mother Earth: Theology, Christian Witness and Theological Education An Indigenous Perspective* (Tainan, Taiwan: Program for Theology and Cultures in Asia, 2013), 17.

2 Rebecca S. Chopp and Mark Lewis Taylor, “Crisis, Hope and Contemporary Theology,” in *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, eds. R. Chopp and M. L. Taylor (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 12.

3 Marti Kheel, “From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge,” in *Earth Ethics: Environmental Ethics, Animal Rights, and Practical Applications*, ed. James P. Sterba (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 219.

prototype of both anthropocentric and exploitative use of the animals and plants by man.”^[4] Another American theologian, Daniel Migliore has similar position as he says: “The teaching that human beings alone are created in the image of God and are commanded by God to exercise ‘dominion’ over all creatures has given Western civilization religious justification for treating the natural environment in a ruthless and brutal manner.”^[5]

As an ardent adherent of the Reformed faith tradition who is also deeply concerned about the unabated ecological degradation across the globe, I am particularly interested in examining the theology of creation espoused by John Calvin, one of the leading Protestant Reformers in the 16th century.

Calvin’s Idea of Creation as a Means of God’s Revelation

One of the significant features of Calvin’s theology of creation is the idea that creation is a means of God’s revelation. However, getting to know the different aspects of Calvin’s idea necessitates an awareness of the circumstances behind the development of Calvin’s doctrine of creation as embodied in his monumental work, *Institutes of Christian Religion*. It is important to note that everything Calvin wrote, especially those that are embodied in the *Institutes*, had important functions for the cause of the reformation. The title itself “*Institutio* is used in the then familiar sense of instruction or education.”^[6] Everything that comprised the *Institutes* including the doctrine of creation was primarily designed to provide theological instruction to the “young community of believers”^[7] that had just severed its tie with the Church of Rome.

For Calvin, creation constitutes everything in the world of nature and the celestial bodies that are scattered throughout the universe.^[8] Through the magnificent creation, God reveals to humanity. Inasmuch as the term revelation connotes uncovering^[9] or unveiling of something^[10] that is hidden,

4 Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1992), 21.

5 Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William b. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 81.

6 Bernard M G Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Reformation*, 2nd edition (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1995), 155.

7 Serene Jones, *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 65

8 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religions*, vol. I, ed. John McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 57.

9 Van A. Harvey. *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 207.

10 Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology* (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988) 585.

Calvin's idea of creation as a means of God's revelation entails that through creation human beings are given the privilege to experience God. Hence, creation discloses something about the characteristics of God and the way God relates with human and nonhuman creatures.

CREATION IS AN AVENUE TOWARDS OBTAINING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE OF GOD

As part of the *Institutio*, the primary purpose of Calvin's theology of creation was to help his readers come to the knowledge of God.^[11] Even if Calvin is firm about his position that the ultimate source of the knowledge of God is the Scripture,^[12] he acknowledged that the human being can obtain knowledge of God through creation as well. In his commentary to the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Calvin writes that the human being has the opportunity to gain authentic knowledge from the world of nature.^[13] The human being is able to obtain knowledge through creation because creation is a means of God's revelation.^[14] Obviously, Calvin recognizes a self-declaration of God in the whole created order.^[15] This means the human being is given the opportunity to come to the knowledge of God through the order of nature.^[16] For Calvin, human beings cannot open their eyes without being compelled to see God.^[17] Hence, creation is a legitimate source of a true knowledge of God.^[18] Calvin stressed that human beings have the capacity to know God because God has implanted in them a sense of divinity.^[19] Whenever a person looks at the grandeur of creation, one thinks of God because the wonders of nature bring an awesome awareness of God upon the human being. In other words, creation is a credible witness of God to humanity.

In as much as everyone has a sense of divinity and the opportunity to come into contact with nature, nobody is deprived of an awareness of God. Hence, one does not need to be a learned person in order to know God. On

11 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religions*, vol. I, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John McNeil, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 35.

12 *Ibid.*, 6.

13 John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans. Ross Mckenzie, eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 32.

14 Calvin, *Institutes*, 52.

15 Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 41.

16 *Ibid.*, 40.

17 Calvin, *Institutes*, 52.

18 I. John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 49.

19 Calvin, *Institutes*, 43.

the contrary, Calvin firmly argues that “God is not known by those who propose to search him out by their proud but feeble reason.”^[20] In the same vein, American theologian Langdon Gilkey argues “God is to be known, if at all, by His own self-manifestation to us within the world, not by our intellectual ascent beyond the world to Him.”^[21]

Moreover, Calvin recognizes that creation plays an important role in establishing and strengthening human relationship with God. Through nature the human being is able to contemplate and commune with God. Citing Hebrews 11:3, Calvin stresses that the whole created order serves as a mirror upon which human beings can contemplate God who is otherwise invisible.^[22] In line with this, Calvin enjoins his followers and readers not to rack their minds about God but rather, contemplate God in creation.^[23]

In his analysis of Calvin’s thought, American Protestant theologian, I. John Hesselink underscores that Calvin’s intention in stressing creation as a means of God’s revelation was to inculcate in the consciousness of his audience that through the wonderful created order everyone can contemplate God.^[24] Through serious contemplation of God in creation, the human being can feel the presence of God.^[25]

John Calvin also warns his readers that their contemplation of God through creation should never be construed as an attempt to investigate and comprehend the essence of God. Calvin emphatically asserts that “we know the most perfect way of seeking God, and the most suitable order, is not for us to attempt with bold curiosity to penetrate to the investigation of his essence, which we ought more to adore than meticulously to search out, but for us to contemplate him in his works whereby he renders himself near and familiar to us, and in some manner communicates himself.”^[26] Thus, through creation, human can enter into fellowship and freely communicate with God.

The declaration of faith of the Psalmist provides biblical foundation of Calvin’s affirmation that the human being can come to know and feel the presence of God through creation: “O Lord our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens” (Psalm 8:1). This passage indicates that the Psalmist’s awareness of God’s presence in

20 Calvin, *Institutes*, li.

21 Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965), 325.

22 Calvin, *Institutes*, 52-53.

23 *Ibid.*, 61.

24 Hesselink, *Calvin’s First Catechism*, 8.

25 Shirley C. Guthrie. *Christian Doctrine* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 40.

26 *Ibid.*, 62.

creation leads him into making a profound declaration of faith. In line with the Psalmist's declaration of faith, Calvin affirmed that no one has any excuse not to acknowledge the majesty, power and goodness of God.

CREATION DISCLOSES MAJESTY, POWER, AND GOODNESS OF GOD

Calvin also affirms that creation discloses the majesty, power, and goodness of God that is discernible through the human senses. Along with this, Calvin considers violent natural phenomena like typhoons and earthquakes as manifestations of God's power: "Psalm 29 looks to this same end, where the prophet—speaking forth concerning God's awesome voice, which strikes the earth in thunder [v. 3], winds, rains, whirlwinds and tempests, causes mountains to tremble [v. 6], shatters the cedars [v. 5]—finally adds at the end that his praises are sung in the sanctuary because the unbelievers are deaf to all the voices of God that resound in the air [vs. 9-11]."^[27]

For William Bousma, Professor of History at the University of California, Calvin's allusion to the passage in Psalm 29 indicates that "he was especially impressed by the most violent phenomena of nature because these best display God's power."^[28] If Calvin were alive today, he might not anymore view the devastating natural disasters such as super typhoons, floods, and landslides as a display of God's power since these phenomena are largely precipitated by the massive destruction of the natural world. It is certain that like in the time of the Psalmist, Calvin had not yet witnessed the erratic movement of nature as a consequence of ecological destruction that the present generation has experienced. In all likelihood, what he had witnessed as the also Psalmist had, was the natural movement of nature which was not yet as devastating as it is today. If Calvin were alive today, he would most likely have a different view of violent and devastating natural phenomena.

Since the movement of nature such as strong winds and floods was not yet that devastating in his time, Calvin considered the display of power of nature as an affirmation that God "the creator reveals his lordship over the creation."^[29] Calvin points out that the power of nature that is felt through human senses as described by the Psalmist is a concrete proof of God's power and divine

27 Calvin, *Institutes*, 73-74.

28 William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 166.

29 Calvin, *Institutes*, I 58.

majesty.^[30] Calvin asserts that there is no more need of other evidence to prove the divine majesty because there are enough in the created order. Evidences is observable in the created order.^[31]

The preceding statement is intended to refute those who refused to acknowledge the existence of God, particularly the Epicurean philosophers^[32] who were sowing confusion among the believers. Disgusted by the posture of the Epicureans Calvin wrote: “This very confused diversity emboldened the Epicureans and other crass despisers of piety to cast out all awareness of God.”^[33] Historically, the Epicureans were the followers of a philosophical school founded by Epicurus a philosopher born in 341 B.C.E.^[34] “According to Epicurus, there is no need to attribute the regulation of celestial phenomena to divine beings.”^[35] This position is sharply contrasted by Calvin who firmly affirms that the universe manifests the existence of God,^[36] but the manifestation of God in the whole created order is being choked by the erroneous views of the Epicurean philosophers.^[37] Moreover, Calvin’s affirmation that creation manifests divine majesty is also meant to persuade skeptics about the existence of God, so they will eventually join the fold of the reformed faith community.

It is worth stressing that the terms lord, power, and majesty that are used by Calvin as attributes of God that are discernible in creation are taken from the attributes of the political and ecclesial rulers as well as judicial magistrates in Europe before and during the reformation period.^[38] Calvin used these terms to address King Francis I in a letter appealing for fair treatment of the followers of the reformation movement. The letter was attached as a preface^[39] to the first edition of the *Institutes*, which he published in March 1536.^[40] Calvin used the language, images, and metaphors that were familiar to his audience to make his message more palatable and convincing.^[41] As Wendel attests, “Calvin employs to his own purpose the definition of public power accepted in Roman law.”^[42]

30 Ibid., 61.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 65.

33 Ibid.

34 V. Cauchy, “Epicureanism,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. V (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 466.

35 Ibid., 467.

36 Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, 31.

37 Calvin, *Institutes*, 64.

38 John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. III (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958), 190.

39 Calvin, *Institutes*, 9.

40 Ibid., xxxiii.

41 Serene Jones, *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 4.

42 Francois Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairret (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), 30.

By stressing God's power, majesty, and goodness^[43] that have been disclosed in the fashioning of the universe,^[44] Calvin reminded his audience that they ought to give their full allegiance to God inasmuch as they give their allegiance to the rulers of this world. This allegiance is to be expressed in a form of faithful worship. As Calvin aptly puts it, this happens "whenever each of us contemplates his own nature, that there is one God who so governs all natures that he would have us look unto him, direct our faith to him, and worship and call upon him."^[45]

To those who believe in God, Calvin delivers an inspiring and faith affirming message. Calvin points out that through God's works in creation "The Lord shows in us his life, wisdom, and power; and exercises in our behalf his righteousness, goodness and mercy."^[46] This faith affirming statement came as an inspiration to the followers of the reformation movement who were in distress amid persecution. The thought of John Calvin is in line with that of Augustine who stresses that behind the good creation is the goodness of God.^[47] Indeed, the work of creating in itself is an act of sheer grace and goodness of God. God fashioned the universe not out of God's own whims and caprices but out of overflowing goodness and grace. Such graciousness and goodness is manifested throughout the universe.^[48]

As far as Calvin is concerned, since creation and everything in it is an avenue for human beings to be aware and to experience the goodness of God, human beings are expected to return all honors and praises to God as an expression of gratitude: "Indeed, no one gives himself freely and willingly to God's service unless, having tasted his fatherly love, he is drawn to love and worship him in return."^[49] For Calvin one of the expressions of giving honor to God is the offering of praises. Since all human beings are recipients of God's goodness and love, Calvin emphasizes that they ought to have acknowledged those benefits through faith and reverence. Pity and reverence are joined with love of God that is induced by the knowledge of God's benefits.^[50]

Driven by faith, a person who is fully aware of the goodness of God cannot fail to praise God. This is also consistent with the conviction of Augustine who declares that "it dawns and breaks into morning when the creature is drawn

43 Calvin, *Institutes*, I, 66

44 *Ibid.*, 67.

45 *Ibid.*, 58.

46 *Ibid.*, 63.

47 Schaff, Philip, ed., "St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 217.

48 Calvin, *Institutes*, 67.

49 Calvin, *Institutes*, 55.

50 *Ibid.*, 41.

to the praise and love of the Creator; and night never falls when the Creator is not forsaken through love of the creature.”^[51] In Calvin’s observation, God has been defrauded the praises due to God.^[52] Calvin once again chides the Epicureans because of their too much reliance on human faculties.^[53] For Calvin, the refusal of his enemies to give glory and honor to God despite God’s goodness that is conspicuously made manifest in the whole creation is a blatant act of ingratitude:

Here, however, the foul ungratefulness of men is disclosed. They have within themselves a workshop graced with God’s unnumbered works and, at the same time, a storehouse overflowing with inestimable riches. They ought, then, to break forth into praise of him but are actually puffed up and swollen with all the more pride.^[54]

For Calvin, the Epicurean philosophers are persons of ingratitude par excellence. At the same time, Calvin also tries to persuade the nobility and rulers of his days in France to discern the glory and goodness of God towards humanity as disclosed in creation and in turn give honor and praise to God. With some allusion to the passage in Psalm 8:1 and 3, Calvin stresses that “David, when he has briefly praised the admirable name and glory of God, which shines everywhere, immediately exclaims: ‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?’ (Psalm 8:4 NRSV).”^[55] Even if it is an anthropocentric statement that excludes nonhuman creatures in the care and love of God, it is nevertheless a profound affirmation of faith. Certainly, God is mindful of human and nonhuman creatures because God is good and gracious. Based on Psalmist affirmation on creation as a sign of God’s goodness towards humanity, Calvin affirms that God nourishes and sustains humans and nonhuman creatures alike through creation.

GOD SUSTAINS AND NOURISHES HUMAN AND NONHUMAN CREATURES THROUGH CREATION

As Calvin reflects on the goodness of God that is made manifest in creation, he comes into a deep realization that apart from creation, human being

51 Schaff, “St. Augustine,” 209.

52 Calvin, *Institutes*, 57.

53 *Ibid.*, 56.

54 *Ibid.*, 55.

55 *Ibid.*, 54-55.

cannot live. Human life comes from God because it is the very breath of God (Gen. 2:7), but the sustenance of the God given life is heavily dependent upon creation. God, the giver of life, sustains and nourishes the recipient of God's precious gift through nature. Creation shows how much God loves and cares for human beings. Hence, creation is the most essential factor for the continuance of human and nonhuman lives.

In Calvin's thought, everything in creation is designed by God for the benefit of human being. Alluding to the creation story in Genesis, Calvin has a firm conviction in the idea that creation exists primarily if not solely for the sake of human being:^[56] "We ought in the very order of things diligently to contemplate God's fatherly love toward mankind, in that he did not create Adam until he had lavished upon the universe all manner of good things."^[57] This firm assertion of Calvin is apparently made to assure his followers that amid difficulties, God cares for them.^[58] He offers his faithful followers some word of comfort and assurance that God will continue to pour upon them God's benefits.^[59]

Calvin's claim that God did not create Adam until God had prepared everything that human being needs is based on the writer's portrayal of the human being as the last to be created. However it does not follow that all other creatures that were created by God prior to the creation of human being were solely intended for the sake of the human being. Every creature has an inherent value in itself having been created out of God's overflowing goodness. As the narrative shows, God takes delight in everything that God has created. Every creature is valuable to God. Out of the same goodness and love for existence, God created the human being when the basic needs were already available in creation. Otherwise, human beings cannot live because human existence is utterly dependent upon nature. Creating the human being with nothing to live on is a negation of the goodness of God.

Although human welfare dominates in Calvin's thought, he nevertheless acknowledges that God is also concerned for nonhuman creatures. Calvin declares that God "sustains, nourishes, and care for, everything he has made, even to the least sparrow (cf. Matt. 10:29)."^[60] This statement is an affirmation that God indeed continues to provide the basic needs such as food to all

56 Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 63.

57 Calvin, *Institutes*, 162.

58 Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 71.

59 Jones, *Calvin Rhetoric*, 155.

60 Calvin, *Institutes*, 197-198.

forms of creatures.^[61] It is also an assertion that every creature is being cared for and sustained by God.^[62] Furthermore, the position of Calvin regarding God's care for all creatures through creation has some parallelism with the claim of Indian Jesuit Samuel Rayan that the earth itself is God's provision for the entire household of God on this planet.^[63] Daniel Migliore, on his part, affirms that God's continuing care for all creatures is attested in several passages of the Bible (e.g. Ps. 104:27-30) such as the affirmation of Jesus that God sends rain on both the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45), feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the lilies of the field (Matt. 6:26-30).^[64]

For better understanding of Calvin's theology of creation, it is important to know his context and theological methodology. It is good to be familiar with Calvin's methodology and historical context since these factors shape every theologian's point of view.^[65]

Calvin's Context and Sources of his Theological Work

It is significant to stress that almost always every theological articulation is done to answer or deal with an issue that has direct bearing on the life of the faith community. John Calvin developed or formulated his theology of creation as part of his overall doctrinal writings that were designed to give shape to the theological identity of the newly formed Christian community.^[66] He wanted to show to the Christian world that the faith affirmation of the new community of believers was rooted in the oldest and most fundamental faith confession of the church of Jesus Christ—the Apostle's Creed.^[67] Calvin had to deal with the doctrine of creation in his writings because it is one of the fundamental concepts of Christian thought that always appears in every period of Christian history and therefore needs fresh interpretation from the point of view of Christian theology.^[68] By stressing creation as a means of God's revelation, Calvin summarized the most fundamental faith affirmation of the Christian Church. Calvin had virtually laid down the foundation of the

61 Julian Hartt, "Creation and Providence," in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, eds. Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 143.

62 Francois Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thoughts*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), 178.

63 Samuel Rayan, S.J. "The Earth is the Lord's," in *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, ed. David G. Hallman (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 141.

64 Migliore, *Faith Seeking*, 100.

65 Werner G. Jeanrond, "Theological Method" in *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, eds. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 480-81.

66 Jones, *Calvin Rhetoric*, 65.

67 Karl Barth, *Credo* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1962), 1.

68 Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965), 41.

Protestant faith affirmation that knowledge of God is a revealed knowledge. There is no true knowledge of God apart from revelation as it is “the original and determining source of our knowledge of God.”^[69]

Calvin acknowledges church tradition as an important source of theologizing. However, the essential source of his theological endeavor is the Bible. Calvin affirms that the Scripture is an important guide and teacher for anyone who comes to God the Creator.^[70] Every aspect of Calvin’s notion of creation as a means of God’s revelation shows that his thought is solidly grounded in the witness of the Scripture. Calvinist French theologian, Francois Wendel attests that as a scholar Calvin made an extensive study of the entire Bible and because of this, he had a more remarkable knowledge than any other reformers, about the Old Testament.^[71]

Calvin’s writings had to be founded upon solid ground since his theology was addressed to different interest groups of readers, many of whom were foes rather than friends, and skeptics rather than believers.^[72] Calvin was not only primarily writing for the sake of scholarly exercise but also to strengthen the faith of his followers and to win more adherents and sympathizers to the reformation movement.

Aside from providing doctrinal instruction and guidance for the adherents of the Reformed faith, Calvin’s idea of creation has had significant cultural and political implications. It must be noted that in the decade (i.e. 1523-1533)^[73] when he was writing the *Institutes*, Calvin witnessed the persecution and martyrdom of the followers of the Reformation in France.^[74] A portion of Calvin’s letter to King Francis I of France gives a glimpse of the harsh persecution of the followers of the reformation in France.

For this reason, most invincible King, I not unjustly ask you to undertake a full inquiry into this case, which until now has been handled—we may even say, tossed about—with no order of law and with violent heat rather than judicial gravity...For ungodly men have so far prevailed that Christ’s truth, even if it is not driven away scattered and destroyed, still lies hidden, buried and inglorious. The poor little church has either been wasted with cruel slaughter

69 Ibid., 328.

70 Calvin, *Institutes*, 69.

71 Francois Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), 123.

72 Ibid., 189.

73 Calvin, *Institutes*, xxx.

74 Ibid., xxxii.

or banished into exile, or so overwhelmed by threats and fears that it dare not even open its mouth.^[75]

Because of the intricacies of the European socio-cultural landscape during the 16th-century reformation, every aspect of Calvin's idea of creation as a means of God's revelation has had multiple functions. He had to carefully deal with his audience that was made up of different interest groups that included the kings, nobles, intellectuals, Roman Catholics, apologists, and Calvin's own students and colleagues.^[76] Hence, every aspect of Calvin's theology of creation dealt with the socio-political, cultural and theological issues that had bearing on the reformation movement.

For the guidance of contemporary adherents of the Calvinist Tradition for their faith and practice in the face of unabated ecological deterioration, it is necessary to reassess and then re-appropriate his theology of creation.

Calvin's Theology of Creation and the Current Ecological Crisis

Calvin's idea of creation as a means of God's revelation has had significant role for the advancement of the cause of the reformation. Through his broad knowledge of the Christian classics and profound theological thought, Calvin was able to lay down the foundation of the reformed faith which is rooted in the witness of scriptures and church's tradition. However, he failed to give as much due importance to other creatures as he did to human beings. In Calvin's idea of creation as a means of God's revelation, the natural world is not the center of attention. In the observation of American Protestant Larry Rasmussen, Calvin's preoccupation is on the knowledge of God and of self, pushing aside the consideration of the world of nature.^[77] Apparently, Calvin's main concern was the strengthening of relationship between God and human beings^[78] leaving the natural world at the background. In his analysis of Calvin's thought, American theologian, David Kinsley concluded that for Calvin, nature is a subsidiary and a background to the significant drama of human salvation.^[79] Calvin's position is reiterated by Karl Barth

75 Ibid., 11.

76 Jones, *Calvin Rhetoric*, 5.

77 Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (New York: ORBIS BOOKS, 1998), 190.

78 David Kinsley, "Christianity as Ecologically Harmful," in *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Routledge, 1996), 112.

79 Ibid.

who views creation as the “stage for the story of the covenant of grace.”^[80] For Calvin and Barth the significance of creation lies heavily on its role as the stage of the drama of God and human encounter.

It must be noted, however, that because Calvin’s main concern when he crafted his theology of creation was on how the human being could obtain knowledge of God through nature. Inasmuch as ecological deterioration was not yet an issue during his time, he did not put emphasis on human being’s responsibility of taking care of the world of nature. As such, it is now the responsibility of the contemporary Calvinist theologians to reinterpret and re-appropriate his thought for it to be relevant to our time and to generate genuine concern for creation from the adherents of the Calvinist tradition.

The case in point here is how to make John Calvin’s theology of creation relevant to the present ecological context. As mentioned above, Calvin convincingly emphasizes that creation is a means of God’s revelation through which human beings would come to the knowledge of God whose goodness, whose love, and whose care for humanity and all other creatures are concretely expressed through the things God has made. Sadly, in the face of the present ecological situation, to a large extent, the world of nature has virtually caused so much terrifying and deadly natural disasters. Unfortunately, due to the frequent horrible natural disasters that have victimized millions of people across the globe, instead of appreciating the goodness and mercy of God, the people have been led into questioning the very existence of God. Instead of seeing a gracious and loving God, many of our people saw the image of a God that is predominantly punitive and full of wrath in the face of the devastating and deadly natural disasters that they have been through.^[81]

Virtually, the present images of destruction and deaths are the exact negation to the claim of Calvin in his theology of creation. However, this writer contends that the spirit of Calvin’s theological thought remains valid and relevant only that it needs re-appropriation by emphasizing what he failed to stress when he crafted his theology. Yes, creation remains a means of God’s revelation; it continues to be a legitimate source of the knowledge of God. It is the only means by which God nourishes and sustains humans and nonhuman creatures alike. However, the validity and integrity of this claim

80 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III “The Doctrine of Creation,” part I, eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. & T. CLARK, 1958), 44.

81 Noriel C. Capulong, “*Understanding Calamities from a Biblical-Theological Perspective*,” a Biblico-Theological Reflection delivered during a theological consultation on Calamities and Natural Disasters held on March 19, 2014 at Silliman University.

would be suspect, should the present state of affairs in the world of nature continue.

By looking at the current state of our Mother Earth, one would realize that John Calvin's claim that creation is the source of nourishment and sustenance of all life forms has been weakened. Presumably, unlike during the time of Calvin, the capacity of our Mother Earth to nourish and sustain the humans has seriously deteriorated. This current sorry situation of our Mother Earth has happened because the means that we her children, use in drawing out their basic needs from her body are destructive. Before the dawn of scientific and technological advancements, the effect of human exploitation of nature was not yet as extensive it is today. A basic example is in the practice of agriculture.

The history of human civilization reveals that during the ancient time circa 12,000 to 10,000 years ago, the tiny human population of the Planet Earth survived through hunting of animals and gathering of wild plants as the main source of food.^[82] During this period, the basic need of the people, especially food, was directly provided for by nature. However, in the course of time, hunting and gathering had no longer been the main economic activity of the people. By the turn of the Neolithic period^[83] or New Stone Age about 8,000 to 10,000 years ago,^[84] a shift from hunting and gathering to food production took place.^[85] So, it was during the Neolithic period that the primitive people embarked on agriculture.^[86] But even then, for quite a long period of time under agricultural food production system, there was some degree of harmonious relationship between nature and individuals of the peasant community. To give an overview of this relatively good relationship between humans and nature, Carolyn Merchant writes:

Evolved over centuries of adaptation to productive capabilities of the natural environment on the one hand and the state of agricultural technology on the other, the peasant community produced a level of subsistence by following traditional patterns of cooperation upheld by the powerful cultural norms. In the early medieval period, these practices and norms tended to result

82 Gordon W. Hewes, "History of Agriculture," in *Encyclopedia Americana*. International Edition, vol. I, eds. Patricia Bayer et al. 353-357 (Hanbury, Connecticut: Grolier Incorporated, 1997), 353.

83 Ibid.

84 William H. Neill, *History of Civilization: A Hand Book*, sixth edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 4.

85 Hewes, "History of Agriculture," 353.

86 Ibid.

in relatively high crop productivity combined with maintenance of soil fertility. The use of plow agriculture integrated crop planting with raising of cows, pigs, and horses. In some areas, this interdependent animal and crop system incorporated the practice of carrying eroded soil back up the slopes to restore washed-out ground.^[87]

It cannot be denied that agricultural activity is one form of exploitation of nature. In spite of this, the ancient method of agriculture did not make much devastating effect upon the natural world. Lynn White gives one example as to how the farmers in ancient time plowed their fields: “Early plows, drawn by two oxen, did not normally turn the sod but merely scratch it.”^[88] Obviously, this mode of tilling the land would not make much problem about soil erosion since it would just scratch the surface of the ground, and it would just utilize a limited piece of land. However, this is already a thing of the past since by the advent of science and technology, farm implements had become more sophisticated, and in this case, this has consequently made the destruction more extensive. As what can be seen today in most agricultural areas, carabaos and cows being used in the plowing of the fields are much lesser. The traditional and nature-friendly mode of production in the farm has been replaced with engine-propelled technology which is more destructive. The power machine could till wide track of lands.^[89] Along this line, American monk Thomas Berry laments on the impact of Industrial Revolution upon the natural world.^[90] He acknowledges that while human beings have already started damaging the earth since the beginning of the agricultural civilization, it was yet at a manageable level compared to our time:^[91]

In our times, however, human cunning has mastered the deep mysteries of the earth at a level far beyond the capacities of earlier peoples. We can break the mountains apart; we can drain the rivers and flood the valleys. We can turn the most luxuriant forests into throwaway paper products. We can tear apart the great grass cover of the western plains and pour toxic chemicals into the soil and pesticides onto the fields until the soil is dead and blows away in the wind. We

87 Merchant, *Death of Nature*, 44.

88 Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis,” in *Environmental Ethics: Concepts, Policy, Theory*, ed. Joseph Des Jardins (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1999), 49.

89 Ibid.

90 Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1998), 7.

91 Ibid.

can pollute the air with acids, the rivers with sewage, the seas with oil—all this in a kind of intoxication with our power for devastation at an order of magnitude beyond reckoning.^[92]

As a consequence of the extensive exploitation of our Mother Earth aggravated by the use of toxic chemicals, millions of peoples around the world are suffering from hunger, ill health, and malnutrition. The severe international problem of hunger and malnutrition is caused by confluence of interrelated issues of socio-political injustice, economics, and ecological deterioration. The problem of hunger and malnutrition are among the manifestations that indeed our Mother Earth is seriously ill. Even the hardworking farmers are no longer capable of providing food to their families because the yields of their farms have seriously dwindled. This scenario happens because the land has lost its fertility and is poisoned and devastated. Every person, regardless of status in society, ought to be concerned about the deteriorating condition of beloved Mother because all life forms are utterly dependent upon her. Hence, the nourishing and sustaining capability of Mother Earth ought to be restored for the sake of humanity especially the less privileged in society.

Toward a Reaffirmation of Calvin's Theology of Creation

In the face of the deteriorating condition of our Mother Earth, John Calvin's theology of creation needs more deliberate reaffirmation that could be translated into concrete actions. In so doing, it is also important to do some re-appropriation and re-interpretation of his thoughts knowing the fact that our ecological context is considerably different from that of Calvin. Along with this, Muriel Montenegro of Silliman University Divinity School asserts that "theology is a timely reflection of the meaning of the gospel in a particular space and time."^[93]

To make the people feel the presence of a majestic, loving, and caring rather than a punitive God, the beauty and grandeur of creation ought to be ensured. That is, whatever is left amid devastation should be preserved and protected. Whatever has been destroyed will have to be restored. This is indeed a missiological challenge to all believers particularly the adherents of

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, *Christology in Situation of Calamities/Disasters and Suffering*, a lecture delivered during a theological consultation on Calamities and Natural Disasters held on March 19, 2014 at Silliman University.

the Calvinist tradition to be more deliberate in their proclamation and action towards restoration of the devastated creation.

For the people, especially the less fortunate in society, in order to have a concrete experience of God's nourishing and sustaining concern for them, all activities that are harmful to creation or Mother Earth for that matter will have to come to an end. That is, friendlier and less harmful activities towards the world of nature by which people's lives are sustained and nourished will have to be deliberately reclaimed and re-introduced.

RECLAIMING AND PROMOTING SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE

In view of the fact that chemically based farming method threatens all life forms in the bosom of Mother Earth, it is incumbent upon all stakeholders—farmers and consumers alike—to reclaim, promote, and support life-enhancing agriculture. Farmers ought to look back and identify forms of proven and tested farming techniques used by their forebears in promoting the well-being of Mother Earth and all natural life forms. Contemporary farmers ought to rediscover certain aspects of old techniques of farming^[94] that were practiced by ancient farmers. Some aspects of the old farming method can be combined with modern techniques that are ecologically affirming. This agricultural method is popularly known as organic farming.^[95] Organic farming is a method that grows plants without applying synthetic fertilizers and chemicals. Aside from relying on natural soil fertility, it also applies organic fertilizers that are derived from animal wastes, decomposed plants, and other natural biodegradable materials.

Since the practice of modern agriculture has become customary to most farmers, they have to be made aware of its advantages and disadvantages vis-à-vis organic farming:

Modern agriculture is characterized by extensive, large-scale monoculture, and depends on high chemical inputs and intensive mechanization. Although productive as defined by the one-dimensional measure of a single crop, its over-reliance on chemical pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizers comes with a string of negative impacts on health and the environment: health risks

94 Radford-Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 259.

95 Ibid.

to farm workers, harmful chemical residues on food, reduced biodiversity, deterioration of soil and water quality, and increased risks of crop disease.

On the other hand, organic farming is characterized by ecologically sound practices:

Organic farming largely excludes synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Instead, it is an ecosystem approach that manages ecological and biological processes, such as food web relations, nutrient cycling, maintaining soil fertility, natural pest control and diversifying crops and livestock. It relies on locally or farm-derived renewable resources, while remaining environmentally and ecologically viable.^[96]

Modern agriculture is basically driven by a strong desire for huge profit and accumulation of more wealth at the expense of the well-being of nature and human beings. Modern agriculture does not benefit the ordinary farmers; it only serves the interest of multinational corporations that manufacture chemicals and agricultural machineries, and of those that have the power and money to acquire and control huge tracts of land by all means. In short, this is a greed-driven method of farming.

Contrary to modern agriculture that is characterized by monoculture, organic agriculture deliberately observes intercropping to maintain the balance of insect populations and soil nutrients.^[97] Practicing farmers in organic agriculture have reported that consistent use of this farming technique has resulted in healthier soil and good harvests.^[98] Moreover, organic farming does not only offer bright promise for the restoration of soil fertility, but it also promotes good health for the people who consume organically grown agricultural products.^[99] In the face of the reality of massive ecological destruction, organic farming brings the promise of healing to Mother Earth. Gradually, organic farming is a practice that recaptures the emphasis of John Calvin since it will restore the nourishing and sustaining capability of

96 *The Case for A GM-Free Sustainable World*, 53-54.

97 Clayton Brascoupe, "Reflections of a Native American Farmer," in *People's Ecology: Explorations in Sustainable Living*, ed. Gregory Cajete, 151-174 (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishers, 1999) 162.

98 "Weeds Your Way" – Organic Farmers Share Secrets of Herbicide-Free Farming accessed June 25, 2015 <http://ofrf.org/>

99 "Organic farming: The future of Philippine agriculture" accessed June 25, 2015 <http://www.fareasternagriculture.com/crops/agriculture/organic-farming-the-future-of-philippine-agriculture>

our Mother Earth by improving soil fertility, promoting biodiversity and decreasing soil, water, and air pollution.

Since organic agriculture is still in its introductory stage for the present generation of farmers, farmers have some reservation about organic agriculture because of the observation that it has lower yields compared to modern farming methods. In some instance, organic farming may have lesser yields compared to modern farming, but if one is to consider the overall monetary costs involving the two methods, the latter entails much larger investment.

On top of the issue of farm yields, the paramount concern that everybody must bear in mind is the ecological cost that all humankind pays for the continuance of modern farming method. It must be stressed that the apprehension about lesser yields in organic farming does not stand on solid ground. A study conducted by the London-based Independent Science Panel has documented outstanding successes of farmers that practice organic agriculture in developing countries. The farmers have experienced significant increase in their food production through organic agriculture:

The success of sustainable agriculture has been concretely demonstrated in a review of 208 projects and initiatives from 52 countries. Some 8.98 million farmers have adopted sustainable agriculture practices on 28.92 million hectares in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Reliable data on yield changes in 89 projects show that farmers have achieved substantial increases in food production per hectare, about 50-100% for rain fed crops, though considerable greater in a few cases, and 5-10% for irrigated crops (though generally starting from a higher absolute yield base). These projects included both certified and non-certified organic systems, and integrated as well as near-organic systems. In all cases where all data were available, there were increase in per hectare productivity for food crops and maintenance of existing yields for fibre.^[100]

There are indeed compelling reasons to encourage the farmers to practice organic farming and abandon destructive conventional farming. This can be done through massive education and awareness campaign to help the farmers realize that organic farming is their viable share in bringing healing upon the wounded Mother Earth. Moreover, organic farming is a concrete manifestation

100 Ibid, 57.

of repentance on the part of the farmers for their sin of commission against Mother Earth and God. By practicing organic farming, the farmers become God's partners in the process of redeeming creation from total collapse. Organic farming will also revitalize creation as the source of sustenance and nourishment for the human beings as claimed by John Calvin.

In addition, organic farming does not only lead to the restoration of the soil fertility and biodiversity; it will also enhance good health of human beings. Through organic farming, the farmers are able to produce organic and toxin-free food supplies that are available for human beings to consume. The organically produced food supplies will improve the health of the consumers because these are free from pesticide residue. Thus, aside from promoting organic farming among small farmers, it is also equally important to encourage people to eat healthy, organic, unprocessed food and to patronize organically grown farm products. The consumers need to realize that by eating organic food, they are demonstrating their opposition to the use of synthetic and chemical-based fertilizers and pesticides and their support to organic farming.^[101]

Organic agriculture promotes the health and well-being of the Earth, human beings, and all life forms that are heavily dependent upon nature for survival. It is a farming method that promotes subsistence agriculture. I call organic farming method as subsistence agriculture because its concern is the production of healthy food supplies directly from the farm for human consumption. Our ancestors practiced subsistence agriculture. Because of this agricultural practice, the natural world and its dependent organisms have been well for centuries until the introduction of modern agriculture. The concern of subsistence agriculture is to ensure that fresh and healthy food is available on every table of every family. It is not concerned with profit and accumulation of wealth; rather it focuses on human survival and the promotion of biodiversity in the ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, John Calvin has a very profound theological formulation on creation. Notably, however, reading Calvin's theology of creation from the vantage point of the current ecological crisis, one would vividly notice that he fails to emphasize human being's responsibility of caring and upholding the integrity of creation. However, it has to be noted that Calvin's theology of creation was heavily shaped

101 Shiva, *Earth Democracy*, 162.

by his own socio-cultural and historical context. After about five centuries since the formulation of his theology of creation, it has been found that his thought is wanting. The challenge for the contemporary Reformed Theologians therefore is to do a re-articulation of Calvin's thought in order to produce a contemporary model of Reformed theology of creation that is relevant and responsive to the sad state of the natural world. Indeed, every generation of theologians must write its own theology for its own time and place.^[102] Since the situation of the Reformed Protestants has changed, there is also a call for some doctrinal change. However, any doctrinal change ought to also demonstrate some mark of continuity with the Reformed tradition.^[103]

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103 Ibid.

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A Heartbroken God Deals with Rebellion: A Theology of Calamity Based on the Flood Story (Genesis 6:5-9:17)

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God created a good world and wills the well-being of all creation. Humankind, however, has sinned against God from the very beginning, following its own will and keeping its ways that oppose the loving and good will of the creator for the creation's well-being. The foregoing study has established the Old Testament understanding that what we now call natural calamities are acts of God through nature, in judgment of a world that has turned against God. Judgment, however, is to be understood as God's action of transforming a corrupt world towards wholeness and well-being. The study of the text and related interpretational resources point to the sovereignty and power of God who uses nature as instrument for judgment and blessing. God, therefore, deals with the corruption of the world by humankind and paves the way for renewal and blessing, though not without pain and grief on God's part.

Keywords: natural calamity, judgment, theology of nature, sin, well-being

For someone who grew up in a farm, the realization that one's well-being is dependent on nature comes naturally. In such an environment, God's love and providence is almost always experienced through nature. This is especially appreciated by the covenant community who professed that God fought against their enemies using natural phenomena: water, frogs, insects, fire, hail, wind, and sea (cf. Exo 7ff).

In view of the recent devastations wrought by typhoons and other

natural calamities in the Philippines, this paper attempts at understanding the function and purpose of the story of the flood in the Old Testament. That people call on God for salvation in the midst of life-threatening situations, particularly natural calamities, is a concrete index of connection between God and nature; however, the destructiveness of natural calamities appears to contradict the concept of a loving, providential God. How does the Old Testament make sense of this contradiction? How is God's character and God's relationship with human persons portrayed in the story of the Deluge in view of its destructiveness?

TRANSLATION NOTES AND INSIGHTS

Genesis 6:5-8. Coming from the hand of J,^[1] the state of wickedness of human beings is assessed through and through. The verbs used such as *nacham* (translated sorry) and *atsab* (grieved)^[2] which are in Hebrew Niphal and Hithpael stems, respectively, can be translated as reflexive which underscores God's feelings. Read in the context of the story, the state of wickedness should be understood as caused by human rejection of God's will for the well-being of a whole created order. Such state compelled God's action of wiping out disorder to give way to a new beginning.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (i.e. *wa+noun*). This is a sharp contrast to the succession of three *wa+imperfect* verbs which are followed by long verses preceding Gen 6:8^[3] where a contrastive view, as should be noted, is introduced: "But , Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." The succeeding verse mentions that Noah was a just man perfect in his generation. P leaves no doubt as to Noah's righteousness.

In each of the two verses (i.e. vs. 12, 13), a two-fold reiteration of the earth's corruption and of all flesh upon it (v.12, J) was intensified (v. 13, P) as further corruption bred among other creatures of flesh and on the earth. P stresses that human beings' end had come (6:13 construct translated, "end of").

7:11-12. The concept of a world built upon the deep, protected by the firmament, (P) was threatened as the foundation of the deep (*tehom*) burst forth and the vaults of the dome (heaven/firmament) were opened so that the

1 Based on the generally accepted documentary hypothesis proposing that the first five books are a composite work reworked by a priestly writer using three main sources J for Yahwist, E for Elohist, D for Deuteronomist, and P for the materials supplied by Priestly editors.

2 Translation based on Rudolf Kittel, *Biblica Hebraica*, 7th Edition, Wurttembergische Bibelanstalt:1973), 8-12.

3 Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's & Sons, 1971), 162-3.

primeval waters above and below raged upon the created order. The Priestly writer gives a picture of how the earth nearly resorted back to the primordial chaos in Genesis 1:2. The rains came for forty days and forty nights, and the waters rose, and only by God's provision of the ark did Noah's family and the animals with them survived.

7: 21-22; 23. The priestly writer stresses the severity of the deluge swelling so mightily, mentioning that it covered the tallest mountains and destroyed all flesh upon the earth: birds, creeping creatures, animals, and human beings. Both P and J summarize how God's intended outcome was accomplished, with only Noah and those in the ark surviving the deluge.

8:1. "But God remembered Noah" and caused a wind to blow. P's comment brings to mind J's strong east wind (see Exodus 14:21 which has been sandwiched with P's insertions).

8:2-19. God closed the vaults of the deep and the windows of heaven, and the place below the dome and above the deep was again made safe for human and animal habitation -- a renewed creation. The waters subsided until Noah and those in the ark were instructed to come out of the ark.

8:20-22. The resumption of sacrifice functioned to set things right as this act pleased God who, upon smelling the pleasant aroma, made a promise to sustain the constancy of the cycle of life. J portrays God as thinking aloud, stressing the point of the verses 21-22. Sacrifices in these verses served to remind God to make allowances for human beings who were indeed sinful, and therefore God promised not to again blot out the living creatures. The after-flood blessing was the same blessing given to the human beings after their creation. But while God (P) in Genesis 1:29 allowed only a plant-based diet, here, human beings were allowed to eat meat (9:3). In Genesis 2:17, J notes the prohibition to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and P in chapter 9: 4-6 notes the prohibition to eat flesh with lifeblood in it, requiring a reckoning from human beings and beasts. These are the stipulations upon which the covenant promise -- never to cut off all flesh and destroy the earth by the waters of the flood again (9:8-17) -- is based.

LITERARY AND TRADITION CRITICISM

The Ancient Near Eastern parallel story of the flood tells of the decision by the gods to destroy the human race for the noise they made, which the gods had

not anticipated.^[4] But Ea, one of the gods, took pity on humankind and devised a way to inform Uta-Napishtim,^[5] instructing him to build a ship. Obligated by Ea's order, Uta-Napishtim took his family and herded animals and birds to the ark. The terror of the catastrophe frightened even the gods who "crouched like dogs on the ramparts and their burning lips quivered with fright."^[6] The waters receded on the seventh day and the gods were happy to smell the pleasant odor of the sacrifice except for the god Enlil who planned the deluge. In Genesis, the mentioned reason for the deluge was moral corruption.

Von Rad, in his commentary to the book of Genesis, notes that the Yahwist flood story was planned "very skillfully," starting with a glimpse of God's "grieving heart" expressing the resolve in God's own words. The J flood story ends with "[t]he same condition, which in the prologue is the basis for God's judgment, [and]the epilogue reveals God's grace and providence."^[7] Further, Shimon Bar-Efrat, author of what is considered a groundbreaking work on Biblical narratives, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, points to the importance of introducing God's thoughts and feelings in this passage which biblical authors rarely do, or would only do as a "matter of special importance."^[8] For the J writer the Flood was a divine exercise of God's sovereignty. This action was called for in view of human wickedness that appears to spin out of bounds. Yet, the divine feeling is not anger but pain and grief, for it is God who created nature. However, God found favor with a righteous man. God took the initiative of revealing what would happen to Noah and gave him instructions for human being's salvation.

The interweaving of J and P's works do produce a seemingly unified account, but the narrative presents two differing versions of the flood story is summarized below:^[9]

Yahwist	Priestly
wickedness of human beings	human being's corruption of the earth
God's regret for creating human beings	no mention of regret

4 Richard J. Clifford (Introduction and comment on Genesis 1:1-25:18) *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* Raymond E. Brown et al. eds. (London: Joffrey Chapman, 1968), 15.

5 Some sources use the name Atra-khasis see for example Albert T. Clay, *The Origin of the Biblical Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), 146-47.

6 Richard Aldington & Delano Ames trans., *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (New York. London. Sydney: Hamlyn, 1959), 62-3.

7 Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (London: SMC Press, 1956), 118-19.

8 Shimon Bar-Efrat, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Press, 1997), 19.

9 In this story the parts attributed to J are 6: 5-8; 7:1-10; 12,16b, 17b, 22-23; 8:6-11, 13b, 20-22; the rest comes from the hand of P. See John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956),148.

destruction of human beings and animals	destruction of all flesh, all life on earth
seven pairs of clean animals and a pair from the unclean ones	a pair from every kind of animal
forty days and forty nights rain	a flood of waters over the earth for one hundred fifty days.
flood duration: 40 days plus 21 days	flood duration: 12 months plus 10 days
dry land on the twenty -seventh day of second month	dry land on the first day of the first of the month
assurance of the constancy of the seasons	blessing and unconditional covenant with Noah that all flesh and all the earth will not be destroyed by such a flood again

THE LITERARY CONTEXT OF GEN 6:1–9:17

Gen 6:1-9:17 in the Primeval History

The primeval history can be divided into three sections (Gen 1:1-11:32)

I. Genesis 1:-4:16. Creation and the first Human Beings

1. Gen 1:11-26. The first creation story
2. Gen 2:1-24. The second creation story
3. Gen 3:1-24. The expulsion from the garden
4. Gen 4:1-16. The story of Cain and Abel
5. Gen 4:17-26. Cain's descendants
6. Genesis 5:1-32. The Descendants of Adam and Eve

II. Genesis 6:1-9:28. Story of Noah and the Flood

1. Gen 6:1-9. Prologue to the flood story
2. Gen 6:9-22. Noah and the flood
3. Gen 7:1-8:19. The flood
4. Gen 8:20- 9:17. Covenant and blessing after the flood
5. Gen 9:18-28. Noah's sons
6. Genesis 10:1-32. The Descendants of Noah

III. Genesis 11:1-9. The Story of the Tower of Babel

Genesis 11:10-32. Descendants of Shem

It is remarkable that the flood story, which filled up nearly five pages, was given a relatively larger space by the biblical writers compared to the other four stories which, all together, occupied six pages of the first section. Affirming the importance of the story to J and P, S.R. Driver notes that the flood story is described in “minuteness”.^[10] The importance of the story of the flood is further underscored by the fact that P interweaves into the existing tradition which predates P by more than 400 years.^[11] This points to P’s familiarity and interest in the story. As Driver notes, “he combines into one the double narratives than was usually his practice, and in parts slightly modifying the phraseology” which, as Driver points out, is P’s way of delving into theology of the matter at hand.^[12]

Skinner notes that J anticipates a better future and that the prophetic theme of judgment is not prominent in J, in spite of the fact that this section already concerns judgment. J’s sources were “low literature” which was not from the literate classes. Shaped in religious gatherings and covenant renewal, the oral traditions served to “validate and strengthen the intertribal movement of Israel” in their desire to “determine their own lives without intervention” from the Canaanite city rulers who imposed the rule of upper classes upon them.^[13] The stories were recited and transmitted in community covenant renewal gatherings. These stories were later used by the redactor J to legitimize the transition from tribal confederacy to monarchy. Meanwhile, P, coming from the elite class who were forcibly relocated to Babylon, sought to reorganize the Jewish life and community after the destruction of Jerusalem that caused the dispersion of Jews.

Though far from Jerusalem, the hopes and aspirations of the dispersed Jews were still tied to their homeland. Gottwald describes the common experience of the people: “All Jews, whether restored in Judah or colonized abroad, were subject to the sovereign power of the great empires that successively ruled them.”^[14]

With the city of Jerusalem destroyed and burned and the people exiled without any form of organization, the Jews who remained in Judah would have to contend with possible intrusion into their land by the neighboring nations like the Edomites in the south and the Amonites and Moabites across the Jordan. Many would have survived mainly by farming, though under the watchful eyes of their colonizers. Most of the neighboring peoples were hostile to them. Due to

10 S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1931), 12.

11 Skinner dates the final redaction of the Pentateuchal materials by P to later than 444 B.C.E., while J’s latest dating is the 9th century. Some scholars point to as early as the 10th century B.C.E. John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical...*, lv, lxiv.

12 S.R. Driver, *An Introduction...*, 21,129. Driver notes that P who does not dwell so much on the deeper problems of theology but notes Gen 5:4-6:9 as an exception.

13 Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible - A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 142.

14 *Ibid.*, 421.

scant resources and the hostility of neighbors, building the temple (i.e. sponsored by Persia) and the wall of Jerusalem took a long time. As mentioned by the post-exilic prophets (Joel 1; Haggai 1:10, Joel 1:2ff., Malachi 3:11), the life of those who came back to Jerusalem was made more difficult by calamities.

While the Jews in Babylon, Egypt and other lands would have adapted, and some eventually might have flourished, the Jews in Israel lived like foreigners in their own land, adjusting to a different culture. Considered outsiders, they experienced exploitation, marginalization and discrimination, and were treated as second class citizens. In the absence of the temple and religious leadership, many of them, no doubt, converted to other religions or simply stopped observing their faith. In fact, Gottwald mentions that many of the Jews who were living among the other races would have become indistinguishable since Jewish synagogues came only after worship and religious leadership was restored in Jerusalem, more than a century after the destruction of Jerusalem.^[15] For the Jews, assimilation itself demanded and required adapting to a new way life and forgetting or neglecting one's own identity.

The Persian policy of consolidating indigenous communities as the basis for colonial rule had certainly helped in reconstituting Jewish faith, life, and identity for those in Jerusalem and those dispersed in other lands. But history is replete with stories of how the Jews whether living in Palestine or in other countries suffered persecution and discrimination for simply being Jews.

THE MYTHOPOEIC WORLDVIEW

Genesis chapters 1-11 are collectively called by biblical scholars as the primeval history which belongs to a “pre-literary and uncritical stage of society”, comparable to legends and myths.^[16] These stories, however, have greater value than mere historical narration of events. A people's myth “reveals the soul of a people, its instinctive selection of the types of character which represent its moral aspiration, its conception of its own place and mission in the world; and also to some indeterminate extent the impact of its subconscious life of the historic experiences in which it first woke up to the consciousness of national unity and destiny.”^[17] Though Israel's understanding of their prehistoric background has been shaped largely by the

15 Ibid., 427.

16 Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical...*, v.

17 Ibid. Skinner defines myth as those that have to do with gods and heavenly phenomena, while legends are based on historical figures.

more advanced civilization around them, they are not passive recipients of the world views of their neighbors. On the contrary, they used the traditions they were familiar with to express their own understanding of reality.^[18]

This way of representing perception of reality is universal. As an encyclopedia of myths claim, "...myths and legends are a universal human invention. They have arisen at different times and in different places, as explanations of the critical problems that always face people. Among their important concerns are the purpose for living, misfortune, success, cruelty, love, and fertility, magic, power, war, accident, chance, madness, creation and the nature of the universe."^[19] The richness of the stories suggests a very deep source in the human psyche that expresses how the early civilizations particularly Israel conceived of the world, of gods, and of human beings.^[20]

Our ancestors captured the imagination of the common people in the form of short stories which were passed on, told, and retold because they were found to be meaningful and relevant to the issues human ancestors faced. Skinner argues that studying the stories in isolation will allow the stories to speak for themselves, enabling the reader to have a better appreciation of these stories.^[21]

THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE FLOOD STORY

The 11 chapters of the primeval history devote two chapters to creation, one chapter (Gen 3) to the disobedience of human beings, one chapter to the story of the brothers Cain and Abel (Gen 4), one chapter to the table of the nations, less than 10 verses to the story of Babel, and a considerable part of chapter 11 to genealogies.^[22] P and J have chosen a story where there is relative scarcity of water, which is not a local phenomenon in Israel. J situates creation in the barren dry ground, which becomes alive and fertile only with the rain and cultivation of Yahweh (Gen 2:4b-24). P makes use of the Babylonian/Amorite primeval chaos of the deep (tehom) as the pre-creation reality. The two creation stories, therefore, have the idea of reversion to primeval emptiness as depicted in the famine-causing droughts (J) and to chaos in all its forms (P). Both traditionists tap the story of the flood to point out the importance

18 Ibid., x.

19 Arthur Cotterell, *The Macmillan Illustrates Encyclopedia of Myths and Legends* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 7

20 Ibid., 8

21 Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical...*, xiv-iv.

22 Julius Bewer also notices that P "tried to tell the story of the deluge." Julius Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962), 274.

of the theme of judgment in the following contexts: 1) security and stability of the Davidic and Northern kingdoms (J); and 2) the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion and colonial experience of the Jews (P).

The deterioration of creation, a scheme which many biblical scholars have noted in the way the materials were arranged,^[23] serves as a clue to the theme of the story. In the flood story, the earth was corrupted by human wickedness, necessitating whole-scale destruction except for a man who had found favor in God's sight. Fohrer states that the flood story contributes to J's purpose of illustrating the fulfillment of "God's promises of territory and descendants and his helping intervention (though) met time and time again by human failures and threatened disaster." J's basic theology anchors on "the victory of God's dominion in the face of the nation's enemies and Israel itself, as well as the establishment and preservation of a close relationship with God despite Israel's rebellions."^[24] J, according to Fohrer, uses tradition "to trace history back to its beginnings, interpreting all events from the standpoint of sin, the dissolution of fellowship with God, and of judgment, the victory of God's dominion over the sinner."^[25]

God's triumph over human failure, as underscored by J, is taken over by P's graphical description of the threat of chaos over the created order. In the overall scheme of human wickedness and corruption of creation, God's salvific work is accomplished through the righteous ones whom God will not forget. The same thought is proposed by Brevard Childs' assertion that "Israel's redemptive role in the reconciliation of the nations was purposed from the beginning and subsumed within the eschatological framework of the book."^[26] On the account of the righteous ones, the world was saved and a covenant where God made allowances for the sinfulness of human beings was initiated. Based on God's faithfulness and grace alone God's creation will endure. P then paves the way for a nobler race of people that bore Shem, the ancestor of the Jews.

Clearly, the earth is depicted as theocentric where God, the creator, sustains all creation. Nothing and no one stands on its own. In the words of Bernhard Anderson, "(N)othing is independent, self-created, self-sustaining. Indeed, if it were not for the Creator's power, which is the source and vitality

23 Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: S.P.C.K., 1976), 148.

24 *Ibid.* p. 149.

25 *Ibid.* The theme of judgment for human beings' wickedness is also identified by Julius Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962), 68.

26 Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 155.

of all that exists, the world would revert to primeval, meaningless chaos.”^[27]

The flood story was cherished by rural folks against the backdrop of powerful civilizations and empires that had them at their mercy. Situated mainly in the hill country of Canaan and beyond the reach of floods, the community of rural cultivators, which almost threatened the imperial centers of the plains vis-à-vis Egypt, cherished the action of a righteous God who checked the increasing wickedness of humankind.

From the point of view of the traditionists and their sources, creation is an intricate and marvelous system of workmanship sustained by God. It was entrusted to human beings’ care who are also a part of creation and whose well-being derives from creation. Limitations had been set and laws emanating from the hand of the sovereign creator had been instituted for the maintenance of order and well-being. Sin is seen not only as an act but a “cosmic disorder” where the physical evil originates from the moral evil.^[28] In the flood story, God responds in judgment to cosmic evil. P describes the world as corrupted by humankind whose thoughts and inclinations were only evil all the time (Gen 6:12).

Nonetheless, the biblical narrator takes special effort to convey grief on the part of God. Moreover, the pivotal role of Gen 8:1 (P) in the understanding of the flood story is supported by the use of chiasm.^[29] That is, in judgment, God finds favor with the righteous and remembers them.

Both J and P then appear to share the same understanding that God’s judgment is always tempered by grace. Such grace is made evident by J and P as the story reveals that God made adjustments in dealing with human beings who were sinful by nature and gave them an unconditional promise of safety and security after the flood, although they had not yet proven anything.

J and P’s theology of the flood, put together in time of national crisis, is surprisingly theocentric. Noah was completely silent throughout. Both P and J affirm God’s complete sovereignty, God’s grace, and God’s pain, glossing over what Noah had to say or his feelings or how human beings suffered on account of the flood.

27 Anderson, *Understanding ...*, 457.

28 John L. Mackenzie S.J., *Myths and Realities: Studies in Biblical Theology* (Milwaukee: the Bruce Publishing Company, 1963), 120.

29 See Richard Clifford, et. al. *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* Raymond E. Brown (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1990), 15. Frick credits the chiasmic analysis of the passage by Gordon Wenham, showing that the structure highlights God’s intervention as a pivotal point of the passage. Frank S. Frick, *A Journey through the Hebrew Scriptures* (Forth Worth/Philadelphia: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1995), 142-44

GENESIS 6:5-9:17 AS A BASIS FOR CONSTRUCTING A THEOLOGY OF NATURE

The dispersion of God's people from the Promised Land and the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem were the points of departure for the Priestly editor. All the signs of God's election of Israel and Judah were lost in what Bernhard Anderson calls national disaster. To J and his sources, human sin in the face of the righteousness of God is a threat to the realization of blessings. But God's plan triumphs in spite of human sin. As God's plan always triumphs, being God's people entails accountability and responsibility. For P, Israel emerged from judgment and suffering with enlarged vision and revitalized faith. Israel had a unique place and task of being an instrument of God's saving acts among the nations (J and P). A theology that is also prominent in Isaiah is the form of a suffering servant concept.

Old Testament understanding of divine intervention is always connected to the transformative "presence, purpose, and power" of God in the history and human life.^[30] Calamities as God's acts, serve the overall purpose of God to restore order and well-being. Calamities are not understood as punitive but redemptive, in the same way that God used the forces of nature to redeem Israel from slavery in Egypt. God is not interested in preserving the status-quo but in transforming it to restore well-being. Thus, the prophets later expected Israel to understand this message brought by natural calamities (e.g., droughts, locust infestation, even war) that were willed by God and by the land towards transformation and well-being. Having a strong awareness that they were God's people and that they had attendant responsibilities and accountabilities as God's people, Israel never lost the vision of a transformed world that God would surely accomplish, despite Israel's failure,.

As the foundational literature of the reconstituted faith community, the primeval history's place in Genesis cannot be overestimated. Primeval history provides orientation for Israel's place in the over-all scheme of things, making possible a life of meaning and purpose despite suffering. As Israel is a small nation amidst much bigger nations in a land where living has been precarious due to the acts of nature and humankind, Israel's history, however one looks at it, can be characterized as calamitous. The flood story which is a familiar story, has undoubtedly served to inspire confidence in the reliability of the God-ordered creation.

30 Walter Brueggeman, *Reverberations of Faith* (Louisville. London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 130.

Understanding the flood story as basis for a theology that views natural calamities as God's instrument in dealing with a sinful world naturally derives from the story. But behind the instrument the "... image of God focuses less on judgment (no anger language?)... (t)han on sorrow, pain, disappointment, regret...and mercy..."^[31] In contemplating catastrophes, the biblical writers emphasize God's act of saving rather than making human beings suffer. This act not only concerns individual person such as Noah but also God's people as agents of transforming human beings and the whole of creation towards well-being. The transformative understanding of calamity brings into focus the saving activity of God who is at work in nature pertaining to humankind and creation.^[32] Calamity is explained as God's means of asserting God's will over that of humankind. As Fretheim observes, "Repetitions of 6:5 and 8:21 are linked formally and thematically, centering on God's relationship to a sin-filled world."^[33]

God's speeches in the flood serve as a "divine rationale for sending the flood, a vision of the world from God's viewpoint."^[34] As part of the primeval history, the story of the flood stresses the issue of what is called today as natural calamities. As Fretheim further asserts, "[T]he flood story focuses on God as well as God's decisions and commitments regarding the creation."^[35]

As acts of God, calamities have to do with sin. God in the Old Testament is the one who "...creates, governs, and wills a world of well-being with and for all of God's creatures... sin is the violation of God's will for that world of well-being willed by the creator God."^[36] Brueggeman clarifies that "(s)in is a distortion or violation of that proper ordering of creatureliness through a refusal to be dependent and responsive." Identified later with the Torah through which Israel attempted to build an egalitarian society in practical ways, the violation of the law is considered "a disordering of the relation to the creator and to the creator's will for the creature."^[37] Sin as understood and taken by the Yahwist and Priestly writers has reached its limits and hence, has to be dealt with in a decisive way. Bringing in the social and structural view of sin helps one understand the point of view of the former slaves and the colonized minorities attempting to build and rebuild an egalitarian

31 Terence E. Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections" New Interpreter's Bible Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 389.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid, 388.

34 Ibid. Richard J. Clifford, identifies 4 divine addresses in the story (6:13-22; 7:1-10; 8:15-19; 9:1-17), The New Jerome..., 16-17.

35 Fretheim, NIB, 395.

36 Brueggeman, Reverberations ...,195.

37 Ibid.,196.

community based on their covenant relationship with God. To quote Gustavo Gutierrez, “(S)in is regarded as a social-historical fact referring to the absence of brotherhood and love among men, the breach of friendship with God and with other men, and, therefore, the interior, personal fracture.”^[38] The flood story further broadens sin to include human beings’ alienation from nature as sin corrupts the created order.

God’s act of creation is understood as the first act of salvation of a world corrupted by human beings, and this hence necessitates renewal. The flood served to reverse the act of self-destruction. Surely, the liberation of Israel from Egypt would always be Israel’s perspective for understanding the acts of God. Moral and social corruption has threatened Israel as God’s creation.

After the flood, God, as storywriters portray, had changed the way of engaging evil: from a “flood-like response” to one where “God (takes) the route of suffering...” and endures ‘a relationship with a sinful world.’^[39] God initiates an enduring covenant that ensures the continuity of human life despite the sorrow, grief, and pain such covenant would cause.

Thus, in the foundational stories of Israel, calamity in its devastating form is God’s agent of transformation in the face of cosmic corruption. Nevertheless, the story is also used as a medium of teaching the nature of Yahweh. Though based on a tradition shared by Israel’s neighbors, the story was significantly changed by the writers so that “... the details inherited from the popular tradition do not obscure the central view that Yahweh, the sole God, acts in human affairs in a meaningful and consistent way (in contrast to the caprice of the Babylonian deities).”^[40] In view of Israel’s faith, God stands out singularly as a God of grace and justice.

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF CALAMITY

The understanding of the flood story as Israel’s theology of calamity is consistent with the origin of the story itself as well as the context of its transmission. Skinner, noting the existence of the story of the Deluge in the memory of so many ancient civilizations, understands the story as a common memory of an ancient cataclysmic event which had been carried by the various branches of human race in their dispersion.^[41] Skinner elaborates on

38 Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (New York, Orbis Books, 1973), 175.

39 Fretheim, NIB, 396.

40 Ibid., 396.

41 Skinner, *ibid.*, 174-5. Clay further noted the existence of Sumerian, Greek, Assyrian and Amorite deluge stories.

the preservation and transmission of the tradition: "(T)he most reasonable line of explanation... is that the great majority of the legends preserve the collection of local catastrophes such as inundations, tidal waves, seismic floods accompanied by cyclones, etc., of which many historical examples are recorded..."^[42] Von Rad has the same opinion, noting that the similarities among the numerous flood stories "...require the assumption of an actual cosmic experience and a primitive recollection, which, to be sure, is often clouded and in part often brought to new life and revised only later by local floods."^[43]

The connection of the flood story to actual calamities is supported by the fact that the earlier version of the deluge story, which was written thirteen centuries earlier, did not only mention the deluge but also referred to a famine.^[44] Clay and Skinner's propositions are important as they point to the fact that the origin of the flood story and its transmission is located in the context of calamities.

Israel confesses that Yahweh is the creator and asserts the "singular, unchallengeable sovereignty of Yahweh" by asserting that Yahweh controls the chaos monsters (Job 40:15-24, 41:1-34) and the floodwaters of the cosmos (Job 38:8-11, 25-33). Psalms 104:25-26 "assumes Yahweh's complete mastery of the threatening forces."^[45]

Hence, in place of a dualistic view which attributes destructive forces to one deity and salvation to another, "in Israel's testimony, there are no causes of destabilization of creation except the will of Yahweh, which in freedom and sovereignty can indeed destabilize the world, when Yahweh's sovereignty is excessively mocked and provoked."^[46]

However, this view of calamity only subsumes the opposing forces under one God holding both polarities in tension. This view fails to point out that the same forces were used by the same God to liberate God's people from Egypt, overthrowing an oppressive power. The one God, therefore, does not contradict Godself as the source of both blessing and curse but rather acts consistently, transforming humanity and creation towards wholeness and

42 Ibid.

43 Gerhard von Rad, *ibid.*, 120-1.

44 Clay, *ibid.*, 146-47. Clay though argues that the elements mentioned in the story is not consistent with Babylonian origin as there is very little rainfall in Babylon averaging only 2.80 to 4.98 inches annually, compared with 35.87 inches in some part of Egypt and 50 inches in Lebanon mountains which point to Amorite origin. Further that the names of the Gods and human characters were of Amorite origin. Amorite origin is also supported by the mention of springs (fountains of the deep) and mountains, which is not true at all in the context of Babylon.

45 Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) pp. 538. Scriptural citations by Brueggemann.

46 *Ibid.*, 538.

well-being. God is not a God who acts in anger when provoked, unleashing the “forces of curse and death... when... mocked”^[47] and creates order, redeems, and saves thereafter. On his part, Von Rad asserts that in calamities, God has “dominion over all life,”^[48] and such dominion is characterized by well-being.

Seeing transformation and salvation as God’s main intention behind the flood stresses values which maintain and sustain community well-being. This view also reinforces the values of egalitarianism and care for land and nature which the egalitarian society cherishes and preserves.^[49] The tradition nourished their faith in a God who delights in righteousness and acts decisively towards the appropriation of land and resources for community well-being and for the transformation of nations and the cosmos towards the realization of God’s will.

The picture of common people in Israel telling the story of God’s judgment of the advanced civilizations around her through the flood does make sense. Nature is an instrument of Yahweh’s judgment to curb sin and right the wrongs. The same concept is alluded to in Exodus when Egypt was struck by God using nature. In some prophetic writings, the prophets similarly understood natural calamities as sent by God (Amos 4:7-8; Jeremiah 5:24-25; Hosea 8:7, 9:14). Even pestilences were attributed to Yahweh (Lev 26:25; 2 Samuel 24:15). The assumption that God is the source of both blessing and “curse” is clear in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, but it is not because God contradicts Godself. Instead, it is God’s way of guiding the people to the path that leads to life. In a sense, to conceive nature as one that is directed by the will of God is an extension of the understanding of God as the creator of all.

P, later following the Deuteronomistic theology,^[50] portrays Israel as the recipient of the same judgment as she lost all blessings attendant to her covenant with God; nevertheless, God did save the righteous ones who received the renewed blessings and commission.

A theology based on the flood story views the world as a sacred venue of God’s saving activity. Nature’s order and abundance is sustained as God’s law and order is followed. Nature is considered sacred as it was God who

47 Ibid.

48 Von Rad, *Genesis...*, 128.

49 Marilyn E.K. Clark notes that in the Genesis flood story justice in relation to non-human creation is given stress. See M. E. K. Clark, “A Flood of Justice: The Scope of Justice in the Flood Narrative (Gen. 6:5-9:19)” *International Journal of Public Theology* 3 (2009) 357–370

50 The theology based on the main teaching of Deuteronomy stating that observance of God’s law brings blessings while disobedience brings suffering.

planted the garden. Nature is not a closed system that mechanically functions on its own. It is the product of divine activity. We enjoy its abundance on God's terms. Sin destroys the created order, and nature is used by God to rein in sin. God continues to uphold creation and to relate to humankind in grace. Such a theology of nature is but the logical result of believing in one sovereign righteous God, whose power is at work towards the realization of well-being for all of God's creation.

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Gay Comrades: Historicizing the Sexual and Gender Issues in the Communist Party of the Philippines

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The history of Philippine revolution has been a history of contradictions. It has been a struggle of the Filipino people against foreign colonizers, against indirect colonizations, against imperialism, and even against its own fellow Filipinos. The national democratic revolution being waged by the Communist Party of the Philippines, together with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the New Peoples Army, is characterized by its parliamentary and armed struggles. The Party itself has faced many contradictions which in one way or another, it tried to resolve. One of these is the sexual struggle that its members are experiencing. For the past four decades, the Party has tried to understand and respond to the contradictions on sexuality of its gay members. This paper presents a historical overview of the sexual struggle and resolution of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Keywords: National Democratic Front of the Philippines, Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army, gay, women's movement, Philippine revolution, sexual struggle

INTRODUCTION

Writing history is writing in perspective. History books frame the memories of yesterday's pages. Hence, in every era, some voices and sectors remain at the margins of mainstream history. These marginalized voices include the gay community. Few pages have been written about gay babaylan (precolonial indigenous priest and shaman), colonial-era gay

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nationalist propagandists, and contemporary gay revolutionaries who have played big roles in shaping the country's history. Even the word *bakla* (gay) is still subject to debates. Nevertheless, the tradition of gay historicization and historiography carries on beyond the confines of mainstream academe.

For so long, many gay people have experienced and still continue to experience exploitation and discrimination. In a semicolonial and semifeudal society, any hint of gayness is confronted with violence. According to PROGAY's research, many gays in the countryside are compelled to go to the cities to seek work. Many of them work as beauticians, hairdressers, market vendors, salespersons, clerks, cleaners/maintenance personnel, fast food servers, shopping mall employees, personal assistants, technicians in showbusiness, entertainers, and even factory workers.

The history of the Philippines can be described as a long history of struggle to form a national identity and to achieve genuine liberation from exploitation, injustice, and poverty. Historians have time and again pointed out: the Philippines is a resource-rich country, but majority of Filipinos remain poor. Discussions on Amado Guerrero's *Short Course on Philippine Society and Revolution* (Maikling Kurso sa Lipunan at Rebolusyong Pilipino/MKLRP) which former, current, and future activists took up/take up/will take up, typically use such analysis as a springboard.

In the first part of this study, the researcher utilized primary documents that were publicly accessible and were published by the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (CPP-NPA-NDFP). Related unpublished documents written by Party members were also consulted. These documents included manifestos, memoranda, guides, newspapers, and even published literary works, written by current and former Party members or sympathizers. Party publications and relevant anthologies on revolutionary and underground literature were scanned to seek the aforementioned materials.

Secondary sources of data for the first part of the research included interviews with long-time and key Party members who had broad knowledge and experience relevant to the research. Documents and actions of the Party had typically interesting backgrounds. Through interviews, the researcher endeavored to gather these stories and context that formed such background. Interviews were only held with current Party members. Former Party members who had voluntarily left or were expelled from the Party had published their own critiques of Party stances, and hence, the current researcher found it

practical to interview only current Party members who remain steadfast in their belief that the Party is in the process of remolding itself or rectifying its errors. Such scope and limitation is all the more justified by the fact that primary documents used in the study were released after a big split or schism affected the Party during the early 1990s and after what the Party calls as the Second Great Rectification. The researcher conducted interviews with two former members who were with the Party's Women's Bureau during the 1970s and with one long-time CPP leader. The researcher also interviewed gay Party members who were known gay rights advocates inside the Party and who established the gay organization, advocating the nationalist-democratic struggle of gays in the legal arena.

Interviews with the above-mentioned people were subject to extreme care. Through direct contacts inside the Party who functioned as intermediaries, the researcher was able to reach key personalities. The researcher assured the interviewees that their identities would not be disclosed. The researcher was also invited in a clandestine activity where he was able to get to know the interviewees better. Interviews were held after an initial meeting or two.

THE REBIRTH OF THE PARTY

On the 26th of December 1968, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was established under the leadership of Amado Guerrero or Jose Maria Sison (Fuller 2007). Such reestablishment was grounded on the integration of the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) with the concrete situation and concrete practice of the Philippine revolution (Sison, Krisis 83). The CPP has described Philippine society as semifeudal and semicolonial:

The CPP defines the basic tasks of the revolution as to achieve national liberation by ridding the nation of US domination in the political, economic, military, cultural and other fields to realize democracy not only by fighting the growing repressiveness of the state but more substantively by emancipating the peasant masses and the entire Filipino people from the feudal and semi-feudal bondage. (NDFP, 4)

Meanwhile, the New People's Army (NPA) was established on the 29th of March 1969, on the anniversary of the establishment of the older guerrilla

group People's Army Against the Japanese (Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon/Hukbalahap):

They numbered around sixty fighters with thirty five guns between then, only nine of which were automatic rifles. Despite these modest dimensions, the NPA gave the new Communist Party of the Philippines both peasant and military credentials. Dante's association with the long tradition of armed resistance in Central Luzon gave a certain measure of credibility to the CPP's claim of launching a people's war in the Philippines. Dante's rejection of the PKP was a great boost to Sison's claim that the Lava clique was redundant and that the re-established party was the genuine revolutionary force in the country. (Weekley 27)

The New People's Army (NPA) is the armed wing established by the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) or the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) to advance its armed people's struggle for the national-democratic transformation of the Philippines. In a statement, the CPP points out:

Membership is open to all persons aged 18 years old and above, physically and mentally fit, willing and ready to fight for freedom. The NPA's main task is to seize political powers from the hands of the corrupt ruling classes through people's war. Under the leadership of the CPP, it steadily breaks the economic and political power of the landlords and comprador bourgeoisie, in particular, and the reactionary state, in general, through waging the agrarian revolution, harnessing the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, and conducting tactical offensives. It assists the CPP and NDFP (National Democratic Front of the Philippines) in building the organs of political power of the masses, sowing the seeds of the revolutionary government. (NDFP 6)

In the statement cited, the CPP has clearly stated the basic qualifications of those who would like to join the NPA. Being on the right age and having a firm belief in the Party's objectives are the only qualifications to join the armed revolution led by the CPP. Nevertheless, seemingly parallel to the pages

of bourgeois history, only a few Party documents or articles that discussed and/or featured its gay members were published. More than four decades of the Party's struggle for the country's national-democratic social emancipation strongly suggest that a number of its members are women and gay.

It is clear from this study that gender and sexuality do not pose any hindrance to a Party member's exercise of rights within the Party. Moreover, based on the experiences narrated by gay activists and communists, it is evident that these gender-related rights are freely enjoyed within the party, and hence it is right to assert that the Party, the NPA, and the NDFP, have spaces for gays. If such gay spaces indeed exist, it is interesting to ask why some gay activists and communists inside the movement still experience discrimination based on their life stories. Ka Salud remarks that this is a result of the uneven ideological development of Party members. For example, a new comrade will understandably still carry vestiges of traditional culture that tends to treat gays with disdain. Thus, such comrade might do or say something which goes against the Party's principle on choosing one's gender. In this light, every Party member's ideological progress through continuous educational discussions is of prime importance in raising their level of consciousness on gender issues. It is clear that any violation of the Party's principles and the rights of its members can be processed as a formal complaint, and if warranted, corresponding disciplinary actions for the guilty side are in place. The key to achieving these dynamics is the continuous participation of gay activists and communists in leading discussions with comrades on gender and sexuality issues. In addition, comrades should consciously recognize the importance of respecting every person's chosen gender. One basic Party principle is the act of criticism--self-criticism--which ensures that every member progressively develops as an activist and a communist, and the Party progresses as the primary advocate of social transformation in the country.

In 1971, the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of the National Democratic Front, the CPP's political arm, was created in Metro Manila, and it started its own underground activities hence (Sison, Rebolusyon 85). From 1970 to 1972, the following new mass organizations thrived: Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa/KASAMA (Union of Labor Organizations) and Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Manggagawa ng Pilipinas/PAKMAP (National Movement of Workers in the Philippines) among workers; Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan/MAKIBAKA (Independent Movement of New Women) among women; Samahang

Demokratiko ng Kabataan/SDK (Democratic Association of Students) and Katipunan ng Kabataang Demokratiko/KKD (Union of Democratic Youth) among the youth; Kapisanan ng mga Gurong Makabayan/KAGUMA (Association of Patriotic Teachers) among teachers; Christians for National Liberation (CNL); League of Editors for a Democratic Society (LEADS); Panulat para sa Kaunlaran ng Sambayanan/PAKSA (Pen for the People's Progress); and the Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista-Arkitekto/NPA (United Progressive Artists-Architects) (Sison, Rebolusyong 45).

On the 24th of April 1973, the National Democratic Front (NDF), which was aimed at uniting the mass organizations that were banned in 1972 under one clandestine umbrella group, was established (Sison, Rebolusyong 85).

The NDF is the most consolidated and strongest clandestine united front organization because it encompasses progressive organizations of basic forces belonging to the labor class, peasantry, and urban petitbourgeoisie... It is flexible enough to accept the reality that the national united front doesn't limit itself in its own boundaries but instead willing to incorporate other forces and elements outside the NDF's framework, to the advancing strength of the national united front and the people's government. The NDF is the most reliable entity poised to establish broader consultative councils and organs of political power. (Sison, Rebolusyong 87-8)

Primarily, the NDF aims to promote the unity and cooperation of all patriotic and progressive classes, sectors, and forces in society so that they can effectively struggle for national freedom and democracy and for them to help bring down the abusive and exploitative ruling class. NDF promotes the revolutionary class line of the united front (NDFP 20).

WOMEN AND THE PARTY

According to Ka Salud, who became a member of a mass organization in 1968 and a Party cadre from 1971, women had already been represented when the Kabataang Makabayan/KM (Patriotic Youth) was founded. The said organization had a women's committee that organized young female students, workers, professionals, and those who belonged to other sectors. Other mass organizations had their women's committees as well. Issues on the role and

importance of women in the national-democratic struggle were incorporated in Amado Guerrero's *Lipunan at Rebolusyong Pilipino/LRP* (Philippine Society and Revolution), one of the most basic works that Filipino activists study. In his work, women were classified as among the special social groups:

Women comprise 50% of the Philippine population and they belong to various social classes. Hence, majority of Filipino women belong to the oppressed and exploited classes. But aside from class oppression, they also experience men's oppression. Male revolutionaries should all the more endeavor to pave the way for the broadest participation of women in the democratic people's revolution. They should delude themselves into believing that men's participation in the revolutionary movement is enough. Truly, such attitude is feudal, and the old influence of family and the Church on women will only strengthen if they will be excluded from the revolutionary movement. Women can take up general and special revolutionary responsibilities. This is an effective means of liberating women from the clutches of feudal conservatism and from the decadent bourgeois stereotype of women as objects for mere entertainment. (Guerrero 146)

It is clear from Guerrero's analysis that women belong to the exploited and oppressed classes in a semifeudal, semicolonial social system because women are in various sectors of our society, such as workers and peasants. But Guerrero emphasizes that aside from being women-workers and women-peasants who are exploited in their respective social classes, women also experience extra oppression and exploitation in the hands of men. On the other hand, women need to wean themselves from the feudal view that the revolution is for men only. Women are duty-bound to become active in engaging and being in solidarity with the people's revolutionary struggle:

The articulation of the women's perspective in social movements, particularly the Left, emerged from the actual engagements of key leaders and articulators with radical social movements such as the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), the social democratic and national democratic movements and the Communist Party of the Philippines. (Santos 114)

One of the primary women's organizations that participate in the national-democratic struggle is the Malayang Kilusan ng Makabagong Kababaihan/ MAKIBAKA (Independent Movement of Modern Women):

MAKIBAKA, in realizing the necessity of linking up the active participation of women in the national-democratic struggle, clarified the correct orientation of women's involvement. The unity and/or revival of women's councils and women's organizations within other national-democratic endeavors should be given particular emphasis and attention. The organization aims to establish other women's organizations in the countryside and in the cities. This is the first time in the history of women's organization that an ideological framework has been adopted to guide women as they struggle for their rights. (Corpuz 117)

Ka Esperanza recalls that at the time of the First Quarter Storm (FQS), there were many women activists. Women activists from various mass organizations decided to hold a summit. Women who participated in the summit resolved to protest against beauty pageants. To express their dissent on the commercialization of Filipino women, they held a picket in front of the Araneta Coliseum where the coronation night of the Binibining Pilipinas or Miss Philippines Beauty Contest was being held. This protest action made headlines. The issue became popular in the mass media and various sectors issued commentaries:

From this point hence, women activists became more enlightened on their social responsibilities. Women have been already participating in the revolution for a long time. As early as the years of the Katipunan, women's contributions to the revolution have been mentioned. But because of the formation of a collective consciousness of women, they learned to fulfill responsibilities which traditionally have been reserved to men, such as marching in demonstrations, nailing down placards, painting flaglets, repairing mimeographing machine, operation-post, and many others. They have spoken too in front of rallies and symposia, wrote manifestoes, and managed organizational branches. They are cognizant of their contributions to the organization and they are proud of it. (Corpuz 81)

Lorena Barros became the founding chairperson of MAKIBAKA in 1970. According to Dr. Judy Taguiwalo, an activist during the First Quarter Storm and currently a UP professor, she remembers Lorena was the first woman to speak in a rally, then. Supposedly, women that time went on stage to merely lead the singing of the national anthem. Some women were also known to speak in some protest actions like Portia Ilagan, but she was identified to what was labeled as the moderate bloc. When Lorena spoke before the rally she said, "Women are not only meant for beds, for kitchens, but they're also meant for the struggle!" Because of MAKIBAKA, women started having a venue to experience various means of actions. Women in other organizations with male members found it difficult to engage in full time activist work because they needed to go home or they could not sleep in the offices because their parents would not allow them,, if there were men around. But because members of the MAKIBAKA were all women, it was easier for them to engage in activist work on a full time basis. In other organizations where there were men, when the mimeographing machine broke down, for instance, male members were expected to repair it. In contrast, Taguiwalo added, in MAKIBAKA, women would do the repairs. She further stated that female students then, who were not allowed by their parents to join Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth) or other militant groups, were allowed to join MAKIBAKA because this was exclusive for women, and hence, parents found it easy to accept their daughters' participation in this organization.

MAKIBAKA was officially established as a national women's movement on the 12th of March 1972, as the group launched its First National Congress. In this occasion, Jose Maria Sison gave a message:

It is very important for the women's liberation movement to recognize the line of thinking that the authority in politics is the backbone of other systems of authorities. In bringing down such authority, we begin to bring down all other systems. Hence, political struggle, active participation in the national-democratic revolution is the key chain in the noble task of liberating women. Basically, the movement for the liberation of women is a struggle against the political authority of foreign imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, if Filipino women are to be liberated and if gender equality is to be achieved. (Sison, "Mensahe" 313)

Meanwhile, women behind MAKIBAKA ensured that their analysis of the

women's situation was aligned with Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. At this time, the women's movement was strong in Western countries. The second stream of feminism in the United States and Europe was on its peak. Thus, MAKIBAKA made it clear that "[w]omen, like men in a semifeudal and semicolonial society, suffer intense exploitation and oppression. They suffer from the oppression and imperialism and the joint dictatorship of the comprador bourgeoisie and landlord classes. Added to this, women suffer from the oppression of religion, the clan and family" (NDFP 10).

As per the opinion of Ka Ligaya, a member of the CPP Women's Bureau since the 1970s, the Party's recognition of women was probably influenced, too, by the Parties in Vietnam and in China. In their Parties, even then, the importance and role of women in the era of launching a people's war for national freedom against the aggression of the US and other colonial powers had been recognized. The CPP swiftly reciprocated such actions of communist parties in other countries.

When Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law, MAKIBAKA and many of its members went underground. MAKIBAKA's relationship with the Party was further strengthened. It is among the organizations that joined the National Democratic Front. Its founding chairperson, Lorena Barros was arrested in 1973, but in the following year, she escaped from her military captors. From that time hence, Lorena joined the New People's Army (NPA). Lorena became an excellent rebel soldier and held a high post in her unit. However, she was able to participate in the armed struggle only for two years because she was killed in her unit's encounter with the military in 1976.

In general, MAKIBAKA remains strongly connected to the national-democratic movement of the CPP and its allied organizations (Elumbre 249). When MAKIBAKA went underground, many women like Barros decided to participate in the armed struggle. E. San Juan Jr. stated:

[O]f immense significance is the direct participation of women in the armed struggle currently raging in the countryside, with the formation of a Red Women's Detachment as an integral part of the New People's Army, a member of the National Democratic Front. Red women fighters have distinguished themselves in ambushes, raids, organizing works etc., on all fronts. They have also worked side by side with male guerilla in consolidating the liberated base areas and supervising the creation of Barrio Revolutionary Committees,

the chief administrative body for initiating revolutionary land reform, building up the people's army and strengthening the united front. (164)

The field of engagement of women broadened inside the movement.

SEX AND SEXUALITY, AND THE PARTY

The Party recognizes that cadres do not only love their country, but also love their fellow humans. Even the CPP founder Jose Maria Sison met his wife Julie de Lima while working in a mass organization. Many comrades and activists developed romantic relationships because of their work in the movement. This is not unique to the reestablished Party. Even in the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas/PKP (Communist Party of the Philippines), sex and sexuality have been tackled as issues inside the movement.

Though they are communists, many PKP members retained their belief in God. Cadres retained their faith on the doctrines of the Church, particularly the Catholic Church. Church doctrines became their primary guide in their relationships, in forming a family, in love, and in their concept of morality. In "An Appeal to Our Catholic Brothers" the PKP pointed out:

[T]here should be no difference between the communists and the Church to the question of morality as the communists are staunch upholders of the family and home. We consider sexual immorality and looseness in the family KPLIe as harmful result of bad social conditions. The PKP's rigid line on sexual matters may well appear surprising, as at this time it was common for communists to be reproached for their presumed advocacy of free love. (Fuller 126)

According to Ka Esperanza, even during the height of activism in the 1960s to the 1970s, the influence of Church doctrines on activists and cadres of the CPP remained strong. During those times, premarital sex, class and sex love were still non-issues. Supposedly, two comrades' love for each other was supreme. Many comrades had unplanned pregnancies, which affected their work in the movement. Cases of infidelity were also reported. Moreover, the Party then had no clear political context for developing relationships. Some had purely sexual relations, devoid of any politics.

In 1974, the CPP Women's Bureau drafted the document "On Relation of Sexes" or ORS to address the said issues. This document, which was only distributed in 1977, served as a guide for cadres and activists on pursuing relationships. According to ORS, the issue of gender relations is an issue of class. This clarified the difference between bourgeois and proletarian perspectives in gender relations. Because of the semifeudal and semicolonial character of our society, one perspective holds that women are under the economic power of men. Women are considered weak because they typically do not engage in production. As per the bourgeois perspective, gender relations are biased towards men. This reflects the capitalist exploitation of relations of production where women are treated as commodities and dehumanized under capitalism. Bourgeois gender relations is competitive, abusive, divisive, and decadent.

On the other hand, proletarian gender relations is dialectical, and there is contradiction between the two genders that lead to unity. It is liberative, progressive and appropriate to the objective conditions of society:

The proletarian relationship between husband and wife is one of unity – it is the unity of the sexes in the service to the people. Thus, in proletarian relationship[s] between husband and wife, we should be guided by the principle of equality of the sexes; while in dealing with the contradiction between couple and society, we should be guided by the principle of service to the people. (ORS 2)

It is clear that the basic principle of gender relations within the Party pertains to the two individuals' love bound by their belief in the revolution and love for the country.

Moreover, the ORS emphasized the importance of the cadres' conduct of criticism-self criticism:

Self-criticism is a mark of a Party persistent and faithful in its obligation to its class and the toiling masses. It honestly accepts its errors, seeks the root causes of such, analyzes the circumstances that brought such, and patiently discusses the methods for rectification. It is only through self-criticism that the Party is able to rectify its mistakes, ensure that the revolution is on the right track, and succeeds in upholding the proletariat's and the broad masses of people's aspirations (Batayan 372).

Such practice is expected from every activist and cadre, even those involved in romantic relations. Those involved in a relationship should evaluate their relations to ensure that this is aligned with MLM and puts prime importance on advancing the revolution. If the woman thinks she is exploited in a relation, or if she is experiencing discrimination, she needs to sincerely criticize her husband. Moreover, the husband should engage in self-criticism with regard to his failings. It is only through this process that the proletarian gender relations is effectively practiced.

Some aspects that the ORS clarified with regard to gender relations included courting among Party members, proletarian love, marriage, and divorce. In a feudal society, a woman courting a man is unacceptable. According to Ka Esperanza, the ORS struggle against such feudal perspective. Hence, as per Party principle, women were free to express their feelings. “Nothing should stop a woman comrade from making the first move in courtship. Neither should the male comrade feel embarrassed about this, not to be contemptuous towards the female comrades” (ORS 3).

Proletarian love has two aspects: the political, which is primary; and the personal, which is secondary. While the personal perspective, liking or desire of a person usually dominates a relationship, each Party member involved in a relationship should be conscious that politics should be given prime importance in their relations. Each Party member has political relations, and thus personal unity strengthened by the political relations of those involved in the relationship forms the nucleus of what is called as proletarian love.

Love inside the Party is said to be free--free from economic considerations, religious judgment, and pressure from society to offer oneself to his/her beloved. This is because two activists or cadres who love each other should still offer themselves and their relationship to the struggle, to the revolution. For Ka Salud, marriage under the Party is important. Supposedly, this is the movement’s alternative to the backward, reactionary, and anti-women perspective in society. Institutions are built to establish order in a society. The same applies to the Party. The marriage institution is meant to preserve the order in the Party. The CPP implements monogamy too, primarily to protect women and to oppose the bourgeois perspective that somehow condones men’s infidelity. Generally, marriage under the Party is not viewed absolutely, as though it is something that will change.

Marriage, as per the Marxist perspective, is another contradiction—a unity and struggle of the personal and the political interest of the two persons

involved. As a contradiction, unity inside marriage is relative; hence, when the decision to part ways is mutual, divorce is permitted. Meanwhile, those involved in a relationship can be also separated when a party commits infidelity. If infidelity is proven, those involved in the relationship will be separated, and the unfaithful spouse will be dealt with disciplinary action (DA). There are instances when ending the original marriage and then remarrying are permitted, like when a cadre and his/her spouse failed to communicate in a span of five years. Based on the movement's experience, there were husbands and wives who worked in different areas, which were typically far from each one. Hence, when communication was missing, either side could ask for a divorce.

On the second part of ORS, experiences of husbands and wives or of those involved in relationships within the Party that should be studied by every activist and cadre were discussed. First among these was the desire of some husbands and wives to tilt their relationship to a merely personal level. There were instances when those involved in a relationship avoid conversing about politics when they were together, or they avoid discussing their ideological and political differences. Some think that the Party was too interventionist when it comes to relationships. There were cadres who were too shy to share their problems on relationships to their unit. But for Ka Esperanza, a cadre needed to share the status of his/her relationship (even prior to entering into one) to his/her unit. This was supposedly needed because when the movement struggled, the Party waged a revolution. If a relationship failed, this might lead to one of those involved in the relationship to lie low, betray the movement, or even aid the enemy. The political and personal basis of the relation must always be ensured, including the issue of security.

The ORS also clarified that the issue persisted as regards cadres who believed in the concept of free love, which wrongly assumed that they could love more than one person. On the other hand, there were those who enter a relationship merely because of the political basis, with no personal angle. There were cadres who said yes to those who court them merely because they found it difficult to say no to a comrade. In such instances, Party members were entreated to deal with the situation carefully.

Among husbands and wives who were members of the Party, there were problems that still need to be resolved. One of these was the perspective that one of them could engage in full-time work for the movement while the other one would work to support the family. The Party asserted the principle, "simple

living, arduous struggle,” and hence it must be emphasized that cadres who are married retained their primary responsibility to serve the people. The couple must put their trust on the masses and other comrade and on their political actions in order to live.

There were also cadres who would want their spouse to stop working for the movement for fear that something bad might happen to him/her. This was common among male cadres who encouraged their spouses to just stay at home and stop participating in the movement’s struggle. There were also couples who did not want to work separately. The Party tried its best to let couples engage in the work or in the same area, but some circumstances demanded otherwise. In these instances, couples were entreated to be open to such possibility. Another concern was the tendency of couples to side with each other at all times. Inside the movement, debates or contradictions were unavoidable, and in such situation, cadres are expected to be objective. But there are instances when a cadre sided with his/her spouse, not because he/she was convinced of his/her spouse’s point but rather, because he/she was his/her spouse.

The Party did not ban couples from having children. However, some comrades would like to have children so that they could become their “second-liners” or inheritors of their posts. This is a feudal perspective on building a family. Instead, couples should build revolutionary families. Hence, the Party’s guide on this issue is very important:

As the raising of children entails a lot of political and personal responsibilities, couples must seriously and thoroughly discuss with their units when to have children and how to rear them to the proletarian way, i.e., scientifically and collectively. In other words, couples must adopt a planned parenthood program based always on objective conditions, taking into consideration the political work of the units to which they belong to. (Women’s Bureau 11)

In an interview with Kathleen Weekley, a Party member discussed the CPP’s perspective on the importance of having a guide on relationships and sex:

In the early days, rules about morality, sexual relations etc. were very strict; we were groping for our own values. These were especially

important in the rural areas, because they stood in sharp contrast to existing corruption, soldiers taking liberties with village women etc. They were also important for maintaining discipline within the NPA itself, particularly in dangerous situations. In the urban areas, where Party members often live together at close quarters, strict control of sexual relations became necessary at times because work and security were threatened by tensions arising from emotional entanglements. (39)

Thus, the document released by the Party in 1983 became an important and solid guide of cadres and activists in developing relationships and/or committing themselves to a married life.

For Ka Esperanza, politics and relationships in connection with the Party should always be of prime importance, and in the revolution's perspective, politics pertained to the relations of the cadres and activists to the masses and their antagonism towards the enemies. Meanwhile, Ka Salud said that the ORS was very constructive. In her opinion, this showed that the Party was advanced in theory and practice. It was not antagonistic.

HOMOSEXUALS IN THE REVOLUTION

Starting in the 1980s, aside from the women's role in the social movement, gays' role in the revolution became a prevalent issue as well. According to Ka Lino, a member of the mass movement in the last years of the 1970s and a Party member in the early 1980s, there were already gays in the movement as early as then. Based on an interview with Ka Esperanza, a Party member since the 1970s, there were very few gays in the movement and they were "straight-acting" or discreet. As per Ka Salud's experience and observation, there were already gays in the movement as early as the 1970s, but the Party and the gays involved had yet to think of a way to handle the situation then. Ka Esperanza thus said:

For example, when a gay comrade cursorily touches another man, the male comrade reacts, but without adequate knowledge on how to really deal with such a situation. Hence, the tendency is for them to repel such act, because during those times, the prevailing mindset denied (sic) the existence of gays. In the feudal perspective, gays

don't exist. That's because culture bans them, and it was defined for men to be macho and women belongs to the weaker sex.

At present, many scientific and sociological studies on women as a sector have already been conducted, and thus there is enough material basis to deal with their gender issues. In contrast, even gay comrades were unable to deal with their personality, their feelings, and their situation.

According to Ka Lino, he had been openly gay even before he became part of the organized forces under the Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth). And based on his observation, most of the gays that he had encountered were from cultural groups:

There are many gays, but majority are discreet. Some are openly gay, but they are mostly from cultural groups from the communities. They groom the actors and actresses of cultural groups with make-up... There are also gay workers who join rallies, just like in May 1, 1978. There were [sic] many gays even then.

As the Party, the NDF and the NPA gathered strength in the 1980s, the role of women in the movement all the more became an intense issue. Discussions and debates among members and former members of the Party on these issues were opened. In an interview, Francisco Nemenzo, former University of the Philippines president, said:

It is not usually knowledge that pushes you into waging a class struggle. It is your grievance. It is the feeling that the system is oppressive, stemming from personal experience. But it must go beyond mere indignation. It has to be rooted in the system, and Marxism, as a method of analysis is a way of finding the root. Now in so far as the women and gays are concerned, I don't think that they should be excluded from participating in the revolutionary movement. But are the women and gays as particular forces are the ones who will build the history? Is it sexes that will determine or is it classes? Whether we like it or not, men and women will have to work together. The relationship between a man and a woman is different from the relationship between a capitalist and a worker. You participate not as a woman, not as a part of the women's movement, but as a worker. (18 at 35).

He also mentioned that as per the experiences of foreign parties and revolutionaries, separating the women's struggle and dividing social classes along gender lines dilutes the perspective that people should be classified along class lines.

One reaction to the interview with Nemenzo clarified the perspective that the women's movement hindered the advancement of a classist revolutionary movement. There was a flaw in one's remark that the women's lib movement was a disservice to the revolutionary movement in the world and to the homosexuals' capability to become truly participative in putting forth a truly revolutionary movement. Nemenzo agreed that the material-objective condition of human beings is the state of being men and women, and that, universally, women, had had a very oppressed position. Homosexuals are here and they are humans, too (Nemenzo on "Open Forum" 34).

He also agreed with Nemenzo's view that categorizing people along mere biological lines must be avoided. Culture must also be taken into consideration aside from a person's biological gender.

The Party and the mass movement succeeded in intensifying calls and mobilizations to oust the Marcos dictatorship. From 1980 to 1985, membership in the Party and in the revolutionary movement soared. This was a result of the worsening crisis of the ruling system, gathering strength of the revolutionary forces, and upholding the correct line of action supported by a big majority of the cadres and fighters (Batayang 418).

Moreover, the armed forces of the movement also broadened its reach and power. By the 1980s the NPA strength, both in terms of manpower and firepower, had increased markedly, notwithstanding the fierce suppression campaigns of the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship. According to an NPA statement, "The revolutionary flames are now rooted throughout the land." On the whole, the foundation had been laid out for the march of the people's democratic revolution from the early substage to the advanced substage of the strategic defense (Kasama 5).

But as the Party expanded and gathered strength, the 'left' opportunist line of regularization and urban insurrectionism that sabotaged the advancement of the revolutionary movement was also strengthened. From 1980, some high Party officials started to systematically spread the wrong line, tried to precipitate internal divisions, and hindered the application

of the correct line and the process of further advancing the revolutionary movement (Batayang 414). Such deviation from the correct line persisted until the latter part of the 1980s, thus causing great damage to the Party. From 1985, militarism in the movement grew stronger when the General Command of the New People's Army (NPA) strayed from the Party's absolute leadership and led the promotion of the line of strategic counter-offensive and regularization through a series of military conferences. At the time, Kampanyang Aho was also launched as a result of the anti-informer hysteria that then existed in the movement.

The campaign to boycott the 1986 election was also a big issue then. "Intra-Party disagreements developed more quickly and more sharply in the capital partly because Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) members and other national democratic activists are closer to other progressive groups who began to take the Party to task for its mistakes" (Weekley 111). Within the Party, disintegration occurred, especially at the leadership level. Such events in the 1980s brought the Party to the Ikalawang Dakilang Pagwawasto or the Second Great Rectification.

The Ikalawang Dakilang Kilusang Pagwawasto/IDKP (Second Great Rectification Movement) is the national movement for rectification launched by the Party in 1992. Reaffirming its basic principles, upholding its correct line, and criticizing, rejecting, and rectifying the great deviations and errors that persisted for a long time, causing a still unparalleled setback to the Party, the New People's Army and to the whole revolutionary movement, became a life-and-death issue. (Batayang 423)

This internal problem was so heavy a burden, and through IDKP, cadres were divided into the reaffirmist (RA) and rejectionist (RJ) blocs.

Reorganization was implemented not only within the Party but also in the mass movement and in the various progressive organizations. Those who stood with the Party, the RAs, conducted many educational discussions. They reviewed the basic principles of the Party. Activists busily engaged in remolding themselves and analyzing problems and experiences that the Party underwent in the past years. Amid this period of confusion, a progressive legal organization of gays was established in 1994.

As early as then, Ka Lino said gay activists and Party members had

discussed the formation of a gay organization within the movement. “From 1991, meetings were held and alliances were formed with sectors where there are gays. One group was formed by a secretary of one sector of professionals. Meetings were conducted almost on a weekly basis. In the initial meetings, many gays participated primarily hoping to get to know other men or fellow gays for a possible casual sex. They thought that it is very difficult to change such orientation, all the more because majority of the members are from the petitbourgeois class. Because of this, we stopped attending meetings of the said group.”

Those times, Ka Lino narrated, when a comrade went to the provinces, and he was able to interact with cadres and activists there, s/he would realize that there were many gays indeed, old ones and young ones. “Gay Visayans are so sweet with the masses. It is hearty to know that they’re accepted by the masses and they are very effective in fulfilling their tasks. In the Cordillera region, the lesbians are dominant.” In the YS (Youth Sector) of Manila, what they call as the pink collective sprouted. This is a group of openly gay and discreet gay people engaged in youth organizations.

From thereon, gay Party members became more determined to establish a gay group. Four Party members, Ka Lino, Ka Jayme, Ka Timoteo, and Ka Mario started holding meetings. They were all gays. Even before they “came out” into the open, they had been holding discussions with one another. They grappled with questions such as “Are they now ready to declare themselves openly gay?” They did not have personnel; members of their organizations did not join them. Their only plan then was to release a statement against the rise in the price of petroleum. They had a staff house where they stayed and that could be used as an office if the media sought them out.

They also discussed what term they should use: the Filipino term bakla or the English term gay. During those times, the term bakla connoted a person who “is weak, a laughingstock, and knows nothing” -- a very negative stereotype. “Ka Jayme and I would want to use the term bakla, because we wanted to transform the way people viewed gays, to use the very term that people used as a derogatory label. From then on, people would realize that they should stop stereotyping gays. Gays are thinking people, and gays are fighters,” Ka Lino explained. However, they took into consideration the gays that they would like to organize. Most of these people were in the petitbourgeoisie and thus were uncomfortable with the term bakla. They were more comfortable with the term gay.

On February 1994, Ka Lino's group released a statement. At a time when petroleum prices were soaring, the media received the statement from the gays. Ka Lino thus said:

Our statement was really a bold one. We said gays are affected by the soaring petroleum prices. If the price of petroleum increases, the price of commodities and services, the price of haircuts, for example, will also soar, and hence, who would go to us for a haircut? Gays pay electricity bills too. Gays ride in jeepneys too.

Because of this statement, two social issues were highlighted. First is the soaring petroleum prices and recognition of gays as a sector. Ka Lino received a lot of calls from the media. The news reached even comrades who were busy with educational discussions. People in the provinces and in the regions asked how a branch of the gay organization could be established in their place. Thus, Ka Lino foresaw the steady growth of the said organization. This was an advantage to the RA bloc as compared to the RJ bloc as the latter had no such gay group. The masses realized that the Party had respect for gays.

Inang, a gay writer and human rights worker joined Ka Lino's group too. Months after the release of their first statement, a mobilization was being prepared. Those in Davao and Naga initiated the establishment of gay organizations in their territories. In big universities, the organization started by Ka Lino and his fellow founding members, established branches. In June of the same year, the group Filipino Gays Fight was launched as the first gay pride march not only in the Philippines but in the whole of Asia.

Ka Lino reported:

Initially, we were not allowed to hold a program but we conversed with a Quezon City official who happened to be a lesbian; thus, we were finally allowed to hold a program at the Quezon Memorial Circle. The police refused to heed our request to march from the corner of Quezon Avenue in EDSA to the Circle, but we were already there. We conducted a dialogue with the police, and they finally let us march as we intended. We marched, around 100 gays, including young ones, old ones, parlor-types, discreet ones. Even

a priest wearing his habit. Our slogans were really amusing: Itsugi ang VAT! (Kill the Value-added Tax!) Palayain ang mga Bakla! (Liberate the Gays!), Stop Patriarchal System in the Philippines!, Let Us Liberate Ourselves! Fight for Democracy of Gays! There were also calls against the OPH (Oil Price Hike), on education and other issues.

This is the nucleus of the progressive organization of gays.

In the mid-1990s, recognizing gay rights became a popular issue. As this recognition underwent remodeling, the Party clarified many things about its principles. Relationships among cadres is one of these matters. At that time, though, “On Relations Between Sexes,” a guide for relationship was already made official. However, such guide was not really strictly implemented as mentioned below:

In 1997, in the initial context of having more ‘gender sensitivity’ in framing sexual relations in the Party, the National Women’s Bureau facilitated formal discussion surrounding the issue, providing kits with researched data and documents. Eventually, the discussion led to the topic of homosexuals in the movement. Questions on the scientific basis for homosexuality were raised: Were gays and lesbians even entitled to raise revolutionary families when they literally could not reproduce? Would not the proliferation of a ‘gay culture’ lead to decadence and moral degeneration among party cadres? Apart from these questions, there was a prevailing view that the proletarian was one who had firm principles matched with physical strength. Gays were seen to be weepy, emotional, weak and affectionate – characteristics seen to be as the complete opposite of a true revolutionary cadre. (Albuero 31)

In spite of this discrimination, cadres insisted that physical strength is not a basis for one to become a cadre. The Party had early on accepted gays in the movement. Gender and sexuality issues did not in any way hinder the effective fulfillment of responsibilities in the Party, at any given time.

The Constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) thus said, “Any citizen or resident of the Philippines who is not younger

than 18 years old, who upholds Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and the Party's Program and Constitution, and agree to arduously fulfill his/her tasks in a Party organization, implement Party decisions, and pay a membership fee and a regular monthly contribution, can become a member of the Party" (Batayang 581). This is the Party's basis for accepting cadres. It is clear that the Party does not discriminate against anyone who would like to be a member.

In the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee, the "Mga Gabay at Tuntunin sa Pag-aasawa sa Loob ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas" (Guidelines and Rules in Marriage Inside the Communist Party of the Philippines) was released. This contained revisions of previous Party documents on marriage and forming relationships. Major revisions included the following:

1. emphasizing is the basic principle and objective of avoiding sexual relations prior to marriage; On this connection, criticism, reminder, and education are the suitable responses to the weaknesses of Party members, instead of implementing disciplinary actions;
2. in granting divorce and lifting the required one-year period of maintaining the relationship if there is a persistent request for a divorce from one side, and when both sides ask for a divorce within the six-month period, and if there is a basis for the request and past attempts to save the relationship so as to immediately decide on the request for a divorce;
3. granting the power to approve request for marriage to the committees to which the couple belongs, in contrast with the previous practice of raising the request to the higher organs.
4. fine-tuning distinctions as regards the nature and gravity of cases for which disciplinary actions are applicable in order to avoid overjudgment.
5. distinguishing between cases, which are administrative in nature and which are criminal in nature and should therefore be filed and prosecuted in the people's court. (KTKS Hinggil sa Pag-aasawa 1)

The last major revision pertained to "adding a separate section on

recognition and respect for relationships between individuals with the same gender, and the application without reservation, of the guidelines, rules and principles on forming relationships and marriage” (KTKS Hinggil sa Pag-aasawa 1). This additional section can be found in Provision E. This provision is entitled “Paglalapat sa Relasyon ng Magkaparehong Kasarian” (Application to the Relationships Between Individuals With The Same Gender). The provision stated: “1. the Party recognizes and respects the individual Party member’s right to choose his/her gender; 2. the basic principles and rules on marriage inside the Party are applicable to their cases” (KTKS Hinggil sa Pag-aasawa 3).

The Party explained such stand to recognize and respect the right to choose gender, and thus purported:

[T]he Party is against all forms of discrimination, oppression and exploitation that exists in society. Part of this struggle is the Party’s opposition to discrimination based on choosing gender. Party membership is based on recognizing and advancing the cause of MLKMZ (Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought) as the proletarian ideology, on the constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the readiness to wage revolution. There is no reason for an individual who complies with such requirements to be turned away just because he/she has chosen a different gender (KTKS Hinggil sa Pag-aasawa 18).

The same document adds:

[H]owever, the principles and rules of the Party are the basic guidelines for the personal lives of the Communists. Hence, it is but necessary for every Party member who had chosen a different gender, just like other Party members, to suit his/her conduct of personal relations to the aforementioned. Secondary perspectives and attitude, prejudicial dealing and unpleasant stereotyping of personalities on this regard should be consciously battled. (Hinggil sa Pag-aasawa 19)

For Ka Esperanza, this revision and additional provision on same-sex marriage within the Party were important. She pointed out, however, that the

more important question was how this policy would be accepted. According to her, "Levels of development are different, hence levels of practice also vary. Just the same, it is very important to note that the policy has been instituted. With regard to practice, experiences are always evaluated so as to see how it can be further improved. In my opinion, gay comrades have a big role to play in helping the Party further develop its policy based on proletarian and revolutionary experience, because it is dialectical, it is possible that this policy is insufficient to really recognize gay comrades, hence we should all help one another in improving such policy."

The aforementioned additional provision was viewed by many as the Party's attempt to create space for gays within the Party. This provision went beyond mere acceptance because the movement had accepted gays early on. Instead, this is an issue of recognition -- recognition of the nature of gays and lesbians to have a crush, like someone, desire someone, and love someone. This was also recognition of their right to court and to be courted, to marry, and to build a revolutionary family.

But this did not mean that discrimination against gays in the Party would entirely disappear overnight. When the new policy was disseminated to mass organizations in 1998, cadres and activists still experienced discrimination from the masses and even from comrades. According to Ka Salud, this was unavoidable because of the slow development of society. She gave the following illustration:

For example, a new comrade comes into the movement still carrying his feudal mindset on gays, and even on women. If he sees or interacts with a gay or a woman, such feudal perspective might still rear its ugly head. It is because we are yet to really liberate ourselves from cultural biases against women, gays and lesbians. This is the law of uneven development, that's why we continue to struggle. It's part of our continuing cultural revolution.

Even the use of the phrase "comrades with chosen gender" was criticized by gay cadres. But as per Ka Esperanza's explanation, it was possibly because of the context of heteronormativity that dominated the situation for so long. Thus, the perspective that the dominant genders and sexualities were male and female only somehow lingers. And the gays, they had chosen a different gender--different from the male and female genders to which society had

been accustomed to. Nevertheless, she clarified that if the phrase “comrades with chosen gender” did not really fit, gay cadres and activists could suggest a more suitable term. The contradiction within the revolution was always there, and the Party was open to these contradictions that were expected to bring about not only political correctness on the perspective on sexuality but also political correctness in the use of terms.

Three years after the revised rules on marriage was released, a story about a comrade who had chosen his gender appeared in *Ulos*, the official cultural publication of the Party. This story entitled “Si Lyndon at si Liam” (Lyndon and Liam) narrates the lives of two gay Red fighters. According to the story’s persona, other comrades played a prank on Lyndon when they threw a dead snake on him, notwithstanding the fact that they knew he was very afraid of snakes. Because of this instance, he climbed a tree, turned very, very pale, and trembled in fear. Lyndon had been with the NPA for three years then. The following is an excerpt from the narrative:

Lyndon, who came from the lower-middle peasantry and an orphan, is a gay Red fighter. It was only in 1998 that Lyndon decided to declare his gender to his comrades. This is after a long period of concealing his personality, after a complicated period of doubt on whether the comrades, the masses, and even himself are ready to accept such truth. (Verdadero at Ka Ali 5)

While the abovementioned was a mere prank, it is believed that some pranks have deeper meanings. According to the narrator, this ‘innocent’ expression could actually be a manifestation of hidden discrimination. The second character, Ka Liam, had been engaged in work in the countryside for four years then and was able to repel the enemies when the other comrades were pulling out after a successful tactical offensive. Before this occurrence, many comrades wrongly thought that Ka Liam was ‘weak’ because he was gay. But after showing courage, he was recognized and his supposed weakness was no longer brought up. These stories, whether they are fictional or based on real stories, prove that gays are steadily carving out space within revolutionary literature.

In 2004, *Ang Bayan*, the official organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines, published an article on Ka Joan. The article described Ka Joan as follows:

Ka Joan, 25 years old, is a Red fighter of a platoon of the New People's Army (NPA) in the southern front of Cagayan Valley. Like other proletarian revolutionaries, he struggles for a future free from oppression and exploitation. But, unlike most Red fighters, his true gender won't be revealed at first glance: Ka Joan is gay. 'I have the heart of a gay man,' he reveals. "I am a gay revolutionary. (7)

This article narrated Ka Joan's life as a gay, an activist and a red fighter. For more than a year of Ka Joan's stay in the countryside, he had served as the finance and supply officer of the squad, as second team leader and even as part of the medical personnel. He also participated in tactical offensives launched by the red army. Ka Joan thus said:

Here, I really feel that they try their best to accept my whole personality, even if they are yet to really do it. Here, I really feel loved by the masses and the comrades because I am a revolutionary, regardless of my gender. And I know that the Party and the revolutionary movement is advancing the tireless struggle to wipe out the remnants of oppression and sexual discrimination within the movement and in society. (Ang Bayan 8)

This publication on Ka Joan's life is a proof that gays are now recognized not only as part of the mass movement but also of the armed struggle where "inside the people's army, the practical methods and regulations to develop relationships of different genders are further improved" (Ang Bayan 8).

Meanwhile, in 2005, the Party publicized the right of gay NPAs and cadres to marry. In Rolly Pinsoy's article entitled "Reds officiate first gay marriage in the NPA" which appeared on the front page of the mainstream broadsheet Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Party's advanced view and treatment of gays had been bravely announced. The article included some photos taken in the marriage which was held in Compostela Valley, inside a guerilla zone. The article reported:

DARE to struggle, dare to win ... as married gays. After raiding a few Army camps, two communist guerrillas hid in a forest gorge and fell in love. Deeply. That was three years ago. On Friday,

under a romantic drizzle in a muddy clearing in Compostela Valley province in Mindanao, Ka Andres and Ka Jose exchanged vows in a heavily guarded ceremony before local villagers, friends from the city and their comrades in arms. They are considered the first homosexual couple in the New People's Army (NPA) who were wed by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) (1).

Applying marriage rules and guidelines to gays inside the Party shows that beyond space, there is clearly a gay space within the Party. This means gay people in the Party are free to express their genuine feelings, emotions and affection. Thus, gays in the Party can court anyone, propose a relationship program, form a relationship, marry, and live as couples. Gay activists and communists have the right to be gay inside the movement: to do what heterosexual couples do, fulfill the needs of a gay relationship, and form relationships – both romantic and sexual. The Party has never opposed this primary basis of being gay--which is the right to love another person of the same biological gender--in any instance, and instead accepts and recognizes it. Therefore, the same rules and guidelines apply to women, men, gays, and lesbians inside the Party.

Gay space in the Philippine revolution is like the space for male and female comrades, the elderly and the young. In the fields where revolutionary men and women operate--from organizational, political, to ideological fields--in leading discussions, in forming alliances, in campaigns, in joining the revolutionary army, there is gay space where gays have freedom to act and fulfill their tasks.

There is gay space for all gay comrades in the national-democratic revolution. Like male and female revolutionaries, gay revolutionaries have the right to court and be courted, to form a relationship, and to marry. Though discrimination against gay comrades still exists, it is expected that gay members of the Party will lead the struggle to confront such discrimination. Expanding this gay space is a primary task of gay comrades themselves. The Party is open in recognizing internal contradictions, and gender issues are covered by such. Acceptance and recognition of gay comrades has been clearly expressed by the Party, but prior to this, gay comrades are entreated to accept and recognize their genuine identity, their true sexuality, and their gayness.

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The Image Of Japan in the Philippine Periodical *La Solidaridad* (1889-1895)

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This paper tries to inductively understand how some articles in the Philippine periodical *La Solidaridad* that directly talked about Japan convey an overall image of this Empire of the Rising Sun. This paper is significant in the sense that this can contribute towards the understanding of how the Filipino intellectuals during the Propaganda Movement thought about the Philippines in relation to its Asian neighbors as well as about the dynamics of power in the Asian region. This project is also significant in the sense that it retrieves a Filipino imagination of Japan prior to the modifications brought about by the Japanese Occupation in the Philippines and the altercations brought about by the Second World War. To achieve such goals, this paper contains four substantive sections that deal with the following: how the articles talked about the First Sino-Japanese War; how the same articles talked about Japan and the Philippines/Spain; how the same articles talked about Japanese culture and character; and how the same articles talked about some featured Japanese personalities. This paper establishes that the image of Japan in this said periodical is a composite picture consists of the threatened Spanish Empire, the disinterested Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the reformist and assimilationist Filipino intellectuals.

Keywords: *La Solidaridad*, Image of Japan, Japan and the Philippine Propaganda Movement, Japan and the Philippines at the End of the 19th Century, and Asia and the Philippines at the End of the 19th Century

INTRODUCTION

L*a Solidaridad* is a fortnightly newspaper established by Filipino nationalists in Spain. It was intended to expound and spread their campaign for political reforms in the Philippines and to promote assimilation of the

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colony as a province of the mother country. It was founded by the medical student turned journalist and orator Graciano López Jaena (1856-1896) in Barcelona in 1889. Although brilliant and gifted, Jaena had an eccentric and unreliable lifestyle. Thus, in less than a year of editorship he was replaced by the lawyer and journalist Marcelo del Pilar (1850-1896), just a few weeks before the newspaper's headquarters was transferred to Madrid. Del Pilar had served as the editor until La Solidaridad closed down in 1895 due to lack of financial support from the Filipinos. Throughout its existence, the newspaper published articles on a wide variety of topics concerning the Philippines, such as education, governance, needed reforms, politics, culture, art, history, anthropology, linguistics, and foreign relations. Among La Solidaridad's notable contributors were the ophthalmologist and polymath, Jose Rizal (1861-1896); the pharmacist, Antonio Luna (1866-1899); the physician, Mariano Ponce (1863-1918); the agriculturist and medical student, Jose Maria Panganiban (1863-1890); the writer, Pedro Paterno (1857-1911); and the lawyer, journalist and polymath, Isabelo delos Reyes (1864-1938) together with the Bohemian professor, Ferdinand Blumentritt (1853-1913) and the Spanish professor, Miguel Morayta (1834-1917). Although the paper was reformist in its overall timbre, it exerted considerable influence on the thinking of the Filipinos who pursued the pathway of revolution as well as on imagination of the Filipino nationalists. La Solidaridad had published seven volumes with a total of 163 issues.

Asia and Philippine/Hispanic international relations were regularly tackled in the issues of La Solidaridad. But towards the last years of its publication, a noticeable streak of articles about Japan occurred. These articles are shown in Table 1 in chronological order.

Table 1: La Solidaridad Articles that Deal with Japan

Title	Author	Volume, Number, and Year
"Prince Horihito"	Unspecified	VI, 129, 1894
"News"	Unspecified	VI, 129, 1894
"China and Japan"	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 133, 1894
"Dangerous Alliances"	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 136, 1894
"The Sino-Japanese Question: the Japanese Empire"	Ferdinand Blumentritt	VI, 137, 1894
"A Letter (from a Reader)"	Unspecified	VI, 137, 1894

“Declaration of War”	Correspondent from Tokyo for Le Figaro	VI, 137, 1894
“Hispano- Japanese Treaty”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 138, 1894
“Marshall Count Yamagata”	Mariano Ponce	VI, 138, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines I”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 139, 1894
“Memories of the Japanese Empire I”	Leopold von Jedina	VI, 139, 1894
“China and the Manchus”	Unspecified	VI, 139, 1894
“The Count of Ito”	Unspecified	VI, 139, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines II”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 140, 1894
“The Prestige of Race”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 140, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines III”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 141, 1894
“Memories of the Japanese Empire II”	Leopold von Jedina	VI, 141, 1894
“Otori Keiske: Minister of Japan in Korea”	Mariano Ponce	VI, 141, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines IV”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 142, 1894
“Human Interest and Patriotic Interest”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 142, 1894
“Mr. Moret’s Conference”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 143, 1895
“Memories of the Japanese Empire III”	Leopold von Jedina	VII, 143, 1895
“The Imperial Japanese House”	K	VII, 143, 1895
“Origins of the Japanese Navy”	Unspecified	VII, 143, 1895
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines V”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 144, 1895
“Memories of the Japanese Empire IV”	Leopold von Jedina	VII, 144, 1895
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines VI”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
“Yalu and The Conference of the German Emperor”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
“Chinese Squadron: Admiral Ting”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
“Japanese Squadron: Admiral Ito”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
“Prince Arisugawa”	Unspecified	VII, 145, 1895
“The Sino-Japanese War”	Unspecified	VII, 147, 1895
“A Japanese Colonel in Pandi, Landed Property of the Dominicans”	Unspecified	VII, 147, 1895
“Japan and China”	Unspecified	VII, 149, 1895
“Dangers and Fears”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 150, 1895
“Japan and China”	Unspecified	VII, 150, 1895
“Dangers and Fears”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 151, 1895
“Japan and Philippines”	Regulo	VII, 151, 1895
“In the Far East”	Regulo	VII, 152, 1895
“Japan”	Unspecified	VII, 154, 1895
“Japan”	Unspecified	VII, 155, 1895

“Japan and the Philippine Islands”	Segismundo Moret	VII, 156, 1895
“Considerations About the Sino-Japanese Conflict”	Ferdinand Blumentritt	VII, 156, 1895
“Japan and the Philippine Islands”	Segismundo Moret	VII, 157, 1895

If these articles were to be spread on the timeline of *La Solidaridad*'s existence in accordance with their dates of publications and next to the most significant Japanese event (i.e. the First Sino-Japanese War) that occurred around such dates, it would appear that the bulk of these articles came out contemporaneously with such dramatic event. These are shown in figure 1 below.

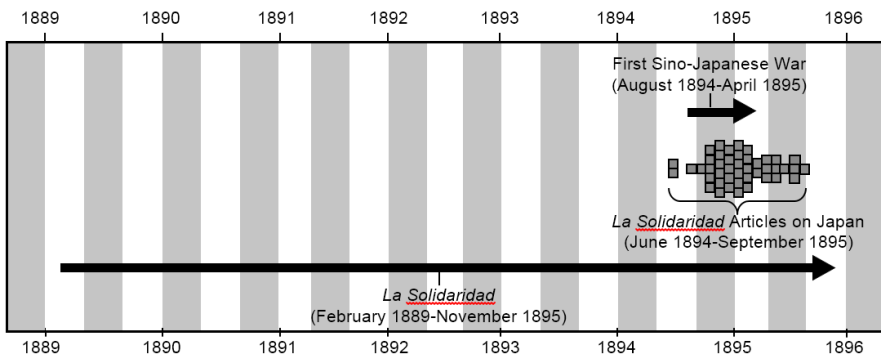


Figure 1: Timelines of *La Solidaridad* and the First Sino-Japanese War and the Publications of the Articles that Deal with Japan

It can be said, therefore, that *La Solidaridad* started to notice Japan because of the First Sino-Japanese War. Indeed, a good number of its articles talked about this conflict. But aside from tackling this War, these articles also talked about Japan and the Philippines/Spain, Japanese culture and character, and some Japanese personalities.

This paper tries to inductively understand how these *La Solidaridad* articles collectively imagined Japan. This project is significant in the sense that it contributes towards the understanding of how the Filipino intellectuals of this given period thought about the Philippines in relation to its Asian neighbors and about the dynamics of power in the Asian region. This project is also significant in the sense that it retrieves a Filipino imagination of Japan prior to the modifications brought about by the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines and the altercations brought about by the Second World War. Although some

of these articles were written by Spanish, Austrian, Japanese, and other non-Filipino writers, the fact that they were included in this periodical suggests that their contents were attuned to the overall thinking of the editorial board about the aforementioned themes. Having been published in this periodical, these articles with foreign authorship were consequently placed in a position of being able to shape the imagination of the Filipino readers about the same themes.

Thus, the following substantive sections cluster and analyze the enumerated articles under the aforementioned recurrent Japan-related topics: 1) the First Sino-Japanese War; 2) Japan and the Philippines/Spain; 3) Japanese culture and character; and 4) some Japanese personalities.

THE FIRST SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Fifteen articles specifically dealt with the First Sino-Japanese War, one of the most recurrent themes in the Japan-related articles of *La Solidaridad* (Table 2).

Table 2: *La Solidaridad* Articles that Specifically Deal with the First Sino-Japanese War

Title	Author	Volume, Number, and Year
"News"	Unspecified	VI, 129, 1894
"China and Japan"	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 133, 1894
"Dangerous Alliances"	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 136, 1894
"A Letter (from a Reader)"	Unspecified	VI, 137, 1894
"Declaration of War"	Correspondent from Tokyo for <i>Le Figaro</i>	VI, 137, 1894
"Yalu and The Conference of the German Emperor"	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
"Chinese Squadron: Admiral Ting"	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
"Japanese Squadron: Admiral Ito"	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
"The Sino-Japanese War"	Unspecified	VII, 147, 1895
"Japan and China"	Unspecified	VII, 149, 1895
"Dangers and Fears"	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 150, 1895
"Japan and China"	Unspecified	VII, 150, 1895
"Japan"	Unspecified	VII, 154, 1895
"Japan"	Unspecified	VII, 155, 1895

"Considerations About the Sino-Japanese Conflict"	Ferdinand Blumentritt	VII, 156, 1895
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These fifteen articles may be further clustered under two sub-themes: 1) journalistic sketches on the raging conflict, and 2) analyses of the power dynamics in the Asian region with Japan and China as the reference points.

Journalistic Sketches on the Sino-Japanese Conflict

On 15 June 1894, a month and a half before the beginning of the First Sino-Japanese War, a news article by an unspecified author from London talked about reports from Shanghai that Japan decided to send military forces to Korea to protect the interest of the Japanese nationals in the said country, and that the Korean King Gojong (1852-1919) had fled the country to Japan. However, the article also mentioned that a correspondent in London dismissed the reports as mere rumors. In reality, Japan sent an 8,000 strong contingent to Korea in this month of June and later on seized its throne and expelled the Chinese troops, on account of the Chinese intervention on Korea's Tonghak Rebellion.

On 15 October 1894, two and a half months after the beginning of the said War, a letter from an unnamed Japanese government worker tried to explain the same War. The letter recounted that Korea was a tributary of China and was attacked by Japan twice. Japan later acknowledged the independence of Korea through a treaty on friendship and commerce. But when the Tonghak rebellion occurred, China sent military forces to repress the rebellion and at the same time to annex Korea. Japan reacted to this intrusion by sending its own military forces. The letter mentioned how the Chinese forces committed atrocities and crimes in Korea, victimizing even the Japanese nationals who were residing in that country. The tension between the Chinese and Japanese presence and interest in Korea escalated into what would become known as the First Sino-Japanese War. On the same date, the article "Declaration of War" by the Tokyo correspondent of the paper *Le Figaro* was published. It tackled the declarations of war issued by both Japan and China on 01 August 1894. Japan on the one hand, insisted that China should accept Korea's sovereignty and independence. China, on the other hand, refused to recognize the treaty between Japan and Korea and insisted that China is only assisting Korea against the Japanese intrusion. China cited that King Gojong had in fact asked China to assist him in suppressing the Tonghak rebellion.

On 15 February 1895, six and a half months after the beginning of the same War, an article “Yalu and the Conference of the German Emperor” by del Pilar was published. This article featured the speech given by Emperor William II (1859-1941) to an audience composed of some deputies and military officers at his White Salon. The German Emperor expressed his admiration for the Japanese victory in the naval Battle of Yalu that happened in 17 September 1894. The Battle of Yalu was the largest naval engagement in the First Sino-Japanese War, and the Emperor called it one of the greatest naval battles in history. This article was immediately followed by two other articles entitled “Japanese Squadron: Admiral Ito” and “Chinese Squadron: Admiral Ting” that were also written by del Pilar. These two articles respectively itemized the vessels from the Japanese and Chinese fleets that were involved in this Battle.

On 15 March 1895, seven and half months after the beginning and a month before the end of the same War, the article “The Sino-Japanese War” by an unspecified author was published. The article gave an update about the Japanese victory over the Chinese forces that earlier retreated from Pyongyang to Manchuria. Based on recent telegrams, the Japanese forces had already occupied that part of Manchuria bounded by the River Liao and the Liao Gulf on the west, by Port Arthur on the south, and by Niu Tchuang and Ying-Ku Ports in the north. The article hinted on the desire of the Chinese Emperor Guangxu (1871-1908) to seek peace with Japan.

On 15 June 1895, two months after the end of the same War, the article “Japan and China” by an unspecified author was published. This article featured the Treaty of Simoneseki of 17 April 1895 that concluded the peace conference between Japan and China that started on 20 March 1895, as well as the First Sino-Japanese War. It enumerated the articles of the said Treaty: China should recognize the independence of Korea; Japan should retain the control of Taiwan, the Pescadores Islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula; China should pay Japan an indemnity of 200,000,000 taels; China should open the ports of Shashi, Congqing, Suzhou and Hangzhou to Japanese commerce; and China and Japan should establish a defensive and offensive alliance. On the same date, another article entitled, “Japan” by still an unspecified author was also published. This covered the resistance of some Taiwanese forces against the Japanese control as specified by the Treaty of Simoneseki. The article made a forecast that even though Japan had successfully taken over the coastal areas of Taiwan, it would encounter some difficulties with the central areas as these Taiwanese forces would resort to guerrilla tactics.

On 15 July 1895, three months after the end of the same War, an article entitled “Japan” by an unspecified author was published. This article contained two important extended quotations. The first one was from a friend of the periodical’s editorial board who was based in Tokyo and who apparently commented on the paper’s inaccurate mention that one of the articles of the Treaty of Simoneseki specified a defensive and offensive alliance between Japan and China. The letter sender reasoned out that such alliance would be unnecessary and disadvantageous for Japan because on one hand China was definitely harboring desires to avenge its recent defeat, and on the other hand an alliance with a country that cannot defend itself was not worth much. The second extended quotation was from the Spanish republican politician, Emilio Castelar (1832-1899) who praised the Japanese victory over China which for him was due to Japan’s superiority in terms of science, liberty, and hard work. Castelar also mentioned the German Emperor Wilhelm II’s amazement on the same victory.

Political Analyses of the Asian Region with Japan and China as the Points of Reference

On 15 August 1894, half a month after the start of the same War, the article “China and Japan” that was written by del Pilar expressed the concern of Spain over the threat of a Sino-Japanese alliance. Such alliance would drive out the European presence in the region and would favor the political and economic interests of the United States of America in the same region. Japan and China’s dispute over Korea would momentarily prevent such alliance. Del Pilar felt that Filipinos would prefer Spanish despotism rather than an Asian or American sponsored liberalism. On 30 September 1894, one and a half month after the start of the same War, del Pilar wrote another article entitled, “Dangerous Alliances” in which he again mentioned the threat of the possible Sino-Japanese alliance to Spain. He leveraged that if only Spain would give justice and fraternity to the Filipinos, this people would remain loyal to the mother country and fight for the integrity of its Asian territory. Del Pilar noted that the Philippines had become attractive to both the United Kingdom and the United States of America because of its strategic location in as far as Asian trade was concerned. Whereas a Sino-Japanese alliance was not probable momentarily, China might ally with the United Kingdom based on the fact that the British had supplied China with arms for its War against Japan. It appeared that the

United Kingdom was already eyeing on Taiwan which is located very close to the Philippines. If the United Kingdom got Taiwan, with its existing control of Borneo, the Philippines would be surrounded with British presence and would soon be engulfed by this Western power.

On 15 April 1895, just a couple of days before the end of the same War, the article “Japan and China” by an unspecified author was published. The article was based on some excerpts from the 07 April 1895 issue of the French periodical, *The Social Democrat*. This article tackled the rumors about an ongoing peace negotiation between Japan and China. In reality, such negotiation started about half a month before the publication of the French paper. The article highlighted again the possibility of a Sino-Japanese defensive and offensive alliance coming out from such negotiation, and the threat that this would bring to Spain. The article also fanned the rumors that there were Japanese officers who stealthily visited some islands in the Visayas and Jolo, and that the Spanish language was already being studied in the Japanese universities.

On 30 April 1895, half a month after the end of the same War, del Pilar wrote the article “Dangers and Fears” that reflects on the possible implications of the Japanese victory over China. The Treaty of Simoneseki had allowed Japan to occupy Taiwan, which, as already mentioned, is very close to the Philippines. There was also a possibility that Japan would share its dominance in the region with other Western powers, just as it had allowed the United States of America commercial access to its territory decades before. On 31 July 1895, three and a half months after the end of the same War, Blumentritt wrote the article, “Considerations about the Sino-Japanese Conflict” arguing that Europeans should not underestimate Japan and China. Their Asian culture and otherness might make them appear coward and comical from the perspective of Westerners, but in reality they are powerful and are not afraid of the Europeans. The historical victories of the Westerners over these two countries were not due to the presumed inferiority of the yellow race, but these were due to some shortcomings on the governmental and organizational institutions of the said Asian countries.

JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES/SPAIN

Several articles specifically dealt with Japan and the Philippines/Spain (Table 3), the other of the most recurrent themes in the Japan-related articles of *La Solidaridad*.

Table 3: La Solidaridad Articles that Specifically Deal with Japan and the Philippines/Spain

Title	Author	Volume, Number, and Year
“Hispano- Japanese Treaty”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 138, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines I”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 139, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines II”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 140, 1894
“The Prestige of Race”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 140, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines III”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 141, 1894
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines IV”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 142, 1894
“Mr. Moret’s Conference”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 143, 1895
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines V”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 144, 1895
“Spain and Japan in the Philippines VI”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 145, 1895
“A Japanese Colonel in Pandi, Landed Property of the Dominicans”	Unspecified	VII, 147, 1895
“Dangers and Fears”	Marcelo del Pilar	VII, 151, 1895
“Japan and Philippines”	Regulo	VII, 151, 1895
“In the Far East”	Regulo	VII, 152, 1895
“Japan and the Philippine Islands”	Segismundo Moret	VII, 156, 1895
“Japan and the Philippine Islands”	Segismundo Moret	VII, 157, 1895

These fifteen articles may be further clustered under three sub-themes that follow: 1) the Spanish unease with Japan; 2) some reasons for Spain’s refusal to cultivate Japanese-Philippine relations; and 3) arguments for a trade relationship between Japan and the Philippines.

The Spanish Unease with Japan

On 31 October 1894, three months after the beginning of the same War and about a month after writing about the possibilities and implications of a Sino-Japanese alliance, del Pilar published the article “Hispano-Japanese Treaty.” The second half of this article dispelled the fears on the side of Spain that Japan would invade the Philippines. Del Pilar argued that although the Japanese navy was superior to the Spanish navy, the other Western powers that were present in the region would foil any Japanese attempt to control the Philippines. The deeper fear on the part of Spain was that it knew how inferior and oppressive its colonial policies were from those of Japan in relation to Korea, or from those

of the United Kingdom in relation to its Asian territories. On 15 November 1894, half a month after the publication of his article “Hispano-Japanese Treaty” del Pilar published the first article of his series entitled, “Spain and Japan in the Philippines.” In this article, del Pilar criticized Spain’s worries about the immigration of some Japanese nationals into the Philippines while simultaneously being lax about the Chinese immigration. He again dispelled the Spanish fear of a Japanese invasion of the Philippines. He pointed out that Spain’s rejection of Japan’s offer for an international treaty with Spain would negatively affect the former’s relationship with the latter, as Japan is the most powerful nation in the Asian region. He explained further that Japan’s power was in fact beneficial to Spain in the sense that it can, in some way, neutralize the presence of the other Western powers in the region.

On 31 December 1894, five months after the start of the same war, del Pilar published the fourth installment of his series “Spain and Japan in the Philippines.” Here, del Pilar leveraged again, in the context of the imminent Japanese victory over China, that in order for the Filipinos not to be attracted to the more liberal and emancipatory international policies of Japan and not to break away from the tyrannical and oppressive governance of Spain, Spain should know the situation and the conditions in its Asian colony more closely and institute the necessary reforms. This line of thinking was reinforced in the sixth installment of the same series, published on 15 February 1895, where del Pilar expressed his view that whereas Spain had been indifferent to the liberties of the Filipinos, Japan could easily give them free press and free exercise of individual rights; whereas Spain had neglected the education of Filipinos, Japan had a wider and liberal educational horizon; and whereas Spain looked down on the Filipinos, Japan would treat Filipinos with respect as fellow Asians.

On 15 January 1895, five and a half months after the start and three months before the end of the same War, del Pilar made a detailed report about a conference given by Segismundo Moret (1833-1913) at the Ateneo de Madrid. Moret was a Spanish politician who previously held a number of ministerial posts including the Ministry of the Overseas Colonies. Moret noted that the rising power of Japan is a threat to the Spanish presence in Asia. Although Japan would not exclude the Western powers in the region, it had a very low esteem for Spain brought about by the failure of this European country to establish an impressive diplomatic and cultural presence in Japan. Moret was aware of the danger that Filipinos might be attracted to create a Malayan league with the Japanese due to the failure of Spain to look at the plight, concerns, and welfare of

its Asian colonies. Moret believed that the Spanish control over the Philippines is doomed and the only thing that Spain could do was to establish some friendly relationships with Japan and at least momentarily benefit from the commercial export of Spanish wine and Philippine sugar.

On 15 March 1895, a month before the end of the same War, the article “A Japanese Colonel in Pandi, Landed Property of the Dominicans” by an unspecified author was published. This essay commented on a letter that was published in the periodical *Correo Español* concerning some alleged sightings of a Japanese Colonel in Sta. Maria de Pandi, Bulacan, who was extensively and intensively reconnoitering the area. The *La Solidaridad* article dismissed the reported sightings as baseless and inconsistent rumor as the Japanese had already accumulated enough information about the Philippines.

On 15 May 1895, a month after the end of the same War, del Pilar published the article “Dangers and Fears” that critiqued the Spanish support for Triple Intervention. The Triple Intervention was a diplomatic action by Russia, France, and Germany on 23 April 1895 concerning the Japanese control over the Liaodong Peninsula as stipulated by the Treaty of Simoneseki. Del Pilar insisted that it would have been better for Spain to maintain a friendly relationship with Japan, or at least neutrally broker a more peaceful transaction between Japan and the triple alliance. Spain had nothing to gain from this support but only undermined its control over the Philippines for doing so.

On 31 July 1895, three and a half months after the end of the same War, Moret published the first half of his article “Japan and the Philippine Islands” that was followed by its second half on 15 August of the same year. Comparing the commentary of del Pilar on Moret’s Ateneo conference with this extended essay, it would appear that this essay was an altogether different piece or at least an updated version of that conference paper that took into consideration the Japanese victory over China. Moret argued that there were only two European nations that were extremely important for Japan at that moment: Russia, because of its proximity to Korea and its naval control over the Northern Pacific; and Spain, because of its dominion over the Philippines. Moret tried to convince the Spanish government to leverage on this status and deal with Japan on one hand and strengthen its governance and mission in the Philippines on the other hand. Moret felt that the Spanish people underestimated the value of the Philippines as a colony and consequently the Spanish status in the Asian region.

Reasons for Spain's Refusal to Cultivate Japanese-Philippine Relations

On 30 November 1894, del Pilar published his article "Prestige of Race" that tackled the superiority complex of the Spanish officials and inhabitants of the Philippines who even looked down on pure blooded Spanish individuals who happened to be born in the islands (*insulares*), as well as on those who were born in the Iberian peninsula (*peninsulares*) but happened to belong to the working class. Del Pilar alluded that this superiority complex was the reason why Spain resisted the Japanese initiative to establish an agreement on Japanese-Spanish immigration as the presence of Japanese nationals in the Philippines might threaten the Spanish image of superiority over the Asians in general. Del Pilar, however, wondered why Spain did not feel threatened by the presence of Chinese nationals in the Philippines. On 31 January 1895, del Pilar published the fifth installment of his extended article "Spain and Japan in the Philippines" where he elaborated again on the reason for Spain's refusal to economically and culturally engage with Japan. Building on Moret's allusion to Japan as the rising sun that was capable of awakening the vitality of the whole Malayan race, del Pilar argued that Spain was aware of how it failed to establish a viable exchange of material and intellectual goods with the Philippines, and therefore it is against the Spanish pride and interest that such exchanges would be undertaken by Japan and the Philippines.

On 15 May 1895, a writer with the pen name "Regulo" published the article "Japan and the Philippines," which presented an extended quotation from the 1803 book of the Augustian friar Zuniga (1760-1818) entitled *Historia de Filipinas*. "Regulo" in Spanish means "ruler," and given his eccentric claim for a Tagalog aristocratic lineage, this could be the pseudonym of Paterno. The quotation recounted how after the death of Governor General Pedro de Acuña (?-1606) some Japanese nationals were driven out of Intramuros by the Spanish residents based on suspicion that they might stage an uprising; how a Japanese uprising almost happened from that action; and how these Japanese nationals were forced to settle in the area of Dilao which was within the firing range of the guns from the walled city. Although the quotation did not mention that the first Japanese uprising in Manila happened during the administration of the said deceased governor general, it did mention the second Japanese uprising in Manila that resulted in heavy casualties on both the Japanese and the Spanish/Filipino sides. The essay appeared to remind everyone of the centuries-old

Spanish mistrust against the Japanese. On 31 May 1895, the same writer published another historical essay “In the Far East.” The essay again appeared to remind everyone of a conflict between Spain and Japan brought about by Spain’s action of sending missionaries to Japan. It talked about how the Daimyo Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), referred to as King Taikosama in the essay, reacted to the spread of Spanish mission in his territory. The essay in particular recalled the death of the Franciscan friar Pedro Bautista (1542-1597) who was sent to Japan by Governor General Gomez Perez Dasmariñas (1519-1593) as both a Catholic missionary and Spanish ambassador. Bautista became part of a group of 26 Christians who were crucified in Nagasaki in 1597 and were canonized in 1862.

Moret, however, in the first installment of his aforementioned essay “Japan and the Philippine Islands” asserted on the contrary that his contemporary Spanish colonial officials in the Philippines indeed saw the value of establishing Japanese-Philippines relations. In fact, Governor General Ramon Blanco (1833-1906) created a commission to study the possibility of establishing a commercial treaty between Japan and the Philippines. However, Moret was exasperated with the reality that these colonial officials planned and moved very slowly to the point that they were always overtaken by the other European powers in the Asian region.

Arguments for a Trade Relationship between Japan and the Philippines

In the aforementioned essay “Hispano-Japanese Treaty,” del Pilar argued that the exchange of labor and goods between Japan and the Philippines would be beneficial to both countries. He even highlighted the difference between the Chinese, whom Spain allowed to stay in the Philippines, and the Japanese workers. Whereas the Chinese workers toiled very hard to accumulate income that they would eventually send or bring back home to China, the Japanese workers also toiled hard to accumulate income, but they brought their families along and eventually integrate into the local population and therefore enrich that local population with their culture and race.

On 30 November 1894, a month after publishing the article “Hispano-Japanese Treaty,” del Pilar published the second installment of his series “Spain and Japan in the Philippines.” He assumed in this article that the importation of abaca, sugar, coffee, and other Philippine products to Japan would be good

for the Philippine economy and would not harm Spanish trade, as Spain was not interested in Philippine products to begin with. On 15 December 1894, he published the third installment of the same series in which he pointed out that Japanese products would not compete with the Spanish products in the Philippine market. On one hand, Spain was not so much interested with the Philippine market as the Philippine demand for Spanish products was too small. On the other hand, Japan's products were entirely different from the Spanish products. He elaborated that Hakodate exported fish oils, edible algae, sulfur, and saltpeter; Yedo exported bronze artifacts, lacquered furniture, porcelain, ivory objects, conches and steel; Yokohama exported tea, silk, and cotton; and Osaka exported silk, brocade, damask, lacquered furniture, porcelain, hats, umbrellas, and ivory objects.

Regulo, in his aforementioned essay "In the Far East," decried the Spanish priority of Christianizing Japan over establishing commercial and labor relations with this Asian country. Instead of reaping deaths for the Spanish missionaries and the feelings of resentment on both sides, Spain and the Philippines could have benefited from the skills and dedication of Japanese workers as well as from a Japanese market for Philippine abaca, wood and Spanish wine. Moret, in the first installment of his aforementioned essay "Japan and the Philippine Islands" corroborated del Pilar and Regulo's observation about the superiority of the Japanese workers when compared to the Chinese workers in the Philippines.

JAPANESE CULTURE AND CHARACTER

Several articles specifically dealt with the Japanese culture and character (Table 4), the third most recurrent theme in the Japan-related articles of *La Solidaridad*.

Table 4: *La Solidaridad* Articles that Specifically Deal with the Japanese Character and Culture

Title	Author	Volume, Number, and Year
"The Sino-Japanese Question: the Japanese Empire"	Ferdinand Blumentritt	VI, 137, 1894
"Memories of the Japanese Empire I"	Leopold von Jedina	VI, 139, 1894
"China and the Manchus"	Unspecified	VI, 139, 1894
"Memories of the Japanese Empire II"	Leopold von Jedina	VI, 141, 1894
"Otori Keiske: Minister of Japan in Korea"	Mariano Ponce	VI, 141, 1894

“Human Interest and Patriotic Interest”	Marcelo del Pilar	VI, 142, 1894
“Memories of the Japanese Empire III”	Leopold von Jedina	VII, 143, 1895
“Origins of the Japanese Navy”	Unspecified	VII, 143, 1895
“Memories of the Japanese Empire IV”	Leopold von Jedina	VII, 144, 1895
“Japan and Philippines”	Regulo	VII, 151, 1895
“Japan and the Philippine Islands”	Segismundo Moret	VII, 156, 1895
“Japan and Philippines”	Regulo	VII, 151, 1895
“In the Far East”	Regulo	VII, 152, 1895
“Japan and the Philippine Islands”	Segismundo Moret	VII, 156, 1895
“Japan and the Philippine Islands”	Segismundo Moret	VII, 157, 1895

These eleven articles may be further clustered under three sub-themes: 1) geographic and ethnographic sketch of Japan; 2) some glimpses on contemporary Japanese Society; and 3) the Japanese character.

Geographic and Ethnographic Sketch of Japan

On 15 October 1894, Blumentritt published the essay “The Sino-Japanese Question: the Japanese Empire” that discussed, among other things, Japanese geography, demography, and language. He explained that the Japanese Empire is comprised of three archipelagos with a total land mass of 382,416 square kilometers: 1) Japan, composed of Hondo or Nipon, Sikok, Kiusiu and Yeso; 2) Kuril Islands; and 3) Ryukyu Islands. He described the inhabitants of Hondo, Sikok and Kiusiu as the civilized ones; those of Yeso as the hairiest people in the world belonging to the Mongol race and living in a savage state; those of Kuril Islands as semi-savage firshermen; and those of Ryukyu as having a culture that appeared to be a mixture of Chinese and Japanese. He placed the total number of Japanese at 40,718,677 individuals which he characterized as intelligent people belonging to the Mongol race with an admixture of Malay, and who were clustered into three social classes: the Sizokou, or the nobility; the Daimos and Kwazokou, or the aristocracy; and the plebeians. He claimed that the Japanese spoke in two dialects: the pure one, called Yamato, was spoken in the Imperial court, in the salons of aristocracy and in first class brothels; while the other one was the general dialect which consisted of Yamato with Chinese vowels and modisms. He added that there were about 8,000 foreigners residing in Japan, half of whom were Chinese. Among the Westerners there, the biggest groups were composed of the English, the North Americans, Germans, French,

Portuguese, Dutch, and Swiss, while the smallest groups were composed of the Spanish and Russians. He noted that discounting the diplomats, the Spanish residents of Japan were all coming from the Philippines.

Glimpses on Contemporary Japanese Society

The same essay of Blumentritt mentioned how Japan appropriated European civilization and blended it with its traditional culture. This can be seen in their universities where the professors are Japanese but were trained in Paris, Oxford, Philadelphia, and Berlin; in the bilingual (Japanese and another Western language) newspaper establishments that were run by Japanese boards and editors; and in the military, where officers were schooled in France, Prussia, Italy, England, and Russia. He noted that with the opening of Japan to Western commerce, specifically through the ports of Hakodate, Hiogo, Nara, Nagasaki, Nagata, Osaka, Tohio and Yokohama, came the liberalization of ideas and religion, at least in the areas surrounding these ports. He also noted the vigilance of the Japanese government in ensuring that there was a healthy balance between Japanese and foreign industries, as manifested in its pressure to increase the production of Japanese cotton in order to minimize textile importation from England and Germany, as well as in its efforts to put up Japanese controlled dockyards, factories, and railways.

From 15 November 1894 to 31 January 1895, a series of four extracts from the 1891 work of Leopold von Jedina (1849-1924) was published under the heading "Memories of the Japanese Empire." Von Jedina at that time was a lieutenant colonel of the Austrian Navy and his book of over 700 pages was entitled *An Asiens Küsten und Fürstenthöfen: Tagebuchblätter von der Reise Sr. Maj. Schiffes "Fasana" und über den Aufenthalt an asiatischen Höfen in den Jahren 1887, 1888, und 1889*. The four extracts published by *La Solidaridad* were all about the visit of the Austrian Archduke Leopold Ferdinand (1868-1935) to Japan. The first extract commented on the cleanliness and orderliness of the Japanese ports, residences, schools, streets, and public places. It also noticed how the government officials, the educated and the upper classes of Japan wore European attire, while the middle classes wore a blend of European and Japanese attire. The lower classes wore purely Japanese attire. As the party of the Archduke travelled by train from Yokohama to Tokyo, von Jedina was impressed by the smokestacks of factories even in small towns, as well as the railway that was constructed by Japanese workers with the assistance

of European engineers. Von Jedina made a side remark that although most Europeans came to Japan with the intention of exploiting the country and its people, some of them ended up being exploited by the Japanese. The second extract featured three cultural and scientific institutions visited by the Archduke and his Austrian party. The first was the Temple of Shokonsha, built by Emperor Meiji (1852-1912) in 1869, to commemorate all those who died for the service of the Empire. The temple also served as a military museum. The second institution was the Imperial Museum of Hakubutsukan which was founded in 1871 and 1882. This had a collection of industrial artifacts, models, and data that can surpass those of the four and only existing industrial museums in Europe at that time, specifically those of France, Germany, Belgium, and Austria. The third institution was the Meteorological Institute and Astronomical Observatory which was one of the bases of Japan's superiority in meteorology over many European countries. The third installment examined more closely the historical and ethnographic collections of the Imperial Museum of Hakubutsukan, particularly its kakemono, or silk scroll painting, collection. Von Jedina made a short aesthetic lecture on the superiority of Japanese kakemono over that of its Chinese counterpart. This installment also made reference to the Japanese War Arsenal where innovations and inventions on modern weaponry were done. The fourth extract was more preoccupied with the Japanese character and therefore will be discussed in the following sub-section of this paper.

On the Japanese Character

The first extract from von Jedina, dated 15 November 1894, mentioned the value of cleanliness and orderliness as a salient feature of the Japanese character. Although he observed that some Japanese natives were physically untidy and lazy, von Jedina was positive that with the rigorous Japanese education that was being implemented in the Empire, these undesirable traits would soon disappear. He also mentioned the commercial and industrial skills of the Japanese that frustrated most Europeans' intention of exploiting them and their country. This extract was immediately followed by the essay "China and the Manchus" written by an unspecified author that recalled the feat of the British General Charles George Gordon (1833-1885) who assisted the Chinese Qing Emperor in crushing the Taiping Rebellion in 1864. Gordon expressed that in the multi-national army that he formed in Shanghai earlier that year, the best

officers and fighters were the Japanese, together with the Tagalogs, due to their valor, endurance, frugality, discipline, magnanimity, fortitude, and sobriety. He referred to these two ethnic groups as “the best soldiers of the Far East.”

On 15 December 1894, Ponce published the essay “Otori Keiske: Minister of Japan in Korea” where he tackled among other things the rather common derision about the Japanese people’s lack of originality. Ponce quoted Blumentritt’s assertion, that all civilizations, including the European nations, copy from one another and therefore copying is not a defining trait of the Japanese people. He further pointed out that Japan was fast moving from the stage of simply copying Western ideas and inventions. In the field of military technology, Japan had already realized that it needed to innovate and manufacture its own equipment and machineries; otherwise, the other countries would know the specific strengths and flaws of such martial gears.

On 31 December 1894, del Pilar published the essay “Human Interest and Patriotic Interest” that reflected on an earlier conference that Moret delivered at the Ateneo de Madrid together with the Spanish army officer and writer Julian Suarez Inclan (1848-1909), the lawyer and politician Rafael Comenge (1865-1934), the Spanish navy officer and politician Ramon Auñon (1844-1925), and the Spanish diplomat Eduardo Toda (1855-1941). On one hand, Moret described the Japanese people as virile, energetic, patriotic, and disciplined; and on the other hand, he also defended the same people from the already mentioned derision of being Europe’s copycat. Moret argued that even if Japan copied elements from the European civilization, it copied these with astonishing speed and thorough assimilation, and it did not only dwell on European externalities but more so on internalities as well as spiritual life, science, politics, economics, legislation, and other cultural and political strategies. The fourth extract from von Jedina, dated 15 January 1895, affirmed Japanese patriotism and downplayed the same derision. Von Jedina also highlighted the progressiveness of the Japanese spirit. On the same date, the essay “Origins of the Japanese Navy” by an unspecified author was published. This told of the humble beginning of the currently awesome Japanese Imperial Navy and alludes to the same Japanese skill of copying and assimilating European technology. The essay elaborated about how the British sailor William Adams (1564-1620) journeyed from Rotterdam in 1598 and ended up on the Japanese island of Kyushu in 1600. Instead of having him and his companions crucified for piracy, the future Shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), asked them to build European style ships.

In the aforementioned essay “Japan and Philippines” that was published

by Regulo on 15 May 1895, the negative side of the Japanese temperament was mentioned. The author referred to the Japanese people as hot-headed and as the “Spaniards of Asia.” Moret’s aforementioned paper “Japan and the Philippine Islands,” dated 31 July 1895, admired the Japanese sobriety, dedication to work, sharp observance, intelligence, and artistic instinct. However, it also hinted that because of the enormous creative and productive power of the Japanese psyche, prostitution had to be legalized in the Empire and the Japanese people appeared to be driven to stretch their dominion on other nearby territories.

SOME JAPANESE PERSONALITIES

A few articles specifically dealt with some Japanese personalities, the least recurrent theme in the Japan-related articles of *La Solidaridad*.

Table 5: *La Solidaridad* Articles that Specifically Deal with some Japanese Personalities

Title	Author	Volume, Number and Year
“Prince Horihito”	Unspecified	VI, 129, 1894
“Marshall Count Yamagata”	Mariano Ponce	VI, 138, 1894
“The Count of Ito”	Unspecified	VI, 139, 1894
“Otori Keiske: Minister of Japan in Korea”	Mariano Ponce	VI, 141, 1894
“The Imperial Japanese House”	K	VII, 143, 1895
“Prince Arisugawa”	Unspecified	VII, 145, 1895

The actual personalities that were substantially featured in these six articles were the following: the military officer and diplomat Otori Keisuke (1833-1911); the military officer Prince Arisugawa Taruhito (1835-1895); the military officer Count Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922); the Emperor Meiji; and the politician Count Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909). The essay “Prince Horihito” dated 15 June 1894, by an unspecified author merely talked about the splendid reception for this Japanese Prince at the Spanish royal court.

Otori Keisuke

In the aforementioned essay “Otori Keiske: Minister of Japan in Korea” dated 15 December 1894, Ponce featured the commoner Otori who, through his

intelligence, exposure to Western knowledge, and hard work, became a high ranking military officer and diplomat. At age 30, Otori was one of the leaders of the Shogun's resistance against the Meiji Restoration. With the triumph of the Meiji Restoration, Otori was imprisoned. After regaining his freedom, he worked for the modernization of the Japanese Empire. He served as the Japanese ambassador to China and then to Korea. He was the Japanese ambassador to Korea when the tension between China and Japan over Korea escalated into the First Sino-Japanese War. Ponce presented Otori as a proof against the dominant idea that only Westerners were capable of attaining greatness.

Arisugawa Taruhito

On 15 February 1895 the article "Prince Arisugawa" by an unspecified author, was published as an obituary for this aristocratic military leader who died a month earlier. Arisugawa was of royal birth who was adopted by Emperor Ninko (1800-1846) and grew up to become an important adviser to both Emperor Komei (1831-1867) and Emperor Meiji. He became General of the Japanese Imperial Army during the Meiji Restoration and fought against the supporters of the Shogun. During the First Sino-Japanese War, Arisugawa fatally contracted typhoid at the battlefields of Manchuria. At his funeral, Emperor Meiji posthumously endowed him with the Order of the Chrysanthemum.

Yamagata Aritomo

On 31 October 1894, Ponce published the essay "Marshall Count Yamagata" that recounted the greatness of this aristocratic military and political leader. At age 28, Yamagata became the Sub-Secretary of War. Two years after, he fought against feudalism despite his Imperial lineage. After the Meiji Restoration, he was sent to Europe to study and observe the military science and organization of various Western countries. At age 34, he became the Minister of War and started to modernize the Japanese Imperial Army by benchmarking on the Prussian Army. At age 51, he became the Prime Minister of Japan. Four years later he served as President of the Privy Council of the Emperor. During the First Sino-Japanese War, Yamagata was the Commanding General of the Japanese Imperial Army. He was greatly admired by Western nations and was often called the "Japanese Moltke" after the famous Prussian military leader Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke (1800-1891).

Emperor Meiji

On 15 January 1895, an author with a pseudonym “K” published the essay “The Japanese Imperial House.” If the letter K stood for “Kalipulako,” then this author would be Ponce. The essay referred to Emperor Meiji using his given adult name of Mutsuhito as the name Meiji is a posthumous name. The essay mentioned how Emperor Meiji succeeded his father Emperor Komei in 1867, in a time when the Shogun was about to lose his ruling power through the earlier mentioned Meiji Restoration. Emperor Meiji is described as an educated and cultured person who was interested with military affairs. He was also a knight of the Spanish Order of the Golden Fleece and was described as a figure that would be remembered forever as the leader who brought Japan to astonishing victory and transformation in a single generation. The essay also mentioned the Emperor’s marriage to the beautiful and talented Princess Haruko, and the paper erroneously assumed that this marriage produced four surviving children: Crown Prince Yoshihito (1879-1926), Princess Masako (1888-1940), Princess Fusako (1890-1974), and Prince Terhito (born: 1893). In reality Princess Haruko did not have children, but Emperor Meiji had a total of fifteen children from five official ladies-in-waiting. Of these fifteen children only five survived to adulthood. Apparently, Prince Terhito died early, and the article failed to mention another surviving daughter, Princess Nobuko (1891-1933). A year after the publication of this essay, Emperor Meiji still had another surviving daughter, Princess Toshiko (1896-1978). The essay also mentioned nine cadet and collateral branches of the Imperial Family: Arisugawa-no-miya, Yamashina-no-miya, Komatsu-no-miya, Fushimi-no-miya, Kuni-no-miya, Kitashirakawa-no-miya, Kan’in-no-miya, Kwacho-no-miya, and Nashimoto-no-miya.

Ito Hirobumi

On 15 November 1894, the essay “The Count of Ito” by an unspecified author was published. Based on the statements of the Spanish geographer and journalist Gonzalo Reparaz (1860-1939), the essay asserted that Ito was one of the renowned contemporary figures of Japan who rose from humble origins through his talent and extraordinary merits. As Prime Minister, Ito led the political, administrative, juridical, and financial transformation of Japan into a modern state. Reparaz had the opinion that Ito was even greater than the Prussian statesman Prince Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898), the Italian statesman

Count Camilo di Cavour (1810-1861), and the British liberal politician William Gladstone (1809-1898).

CONCLUSION

The Filipino intellectuals behind the periodical *La Solidaridad* appeared to begin paying closer attention to Japan at the time when this country courageously stood its ground against the old and enormous Chinese Empire. Nonetheless, the image of Japan documented in the said periodical is a composite picture of this country as seen from the point of view of the threatened Spanish Empire, of the disinterested Austro-Hungarian Empire, and of the reformist and assimilationist Filipino intellectuals.

To understand this composite image of Japan, it would be helpful to first look back at the authorship of the 43 articles from the said periodical that were analyzed by this paper. Of these articles, 40% was written by del Pilar, 9% by von Jedina, 7% by Ponce on the assumption that he was also the person behind the pen name “K,” 5% by Blumentritt, 5% by Moret, 5% by Regulo who this paper earlier surmised to be Paterno, 2% by an unspecified Japanese letter sender, and 28% by some unspecified writers. The threatened Spanish view can be partially found in the writings of Moret and consistently found in the writings of Regulo. Even if Regulo was indeed Paterno, such Spanish point of view would not be a surprise given his reputation of being a turncoat. The disinterested Austro-Hungarian view can be partially found in the writings of Blumentritt and fully found in the extracts from von Jedina’s. The reformist and assimilationist Filipino view can be found partially in the writings of Moret and Blumentritt and are fully found in the writings of del Pilar and Ponce.

The image of Japan from the perspective of the threatened Spanish Empire was characterized by the following: the fear that as Japan became the most powerful nation in the Asian Region, it would drive away all the Western powers and occupy the Philippines; Spain had regrets for failing to cultivate a more cordial relationship with Japan at the time when it was still a fledgling country; Spain proposed to make friendly representations with Japan no matter how belated this would be; and a beneficial economic interaction was established. The image of Japan from the perspective of the disinterested Austro-Hungarian Empire was characterized by admiration for the Japanese culture, values and character, as well as by astonishment on the speed of the country’s modernization.

The image of Japan from the perspective of the reformist and assimilationist

Filipino intellectuals actually built on the threatened and paranoid Spanish image as well as the admiring Austro-Hungarian image. Based on the Spanish fear and the Austro-Hungarian tales of power, the Filipino intellectuals behind *La Solidaridad* made Japan a leverage. These Filipino intellectuals subtly presented their case that if Spain would not initiate reforms in the colony, the Filipinos might get more and more attracted to the dazzling Japanese developments and system. Based on the Austro-Hungarian tales of Japanese modernization, these Filipino intellectuals also represented Japan as a model for development from backward feudalism to modern industrialization and capitalism. Based on the Austro-Hungarian tales of the virtuous Japanese character, these Filipino intellectuals also represented Japan as a counter-proof against the still predominant Euro-centric bias that only Westerners were capable of attaining greatness. Based on the same Austro-Hungarian tales, these Filipino intellectuals used such image of Japan to instill among their fellow Filipinos the sense of pride of being Asians. Based on the belated Spanish desire to establish economic relations with Japan, these Filipino intellectuals also saw Japan as an opportunity for improving the rather neglected Philippine economy. Lastly, based on the Spanish fear of a Japanese take-over of the Philippines, these Filipino intellectuals banked on the remote hope that if such scenario would indeed happen, Japan would grant to the Philippines the independence that it guaranteed to Korea even at the expense of going into the First Sino-Japanese War.

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Legal Challenges in Securing Land Tenure and Property Rights in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Philippines

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The Municipality of Lake Sebu in South Cotabato was named after the largest lake in the area, which serves as the major source of livelihood of the local people. It was covered by the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act as well as the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act. Prior and subsequent to its declaration as protected area and ancestral domain, land acquisitions by non-tribe members were also prevalent. This paper describes the context and challenges in securing land tenure and property rights in Sitios Lamsufo and Isla Grande in Barangay Poblacion, Lake Sebu. Data were collected through survey, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Results show that migrant respondents possessed a land title while indigenous people (IP) respondents only had a tax declaration. However, regardless of the tenurial instrument they possessed, their withdrawal and control rights over resources were limited. IP respondents also showed lack of awareness of the tenurial instruments issued to them such as the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) and Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT). Compared to the IPs, migrant respondents benefitted more from the Lake Sebu through aquaculture production, which, however, contributed to the degradation of the Lake. There was also an overlapping area of management responsibilities between the local government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The paper recognizes advances at the policy level to address the contentious issues in protected area management. It also proposes local initiatives such as enhancing information campaigns, establishing equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms, formalizing collective actions, and resolving management issues in response to the emerging concerns in the area.

Keywords: ancestral domain, aquaculture, indigenous peoples, lake degradation, land tenure, property rights, protected areas

INTRODUCTION

The complexity of the land tenure system in Philippine protected areas (PAs) lies in the multiple territorial claims and overlapping policies. These are rooted in the two major doctrines that serve as the foundations of the various statutory rules in the country. The Regalian Doctrine, which has been entrenched in the previous and current Philippine Constitutions, asserts that the state has the sovereign power over public lands. PAs are classified as public lands, and thus the state assumes ownership and control. Meanwhile, the Prior Rights Doctrine applies the “first in time, first in right” principle, which supports local people’s claims over their lands and the natural resources therein. Before declared as PAs, most of these areas were occupied by the indigenous peoples (IPs) and their ancestors for centuries. In this paper, IPs refer to the indigenous cultural communities/indigenous peoples as defined by the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997.

The customary rights of IPs over their lands are recognized in the NIPAS Act of 1992 or Republic Act (RA) 7586. It was the first national legislation to accord recognition of IPs’ rights to utilize the resources within their ancestral lands. It introduced the PA framework in biodiversity conservation while enshrining people’s participation and traditional rights of IPs as principal management objectives (Capistrano, 2010).

This Act paved the way for the issuance of various instruments to the local communities. These include the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC), Certificate of Ancestral Land Claim (CALC), and Protected Area Community-Based Resource Management Agreement (PACBRMA) issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The issuances of these instruments show that environmental policies have shifted towards greater recognition of local people’s rights.

However, in government-controlled PAs, the IPs’ rights over their ancestral lands and resources remain to be a major issue. IPs are characterized by their distinct ways of life. Their relationships to the land and natural resources are embedded in their culture, beliefs, and livelihood. The tenurial instruments awarded to IPs such as CADC, CALC, or PACBRMA only grant usufruct rights over resources but not security of tenure since land ownership still belongs to the government. These instruments are not land titles that are considered as the strongest form of tenure security (De-Soto, 2000; Reerink & van Gelder, 2010, as cited in Usamah, Mitchell, & Handmer, 2012). Under the principle of

native titling, IPs do not need a document to ensure ownership. However, in the current legal system, the absence of a title to support land claims means insecurity of tenure and limited property rights.

Property rights, as defined by Schlager and Ostrom (1992) are composed of bundle of rights, which include the rights of access (i.e. the right to enter a defined physical area), withdrawal (the right to obtain a products of a resource), management (i.e. the right to regulate internal use patterns and transform the resource by making improvements), exclusion (i.e. the right to determine who will have an access right and how that right may be transferred), and alienation (i.e. the right to sell or lease either or both of the above collective-choice rights). Meinzen-Dick (2006, as cited in Pulhin, Dizon Cruz, & Dahal, 2008) further regrouped this bundle of rights into use (i.e. access and withdrawal rights), control or decision-making (i.e. management and exclusion rights) and alienation. According to Barry and Meinzen-Dick (2013), holding the complete bundle of rights over a particular resource is often thought of as ownership.

The IPs' rights to own their ancestral lands and domains were first recognized in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 or RA 8371. IPRA serves as the legal foundation for the recognition, protection, and promotion of IPs' rights. Under the law, "ancestral lands" refer to the areas occupied by individuals, families, and clans who belong to an IP, while "ancestral domains" refer to the areas generally belonging to an IP, including ancestral lands, inland waters, coastal areas, and the natural resources therein. Both ancestral lands and domains are required to have been occupied, possessed, and utilized by IPs or their ancestors since time immemorial, continuously to the present. A Certificate of Ancestral Land Title (CALT) and a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) are given to qualified IPs to guarantee their ownership of their ancestral lands or ancestral domains, as appropriate.

RA 8371 also recognizes other rights that come along with ownership rights. These include, among others, the right to harvest, extract, develop, or exploit resources as well as develop, control, and use lands and territories traditionally occupied. The IPs also have the responsibility of maintaining ecological balance, restoring denuded areas, and observing laws. The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) was created under the Office of the President to serve as the primary agency to formulate and implement policies, plans, and programs in accordance with the IPRA.

Although the rights of the IPs had already been recognized in the IPRA, their struggle for land tenure security continued because of the inherent complexity of the tenure system in PAs. In the Municipality of Lake Sebu in the Province of South Cotabato, Philippines, the T'boli and Ubo IPs comprised the majority of the population. They were regarded as the original settlers of the area. It was only in the 1960s when the T'boli and Ubo IPs started to share their territories with the migrants. For some IPs, it was the start of their land deprivation. Some of them lost control over their ancestral lands to migrants for cash or goods. Their historical rights over their ancestral lands were also threatened when migrants applied for land titles within the area.

However, both the IPs and migrant settlers faced the challenge of securing their rights when the Municipality was declared part of the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve under Presidential Proclamation (PP) No. 2455 on September 24, 1985. Lake Sebu is situated at the upper catchment of the Allah River, and it supplies irrigation water to the lowland farms of South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat. It is also characterized by its rich biological diversity, covering wetlands, falls, springs, rivers and creeks, as well as vast forests that serve as habitats of endangered species. The declaration of Lake Sebu as a PA came subsequent to its creation as a Municipality on November 11, 1982.

In 2004, the T'bolis and Ubos were awarded by the DENR with CADCs, specifically R11-CADC-003 and R11-CADC-004, respectively. The CADCs covered 18 of the 19 barangays in Lake Sebu. These CADCs were converted into CADT in 2010. The NCIP issued the CADT R12-LAK-0110-155 to the T'bolis and Ubos under the IPRA. However, the existing private properties within the covered ancestral domain caused the delay of the awarding of the said titles to the IPs. These private properties, which were acquired legally prior to the approval of the IPRA, were also recognized and will be excluded from the CADT.

With the overlapping systems of land tenure and management regime in Lake Sebu, this paper aimed to describe the legal challenges of securing land tenure and property rights of the local people. Specifically, it aimed to 1) describe the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the local people; 2) determine the tenurial status and bundle of rights of the local people; and 3) explain how the statutory policies affect the land tenure condition and people's property rights.

Unresolved land tenure issues in PAs affect the effectiveness of their

management as these add to the social and political complexity in these areas (Gonzalez & Martin, 2007). Land tenure does not only affect the social and political aspects, but also the technical, legal and economic structures at both the local and national levels. This makes land tenure a critical element for economic production, which is the foundation of social relations and cultural values, and the source of prestige and sometimes power (FAO, 2002 as cited in Gonzalez & Martin, 2007). Hence, it is important to have a better understanding of the emerging conditions of land tenure in PAs to develop policies and programs that will not only take into account biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management but will also safeguard the security of tenure and property rights of the local communities. Many land tenure studies have already been conducted, but each context is different and thus, warrants special analysis. This paper aimed to provide a clearer picture of the current tenure situation in Lake Sebu that can be beneficial in the current harmonization of national policies, as well as in the formulation or improvement of local policies and programs to balance the interests and concerns of both the government and local communities.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Sitios Isla Grande and Lamsufo of Barangay Poblacion, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. These communities did not represent random samples but were purposively selected because they were among the communities directly involved in the utilization of the lake, also known as Lake Sebu, a major resource in the Municipality.

A combination of qualitative and quantitative social research techniques was employed in 2012 for this study. The rapid tenure assessment (RaTA), a methodological framework introduced by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in Indonesia was conducted to have a better understanding of the current tenurial conditions and the governing policies in Lake Sebu. Specifically, the study employed the following RaTA steps: locating and mapping potential sites, identifying competing claims, and stakeholder, and conducting policy analyses (Galudra et al., 2010). Data were gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs) with local leaders and key informant (KI) interviews. A household survey was also conducted with 32 households (i.e. 82% of the population in the two communities) to be able to describe the socio-demographic and economic characteristics, tenurial status, and property rights of community members.

Secondary data were also reviewed including national and local policies, municipal and barangay development plans, and land use maps among others. In May 2014, a research feedback cum workshop was conducted to validate the results of the study from which valuable pieces of information were also obtained and discussed in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic and Economic Characteristics

Majority of the respondents from Lamsufo were male and household heads while most of the respondents from Isla Grande were female. Male household heads in Isla Grande were not present during the conduct of the survey because they were involved in livelihood activities in other communities. In terms of ethnicity, Lamsufo respondents were mostly migrant settlers while almost all Isla Grande respondents were members of the T'boli tribe. Most of the respondents from both study sites were married and young adults. Majority of them had secondary education; their families had an average of five members; and they lived in extended households (Table 1).

More than half of the respondents from Lamsufo had semi-permanent houses while majority of those from Isla Grande lived in temporary dwellings. All respondents from Lamsufo had access to electricity while all Isla Grande respondents used kerosene or gas lamps for lighting because of lack of access to electricity. Most of the respondents from both study sites used wood and charcoal for cooking. Majority of Lamsufo respondents reported that their water supply came from a hand pump/tube well while Isla Grande respondents cited a spring as their source. For the major sources of income of household heads, on-farm activities such as gillnet fishing and aquaculture were cited by respondents from both sites. The spouses of household heads earned mostly from non-farm sources such as sari-sari store, employment, and beads-making. The combined monthly income of household heads and spouses ranged from PhP5,001 to PhP10,000 in Lamsufo, and less than PhP5,000 in Isla Grande. A few respondents from Lamsufo reported a monthly income of above PhP25,000 (Table 2).

Tilapia culture was the dominant livelihood activity of the people in Lake Sebu. It was introduced in the early '70s by Dr. Jose Velasquez. He initiated a fish pen project that was eventually adopted by the migrant settlers (Dongon, 1994 as cited in Beniga, 2001). While the migrants continued to practice aquaculture

production, most of the IPs had limited financial resources to establish large fish farms to earn higher income. As reported by the Municipal Agriculture Office, most fish cage owners at the time of the study were migrant settlers. Indeed, results of the study show that most of the migrant respondents were engaged in aquaculture production while most IP respondents conducted gillnet fishing to earn their daily income. In the customary practice of IPs, gathering of fingerlings was prohibited. Only hook-and-line and homemade fish nets were allowed in fishing. Over the years, the IPs had also adopted aquaculture production but due to limited resources; they operated smaller fish pens than those owned by the migrants.

With the proliferation of fish cages in Lake Sebu, fish kills also became frequent and caused the depletion and scarcity of indigenous as well as introduced species of fish. Dwindling fish stock outside the cages was also observed and attributed to smaller fish catch and thus the meager income for the IPs who were into gillnet fishing. Similar impacts had been observed in the status of livelihood of local fishermen in Taal Lake in Batangas, where the multiplication of fish cages in the lake reduced the income of small fisherfolks due to declining fish catches (Mercene-Mutia, 2001).

During the research feedback and management workshop, it was mentioned that the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture (BFAR-DA) provided fingerlings to address the dwindling fish catch outside the cages. In 2000 and early 2014, the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist also spearheaded the demolition of illegal cages and massive clean-up operation in Lake Sebu. Local policies on fisheries are currently being reviewed to come up with new or revised policies and programs to help address the situation.

In other PAs, one of the strategies commonly employed for biodiversity conservation was the formation of resource protection volunteer groups such as those in Mount Kitanglad Range Natural Park in Bukidnon, Mount Kanlaon Natural Park in Negros, Apo Reef Natural Park in Occidental Mindoro, Subic-Bataan Natural Park in Zambales, and Batanes Protected Landscapes and Seascapes (Senga, 2001). In Lake Sebu, a group of volunteers called Bantay Lawa was also organized in 1994. During the conduct of the study, there were 29 members, but only five were active, according to the Lake Warden.

Tenurial Status and Property Rights of the Respondents

Almost all respondents from Isla Grande said that they did not possess

a land title, while majority of those in Lamsufo said they did (Table 3). As earlier mentioned, the DENR and NCIP issued the CADCs and CADT to the IPs in Lake Sebu, respectively. However, survey results showed that IPs, who composed majority of the Isla Grande respondents, were not aware of such instruments. The only proof of possession and reason for occupying their respective areas, which they considered a legal document, was their tax declaration. It was issued by the municipal LGU every three years to determine the land value. It was not tantamount to a land title in legal terms, although it can be a basis in obtaining a private land title. It is a powerful claim of possession but not a form of ownership. According to Bromley (2008), titles are symbols of ownership and the mere possession or regular use of an asset is not an assurance of ownership.

Nevertheless, most of the respondents from both study sites reported that they possessed withdrawal and control rights over resources, regardless of their tenurial instrument (Table 3). However, some of the respondents shared that the government prohibited them from cutting down the trees. Indeed, the government controlled the use of resources in Lake Sebu, particularly forest resources, since it had been declared as PA.

Majority of the Lamsufo respondents claimed possession of the right of alienation (Table 3). On the other hand, almost all Isla Grande respondents believed that they did not have such right. This was not surprising since majority of Lamsufo respondents were title holders while Isla Grande respondents were not. Respondents who signified possession of alienation right were further asked if they exercised such right and majority of them said no. Those who declared otherwise said that they granted family members permission to occupy or use a portion of their properties for fishing, but they did not ask for remuneration nor issued a written document for such arrangement. Schlager and Ostrom (1992) defined alienation right as the right to sell or lease the management or/and exclusion rights. With this definition, the transaction mentioned by the respondents did not illustrate the exercise of alienation right.

Statutory Policies Affecting Land Tenure and Property Rights

The IPRA imposes the recognition, protection, and promotion of the IPs' rights. Among these is the right to utilize or extract resources within IPs' ancestral lands and domains, including timber and non-timber products. However, survey respondents reported that they were not allowed by the government to

utilize wood trees and bamboos for commercial purposes. Hence, some of the community members conducted non-farm activities to augment the meager income they earned from gillnet fishing because they could not utilize the other resources in their community. Even within CADT areas, the DENR retained its mandated tasks in the conservation, management, development, and proper use of resources. Similar conditions had been reported in Pastolan, Batangas. The Aetas were issued their CADT in 2004 but were still pressing for livelihood opportunities and access within the built-up area included in their CADT (Caballero, 2004 as cited in Walpole & Annawi, 2011).

While the IPRA provides the right to withdraw resources, the NIPAS Act prioritizes conservation and sustainable use of resources. It had been feared that it would cause difficulties for the IPs to secure their ownership and control over their territories and to access livelihood resources and cultural areas within PAs (Walpole & Annawi, 2011). According to Brandon (1996 as cited in González & Martin, 2007), a complete convergence of interests of the IPs and conservation practitioners may not be possible since the former's end goal was not always biodiversity conservation but respect for ancestral territory and practices. However, Brandon noted that IPs can be great allies, and establishing alliances for biodiversity conservation is fundamental in PAs. Improvement of local people's access to resources, particularly non-timber forest products, for their livelihoods called for the simplification and streamlining of the permit system (Aguilar, 2008 & Aresna, 2007 as cited Walpole & Annawi, 2011).

An important livelihood resource in the study site is Lake Sebu, the largest of the three lakes in the Municipality. As earlier mentioned, Lake Sebu is used for aquaculture production by the local people. A municipal ordinance on the proper use of lake was issued and user fees were included in the Municipal Revenue Code.

The primary responsibilities of protecting and managing fisheries and coastal resources are devolved to the local government units (LGUs) based on the Fisheries Code (La Viña, Kho, Caleda, 2010). The Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 also states that the municipal LGU should manage the municipal waters within a distance from the coast of 15-km seaward, and enact and enforce appropriate fishery ordinances (Capistrano, 2010). However, the Municipality of Lake Sebu is also covered by the NIPAS Act that empowers the DENR Secretary to prescribe and collect fees from any person or entity, including government agencies for any benefit derived from the use of PAs. The NIPAS Act mandates the creation of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), which is, among

its various functions, responsible for the management and administration of PAs.

Under the Fisheries Code and LGC, the power and jurisdiction of LGUs cover all waters within a municipality that are not declared as part of the PA. Otherwise, exclusive jurisdiction and management responsibility is transferred to the PAMB. It must be noted, however, that the LGUs have a generally better record in terms of managing and protecting marine resources since management decisions and funding are decided on locally and quickly (La Viña et al., 2010). A sample case is the Apo Island Protected Landscape and Seascape in the Municipality of Dauin, Negros Oriental. Apo Island has been protected by a municipal ordinance since 1986 (DENR-PAWB and GIZ, 2011) when Apo Island Marine Sanctuary/Reserve was created. The formation of the sanctuary was facilitated by Silliman University (White, 1996 as cited in White, Salamanca, & Courtney, 2002). The Municipality of Dauin, according to La Viña et al. (2010), led an effective program of conservation, enforcement and control of user fees. In 1994, however, the protection of the Apo Island was covered under the NIPAS Act when it was declared as Apo Island Protected Landscape and Seascape under Proclamation No. 438. Thus, all revenues generated from its management and operations accrue to the Integrated Protected Area Fund (IPAF). The IPAF can be utilized for operational expenses or channelled back to the community through development projects (DENR-PAWB and GIZ, 2011). However, the lengthy bureaucratic process for the release of the IPAF has stopped certain services (e.g. monthly health care clinic) (Raymundo, 2002) and hampered conservation efforts in Apo Island (La Viña et al., 2010). Hence, the municipal government has been lobbying for the rescindment of the Island's NIPAS classification (Alanano, 2012).

During the research feedback and management workshop, it was pointed out that the Municipal Government had no authority to collect rental fees from the fish cage operators since the Lake Sebu is part of the Allah Valley Watershed Forest Reserve. The DENR, through the PAMB, is the government agency vested with control and administration rights. In order to formalize the local policies implemented by the LGU of Lake Sebu, a co-management agreement between the LGU and the PAMB was suggested.

This was not similar to the case of the Calamian Tagbanua, an IP group in Coron Island in Palawan who was also accorded with a CADC and then a CADT. The IPs themselves, not the LGU, control the collection of user fees and the number of tourists who enter the various lakes and beaches within

their ancestral domain (Capistrano, 2010). The Tagbanua ancestral waters were included in the CADC issued to the IPs in 1998 (converted to a CADT in 2004), which set the precedent for the inclusion of ancestral waters in the definition of ancestral domain (Philippine Association for Intercultural Development, 2000 as cited in Walpole & Annawi, 2011).

As regards ownership and alienation rights, IPRA recognized that ancestral lands and domains belong to generations and these could not be sold, disposed, or destroyed. Non-IPs were prohibited from acquiring lands within the ancestral domain, but existing migrant settlers or non-IPs who occupied an area within the domain prior to the effectivity of the Law were also recognized and respected. Hence, lands that were legally acquired by migrant settlers in Lake Sebu before the enactment of the IPRA were recognized and were excluded from the CADT that was issued by the NCIP to the T'boli and Ubo tribes.

Land ownership under the customary law of the IPs in Lake Sebu covered open and cleared areas and forestlands. Ownership also covers natural resources such as waterfalls, springs and minerals that can be found within their territories. The IPs were only entitled to transfer their property rights to other members of their tribe through succession or inheritance. These customary beliefs and practices in land ownership were recognized in the IPRA. The Law defines ownership as private but communal and could not be disposed or sold to non-tribe members. Ownership, expressed in the form of CALT or CADT, covered ancestral lands or domains and the natural resources therein.

At present, one of the most pressing issues in Lake Sebu is the rampant selling of ancestral lands to non-tribe members, according to the Municipal Tribal Council. As a result, there have been cases of multiple land claims and alleged illegal acquisition of lands in Lamsufo and Isla Grande. Massive land selling have been observed in Barangays Tasiman, Lake Lahit, Maculan, Lamcade, Halilan and Lamfugon. Educated tribal members, government officials and tribal leaders are allegedly involved, taking advantage of some IPs who are illiterate and have limited awareness and understanding of the IPRA. Under the Law, however, land selling transactions made after the passage of the IPRA are null and void. Selling is simply the rights to use the land for a specific time not for necessarily ownership. Aside from being covered by the IPRA, the lands in Lake Sebu are largely forest lands and are thus non-alienable and disposable. Hence, land selling is covertly a private transaction which is neither registered nor known to land authorities.

Selling of ancestral lands is a common problem in the country. This has been influenced by the modern lifestyle introduced to the IPs as seen in the case of Higaonons in Bukidnon and Manobo in Agusan del Sur. When Kulafu (a kind of wine) and canned sardines were introduced to the Higaonons, some of them exchanged or sold portions of their land for these commodities until all that was left to them were the hilly and sloping areas (Pantaon, 2008). Likewise, when electricity was introduced in Balit, Agusan del Sur, some Manobos had to sell their lands to buy karaoke and billiard tables (“Environmental Science,” 2007 as cited in Walpole & Annawi, 2011). Meanwhile, Manobo tribes in the Cotabato Province disposed of their lands due to low production yield, high production cost, and scarcity of resources to finance the production (Alano, 2008).

Moreover, illegal selling of ancestral lands was also reported in Baguio City. The NCIP Regional Office issued a directive to field offices to discourage and disallow this practice or the processing of titled ancestral lands to non-members of IPs. The Register of Deeds was also advised not to allow or annotate any transactions on CADT without NCIP’s clearance (Agreda, 2013). Further, due to the conversion of ancestral lands in Barangay Irisan, Baguio City into residential uses and the ancestral land sale to non-tribe members, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board passed the Board Resolution No. 885 Series of 2012, declaring a moratorium on the issuance of development permits or licenses to sell for purposes related to development projects within ancestral lands and/or domains.

Under the Law, IPs have the right to transfer their land and property rights to members of the same tribe. Section 8(b) of the IPRA also states that “in cases where it is shown that the transfer of land/property rights by virtue of any agreement or devise, to a nonmember of the concerned ICCs/IPs is tainted by the vitiated consent of the ICCs/IPs, or is transferred for an unconscionable consideration or price, the transferor ICC/IP shall have the right to redeem the same within a period not exceeding 15 years from the date of transfer.” According to NCIP Cordillera, this provision implies that if the retail price was proper and there was no reason to redeem the sale of ancestral lands, then the sale to a third party other than the tribe members was allowed by RA 8371 (Cabreza, 2012).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper discusses the context and challenges of land tenure and property rights in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. The existence of IPs since time

immemorial, the creation of Lake Sebu as a municipality prior to its declaration as a protected area and the widespread ancestral land selling to non-IPs, even if the land was protected by the NIPAS Act and the IPRA, all summarize the complexity of land tenure system in the area. The state of the current tenure system in the community sets the stage for both challenges and opportunities for various stakeholders, particularly the government and local communities, to secure territorial rights of the people while at same time achieving the desired conservation goals of the government.

In the use of the major resource in the community, which is the body of water called Lake Sebu, it appears that migrant settlers benefitted more from the resource since majority of the fish cage operators were migrants. Hence, the paper suggests establishing equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms to ensure that both migrants and the IPs will benefit from the resource.

The proliferation of aquaculture setups was also attributed to the degradation of the Lake, extinction of indigenous fish species, and frequent fish kills that led to scarcity and depletion of indigenous and introduced species. It is good to note that the current local policies on lake utilization and management are under review. The paper also suggests formalizing collective actions by establishing an organization of resource users that will work alongside the government, non-government organizations, research institutions and other concerned stakeholders in rehabilitating and protecting Lake Sebu from further destruction.

Moreover, the proposed co-management agreement between the PAMB and LGU will formalize the current policies of the local government. It may also lead to better regulatory mechanisms and effective management if genuine participation of various stakeholders will be obtained. Common objectives framed within environmental policies and customary practices of the people should be established in the agreement. The rights, roles, and responsibilities of the various stakeholders should also be clearly defined.

The agreement will also address the conflicting provisions in the LGC and NIPAS Act in terms of resource management and administration of Lake Sebu. The question of whether the LGU or the PAMB has the legal right to control the use of the resource is not the only topic of debate. Although this was not raised during the FGDs, KI interviews, and surveys since the CADT issued to them also covered inland ancestral lands and water, the question on the role of the IPs in lake management also needs concrete answers. The issuance of a joint memorandum between PAMB, NCIP, and LGU to address this issue should be considered.

Further, the IPs' lack of awareness of the tenurial instruments provided to them by the government apparently makes them vulnerable to manipulations and external threats of encroachment. Even with the declaration of the Municipality as PA and ancestral domain of the T'boli and Ubo IPs, titling and land-selling were pervasive. The IPs' awareness of their property rights is necessary to strengthen their capacities to defend their rights and protect their lands from encroachment. The issuance of CADCs and CADT should be accompanied by information campaigns to provide greater understanding of the rights provided by these instruments. The security of tenure of the IPs is also threatened by the delay in the awarding of the CADT because of the existing private properties that will be excluded from the title. Thus, the paper suggests the expedition of the land survey so that the CADT will be awarded to the IPs soon.

Despite recent gains in the recognition of people's rights to occupy and utilize the natural resources in PAs like Lake Sebu, local people still do not have complete withdrawal and control rights over resources regardless of the tenurial instrument they possess. Even with the passage of the IPRA, this remains to be a challenge.

Nevertheless, the issuance of the Joint DENR-DAR-NCIP-LRA Administrative Order No. 01-12 shows advances in the efforts of the government to harmonize the overlapping statutes. This administrative order clarifies, restates, and interfaces the different jurisdictions, policies, programs and projects of the four agencies to address not only the jurisdictional but also the operational issues and conflicting claims between/among these agencies. While the multiple and conflicting claims are addressed at the national and policy levels, the proposed activities in this paper can be done at the local level. These initiatives need political commitment of the regional, provincial, and local governments as well as support from non-government and people's organizations, research institutions, and the academe. Overall, with its mandate, the NCIP should lead the resolution of these conflicts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The study will not be possible without the support and contributions of various institutions and individuals to which the authors express their sincerest gratitude: World Agroforestry Center for the financial support through its Research Fellowship program and for being part of the study on "Property

Rights, Power Relations and Benefit Sharing in Common Lands in Asia and Africa;” DENR-Region XII, particularly the Protected Area Management Board and the Local Government of Lake Sebu for allowing the conduct of this study; the survey respondents and the participants of the focus group discussions and research feedback cum workshop for sharing their living conditions, worries, and perceptions; the representatives of various local government units, government agencies, non-government organizations and private companies for accommodating the request for interviews and relevant data; Mr. Reynaldo Legaste for coordinating the fieldworks and the researchers’ accommodation in Lake Sebu; and many other individuals who provided assistance, encouragement, and other forms of support during data gathering and report writing.

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Table 1. Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Particulars	LAMSUFO		Isla Grande	
	No.	%	No.	%
Sex				
Male	13	72.2	6	42.8
Female	5	27.8	8	57.1
Total	18	100	14	100
Age (years)				
Young adult (20-39)	8	44.4	10	71.4
Adult (40-59)	7	38.9	3	21.4
Old age (60-above)	3	16.7	1	7.1
Total	18	100	14	100
Mean	44.94		36.36	
Civil Status				
Single	1	5.6	0	0.0
Married	14	77.8	12	85.7
Widow/er	2	11.1	2	14.3
Separated	1	5.6	0	0.0
Total	18	100	14	100
Ethnicity				
T'boli	2	11.1	12	85.7
Ilonggo	13	72.2	1	7.1
Cebuano	2	11.1	1	7.1
Mixed (Ilonggo & Cebuano)	1	5.6	0	0.0
Total	18	100	14	100
Educational Attainment				
No Formal Schooling	0	0.0	2	14.3
Elementary Level	1	5.6	2	14.3
Elementary Graduate	0	0.0	1	7.1
High School Level	1	5.6	5	35.7
High School Graduate	11	61.1	3	21.4
Vocational	1	5.6	0	0.0
College Level	2	11.2	0	0.0
College Graduate	2	11.2	1	7.1
Total	18	100	14	100
Household Structure				
Single	1	5.6	0	0.00
Nuclear	6	33.3	5	35.7

Extended	11	61.1	9	64.3
Total	18	100.0	14	100.0
Household Size				
1-5 members	13	72.2	11	78.6
6-10 members	4	22.2	3	21.4
11-15 members	1	5.6	0	0.0
Total	18	100.0	14	100.0
Mean	4.94		4.78	

Table 2. Respondents' Economic Characteristics

Particulars	LAMSUFO		Isla Grande	
	No.	%	No.	%
Type of house				
Permanent	5	27.7	0	0.0
Semi-permanent	10	55.6	4	28.6
Temporary	3	16.7	10	71.4
Total	18	100	14	100
Source of light				
Electricity	18	100.0	0	0.0
Kerosene	0	0.0	14	100.0
Total	18	100	14	100
Fuel source for cooking*				
Electricity	0	0.0	0	0.0
Wood	10	43.5	14	87.5
LPG	5	21.7	0	0.0
Charcoal	8	34.8	2	12.5
Total	23	100	16	100
Source of potable water*				
Water system	1	5.3	0	0.0
Hand pump/tube well	16	84.2	5	35.7
Spring	1	5.3	9	64.3
Water tank	1	5.3	0	0.0
Total	19	100	14	100
Source of domestic water*				
Water system	1	5.3	0	0.0
Hand pump/tube well	16	84.2	5	35.7
Spring	1	5.3	9	64.3

Water tank	1	5.3	0	0.0
Total	19	100	14	100
Household heads' source/s of income				
On-farm	16	84.2	11	78.6
Off-farm	1	5.3	1	7.1
None-farm	2	11.5	2	14.3
Total	19	100	14	100
Spouses' source/s of income				
On-farm	0	0.0	0	0.0
Off-farm	0	0.0	0	0.0
None-farm	4	100.0	3	100.0
Total	4	100	3	100
Monthly household income				
Above 25,000	4	22.2	0	0.0
20,001 – 25,000	1	5.6	0	0.0
15,001-20,000	1	5.6	0	0.0
10,001-15,000	1	5.6	0	0.0
5,001 – 10,000	7	38.9	3	21.4
Less 5,000	4	22.2	11	78.6
Total	18	100	14	100
Average monthly household income				
On-farm	10,582.00	31.9	3,127.00	40.9
Off-farm	5,600.00	16.9	3,000.00	39.2
None-farm	16,957.00	51.2	1,524.00	19.9
Total	33,139.00	100	7,651.00	100

* Multiple answers

Table 3. Tenurial status and property rights of the respondents

Tenurial Status/Property Rights	LAMSUFO		Isla Grande	
	No.	%	No.	%
Tenurial status				
Private land owner	13	72.2	0	0.0
CLOA beneficiary	0	0.0	0	0.0
Tenant	0	0.0	2	14.3
Non-title holder	5	27.8	12	85.7
Total	18	100	14	100

Withdrawal right				
Yes	18	100	13	92.9
No	0	0.0	1	7.1
Total	18	100	14	100
Control rights (management & exclusion rights)				
Yes	16	88.9	13	92.9
No	2	11.1	1	7.1
Total	18	100	14	100
Alienation right				
Yes	17	94.4	1	7.1
No	1	5.6	13	92.9
Total	18	100	14	100

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In Search of Lessons: What Students Look for in Stories

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This paper explored students' search for lessons in stories. Using the generic label for narratives that students encounter, the inquiry focused on the question, what do you look for in stories? A total of one hundred forty-eight students from six sections responded. Coming from two World Literature and four Philippine Literature classes of undergraduate courses (out of the 10 first semester course offerings on introductory literature), these students were mostly in their sophomore year in college; their ages ranged from 17- 22, with a few aging up to 28 years old. Their answers explicitly revealed that indeed students look for lessons. Even when some students look forward to aesthetic pleasure, they also look for lessons. Interestingly, lessons for the students mean something that has a positive impact. In addition, a considerable number manifested their intention to "apply" the lessons and insights they learned as "guide" to live their lives. The results strongly suggest that students' reading experience in stories may benefit from ethical inquiry as stories have powerful (ethical) invitations. To literature teachers, this study offers to (1) overcome the discomfort at dealing with lessons and to embrace the opportunity to help students develop an ethos that is in Wayne Booth's words, ethical at its center; and (2) to teach students to read both efferently and aesthetically as Rosenblatt suggests. While the result of our students' reading experiences may not be immediately detected, the aim is for teachers to constantly provide opportunities for instances of ethical engagement and confrontation.

Keywords: ethical criticism, efferent reading and aesthetic reading, lessons, invitations

INTRODUCTION

As literature teachers, we often shy away from discussing "lessons" in narratives. In like manner, we try to avoid teaching students to look for

lessons in stories hiding “lessons” in discussions of the political-economic—gender, class— and the psychological. At least most of the time, we make it a point not to voice the word lesson in our discussion. It is much safer this way, for to venture into moral lessons would invite a whole range of issues, not the least of which is censorship of works. This is a tricky place most teachers do not want to confront. Thus, looking for “moral lessons” sufficing in the elementary and high school English classes are now seen in the collegiate classroom as expressive of naïveté and uncritical thinking. Students who assess a literary work against questions of good and bad actions/worldviews are perceived as less astute than their counterparts who simply enjoy the text without hunting for its ethical value.

Moreover, most of the time we impose on our students what we think is good literature and how to enjoy it best. We do not need to ask them because in the words of a colleague, we know what is best for them. But what if our own students actually look for lessons in literature? If so, what are these lessons? Is looking for “lessons” in literature particularly in narratives a legitimate form of inquiry inside the collegiate literature classroom? As teachers, given our ambivalence and discomfort toward the word lessons, how can we address this desire for lessons in the classroom?

RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

We love to tell stories and we love to listen to them in equal measure. This is because “[t]elling and consuming stories is a fundamental human activity” (Gregory, 2005, p.38). Evolutionary psychologists argue that imagination is a fundamental trait in human beings. We have evolved to be capable of “fiction-making;” unlike animals whose thought processes work upon response to stimulation, we can make supposition, inferences, and mental experiments (Gregory, 2011). For neuroscientists, telling stories is the culmination of our ability to understand the because, the idea of causality. It is the product of our impulse to make sense of the world and the part we play in it. Also, we listen to them because we want to “confirm our belonging to a group and our commitment to the values of our society” or use them to question and defy such values (Rosenstand, 2005, p.157).

As stories are fundamental, ethics is also “primal, not discretionary.” There is a close connection between narratives and ethics. This is precisely the reason why when we assess literature we cannot avoid ethical questions.

“[E]thics lies at the center of and derives from the nature and requirements of sociability itself” (Gregory, 2011). “If ethical questions arise as a natural consequence of first-hand interactions and sociability, then they will also arise as we meet and interact with fictional characters” (Gregory, 2005, p.41).

John Gardner (2005) claims that “art is civilization’s single most significant device for learning what must be affirmed and what must be denied.” In this sense, art therefore must be thoughtfully crafted so that it becomes worthy of imitation, enlightening of some truths of the human condition, and encouraging of positive perception of life. Art becomes life affirming “when it has a clear positive moral effect.” Thus, for Gardner “true art” is by “its nature moral.” Moral art for Gardner is not didactic, for true art and didacticism are “immiscible.” It is the kind of art that “tests values and rouses trustworthy feelings about the better and worse in human action.”

Arguments against Ethical Criticism in Literature

Over the years, however, the word moral has achieved quite a notoriety equated to a set of thou- shall-not’s. Most often, we hear critics intoning what is a superior story over another or how a story must be taken off from the reading list because it encourages bad behavior in students. What we get then is a prescriptive reading list and a prescriptive reading of the texts. On the other end of the spectrum are critics who think that literature and lessons or morals are incompatible. By tradition, it was Plato who called for the banishment of poets from his Republic, claiming that poets are incapable of truth and thus are a bad influence to citizens.

Unlike Plato who saw ethical concerns in literature, others simply refuse to acknowledge ethics in literature. As Oscar Wilde has said, ‘there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all’ (as cited in Posner, 2005). Critics believe that to venture into ethical criticism means to destroy true art, the domain of the aesthetics, for true art ‘occupies a different moral space’—a place far superior than mundane every day cares and realities (Steiner, as cited in Booth, 2005a). Thus a work should not be immediately refused because it manifests morally objectionable views as the author and his work are different. Literature too has nothing to do with a person’s character. Ultimately, reading literature does not in any way produce better people. Thus, the true gauge for assessing a work is not the ethical but aesthetic (Posner, 2005).

Another concern that resulted in ethical criticism's almost demise is the notion that we can only gain knowledge from facts not from values. Since ethical criticism is most often relegated to the domain of values then ethical criticism can never be objective as values are subjective. The subjectivity may be based on personal preferences or cultural conventions. A given community may have a different set of values from another. Hence, a criticism of a literary work using ethical criticism may be valid in one community and found obnoxious in another. This idea of irreconcilability of values is perhaps the sturdiest hurdle of ethical criticism (Booth, 1988). This fact versus value controversy has prompted critics to abandon ethical criticism because from this standpoint all literary evaluation using ethical criticism is in Northrop Frye's words at best 'one more document in the history of taste' (as cited in Booth, 1988, p. 28).

As a result then of this verdict, there emerged a threat that critics fear—the threat of censorship. If and when ethical criticism is given space in literary theory like it had been before, others fear that there is no stopping everyone from deciding to ban works thought of as unfit because everyone can decide what is best reading, what is superior literature. A bigger threat is when the right to decide is given to those who are in power. When this happens, critics who are for “pure art,” fear that much will be lost from readers and literature alike. Therefore, the ethical must be confined to philosophy as the aesthetic is to literature and literary theory.

Arguments for Ethical Criticism

This ethical and aesthetic divide for Nussbaum (as cited in George 2005; 2003) is detrimental to both fields. For Nussbaum, philosophy can benefit from literature as literature presents the complexities of human life while literary theory can profit from the rigor of ethical inquiry. Much is at stake if literary theory continues to ignore ethical criticism; after all, literature matters to us because it arouses ethically and socially relevant questions. This admission that literature matters because of its inherent textual power is for some critics untenable. For these critics, it is untrue that a work has an autonomous power and value outside of the reader and a given community. Booth (1988), however, believes that while it is true that a text may appear to be inert until a reader comes along, the text too determines its value; it places value upon itself by choosing what to do. The reason why each literary work has a “distinctive

potential power” is that “it has been made intentionally (p. 92).” A work is laden with intentions from the act of telling the story and from the language itself. Also, language is literature’s vehicle and since language is most often loaded with ethical judgments, it will reflect views on “how to live and how not to live” (Booth, 2005a). There is never a neutral language or a neutral assertion.

This is why stories have a special agency of bringing across messages and ideas. Prose fiction’s relation to ethics is most evident in its characteristic of lending out “states of experience” for the reader to participate in (Newton, 1995, p.7). Since most fiction is a representation of life and life is fraught with ethical concerns, it follows then that literature reflects these concerns. Thus, rendering moral judgments in works and on their characters is simply inescapable. While we may be influenced by our environment, there is “a dimension of choice to all forms of human conduct” and “conduct is always subject to moral and ethical evaluation.” This holds true for literary characters as well (Gregory, 2005, p.40). Moreover, the text has the capacity to bring about “actualized intentions”— the inferences that readers make from the ethical choices presented in a work. This actualized intentions come from intents of the works itself. Thus, if the text has intentions, then the reader has the right to think about the [moral] choices inflicted by the text on him. The reader has the right to determine whether the choices presented in the text are good ones or bad and ultimately refuse the text’s impositions (Booth, 2005a).

Stories, after all according to Newton (1995), are a “participatory act” composed of the “Said” and the “Saying.” Following Genette’s triadic model, Newton considers the term narrative as composed of the story or the signified content, the narrative or the signifier or narrative text, and narrating or the narrative act. Newton is particularly interested in the narrating as he refers to it as the “saying.” In analyzing Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Newton sees the act of narrative as the domain that invites ethical performance and confrontation. The “saying” as opposed to the “said” or the [moral] proposition is a temporal situation that afford ethical encounter binding narrator and listener, author and character, or reader and text. They are provoked, called upon and asked to respond to the urgency of the narrative. For Newton, narrative is ethics. In this act, readers submit their very selves, feeling, and thoughts to the implied author, ‘thinking the thoughts of another as if they were their own. This invitation may be refused by the reader. Paradoxically, however, the reader has to be engaged on some level so he can refuse the implied author (Booth, 2005b). It is at this very moment that

the reader makes a “moral stance” which is developed through empathizing with the characters in literature. Such stance may be influenced by standards outside of the self, but it is always something personal developed out of feeling what the characters feel, thinking their thoughts, and deciding whether s/he, the reader, will accept or refuse the character’s supposition (Yehoshua, 2005).

This importance laid on the coming together of reader and text is similar to Rosenblatt’s (1988) transactional theory. Indeed, Rosenblatt’s transactional reading is an appropriate tool to evaluate stories’ ethical effects on the reading experience of students. She posited that in the two stances that one takes in reading— efferent stance (one wants to carry away something) and aesthetic (one is involved in the literary experience)—the reading of literature must fall in the middle of the continuum. Rosenblatt (1993) further stressed that these two stances, as both aspects of meaning, must be involved, for they are “always present in our transactions with the world.” In addition, reading becomes meaningful when we move back and forth from the efferent and aesthetic continuum Booth (1988) also believes that while it is worthwhile to read for lessons, readers must also enjoy the pleasures the text offers.

Furthermore, Booth (2005a) observes almost everyone (i.e. defenders and attackers of ethical criticism) grants literature its power to influence behavior in people. In Booth’s (1988) own study “The Company We Keep”, he asked respondents whether their ethical education was in a way shaped by the stories they have read. Most of the respondents agreed that when they were truly engaged in the act of reading, stories did influence their ethical stances. This influence is more potent when one is young. This is because “stories are our major moral teachers” (Booth, 2005a, p. 27). Also, there is no other form of art that invites so much cognitive and ethical participation from the readers. Gregory (2005) sees the ethical import of imaginative transpositions between readers and fictional characters. In stories, we can transcend life’s limitations of time and space. Stories provide us a rich and imaginative representation of the human life and we learn from them.

So what is ethics in stories? How must ethics mean? Newton (1995) describes ethics as the “radicality and uniqueness of the moral situation itself, a binding claim exercised upon the self by a concrete and singular other whose moral appeal precedes both decision and understanding.” Ethics for Newton is the narrative situation itself that imposes binds on the text and reader. For Booth (1998) ethics refers to the whole range of human characteristics and habits of behavior, virtue and vice. To pursue the ethical means to pursue

virtues, a kind of excellence that is praiseworthy and creates better selves.

Booth (2005a) admits that “ethical criticism” can never be simple. He further acknowledges that most often when we hear the words ‘ethical’ or ‘moral’, these are “reduced to the narrowest possible moral codes.” What is most important in ethical criticism is the “overall effect on the ethos, the character of the listener” (p.18). It is, in other words, the idea of the lived experience of the reader in the act of reading.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research on what students look for in stories. Although this project started out as a preliminary introduction to my course and students’ introduction of themselves without the added pressure of being subjected to their classmates’ judgments, it decisively took a different route. I wanted to know my students’ reading habits and preferences in the hopes of re-assessing my reading list particularly on fiction. Thus, I asked them to write about the following questions: what stories do you like to read and what do you look for in stories. I use the word stories to refer to the generic label for narratives that my students encounter (online stories, novels, non-fiction, even movies).

When I received their responses I found out that more than half of them mentioned the words “lesson,” “meaning,” “moral,” and “insight”. I wanted to find out if the same holds true to other students who are taking up general literature courses in other sections with others teachers.

I then collected data from other undergraduate introductory courses in literature. I focused on the second question: What do you look for in stories? There were six sections, a total of one hundred forty-eight students that responded to the study. Coming from six sections (two world literature courses, Literature 22; four Philippine literature courses, Literature 21) of undergraduate literature courses (out of the 11 first semester course offerings on introductory literature), these students were mostly in their sophomore year in college; their ages ranged from 17- 22, with a few aging up to 28 years old.

Working on their responses, firstly, I listed down the number of students who explicitly stated “lessons” in their answers in the first category (a). Then, I sorted other responses to the following categories based on their common answers: (b) insights, realizations, meaning, (c) themes, (d) happy endings, (e) inspiration and transformation (f) guidance and application to life, (g)

personal relevance, (h) aesthetic experience. A student may have mentioned discovery, insights, and guidance in the same response. For example, a student may have mentioned both insights and guidance in his responses. In this case, the responses, insight and guidance were listed under respective categories--one under the category realization, insight, meaning and another on guidance and application. Except for those listed in the first category (moral lessons), other respondents had more than one entry in the rest of the categories.

I excluded the titles of books mentioned as well as other unrelated responses. In addition, I did not look into respondents' cultural background, gender, age, and social class. While they may be significant data that reveal students' preferences, I believe that they can be aptly addressed in another study of their own.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 148 students, 47 (31%) explicitly mentioned that they looked for "lessons" or "moral lessons;" 30 responses were inclined to "realizations and reflections," "meaning," "discovery," "moral and spiritual insights," "deep insights about life," and "insights about the human experience;" others (4) looked for big themes and "strong messages" such as "love," "hope," "justice," "truth," and the "triumph of good vs. evil." There were 13 students who preferred "happy endings;" 16 rooted for stories that "inspire dreams," "motivate," "have a positive impact," "help [them] approach life in a positive way," and "change one's life," "views," "perspectives," and "perception on how important life is." Twenty four wanted to use and apply what they learned as "guide" and "answers" to "real life." Six wanted stories that they could personally relate to. Thirty-two students were concerned with stories that thrill, entertain, and "make [them] feel that they [were] inside" to "imagine as one of the characters," know "what it's like in the character's place," "compare [their] life to the character's," and "compare the character's experience to [their own] and see if [they're] doing it right."

(a) lessons/ moral lessons	(b) realizations, insights, meaning	(c) Themes	(d) happy endings	(e) inspiration and transformation	(f) guidance and application to life	(g) personal relevance	(h) aesthetic experience
47	30	4	13	16	24	6	32

Stories as sources of lessons

From given data, it is clear that students had pre-conceived notions of a preferable story as 31% of the 148 respondents explicitly stated they wanted stories with “moral lessons.” In less subtle terms, 30 responses mentioned realizations, insights, inspiration, transformation, and definition of what life is and how it is to live, while 16 wanted stories that inspire, motivate, and transform. Since students looked for lessons or insights in the stories that they wanted to read, let us first take a look at what these lessons were for them. From the responses of students, it can be said that they view “moral lessons” as possessing positive impact that motivate and inspire them to change their perception. The following are the words of these students:

“When I read stories, I look for its moral lesson and insights into the human experience.”

“I look forward [to] the moral lesson of a certain story, and how it will change my views in life.”

“I want a story to have content, a moral, that maybe I can apply in my daily life.”

“I look for stories that could also make me realize what life really is.”

“I usually look for stories that answer how a person lives a good life....”

“Of course I look for... stories that mainly make me happy, but it would be a better choice if that story gives you a moral lesson and teaches you to be a better person.”

While it may be difficult to point out what particular lessons these students needed, it is clear that the lessons here referred to something that would fall under the “range of virtue” that Booth refers to as admirable and praiseworthy. Also, it seems that lessons and insights, for these students approximately meant the same thing: something positive and potentially transforming. Both lessons and insights here then meant positive impact. For

example, four students preferred stories that had content. Particularly, they liked stories that were morally serious such as those that contained themes as “justice,” “love,” “truth,” “hope,” and the “triumph of good over evil.” These are themes that have, in the words of Matthew Arnold, “high seriousness.” It is the kind of lessons that students prefer to “use” in their lives for knowing how it is to live and to living life well. Ascribing unto stories a practical role, twenty-four (24) students showed what they did with lessons they gleaned from stories--their application to real life.

“In stories I’m looking for moral lessons that could preferably teach and guide ... [me] all throughout life’s journey.”

“As a reader, I want to gain more knowledge about life and hence by reading books I will be able to gain lessons that I can apply to my life. This will help me become a better person.”

The responses of these students yielded a vital admission that stories do not only influence readers in the act of reading but that they are potential sources for character-building as students turn to them for “lessons and insights.” And hence in this respect, ethical inquiry is indeed a legitimate form of criticism in the classroom. Even in the desire for aesthetic experience, one student said she compared her own experience to that of the character to see if she was doing it right. This surrender to the ethical effects of stories reminds literature teachers once again the Horatian platitude: that literature instructs and delights. This surrender too brings to the table once again the idea of creating better characters in students. While this thought may have been supplanted by postmodern ideas questioning ethical criticism’s legitimacy, it is important to note that in the contemporary ethical criticism, the focus is on invitations and the narrative situation that entails ethical confrontation, not on a rigid moral prescription (although it is undeniable that there are values that are universal-valuing life, showing compassion and love, aspiring justice for all).

Why do students turn to stories for lessons?

The answer lies in what Newton (1995), Gregory (2011), and Booth (2003) see in stories: “invitations” and “offerings.” Stories “create an immediacy and force, framing relations of provocation, call, and response that bind narrator

and listener, author and character or reader and text” (Newton, 1995, p.13). For students, these stories offered them these invitations to be part of an engagement. It is worth noting here that while 47 students explicitly stated that they looked for “moral lessons” or “lessons,” 30 suggested for insights and meanings (which achieved approximately the same meaning as lessons as they too were potentially transformative). While a large number of these students looked for the moral proposition or the said, some of these students (32) preferred the aesthetic experience, and 24 of the 32 students mentioned that they both looked for entertainment and lessons or insights.

“For me I read books not just to be entertained but also to have insights and learning that can be applied or related to real life situations.”

“I look for entertainment because I just want to entertain myself by reading. I also look for moral insights because it is a way for to reflect on my life.”

The lessons that the students looked for then (I would like to believe) was not “a set of meta-theoretical ideas or pre-existing norms” (Newton, 1995, p. 13) that they could carry away after every reading. Rather, it was the lived experience that was a result of the transaction of reader and text once the reader accepts the invitation. Literature and stories in particular extend to the reader the following: invitations to feelings, invitations to belief, and invitations to ethical judgments (Gregory, 2011). All the responses of the students manifest a willingness to accept such invitations. When students said they looked for stories that inspired and made them realize things, they were actually saying they were willing to accept the invitation to belief. When students looked for stories that showed them how to live, they were also in a way saying they were willing to accept the invitation to ethical judgment.

How do these students accept such invitations?

It is through what Gregory (2005) calls “imaginative transposing,” the “vicarious imagination.” As students engage in the act of transactional reading, in a give-and-take relationship with the text, they momentarily suspend their own consciousness and take that of another. In the words of these students, they looked for stories that “make [them] feel that they are inside,” a part of the

world of the story; they try to “imagine [one of] the characters,” to know “what it’s like in the character’s place,” “compare [their] life to the character’s,” and “compare the character’s experience to [their own] and see if [they’re] doing it right.” It is interesting to note as well that students who manifested desire for the vicarious experience also look for lessons:

“I look for lessons in non-fiction stories because I would like to gain wisdom through other people’s experiences. I believe that I may not be able to experience things first-hand but probably through other people, I will learn what they have also learned from their experiences.”

“...I look for morality [sic] because I think all books have [issues on] morality so after [I] read a book, I always try to compare to my life and main character’s life.”

When students imagine as one of the characters they actually imaginatively inhabit another’s consciousness, identifying with the character’s thoughts, emotions, and ideas. In this inhabiting, the readers again are invited to negotiate their feelings, beliefs, and judgments with those of the character. Certainly it is ultimately the reader’s choice to accept the invitation or decline it. If the reader sees the invitation as offering something of worth then he/she engages.

What then are the pedagogical implications of this study?

This study offers two things to teachers: to overcome discomfort at dealing with lessons and to embrace the opportunity to help students develop an ethos that is in Wayne Booth’s words, ethical at its center; and to teach students to read both efferently and aesthetically. Mark Bracher (2006) in his article Teaching for social justice: Reeducating the emotions through literary studies pointed out that “despite our commitment...to political and ethical ends, there is little evidence that literary study has made much difference in the injustice that permeates our world, and there is good reason to believe that literary study as it is currently pursued is incapable of doing so.” This is because as teachers “we have not figured out how to take sufficient advantage of the access we have: the opportunity to change the hearts and minds of our students.” We are placed in the impossible position of advocating for change, and yet we are reluctant to effect change in our students because, paradoxically, we think that it is unethical to do so.

Charles Paine (1989) calls for us to embrace our “role as manipulators.” Although Paine is primarily advocating for a sophisticated relativism as equal to radical pedagogy, his point may be appropriate here. The idea of transforming students must start with a change in attitude. Perhaps another reason why we never achieve our goals is because we have not really believed we can effect change. We have not taken ourselves seriously. The word “manipulator” has an unsavory taste for it entails an imposition that ethical criticism as well as other forms of criticism objects to. Yet, there is some truth in this. Do we not exercise a certain level of manipulation in the classroom? The act of teaching itself is in some ways a form of imposition, even in choosing what texts to include in the syllabus, or charting the direction for a discussion entails a certain level of control in itself. For how do we help students develop a selfhood when we have not acknowledged that we can help? To refuse to embrace our roles is to refuse to help and teach to transform. We are once again pulled back to our own contradicting theories and pedagogies, straitjacketing us and stopping us from moving forward. Such paralysis is handed down to our own students who think that the literature classroom is a place where we discuss theories and nothing more. When outside the classroom, they revert back to their old selves content with their affluent comforts indifferent to the social realities they once read in literature and from which they experienced discomfort. Indeed several times, we face this vey nemesis of paralysis and indecision. At the very best, our classrooms have become merely a site for discussions, though intellectual but unfruitful. In one classroom discussion, one student asked me if the act of the character— sleeping with a married man— is justified for the purpose of claiming her place in her new home (as the story is one of Diaspora). How do we answer questions like this in the face of postmodern theories and think of the students’ welfare at the same time?

Perhaps, we have to qualify the word manipulator here, perhaps “influencers?” Let us just say that in order to get rid of our discomfort at the word lessons we must think of ourselves as inevitable influencers to our students’ hearts and minds, and in this respect, we are in a way manipulators. To embrace this role is to recognize that we are in the position to change our students, and from the perspective of literary education’s goal, that role is justified.

Along with this role, we too must recognize the danger of this invitation. We are vulnerable to self-proclaimed judgments. But if embracing this role comes with a reflective attitude, then we can somehow check ourselves from

this pitfall. Let us take our reading list as a starting point. Our reading lists according Booth (2003) are “ethical constructs”. Since they are “constructs” they can certainly be “reconstructed.” An open attitude to collaborative teaching and discourse may help teachers achieve goals. We can review and share our reading lists and syllabuses with teachers handling the same subject. This can open up a dialogue on what might possibly be helpful to students in their search for lessons and insights in literature classrooms. Note here the suggestive language might not the prescriptive should. We can share readings to each other and observe how students respond to these readings: are they motivated to ask questions/ are the texts personally relevant to students/do they bring up ethical concerns and discussions / are they receptive of each other’s opinions and thoughts?

Our hesitation to embrace this position is perhaps based on inadequate understanding of our own students. We often think that when we, ourselves, make judgments on character’s choices, our students receive this judgment uncritically. While this may ring true in students whose very values we have just confirmed through our judgments, other students will not easily accept for their own values come into play when they read and interact with us. What is more important here is our willingness to embrace the inevitability of our roles as influential to students. We must embrace the opportunity to help students develop an ethos, to cite Booth again, ethical at its center. Like the critics cited in this paper, I too believe that the overall effect of literature on the character of students or any reader for that matter cannot be “conclusively demonstrated” (Booth, 2005). But as teachers, we take calculated risks so to speak because students seek for lessons, inspiration, motivation, insight, realization, guide and answers. Unlike theorists and critics, teachers are not afforded the luxury of editing. Once inside the classroom, we are bound by time and space. On a personal note, reflecting on students’ answers, I feel suddenly wanting, yet to shy away from this is cowardice as Booth enjoins us to “seek selves for ourselves as teachers that...will change students in ways that we are sure are most useful to them.” Our seeking of selves requires that we acknowledge first that our role involves so much influence on our students who, in this study, are seeking selves.

Our job is made easier because of the stories themselves. As students inhabit the consciousness of characters, they are inevitably forming their selves and the self is never static. It is evolving and transforming by acts of negotiation, acceptance, and refusal. As students identify with characters they

are in a way negotiating, testing their own experiences against those of the characters, making up their mind whether to feel what the characters feel, to believe the characters, or to resist them altogether. Students are engaged in the process of accommodating new friends (to use Booth's metaphor of friendship) or declining unpleasant acquaintances. These stories' offerings are powerful in that they present moral complexities and ambiguities that may have been absent in other forms of character teaching tools. More importantly, literature (or stories in specific) teaches students "effective casuistry" (Booth, 1998). Hence, lessons here are not the simplistic moral codes, but the outcome of the casuistry, the students' choosing one virtue over another. It is a complex process of discriminating which virtue is best and which virtue is most useful. In this transaction, students build an ethical center, not a fixed set of rules of ethical conduct. Rather it is "a range of 'virtues,' characteristic habits of behavior considered admirable." It is building a better self (Booth, 1998). Changes occur in perspectives and feelings, and on judgments, and these changes add up and we are the sum.

Reading stories with insights is different from mere willingness to read stories with insights. My point here is that engagements with stories may be difficult to achieve given our students who seem to have developed an aversion to reading. This will challenge our capacities. The first thing to do for students to experience fully a story is to get them engaged. There is no other way to do this other than close reading or engaging the aesthetic tactics as Gregory Marshall puts it. To come face to face with the characters and to inhabit the world of the story requires students' surrender to the workings of language. We must revisit with rigor once again with our students the skill of formal analysis and explication.

I suppose our task is not really to teach our students to look for lessons. This leads me to my last point on the study's pedagogical implications. Our task is to teach them how to read both efferently and aesthetically. It is through close reading that students discover meaning. A reading that is meaningful effortlessly glides back and forth from the efferent and aesthetic and back again. They can both look for lessons and enjoy the text's language and form.

Based on the respondents' answers, it can be said that with the exception of those who looked for both lessons and aesthetic experience, students read efferently. They read with the determined aim to look for something they could carry away. In their words:

"I look for stories with lessons. Stories without lesson are nonsense."

"...Stories without lessons are not worth reading."

Indeed, an alternative organization of the results would look like this: 127 responses partial to efferent reading and 45 responses on aesthetic reading.

A. Lessons (127)		B. Aesthetic Experience (45)	
moral lessons	47	Excitement and thrill	7
realizations, insights, meaning	30	entertainment	22
themes	4	vicarious experience	3
inspiration and transformation	16	happy endings	13
guidance and application to life	24		
personal relevance	6		

While these responses do not conclusively determine the kind of reading students do, they are helpful at best as reminders to teachers to practice ethical criticism responsibly in the classroom. When literary evaluation of a story or any text is reduced to merely a hunt for "moral lessons" then we risk losing the merits that aesthetic experience delivers. Morality or ethics in this sense becomes trivial and "cornball morality leads to rebellion and loss of faith" (Gardner, 2005, p.4). Thus it is necessary to make a move from the old ethical criticism's overt focus on "lessons" to the new focus on "invitations." Inevitably, when students accept the invitation, they enter the world of the story alone. We, as teachers, wait for them when they exit.

Our students may be, alone, solitary in reading but discussing our understanding of the stories is not at all solitary but discursive and dialogic. The classroom provides this site for discourse and dialogue. And the main aim for this dialogue is clarification. We open up discussions not just to test students whether they read the assigned text (admittedly, we do this often), but also to help students clarify confusions. Thus, in classroom discussions, our role shifts to prompting questions, helping students make sense of their own understanding of the experience and clarifying thoughts that previously confused them. It is at this instance that we can help students by referring them back to the text, pointing out metaphors, and asking them critical questions. There is no better way to do this than employ the formalist approach. In fact, it may be helpful to prepare general guide notes before students read the stories

so that they will not have to read with the sole purpose of looking for lessons.

However, it is not as well helpful for students when we deny them the lessons they seek by shutting all discussions about ethics. If it means mentioning and acknowledging “moral lessons” in the discussion, then so be it. We can open up a discussion on what they think is the better action, behavior, and decision. The point is that it has to be a balance of ethical and aesthetic pursuits.

When we continually provide students the opportunity for ethical confrontation through the stories we assign, we help them interact with life itself because literature offers our students a description of the human condition. In stories, we help them prepare their own actions and decisions when they go back to the real world. When such relationship of literature and life continues in our students’ cognition and emotion, they develop “habits of the heart:’ the typical patterns of our intellectual, emotional, and ethical responses” (Gregory, 2005). These habits will hopefully make for our students better decision makers, holding the power of choice, of *timshel* (Rosenstand, 2005). Ultimately, these habits we hope will create better selves in our students in the long run.

CONCLUSION

Among other things, this study has given hope to a literature teacher like me. The course that we teach is and will most likely remain relevant in the face of so much technological changes. Literature still matters to students. This should cause us to reflect on the best pedagogical practices that afford opportunities to students to become their better selves. Indeed if we truly are student-centered then our students’ concerns matter and figure in our pedagogy. Since they look for lessons in stories that they can somehow use in their lives, then great care must be taken in constructing reading lists, preparing discussion guides, and in mediating classroom discussions. Also, we emphasize once again close reading or the aesthetic tactics. As students read, we must develop in them the ability to read both efferently and aesthetically. They can read both for the purpose of carrying away something of value (lessons and insights) and for the aesthetic enjoyment the text offers. While the result of our students’ reading experiences may not be immediately detected, the aim here is for teachers to constantly provide opportunities for these kinds of ethical engagement and confrontation. When students develop the habit of confronting ethical and

social questions, they develop attitude and perception change, even changes in ideologies. Our role as teachers, much to our chagrin, entails so much risk and responsibility. Yet, can we dismiss our students' plea for stories that show them "how to live?" It is cowardice to turn away from this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Several studies may be conducted from the data gathered. Factors such as cultural traits, gender, and social class may be looked into in determining students' motivation in reading stories. As gender, age, and social class determine in several ways our characteristics and habits, researchers can have several similar studies on these factors. Another potentially interesting study is a correlation of students' reading ability and their preferences. A third promising project and perhaps the most interesting one is a phenomenological study on student responses to ethical questions evoked by a particular story.

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Towards a Tradition of Sillimanian Literature

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This article provides the motivation for a literary history of Silliman University, a specific example of regional literature that has remained a largely neglected part in the consideration of the Philippines' national literary history, unappreciated in favor of the literary production and industry in the capital. The paper establishes Dumaguete as an important place in the Filipino literary geography and posits that there indeed exists a "Sillimanian" tradition of writing.

Keywords: Silliman University, literary barkada, Sillimanian writing, Sillimanian writers, literary tradition, National Writers Workshop, Philippine literature, Edilberto Tiempo, Edith Tiempo, Rodrigo Fera, *Sands & Coral*

INTRODUCTION

The immense contribution of writers from Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental to the development of Philippine literature in English remains a largely neglected chapter in the country's literary history, unremembered or unappreciated fully in favor of the literary production and industry in the Philippine capital. This is an understandable slight, if unwarranted: the center is power, power fed by easy access, a condition absent of the marginal and which hobbles its prospect for dominance.

One thing has to be made clear at the outset of this particular historical

project in this article. For the most part, a study of Dumaguete and Oriental Negrense literature is informed by and large by the literature put out by writers from Silliman University, the academic institution situated at the heart of the provincial capital, founded by American missionaries in 1901. Dumaguete itself, a city at the tip of the boot-shaped province in the middle of the Visayan Islands, is a university town, host to many academic institutions, including two other universities—but the gravity of creative writing lies very much within Silliman, influencing even those produced by writers from other universities and schools in town, most of whom invariably have gotten their training, formally or informally, from Edith Tiempo or Edilberto Tiempo, Dumaguete’s literary titans.

That influence—also distinctive for its almost exclusive use of English as the primary language of expression—has spread to the rest of the province, and while the literary brand can correctly be labeled as “Sillimanian,” the better distinction, if one has to be true to terminology, has to be “Dumagueteño” or “Oriental Negrense,” given that it is the place—the geographical specificity—that eventually gives the local literary tradition its distinctive flavor. Writers from the place, after all, write about Dumaguete, and not Silliman; the university may indeed be instrumental in giving formal instruction on the craft to local practitioners, but it is the spirit of the work, sprung from a Dumaguete sense of being, that ultimately gives shape to the writing tradition. To make the distinction less confusing, one must quote the campus writer Georgette Villa (1995) who once exasperatedly declared, “Dumaguete is Silliman, and Silliman is Dumaguete.” While arguable—because it simply does not compute, and is rather reductive of the two—it bears the mark of an emotional truth. For the sake of simplicity, let us blur the boundaries between the two. That blurring also reminds us that these categories—e.g., Silliman writing, Dumaguete writing, Oriental Negrense writing—are porous.

Edith Tiempo, for example, was born and raised in Bayombong, Nueva Ecija, but she is the paragon of Dumaguete writing. She was awarded, in fact, for this distinction by the provincial government when Negros Oriental celebrated its centennial in 1989. Her story as a transplanted Dumagueteño writer is the story of many other writers whose literary identities are fused strongly with the Oriental Negrense city: poet and fictionist Cesar Ruiz Aquino, from Zamboanga, and poet Marjorie Evasco, from Bohol, are the best examples of these. Then there is poet, fictionist, and playwright Elsa Martinez Coscolluela, who is from Dumaguete and who has written significantly of Dumaguete in her body of literary works. She can also be rightly called a Bacolodnon writer, having found

a home in Bacolod on the other side of Negros Island.

And what, in fact, constitutes a “Sillimanian”? In Handulantaw, a historical appraisal of the tradition of art and culture in Silliman University since its founding in 1901 (Casocot, 2013), the term is defined as someone who has matriculated in the institution, but not necessarily graduated from it. This would then include such literary luminaries as Resil Mojares, Rosario Cruz Lucero, and Kerima Polotan, who have enrolled in Silliman University for varying stretches over a few semesters, but would eventually transfer to other institutions where they eventually graduated. The term “Sillimanian” is also given to those people who have worked in the institution either as members of the faculty and staff, but having not necessarily graduated from Silliman itself. This allows for the inclusion of many people—e.g., David Hibbard, Laura Hibbard, James Chapman, Charles Glunz, Robert Silliman, Metta Silliman, Abby Jacobs, William Pfeiffer, Harry Pak, Albert Fautot, Alfred Yuson, Susan S. Lara, Betty Abregana, and many others—who have graduated from other academic institutions but whose professional lives are closely intertwined, in varying degrees, with the development and shaping of the university’s art and culture scene.

The distinction of “Silliman writer” is thus porous, but it is also one that is important to make, because it is a snapshot of a literary scene governed by a specificity of place and circumstance, one that has a continuous and considerably history (from 1901 to the present), and—because it is set in the regions—one that provides a necessary corrective to the idea that Philippine literature is one defined broadly by its developments in the National Capital Region.

Still, even with the convenient blurring of distinctions and an acceptance of their necessary porousness, excavating a history of local literary culture proves to be a daunting task.

Only very few literary scholars and academics, among them Mary Ann Evasco Pernia (2013) and Merlie Alunan (1997), have written (mostly unpublished) short histories and cultural studies of the Silliman University National Writers Workshop and the literary culture of Dumaguete’s premiere university. Scholarship that attempts at a definitive history of the literature and/or literary culture found in Negros Oriental has been scarce, often relegated to obscure academic journals and disappearing literary folios, because unarchived.

There is also a host of other challenges, one of which has created a fascinating limitation to any anthologizing project of a historical nature. Foremost of this is the language issue for this specific regional literature. Oriental Negrense literature written in the predominant Cebuano language has largely disappeared

as a driving force in local literary culture—or at least invisible because it is vastly unstudied, uncollected. One reason for this absence, despite the fact that Cebuano is still the common language spoken in the province, may be the “English Only” policy that took root in major schools around the capital city of Dumaguete, in large part due to the influence of American missionary teachers, who did not only find Silliman but also the popular provincial public high school in the middle of the city. Their language policy worked only too well, providing firm foundation for the flourishing of an English language literary culture, to the detriment of the development of a Cebuano literature. (It must be said, however, that Cebuano was one of the major languages the American missionaries used in the early days of Silliman—and along with Spanish and English, this was the main language used in the earliest publications, such as *The Silliman Truth*. But this was partly because of proselytizing purposes. Within a decade, Cebuano largely disappeared from the official organs of Silliman. Spanish and Tagalog had a longer run, persisting well into the late 1950s.)

Surprisingly, save for the occasional efforts of the editors of the literary folio *Sands & Coral*, there really has been no major attempt at anthologizing the literary outputs of significant writers to come out of the province or Dumaguete. The closest has been Merlie Alunan’s *The Dumaguete I Know* from 2012, which collected creative nonfiction of personal recollections by various writers from Dumaguete. By and large, there has never been any attempt at preserving local writerly contributions, or perhaps more alarmingly, of their memory, thus marking a conspicuous absence in an otherwise very literary city. The plays of Roberto J. Ponteñila Jr. or Ephraim Bejar, who wrote a number of powerful indictments of the Marcos dictatorship, have been forgotten, unfortunately unpublished in collected form, or unstaged. The award-winning short stories of Jose V. Montebon remain uncollected. The essays on Moslem life by Lugum Uka—arguably one of the earliest Moslem writers to attempt at a cultural examination of Moslem Mindanao—have been forgotten. And the same can be said even of more contemporary writers, like the exacting feminist poetry of Lina Sagaral Reyes and Grace Monte de Ramos—both of them female voices unique because grounded in the local. Their poetry has remained uncollected.

This article, the first in a series of historical studies towards establishing a tradition of Sillimanian literature, serves then as a much-needed filler of a gap in literary scholarship, a veritable memorial to the forgotten and the unremembered, an anthology of lost voices.

The major impact of this regional literary tradition can be rightly traced

to the annual Silliman University National Writers Workshop (then known at its inception as the Summer Writers Workshop, and briefly as the Dumaguete National Writers Workshop in the 1990s and early 2000s). The SUNWW is patterned after the Iowa Writers Workshop and is held in the Dumaguete campus every summer since its founding in 1961, which makes it the oldest creative writing workshop of its kind in Asia. Established by the Tiempos, the workshop has become the virtual rite of passage for countless poets, fictionists, playwrights, and essayists writing in English for more than five decades. A cursory look at its roster of alumni becomes a veritable parade of active practitioners of contemporary literature.

In turn, alumni of the workshop, coming from various regions of the Philippines, have injected much of what they have learned from the Dumaguete workshop into their own literary efforts, so much so that the poet and anthologist Gemino H. Abad (2012) has admitted, in *Hoard of Thunder: Philippine Short Stories in English, 1990 to 2008*, that Dumaguete can very well be considered, quoting the researcher, as “the hometown of Philippine literature.”

That consideration is entirely not without merit. The place indeed occupies a central pre-occupation in the imagination of many contemporary writers, a ubiquitous presence in hundreds of short stories and novels, poems, and essays, which will be discussed in the next section.

Primarily, there is the significant fact of cultural contagion. Creative writing graduates from Silliman University, mostly trained by the Tiempos, have also gone on to found creative writing workshops and programs modeled after Silliman’s everywhere else in the country—Erlinda Kintanar Alburo in Cebu; Merlie Alunan in Tacloban; Christine Godinez-Ortega, Jaime An Lim, and Anthony Tan in Iligan; Francis Macansantos in Baguio; Leoncio Deriada in Iloilo; Aida Rivera Ford, Antonino de Veyra, and Timothy Montes in Davao; Marjorie Evasco in Tagbilaran and Manila; and Elsa Victoria Martinez Coscolluela in Bacolod—making the Dumaguete/Silliman brand of literary writing an influential shaper of national letters. Within Dumaguete itself, the Tiempos’ influence spread to neighboring universities, with fictionist and playwright Bobby Flores Villasis shaping much of the literary culture in Saint Paul College (now University) and poets Artemio and Gemma Racoma Tadana in Foundation University.

Internationally, its impact can be felt in small ways in the founding of the International Writing Program (IWP) of the University of Iowa by the poet Paul Engle, the former teacher of the Tiempos in that university’s famed

writers' workshop. Engle's visit to Dumaguete in 1963 helped pave the way to his creation, with the help of his wife, the Chinese writer Hualing Nieh of the IWP, which has hosted literary writers from all over the world to a generous fellowship since 1967.

There is also the matter of Dumaguete writers routinely giving, since the 1950s, their counterparts in Manila stiff competition with regular publications of short stories, literary essays, and poems in national magazines and anthologies, as well as in winning national awards. Edith Tiempo, notably, was one of the first winners of the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards, which were first handed out in 1950, and was the first Filipino poet to be published in the prestigious Poetry magazine. She was also chosen by the American critic Leonard Casper as one of only half a dozen poets in the country churning out provocative work in the landmark anthology *Six Filipino Poets*, published in 1954.

But it would be wrong to say that creative writing in Dumaguete started only with the *Tiempos*. When it was still known as Silliman Institute, the university churned out the first provincial newspaper (masquerading as a campus organ) then known as *Silliman Truth*, first published in 1903 and edited by the American missionary and entomologist James Chapman, although the earliest available extant copy is from 1904. The paper contained the first instance of literary criticism in English in the country, with a short unsigned article published in 1 February 1905 arguing about the literary merits of Jose Rizal's novels. It was, however, a publication grounded in two central types of writing: reportage on the goings-on in the small college, and earnest proselytizing essays with a distinct Protestant missionary zeal. That said, fissures of the literary type could be occasionally seen. In 1907, the first short story—unsigned—was published in Spanish in the March 15 issue of the school organ titled “Una Palabra a Tiempo,” an involved tale about a country doctor who meets a drunkard on the way to a house call, and tells him that medicine cannot cure him of his affliction as a drunk—but that there was one other doctor who probably could, and his name was Jesus Christ. The piece is still in the proselytizing intentions that *Silliman Truth* was predicated upon, but it provides a good break in form—and also provides us a glimpse into the earliest literary ferment in Dumaguete at the turn of the 20th century.

The first three decades of Silliman University [then known as Silliman Institute] were years of foundation-building—many of them tumultuous—but the 1940s may be considered the decade that would mark a decisive turning point for Sillimanian writing. With the founding of its pathbreaking literary

folio, Sands & Coral, in 1948, the university made another mark on the national literature, introducing many writers from Southern Philippines to the attention of those in the national literary scene—and among the writers that were thrust into the literary limelight are the *Tiempos* as well as Rodrigo T. Feria, Cesar Amigo, Dolores Stephens Feria, Aida Rivera Ford, Jose V. Montebon, James Matheson, and Ricaredo Demetillo, most of whom would later make names for themselves in Manila and Davao literary circles.

From them, and from the many that soon followed their ranks, sprang a ground-swelling of literary ferment that became tradition.

DUMAGUETE IN THE LITERARY IMAGINATION

But there is the matter of the literary imagination, and Dumaguete's hold on it. This is the bedrock with which to begin any claim for a regional tradition of writing.

There is a certain emotional gravity whenever one tries to situate Philippine literature in the context of home, that is, in the sense of Dumaguete—and even more specifically, Silliman University, the city's premiere university and main engine of culture since its founding by American missionaries in 1901.

One can make the argument that Dumaguete is the 'x' on the map of the Philippine literary imagination. In this place, "the acacia trees run, the surf dances, the air is heavy with sepia memories, life is recalcitrant to change" (Casocot, 2006). It is a friendly place for the pen: to be a writer in the Philippines is in a sense to be, at heart, a Dumagueteño.

Philippine literature has lain claim to a mythic Dumaguete—the same literary sense of geography that embraces Manuel Arguilla's Nagrebcan, Carlos Ojeda Aureus' Naga, Anthony Tan's Muddas, Nick Joaquin's Old Manila, and NVM Gonzalez's Romblon. Perhaps you can add to this list, F. Sionil Jose's Cabugawan. But while each of these places is mythologized in individual writers' dream of words, the "literary Dumaguete" has been borne from more than one pen, and has gone on to colonize more than one individual imagination.

Perhaps this is because the *Tiempos*, for so many years, inspired an annual pilgrimage by young writers to Dumaguete, and subsequently the quiet appeal of the small Oriental Negrense city has indeed made its way into the pages of countless books, journals, and literary magazines, and immortalized in equally countless stories, poems, and essays. The Filipino authors one often reads about have been through Dumaguete, have walked on its streets, and have written

sonnets to the sunrise off its famed Rizal Boulevard. Indeed, for many writers since the 1960s, Dumaguete—perhaps because this was where they had their first rush of maturing literary awakening—has become their default literary hometown.

In a chapter from his book *The Word on Paradise: Essays 1991-2000 on Writers and Writing* titled “The Adopted Hometown,” the poet and novelist Alfred Yuson (2001) writes: “In May, at the height of summer, I come to Dumaguete for a week or so to renew fraternal ties. Recent years may have confined the brief idyll to clockwork regularity. But I take the opportunity nonetheless, perchance as a perpetual gift. Only by doing so may I remain privileged in fostering an undeniable affinity. Poor Manileño never had a hometown. Until Dumaguete. I remember it as clearly as yesterday, that first ride on a slow-moving *tartanilla*, May of 1968. How I marveled at the manner of entry, at the fresh air of *provincia*, rustic redolence, aged acacias lining an avenue I instantly knew would lead to a long-imagined, long-elusive fountainhead.... I would have friends here. I just knew it. We would share time and joy together here, until the place itself would turn into a memorious intimate. It has happened. Come to pass. And it’s still, as they say, taking place. My Dumaguete friends and I continue to pass snatches of time together through decades of an evolving tapestry, absorbing layer upon fine layer of reminiscence. Those first three weeks in Dumaguete in the summer of 1968 had proven so thoroughly enjoyable that I swore to come back. *Na-dagit*. Hooked by her, the City of Gentle People.”

Other prominent Filipino writers share similar sentiments. Poet Anthony Tan (2001) recalls the National Artist for Literature Rolando Tinio being in his element in Dumaguete of 1973, when he came to the summer workshop for that year: “He played the role of the devil’s advocate to the hilt [during that summer’s writers’ workshop]. There was no story or poem that pleased him. I remember an incident one afternoon when a literature-teacher fellow showed his poem to Mr. Tinio. It was under the acacia tree in front of Larena Hall. A circle of benches surrounded the tree. It was where idle students should make *tambay*, where the laundry women on Saturday and Sunday afternoons would wait for the students to pick up the laundry. After a quick reading of the poem, Mr. Tinio dropped the piece of paper, bent down, and covered it with a pile of sand and remarked that the poem deserved a proper burial. The way he scooped the sand with both hands, wordlessly pouring the grains of sand on the paper, how he quickly stood up and delivered the punch line was a brilliant comic action. We were all entertained. We all laughed, including the mustachioed victim of this joke who,

we learned later, he invited to teach with him at the Ateneo de Manila...”

Indeed, to journey to Dumaguete as a writer has been, for many, to relive the haunts of literary heroes from the past. Dumaguete exists in a tumble of writers’ memories, and it can be claimed, as one writer once said, that “they’ve *all* been here.”

Consider a small list of literary names who have come to Dumaguete, either to mentor or to learn, aside from the *Tiempos*. There’s Nick Joaquin, Gregorio Brillantes, Victor Sugbo, Wilfredo Nollo, Petronillo Daroy, Jose Lansang Jr., Linda Ty-Casper, Erwin Castillo, Elena Reyes, Geronimo Sicam, Rogelio Sicat, Rolando Carbonell, NinotchkaRosca, Jose Carreon, Elsie Martinez Cosculluela, Federico Licsi Espino, Salvador Bernal, Marra PL Lanot, Edgar Libre Griño, Migen Osorio, Donel Paccis, Rene Estella Amper, VirgilioAlmarino, Alfredo Salanga, Ricky Lee, Conrado de Quiros, Carlos Cortes, Francis Macansantos, VirgilioVitug, Leoncio Deriada, Estrella Alfon, Romero Centina, Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo, Eric Gamalinda, Marjorie Evasco, JuanioArcellana, Simeon Dum Dum Jr., Grace Monte de Ramos, Susan Lara, Fanny Llego, Myrna Peña-Reyes, Danton Remoto, Vicente Groyon III, Ruel S. De Vera, Ruben Canlas Jr., Nerisa del Carmen Guverra, Doreen Jose, Rene Ledesma Jr., Conchitina R. Cruz, Ralph Semino Galan, Carla Pacis, Lorenzo Paran III, Lourd Ernest de Veyra, Anne-Marie Jennifer Eligio, John Labella, Kris Lanot Lacaba, Andrea Pasion, Ronald Baytan, Lakambini Sitoy—a list of names that are a mere drop in Dumaguete’s pail of literary waters.

Davao’s Aida Rivera Ford (2001), author of the oft-anthologized story “The Chieftest Mourner,” recalls traveling to 1940s Dumaguete: “To go to [Dumaguete] after the war, I rode on a rice truck from Bacolod escorted by Mama, not via the sunny route passing San Carlos but through the towns with airy names—Hinigaran, Binalbagan, Himamaylan, Kabankalan—and from thence through dark mountains where lurked guerilla-turned-bandits or just plain wayfarers. We spent a night at a barrio chieftain’s hut, with our *buri* baskets containing our precious few clothing left out on the bamboo porch, Mama worrying visibly about them and a Chinese trader whose baskets contained bundles of money nonchalantly putting on an air of calm. Nothing did happen that night. Late in the afternoon, we made it to Dumaguete...”

Poet Antonino de Veyra (1988) remembers Dumaguete in 1985: “... I came over to complete some papers with my professor who is doing her doctoral thesis here. I liked the ‘New England’ ambience of the place. Old world charm, complete with fog rolling in at night to the bass notes of boat horns either

docking or casting off. Like Gothic, man. So I decided to drop by another time...” and remained for more than a decade as a professor in Silliman, and in his recollection he seemed amused and bewildered over the long years of stay.

“This place,” Palanca Award-winning fictionist Timothy Montes (1988) writes in an essay for the *Sillimanian Magazine*, “a friend told me once, ‘can make poets out of bums.’ The poetry here, however, is the poetry of leaves. We are forever in the shadow of mild feelings, mild contemplation, mild laughter—never the wildness of city tenements and the seething rage of the sun... Every day has a dramatic atmosphere of sad farewells...”

Beyond the non-fictional musings, there are the stirrings of Dumaguete in the Philippine literary geography. To provide a few examples: In Jaime An Lim’s Palanca-winning short story “The Axolotl Colony,” one gets a jolt of amusement and surprise to realize that the main characters Tomas and Edith Agbayani, expatriates in Iowa, are exiles from Dumaguete. Poet J. Neil Garcia, in the first *Ladlad: An Anthology of Philippine Gay Writings*, waxes rhapsodic over traveling across Tañon Strait from Dumaguete to Siquijor. In “Un Bel Di,” a chapter in Edith Tiempo’s novel *His Native Coast*, the city in the story bears a strong resemblance to Dumaguete. Gemino H. Abad philosophizes on children and old age in his poem “Casaroro Falls,” the famous cataract in Valencia town north of Dumaguete. Merlie Alunan, in her poem “The Bells Ring in Our Blood,” paints an anguished exploration for a city grappling the loss of an activist priest in the dark days of Martial Law, as recalled in the tolling of Dumaguete’s Redemptorist Church’s bells. Alfredo Yuson situates his Palanca Award-winning novel *The Great Philippine Jungle Energy Café* in Bacong, the town bordering Dumaguete to the south. In his short story collection *Boulevard Bergamasque*, fictionist Bobby Villasis finally embraces Dumaguete in his tales chronicling the madness and drama of its upper middle class, and makes the city the crown jewel of his literary world. And in Lakambini Sito’s novel *Sweet Haven*, Donostia, the scandal-rocked Southern Philippine city in question, is a pseudonymous Dumaguete, and Sweet Haven University in its pages is actually Silliman.

One may wonder about the so-called “captivating romance” claimed of this place, and which has been appropriated by many writers in the making of their own personal literature. The city, truth to tell, offers no instantaneous quickening of bigger metropolises, and no obvious literary impulses, save perhaps for the pervading calm and the shiftless changes of provincial days. Dumaguete is not sophisticated New York, nor decadent Manila, nor slumbering countryside as we find in Manuel Arguilla’s literary landscape. “Nothing happens,” Montes (1988)

writes in that same essay. “The [newspapers] can’t find enough dogs bitten by men, everybody knows everybody, and one resorts to gossip in the face of the uneventfulness of leaves falling to the ground. Still, when one says goodbye, one never really leaves the place. The mild sadness grows within you and when you ask yourself what makes you hang around this place transfixed in time, you realize the irony of leaves falling to the ground. I love Silliman; that’s why I hate it. Like leaves falling to the ground, we are suspended in mid-air and never quite reach the ground until we learn to despise it.”

The clearest answer is the common pull of Silliman matriculation. One of the first in the country to offer a degree in creative writing (then called “imaginative” writing) (Tiempo, 1955), it has become the incidental reason for the ubiquity of Dumaguete in contemporary Philippine literature in English.

IN SEARCH OF A LOCAL LITERARY TRADITION

This article aims to establish an interested take on the state of literature and creative writing in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental—with a considerable focus on Silliman University—given the lack of scholarship that detail what can be considered a local writing tradition. Only a small—but very significant—part of this tradition has ever been studied: that of the contributions of the Tiempos, Edilberto and Edith, to the national literature, including their influence in shaping the sense of craft of many contemporary writers such as Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas, Susan Lara, Marjorie Evasco, Cesar Ruiz-Aquino, Bobby Flores-Villasis, Myrna Peña-Reyes, Leoncio Deriada, Anthony Tan, Merlie Alunan, Jaime An Lim, Christine Godinez-Ortega, Timothy Montes, and others.

But the greater part of that writing culture has remained unstudied.

What one proposes to do with this project is to establish a history of creative writing in Dumaguete City and Negros Oriental, and lay down a definitive idea of local tradition. Part of this goal is to provide a conclusive history and anthology showcasing the development of local writing, featuring significant Philippine writers from Dumaguete City and Silliman University, some of whom no longer enjoy even a bit of recognition among those circulating in Philippine literary circles.

Case in point: the eminent Sillimanian writer, the late Jose V. Montebon Jr. who, at the height of his literary ambitions in the 1950s and 1960s, won top prizes from some of the national contests for his short stories, including the prestigious *Philippines Free Press* Literary Awards which gave him second prize

for his short story “A Bottle Full of Smoke” in 1954. Today, his stories—because he chose to remain in Dumaguete, and in the margins of Manila’s publishing centers, and because he chose to pursue a career in law—have remained uncollected and unremembered, depriving our national literature of one of its brightest voices. Another case in point: the poet Artemio Tadena, a Tiempo-trained writer and professor of English at Dumaguete’s Foundation University, has been acknowledged by anthologist Gemino H. Abad as a Filipino poet of the first rank, and when he was alive, won a string of national prizes for his stirring poetry, soon collected in a number of books—now all out-of-print, and its author largely forgotten.

A comprehensive study on the subject of a Dumaguete or an Oriental Negrense literary tradition entails a challenge that takes into consideration the literary works and developments in the city and the province over the past one hundred years, and subsequently mapping and even problematizing the Sillimanian stamp to its development. At the outset, it is important to consider our explorations into a possibility of a local writing tradition with the following questions: Does the university setting of the local literature provide a good framework for a consideration of literary development? But what exactly is a literary tradition, and is such a thing to be found in our geographic focus? Where does one get evidence for this possible literary tradition?

In her essay, “The Literary *Barkada* in the Philippines,” the fictionist/essayist Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo (1988) pounces on a coinage—the literary *barkada*—made by Gemino H. Abad, and argues that the development of Philippine literary is largely the result of various communities of writers, mostly tied to a university, influencing or egging each other in their literary productions.

“*Barkada*,” writes Hidalgo, “is a term for which there is no adequate translation into English. It is less formal than ‘organization’ but more formal than ‘gang.’ It consists of people who just like to hang together because they like each other.”

She then proceeds to name many the literary *barkadas* in Philippine history, starting with the *barkada* of Jose Rizal, Juan Luna, and their ilk (each of them responsible for iconic pieces of protest literature that include novels, poetry, speeches and essays, and various forms of journalism) that first put out the revolutionary newspaper *La Solidaridad*; to the group of pensionados sent to the U.S.A., and published in Berkeley in 1905 *The Filipino Student Magazine*, which various scholars claim to be the first Filipino literary publication in English (*The Silliman Truth*—a publication in English, Cebuano, and Spanish—

actually antedates *The Filipino Student Magazine* by two years. It was first published in Dumaguete in 1903); to the founding of such famous literary groups as the Veronicans and the Ravens, to the various literary organizations that have sprung since the 1950s, including the Philippine Literary Arts Council or PLAC (which publishes the poetry journal *Caracoa*), the U.P. Writers Club (which publishes the *Literary Apprentice*), the Literary Guild, the Beer Club, the U.P. Women Writers' Club, The Quill, the University of Manila Literary Club (which published the *Seed*), among many others. The assertion she makes is that a shared academic background is in a sense a kind of "barkada." In her summation, Hidalgo contends that many of these groups are university-based. She writes:

It is also noteworthy that regardless of which group they happen to be part of, most Filipino writers in English today feel a strong sense of community with other writers. The "writing community" has grown, and has spread beyond the traditional "center," Manila, to the other regions, helped on by an active literary scene. It provides strong peer support for its members and invaluable training for the young. And, as in the early days, since many among them are also editors, publishers, journalists, and academics, young writers find themselves remarkably well connected at every step of their career.

Hidalgo pays attention to a "group of southern writers"—consisting of Silliman writing alumna Leoncio Deriada, Erlinda Alburo, Elsie Martinez-Coscolluela, Merlie Alunan, Anthony Tan, Jaime An Lim, Rosario Cruz Lucero, Aida Rivera-Ford, Marjorie Evasco, and Timothy Montes—who dominate the leadership of such regional creative writing workshops such as the Cornelio Faigao Workshop in Cebu, the Iligan National Writers Workshop, the Iyas Workshop in Bacolod, and the U.P. National Writers Workshops in Tacloban, Davao, and Iloilo. Collectively, they are informally known in literary circles as the "Silliman mafia."

Hidalgo posits then that this community of writers may well be the engine in the growth of our literature. And if that is the case, then it pays to put some concentration on these clusters. There is, indeed a U.P. tradition of writing, as well as La Sallian, Atenean, and Thomasian traditions. The literary folios of these universities have been quick to trace such a tradition in their campuses. In *Tomás*, the late poet Ophelia Alcantara Dimalanta (2000) writes in her

article, “Thomasian Writing: Reality of Myth”: “Some outsiders observe that they can smell Thomasian writing miles away. Pejorative or not, this comment is truly interesting. What this smell is perhaps they should tell us.” She admits to struggling with a definition of Thomasian literature, but concedes that Thomasian writing “as authentic voice is worth capturing, the expression of a life illumined by this lived [Catholic] faith . . . and breathed into art, celebratory, affirmative, even in the saddest lines, in the sheerest grappling with every day’s needs, from the quietest to the most crying.”

Could the same be said about the writings of Sillimanian authors? Is there an authentic Sillimanian literary voice?

Strangely, in Silliman University (which is the ecclesiastical cousin to the Catholic University of Santo Tomas, being the first Protestant academic institution to be established in the Philippine Islands), save for the consideration one gives to the contributions of the National Writers Workshop to Philippine literature, no concrete attempt—as has been previously discussed—at describing a local literary tradition has ever been done, save for an attempt by the poet Merlie Alunan (1997) who once wrote: “Whether true or not, there is said to be a ‘Silliman style’ or a ‘Silliman school’ of writing. The so-called school is characterized by a certain ‘finish,’ an exactness of tone, diction, handling of verse, ‘smoothness,’ ‘polish,’ a sense of being ‘crafted.’” She nonetheless goes on to point out that these qualities—no matter how they might sound to be paragons to be sought after in writing, are not always pointed out by critics of so-called ‘Silliman style’ as admirable: “[F]or the terms could all be stretched to mean being effete, lacking in spontaneity, too ‘arty,’ too self-conscious. Those with mass sympathies and grassroot identity accuse the Silliman school of elitism.”

And yet it is also interesting to point out that many of the writers identified with the ‘Silliman school,’ often said to sound like their mentors, the *Tiempos*, are forerunners in scholarly exploration and literary crafting in regional languages—among them Marjorie Evasco, Merlie Alunan, and Erlinda Alburo in Cebuano, Leoncio Deriada in Hiligaynon and also in Cebuano, and Alunan again in Waray. Christine Godinez-Ortega and Elena Maquiso have given distinct contributions as well to the study of folk literature in Northern Mindanao. “Each has a distinct voice,” Alunan wrote. “Taken together their voices are as diverse as their ages, heights, and sizes.” She continues:

Also, they would be the first to deny they sounded like their mentor, the inimitable Edith Tiempo. Any writer, however, might admit a

brief period of intense influence of which one is quickly cured by maturity, one's evolving sensibilities, the broadening and deepening of one's imaginative capacity to deal with experience. To the Tiempos at least, it may affirm unmistakably the workings of tradition and individual talent from whose cutting edge, they believe, no serious artist of the word may escape.

The current lack of inquiry into the Sillimanian writing tradition is unfortunate, given the more than a hundred years of this tradition that has seeped into the national literature, which began the moment local Dumagueteños began reading and writing under the tutelage of American Presbyterian missionaries in a rented house in 1901.

But what exactly is a "literary tradition"?

Simply defined, it is an awareness of a specific (and influential) body of literary work that has come before what is contemporary in literature, and which writers try to continue (as well subvert) in their individual efforts to do creative writing—mindful of T.S. Eliot's charge of the "anxiety of influence," which is the battle between "tradition and the individual talent."

Timothy Montes (2001) has argued that such a tradition exists in the Philippines—but, for the most part, contemporary writers remain ignorant or skeptical of it, which may lead to a literature that does not grow, or that remains perpetually inchoate (which is Fr. Miguel Bernad's once-famous charge against Philippine literature as a whole), simply because they have remained uninformed of what has already gone on before. Montes writes:

I [mention] the word "tradition" in a more positive light [and does not carry] dark connotations... I [associate] it with another word: *agon*—a writer's imaginary dialogue, a struggle, a conversation, a wrestling—with writers from the past. It was T.S. Eliot who wrote in his influential essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that tradition was the force to reckon with for any writer. He said that if a young writer worth his salt wants to continue writing beyond his twenty-fifth year, he has to develop a sense of history, of tradition. A young [Filipino] writer can begin writing in his teens from a host of motives—to win a Palanca, to get the attention of a pretty classmate in Introduction to Poetry, to preserve childhood memories, to be inspired by early Joyce: "to forge in the smithy of my soul the

uncreated conscience of my race.” But a young writer is apt to lose steam and fall along the wayside if he relies on romantic, adolescent obsessions alone. One simply outgrows them when the sordid realities of life overtake him: marriage, work, payment of insurance—what philistines call “reality.” Eliot’s prescription was for the writer to take the long view: in his case he carried on an *agon* with the past, with the Western Canon. Eliot was carrying on an artistic dialogue with his predecessors—Dante, Shakespeare, Donne, Wordsworth, etc. “No poet,” according to him, “no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists.”

He continues:

In this case, since the yardstick has been established by the past, the contemporary young writer has to take the responsibility of critical judgment by the standards of the past. It is as if our predecessors were millionaires who have bequeathed such accumulated wealth to us and we can not afford to lose that inheritance in the money market of free enterprise. The past, therefore, can be an object of imitation, of inspiration, or of derision by contemporary young writers.

If the past thus defines what is “tradition” in writing, our entrance to a study of a “Dumaguete writing tradition” must then first be grounded in the historical, with the hope that it leads to a formation of an idea of a “Dumaguete literary evolution”—the gleaning of the years since 1901 (the year of the founding of Silliman University) resulting to a harvest of observation of what Dumaguete writers write about, how they write it, how they share this craft of expressing what they write (and whether there is indeed a commonality of styles and message), and how succeeding generations of local writers respond to this living history of literary output.

For sure, this tradition of writing began to exist as something formless and quite inchoate—and solidified only by a constant turning of outputs all shaped by a never constant and present community, and in this case provided by the structure called Silliman education. The writings that were being produced in the early years of Silliman, especially between 1903 and 1945, existed in a vacuum of identity that was loyal only to individual expression, and not necessarily part of a

body of writing produced by a community. But the obliterations of World War II and the newly-acquired independence of the Philippines from America in 1946 most effectively provided the impetus with which many of these campus writers began to gravitate towards an idea of a shared or communal body of writing. The surprising high critical reception of the *Sands & Coral*, the literary folio produced in 1948, which stirred even the literary circles in the national capital, certainly helped in giving shape to what was now being called “Silliman writing.” And there is evidence that as far back as 1952, the notion of “Sillimanian” writing had been acknowledged as something that was, in fact, existing and thriving. For the column *Point of View*, written by two pseudonymous critics named Alphonse and Gaston (1952), an article titled “Silliman Writers: Here and There” was published in the Christmas issue of *The Sillimanian Magazine*, dated December 20, which took into consideration the seeming preeminence of writers from the Dumaguete university in various national publications:

There are on the campus today budding and seasoned writers. There are those who have been published in American quality magazines and have been praised (many times) and “unpraised” (still many more times) by the ever self-appointed critics. There are the few writers who have established themselves in the national magazines, and have managed to keep their names there at present. Then there are the newly recognized ones—those who have eventually succeeded in getting through the editor’s desk. Finally, there are the unpublished ones, those who from time to time submit their materials for publication, with the hope that eventually they will make the grade... In the field of the short story, the Silliman writers have done their share of the job. In fact, according to [Editor-in-Chief Graciano H. Arinday Jr.] and [Managing Editor Ricardo Drilon] of *The Sillimanian* (these two have made quite a survey of all Philippine magazines), we have the longer list of published short stories than that of any other school in the Philippines. We really did not believe it at first. We argued with them, protesting vehemently at their assertions—How about Vivente Rivera Jr., Manuel Viray, Morli Dharam, and Joan Elades of UP; or Clemente Roxas, AzucenaGrajo of FEU; or Kerima Polotan Tuvera of Arellano? Their names have appeared constantly in national magazines.

But these two ... quietly took a sheet of paper and handed it

to us. At first it looked like a telephone directory page in our hands; but when we started reading, it turned out to be a list of short stories, articles, and poems by Silliman writers published in national magazines this year [1952]. The two had us there.”

In that list were names that included James Matheson, Reuben Canoy, Edith Tiempo, Edilberto K. Tiempo, Kenneth Woods, Jose Montebon Jr., Graciano H. Arinday Jr., Ricardo Drilon, Leticia Dizon, David Quemada, and Ricaredo Demetillo, all being published by *Philippines Free Press*, *This Week* (the Sunday magazine of the *Manila Chronicle*), *Graphic Report*, *Saturday Magazine of the Philippines*, *Evening News Saturday Magazine*, *Philippine Review*, *Sunday Times Magazine*, and *Weekly Women's Magazine*, as well as *Poetry Magazine* in Chicago. They provided the initial burst of inertia that galvanized “Sillimanian writing,” which was to eventually flower in influence in 1961, with the founding of the Summer Writer Workshop by the Tiempos. It was not always a rosy picture of constant literary excellence, as evidenced by Antonio Gabila's (1957) rant, titled “Campus Writers and Writing,” in the very pages of the same magazine in 1957, where he charged local writing as “uninteresting,” “need[ing] restraint,” and incapable of sustaining a singular theme. “When one writes on the floodtide of emotion, one produces not interesting, vivid writing, but often mush,” he wrote.

But that is, of course, a kind of an inevitability in any story of growth—and the truthfulness of this becomes even more apparent as literary culture in Silliman and Dumaguete expanded and receded, in an extremes of heaving that is nonetheless indicative of its continued life. The march of Sillimanian writing has only continued since Gabila wrote those warnings in 1957, gaining momentum in the 1960s and the 1970s, and consequently prospered beyond the imagination of those who first laid its foundation.

For the purposes of this article, the best sources for finding what must constitute the Sillimanian writing tradition are the many publications that have come out in the university's more than one hundred-year history, which have nurtured literary musings of various sorts—Sands & Coral (first published in 1948); *The Weekly Sillimanian* (first published as the *Silliman Truth* in 1903, then as *The Sillimanian* in 1920, and briefly as *The Daily Sillimanian* during the early months of the Second World War); *The Sillimanian Magazine* (first published as a supplement to the campus paper in 1939); the *Silliman Journal* (first published in 1953); *The Junior Sillimanian* (first published in 1949); Stones and Pebbles

(first published as *The Midget Sillimianian* in 1967); Portal (first published as *The Annual* in 1913, and renamed in 1918); and *Dark Blue Southern Seas* (first published in 2007)—putting in minor consideration the literary outputs that remain in notebooks and the unpublished typescripts from Sillimianians. Other Silliman publications not covered in this study are *The Weekly Calendar* (formerly *The Calendar*), a newsletter for the faculty and staff; *Silliman Law Journal*; *The Parish News* (formerly *The Parish Visitor* and *The Church Concerns*); *Ang Sinugo* (formerly *Silliman Christian Leader*); *Silliman Ministry Magazine*; *The Nurse*; *SUCNA Newsletter*; *The Gomez Gazette*; and *The Reporter*. Most of these have ceased publication. The fact of publication—having a piece written, edited, and read widely—makes literary pieces an inscribed part of history-making, and have better chances of contributing to a living writing tradition.

From the pages of these publications, and from the various histories of Silliman University written by David S. Hibbard (in 1926), Tiburcio Tumbagahan (in 1941), Arthur Carson (in 1965), Crispin Maslog, Edilberto K. Tiempo, and T. Valentino Sitoy Jr. (in 1977), and Paul Lauby, Proceso Udarbe, and Jennifer Lauby (in 2006), one can glean a workable tradition of literary writing that can include the following periods, and their subsequent literary sensibilities:

- 1. The Formative Period**, from 1901 to 1945. This period covers, firstly, the foundational challenges (1901-1905) faced by the pioneering Presbyterian missionaries—particularly David and Laura Hibbard and James Chapman—as they struggled to fulfill their mission for their Christian denomination, as well as fulfill the vision of industrial education by philanthropist Horace B. Silliman. The nascent literary culture then was marked by the creation of several literary societies (organizations devoted to debate and oratory), the establishment of English as one of the main modes of classroom expression, and the purchase of a printing press in 1903, and with that the subsequent first publication of the campus paper, *Silliman Truth*, that same year. Secondly, it covers the eventual turn-around in the fortunes of the fledgling institution (1906-1941), which saw its campus publication become more secular—and student controlled—in 1920, now renamed *The Sillimianian*; the publication of the yearbook in 1913 (which was described by Hibbard as something “permeated with poetry”); and then the publication of *The Sillimianian’s* supplementary magazine, *The Sillimianian Magazine*, in 1939, which hastened the literary ferment in campus. Thirdly, it covers the years

under Japanese occupation and its immediate aftermath (1942-1946), which saw the wartime publication of *The Daily Sillimianian*, the eventual silencing of the budding literary voice as the campus became deserted, and, after the war, the 1947 publication of Edilberto K. Tiempo's novel *Cry Slaughter!* (local title: *Watch in the Night*) by Avon Books in the U.S., a harrowing account of the war in Negros, which also helped bring in a stronger mode of realism in the Philippine novel in English.

Sillimanian writing from this period would be characterized first by a proselytizing bent in three languages—Cebuano, Spanish, and English—expected for an institution founded by Protestant missionaries; second by a didactic sensibility, with essays passionately tackling issues of morality and nationalism; and third by an inchoate literary and secular sensibility pervaded by the Romantic mode typical of the literature of this period.

- 2. The Period of Rapid Literary Advance**, from 1946 to 1961. This brief period may be considered the Golden Age of Sillimanian writing, and covers Edilberto K. Tiempo's departure to the U.S. for study in the Iowa Writers Workshop under the poet Paul Engle in 1946. (Edith Tiempo would follow suit in 1948.) The joining of the faculty by alumnus Ricaredo Demetillo and the arrival of Rodrigo Feria in Silliman campus in 1947, together with Metta Silliman's leadership of the Department of English and Literature, jumpstarted the literary culture in Silliman, which became an agency for students, faculty, and staff alike to bolster morale after the ravages of World War II. Feria would become adviser to *The Sillimianian*, where he would institute radical changes in campus publishing and journalism that, together with Demetillo, would see the creation of the literary folio, *Sands & Coral*, in 1948, with Aida Rivera [Ford] and Cesar J. Amigo as founding editors. The 1950s would also see the national publication of many campus writers, including the Tiempos, Demetillo, Reuben Canoy, Kenneth Woods, Jose Montebon Jr., Graciano H. Arinday Jr., and David Quemada, together with the unceasing annual publications of both the literary folio and the magazine. Silliman University became one of the first schools in Asia to offer a degree in creative writing, then known as "imaginative writing."

Sillimanian writing from this period would be characterized by a more mature form of Romanticism, slowly pervaded by a formalist sensibility that would eventually flower in the late 1950s.

3. The Period of the National Writers Workshop, from 1962 to 1990. This period would see the rise in the national literary stature of the *Tiempos*, who were both back in Dumaguete fresh from their post-graduate studies in the U.S. Their founding of the Silliman Summer Writers Workshop in 1962 would bring in the Iowa model of formalist writing and criticism to the Philippines. They also brought into the Dumaguete fold many generations of contemporary Filipino writers in English, effectively making the city and Silliman University part of the rite of passage for any young writer in English in the country. Ricaredo Demetillo and Rodrigo Feria, together with wife Dolores Stephens Feria, would eventually make the move to the University of the Philippines during this period, where they would eventually gain grander prominence in the literary circles of Manila. The 1980s were a turbulent time for Silliman writing; however—an offshoot of the general sense of paranoia and disarray fostered by the imposition of Martial Law on the country by Ferdinand Marcos—and, while it ushered in a fresh generation of campus writers who were marked by a sense of radical social awareness and activism (seen in the likes of Timothy Montes, Antonino de Veyra, V.E. Carmelo Nadera, Lakambini Sito, Lina Sagalar Reyes, and Fanny HB Llego), it also marked the beginning of the exodus of a previous generation of campus writers such as Leoncio Deriada, Marjorie Evasco, Jaime An Lim, Merlie Alunan, Christine Godinez Ortega, Carlos Ojeda Aureus, Anthony Tan, among others, who moved on to other cities and other academic institutions in the Philippines, following a protracted institutional turmoil in Silliman’s Department of English and Literature. In 1990, Silliman University would cease support for the workshop, which was hereafter run by the Creative Writing Foundation and eventually by the College Assurance Plan and, through the Dumaguete Literary Arts Guild, by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Sillimanian writing from this period would be characterized by a deft handling of formalism, but one slowly pervaded by a socialist sensibility brought about by the burgeoning protest literature typical of the period.

4. The Period of the Diaspora, from 1991 to 2006. This period covers a time in Silliman writing described by Montes once as the “tail-end” of a great generation of writing, and is characterized by a sense of the

young writers then as being orphaned by the lack of writing mentors in campus (Eligio, 2001; Alojamiento, 2001), most of whom have decamped to other cities—and which paradoxically helped cement Silliman's reputation as a literary hub by transplanting its influence in other regions of the Philippines. The university's Creative Writing Program, administered by the Department of English and Literature, while still officially alive, became inactive for a number of years. In 1997, Edilberto K. Tiempo would pass away, and in 1999, Edith Tempo would be conferred the title of National Artist for Literature (a national recognition which would help seed literary reawakening in campus years later). This was also the last period where the Sands & Coral would have a regular annual run, capped in 2002 with its nomination for Best Anthology in the National Book Awards given by the Manila Critics Circle. The Sillimanian Magazine, meanwhile, would last be seen in print in 2002.

Sillimanian writing from this period, while marked by a gradual slowing down because of the diaspora, would be characterized by a post-modernist approach, akin to Gemino Abad's (1998) description of a kind of poetic "open clearing" or what Jose Y. Dalisay Jr. (1998) once observed as the hallmarks of a new kind of generational writing, one that "derive[d] its inspirations from a whole new set of writers and ways of writing—still predominantly Western, but no longer so stolidly canonical"; one that dealt "largely with the bewildering variety of our unfolding experience—OCWs and the Filipino diaspora, the war in the countryside, the alienation of the middle class, the Chinese and the Others among us, our connections to the supernatural and to the afterlife, the tangled web of our personal relationships, including our sexuality, and art-making itself as subject" one that was "eclectic" in terms of treatment and approach, combining a deft handling of the dominant strain of realism with the "forms and mindsets of magic realism, metafiction, minimalism, science fiction, parable, comic book, gothic horror, and postmodern parody"; and finally, one that was, in terms of language, characterized by an unapologetic use of English and "the refusal to be burdened by colonial guilt." This mindset would pave the way to a soft resurgence of bilingual writing in campus, with many writers opting to write not just in English, but also in Tagalog or Cebuano.

- 5. The Period of Literary Reawakening**, from 2007 to the present. In 2007, under the presidency of Dr. Ben S. Malayang III, Silliman University once again sought custodianship of the workshop founded by the Tiempos, which would then be known as the Silliman University National Writers Workshop. In 2009, the workshop would have a regular home in the Rose Lamb Sobrepeña Writers Village, in what was formerly called the Camp Lookout in Valencia, Negros Oriental. (The workshop would celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2011, the year Edith Tiempo would pass away.) In 2013, *Sands & Coral* would be published anew with the special anthology publication titled *Celebration*, which commemorated the golden anniversary of the National Writers Workshop, taking note of its contribution to the formation of contemporary Philippine literature. In 2012, the Edilberto and Edith Tiempo Creative Writing Center would be founded, with the researcher as the founding coordinator and writing associate, and with Cesar Ruiz Aquino, Myrna Peña-Reyes, and Bobby Flores-Villasis as fellow associates (Marjorie Evasco, Anthony Tan, and Elsa Martinez Coscolluela would become associates in 2015.)

A history of Silliman writing, while mirroring much of what is happening to the national literature, offers another view of its development springing from more regional circumstances, and free from the conceits that shaped the literature developed in the national capital. It has its own arcs of development, replete with its dramas and challenges.

It reminds us that the literature from margins can have impact. To quote Alphonse and Gaston's parting remarks in their 1952 article: "An editor of a national magazine predicted that the good and better short stories and poems will come from the South. We believe that this editor was an exception to the general rule—he was not exaggerating. And we are surely glad that these writers ... will be coming from Silliman, we hope."

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Introduction to the Readers Forum

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The Readers Forum has been a venue for keen and invigorating discussion of featured articles that span a variety of discipline-based topics and interests. In this issue, the forum presents an enlightening discourse on the causes of poverty in the Philippine context. Peering through social-psychological lenses, Allan B. I. Bernardo (Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Macau), in his article “Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: Social Psychological Dimensions of Socioeconomic Inequalities in the Philippines,” locates the roots of poverty within the social inequalities in Philippine society. The forum then voices rich, varied, yet highly perceptive reader responses from Jeffrey Oca, PhD (Associate Professor, Philosophy Department, Silliman University) Victor Aguilan, PhD (Associate Professor, Divinity School, Silliman University), Gail Tan Ilagan, PhD (Director, Center of Psychological Extension and Research Services, Ateneo de Davao), Gabriel Jose Gonzalez, SJ (Academic Vice-President, Ateneo de Davao), and Renante Pilapil, PhD (Dean, School of Arts and Sciences, Ateneo de Davao). As the responses seem to bring in some discipline-based inspirations, one can expect to read differing stances on the issue at hand. Emphasizing the role of education in transforming the seemingly anti-poor mindset of privileged Filipinos, Victor Aguilan draws on the concept of “conscientization” which, he argues, can

open the eyes of the privileged class to the struggles and oppression of the Filipino poor. From quite a differing viewpoint, Jeffrey Ocaj figures that key to addressing the issue of poverty is heightening social consciousness, not only among the rich or the “non-poor” but also among the victims of poverty and injustice themselves. Renante Pilapil takes on the moral and normative aspects of Bernardo’s argument while Gail Tan Ilagan and Gabriel Jose Gonzalez, SJ show the importance of intergroup dialogs and communication in Mindanao in blurring the thick social divide between the rich and the poor. These among others are sure to engage readers in a discourse that heightens consciousness of one of the pressing societal concerns.

Poverty, Privilege and Prejudice: Social Psychological Dimensions of Socioeconomic Inequalities in the Philippines

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Abstract: Discussions on poverty alleviation in the Philippines often obscure discourses related to the role of those who are not poor, failing to locate poverty within the social inequalities in Philippine society. This article applies social psychological approaches to inquiry on poverty and privilege and assumes that one reason poverty persists is that policies to fight poverty are not being pushed by many privileged Filipinos who hold social motives, beliefs and attitudes that make them more likely to oppose anti-poverty policies. Social psychological theories are used to 1) discuss the half-blindness of privilege that normalizes the experience of wealthy Filipinos; 2) explore the social dominance motive and social beliefs used; and 3) justify social inequalities and privilege. Some general suggestions are proposed on how to target motives, beliefs and attitudes so that Filipinos from all sectors can be allies in pushing for policies that minimize socioeconomic inequalities in Philippine society.

Keywords: poverty, privilege, prejudice, intergroup relations, lay theories, social dominance theory, system justification theory, norm theory

INTRODUCTION: ASSUMPTIONS, SCOPE, AND LIMITATIONS

“Poverty does not persist because there is a scarcity of resource, nor does poverty exist because some societies have inefficient economic systems, lack natural resources, or because poor people lack ambition. Poverty is a product of human social relationships because social relationships

determine how people distribute resources... how much or how little people value others in relation to themselves is a fundamental cause of poverty, and that basic aspects of social relations, including prejudice, power, violence, and inter-group dominance, work together in the creation and maintenance of poverty”(Lemieux & Pratto, 2003, p. 147)

“...the Philippine elites have the financial capacity to pull the country out of poverty but yet it’s their apathy and lack of priorities that prevent them from using this money to achieve social progress” (Celdran, 2007)

The two quotations present a human explanation as to why poverty persists in the Philippines; both quotations refer to characteristics of how different groups of Filipinos relate to each other. The first quotation points to the vast amounts of wealth and natural resources that can be found in many countries with high incidences of poverty which arises because of how such resources are distributed. This fact is attested to by government statistics on economic inequality. Data from the National Statistics Office’s Family Income and Expenditures Surveys in 2006, 2009, and 2012 (Albert, 2013) indicated that the poorest 20% of Filipino families shared only 6% of the national income, whereas the wealthiest 20% of Filipino families shared almost 50%. Further analyses by the National Statistics Development Board (Albert, 2013) indicated that the income of the wealthiest 20% of families is eight times more than the income of the poorest 20%.

The trends showing vast income inequalities have not changed over the last decades, even during periods of economic growth (Balisacan, 2012). Indeed, historical data have indicated that economic growth tended to disproportionately benefit the richer sectors of the population (Balisacan & Pernia, 2002), and this contributes to widening the existing gaps between the country’s rich and poor. As the Philippine economy has registered strongly positive growth rates in the most recent years, economists have warned against the possibility that such growth would exacerbate these socioeconomic inequalities; a likely scenario is that the Philippine economy improves with rich families become richer, while poor families remain poor. On this point, the second quotation above underscores the social intergroup dimension of poverty in the Philippines. Celdran (2007) implicated a subgroup of Philippine society for its lack of care and willingness to redress the inequitable distribution of income and wealth in the country that would improve the lives of other subgroups of Philippine society; his argument

is a concrete exemplification of the social psychological processes that contribute to the causes and to the factors that maintain poverty and social inequality suggested by Lemieux and Pratto (2003) in the first quotation.

This article focuses on the social psychological aspect of poverty and social inequality in the Philippines: the social psychological processes and factors that characterize how the better-off Filipinos think about the poorer Filipinos. The thesis is not that these social psychological processes are the only or even the main cause of poverty and social inequality in the Philippines. The various societal processes that shape poverty in the country are all important forces to consider for a full understanding of poverty in the Philippines. Moreover, the important role of empowering and capacitating poor persons to help them get themselves out of poverty is another process to consider in this discussion. However, this article aims to put to the fore a critical factor that is often obscured in discussions of causes of poverty and of ways to help people get out of poverty: the social psychology that underlies the privileged social position of the wealthy (or non-poor) vis-à-vis the poor sectors of society.

Pratto and Stewart (2012) referred to the “half-blindness of privilege.” As poor people are identified and marked as the “problematic” group in society that deserves people’s concern and assistance, it is often neglected to describe the contrasting group (i.e. rich and all non-poor persons) and their superior social position in an unequal and hierarchical social system. It is argued that the unmarked situation of the dominant wealthy groups suggests that their status and social dominance should not be problematized. Their social position of privilege may entail an implicit assumption that this privilege is normal, and that social dominance, superior social position and greater social agency are not considered privileges.

The normalizing of privilege in an unequal society is likely to give rise to similar cognitive distortions about the problematized group. As such, poverty in the Philippines may be partly due to how some Filipinos in higher socioeconomic groups think about poverty and poor people. People’s stance about how to help poor people relate to particular ways of perceiving, feeling and thinking about poor people and about the reason they are poor. When thoughts about poor people generalize negative qualities or attributes to all poor people, there is prejudice against poor people, and prejudicial thoughts about any group are not likely to motivate pro-social actions towards the group. Indeed, prejudice is more likely to motivate inaction or even harmful actions towards the target group. But specific forms of prejudice about poor people may

also motivate seemingly helpful actions that actually assist poor people in ways that do not actually help poor people get out of poverty. This article discusses how beliefs regarding intergroup hierarchy and how social dominance motives may be associated with prejudice against poor people. It aims to understand the social psychological processes and the factors that may give rise to these beliefs and thoughts, in order to discern how to deal with the effects of these potentially harmful implicit and invisible psychological processes. To address this objective, this article covers the following: (a) the theoretical lenses from social cognitive psychology that define the basic arguments; (b) observations regarding negative attitudes or prejudice against poor people and attributions of poverty; (c) the process by which social cognitions related to poverty and privilege constrain people's thoughts about solutions to poverty; and (d) solutions to correcting the potentially harmful effects of these social psychological processes.

CONSTRUCTING POVERTY AND PRIVILEGE: THEORETICAL LENSES

The focus of this article is how Filipinos in higher socioeconomic groups perceive, think about, and relate to poor Filipinos and how they understand poverty, its causes, and solutions. This focus draws from the basic approach in social cognition which seeks to understand how people process, store and use information about other people and other groups of people, and how these cognitions influences people's behavior, feelings, and social interactions with other people and groups. Thus, constructions of poverty are likely to shape cognitions and behaviors related to how wealth is distributed in Philippine society or how social inequalities are maintained in Philippine society. There are some social psychological theories of intergroup relations that can make sense of these attitudes, attributions and other social cognitions related to poverty.

The first theoretical approach draws from the role of the social dominance motive in intergroup relations. Social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) is premised on the observation that most social collectives are hierarchical in structure and that people have different orientations towards these social hierarchies. The theory proposes that people differ in their social dominance orientation (SDO) or in the motive to accept group-based social inequalities and maintain the hierarchical and unequal relationships between groups. Research in various countries have shown that SDO is strongly associated with prejudice towards lower-status groups (Fischer, Hanke, & Sibley, 2012). More importantly,

members of higher status groups have stronger SDO and the relationship between SDO and prejudice is stronger for individuals who are members of advantaged social groups (Sibley & Liu, 2010). The stronger relationship between SDO and prejudice among members of higher status groups is also associated with support for social policies that serve to maintain and intensify the group-based social hierarchies (Levin, Sidanius, Rabinowitz, & Federico, 1998). These studies have pointed to the important role of social dominance motive as a factor that contributes to privileged individuals' prejudice against lower-status groups, and their attitudes and actions towards bridging the group-based social hierarchies.

The social cognitions of members of privileged social groups towards social hierarchies can also be understood from the theoretical lens of norm theory, which may explain why rich people can be blind to their privilege as dominant group members in a highly unequal society even as they are aware of the disadvantage of poor people. Norm theory (Kahneman & Miller, 1986) proposes that people implicitly view particular groups as normal and that people construction of the "difference" of other social groups is with reference to the normal group. Applying the norm theory to understanding social cognitions about dominant and subordinate groups, research has shown that when asked about difference between these two groups, people typical referred to stereotyped features of the subordinate group more often than on features of the dominant group (Hegarty & Pratto, 2001). The ascription of norm to a particular social category is implicitly achieved through abstraction of mental representations of different social experiences. In hierarchical societies, members of privileged groups know more about their own personal conditions and social experiences, especially as media and social institutions present their experience and points of view more often than other social groups (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). Thus, the implicit cognitive norms for social groups that develop refer to the privileged groups' experiences. These social category norms result in the conflation members of the normal dominant groups' their identities and experiences as that of the entire society (Leach, Snyder, & Iyer, 2002).

A third theoretical lens is system justification theory (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), which assumes that people are motivated by the need to affirm the legitimacy of the current social system and to see the system as being fair and just. Rationalizing the status quo and accepting inequality as just and even inevitable is an expression of this motive (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Research has shown that the system-justifying motive predicts tendencies to believe in myths that legitimize inequality between social groups (Schmader, Major, Eccleston,

& McCoy, 2001), thereby stereotyping lower status group to rationalize status difference between groups especially when there are perceived threats to the system (Jost & Hunyady, 2002).

The last theoretical lens draws from the lay theories approach to intergroup relations. Lay theories are sets of beliefs that people have about humans, groups and societies that are often intuitive and implicit but provide strong guides to how people perceive, understand, and relate to other individuals and groups (Levy, Chiu, & Hong, 2006). There are many different intergroup lay theories; this article considers meritocracy and Protestant work ethic. Meritocracy refers to a set of beliefs that assume that there are limited rewards in society and these rewards should be allocated based on merit, talent, and performance; people who enjoy more social rewards and higher social status do so because of meritorious reasons (Jost, Blount, Pfeffer & Hunyady, 2003). Protestant work ethic refers to the belief that hard work leads to success, and reciprocal success is achieved through persistence and hardwork (Levy, West, Ramirez, & Karafantis, 2006).

Lay theories not only provide cognitive frames to make sense of why some people are successful and enjoy greater social rewards, but they also explain and justify why there is inequality. These lay theories imply that people or groups are unsuccessful (i.e. enjoying less social rewards) because they are not meritorious, are not hardworking, and deserve less in society. Research shows how belief in these lay theories is consistently associated with negative attitudes towards and blaming of lower status groups (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). This consequently implies that a group's relatively lower status and one's negative attitudes towards low-status groups (Levy et al., 2006), and the belief in the unequal social system is justifiable (Ledgerwood, Mandisodza, Jost, & Phol, 2011). The assumptions of these theoretical approaches are applied in this article to understand anti-poor cognitions and behaviors of some Filipinos who belong to the higher socioeconomic classes.

POVERTY-RELATED ATTITUDES

“The poor are not really nice people. They’re ignorant, they’re distrustful, they’re the biggest snobs one can find, they are ungrateful... And they’re balasubas (rogues)...Matumal (slow) and then they take advantage... They feel they’ve a right; they have a mendicancy attitude... That’s their attitude and it prevents them from raising themselves up [Quote #5: Prominent Chinese-Filipino businessman]” (Clark & Sison, 2003).

“You just look at the way your maids treat you. If they break a dish, they will hide it in the garden. If you ask for it, they will say ‘I don’t know where it is’. And if the neighbour [offers] her five pesos more, she will leave [to work for the neighbor] and say ‘my mother is sick’. She’ll never tell you ‘I need more money. I need a raise’. Isn’t that the way they behave” [Quote #7: Socialite](Clark & Sison, 2003).

The two quotations were taken from interviews of 80 members of the Philippine elite in the study of Clark and Sison (2003). The quotations are not representative of all survey respondents, but they were chosen to exemplify how some members of the privileged sectors of society hold rather extremely negative views about poor people. Not all rich people hold such negative views about poor people. The social psychological question is “What factors underlie such negative beliefs in some people?”

Recent studies point to the effect of the social dominance motive in the negative attitudes of Filipinos from higher socioeconomic groups. In two studies (Bernardo, 2013), Filipino respondents from higher socioeconomic groups who had higher SDO were more likely to hold negative attitudes towards poor Filipinos compared to near wealthy and middle-class Filipinos. This was observed in both the cognitive and affective dimensions of these attitudes. On the cognitive dimension, those who had higher SDO were more likely to ascribe negative stereotypes traits to poor Filipinos (e.g. lazy, undisciplined) and were less likely to ascribe positive traits (e.g. humble, friendly). On the affective dimensions of attitude, those who had higher SDO were less likely to feel empathic emotions (e.g., sympathy, compassion) but were more likely to feel colder and more negatively towards poor persons. Consistent with the assumptions of social dominance theory (Levin et al., 1998), the relationship between SDO and attitudes towards poor people were only observed in the participants from higher socioeconomic groups. The social dominance motive did not predict attitudes among participants from lower socioeconomic groups.

Other studies (Bernardo, 2012) found consistent patterns of personal perception judgment when comparing a poor person who had become wealthy to wealthy person who had become poor. Respondents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds consistently rated the person who became wealthy as being more competent, socially adroit, and virtuous compared to the person who became poor. There were more negative ascriptions of the person who became poor compared to those who became rich among the study respondents

who also held strong meritocracy beliefs. Thus, the belief that social rewards should be reserved for those who are talented and who perform well tends to amplify the negative attitudes towards people who fall down the socioeconomic ladder.

There are three important features of the above studies showing expressions of negative attitudes towards poor Filipinos. First, the negative attitudes were manifestations of prejudice against a group of people and negative perceptions generalized to a group of individuals whose only common characteristic was the fact that they did not have much money. Second, the negative attitudes seemed to arise from motives and beliefs that are known to be associated with the acceptance, justification, and maintenance of social inequality (i.e. SDO, meritocracy, Protestant work ethic). Thus, this prejudice towards poor Filipinos may be a manifestation of motivated social cognitions related to the tacit approval and rationalization of social inequality. Third, this prejudice and associated social motives and beliefs are observed mainly among Filipinos from higher socioeconomic groups who occupy more privileged positions in the hierarchical society.

ATTRIBUTIONS OF POVERTY

“The difference between the wealthy mindset from the poor mindset: Rich people believe ‘I create my life.’ Poor people believe ‘Life happens’” (<http://bosanchezwisdom.blogspot.com/2012/02/bo-sanchez-quotes.html>).

“What separates rich people and poor people is how much wisdom they’ve applied in their lives” (<http://bosanchezquote.blogspot.com/>).

“Permanently poor people blame their poverty on everything else but themselves. And it’s so easy to do that. But if you keep blaming your financial condition on things outside yourself, you’ll never become rich” Sanchez (2007).

The three quotations have one important point in common: they all blame poverty on the characteristics of poor people themselves. The first two implicate the beliefs and lack of wisdom of poor people; the third disapproves of the attribution of poverty to external causes and the alleged unwillingness of poor

people to take responsibility for their plight. The quotations come from the writings of Bo Sanchez, a person who has devoted his work to helping poor people in the Philippines and is most certainly not a person who might be motivated to distance himself from poor Filipinos. This fact, however, underscores the point that even people who have the sincerest intentions towards helping poor people may hold prejudiced beliefs about the poor.

There have been studies that inquired into how Filipinos attribute the causes of poverty, and these studies generally show that Filipinos from different sectors of society have an appreciation of the structural causes of poverty; that is, survey studies have indicated that Filipinos tend to attribute the causes of poverty to factors external to the poor person. This is true in surveys of poor Filipinos who generally refer to family circumstances (Tuason, 2008), availability of jobs (Generalao, 2005) and other societal factors as causes of the current financial situation. External attributions of poverty that refer to historical antecedents, government policies and inability to provide basic services along with business practices and corruption are also typically mentioned by anti-poverty activists (Hine, Montiel, Cooksey, & Lewko, 2005) and by Filipinos from the elite sectors of society (Clarke & Sison, 2003). However, the Filipino elite are also likely to make internal attributions of poverty, describing this state as being caused by personal qualities of poor persons such as laziness, fatalism, and lack of ambition (Clarke & Sison, 2003). Related to this form of internal attribution of poverty are references to “culture of poverty” that ascribe a subculture among poor people characterized by shared dysfunctional values, beliefs, and behaviors such as the lack of ambition or aspiration, propensity to engage in high-risk behaviors, fatalism, feelings of helplessness, and dependence. This culture of poverty seems to be the mindset that Bo Sanchez was referring to in the three quotations cited above, and such mindset actually embodies negative stereotypes that blame poor people for their poverty. However, the conception of a culture of poverty is not actually supported by the evidence (Gorki, 2008). Various studies among poor Filipinos have pointed to strong achievement orientations and self-efficacy (Obligacion, 2004), perseverance and shared agency (Tuason, 2008), optimism, intention, and effort directed towards finding jobs (Generalao, 2005) as inconsistent with the culture-of-poverty perspective. The culture-of-poverty attribution is probably best seen as a myth composed of stereotypes about poor people (Gorki, 2008).

So why do these culture-of-poverty myths and this tendency to blame poor people for their plight persist? Research suggests that similar motives and

beliefs associated with the acceptance and justification of social inequalities may be important explanatory factors. A recent study (Bernardo, 2013) found that SDO was a significant predictor of the tendency to view internal and culture-of-poverty attributions as causes of poverty; but this result was found only among Filipinos from higher socioeconomic groups. Consistent with assumptions of social dominance theory, the acceptance of social inequality and the desire to maintain their dominant position in the social hierarchy motivates the tendency to blame poor people and to ascribe a subculture of poverty which rationalizes the subordinate position of poor people in Philippine society. Recent research (Bernardo, Levy, Lytle, & Luo, 2015) also have also shown that belief in the Protestant work ethic (i.e. hard work leads to success) is positively associated with endorsement of stereotyped traits that blame poor people for their plight (e.g. undisciplined, lazy). This result provided further evidence to how lay beliefs that justify intergroup inequalities may shape Filipinos' social cognitions of poverty. The same social motives and beliefs that motivate prejudice against poor people in the Philippines are associated with poverty attributions that tend to blame poverty as being caused by poor people themselves.

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOLUTIONS TO POVERTY

“Although it may sound elitist to you the fact is this country is built on the foundation of haves, have-nots and wannabes. One group will never get the culture of the other... and frankly I don't want to be someone to bridge the gap between socioeconomic classes. I leave that to the politicians in my family who believe they can actually help” (Fernandez, 2007).

This quotation from a Filipino lifestyle columnist is a rather bald-faced statement of indifference and may be read as an extreme point-of-view that does not represent the sentiments of most other wealthy Filipinos. However, what can be seen in this statement is how the acceptance of social inequality is taken as a matter of fact, and that this assumption serves as the premise for the columnist's lack of any interest in bridging the socioeconomic gap. This point-of-view may not be that isolated. A survey by Pulse Asia (2013) pointed to marked differences in how the wealthier and poorest sectors of Philippine society perceive the most urgent national concerns. In particular, compared to those from the lowest

socioeconomic group, those from the highest socioeconomic group were much less likely to consider poverty-related issues as being of urgent concern. Considering the significance of the following issues--controlling inflation, improving/increasing pay of workers, creating more jobs, and reducing poverty of many Filipinos—it is quite curious why wealthy Filipinos were 9% to 13% less likely to consider these as urgent national concerns than the poorest Filipinos. If attitudes towards poor people and attributions of poverty among Filipinos in the higher socioeconomic groups seem to be motivated by social dominance and other inequality justifying lay beliefs, it seems reasonable to infer that similar motives and beliefs may also underlie some wealthier Filipinos' apathy towards the plight of poor persons and their unconcern about socioeconomic inequalities. Unfortunately, there seems to be no available Philippine research to clarify the social cognitive processes that can explain perceptions and attitudes towards anti-poverty policies and programs. However, there are relevant studies in other countries that show how these similar social dominance motives and beliefs that justify social inequality are associated with opposition to social programs and policies that favor low-status social groups (hierarchy-attenuating policies) and with support for programs and policies that favor high-status groups (hierarchy-enhancing policies) (Cozzarelli et al., 2001; Rosenthal, Levy & Moyer, 2011; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). It would be important to investigate whether these same factors influence support or opposition for anti-poverty programs in the Philippines.

Interestingly, culture-of-poverty beliefs may also be motivating a different set of attitudes and approaches regarding helping the poor. It can be recalled from the study of Bernardo (2012) that people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds consistently rated more positively the person who became wealthy compared to the person who became poor. That study also showed that belief in the culture-of-poverty tended to weaken the negative ascriptions of the person who became poor. The culture-of-poverty belief seemed to dispose the respondents to have more positive ascriptions of persons who become poor. Such is the opposite of the influence of belief in meritocracy. Thus, although culture-of-poverty beliefs expressed rather negative views about the poor, the belief may not ascribe the negative qualities on poor persons themselves but on a sociocultural situation. The culture-of-poverty belief, therefore, may not be a simple internal attribution of the causes of poverty on the individual person; instead, the culture-of-poverty attribution might actually recognize how the poor person's agency is inextricably linked to aspects of his/her social environment.

Attitudes regarding programs to help the poor could also be understood within the frame of helping among non co-equals. The relationship between the helper and the recipient is an inherently unequal relationship: the recipient is dependent both on the helper's goodwill and resources (Nadler, 2002). Thus, when wealthier Filipinos try to help poor Filipinos, the hierarchical relationship between these two groups in society may be echoed in the helping relationship. But what may be important is the orientation of how the Filipino in higher socioeconomic groups choose to help the poor. Social psychologists differentiate between dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented help (Nadler, 2002). Dependency-oriented help provides a full solution to the problem and indicates the helper's assumption that the recipient cannot help himself or herself. In the long run, this form of help intensifies the unequal hierarchical relationship between the helper and target and further promotes dependency. Perhaps, more importantly, dependency-oriented help may be seen as the helper's implicit assertion of dominance and control over the recipient. In contrast, autonomy-oriented help provides partial and/or temporary solution to the problem and indicates the helper's assumption that the recipient can actually handle the problem himself or herself if given some appropriate tools or assistance. Previous research showed that dependency-oriented help was more likely to come from individuals who were high in SDO (Halabi, Dovidio, & Nadler, 2008). The divergent opinions regarding programs to help the poor may be based on whether people perceived it as dependency-oriented or autonomy-oriented help.

The preceding arguments on the relationship between social motivations, lay theories, and beliefs and approaches to helping poor people are mainly speculative. Future research may be conducted to directly explore the role of social motivations and beliefs in determining who would support or oppose particular programs and policies to combat poverty. Research could also reveal how social motivations and beliefs might predispose Filipinos to support one type of anti-poverty program but oppose another type. The influence of these social motivations and beliefs may be seen not only in programs that directly assist poor people (e.g. increasing minimum wage; controlling the price basic commodities and public transportation) but also in policies that seek to reduce social inequalities such as those that involve wealth redistribution (e.g. progressive taxation), building of assets for the community and investment in human capital (e.g. strengthening basic education; improving access to health services).

HUMAN AND SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

How do these ideas point to possible solutions to the problem of poverty and social inequality in the Philippines? The direct solutions will take the form of economic policies for inclusive economic development, and improved governance at all levels and interventions that empower both individuals and communities to be active agents in combating social inequality. This article tries to present answers to why there are Filipinos who do not support such policies and instead oppose efforts to bridge the widening socioeconomic divide in Philippine society. It tries to present answers to why there are Filipinos who do not even think that poverty is a problem that needs to be addressed.

As the opening quotation suggests, poverty persists in society because there are people who wittingly or unwittingly conspire to maintain the unequal distribution of wealth and resources in society. This conspiracy is founded on some very basic social psychological concepts: the acceptance of social inequality and social hierarchy as normal and legitimate; the motive to preserve one's dominant status in this social hierarchy, which means keeping others in their subordinate status; and the use of an array of beliefs to justify one's dominant status and others' subordinate status and to rationalize the legitimacy of the whole system that maintains the social hierarchy. It would be wrong to assert that the correcting these motives, beliefs, and attitudes in Filipinos from the higher socioeconomic groups would solve the problem of poverty and social inequality in the Philippines as the solutions need to be structural and multidimensional. But it is an undeniable fact of Philippine social life that policy decisions that can impact on the lives of many people are made by those from the privileged sectors of society. The country's decision makers in government, industry, and even in the non-government sector are over-represented by Filipinos from higher socioeconomic groups, and it would not be surprising that many of them would display the problematic social psychological motives, beliefs, and attitudes.

Now we can consider some human solutions that may contribute to the transformation of motives, beliefs, and attitudes related to poor persons and to poverty. The suggestions will focus on the following broad themes: (a) pro-poor mindsets, (b) educating privilege, and (c) shaping of institutions, with some specific suggestions within each theme.

PRO-POOR MINDSETS AND MINDFULNESS

Psychologists primarily work with individuals, and the first cluster of human solutions discussed relates to being mindful about the implicit social motives and beliefs that may or may not be helping the poor. It is very likely that these social motives and beliefs are not always made explicit, but they exert powerful influence on people's actions and dispositions. The first step towards developing pro-poor mindsets and transforming anti-poor mindsets involves making the implicit explicit by exposing any implicitness and by making people more conscious of their mindsets, motives, and beliefs. With appropriate levels of mindfulness, transformation of mindsets can then follow. Psychoeducational interventions, campaigns in media and schools, and various informational programs can promote more pro-poor mindsets, motives, and beliefs. What need to be considered are three of these beliefs that should be prime targets of exposure and transformation: poverty myths, prejudice against the poor, and hierarchy-enhancing policies.

Rethinking the Myths of Poverty in the Philippines

In all human societies, important social problems are viewed from the perspective of discursive frames that are articulated and negotiated through society's various institutions. Similarly, individual Filipinos' views and stances regarding poverty are likely to have been shaped by how their parents and relatives talk about the poor, how their schools may or may not have engaged them in understanding the causes of intergenerational poverty, how news and entertainment media contrive portraits of the lives of poor people, how religious organizations frame appropriate actions towards poor people and how government presents and rationalizes options to deal with the problem of poverty. The same social institutions also provide perspectives on wealth, privilege and social status; these perspectives may or may not make references to poverty, unequal distribution of social resources and hierarchical social relations.

In this regard, social psychologists can help Filipinos in all sectors of society by critically engaging the various poverty-related discourses in Philippine society. Perhaps the most important critical stance should be directed towards discourses that ignore the long-standing social inequalities in Philippine society, and normalize and justify the privilege of the economic

and political elite. In concrete terms, the aim should be towards greater critical awareness and willingness to interrogate all forms of poverty-related discourses. When elected politicians speak of programs for poor families and communities among constituencies, people should be willing to ask why the politicians' own families are becoming richer when their constituents remain poor. When religious leaders preach about being charitable and helping the poor, one should be willing to inquire about the vast real estate and financial holdings of religious organizations. When news and entertainment media dish out stories of how their companies serve poor people by giving away huge prizes and by granting their wishes, viewers should be willing to query about how much income from advertisement such shows earn for their organizations and how many requests from poor and needy people are systematically rejected in the process of producing their shows because the requests may not have the desired entertainment values. People need to ask such critical questions because the myths of poverty are often created and sustained by individuals, groups, and institutions that enjoy the privileges that come with being members of the dominant social sectors of Philippine society. As the social psychological research suggests, beliefs about poverty and wealth are closely linked with motives, some of which might be largely self-serving on the part of those who seek to maintain and justify their privileged position in Philippine society.

Reducing Prejudice

The myths about poverty are often crystallized in stereotypes about poor people. Many of these stereotypes are negative – that poor people are lazy and undisciplined, have no aspirations, expect dole outs and can be made to do anything (including vote for a particular candidate) with minimum compensation. Some of the stereotypes may be positive – that poor people lead uncomplicated but happy lives, have simple views of the world, are trusting and have a pure heart, and have a strong spirit that allows them to endure their harsh circumstances with a smile. Such stereotypes are perpetuated by the same social institutions that frame the discourses on poverty in Philippine society, and are likely to be accepted and internalized by Filipinos in middle and upper socioeconomic classes who have little or no meaningful interactions with poor people. It is easy to indulge in such stereotypes when one's interactions with poor persons are limited to seeing beggars in the streets,

viewing petty criminals on news programs, and watching two-dimensional romantic characters on television and movies. Indeed, there are very limited opportunities where the haves and have-nots of Philippine society can even meet. Poor and rich persons live in markedly different communities located in well demarcated geographic spaces. Poor people commute in public transport systems while the rich commute in their private vehicles. Poor people eat and purchase their material needs in different types of eateries and stores from the rich. Poor families send their children to public schools, and the children of the rich go to private schools or to schools in other countries. Within the social bubble where the privileged Filipinos live, it is easy to construct their personal experiences as the norm and to problematize the experiences of poor people in stereotypical terms.

As these stereotypes are mere perceptions, they are likely to be benign most of the time. But stereotypes can be socially harmful if the negative stereotyped perceptions become hardened prejudices that motivate apathy and even discriminatory acts towards poor people. When the maid or the driver routinely become the first suspect when something is misplaced or lost in the household, that is a clear act of discrimination based on prejudice. Prejudices against poor people may motivate refusal to do simple acts that provide short-term relief to poor people. When someone says, “Huwag ka nang magbigay ng limos, at malamang ay ibibili lang yan ng alak o itataya sa jueteng” (Don’t both giving money to poor people, as that would most likely be used to buy liquor or to make a bet), the sentiment is premised on prejudice. At a societal level, skepticism over government policies and private sector programs to help poor people might also be partly based on deeply held prejudices, as when land reform policies are rejected on the notion that the farmers are likely to lose the land given to them anyway because they do not have the capacity, motivation, and wherewithal to keep their farm lands productive.

Prejudices become even more harmful to society if they are used to justify current social inequalities, to blame poor people as solely responsible for their plight and to resist even the thought that Philippine society could ever be less unequal. Prejudice against poor persons has complex negative consequences, and as such, social psychologists should find ways to reduce these stereotypes, and to build more constructive and respectful representations of the different poor communities in Philippine society. Contact theory (Brown & Hewstone, 2005) and other social psychological theories have provided conceptual guides and empirical evidence that suggest ways for minimizing intergroup

stereotypes and prejudice. At the core of these suggestions is increased contact between the target and the holder of stereotypes in intimate, cooperative, and co-equal status interactions. In their own way, private schools that hold community immersion activities with their students try to implement these principles. However, such activities need to involve truly cooperative activities, not only those where one group helps the other. The premise in such forms of contact is that individuals from the different social groups learn more detailed information about each other, and when such detailed information become more cognitively available and salient, they can be used to contradict the stereotypes and also to build a better understanding of group differences.

Guarding against Hierarchy-Enhancing Policies

There are many policies and organizational reforms that would be effective in helping poor persons escape from poverty. Nonetheless, economic development planners also point to the need for more inclusive economic development policies, especially as the country's economy grows at a faster rate which might exacerbate economic divides. In this regard, poverty reduction policies should also indicate how economic growth would benefit poor people. Anti-poverty policies are not limited to those that provide direct assistance to poor people; they also include economic policies that expand the opportunities for and capabilities of poor people to raise their income and productivity. There are also policies that involve forms of economic redistribution to minimize huge income and wealth disparities. More importantly, there are economic development policies that may actually impair the poor's capacity to work themselves out of poverty or restrict the opportunities for them to do so.

Theories and research distinguishing between hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating policies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) suggest that social dominance motives and system-justifying beliefs are likely to be associated with support for the former and with opposition to the latter. We need to be more careful in considering various anti-poverty programs as they may actually involve hierarchy-enhancing elements. Similarly, any policy at any level might actually have hierarchy-enhancing features, even if they do not explicitly refer to poor people. As the Philippines continues in its upward economic development, there should be greater vigilance against implicit motives that might push towards policies that unintentionally create more social inequality. As with Filipino discourses about poverty and prejudices about poor people,

there should also be greater mindfulness about the implicit social motives and beliefs related to our stance about policies that directly or indirectly relate to poverty and social inequality.

EDUCATING PRIVILEGE

The research reviewed point to the potent influence of social dominance motives and system-justifying beliefs among Filipinos from the higher socioeconomic groups. Such findings are consistent with research and theory that shows how individuals born into privilege are likely to normalize their own experiences as members of dominant social groups in their society and are also more likely be motivated to maintain and to justify their privileged status in society. Fortunately or unfortunately, most of the leaders and decision makers in the Philippines come from this privileged sector of our society, so educating persons of privilege in the Philippines can have important social impacts.

Educating privilege should begin with making privileged people aware of their own privilege by creating greater awareness and understanding of social inequalities in the Philippines and of the social processes that create and maintain these inequalities. Beyond awareness, persons of privilege can be educated on egalitarian ideals and values; in other words, persons of privilege should be educated to problematize their own privilege and aim to develop stronger empathy for the less privileged members of Philippine society. Some researchers on the psychology of privilege have began exploring the development of “ally identity” by encouraging reflections on privileged and oppressed social identities in unequally social relations (Coston & Kimmel, 2012). Ally identities refer to stronger appreciation of social identities associated with different status social groups, and this leads to greater opportunities for activism, behaviors and beliefs that do not conform with privileged social identities and/or greater empathy for less privileged social groups. These efforts to educate the privileged towards more egalitarian motives, beliefs, and behaviors are still in their earliest exploratory stages and have not focused on socioeconomic privilege (Case, Kanenberg, Erich, & Tittsworth, 2012). More research needs to be done to understand educational programs and other forms of intervention that might work in the Philippine context. Fortunately, many exemplars of Filipinos from very privileged backgrounds who are very active allies of poor Filipinos, and their personal education and social development can serve as good models for how to educate the privileged.

SHAPING INSTITUTIONS BY MATCHING INDIVIDUALS

Social institutions play a great role in shaping discourses that may promote social dominance motives, system-justifying beliefs, and other hierarchy-enhancing ideas. As such, it is expected that some institutions may be inherently and possibly more consistently hierarchy-enhancing in their goals and activities (e.g. financial and other profit-oriented organizations) while others might emphasize more hierarchy-attenuating goals and activities (e.g. human rights and public welfare organizations) (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, & Levin, 2004). Other organizations seem to express contradictory tendencies, and the Catholic church of the Philippines seems to be a good example. There are members of the Catholic hierarchy in the Philippines who have dedicated their mission to being one with the poorest communities in the different parts of the country, even joining in movement to resist oppressive forces from the powerful sectors of society. But other members of the same Catholic hierarchy seem more inclined to enjoy the entitlements of being revered representatives, being party to various hierarchy-enhancing processes within the church community, maintaining exclusive and elitist schools and church-related lay organization, and even taking roles as courtiers of the most powerful.

It would be interesting to observe which types of organizations and which sectors within large social organizations play a more visible and active role in shaping public discourses and government policies. However, it should be kept in mind that these institutions are actually led and staffed by individuals whose social motives, dispositions and values may or may not converge with the organizations' own goals, and values to different degrees. One would expect that there is a lot of self-selection that takes place in the human resource complement of the various types of organizations where organizations recruit individuals that share similar values and where individuals also seek to work in organizations that would also allow them to express their personal values (Sidanius et al., 2004). As individuals stay in the organization, they continue to be socialized into the values of the organization and eventually are even made to contribute to the shaping of the organizational values. But organizations can and do change. Recent movements for corporate social responsibility, for example, have shown how businesses which are essentially hierarchy-enhancing in their motives and meritocratic in their internal processes can redefine their goals to include more egalitarian ideals. We now hear of businesses where the goal is no longer to increase profit and market share at all cost but where there is an explicit attempt

to redistribute profit in some way. These shifts in the emphasis of business are likely pushed by groups of individuals in leadership positions of the businesses supported by like-minded personnel. The motives of such businesses are probably still not as hierarchy-attenuating as community-based cooperatives are; indeed, some cynical observers would conjecture that corporate social responsibility is just another way of getting tax breaks to increase profits. However, one can see how more egalitarian-oriented people (or low SDO individuals) may be drawn to such organizations in the hope of building and strengthening the hierarchy-attenuating programs and activities of the organization.

The national government is perhaps the biggest organization that is supposed to address the problem of socioeconomic inequality in the Philippines. Unfortunately, we have continued to elect people and have witnessed the appointment of people who are half-blind to their privilege and who are motivated to maintain, enhance and justify their privilege. These people execute their official government functions in ways that further promote hierarchy-enhancing policies and ignore or oppose policies that have the potential to attenuate the entrenched social hierarchies. When these elected and appointed leaders act to help the poor, the help is typically dependent-oriented help that fits the template of patronage designed to keep poor people perpetually poor and beholden to the socioeconomic and political elites of society. However, there are exceptions when communities organize themselves to resist the candidates of the entrenched powers and rally behind alternative candidates who represent a more egalitarian vision for their communities, daring to go against the self-selection of personnel in government (i.e. the cynical view that only corrupt persons are attracted to government service). If ever there will be a real hope of transforming the national government to be more responsive to the needs of the growing numbers of poor Filipinos, it would have to come from the election of a critical mass of individuals guided by pro-poor motives and beliefs and by the vision of a non-hierarchical Philippine society. This article, however, falls short of prescriptions on how to get such individuals actually elected into office but instead approaches the end with that signal of hope.

CONCLUSION

Solving the big problem of poverty in the Philippines will require a whole package of government policies supported by private sector programs and

initiatives – policies and programs that aim to create opportunities and build assets and capacities among poor people to help themselves escape from intergenerational poverty. This article calls attention to various discourses that are often obscured in anti-poverty discussions that ignore the persistent social inequalities within which poverty is socially located. These obscured discourses relate to those who are not poor and to those who may even want to help the poor. There is a need to surface these obscured discourses because policies to fight poverty are not being pushed with more resoluteness as many Filipinos who may be in the position to push for these policies are actually holding implicit motives, beliefs, and attitudes that make them more likely to oppose or to simply ignore these anti-poverty policies.

But with this rather cynical belief comes a solid dose of optimism. From the empirical and theoretical expositions, the article proposes some general suggestions on how to target these implicit motives, beliefs, and attitudes that may be transformed. Perhaps the social psychology of the privileged Filipinos could be transformed so that they can be allies of Filipinos living in poverty in their own attempts to improve their lives and to contribute productively to the building of a nation that is not divided by socioeconomic differences.

AUTHOR NOTE

Preparation of the article was supported by a research grant from the Research Development and Administration Office of the University of Macau (Grant No.: MYRG2014-00099-FSS).

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From Institutions to Persons? Responding to Bernardo

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Bernardo's article *Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: Social Psychological Dimensions of Socioeconomic Inequalities in the Philippines* attempts to provide not only an explanation why poverty and social inequality in the Philippines continue to persist but also some potential solutions to such socioeconomic problems. What is unique in his approach is that, as a psychologist, he locates the causal explanation not in the unjust institutional policies and rules or the inability of the Philippine government to address these problems. Instead, he particularly locates the cause of poverty and social inequality in the social psychological attributes of individuals, most particularly the attitudes, biases, beliefs, and motives of the privileged class in the Philippine society. For example, he points to the attitude and belief of the rich towards the poor as "ignorant and distrustful," "lazy, fatalistic, lacking in ambition" (p. 6). All of these not only blame the poor for their own difficult and miserable condition but also tend to normatively justify the social and economic positions of the privileged class. No wonder, Bernardo surmises, many privileged Filipinos holding positions in the government or otherwise refuse to actively push for anti-poverty programs. As such, Bernardo concludes that combined with other social processes, the social motives, beliefs, and attitudes of the rich toward the poor have significantly contributed to the persistence of poverty and social inequality in the Philippines. Strangely though, he is quick to add that this

apparent causal relationship is mainly “speculative” because “there seems to be no available Philippines research to clarify the social cognitive processes that can explain perceptions and attitudes towards anti-poverty policies and programs” (p. 7). From here on, Bernardo proposes possible “human and social solutions” to the problem of poverty and social inequality in the Philippines, all of which are anchored in the goal of transforming the motives, beliefs, and attitudes of the privileged class towards the poor and poverty. Concretely, the solutions include 1) developing pro-poor mindsets; 2) educating the privileged; and 3) shaping institutions through individual actions (p. 9-12).

Bernardo’s “social psychological” approach is not unsurprising given his background as a social psychologist. Although the negative stereotypes towards the poor in general and the poor Filipinos in particular are not uncommon, and therefore, are not new, what is interesting is the way Bernardo highlights the crucial role that social psychological processes play in the persistence of poverty and social inequality. Bernardo’s main argument is that, contrary to the claim of some social scientists, poverty and social inequality are not merely structural problems. They are not simply about unjust social, economic, and political structures such as unjust policies, rules, and other institutional arrangements that trap individuals from being able to live a decent and dignified life. More importantly, underlying the issues of poverty and social inequality are the personal dimensions. This means that the negative attitudes, beliefs, and motives of individuals, mainly the privileged class, towards the poor can affect their behavior in dealing with the issues of poverty and social inequality. Such can happen either directly, as when a rich person refuses to touch a poor man’s hand because it is dirty, or indirectly, as when the rich, being a member of an institution, design, develop, support, and promote (or otherwise) anti-poverty programs. Given this constellation, the roots of poverty and social inequality are not simply traced back to structures and institutions but more importantly to personal conduct, beliefs and motives. Consequently, it can be logically claimed as well that the solution to these problems does not only require the reformation of unjust structures and institutions but more importantly the transformation of “negative” personal attitudes, beliefs, and motives.

Interestingly, this approach stressing the role of personal quality, or better yet, personal conduct (which is an expression of personal attitudes, beliefs, and motives) in understanding and addressing poverty and social inequality finds resonance in discourses on social justice, at least in the field of ethics and political philosophy. Contrary to John Rawls (1999) who limits the primary subject of

justice to the “basic structure,” political theorists like G.A. Cohen (2000) and Liam Murphy (1998) put the effects of personal conduct or personal choice at the center. Cohen, for example, argues that because individuals have self-seeking attitudes, their personal choices must not be left “unregulated.” He suggests, then, an ethos of justice which can promote social justice more than what the rules of economic games can secure by themselves. As such, personal conduct cannot be disregarded in the issue of social justice. While concern has to be given to transforming unjust rules, policies, and other institutional arrangements, equal (or greater?) concern should likewise be given to decisions, judgments, attitudes, and dispositions of individuals. Making normative judgments on structures or rules must not lead us to turn a blind eye to making normative judgments on individual interaction. While the former mainly points on broader, macro view of social processes, that is, the moral evaluation and judgments of rules, policies, and institutions, the latter is concerned with issues on how people treat one another in more direct ways or with the choices they make within institutions.

Nevertheless, it has to be made clear that Bernardo is not at all concerned with normative judgements of individual actions towards the poor. Being a social scientist, what he does is only describe how the social psychological attributes of individuals, particularly the privileged class, namely their attitudes, prejudices, and beliefs about the poor, contribute to the persistence of poverty and social inequality in the Philippines. Normatively speaking, the utility of Bernardo’s psychological account is scant. In fact, it tries to avoid normative vocabularies, say, terms such as justice, injustice, oppressed, oppressor, morally right or morality wrong. More seriously, it does not explain why the “internal attributions” or negative stereotypes towards the poor such as lazy, fatalistic, and lacking ambition are morally wrong or morally unacceptable. Are these normatively wrong because they contribute to the persistence of poverty? Or are these labels wrong because they tend to reduce the poor into objects? Yes, he makes references to notions of harm or negative consequences of these prejudices, but he only regards them as mere facts and therefore, stops short of saying that negative stereotypes are indeed morally wrong. In fairness to Bernardo, these normative questions may not really be the concern of his paper. What he does is simply to describe the role that social psychological factors play in the persistence of poverty and social inequality. His primary concern is to find a causal relation between the prejudice, disposition, attitude, motive, and beliefs of the privileged class and the persistence of poverty and social inequality and to suggest possible “human and social solutions” to these problems. However,

I wonder if it would be sufficient for Bernardo, just like any social scientist, to be only concerned with questions of what is and dismiss questions about the ought to given that he also recognizes the need to address poverty and social inequality. Why would he propose “human and social solutions” if there is no implicit acknowledgement that poverty and social inequality are morally wrong and unacceptable?

Although Bernardo’s account tends to be weak at the normative level, theoretically, it still serves a particular purpose in that it complements with philosophical discussions about how the cause of poverty and social inequality can be traced back to personal dimensions. Employing a psychologizing strategy, it provides what Axel Honneth (1995) calls a “naturalist explanation” to the cause of poverty and social inequality. Bernardo particularly applies this psychologizing strategy, not to the poor who are, normatively speaking, the victims of injustice. Rather, he applies this strategy to the agents who are responsible for the persistence of poverty and social inequality. In other words, he describes particularly the social psychological make-up of the agents of injustice or the oppressors, in this case the privileged class in Philippine society. However, such psychologizing strategy might not be necessarily that straightforward as it seems to be the case.

Part of the human solutions that Bernardo proposes is the development of pro-poor mindsets and transformation of anti-poor mindsets through critical engagement with the rich so as to make the implicit explicit and through various institutional measures involving the media and educational sector. However, I wonder up to what extent this can be effectively carried out. Bernardo seems to be overly optimistic in his suggestions such as exposing the anti-poor mindsets of the privileged class, problematizing their own privilege, “psychoeducational interventions, campaigns in media and schools, and various informational programs.” The question is whether these measures would automatically transform the privilege class’ minds, prejudices, and negative stereotypes towards the poor. It appears that Bernardo paints a very simplistic account here, ignoring the potential problems that these “psychological” campaigns could face. This leads me to my next point.

What would it take for a rich person to change his anti-poor attitude to pro-poor attitude? What would push him to transform his/her “selfish” mindset? Granted that individuals can change their mindsets, what is missing in Bernardo’s account is an adequate explanation of the compelling reasons that would make people change their behavior and attitudes towards the poor.

The point is that before people change their minds, they have to be able to see, understand, and be convinced with the reasons why they have to change their mindsets. What will change their mindsets? And why do they have to change their minds? This is where questions about normativity become a very important factor. The rich privileged class should be convinced first why their prejudice and negative stereotypes towards the poor is wrong, and therefore, have to be changed. Convincing them might not only require rational justifications but also non-rational ways, say, by evoking their feelings and emotions. Yes, Bernardo points to the harmful effects of negative stereotypes, like apathy towards to poor, discriminatory acts, and other negative consequences. But I wonder if these are indeed sufficient to make the rich privileged class change their anti-poor hearts and minds.

Finally, the desire to develop pro-poor minds and transform anti-poor minds seems to operate within a distorted view of the human person. Human beings, particularly the rich privileged class, are treated like patients that suffer from a disease, and as such the task of the social psychologist is to provide the treatment through some kind of ideological (Maoist?) re-orientation or through constant policing of their minds. However, wouldn't this be guilty of inadvertently and unnecessarily categorizing the rich privileged class as commonly having only negative stereotypes towards the poor? To what extent does it leave room for respecting the individuality and uniqueness of people? Moreover, wouldn't the re-orientation programs of transforming the rich "distorted" minds and values be guilty of being illiberal and tyrannical? To what extent can it leave room for respecting an individual's autonomy?



From Social Consciousness to Radical Political Action: A Response to Allan B. I. Bernardo's Social Psychology of Poverty

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At the outset, I want to make my position clear that I share Allan B. I. Bernardo's social psychology of poverty, which, as I see it, is expressed most visibly in his attempt to promote socio-economic equality in the Philippines by way of poverty reduction. The burgeoning poverty in the Philippines is indeed an urgent issue that demands serious consideration. In fact, this is an interesting research theme that has drawn considerable attention from several young Filipino scholars, especially in the field of "development studies" construed more broadly. I therefore commend Bernardo's contribution to this scholarship given the perspicacity of his noble intention.

Yet, certain issues relating to the practicability of his proposal and his reluctance to come to grips with real causes of poverty have to be dealt with squarely—at the end of it all I have to engage in this tussle of showing how much (or rather how less?) Bernardo has done justice to the issue of reducing, if not completely eradicating, poverty in the Philippines to the minimum. My response to Bernardo will focus on these two points. On the one hand, I argue that the alternatives he offers to the problem of poverty in the Philippines appear to be untenable. As we can see, while he clearly warns his readers that his main intention is to explain why there are Filipinos, especially the elites and non-poor, who do not only support but oppose pro-poor economic policies, attitudes which, for him, only hamstrung real development, he offers in the end seemingly

conclusive alternatives. This is problematic as it confuses sham causes of poverty with real ones. On the other, Bernardo's reluctance to come to grips with real causes of poverty as a result of his privileging of the social consciousness (i.e. pro-poor mindset) of the rich or non-poor as the key to poverty reduction has not only pushed real alternatives to the background but also "depoliticized" the real agents of social transformation, that is, the poor people themselves. Thus, my take on the issue on poverty reduction in the Philippines begins where Bernardo ends. To speak very simply, while I agree with Bernardo that social consciousness plays out decisively in addressing the problem of poverty in the country, I argue that it has to be sought not in the consciousness of the rich or the non-poor but in the poor themselves, and that this consciousness needs to be pushed further to the point that it mobilizes them for radical political action. Let me briefly develop my position.

It might be worthwhile to remind ourselves here about the key intuition of Bernardo's paper. As we can see, the paper aims to investigate the nature and dynamics of poverty in the Philippines from the angle of social psychology, and argues that one of the reasons why poverty persists is that "pro-poor policies" have not been pushed by the rich or non-poor Filipinos. As a matter of fact, Bernardo holds that the social motives, beliefs, and attitudes of these privileged Filipinos make them more likely to oppose pro-poor policies. Bernardo then suggests some ways on how to target motives, beliefs, and attitudes that would make Filipinos become pro-poor. Here, Bernardo appears to be deeply influenced by Anthony F. Lemieux and Felicia Pratto's contention that poverty ultimately stems from social relations. Then, following Carlos Celdran who argues that the elites could have pulled the country out of poverty but failed to do so, Bernardo tasks himself on demonstrating how it could be practicably done by suggesting some alternatives that draw inspiration from social psychology. Although Bernardo acknowledges the fact that his thesis is just one of the many important factors that cause poverty, the manner upon which he presents his solutions to the problem appears to be conclusive; that is, he sees it that if we had only instilled in the mind of the Filipinos some kind of "pro-poor mindset," which I view as a kind of "social consciousness" (of the privileged Filipinos), then we could have solved poverty and social inequality in the country. To my mind, this is problematic not only because it runs the risk of oversimplifying the highly complex problem of poverty, but also because, as already mentioned, it confuses sham causes of poverty with real ones. More importantly, Bernardo's approach fails to analyze poverty from the needed socio-historical and politico-economic

perspectives, the proper context upon which we can make sense of the problem more meaningfully. As a result, Bernardo's social psychology of poverty suffers from practical and theoretical deficit that resulted in the offering of piecemeal solutions to the already deeply ingrained problem of poverty in the Philippines as well as the privileging of the rich and non-poor. For sure, social consciousness is crucial to national economic development; however, contrary to Bernardo's position, I argue that it has to be sought not from the privileged Filipinos but from the direct victims of injustice themselves that is, the poor and marginalized. This is precisely because the rich people do not only have the tendency to be elitist and self-serving, as Bernardo clearly demonstrates in his paper, but also because they will never fully understand the plight of the poor for the simple reason that they do not concretely experience poverty on their knees. As a matter of fact, we cannot expect the rich people to be "pro-poor" and push for "pro-poor policies" given that they are enjoying some kind of social leverage that they are afraid of losing. If we remind ourselves of the historical development of the welfare state in the West, certain pro-poor mindset was introduced not because the elites wanted to address poverty but simply because they were afraid of rebellion. In other words, such pro-poor mindset was not meant to really solve the problem of poverty and promote socio-economic equality but simply to appease the recalcitrant "poor," which resulted in the acquiescence and depoliticization of the poor themselves. I want to read Bernardo's social psychology of poverty from this vantage point.

WHAT THEN IS THE BEST ALTERNATIVE TO THE PROBLEM OF MASSIVE POVERTY IN THE PHILIPPINES?

First, we have to remind ourselves that the kind of poverty that we know today emanates from the situation of "scarcity" in the olden times. In the distant past, human beings had the difficulty of finding the means of subsistence given that Nature had not provided them with the kind of structural and organic connection to the environment that was granted to other living beings. Thus, human beings had to work long and hard in order to survive in order to simply put food on the table, clothes on their skin, and shelter over their heads. And since, again, society in the past did not have enough means to support the life of its members without work on their part, it must see to it that the number of these members is restricted and their energies directed towards productive work. To me, this is the socio-historical context of the widely accepted view that the poor are "poor"

because they are lazy—because they do not work productively—one that is not captured in Bernardo's social psychology of poverty. However, as we can see, the advancement of science and technology has already successfully answered the problem of material necessity. In fact, scarcity is in theory overcome with modern production. Thus, we could rightly say that the advancement of science and technology has already put an end to material scarcity and that poverty could have been eliminated. But today's economic system of (over) production and lavish, and seemingly unlimited consumption, maintain the prevalence of a massive and unbending scarcity through the creation and valorization of artificial needs, which constitute a new justification for the old demand that working and consuming individuals obey and conform to the dictates of society. In the advanced industrial society, the procurement of basic needs is no longer a problem, but it is the manner in which these material needs are distributed and utilized. For how can we justify the prevalence of dire poverty in both developed and developing countries given the unprecedented achievements in science and technology? How can we make sense of scarcity amidst massive abundance even in modern societies? For sure, poverty, which is the historical form of "scarcity" specific to old civilizations, is a human creation. It is the direct result, albeit unintended, of the manipulation of the world's resources by the rich and powerful nations to their advantage. As Walden Bello rightly puts it, poverty and other related social problems have resulted more from the global economic framework that is imposed on developing countries by the dominant and powerful countries. In the case of the Philippines, like any other formerly colonized territories, material scarcity is compounded by the forces of economic globalization, such as the transnational corporations, IMF, World Bank, and World Trade Organization that demanded for the restructuring of the Philippine economy for their own advantage. To explain in great detail the reason why poverty can be ultimately traced back to economic globalization is not my concern in this short response to Bernardo, but I think it suffices to say at this point that the structural transformation of the Philippine economy as a result of the invasion of these forces of globalization is the root cause of poverty in the country. I argue that this should be addressed first before we can meaningfully talk about other factors that may have contributed to the problem of poverty such as corruption, overpopulation, management issues, and even social psychology of poverty.

Now, if poverty is a human creation--that is, a product of social and historical construction--then it can be fully eliminated. But because eliminating

poverty is a Herculean task, I do not pretend to possess the key that would finally resolve the problem. I believe that the best alternative begins with a clarification of the method to be used in diagnosing social pathology of poverty, rather than with offering prefab solutions. To be specific, in order to come up with practicable and historically informed means of addressing poverty, one needs to inquire thoroughly into the problem and understand the manner in which it arises. This is because a thorough understanding of the problem and its possible resolution can only be fully worked out through a holistic engagement with the problem per se. Thus, to respond to the social pathology of poverty without explaining the manner of its emergence in full, as Bernardo did, is to remain absolutely on the fringes. Bernardo's intentional focus on only one aspect of the highly complex problem of poverty in the Philippines, as already mentioned, not only obfuscates the problem but suppresses real alternatives. Bernardo's critique of the social pathology of poverty in the Philippines would have made more sense had it been focused on the analysis of the internal contradictions immanent in the problem itself, contradictions that have been compounded and entrenched by the forces of economic globalization. On a practical level, the theoretical insights that would have resulted from this analysis should enable the poor who are the direct victims of economic globalization and the real agents of development to take a very schematic view of the problem, which allows them to become conscious of their plight. I believe that this social consciousness is the key to real development and to poverty reduction in the Philippines, inasmuch as our full knowledge of the concrete historical situations of poverty in the Philippines would make the poor become disposed to radical political action that will finally lead to a collective radical action aimed at the transformation of this pathological society. And this task has to be worked out by the poor themselves as the real agents of social transformation. We may doubt the capability of the poor to liberate themselves from poverty, but this is only so if we remain to be politically naïve, if we remain elitist in our political outlook. If only the privileged Filipinos do not allow themselves to be blinded by their intellectual arrogance, then they would see hope in the millions of poor Filipinos who struggle for the recognition of their basic demands and deep-seated claims. Thus, the least that the privileged Filipino people can do is help politicize the poor and allow them to have more freedom to conceptualize and formulate the practicable alternatives for themselves rather than promote some kind of pro-poor mindset. This is precisely the reason why, as I argued above, that social consciousness has to be sought not from the rich and non-poor, as Bernardo would have us believe,

but from the poor themselves. This social consciousness, however, should not remain on the level of theory. It has to mobilize the poor for radical political action. Indeed, it is only through these politicized and empowered masses that we begin to witness the dawning of true human flourishing in the Philippines.

On Poverty, Privilege and Prejudice: The View from Mindanao

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Taking off from the sober analysis of how social relations cause poverty (Lemieux & Pratto, 2003) and the more incendiary 2007 blog post by cultural activist, Carlos Celdran, Allan B.I. Bernardo embarked on a series of inquiry into the attitudes, social motives, and beliefs held by the privileged in Philippine society, especially as these are implicated in their cognition and perception of the poor among us. Over the years, Bernardo has faithfully reported the progress of his research on poverty, privilege and prejudice at the annual conferences of the Psychological Association of the Philippines(PAP) and the bi-annual conferences of the Asian Association of Social Psychology (AASP), as well as in other professional and academic fora. At each presentation, he enthralled his jury of peers with his creative methodologies at measuring social distance or parsing vignettes for the polarity of value judgment on justice across social classes. He seriously interrogated his subject matter while at the same time painlessly instructed practitioners of the discipline on novel ways to calibrate. His work fascinates so much so that the mere act of evaluating his questionnaires is enough to make one volunteer to answer them.

In his newest article, he put his findings in the context of relevant literature to bolster his conclusion: The attitudes, social motives and beliefs held by the privileged in Philippine society work to defeat any genuine effort

at poverty alleviation towards a more equitable wealth distribution that would bridge the ever-widening gap between the very few who have and the overwhelming multitude who have not. Bernardo argued that the problem is relational; thus he proposed for the application of social psychological treatment to transform the motive, beliefs, and attitudes of the privileged towards their poor relations.

Bernardo's article comes at a time when there is yet a "distinct lack of basic theory regarding the psychology of social change currently capable of serving as a framework to guide social scientists" (dela Sablonniere, Bourgeois, & Najih, 2013). To compensate for this lack of a unifying framework, Bernardo valiantly spliced three theoretical lenses to explain the inertia and resistance to social change, and he did so with some measure of success.

AN END TO SOCIAL CLIMBING?

It often is the case that social inequalities result from unequal opportunities and access to what society recognizes to be of value. People gravitate to locate themselves in subgroups among those they perceive to be of similar status to themselves, yielding in-group/out-group dichotomies that bound their emotional investment in identification and belongingness to their respective categories. Thus, for example, Bernardo finds that the higher income group would look more favorably on the poor who became wealthy than on the wealthy who became poor. It is a question of who left the group and who needs welcoming, who belongs and who does not.

Social hierarchies are a fact of life. This is not a system-justifying pronouncement intended to mean we all should throw in the towel at alleviating conditions of poverty. This is to recognize that social hierarchies persist in any society. The stability of social order is maintained as a function of adherence to norms and values that members of a society strive to attain (Parsons, 1964). If it is not about angels and demons, it could very well be about money or the lack of it.

It is when social scientists try to assert a horizontal reading of vertical data that we bring on a humongous headache on ourselves. The rigid social stratification in the Philippines is indicated by the unchanging inequality of wealth distribution that persists even when, as Balisacan's (2012) paper pointed out, economic conditions have taken a turn for the better. The

proposal to erode the rigid social stratification is a proposal to render the social system unstable, even when it is done with much optimism that perhaps the system would seek its balance with the least disturbance.

Because the ever-widening divide would breed deprivation, resentment, and conditions for societal implosion, the proposed change is indeed compelling in that it portends to be the only way to go. However, this would require a cautious management of directed change, as too dramatic a change may pose unintended, uncontrolled consequences (de la Sablonniere, et al., 2013).

Bernardo reads it right that efforts at poverty alleviation would need targeting crucial players in the hope that they would buy into the proposition to level the playing field somewhat. Up to a point, we do agree. But first, we need to clarify points he made on rethinking the myths of poverty, obliterating prejudices, and reworking helping relationships.

SIDESTEPPING THE MYTHICAL ARGUMENT

A further examination of Bernardo's suggestions yields some questions that have been inadequately answered, perhaps because the brevity of this paper prevented a fuller exploration. In his section on Rethinking the Myths of Poverty in the Philippines, the critical questions he posed do not so much allow the reader to grasp the myths and rethink them as they encourage him or her to embark on a mission to unmask the hypocrisy of super rich politicians, media moguls, church people, and institutions that ostensibly profess to redistribute wealth. This section should provide suggestions on how to recognize and then to counteract the stereotypical attributions of poverty held by people of privilege.

Perhaps though the more problematic aspect of this paper is its unwarrantedly narrow definition of the culture of poverty. The reader can infer that it is related to fundamental attribution errors that indicate poverty to be a life-long affliction and not a temporary state. Thus, the ensuing discussions focus on only one attribution of poverty, that is the perception of the rich regarding the poor's motivation to work. One may very well ask: Are there other dysfunctional values, beliefs, and behaviors that get in the way of poor people raising themselves above their current plight?

Take the cyclical phenomenon of the poor being party to vote-buying come election time. Despite efforts at political education directed at the

bigger mass of the Philippine electorate, such consistent behavior of the poor points to a stubborn refusal to muster the considerable power of their sheer number to dictate how elections could swing to their advantage. Instead of heeding the long-term societal consequences of their individual actions, they choose to prioritize instant gratification. Such a consistent pattern hints at a static social identity that no amount of electoral education could seem to shake. Subašić, Reynolds, Reicher and Klandermans (2012) proposes that social change happens when group members attempt to redefine their social identity. Until the poor find it relevant to redefine their present and future social identity and perhaps extend the timeline on the projection of the consequences to their present actions, it does appear that they remain willing accomplices to the retention of the oppressive social hierarchy in our society.

BREAKING DOWN SOCIAL DIVIDES

Contact theory is indeed useful in prescribing distance-reducing interventions to break down prejudices across social divides. By observation, however, there may be more factors at work in the Philippine society that sustain prejudices or at least maintain the rigid boundaries of the divide. For example, a family driver may stay in the employ of a rich man all his adult life. In this position, the contact is so close over a long period of time, and yet, like a line drawn with indelible ink, the divide is likely to remain. While the driver's knowledge of his employer is likely to grow more intimate as their relationship persists, it is very seldom that the rich man is motivated to get to know his employee on a personal basis enough to identify with the driver's hopes and dreams, his pain, helplessness and frustrations. Contact theory perhaps presumes the process of identification a bit too much. Unfortunately it does not come automatically.

The limits of contact theory in significantly reducing the divide and fostering more egalitarian relations may be addressed by recently emerging peace building interventions. The use of dialogue, oral histories and cooperative convergence – or collective actions - may be directions to go in order to augment gains from the application of contact theory.

We observe in Mindanao that intergroup dialogue has gained ground in thawing relations and in getting various sectors to work together for community security, peace, and development, especially in what used to be conflict-affected areas (Ilagan, 2010, p. 15). For his part, peace advocate Rudy

Rodil encourages the retelling of Mindanao history to explain the roots of social inequalities in Mindanao. Indeed, an individual's understanding of his group's history is a crucial tool to influence his motivation for social change (Huang, Liu, & Chang, 2004).

As a matter of standardizing education in the Philippines, the young of Mindanao are educated on a Luzon-based norm of Philippine history that consigns the Mindanao experience to the margins. The retelling of Mindanao history to students in Mindanao fosters their adoption of a shared history, renders meaningful the intercultural and interreligious tensions that they can feel, and becomes the basis for interrogating the rightness and usefulness of present social relations in attaining their generation's aspirations for peace, harmony, and inclusivity regardless of cultural and religious differences. In the grassroots, we observe that the retelling of oral histories becomes the start of residents negating social divides as people unite on a common concern: to chart another chapter in their history--one that preserves peace and prevents the escalation of armed confrontations in their midst (Ilagan, Batican, & Limbadan, 2011). The shared role of telling the history accomplishes the task of mutual identification.

HELPING RELATIONSHIPS ARE A TWO-WAY STREET

Overall, Bernardo's marching order for educators and practicing social psychologists is compelling for its guidance on what to target for intervention when working with the privileged and getting them to care about the poor. It is, however, silent on what we should target when working with the poor. How do we prepare the poor to engage the kind of interventions that would be initiated by the enlightened privileged we hope to breed? When autonomy-oriented poverty alleviating initiatives proceed from new motives, beliefs and attitudes, these are likely to translate into new expectations in the poor's response to these initiatives. Thus, preparing the poor would just be as important as preparing the rich, if we hope for the helping relationship to be more hierarchy-attenuating. From one of the previous points, can something be said here about helping the poor establish that identity which allows them to project the consequences of their current actions to the future?

For educators, in particular, who judge whom to anoint with the privilege of education, there is a need to consciously encourage the bias for social conscience and social responsibility over the student's knee-jerk sense of

relief at his/her comparative advantage given his family's economic resources. It is perhaps a natural adolescent trait to be obsessed with one's own social desirability, but with a little patience, the young can be guided to look beyond themselves and see themselves in others. It is the Ateneo way to form "persons for others." Framed that way, it is sometimes hard for the student to see that those who are not him/her are not really "others," and so there is a need to go beyond the sloganeering and get to the heart of the sentiment. As the U2 song goes: "There is no Them. There's only Us."

AN AGENDA FOR SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS IN MINDANAO

Nomothetic techniques of inquiry--such as used in the studies Bernardo referred to--tend to collapse chunks of categories. While their conclusions apply at a general level, they may fail to highlight the nuances and details of the phenomenon in question as they manifest in peculiar cases.

While reading this paper, we could not help but think about the poor of Mindanao where most of the ten poorest provinces in the country are (Gallarde, 2014). Mindanao's poor are unquestionably among the poor in the Philippines that this paper refers to, but they are also a class on their own. As a significant number of the Mindanao poor hopes for the passage of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), the privileged classes of the Philippine society seem to close ranks to keep them down. One only has to listen to the bitter diatribe of anti-BBL senators and the cacophony of social network abuse heaped on the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and even on the government negotiators for allowing the talks to progress to this point, when those who have not gone down south may anticipate a life that approximates the cultural privileges considered to be the norm in our society. The lopsided public discourse intimates at a normative view towards preserving the social hierarchy that disfavors the Mindanao poor. That lopsided public discourse aimed at determining the fate of the Mindanao poor is happening where the Mindanao poor cannot hear it.

Rather than give this up as a lost battle, we personally see this as an opportunity especially for social psychologists practicing in Mindanao to chip away at the unexamined prejudices of our countrymen, many of whom have never been to Mindanao or have seen a Muslim village that has been repeatedly beset by human-initiated disasters. The onus on us here is, indeed, to use every means at our disposal to present the human face of the Mindanao

poor and to make this the compelling argument for why those who have the influence should use their privilege in transforming community conditions into those which affirm the dignity of the human person.

AUTHORS NOTES

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The Privileged and The Poor: Friends or Foes?

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Allan Bernardo has written a stimulating article on poverty and the mindset of the privileged class. His aim is “to put to the fore a critical factor that is often obscured in discussions of causes of poverty and of how to help people get out of poverty: the social psychology that underlies the privileged social position of the wealthy (or non-poor) vis-à-vis the poor sectors of society.”

Bernardo discusses four theoretical lenses that show as far as the privileged class is concerned that poverty is never a question of injustice and exploitation. Thus, the privileged class believes that they have no responsibility to the poor. The social psychology of the privileged class reveals a mindset that blames the poor and denies oppression. If my reading is correct, the author wants to tackle the anti-poor mindset of the privileged class. Can the members of the privileged class become an ally of the poor? The author writes, “Perhaps the social psychology of the privileged Filipinos could be transformed so that that they can be allies of Filipinos living in poverty in their own attempts to improve their lives and to contribute productively to the building of a nation that is not divided by socioeconomic differences.”

How can one transform the mindset of the privileged from anti-poor to pro-poor? One solution the author mentions is educating the privileged. He writes, “Persons of privilege should be educated to problematize their own privilege and aim to develop stronger empathy for the less privileged

members of Philippine society.” The author suggests that “educating privilege [sic] should begin with making privileged persons aware of their own privilege – by creating greater awareness and understanding of social inequalities in the Philippines and the social processes that create and maintain these inequalities.”

Educating the privileged to change their mindset to becoming pro-poor requires resources, time, and committed mentors. Educating the privileged will need mentors (e.g. teachers) who are passionate and dedicated to justice cause. It will also need a curricular design that will nurture pro-poor awareness with critical understanding of social inequalities. I know some schools and universities that have introduced courses or programs of community immersion with the goal of changing the values and attitudes of the students toward the poor. I agree with the author that research is needed to determine the impact of such program. My observation is that only a handful few become allies of the poor from such program.

An important observation one can make of the Philippine educational system is the dominant role that private schools have played and continue to play at the tertiary level. Private schools most likely reinforce the ideology of the privileged class. Schools are the instrument of the privileged class to maintain their hegemony in society. Elite schools educate the members of the privileged class. Students from middle and poor families, after attending private schools, often imbibe the values and attitudes of the privileged class. The school system is an ideological apparatus of the privileged class that props up the iniquitous social system.

I have one critical question that requires clarification from the author. Can the privileged class be transformed into an ally of the poor without a class standpoint and class conflict perspective?

A pro-poor class standpoint simply means the opposite of the privileged or bourgeois standpoint. It is neither a paternalistic nor humanitarian standpoint. It is a standpoint that is in solidarity with the struggle of the oppressed. It involves reflecting on social, cultural and political injustice and how and why such injustice has come into existence. Moreover, a pro-poor class standpoint is a mindset that focuses on restructuring power-relations by empowering working-class. This mindset requires a structural understanding of power relationships between the powerful and the poor. A genuine pro-poor mindset is an emancipatory consciousness.^[1] Thus, it will be a threat to the consciousness of the privileged class.

1 Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).

Educating privilege will take the form of conscientization, which means knowing and understanding the real and concrete struggles of people who are oppressed and exploited.^[2] Conscientization stresses the importance of obtaining an authentic and sympathetic understanding of the people's life situation through actual lived experience with them. The goal of conscientization is to raise the awareness among the poor that there is a need to educate the members of the privileged class. That is, for the privileged to understand the situation of the poor, they have to share the experiences of the poor- their pain, aspirations, and struggles to overcome poverty.

Educating the privileged to be pro-poor implies solidarity with the poor in their struggle for emancipation. The privileged class must be confronted and challenged by the poor. So, when some members of the privileged class become allies of the poor they have to prove that they are one with the struggle of the poor. They have to use their resources and power to subvert their social and political relationship by empowering the poor and distributing wealth (e.g. paying their workers decent wages, encouraging them to form union, strengthening participation, and distributing their land to support genuine land reform). With conflicting interest, the privileged class will not voluntarily surrender their class interest. An example is the history of the labor movement which shows that it was the struggle of the poor workers that compelled the state and owners of industries to surrender some of their "management prerogatives." Moreover, I do not think those members of the privileged class who ally themselves with the struggle of the poor will be welcomed by the majority of the privileged class.

Poverty is not just an economic issue but a justice issue. Poverty is not just a problem of low economic growth (i.e. enlarging the pie) but primarily a problem of wealth distribution (i.e. inclusive economic growth). A growing economy by itself, like the Philippines, is no solution to the problem of poverty. With the high and rising inequality in the Philippines, an expanding economy will do little to improve the well-being of the poor.

The massive poverty in Philippine society is a symptom of the social contradiction and injustice. Conflicting class interests will inevitably characterize the struggle to overcome poverty in the Philippines. The struggle of the poor for justice is a struggle against injustice and oppression. The privileged class cannot be expected to restructure a system that would negate their class interest.

2 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970).

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Broadening Psychology Discourses on Poverty and Connecting with Conversations on Social Change

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Social psychologists in the Philippines have been engaged in research, advocacy, and development work related to a variety of societal problems, even working with marginalized and oppressed sectors of Philippine society. Several reviews of Philippine psychology research indicate that social psychologists are the most active group of psychology researchers in the Philippines, accounting for the largest percentage of publications in psychology research (Bernardo, 1997; 2012). Clearly, Filipino social psychologists have shown a strong commitment to using the tools of psychological science to understand and address the various issues in Philippine society. Yet, the same reviews note how psychology research has tended to be descriptive, with limited theorizing – social psychological theories often invoked after the fact to interpret data related to some social problem or issue. Even research reports that describe social development programs typically do not reference social psychological theories, and instead reference social development discourses in other disciplines (sociology, economics, political science, community development, and so on).

The same is true about Philippine psychology research related to poverty. Published research tended to focus on descriptive analysis of attributions of poverty (Generalao, 2005; Hine, Montiel, Cooksey, & Lewko, 2005; Tuason, 2008) and anti-poverty programs that draw from discourses from sociology

and development studies (Ortigas, 2000). It is in this context that the target article, "Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: Social Psychological Dimensions of Socioeconomic Inequalities in the Philippines" (Bernardo, 2015) was developed. The goal was to extend the theoretical space for social psychologists to engage the problem of poverty and socioeconomic inequality in the Philippines. The comments and discussions on this article by active scholars both within and beyond the discipline of psychology make important critical observations that invite further and deeper reflection on how social psychology in the Philippines can engage the important problem of addressing poverty and social inequality in the country. The four commentaries make numerous excellent points and for this, I thank the authors for their thoughtful reading of the target article. However, I focus only on a few points to move forward the conversations among social psychologists and other scholars in social development.

APPROACHES TO STUDYING POVERTY AND ITS SOLUTIONS

There is no scarcity or inadequacy in Philippine discourses on the nature and causes of poverty and on approaches to help poor people lift themselves out of poverty. For example, as suggested by Ocay (2015) in his commentary, poverty should be understood with a socio-historical perspective where scarcity of resources has been addressed in different ways by evolving and competing economic systems in the history of the Philippines and the rest of the world. Both Aguilan (2015) and Pilapil (2015) remind us about the social structural dimensions of poverty, as well as the moral/normative assumptions that are implicit in judgments that relate to the structures and social rules that contribute to and/or maintain poverty. Closer to psychology, Ilagan and Gonzalez (2015) underscore the important role of social identities in shaping how groups of people define their aspirations and actions in societies that have many divisions, and remind us about this important dimension in both understanding poor people and approaches to solving the problem of poverty. These insightful approaches have to be added to the rational approaches proposed by economists and economic development policy makers, and each of these approaches points to meaningful methods or schemes to solving the problem of poverty ranging from consciousness raising efforts (Ilagan & Gonzalez, 2015) to radical political action (Ocay, 2015).

The different approaches to studying and to addressing poverty underscore the limited scope of the proposed social psychology of poverty

and privilege that was the focus of the target article (Bernardo, 2015); but the different approaches also point to the limitation of each approach advocated no matter how strongly researched or argued. It would be a mistake to read the target article as theorizing about the most important factor that contributes to poverty and social inequality in the Philippines, and even bigger mistake to read the proposed “human and social solutions” as the panacea or the conclusive solution to the aforementioned problems. Instead, the human and social solutions proposed should be read as an attempt to find ways of dealing with the social motivational roots of the attitudes and behaviors that might be at the base of some privileged Filipinos indifference to the problem of poverty. In other papers, we have pointed out the need for social psychologists who engage in the work of social change to theorize and to engage different actors who have conflicting social roles, perspectives, and motivations shaped by cultural knowledge and sociohistorical processes (Bernardo & Liu, in press; Liu & Bernardo, 2014). Even as we advocate for a social psychological approach to social change, this approach should not be seen as an effort that is separate from the broad and complex efforts towards meaningful social change.

The commentaries from scholars from different disciplines point to the richness of engaging in different discourses about poverty as this interdisciplinary conversation reminds each one of us about the limits in our respective discourses and of the need to draw from each others insight to expand the options for solving the problems of poverty and socioeconomic inequality. These conversations would hopefully inform policy discussion that are presently mostly informed by the theories and assumptions of economists and constrained by what may be cynical presumptions of political tacticians. Indeed, while it is important for scholars and advocates to have strong convictions regarding their own approaches to discoursing and advocating on the problem of poverty, there is a greater need to draw insight from the widest variety of approaches about the problem, and this is more likely to happen with more interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary conversations.

PRIVILEGING THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF PRIVILEGE?

One of the most important common themes in the four commentaries relates to the question of the value of addressing the social psychological processes of the privileged sector of Philippine society. On the one hand, the commentary of Aguilan (2015), and Ilagan and Gonzalez (2015) seem to appreciate the focus

on the privileged but see the problematic and narrow aspects of this approach. Pilapil's (2015) commentary poses important questions related to theorizing about the privileged as a social and conceptual category, and Oca's (2015) commentary argues that the focus on the privileged members of society "not only obfuscates the problem but suppresses real alternatives" (p. 219).

In narrowly defining the scope of a scholarly argument, there is an inherent danger of coming across as suggesting that the points raised are the only important insights and that the solutions suggested are the best alternatives available. I hope that those who will read (and re-read) the target article would avoid that dangerous interpretation, and instead note the attempts to clarify and to locate the limited scope within the larger more complex analysis of the problem of poverty and socioeconomic inequality in the Philippines.

So why focus on the social psychology of privilege? In a policy forum I attended a few years ago, a leading Philippine economist presented different economic development options for the Philippines and carefully pointed to those that would create inclusive growth and those that would exacerbate current socioeconomic inequalities. Believing that the option for inclusive economic development is the obvious choice, I had to ask the question as to who is making these policy decisions and why they are not choosing the path of inclusive growth. In so far as those policy options are concerned, it is the decision makers (who are not poor) who are calling the shots (or who choose not to do so). For the reason that many big and small decisions that related to the allocation and/or restriction of limited resources are made by privileged persons in Philippine society, there is some value understanding and calling attention to the social psychology of privilege and to proposing some solutions to correct some of the problematic aspects of the same.

However, I acknowledge that it is tempting to read these proposed solutions as paternalistic and even elitist. Indeed, by focusing solely on the psychology of privilege, the target paper may be seen as inviting the inference that it is the privileged who shall solve the problem of poverty. Such an inference would be wrong, and in hindsight, the target paper should have been more explicit in taking a clearer position against elitist and paternalistic notions. As Oca (2015) forcefully argues, the social consciousness of poor people that would lead to the framing of alternative actions and futures for themselves is a most important component to solving the problem of poverty. Ilagan and Gonzalez (2015) more concretely problematize the same point with reference to how poor persons and those in other marginalized sectors can be engaged in more

hierarchy-attenuating social roles, relations, and engagements. Aguilan (2015) raises this issue to an even higher level of complexity by inquiring into how privileged persons can not only understand the situation of the poor but attain “solidarity with the poor in their struggle for emancipation” (p. xx). Aguilan (2015) proposes that the “privileged class must be confronted and challenged by the poor” and the members of the privileged class “have to use their resources and power to subvert their social and political relationship by empowering the poor and distributing wealth...” (p. 231). In this regard, I thank the different commentators on the target article for providing a more complete perspective within which to appreciate the social psychology of privilege.

But I also wish to make a rejoinder to the preceding point. I would like to underscore that in the various social psychological theoretical lenses proposed in the target paper, the social motivations that relate to social hierarchies are characterized as being shared by people across social categories (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar & Levin, 2004). The target paper did not discuss this point, but a reading of the original theoretical sources (i.e., social dominance theory, system justification theory, intergroup theories) would indicate that people in the subordinate social categories (e.g., poor persons) also share in similar motivations, cognitions, and behaviors, but in differing degrees. The theories underscore the point that the social motives related to social dominance, maintenance of hierarchies, and legitimization of social systems are powerful because they are consensually shared. Thus, in contrast to approaches that seem to assume a class-struggle discourse, according to these social psychological theories, both dominant and subordinate groups participate in the legitimization and maintenance of hierarchical social systems. Within these theoretical lenses, which are also supported by rather extensive empirical data, there are also very real constraints and challenges to consciousness raising and empowering of poor persons who may actually see the system as legitimate – a point that only Ilagan and Gonzalez (2015) seem to appreciate in a truly substantial way.

HUMAN SOLUTIONS: HOW REALISTIC ARE THESE?

All the commentators also posed valuable observations and critiques regarding the human and social solutions proposed in the target article. Although Oca's commentary (2015) does not see these solutions are relevant and useful, the other commentators question their viability and effectiveness. Pilapil (2015), for

example, is skeptical about the effectiveness of psychoeducational interventions that target anti-poor mindsets. The skepticism is not without basis, given that the target article does not provide very specific details about the design and elements of such interventions. Pilapil correctly notes that changing mindsets is not a simple matter of switching off one and switching on another. Fortunately, the problem of changing minds has been a long-standing focus of psychology research and theory, and the pertinent psychology literature can point to some very useful leads in this regard (Hewstone, Rubin & Willis, 2002; Rabinowitz, Wittig, Von Braun, Franke, & Zander-Music, 2005; Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008; Sidanius et al., 2004). Ilagan and Gonzalez (2015) actually make reference to contact theory in their commentary, which has been the basis of numerous effective interventions. But clearly, there needs to be more precise and concrete research work in the Philippines about what would make such psychoeducational interventions work.

Pilapil (2015) also raises questions about the nature of psychoeducational interventions for the rich privileged class; in particular, concerns about what may seem likely ideological re-orientation or indoctrination that does not respect individuals' autonomy. He also inquires into whether such programs unnecessarily categorize the rich privileged class. These concerns are important to raise and provide a good opportunity to further clarify how social psychologists theorize and conceptualize interventions. Regarding unnecessarily categorizing all rich privileged people into a class with only negative stereotypes of poor people, we should clearly state that the target article does not claim nor assert that all rich and privileged people have the same set of motivations, thoughts, and behaviors regarding poor. Indeed, the social motives, attributions, and other social psychological constructs referred to in the target paper are pitched at the individual level, and vary across individuals in any group. Thus, although there are group differences observed (i.e., between higher and lower socioeconomic groups), these are average differences and there are variations within the groups. Second, psychoeducational interventions typically involve information, information frames, and options that may influence or nudge individuals' thoughts and actions one way or another. Human thought and behavior are complex processes that are embedded within dynamic social processes; as such, indoctrination programs are only likely to be effective if the individual is isolated or insulated from these other powerful social influences.

In connection to the last point, Aguilan (2015) poses very good questions regarding how psychoeducational interventions embedded within the proposal

can educate the privileged. Writing like a seasoned social psychologist, Aguilan notes that there are group or class interests and motives that arise from their very social position within a social system that supports their privilege, and as noted in the target article, that normalizes their privileged worldview. As a concrete example, Aguilan refers to the elite private schools that educate most children from the privileged class and how their institutional processes “is an ideological apparatus of the privileged class that props up the iniquitous social system” (p. xx). Would such schools have the inclination and wherewithal to undertake the education of the privileged in ways that cause them to undermine their own role in the unequal system? Would rich students who come to develop solidarity with the poor be treated as class traitors and be treated as such in their schools? These are valuable questions that are important for social psychologists to grapple with, and as suggested in earlier papers (Liu & Bernardo, 2014), there needs to be more rigorous theorizing about how these external stakeholders and forces need to be engaged in programs that aim to bring about social change.

Ilagan and Gonzalez (2015) point to what might be important features of potentially effective intervention programs by referring to their experience with intergroup dialogue that fosters shared reexamination of assumptions related to conflict, tensions, and social identification (and separation). It is not yet so clear how such a framework would apply to interventions involving rich privileged and poor disadvantaged people, but at the very least, the approach highlights conceptual and pragmatic features that advocate, development workers, and researchers can examine in systematic ways.

CONCLUSION: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

There are some strong convictions in the social development about the best ways to solve the problem of poverty and socioeconomic inequality in the Philippines. However, the fact that the problems persist suggests that we have not yet the best solutions and maybe the most feasible and sustainable approaches to implementing the said solutions. Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary conversations provide a venue to engage, to appreciate, and to critique different disciplinary approaches with their underlying theoretical assumptions and methodological approaches. Nevertheless, Philippine social psychologists must be able to rise to the challenge of this conversation by bringing in something substantial: data, theory, and analytic tools that will enhance and be enhanced

by sharp and exacting conversations with the larger community of scholars, social development workers and partners, and stakeholders in the community.

AUTHOR NOTES

Preparation of this article was supported by a research grant awarded to the author by the University of Macau Research Development and Administration Office (Grant No: MYRG-2014-00099-FSS).

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Poeticising Love

Gwee Li Sui

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Thank you for inviting me to your beautiful, historic campus and for making me part of Silliman University's long and rich literary heritage. This is an honour for me as well as a special blessing. Dr Richardo de Ungria, the director of your National Writers Workshop, was in constant touch with me for all of last month, and, at one late point, he asked me gently what I would be lecturing on. My immediate response was, "Am I giving a lecture?"

I think that we gave each other a bout of heart attack then. Thankfully, the panic didn't last long, and, when a clear thought soon came to me like a song, I knew that this was what I needed to expound. Today I wish to talk about love poetry not just because, in love, we can all find a language that is more common and natural than language itself. It is not just because love is this universal topic that has fascinated every literate culture across time, expanding its body of songs and poems.

In fact, I am well aware that one of the most exuberant traditions of the romantic is found here in the Philippines. This was surely why, when Singaporean and Filipino poets collaborated on an anthology back in 2002, the theme had been love. That charming collection, called *Love Gathers All*, was edited by Ramón Sunico, Alfred Yuson, Alvin Pang, and Aaron Lee.

Given this knowledge of how steeped your culture is in romantic expression, I am clearly putting myself at great risk to attempt to comment

on it here. I run a high chance of being embarrassed on a grand scale, of being found ignorant or gravely mistaken. Yet, I wish to proceed primarily because I doubt that this opportunity to dissect love poetry will come to me back in my country. In Singapore where even literary interests are practical, I am likelier to get speaking engagements on so-called more relevant or accessible concerns such as “Why write?”, “Is there a career in the arts?” and “What is the role of Singaporean literature?”

Besides, I cannot be certain that, even if the chance presented itself, I would not refrain from taking it up for more personal reasons. There are, after all, people who know too well this relationship of mine in focus, family members and friends for whom my long discussion in Singapore would feel too close, too cruel.

But my love poems remain a terrain I must somehow confront since they are still my freshest creative experiences, having appeared in print as *One Thousand and One Nights last year*. I feel that I have an obligation to put the aesthetic lessons I learnt through them out there – before I forget these along with all in a failed romance I wish to forget.

One Thousand and One Nights is what I like to describe to people who ask as “my happy-sad book.” It collects forty love poems I have written for a Korean novelist I met and fell in love with during my sojourn in South Korea several years ago. From the beginning, this love was ill-starred – but how could any lover have known it and, even if he or she did, do anything else? Stendhal, in a little treatise on love published in 1822, described love as a fever that put no limit on age and could come and go “quite independently of the will.”^[1]

It was indeed despite the effort my lover and I took, talking all the time and travelling to and with each other, that the end came to me one day like a stranger at the door. This end further arrived at the most ironic of times, soon after the first draft for my book had been completed and sent out. At that point in time, the relationship was almost three years long, slightly over one thousand and one days – hence enabling the volume’s magical title.

But what does one do when love ends and especially when one already has a manuscript with one’s publisher celebrating, in all innocence, that love? It seems inevitable that the publisher will become a confidant and a mentor, and Goh Eck Kheng played these two sudden roles very well. Goh, my publisher, advised me to set the book project aside and promised that

1 Stendhal, *Love*, trans. Gilbert and Suzanne Sale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), 51.

he would bring it up again only when he felt that I had experienced enough distance.

When I finally did return to look at my first manuscript in the early months of 2014, I felt a strange sensation like a revisit to a beautiful childhood home. The manuscript was reading by now like a very different book to me, its author, who had become a lover at a very different, heartbroken stage. Accordingly, I set out to revise all the poems once more in order to make them truer to a current sense of decorative memory and painful loss. I aimed this time to edit by embedding a second layer, a subtle stratum of precognition, of foreboding, across the entire text.

In other words, I added into the frame for all my moments of oblivious happy loving this quiet hanging sword of an end. The result is uncanny: what saw print as *One Thousand and One Nights* has a rather Gothic quality as it, in effect, contains a ghoulish double, its own *doppelgänger*. *One Thousand and One Nights* emerges as two books of the same name in one, *One Thousand and One Nights* the burier of *One Thousand and One Nights*.

My belated editing has functioned like this kind of interment that allows me both to preserve or immortalise my lost romance and to end it tangibly. It allows me a paradox of making this love I treasure eternal and yet also final enough for me to move on from. That is technically how the book as artefact or as memorial is supposed to work – and I am reminded here of John Keats’s Grecian urn, an object that is of both beauty and death. Of course, my own actual, emotional life is always something, somewhere else.

I can illustrate to you how this effect of a haunting dual tone that celebrates and grieves transforms the collected poems. For example, “Bee Farm” is one of a number of titles I barely needed to re-edit – but sense what happens even here as I read it. The piece is set way before the relationship started, and it revolves around a visit my lover and I made to a mutual poet-friend who is also an apiarist, a beekeeper:

In reality, the keepers
had been some other couple,
friends now after we feasted
on their soft floor of home.

But, when the mind labours
to write its own fiction,

I wonder whether we were
collecting nectar even then.

A careless day we squandered
away to reach a new friend
and gawk at her toy pagodas,
beehives littered across a slope.

You were rubber-booted for mud
and saw the colonies' treasures;
as evening tempted us in, we
rustled and waded at the foot

of mountains, their paths achoke
with leaves and river water.
Our fates were starting to bend
through this forest of friends:

nature parted the trees
and opened hidden trails,
letting our mouthlessness touch
the hour's dimming warmth.

Or how else might I have come
now to yearn for your taste of light
and to feed on your soft voice
calling the stars by name?

How else can I explain
my modest wish to kiss you
as long as the wet of dew
on the last autumn leaf?

Love that grows like the secret
comb of bees, quick with surprise,
has the sediments of time
to affect its produce.

It shapes on a kind smile,
a first twitch of the heart,
an ignorance to how a drop
of us is already stolen.^[2]

Up to the time of *One Thousand and One Nights*, I hardly attempted love poetry, let alone with such dangerously deep investment and at such a scale. Writing and editing the book were for me not just a novel experience but also an excruciatingly painful one. I will not recommend making a book this way as therapy, as a means to cope with heartbreak, to anyone. Much better that you rant and curse at the one you lost or mourn for him or her than to stay a lonely, principled custodian of the past, of abandoned good memories!

But I have laboured under a fool's belief that to grieve at love's end is only to respond to half the truth of a relationship that, until its demise, was full of happiness. I have thought that, firstly, the end comes to all relationships anyway, whether through a breakup or a death, and that, secondly, a relationship has to be remembered for all it has been and not just for its end.

If you have ever felt the weight of death in a heartbreak, perhaps you can begin to imagine how it must have felt to endeavour quixotically – aptly from the word “Quixote-like,” naming my type of stupidity – to reconstruct not with photographs but with living words the best moments of a love in all knowledge of its loss. Can you imagine how something must die in you forever even as you write in this way the dead to life?

I shall not – must never – write such love poems again because of how much they took from me, how much they have aged my soul. I cannot say whether I can survive making another book like this. I am not sure how Christina Rossetti or Pablo Neruda does it.

Love is a monstrous mystery; it lures us into its cave to devour us – yet we go with it willingly. If you will make a simple comparison between love and hate, love's presumed opposite, you will realise that the two are never equals. Love and hate do not operate under the same terms. We all know very well why we hate a particular person, much better than we can ever understand why we love someone.

Love is something bigger, more than our unit-selves. It is like the poetry

2 Gwee Li Sui, *One Thousand and One Nights* (Singapore: Landmark Books, 2014), 28-29.

of which two people surprisingly find themselves the subject. But this is just another way of saying what Plato had observed in the Symposium long ago, how, at the touch of love, everyone would become a poet.^[3] Love moves us from the private to the intimate and yet keeps us away from the social: in this sense, love is poetry but not quite or not yet knowledge.

But, if love is poetry, then what is poetry? This bit is more difficult to explain, and we may perhaps simply consider poetry in terms of the complex passions it raises in us: a form of joy, sadness, anger, pain, boredom, ambivalence, and so on. Love – by making us poets, by putting the poetry into us – makes us feel ourselves as more than who we normally are. Indeed, Voltaire argued that love was “of all the passions the strongest” precisely because it could involve the head, the heart, and the senses all at the same time.^[4]

Love subverts the physicality by which we know ourselves or are known to others by making that inadequate, irrelevant. It creates a real dissonance, a lack of equivalence, between how we feel and how we appear to others or how others appear to us. William Shakespeare’s Cleopatra therefore famously pines for her lover Antony in these words:

His legs bestrid the ocean: his rear’d arm
 Crested the world: his voice was propertied
 As all the tuned spheres.^[5]

What I want to highlight with this – the first of three observations I will offer to you and hope that you can take away today – is how similar love’s mode of exaggeration, of failing correspondence with the observed world, is to the love poem. My first point is not a mere argument about the nature of love but also about the nature of poetry. Indeed, love poetry is already a doubling, being hyper-referential of the life of poetry to itself; it is the poetry of poetry. Was it James Joyce who said in *Ulysses* (1922): “Love loves to love love?”^[6]

My own short poem “Yonsei” should illustrate this point of a natural doubling by being, at casual glance, not about love. “Yonsei” describes the first leaf-fall of a Korean autumn and how nature is freeing itself into the

3 Plato, Symposium 196e.

4 Voltaire, *Le Dernier Volume Des Œuvres De Voltaire: Contes – Comédie – Pensées – Poésies – Lettres* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1862), 192.

5 William Shakespeare, Antony and Cleopatra 5.2.81-83.

6 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2009), 319.

unknown by embracing self-belief. And yet here it all is too, the elements that make this only about love:

Words like ginkgo leaves
are freeing themselves
tonight.

They are seized
by invisible feelings
to take flight against
a certainty of change
in individual
fashion.

Each sets a time
to twist away like a
yellow hand unclasping,
sinks into a floor of words
golden under streetlights.^[7]

Secondly, the point cannot be neglected that to write a love poem is to have entered implicitly into a pact with language to be genuine and, as such, vulnerable. Note that I say how this pact is with language and not with the beloved because that is what it truly serves. Young poets tend to make the mistake here. In a love poem, one agrees to lay oneself on what I talked of just before as “the floor of words”, with all the risk this brings of being loved or being hurt – or both.

Here then is an interesting way through which we may distinguish the love poet. Unlike all other poets’ works, the verse of a love poet cannot set out to demonstrate his or her mastery over the poetic craft as a validation of the self. To do so would almost be an instant tragedy since any move to protect the self at first instinct, to lose sight of another who keeps the heart open, closes the flower of love. It does not simply stop the transaction of feelings; it also casts any attempt to go on as awkward, inauthentic, or, worst, opportunistic.

This does not mean, however, that the love poet exercises little to no

7 Gwee, *One Thousand and One Nights* 24.

mastery at all and is a mere effusion of exaggerated or hyperbolic emotions. He or she is not all heart and no head. Rather, such a poet trains himself or herself in a different kind of control, working hard to make the feeling voice fragile. The love poet is such a glassmaker, a builder of a glass house and not a house of brick and mortar.

This mastery of fragility is a curious power of the love poet: his or her practice asserts greater strength singularly through greater weakness. In this light, more than other kinds of poets, a love poet commands the feelings of his or her works by being highly aware of the physicality or harshness of his or her voice and by therefore directing and managing it all from behind a façade.

I recognise at once that I am already involving a contradiction as the point here is to be vulnerable – whereas I am putting forward the thought that even this vulnerability begins as a craft. But a poet's first responsibility is to the accuracy of his or her writing's sentiment, new or strange as it may be, and the love poet's vulnerability thus does not come before his or her creation of a way to be genuinely vulnerable. The delicate authorial control in a love poem is a distinct skill of revealing and concealing, of concealing one's direction and management of feelings in order that the poem can reveal better, confess better, the free voice of love.

I certainly struggled a lot with this paradox of the genre when I was writing the self-explanatory poem "Post". Such a work could not have been more authentic in feeling if I had not found, in deliberate wordplay, the means to recreate the sense of loving as a poignant game of swift actions and long waits. This game is especially true with long-distance relationships:

Post is a prefix:
 as in after, over, behind
 written as a before:
 as in post-hoc, post-mortem, postscript.
 Post is what I send you again, anew,
 posting on the event post-event:
 me in Wonju, you in Seoul, then
 Clementi, me in Cape Town, Paju,
 you in Ulaanbaatar...
 Post is on its way,
 arriving before it is received,

often missing its mark,
at times received by another.
Have you received my post?
My postcards, in the post:
wild animals, merlions, temples,
colonial districts, mountaintops,
exotic food and phrases,
postage also affixed to place:
what done, perhaps to do again,
to fix backwards and forwards,
Post-Ited, postmarked.
Your postcards are pre-marked,
arriving in compact boxes
with honey, chamomile, ginseng,
health supplements, even smaller boxes:
my boxes cradle Boh tea, pencils,
a stuffed pony that gallops backwards
to times we have loved pre-post:
in post offices, we are
posting boxes while apart
or when together, I waiting for you.
In the same vein, postboxes
which you love, find, pose with
everywhere we visit or you without me,
later sending me a photo.
Have you received my post?
Here are a few photos on Skype.
Waiting once again,
waiting within waiting:
photos as posts, of posts,
boxes, postcards, aerogrammes:
photos taken before and after
of stuff looking completely the same
pre-post, post-post:
there is no knowing mid-post
which is, in fact, post at its purest,
vicarious desiring at both ends.

When post arrives, the middle days fall out:
 they vanish once the postman rings or knocks:
 I hear him arrive behind another door
 at your apartment,
 at different apartments,
 at an older address, my father's:
 father and others
 passing our posts one to another to another,
 a great chain aggregating destinies:
 there was a postman who won a prize
 because you wrote of how well
 he delivered his posts, others' mine,
 eventually all yours:
 destiny within destiny.
 Post is at the door of our destiny,
 at our outermost entrances and exits,
 holding up for the next post, the after
 written as a before:
 post, the delivery of romance,
 a prefixing balling
 between us two only:
 post always about two persons
 living so much of themselves,
 ourselves, in suspension.^[8]

So, as I have argued and demonstrated, something about the authenticity or believability in a presentation of love requires the love poet to reveal his or her loss of control, his or her vulnerability. Exaggeration and outpouring of emotions, in fact, tend to define the genre precisely because these are easy ways to hint at some inner loosening or undoing. Yet, underlying it all is also a mastery that must hide itself even as it aims for some dangerous subverting or undermining of self.

There is one way through which we often judge whether a love poem has been successful, and that is by whether a private abyss has opened up and been left self-destructively for another's gaze. The love poem indeed exists at this point of critical imbalance. It possesses its own wounding, a means

8 Gwee, *One Thousand and One Nights* 53-55.

by which it can be sensed how any attempt on the poet's part to control may well exist but is ultimately ineffectual.

My final observation on romantic verse is therefore this, and you may have seen it coming: although I have said that love poetry is a poetry of poetry, still, at some fundamental level, this is also a poetry against poetry. In love poems, the aspects of poetry collapse on themselves, and this is how it perceives itself as becoming more than other forms of more measured, reflective verse. The fountainhead of poetry runs against the craft of poetry and seems to overwhelm it like how a waterfall rushes over the rocks protruding through it.

Thus, at the same time as we say that love poetry is the quintessence of poetry, we must also stress the paradox inherent to love poetry that it should even exist! The truth of a love poem threatens its own point of utterance, the fragile speaker. The fragility of this speaking is a muscle that breaks against the pressure to see form or voice first as poetic while, all the time, the form of this poem is being consumed by a voicing, a thinking. The love poem is in such a danger of its own collapse, of being in love with non-being, the potential for which is fundamental.

As such, we must come back to note again that the writing of love poems always involves dying, first and foremost to the one who is being addressed or showered with love. What the love poet is saying by writing, through the text's othering of himself or herself, is that he or she loves by leaving the private self – the one true possession – open, by leaving a part or trace of it behind as text.

This point stands even without heartbreak or mourning being involved yet in a relationship because, in love, whether we know it or not, what we are choosing is the freedom to hurt ourselves. There is no loving without death. Because of the openness of text, a love poem is such an eternal bleed.

At the close of my lecture, I want to read to you what is also the last poem in *One Thousand and One Nights*, its only poem written after the breakup. This piece is included here not just as my way of concluding the narrative of a linear romantic adventure that frames the book. It is also a way to express my understanding that every love affair is built on the promise of the future of itself. The Jumok is the Korean yew tree, a long-living tree known to last centuries and even millenia. The Koreans have a custom where one wishes under a Jumok as a mark that one intends to keep a promise.

Lost love is such an affront against nature and culture. It

is the quintessential broken vow through which one chooses a selfish present by losing sight of a future and denying the memories of a better believing self. This poem is called “Jumok Our Promise”:

Hide with me
as evening grows.
Our shadow is large
and can endure
discrepancies.

In it, you will find
Jumok our promise,
its leaves and stars
unbraiding from
a single trunk.

A sudden snowflake,
a clover of lips –
everything we hid
away under
a cracked moon.^[9]

Perhaps now you know a little why I say that I cannot write another book like this again. Thank you for being attentive.

Lope B. Robin

The Ecological Crisis and the Reformed Theology of Creation: An Analysis

Lily F. Apura

A Heartbroken God Deals with Rebellion: Towards a Theology of Calamity Based on the Flood Story (Genesis 6:5-9:17)

Rowell D. Madula

Gay Comrades: Historicizing the Communist Party of the Philippines and its Sexual Struggle

Renato G. Maligaya, Maria Luisa A. Mamaradlo, and Feorillo A. Demeterio III

The Image of Japan in the Philippine Periodical *La Solidaridad* (1889-1895)

Stella Concepcion R. Britanico, Josefina T. Dizon, Rolando T. Bello, Maria Ana T. Quimbo, and Caroline Duque-Piñon

The State and Challenges in Securing Land Tenure and Property Rights in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Philippines

Alana Leilani C. Narciso

In Search of Lessons: What Students Look for in Stories

Ian Rosales Casocot

Towards a Tradition of Sillimanian Literature

READERS FORUM

Myla June T. Patron

Introduction to the Readers Forum

Allan B. I. Bernardo

Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: Social Psychological Dimensions of Socioeconomic Inequalities in the Philippines

Renante D. Pilapil

From Institutions to Persons? Responding to Bernardo

Jeffrey Ocaj

From Social Consciousness to Radical Political Action: A Response to Allan B. I. Bernardo's Social Psychology of Poverty

Gail Tan Ilagan and Gabriel Jose T. Gonzales, SJ

On Poverty, Privilege, and Prejudice: The View from Mindanao

Victor Aguilan

The Privileged and the Poor: Friends or Foes?

Allan B. I. Bernardo

Broadening Psychology Discourses on Poverty and Connecting with Conversations on Social Change

NOTES SECTION

Gwee Li Sui

Poeticising Love

Cover Artwork by *Anna Lacson*

