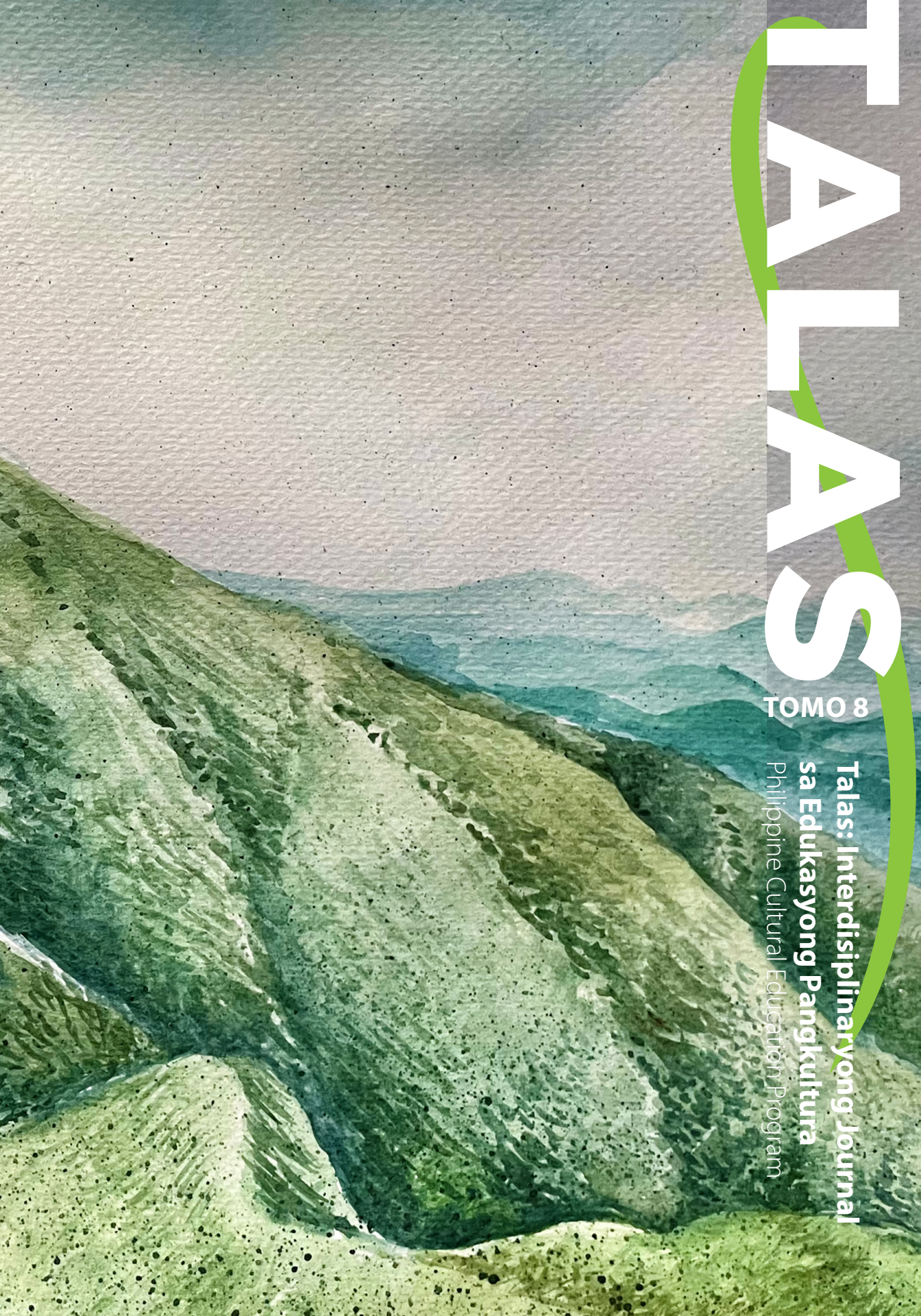


# TALAS

TOMO 8

**Talas: Interdisciplinary Journal  
sa Edukasyong Pangkultura**  
Philippine Cultural Education Program





# TALAS

**Talas: Interdisiplinaryong Journal sa Edukasyong Pangkultura (Tomo 8)**

Philippine Cultural Education Program



**Talas: Interdisiplinaryong Journal  
sa Edukasyong Pangkultura (Tomo 8)**

Philippine Cultural Education Program  
ISSN: 2545-9368

Karapatang-sipi ©2024  
ng Pambansang Komisyon  
para sa Kultura at mga Sining  
at Philippine Cultural Education Program

Hindi maaaring kopyahin ang alinmang bahagi ng  
aklat sa alinmang paraan – grapiko,  
elektroniko, o mekanikal – nang walang  
pahintulot mula sa may hawak ng karapatang-sipi.

*Ang Talas: Interdisiplinaryong Journal sa Edukasyong  
Pangkultura ay dumaan sa double-blind na proseso  
ng pag-referee at taunang inililimbag.*

---

Inilathala at ipinamamahagi ng



**PAMBANSANG KOMISYON  
PARA SA KULTURA AT MGA SINING**

Room 5D #633 General Luna Street,  
Intramuros Manila  
Tel: (02) 8527-2192 loc. 529  
Email: pcep.secretariat@gmail.com



**KORO BULAKEÑO**

Gat Blas Ople Building  
Sentro ng Sining at Kultura ng Bulacan

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is the overall coordination and policymaking government body that systematizes and streamlines national efforts in promoting culture and the arts. The NCCA promotes cultural and artistic development: conserves and promotes the nation's historical and cultural heritages; ensures the widest dissemination of artistic and cultural products among the greatest number across the country; preserves and integrates traditional culture and its various expressions as dynamic part of the national cultural mainstream; and ensures that standards of excellence are pursued in programs and activities. The NCCA administers the National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts (NEFCA).



**LUPON NG EDITOR**

**Joseph "Sonny" Cristobal, Ph.D.**

Punong Editor  
Direktor  
Philippine Cultural Education Program

**John Iremil E. Teodoro, Ph.D.**

Editor ng Isyu

**Ramonita V. Pico**

Language Editor

**Alpha Ruiz**

Tagapamahalang Editor

**Mervin Concepcion Vergara**

Tagadiseno ng Pabalat at Journal

**SEKRETARYAT NG PCEP**

**Alpha Ruiz**

Project Officer

**Jennifer Barberen**

Project Officer

**Agnes Villareal**

Administrative Officer

**KORO BULAKEÑO**

Glenn De Jesus  
Raymond Carlos  
Herminia Laudencia  
Consolacion Gamboa  
Estelita Dela Cruz

---

Tungkol sa Pabalat: "Mt. Hamiguitan"  
watercolor on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches, 2024  
by Mervin Concepcion Vergara

# NILALAMAN

1 Paunang Salita ni Joseph Cristobal

3 Introduksiyon ni John Iremil Teodoro

## Mga Artikulo/Articles

7 “Oral Accounts of Lake Dasay’s History,  
1950-2018: A Cursory Study”  
By Coleen Jean B. Templa

44 “Filipino Po Ba Ako? Of Doubt and Mistrust  
in the Economy of Marginalization: A Volunteer’s Experience  
Among the Hanunuo Mangyan Youth”  
By Carole Raymundo Diamante

57 “Manong’s Lost Gem: Cinematic Contradictions  
in *Banaue: Stairway to the Sky*”  
By John Adrianfer Atienza

69 Surviving River: Ecocritical Lessons from the Selected Works  
of Merlinda Bobis, Merlie Alunan, and Rebecca Añonuevo  
By Dinah T. Roma

78 “Delubyo at Depopulasyon sa *Awit ni Pulaw* ni E. B. Maranan”  
Ni Mark Anthony S. Angeles

96 “Metaphorical Structures of Love: A Reading of Select Love Poems  
from Victor Sugbo’s *Inintokan*”  
By Jessa Amarille

108 “Pagsusuri ng mga Piling Muralya sa Sining Saysay Exhibit  
Gamit ang Semyolohiya ni Barthes”  
Nina Nikky F. Necessario at Cristy Allen L. Serote

- 132** “Pahambing na Pagsusuri sa mga Isyung Panlipunang Itinatampok sa Ilang Akdang Salin Mula sa mga Piling Bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya (Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, at Thailand)”  
Nina Marlon L. Miguel at Philip A. Perida

**Mga Malikhaing Panulat/Creative Works**

- 158** “Haikus in the Wilderness of Mt. Hamiguitan”  
“Ang Kinatumyan sa Mt. Hamiguitan / The Summit of Mt. Hamiguitan”  
By Jovanie B. Garay
- 160** “The Yellow Shoes”  
By Hammim B. Casan
- 168** Tungkol sa mga May-akda/About the Authors

# PAUNANG SALITA

Sa ikawalong isyung ito ng *Talas: Interdisiplinaryong Journal sa Edukasyong Pangkultura* ay patuloy na ginagampanan ng Philippine Cultural Education Program (PCEP) ng Pambansang Komisyon sa Kultura at mga Sining (NCCA) ang isa sa mga mandato nito na magbahagi ng kaalamang hinggil sa pagkakakilanlan ng Filipino mula sa mga akademiko at mananaliksik patungo sa mga guro, estudyante, at mamamayang Filipino sa kabuoan na nais palawakin at palalimin ang kaalaman hinggil sa kulturang Filipino.

Dumarami na ang mga iskolar na nagsusumite ng mga papel ng pananaliksik at malikhaing akda sa ating journal na ito na labis naming ikinagagalak dito sa PCEP. May sampung akda na napili ang ating issue editor na pumasa sa pagsusuri ng ating mga blind referee. Ibig sabihin, ipinapabasa natin sa mga eksperto ang bawat papel na walang pangalan ng mga may-akda. Pumapasa ang mga akda sa sariling merito ng mga ito.

Tampok ang walong papel at dalawang malikhaing akda dito sa *Talas 8*. Karamihan sa mga ito ay tumatalakay sa relasyon ng kapaligiran at ng mga katutubo, ng mga partikular na lunan at ng mga taong naninirahan dito. Ang mga lawa, ilog, at dagat ay nagbibigay ng kabuhayan subalit maaari ding maging malupit ang mga ito sa pagdating ng mga delubyo. Marami sa mga pagsubok sa buhay natin bilang indibidwal at bilang mamamayang Filipino (at maging bilang mamamayan ng mundo) ay kagagawan din naman nating mga tao dahil sa uri ng ating pamumuhay na mapanira sa kalikasan at masyadong makasarili. Tayo-tayo ay nagsisiraan at may mga kapuwa Filipino tayong iniitsapuwersa.

Dito natin ngayon makikita ang halaga ng kultural na edukasyon na nakasalig sa ating pagka-Filipino. Hindi matatawaran ang mga gawaing pagsasanay sa maraming guro hinggil sa pagturo at pananaliksik sa larangan ng kultural na edukasyon. Mahalaga rin na magkaroon ng venue upang malathala ang kanilang mga pananaliksik.

Palaging sinasabi ng Pambansang Alagad ng Sining para sa Panitikan, Virgilio S. Almario, na dapat ibalik natin ang tula sa madla. Sa tingin ko dapat sabayan ito ng pagbalik natin ng pananaliksik sa madla. At sana isang ambag, gaano man kaliit, sa pagkamit ng tunguhing ito ang *Talas 8*.

**Joseph “Sonny” Cristobal, Ph.D.**

Direktor

Philippine Cultural Education Program

National Commission for Culture and the Arts



# INTRODUKSIYON

Ang lahat ng bagay ay magkaugnay. Isa ito sa mga prinsipyong pangkapaligiran at maaaring prinsipyong panlipunan din dahil ang isang kultura ay nananahan sa isang pook o may kinapopookan.

Ang walong papel na tampok rito sa ikawalong isyu ng *Talas* ay ipinagkakawing ng mga isyung pangkapaligiran at pangkatutubo na konektado sa mga isyung kultural at kaakuhan nating mga Filipino. Karamihan sa mga sanaysay rito ay may kinalaman sa tubig, maging tubig-tabang man o tubig-dagat. Tubig na pinanggagalingan ng buhay dahil tagabigay ng pagkain, at tubig na bumabawi ng buhay dahil sa mga delubyo—natural man o gawa ng tao. Ang dalawang malikhaing akda na kasama sa isyung ito ay may kinalaman din sa katutubong bundok at sa alitan hinggil sa pagmamay-ari ng lupa sa isang katutubong pamilya.

Itong pagkakaugnay ng lahat ng bagay dito sa kalibutan ang binigyang diin ni Mark Anthony Angeles sa kaniyang papel na, “Delubyo at Depopulasyon sa *Awit ni Pulaw* ni E. B. Maranan.” Nag-umpisa siya sa sipi mula sa akda ni Maranan na nanalo ng grand prize sa PBBY-Salanga Writer’s Prize noong 1989—

*Mayroong dahilan at nabubuhay ang lahat—  
Hangin, tubig, halaman, hayop at puno sa gubat.  
Bawat isa’y mahalaga, kapag isa’y napahamak...  
Simula na ng wakas...ang wakas ay pagkawasak.*

Sinasabi naman ng makatang si Dinah Roma sa kaniyang sanaysay na “Surviving River: Ecocritical Lessons from the Selected Works of Merlinda Bobis, Merlie Alunan, and Rebecca Añonuevo,” na nasa panahon na tayo na dapat mas lalo nating paigtingin ang ating kamalayan sa mga nangyayari sa ating kapaligiran, at ang pagbabasa sa mga tula tungkol sa mga trahedyang may kinalaman sa ating mga ilog ng tatlong babaeng makata ang isa sa mga mabisang paraan upang gawin ito.

Ang “Oral Accounts of Lake Dasay’s History, 1950-2018: A Cursory Study” ni Coleen Jean B. Templa ay mahusay na ambag sa local history lalo na sa kasaysayan ng mga lawa. Dito ay sinubukan niyang isalaysay ang kasaysayan ng Lawa Dasay sa Zamboanga del Sur gamit ang mga kuwento ng mga naninirahan sa lugar lalo na ng mga katutubong Subanën. Ani Templa, ang kasaysayan ng Lawa Dasay ay kasaysayan din ng mga tao at pamayanang naninirahan at nabubuhay sa lawas ng tubig na ito.

Kumukurot naman sa puso ang papel ni Carole Raymundo Diamante tungkol sa mga batang katutubong Mangyan na naiitsapuwersa ng engrandeng naratibo ng bansang Filipino na, “Filipino Po Ba Ako? Of Doubt and Mistrust in the Economy of Marginalization: A Volunteer’s Experience Among the Hanunuo Mangyan Youth.” Sa edukasyong community-based at may pagpapahalaga sa katutubong kultura nakikita ni Diamante ang solusyon para mabawasan at tuluyang mabura ang marhinalisasyon ng mga katutubong Mangyan. Kailangan ding isaalang-alang ang katutubong karunungan sa lokal na pamamahala para walang maitsapuwersa.

Cultural appropriation ang binigyang tuon ni John Adrianfer Atienza sa kaniyang papel na “Manong’s Lost Gem: Cinematic Contradictions in *Banaue: Stairway to the Sky*.” Tungkol ito sa pelikulang dinirehe ni Gerardo de Leon noong 1975 na ayon kay Atienza ay masyadong underrated. Ang pelikula ay tungkol sa mga katutubong Ifugao at ang malalim na relasyon nila sa lupa kung kayâ nalikha nila ang mga payaw o ang tinatawag ng marami na “hagdang-hagdang palayan.” May mga bahid man ng cultural appropriation, komodipikasyon, at misrepresentation, hindi pa rin maikakaila na mahalaga ang pelikula sa paglarawan ng kulturang Ifugao na bahagi ng bansang Filipino.

Pagbasang new critical naman ang tinutukan ni Jessa Amarille sa kaniyang sanaysay na, “Metaphorical Structures of Love: A Reading of Select Love Poems from Victor Sugbo’s *Inintokan*.” Ang librong ito ni Sugbo na inilathala ng University of the Philippines Press noong 2008 ay kalipunan ng mga tula sa Waray na may salin o bersiyon ng makata sa Ingles. Sa kabila ng pagiging new critical, o pormalista sa tradisyong Silliman o ng mga Tiempo, ng mga tula ni Sugbo, kitang-kita pa rin ang Waraynon na sensibilidad sa mga siday.

Sa pagdalumat nina Nikky F. Necessario at Cristy Allen L. Serote sa isang eksibisyon ng mga likhang sining sa sanaysay nilang, “Pagsusuri ng mga Piling Muralya sa Sining Saysay Exhibit Gamit ang Semyolohiya ni Barthes,” nilapatan nila ng semyolohiya ni Roland Barthes ang kanilang pagbasa. Ayon kina Necessario at Serote, ang kabuluhan ng mga likhang-sining ay ang kapangyarihan nitong maghatid ng mga mensaheng maaaring makapagpabago at makapagpakilos sa mga makakakita at makakaintindi nito. Maaari din itong lunsaran ng mga diskursong patungo sa pagkamulat ng nakakarami.

Timog-Silangang Asya naman ang pinagtuunan ng pansin nina Marlon Miguel at Philip Perida sa papel nilang, “Pahambing na Pagsusuri sa mga Isyung Panlipunang Itinatampok sa Ilang Akdang Salin Mula sa mga Piling Bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya (Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, at Thailand).” Paghahambing ito at pagsusuri ng mga maikling kuwento mula sa apat na karatig-bansa natin at nakita nila ang mga global na isyung makikita rin sa lipunang Filipino. Mahalaga ang mga ganitong pag-aaral na nagsusuri sa mga pagsasalin sa Filipino (at iba ang mga wika sa bansa) ng mga akdang Aseano upang makapag-ambag sa pagpapabilis at pagpapatibay ng integrasyon ng mga bansa sa Association of Southeast Asian Nations o ASEAN.

Tampok sa isyung ito ng *Talas* ang mga akda mula sa dalawang malikhaing manunulat na parehong mga guro at taga-Mindanao. Ang mga akdang ito ay maaaring magsilbing malikhaing tulay upang mapalapit at maipakilala ang mga katutubong Mandaya at Mëranaw sa iba pang mga katutubong grupo at pangkat-etniko sa iba’t ibang bahagi ng bansa.

Mga oda sa kagandahan at mysteryong taglay ng Mt. Hamiguitan ang “Haikus in the Wilderness of Mt. Hamiguitan” at “Ang Kinatumyan sa Mt. Hamiguitan / The Summit of Mt. Hamiguitan” ni Jovanie Garay. Ang Mt. Hamiguitan ay dineklarang wildlife sanctuary noong 2004 at isinama ito sa listahan ng UNESCO World Heritage Site noong 2014. Matatagpuan ang bundok na ito na may taas na 1,620 metro sa Davao Oriental. Kabilang sa mga buhay-ilang na matatagpuan dito ay ang Philippine eagle at pitcher plant, pati na rin ang natural na hardin ng mga unanong punongkahoy, mga bagay na nabanggit sa mga tula ni Garay.

Maganda ang kuwento ni Hammim Casan na “The Yellow Shoes” dahil dinadala nito ang mambabasa sa mundo ng mga Mëranaw. Sa paggamit niya ng mga katutubong salita sa kuwento ay nailalapit niya sa mambabasa ang kulturang Mëranaw. Masalimuot ang kuwentong umiinog sa lupaing pag-aari ng isang pamilyang gusto nilang ibenta sa isang malaking korporasyon upang magkapera sila subalit nauwi ito sa isang trahedyang dahil may ibang pamilyang nagsasabing sa magulang nila ang lupang iyon. Nagtapos ang kuwento sa planong paghihiganti. Hindi man binanggit ang salitang “ridô” subalit halos tiyak na doon papunta ang kuwento. Ang ridô ay

minsang tinatawag na “ubusan ng lahi” ng dalawang pamilya o angkan dahil sa gantiang na may kinalaman sa patayan. Maganda ang kuwentong ito ni Casan dahil masisilip dito ang pagbabago ng kulturang Mëranaw sa konteksto ng modernong teknolohiya tulad ng cellphone at satellite towers.

Ang bawat artikulo at akda sa isyung ito ng *Talas* ay mga matalas na pagdalumat sa papel ng pook o lunan na nagbibigay-hugis sa kultura at kalagayan ng mga taong naninirahan sa mga ito. Patunay rin ang mga ito na malawak at sari-sari ang kulturang Filipino at kailangang kilalanin at igalang natin ito upang walang maiiwan sa patuloy na pagsusumikap nating mabuo ang bansang Filipinas.

**John Iremil E. Teodoro, Ph.D.**  
Editor

# Oral Accounts of Lake Dasay's History, 1950-2018: A Cursory Study

*By Coleen Jean B. Templa*

## **Abstract**

Water is one of the basic needs of man. Since time immemorial, communities developed and thrive near bodies of water. Lakes have been long utilized by people for many purposes such as agriculture, electricity, food supply, and other commercial uses. This study is a modest attempt in writing the local history of one of the lakes in Zamboanga Del Sur known as Lake Dasay. Based on the records and the oral accounts of the settlers, the land surrounding the lake is endowed with fertile soil which supported the people for their day- to-day survival. Along with its waters and forested area, it greatly contributed to the shaping of the place's history. This is also the reason why migrants were enticed to stay and settle in the area for good. In turn, it became a major factor in the movement of people. Due to the scanty records about the lake, the study sought the oral narratives of the settlers to web the history of Lake Dasay. Furthermore, the study also finds out that the Subanën, despite the introduction of Christianity and the advent of modernization, still clings to their traditional beliefs. Their practices are highly connected to the spirits that abound in natures whom they believed are the protectors of the environment. Issues and concerns also surfaced in the study as these are the results of the constant bad practices of the people around the lake's surroundings. Added also are the apprehensions of the settlers based on their traditional beliefs. The study aims to reconstruct the history of Lake Dasay and the inhabitants of the area. It is hoped that this study might contribute to the growing research on small lakes and local history.

**Keywords:** Lake Dasay, Local History, Oral Accounts, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur

## Introduction

A lake is a large body of water that is surrounded by land. It is distinguished from other bodies of water such as bays, gulfs, and some seas that connect with the ocean and are subject to tides. Lakes are silent features of nature but are of great importance to the various life forms depending on it. They all come in various sizes, shapes, and forms, but they still share the same common value to people and other life forms.

In Zamboanga Del Sur, there are three known lakes namely: Lake Wood in the Municipality of Lakewood; Lake Dasay in the Municipality of San Miguel; and Lake Maragang in the Municipality of Tigbao. Lake Dasay is the second largest lake in Zamboanga Del Sur, after Lakewood, with an elevation of about 230 meters. It covers a 41-hectare area surrounded by forest land, and it is located at Purok 3, Barangay Sayog, in the Municipality of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

History records had it that the Subanëns, a semi-nomadic ethnic group, were the first inhabitants of the place. However, in the second decade of the 20th century, Christian settlers arrived. The majority of them came from the Visayas region namely Cebu and Siquijor. Other settlers came from the neighboring region of Misamis Occidental and Lanao Del Norte. At that time, the Poblacion was a forested area and was inhabited by wild animals. Generally, the whole area was not fit for human habitation, considering the fact that malaria and other diseases were common occurrences.<sup>1</sup> The coming of the brave and determined individuals caused the continuance of progress which certainly contributed to the shaping of the history of the community.

Unfortunately, no one was interested to study Lake Dasay. This prompted the researcher to write its historical value using the oral narratives of the people and some primary documents. The researcher was curious about the local history of the area because of the various stories she hears about the lake from her grandparents and other locals. People sometimes need not look far to see reflections of the past because their own community contains many sites, oral traditions, and records with a rich history. The countless stories from individuals likely contain fascinating information that is worth finding, recording, and preserving. As a student of history, the researcher felt responsible for collating some, if not all, of those stories conveyed by the people into account.

This is also an attempt to answer the call to balance the scholarly deficit about the lake studies according to Brillo<sup>2</sup>. Accordingly, there is a need to account all existing lakes in the country, conduct more social science-based studies on lakes like in the field of history, and fill in the



need for more outputs on small-lake research. Small lakes are not lesser in importance when compared to big lakes. Small or big they all serve the people not only today but for a long period of time, as part of nature's free services to mankind.

Moreover, Lake Dasay may not be that popular compared to Lakewood, Zamboanga Del Sur, but it is also known due to the history and mystery associated with it. It is also a possible new eco-tourism hub in the province. These are some of the reasons why Lake Dasay is considered as one of the remarkable landmarks in the Province of Zamboanga Del Sur and the treasure of the Municipality of San Miguel.

### **Methodology**

This study attempts to write and document the history of the place using the people's oral accounts. The study is qualitative in design and uses the narrative-inquiry approach. The use of oral accounts of the people who know the area very well and the people who have relatively important positions in the community is treated as a primary source. Along with these are the accounts from Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, specifically the accounts in Volume 40, 1690-1691, entitled "The Natives of the Southern Islands" by Francisco Combés, S.J., in his *Historia de las islas de Mindanao, Iolo, y sus adjacentes*<sup>3</sup> and studies by local authors such as Consejo Laviña<sup>4</sup> and Estefanio Argall Luceño<sup>5</sup> together with the rest of important sources and references outsourced from the various paper publications and government published agencies on their conducted studies.

Informants were composed of settlers around Lake Dasay, locals in the other barangays of San Miguel, Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative of Barangay Sayog, Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative of Poblacion at the same time the Tribal Chieftain, and the Municipal Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative of San Miguel – were interviewed by the researcher. The informants were randomly selected and interviewed as long as they are knowledgeable of the stories about Lake Dasay. Since most of the informants hold important positions in the community (as timuay<sup>6</sup> or chieftain, barangay, and municipal official) and are elderly settlers, their oral accounts were acquired. The informants are of mixed backgrounds. Permission was asked from the indigenous people's heads to have an interview with some Subanëns in the locality through securing letters. The researcher was consequently granted permission.

## LAKE DASAY: ORIGIN, LOCATION, AND THE PEOPLE

### Origin of Lake Dasay

All creations in this world, whether it is natural or man-made, has its own origin and history. Lake Dasay also has its own story to tell about its beginnings and origins. Accordingly, stories about the origin of Lake Dasay<sup>7</sup> are told in several versions anchored in mythical beliefs as told by the timuay.

*“Based on the legend that was handed down from our ancestors, in the beginning, they called the Lake as “Lake Danaw.”<sup>8</sup> Lake Danaw (Lake Dasay) in San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur is the younger sibling of Lake Danaw (DANAW, Malay word for Lake) in Lakewood, Zamboanga Del Sur. It is said that once upon a time, it rained for forty straight days which resulted to widespread flooding. The soil in that area where Lake Danaw in Lakewood was situated, collapsed. After the devastating calamity, it resulted to the emergence of Lake Danaw (Lake Dasay).*

Such legend was also seconded by Mr. Joshua Singol<sup>9</sup>. Accordingly, it was mentioned by his late grandfather before, and that most of the natives believe such myths. He added that the Municipality of Lakewood today is also popularly known as Danaw. Below are the images of Lake Dasay and Lake Wood respectively:



Figure 1. Aerial view of Lake Dasay also known by the locals as Danao (smaller one). Source: Inside Pagadian Facebook Page



Figure 2. Panoramic view of Lake Wood or Danao (bigger one). This image was published by the Zamboanga Del Sur News in November 2015.

Another account of the lake's history is narrated by a native inhabitant, named Lope Sestoal<sup>10</sup>, who said;

*“According to Gutaran’s<sup>11</sup> grandfather, Barangay Sayog was then a swampy area. It is believed that the flowing water in the area of the crater vanished right after the eruption of the volcano. Sometimes, the fish in the lake die in the month of January to April. It seems that the water boils, but it does not happen every year.”*

This information given by Mr. Lope Sestoal was also mentioned in the history of Barangay Sayog. It was said that in 1929, there was a man named Gamoc, who named the barangay as *sayog* meaning “a muddy place.” During the rainy season, the place becomes very muddy. *Sayog* is a term that comes from the Subanën dialect which means “muddy.”

Some legends were backed up by scientific origins as shown by records revealing that Lake Dasay came into being because of a volcanic eruption that occurred in the older times, as mentioned by Mr. Rosalino Sanlao<sup>12</sup>;

*“Our ancestors have told us that Lake Dasay (Danaw) used to be a mountain. Suddenly it erupted, and that was only then that the inhabitants became aware that it was a volcano. After its eruption, it then turned into a lake. The mysteries surrounding the lake have already been there long before the occurrence; even our ancestors cannot explain much of it. The only thing they surely know is that the lake is an abode of many spirits.”*

It is not quite surprising that many theorized the beginnings of some geographical landscapes, especially here in the Philippines, are either tectonic or volcanic. In the Philippine context, the origin of most of the geographical landscapes such as mountains and lakes are closely related to volcanic and tectonic activities. This is possibly due to the fact that the Philippine Islands are considered as part of the so-called Ring of Fire or Pacific Ring of Fire.<sup>13</sup> Lake Dasay's myth pertaining to the volcanic origin of the lake is also accounted in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources data and it goes like these, *"This is the second largest lake among the 3 lakes in Zamboanga Peninsula situated about 230 MASL which form part of the volcanic terrain of the region."*<sup>14</sup> Indeed, every mythical origin describes how places or things came into existence. Stories about the lake's origin, which are anchored on the myths/legends that are handed down from generations, are vividly remembered by people. Some of these may be seconded by factual documents, but the problem is, these documents also lack supporting details, such as the data from DENR. Studies about Lake Dasay's scientific origin is still in the process of validation by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). Oral narratives supplement the accounts of the lacking documents. They are often treated as part of the history of the place, an intangible one which can only be found from people's accounts and handed down from generation to generation.

### **How the Lake Got its Name**

Oral tradition is usually the source of historical data when written accounts are absent. This is true in the case of knowing the origin of the word "Dasay" and "Danaw", as both names are used by people in referring to the lake. Tradition emphasized that the name "Danaw"<sup>15</sup> is the original name of the lake and it has been commonly used by the Subanëns since time immemorial. When migrants started to settle in the area, they also refer to the lake as "Danaw". The word "Danaw" means "lagoon or lake." "Danaw" is somewhat similar to the words "Ranao" or "Lanao", also used to refer to Lake Lanao in Lanao Del Norte and Lake Danao in Ormoc, Leyte. In the narratives of *timuay* Precy Buay- Marquiala,<sup>16</sup> she mentioned the name "Danaw":

*"Based on the legend that was handed down from our ancestors, in the beginning, they called the Lake as Lake Danaw. Lake Danaw (Lake Dasay) here in San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur is the younger sibling of Lake Danaw<sup>49</sup> in Lakewood, Zamboanga Del Sur."*

Thus, it is safe to say that calling the lake Lake Danaw is redundant, as both words refer to lake; the same is the case with Lake Lanao. In spite of that, the people in San Miguel continue to call the lake "Danaw" since it is something they are used to and grew up with. Even the researcher prefers to call the lake "Danaw" for she always hears the name from the narratives of her grandparents. In an interview with Mr. Freddie A. Sanlao, he also explained why the lake is known as Danaw. According to him, the word Danaw have been



derived from a tree called Danaw that abundantly grew in the area before. He added that this tree may no longer be found in the area today since the forest is long gone.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, “Dasay” is said to be officially named after Mt. Dasay, at the foot of which the lake is situated, as shown in the records of DENR-RIX, as described, *“The lake is situated at the northern lowland/footplain of Mt. Manoy (formerly Mt. Dasay, moderately steep slope area, passing through gullies and through Buluan Dako Creek and Tabalon Creek.”*<sup>18</sup> The said name is also used in municipal records, provincial records, and those of other government agencies when referring to the lake in San Miguel. In other words, the term “Dasay” is the official name of the lake as it is in the records of all agencies concerned in the country. Yet still, the word “Danaw” is the name popularly used and preferred by the people in referring to the lake. People who are not natives of San Miguel may be confused as to what name to use to refer to Lake Dasay. To avoid confusion, the two terms may be used interchangeably, depending upon the person.

### **Location and Physical Features of Lake Dasay**

This study was conducted in one of the three lakes in the province of Zamboanga Del Sur. In the province alone, there are three well-known lakes namely, Lake Wood in the Municipality of Lakewood, Zamboanga Del Sur; Lake Maragang in the Municipality of Tigbao, Zamboanga Del Sur and Lake Dasay all of which are of great importance because of their functions and great help to the community. Lake Dasay is the second largest mountain lake in Zamboanga Del Sur, after Lakewood, with an elevation of about 230 meters. It covers a 41-hectare area surrounded by forest land and is located at Purok 3, Barangay Sayog, in the Municipality of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur. It is in the northwest portion of Barangay Sayog and southwest of Barangay Poblacion, which are one (1) kilometer and two (2) kilometers away from the lake, respectively. It is accessible by land and air transportation. The mountains standing high above the surrounding area, with small summits, steep slopes, and local reliefs of 300 meters or more are Mount Imbing, Mount Bacauan, and Mount Dasay. They each have an elevation of 692 meters, 621 meters, and 450 meters above sea level, respectively. Lake Dasay has two small inlets: the smaller one is from Barangay Lantawan and the bigger one is from Mount Dasay. It has only one outlet, which is the cave that flows to Lapuyan River.<sup>19</sup>

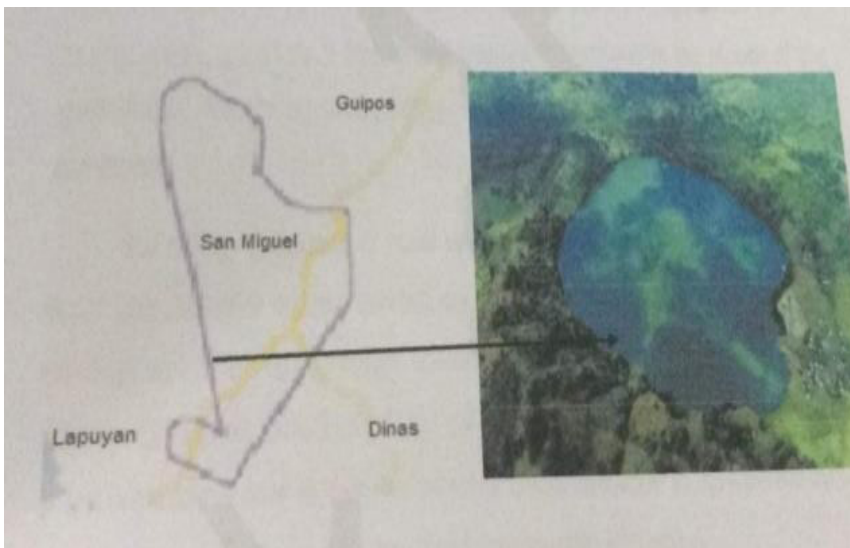
The municipality of San Miguel is under the 2nd District of the province of Zamboanga del Sur. It is a 4th class municipality and is comprised of 18 barangays. It is geographically located within the center of the Baganian Peninsula and is situated about 33.6 km from Pagadian City. It lies between the coordinates of latitudes from 7° 36' 30" to 7° 48' 40" and longitudes from 123° 12' 40" to 123° 20' and belongs to the fourth climatic type or that with no distinct dry or wet season. Its rainfall is distributed throughout the year. Regular rain comes during the months of June to November, but the peak rainy months are June, July, August, and October. It

is bounded on the North by the Municipality of Tigbao, on the Northeast by the Municipality of Guipos, on the Southeast by the Municipality of Dinas, on the West by Municipality of Lapuyan, and on the South by the Municipalities of Margosatubig and Dimataling.<sup>20</sup>

Based on actual observation on site, the researcher got an impression that the lake is bounded by various landscapes and landmarks. In the Northern part of the Lake is Mt. Imbing, which is the highest mountain in the area; in the Northwestern part is Purok 3 where the settlers are highly concentrated. The Northeastern part is another mountain called Mt. Bacauan; its Eastern part is a rugged hill, in which slopes upland rice and corn are cultivated; in the Western part spans the remaining forest cover in the area which serves as the boundary of Municipality of San Miguel and Lapuyan; and in the Southern part is the cave, only through which the water of the lake exists and flows towards Lapuyan River. The lake is a potential venue for recreation and other educational activities considering that it is the habitat of freshwater species which include *tilapia*, *carpa*, mudfish, catfish, *pait-pait*, *purang*, shrimps, crabs and Taiwan shells. Additionally, the lake is the temporary home of bats and transient birds like wild ducks, egrets, herons, and kingfishers. Along the buffer zone area, *flora* species are also growing like teak, mahogany, *yemane*, and fruit trees. Its water resources are sustained by the spring (*tubod*) within the lake and some few creeks with a single outlet passing through a cave.<sup>21</sup>

Aside from that there is also a freshwater plant growing in the lake called *Lumbia*,<sup>22</sup> occupying the shore and sporadically distributed in clumps, majority of which are situated along the western section of the lake. This plant plays a significant role in controlling erosion and serves as refuge and habitat for birds, reptiles and amphibians. The rest of the lakeshore is vegetated with some wild grasses, vines, and creeping plants. This *lumbia* plant is believed by the people to be inhabited by various spirits and mythical beings, as told through their narratives. The presence of this plant is also a sign that the area has an abundant water resource.





*Figure 3. Geographic Location of Lake Dasay taken from DENR- Region IX files. May 21, 2020.*



*Figure 4. Lake Dasay under fair weather condition. The highest mountain shown in the picture is Mt. Imbing, Lake Dasay, Sayog, San Miguel. March 7, 2020.*

## The Subanens as the Early Settlers

Before the advent of Islam, the Subanëns lived in scattered settlements in present-day Zamboanga and Misamis Occidental. The Subanëns (Spanish form “Subanos”), or “Men of the Rivers”, are an important pagan tribe in Western Mindanao. They are found in the mountains of Zamboanga, extending eastward slightly into Cotabato, Misamis, and Dapitan.<sup>23</sup> When Islam was introduced in Mindanao by Shariff Kabungsuwan, the Subanën who were “pagans” refused to accept the new faith. However, they were eventually forced to accept the Islam faith lest they must leave their original place and live in the hinterlands of Zamboanga and part of Misamis Occidental. When the Subanëns fled to the hinterlands, they built their homes—a makeshift affair, along inland bodies of water such as lakes and rivers. The word Subanën was derived from the root *suba*, meaning “river” common to Philippine Dialects.<sup>24</sup> Some of them fished in the rivers or the nearby bays and inlets which teemed with fish and other edible marine products. Life for the Subanëns in the beginning must have been idyllic. They tilled the fertile lands, adopting the slash and burn method of crude agriculture. With very few inhabitants, the land could easily support them. They were left alone to practice their customs and traditions.

It was only much later when large groups of other settlers from many parts of the Philippine archipelago arrived, some of whom were previously converted to Islam, that the Subanëns started to be pushed inland. Subanëns had been known to be peace-loving. No wonder they were the favorite intended victims of aggressive tribes or scheming migrants. To defend their settlements, the Subanëns sometimes warred against the new invaders, especially the Moros. The Subanëns, accordingly, almost always lost. They could not match the bravery, strategy and better armaments of the Moros. So, most of Subanëns continued their diaspora to the hinterlands, choosing the flatter lands. However, starting in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, larger groups of migrants from the Visayas, and in a few cases, from Luzon, arrived in their lands. They sold or bartered or were driven away from their lands and went farther inland. Most of them are now living in hilly, unproductive areas whose soil is made poor by erosion.<sup>25</sup>

In the early days, the Subanëns were few in number in San Miguel and in the surrounding areas of Lake Dasay since it was a forested area, as conveyed by the lady *timuay*. They owned vast acres of land in the area. Being nomadic and wanderers before, they monopolized the beauty and bounty of nature and engaged in a primitive system of agriculture called *binal* (kaingin). Fish were plentiful in the inland waters like the lake and the rivers. Wild fruits were gathered for consumptions. Forest trees were used for household building and other various purposes. As they did not have permanent settlements before, wet agriculture and domestication of animals were unknown.

But as time passed by, migrants came in the area in search for better fortune. Migrants slowly introduced to them the methods of farming and later on they begun to learn and adopt those methods. Since the surrounding areas of the lake and San Miguel, in general, are endowed with rich fertile lands, agriculture flourished and continued to flourish up to these days. Thus, landowning Subanëns and migrants continue to thrive and till the lands for various agricultural products.

Today, many of the Subanëns in San Miguel are Christians, belonging to different religious groups like Roman Catholics, Born Again Christians, CAMACOP, Iglesia ni Cristo, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the like. According to their Lady Timuay, Precy B. Marquiala,<sup>25</sup> though they are Christianized, it does not mean that they abandoned their traditional beliefs. They still conduct some rituals and adhere to superstitious beliefs and practices. The way their ancestors regarded and respected the lake as well as their environment in general as an abode of many spirits is carried out up to these days. All of these are still evident in the community.

### **The Migrants as the Later Settlers**

Originally, San Miguel was a distant sitio of Barangay Libuganan, one of the original barangays of the Municipality of Dinas, the mother municipality of the present Municipality of San Miguel. History had it that the Subanëns, a semi-nomadic tribe, was the first inhabitant of the place. However, in the second decade of the 20th century, about 1920, Visayans or Christian settlers started to migrate to the area. At that time, the Poblacion and its surrounding areas were actually a forest with wild animals that abound the place. Generally, the whole area was not fit for human habitation considering the fact that malaria and another epidemics were common occurrences. However, there were many adventurous and fearless settlers who fought it out with the elements.<sup>26</sup> They scoured the malaria-infested area and fought the wilderness. Among them were the Ocarinas, Oteros, Saladagas and Ramonals.<sup>27</sup>

Miguel Ocapan, a man of irresistible courage and determination, managed to acquire vast areas of agricultural land. According to his relative who refused to be named, Miguel Ocapan came from Tangub, Misamis Occidental, particularly from the Lorenzo Tan area in present Tangub City. Miguel Ocapan, accordingly, sold his lands in Tangub and migrated to what is now known as San Miguel. He bought lands from the Subanëns, but some lands were acquired by exchanging tobacco with the natives. He and his family became good friends with the natives for he took some Subanën women to become his wives. It has been said that he had seven (7) wives but he married none of them. Majority of the lands in the then *Poblacion* were owned by him, starting from the present location of the Municipal Hall of San Miguel and extending to most lands in Barangay Sayog. In due time, he was able to inculcate into the hearts of the Subanëns the Christian faith as the way of life. In turn, the Subanëns recognized the efforts and dynamic leadership of Miguel Ocapan, they virtually made him their leader after making

him their Timuay, a title rank given to the ruling class of the Subanëns.<sup>28</sup> He was recognized as the founder of San Miguel.

As the years passed, consequent waves of migration happened. More and more people settled in San Miguel. In the 1950s, evident migration patterns have been recorded which led to the influx of migrants in San Miguel that forever altered the living conditions of the early inhabitants. Remarkable events happened around 1950s onwards; hence, greater emphasis on the events around Lake Dasay has to be given importance and needs to be documented. Around 1954, the area was densely populated. Three years later, in 1957, the population grew because of the influx of people from far and near areas. Starting as a mere sitio of Barangay Libuganan, San Miguel, originally belonged to Dinas. The municipality of Dinas gave the place the status of a regular barangay in recognition of the leadership of Miguel Ocapan. In 1960, barely three years from its creation as a regular barangay, development happened fast, and growth became inevitable. In fulfillment of the people's aspirations for their quest to have an identity of their own, the barangay was elevated to the status of a municipality.

One of the barangays of San Miguel is Sayog which is the location of Lake Dasay. In 1929, there was a man named Gamoc, who named the barangay *sayog*, meaning a muddy place. During the rainy season, this place became very muddy. Sayog is a term coming from the Subanën dialect which means muddy. As time passed by, this place was inhabited by many Cebuanos because they were enticed by its fertile soil, suited for farming, and the availability of water supply from the lake.<sup>29</sup>

In 1954-1964, Mr. Floro Fernandez became the first barangay captain of Sayog. During his time, he was able to unite the Subanëns and the Cebuanos. There was unity among the people in the community. During his term he made some improvements in the barangay like helping together in the farm. Barangay Sayog has a total land area of 2,467.9476 hectares, of which 2.443858 sq. km are now devoted to agricultural production, with various economic oriented crops such as coconut, rice-both rain fed and upland, corn and other various perennial crops such as fruits and vegetables. The farmers are commonly adopting multi-cropping technology to maximize agricultural production. Hog raising, cattle raising, and fish raising located along the lake are also present in the area.<sup>30</sup>

Apparently, there was a Human Resettlement Building established near the lake to cater to the housing needs of the people who migrated to the area during the second term of Former President Ferdinand Marcos in the 1960's. It is said that it was a project of his wife, Imelda Marcos. At that time, the place was under the administration of the first Municipal Mayor of San Miguel, former Mayor Proculo Ocapan, the son of Miguel Ocapan. It was being used as a resettlement for the displaced settlers during the New People's Army insurgency. The building was also built during Proculo Ocapan's administration as a relaxation destination

area.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, it was burned down into ashes by the New People's Army during the martial law period and the housing units were never reconstructed. The said terror brought by the New People's Army during those times was recalled by Mr. Alberto Abadan, Jr., as follows:

*“It was worst during the time of the NPA. This place only had five inhabitants. Our nearest neighbor was on the other side of the mountain. We evacuated from time to time to the Poblacion because it was the safest place due to the presence of the Army. Even though I was at the side of the government, it still was not safe. Instead, if you are identified as a person on the government side your life was totally at risk.”*

No remnants were left of the said resettlement site save for the cemented part which cannot be easily noticed because of the thick grasses that envelops the area. There were no written records left in the municipal office about the said project, but the municipal and barangay officials as well as the researcher who visited the site are certain about the fact that it existed. This is supported by the testimonies of the inhabitants living in the area. Taking a picture of the site was deemed useless as it only shows thick grasses and wild trees.

## **LAKE DASAY: IN THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE**

### **On the Accounts from the People's Beliefs and Practices**

The Subanëns interact with the lake and its surrounding area as they used the usual practices handed down from their ancestors. The tribal chief narrated that the lake is not like any ordinary lake; to them it is sacred. They interact with the lake with carefulness in accordance with their beliefs. It is for them, so as not to trespass on the lives of the spirits in the area. They believe that nature is a great creation of Shapo Magbabaya (the name of their god), and the resources in nature are provisions for all human beings. They believe that there are spirits living in nature such as rivers, mountains, big trees, forests, and especially lakes. These spirits are owners and guardians of nature, thus, it is very important that the Subanëns should give reverence to them through rituals. Rituals are performed by the Subanëns before entering or passing by the abode of the spirits such as forests and bodies of water. They also perform rituals when they extract resources from nature such as fishing, farming, and cutting of trees. The *timuay* wanted to inculcate in the minds of the younger generation of Subanëns, the new settlers and visitors that they should observe right conduct when in the area. Others would say “*Tabi- Tabi po*” to ask permission around the abode in order not to anger the spirits, especially if one is not familiar with the area. As mentioned, if accidents occur in the area like people drowning, they would need to seek the help of the elders or *timuay* to recover the body of the dead person because the spirits would likely hide the body from the naked eye. The dead body would only surface if they are appeased by the *timuay* through a series of rituals.

Moreover, when plans of developing the lake into a tourism destination were made before, the *timuay* and the council of elders did not approve. They prohibited any development activity around the lake. They wanted to preserve the lake the way it is because, accordingly, the lake is not an ordinary lake. It is intangible like their culture. With this, and with a little bit of a warning they wanted to remind the people that the lake is not something one can disrespect, as disrespecting Lake Dasay is similar to disrespecting their elders. They believed that Lake Dasay is as old as their ancestors, that is why they highly treasured the lake as an important part of their culture.

Such native beliefs are oftentimes labeled as superstitions and myths and part of folklore by effecting those who are not living in the area. For people who believe, there is no harm in believing and venerating the spirits of the lake. The reason out that the fear of being punished is just a way for the spirits to scare the people and make them respect the place.

Animistic people, according to various records believe that spirits living in nature, when disturbed, could inflict sickness and disaster to people as punishment for their disrespectfulness. Many believe that Lake Dasay is really a mystical place and anyone who disrespects the area will meet their end as evidenced by the accidents in the area. Over the years, some people have died in the lake. It has been said that those who died acted badly around the lake, like having loud voices, making fun of the lake, and cracking improper jokes about the lake. Residents in the area, both Subanën and migrants, believed that the spirits got angry because they were disturbed. Mostly, accidents happen to people who scorn the spirit of the lake. It was believed that the victims were imprisoned in the spirit world (other world), and interventions from elder Subanëns *timuay's* are needed to recover the body. When accidents happen in the area, news goes out like wildfire and, to some extent, this makes people afraid to visit or even go near the lake.

Lake Dasay has its fair share of popularity in Zamboanga Del Sur. But this kind of popularity that Lake Dasay is known for is more on its mysterious nature. It has been known over the years or since time immemorial that Lake Dasay is a mystical place wherein various spirits live. The Subanëns, who were dwellers in the area since time immemorial, cautiously act when nearby the lake. This negative illustration of Lake Dasay got stuck over the years, even in its description in various write-ups and in the book about the History of Zamboanga Del Sur province. The description of the lake in the Zamboanga Del Sur profile goes like this, *"It's like a luscious mouth parted in a smile reflected on the face of a country damsel. Though it's so innocent-looking, yet all the silent fury lurks beneath its waters."*<sup>34</sup> This was also mentioned in Luceño's book, "History of Zamboanga Del Sur as a description of the image of Lake Dasay shown below:





**LAKE DASAY: A DREAMER'S PARADISE**  
(San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur)

Lake Dasay is the second largest mountain lake located in the town of San Miguel. It's like a luscious mouth parted in a smile reflected on the face of a country damsel. Though it's so innocent-looking, yet all the silent fury lurks beneath its waters. It's like a liquid valley drenched in tears of joy in the eyes of an angel, as sweet juices flow from Lady Fair that Dasay is, down its outlet deep in a cavern of love's eternal bliss.

Figure 5. Excerpt from Luceño, E., "History of Zamboanga del Sur", p 13.

The description itself suggests how eerie Lake Dasay is. This mythical belief of Lake Dasay is further accepted by the people because there is no written record on how deep the lake is. Many divers and surveyors attempted to measure the depth of the lake but were not successful. That is probably the reason why there are no written records coming from government agencies as to how deep the lake is. This further concretizes the belief of the elderlies that the lake is the "gateway to the spirit realm" since its depth is not clearly defined and known.

Moreover, beneath the waters of the lake are lots of logs as remnants of the big trees. These were submerged when the area collapsed after raining hard for forty (40) days as legends are told and as relayed by the informants. According to Mr. Rosanilio Sanlao, "A forest was seemingly submerged under the waters of the lake, as told by our elders. It is inferred that before the area collapsed due to volcanic eruption, that area was a forest. It seems eerie when you look at it underwater because there are a lot of big logs, which some people painstakingly get for personal use; these are said to be hardwood. But there are a lot of these logs that are yet to be recovered especially in the area at the center of the lake, because it is very deep and people have a hard time retrieving them. One more thing is – it is unusual – most of the time people are afraid to go to the center of the lake because our elderlies always remind us, as much as possible, not to go to the center as it is very dangerous and frightening..."<sup>255</sup>

The lake also was surrounded by stories of mythical and unidentified creatures lurking within the calm waters of the lake. One of it is the so called Busiso<sup>36</sup>, a specie of gigantic fishes which can swallow entire boats from Subanen beliefs; centuries-old chants are still being sung about the creatures. Another is the infamous creature known as Okoy<sup>37</sup>, the Visayan version of the merman. It is a humanoid creature that lives and lurks in the water. This mythical creature has scaly skin and webbed feet. There are also some Okoys with a fishtail similar to a mermaid or sirena. These creatures drown their victims before consuming them. This Okoy was believed to be the culprit of the drowning incidents around the lake.

Mr. Benito Linghag<sup>38</sup> mentioned about a group of students who were accidentally drowned while having picnic in the lake. This was also mentioned by the lady *timuay* in my interview. Coincidentally, the researcher happens to be the neighbor of one of the victims. According to Mr. S. (the researcher will just name the informant Mr. S. from the first word of his name for he refused to be named as a sign of respect to his deceased friend)<sup>39</sup>, it was in 2008 that the tragedy happened. He and his friend decided to celebrate their other friend's birthday in one of the newly built floating cottages in Lake Dasay. Never did it occur in their wildest dreams, that a life will be lose in exchange of celebrating another. His friend drowned while they were happily swimming. At first, they thought that their friend is pranking them about drowning because they knew that their friend knows how to swim. Little did they know that it would be the start of their nightmare and the loss of their friend's life. The body was found two days after the incident; right after the incident, rescuers and divers made attempts to recover the body but their efforts were futile. With that incident, many people believed the stories about the lake. The above-mentioned accident was not the first because prior to that, many people had died in the lake and their bodies were found days after the incident. Usually, accidents like this happen when the *lumbia* is plant moved from its usual place to another. Most of the locals of San Miguel know about the stories, and more often, believed that this will bring disasters to the lives of the people who happened to be swimming in the lake.

With such scary stories, people were sometimes hesitant to visit the place for the fear that the spirits might get them. This frightened them to fish in the lake and swim for recreational purposes. This is one of the reasons why tourism activities in the area would not take off. This also discouraged the government and the businessmen to develop the area as a recreational facility. On the other hand, the council of elders and the Subanën tribe and other migrant settlers are happy because this will not alter the lake. Many believe such stories especially those who are very traditional; others are also swayed by the scary stories they heard. But, many of the migrant settlers do not believe that the lake is mysterious. They said that accidents happening (people drowning) are natural occurrences and could not be blamed on the lake. This is just a result of carelessness. But Subanën settlers really believe these stories which were told to them by their forefathers, and this is an integral part of their culture.

In the case of the lake's history, others may say that some of the stories are absurd and unbelievable. But let us consider that not all that is believable is true, and not all that is true is believable, the same is true with the stories about Lake Dasay. These superstitious beliefs unintentionally negatively affected the local tourism aspect of the area. Although there is no direct evidence pointing to livelihood loss because of superstitious beliefs this does not mean that livelihood in the area is thriving since aside from agriculture dependence, no other mainstream source of income is evident. This part will be discussed and expanded in the latter part of the study, on the issues and concerns surrounding Lake Dasay.

### **On the Narratives about the Lake's Importance to the People**

In all aspects of human life, mankind is connected to the environment where they live. Throughout history, humans have gathered around wetlands, and these areas have played an important part in people's lifestyle, society, and culture. Lake Dasay as a geographical landscape offers a lot of benefits to the people. The benefits that the lake has given to the people are mostly not found in written documents. Most of its history is missing from the records, or it has no record at all. Thus, there is a need to uncover these things from the sands of time using the narratives of the people; though it might not be complete and perfect, this can be the beginning of things.

As to their usability, lakes have long been utilized by people for many purposes. These may be agricultural like irrigation or commercial such as fishing. Also, it could be for the transportation of industrial water supplies by building water dams across a watercourse for impounding water to be used by and to be distributed to the people. These ample contributions are nature's "free" services to mankind. These lakes are very beneficial to the people. From day to day activities, the natural resources are in operation 24/7, serving everyone.

Moreover, healthy lakes and their shores do not only provide people with a number of environmental benefits; but these also strengthen the economy. Lakes work to replenish groundwater, positively influence water quality of downstream watercourses, and preserve the biodiversity and habitat of the area. When the ecological puzzle pieces of a lake come together and the lake is able to work as it should, the big picture is clear. We all stand to benefit from this important resource.

Similar to Lake Dasay's case, Lake Sebu of the T'boli's in South Cotabato provided similar experiences to the indigenous communities living around the lake. "The T'boli Landscape" by John M. Maguire<sup>40</sup> is a significant contribution to the understanding of T'boli culture and their relationship with the environment, particularly in the context of Lake Sebu. This book delves into various aspects of T'boli life, including their subsistence practices, spiritual beliefs, social organization, and interactions with the natural world. Maguire's work provides

a comprehensive examination of the T'boli people's traditional ecological knowledge and their sustainable use of resources. It explores how the T'boli perceives and interact with the landscape around Lake Sebu, incorporating insights from anthropology, ethnobotany, and environmental studies. Through detailed ethnographic research and firsthand observations, Maguire offers valuable insights into the T'boli worldview, highlighting their deep spiritual connection to the land, water, and forests of their ancestral territory. It discusses significance of sacred sites, rituals, and oral traditions in shaping T'boli perceptions of the landscape and their place within it. As such, it is closely related to the Subanëns belief and practices in connection to the importance of Lake Dasay to their daily lives. As the T'boli's gave much importance to their heritage, Subanëns are no different.

Similarly, the Tagbanuas of Coron Island have, since time immemorial, been managing their island and its surrounding waters. The Philippine Government recognizes this right and capability by awarding a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title over 22,284 ha of ancestral land and ancestral water. The Tagbanwa Ancestral Domain is host to unique and ecologically-intact ecosystems deemed to be one of the richest in terms of biological diversity, featuring sacred tropical lakes that may be unique in the world. The Tagbanwa formulated an Ancestral Domain Management Plan based on their customary laws and sustainable practices. Both local and foreign tourists frequent Kayangan and Luluyuwan (known to non-Tagbanwa as Barracuda) Lakes throughout the year. The municipal government and tour operators promote these as destinations but have not established a system to control tourism impact such as waste disposal and biological prospecting, among others. Worse, their rights, sacred places, and fragile sites have been violated and disturbed. The Tagbanwa embarked on the Visitor Management Program with the objective of asserting their rights through their direct management of visitors and their activities to ensure environmental protection and secure cultural integrity.<sup>41</sup>

Lake Dasay's importance is best described in the people's narratives. From its fertile lands that supports agricultural productions, the abundant waters it supplies goes to the rice fields, and it is also home to various aquatic resources. The water also flows to forest land that houses an important ecosystem in the past. This clearly shows that this particular geographical landscape offers a lot of benefits to the people. The people in San Miguel especially those who settled near the lake, regarded the lake as a part of their lives. Their daily activities revolve around the lake which range from household activities to agricultural activities. Not only the Subanëns but also the Visayan migrants have their fair share of the resources of the lake that made them start their new lives easily. The fertile soil and the vast forest area are the factors that attracted migrants to settle in the place. Had it not been for the migration of the people, San Miguel would not be born. Native informants, Mrs. Condiana I. Albellar<sup>42</sup> and Mr. Rosalino Sanlao<sup>43</sup> shared their sentiments about the said migration and the migrants themselves. According to them, there was no problem at all when the migrants came, no ill feelings. They welcomed the migrants and became good neighbors for a long period of time. Some of the Subanën lands

were offered to be sold to the migrants. That is how the early migrants acquired vast lands as the Subanëns had.

It is safe to say that much of what the people enjoyed or received in the community nowadays, they owe from the environment. The lustrous environments that the areas have are the significant contributory factors. Both Subanëns and Migrants who became neighbors for some time have many stories to tell. They have shared knowledge, experiences, and gifts they got from the lake itself. Their shared knowledge about the lake's existence and its God-given fertile surroundings brought the Subanëns and migrants together in one area. The migrants who came to the area brought along with them their lifestyle which was different from the Subanëns. Both sides became acculturated to each other's culture. Through the years, the relationship between the Subanëns and the migrants proved to be a good one. They experienced altogether the wrath of nature from a violent storm to flooding, including civil unrest in the past. As years passed, their community grew, and they continued to help each other in times of need. Until now, the lake and its environment continue to give to support the people in their needs.

From the water it supplies to agricultural crops, fertile soil in its surrounding areas, and rich flora and fauna, the lake is also a promising ecotourism site of the municipality. As identified, San Miguel is considered as an eco-tourism destination of the region because of its natural attraction. Along with its adjacent cave, it could boost the tourism industry of the municipality. Moreover, the provisions given by the lake are not only limited to food supply but also logs and lumber. This is according to the earliest migrants in Barangay Betinan – even before San Miguel became a municipality. They narrated that their fathers and grandfathers often went back and forth the lake just to get those logs since, accordingly, those were hardwood, and it would be a waste not to use them.

Similar to the lakes around the world, Lake Dasay provided ample contributions to the people living around it, from the water it supplies to the agricultural crops around the lake and the fish caught from its waters. Its environment is endowed with vast acres of fertile land and areas of inland waters such as rivers, streams and lakes. The fertile lands pave the way for various agricultural activities producing various agricultural products. Most of the grown crops are considered as the staple food of the community, such as corn and rice. It should be noted also that the place houses vast acres of coconut plantations. The then forested area is now devoted to coconut cultivation. Wherever you turn your head to, it is all about coconut trees, and underneath them are rice or corn fields.

Thus, the Department of Agriculture identified the municipality as one of the major corn cluster municipalities in the region. The vast areas surrounding the lakes produce agricultural products, especially corn. These agricultural activities includes the use of traditional ways for production using plow, and carabao, as well as modern technology, using tractors. Both

methods of production provide good outcome for farmers but some of them are using modern technology to produce far better than the traditional way. Improved methods of agricultural production mean more income to the farmers.

The waters of the lake have its great importance since then and its usability, even until now, is undeniable. The small-scale farmers in the area, who grow their rice in the rice paddies, use the water from the lake. Towards the same end, the Municipal Planning and Development Council of San Miguel is planning to construct several reservoirs in the area for the agricultural irrigation in the nearby barangays. It also plans to install a water supply system to service the areas in the municipality which do not have enough water supply.

Moreover, the vibrant fishing activities on the lake provide abundant supply of inland water fish. According to the Municipal Resource Profile as of 1992-2001, most of the inland aquatic resources of the municipality came from the lake, which houses different kinds of fishes and shells. Inland water tilapia provides 300 kilograms volume of production per year and Taiwanese shells provides 100 kilograms volume of production per year. Though redfish, catfish, *dalagang bukid*, and other inland fishes are unquantified, these have significant contributions in the day to day living of the people in the area. Furthermore, the waters of the lake are not only important to the people nearby but also to the neighboring municipalities of San Miguel.

Undoubtedly, the case of Lake Dasay is similar to other notable lakes in the Philippines, in terms of their cultural and spiritual significance, namely: (1) Laguna de Bay, the largest lake in the Philippines and is located in the province of Laguna. It has significant cultural and economic importance to the surrounding communities. While there might not be specific religious studies conducted on this lake, it holds importance in local folklore and traditions; (2) Lake Lanao, situated in Lanao del Sur province on the island of Mindanao, is the second-largest lake in the Philippines. It is considered sacred by the Maranao people, who reside in the area. Traditional rituals and ceremonies are performed by the Maranao community around the lake; (3) Lake Bulusan, located in the province of Sorsogon in the Bicol Region, is known for its picturesque setting near Mount Bulusan. While primarily known for its natural beauty, the lake area may hold cultural significance for local communities, including indigenous groups like the Agta; (4) Lake Mainit, situated in the Caraga region of Mindanao, is the fourth-largest lake in the Philippines. It is surrounded by lush forests and is home to various indigenous communities. While there might not be specific religious studies conducted on this lake, it likely holds cultural importance for the indigenous peoples living in the area.

These lakes, along with many others in the Philippines, have rich cultural and spiritual significance for the communities living around them. These are often featured in local folklore, traditions, and religious practices, contributing to the cultural tapestry of the Philippines. Noticeably, these are only the few, well-known lakes in the country out of all hundreds of lakes



that were documented and usually used as subjects for research. Small lakes, like Lake Dasay, are also worthy to be studied. Small or big they have similar significance and contributions to the inhabitants and the adjacent areas.

### **LAKE DASAY: ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

The issues and concerns that Lake Dasay is facing in the recent years are results of people's activities along with some myths and mysteries believed by the people which affect their daily lives. The waves of migration that occurred in the later part of the 20th century hastened the environmental changes around the area. The following concerns surfaced in the study namely, deforestation and *Kaingin*; soil erosion and pollution; ecotourism; and belief system.

It was way before the coming of the migrants that lush trees and diverse flora and fauna species thrive in the area. Apparently, the reason behind the drastic changes in the surroundings of Lake Dasay, especially the depletion of trees, was the increase in the demand for logs and lumber. The indiscriminate cutting of trees is the result of the great demand for materials for building construction and other related activities. Moreover, trees were cut to convert the area for agricultural purposes.

What can be seen in the area now are trees that were recently planted by the people. Big old trees are long gone. But those trees were not logged by big companies since no logging concession was permitted in San Miguel. The cutting of trees results from the residents' growing need for logs and lumber for the construction of their houses. More volumes of water are exposed to radiation due to the absence of forest trees that are supposed to protect the area; this, in return, results to water evaporation. The absence of trees make the lake's water warmer which, in turn, results to less fish production.<sup>44</sup>

During dry season, rapid evaporation takes place causing the Lake Dasay water level to drop. As a result, water supply for irrigation becomes inadequate which also means a drop in the yield of crops. The trees in the forested area of the municipality were subjected to the improper logging, harvesting operations and "kaingin"<sup>45</sup> systems, leaving the forest ecosystem degraded contributing to forest destruction in the area. These trends directly affect the livelihood of the rural majority. Added to this, biodiversity loss becomes evident in the deforested areas. Losses in the biodiversity reduce the resiliency of eco-systems and places the poor, who depend on these ecological resources, at risk of losing their livelihood.

In addition, soil erosion is the most common type of land degradation in San Miguel, which poses a detrimental effect on lives and property. Soil erosion in the area is caused by the depleting number of forest trees. The terrain of the municipality is sloped; the lack of forest vegetation contributes to the occurrence of severe soil erosion. If no human intervention is made, this may

lead to a disastrous landslide. Plus, eroded lands make the land less suitable to crop production. In some cases, severe erosion results to total loss of productivity.<sup>46</sup> Accordingly, to prevent or minimize soil erosion, farming, especially planting of upland rice and corn on slopes, must be discouraged. Farmers should adopt the “Sloping Agricultural Land Technology” or “SALT” as an alternative. Otherwise, farmers should be encouraged to shift to other farming activities like planting of forest trees, which do not require heavy cultivation; thus, minimizing severe soil damage.

As mentioned by Mr. Julito A. Abella and Mr. Renie L. Buay, the Barangay Captain and IMPR of Barangay Sayog, respectively, they have conducted tree planting activity in some parts of the lake to somehow lessen the pervasive problem of soil erosion in the area. But they admit that such effort is not enough. It is important, therefore, that soil and water conservation practices that fits in every given physical characteristics of the area be observed at all times to promote maximum utilization of the land and provide protection against further loss of topmost soil due to erosion. The lake was once surrounded with rich and fertile soil. However, because of unthinkable deforestation, the conditions had greatly changed. The once fertile soil became a decollated area and needs reforestation in order to avoid complete denudation. Likewise, environmental sanitation is seldom observed and practiced by the residents, and threats to excessive fishing and disturbances from domesticated animals are evident. The lake is threatened with the presence of unlicensed hunters, fishers, and households around the lake.<sup>47</sup> Lake Dasay is obviously neglected as evidenced by the presence of aquatic weeds, undesirable floating materials, and bare eroded soil in the surrounding lake areas.

Another concern is the proposed development to be undertaken in the area. This concern arose as the local government wanted to develop the area as Lake Dasay is likened to a hidden treasure of the municipality. It has a potential to become a tourist destination. The lake will be used for income generation. Undeniably, tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the country, generating income and bringing positive impacts to stakeholders. But it may have cause negative impact on the immediate surroundings.

As identified, San Miguel is considered as an eco-tourism destination in the region, owing to its promising natural attraction. However, physical facilities to support and sustain these tourism destinations are significantly inadequate and absent. In other words, the lack of state-of-the-art facilities to make local tourism competitive posed a big threat to the proposed plan. While major roads leading to these areas were provided by the LGU, connecting or feeder roads leading to specific destinations appear inadequate. Power, communication, and water infrastructure are still absent while accommodation facilities (cottages, housing, etc) are either insufficient or even absent (for housing).<sup>48</sup>

Ecotourism can be a competitive industry in the area if support facilities are established and local tourism enabling policies are fully institutionalized. Without these things, services would be inadequate. Ecotourism operations occasionally failed to live up to conservation ideals. Aside from environmental degradation with tourist infrastructure, population pressures from ecotourism also leave behind garbage and pollution. Such activities produce environmental issues because they may disturb fauna and flora. The industrialization, urbanization, and unsustainable agriculture practices of human society are considered to be having a serious effect on the environment. Ecotourism is now also considered to be playing a role in this depletion. This invasion often includes deforestation, disruption of ecological life systems and various forms of pollution, all of which contribute to environmental destruction.<sup>49</sup>

In that case, ecotourism may not bring benefits to the lake's surroundings; instead, may lead to more damage. Efforts toward environmental development and protection should be undertaken proportionally and sustainably. The regulations for environmental protection are vaguely defined, costly to implement and hard to enforce because of some opposition and a long line of procedures that needs to be followed. Government regulatory agencies, as political bodies, are susceptible to making decisions that spend budget on politically beneficial projects but not environmentally friendly. Because of prestige and conspicuousness, the construction of an attractive visitor's center at an ecotourism site may take precedence over more pressing environmental concerns like acquiring habitat, protecting endemic species, and removing invasive ones.<sup>50</sup>

The concern about the belief system is not quite obvious compared to the environmental concerns. However, the beliefs of the people sometimes contribute to the state of backwardness of a certain area. As discussed in the previous section of this study, the lives of the people are greatly influenced by the myths and legends they believed in, that are passed down from generations, especially in the case of the Subanëns. In the interview of the tribal chieftain or *Timuay*, she described how the Subanëns interact with the lake and its surrounding area. She narrated that the lake is not like any ordinary lake. They interact with the lake with carefulness in accordance with their beliefs for them not to trespass the lives of the spirits in the area.

They also believe that there are spirits who live in nature such as rivers, mountains, big trees, forests, and especially lakes. These spirits are owners and guardians of nature. Thus, it is very important that people should give reverence to them through rituals. Rituals are performed by the Subanën before entering or nearing the abode of the spirits, such as forests and rivers. They also perform rituals when they extract resources from nature, such as fishing, farming, and cutting of trees. Accordingly, the Subanën rituals are meant to show respect to the spirits.

*“Based on our ancestors’ beliefs, before we go to the lake, if there are some big events happening, we are obliged to perform rituals. We will use seven leaves and seven chickens as offerings to the spirits.*

*One is not allowed to enter the lake's premises if one is only making fun and cracking insolent jokes around the area. Tragedy will definitely come to those who act that way. Similar to what happened to the high school student. His body could not be found without the assistance of the timuay who performed the rituals.*<sup>51</sup>

Because of this belief, they are also adamant about the possible changes to be undertaken in the lake area. As the *timuay* continues:

*“Before, the Council of Elders and I prohibited acts or projects to be made in the lake for the development of a possible tourist attraction. For us, the lake is not a subject for development. We wanted to preserve it the way it is. But some would say that we are in the modern generation; they really wanted to pursue the developments. It is also part of the Municipal Mayor’s and the Provincial Government’s plans; but before they can implement any projects, they need to pass through me first. As a tribal chieftain in San Miguel, I am a signatory to the National Commission on Indigenous People, prohibiting the implementation of any projects on Lake Dasay, unless they consult me.”*<sup>52</sup>

Aside from that, majority of the informants have no problem with the plans for the lake, especially the Barangay Officials of Barangay Sayog where the lake is located. They are in favor of the plan and are looking forward for the said ecotourism development in Lake Dasay in the future. For them, it would be great for their place, especially for their lives if such will happen. Even though majority are enthusiastic about the future plans for the lake, the fact remains that there are some who are hoping that the project would not materialize; because for them, the lake is sacred. Modernization and development should not alter the lake.

Since all of these are still plans, people believe there is no certainty that it would take place in the future. To them, such plans are subject to the prioritization of the Mayor; and if it is not approved, then they cannot do anything about it. Waiting is the only thing they can do. Aside from that, it would be a challenge for the project to get some investors, especially from the locality of San Miguel, since most of the people know about the notorious stories about Lake Dasay. They said that it would be okay if developments will take place in the area. However, the question is, “who will have the guts to do that” since most of the time, people are afraid that something might happen to them if they make changes within the vicinity of the lake.

Thus, it would be quite challenging to change the mindsets of the people since these beliefs have long been embedded in the community and are deeply rooted on the culture. With this, the wish of the elders to preserve the lake as it is protected, because realizing such plans may yet happen in the far future.

The above-mentioned issues and concerns are said to be unintentional effects of people’s practices. As indicated in the title of the study, the research coverage is only until around

2018, since most of the remarkable changes as well as the data acquired from local agencies, that provided documentary evidences, ended that year. The issues and concerns surrounding Lake Dasay were clearly evident and documented around 2000, as part of the municipal planning and development program studies. Additionally, as mentioned in the earlier part of this study, some documentary evidences, like the DENR research, focused only on the water and environmental aspects of Lake Dasay. Hence, this study is an attempt to add to the inadequate number of lake studies using oral accounts, in the absence or lack of surviving or historical records.

## CONCLUSION

This study is about the history of Lake Dasay based on the oral accounts of the settlers of the place. Lake Dasay is the second largest lake in the province of Zamboanga Del Sur located in Purok 3, Barangay Sayog, in the Municipality of San Miguel. The lake is said to be the treasure of the people (both Subanën and migrant settlers) of the area. The lake provided them the provisions they needed in their daily lives. To them, it is a gift from God. The lake is surrounded by fertile soil making agriculture productive. The water from the lake is a source of irrigation for their rice fields and other agricultural crops. It also provides abundant supply of fish as source of food and livelihood. The serene beauty of the lake is also a potential venue for recreation and other related educational activities. Along the buffer zone areas, flora species are growing abundantly like teak, mahogany, and yemane as source of lumber and some fruit trees. Its water resources are sustained by the spring within the lake and some few creeks with a single outlet passing through a cave.

Based on the municipal and DENR records, the basin-like-lake is located at the foot of Mt. Dasay which was believed to be a crater lake. It was caused by a volcanic eruption due to the tectonic movement in the older days. As for the natives of the place, the lake was created after a forty (40) day rain that happened thus resulting to the formation of the area where Lake Dasay is located.

The Subanën were the original settlers of the place. During the second half of the 20th century, people from the Visayas and nearby municipalities and provinces started to migrate and settle in the area. For the native settlers, (mostly Subanëns) the lake is sacred because it is the home of the spirits, the protector of the environment. The place should be respected in order not to anger the spirits and not to be punished by them. The lake is described in the book, the History of Zamboanga Del Sur as, “*It’s like a luscious mouth parted in a smile reflected on the face of a country damsel. Though it’s so innocent-looking, yet all the silent fury lurks beneath its waters.*” The mystery of the place is handed down from generation to generation as told by their ancestors. Nowadays, many are adamant to believe these stories. However, for the Subanëns, such stories were engraved in their memories and belief system, as part of their culture.

Based on the oral testimonies of the informants, several issues and concerns such as deforestation, erosion, and pollution arose. The increased population in the area contributed to these problems. Soil erosion is commonly caused by the indiscriminate cutting of trees around the lake area. This resulted to the occurrence of landslide and loss of the fertility of the soil. Furthermore, the continuous practice of Kaingin aggravated the threat of soil denudation. Deforestation also exposed the lake's water to radiation. These causes the drop of water level which also affects the lives of the aquatic species in the lake. The visitors' indiscriminate dumping of their wastes pollutes the lake, making the water less potable for drinking.

The people, especially the Subanën, were apprehensive about the plan of making the lake as an ecotourism destination because they were afraid that it might anger the spirit. In turn, the spirit may inflict disaster to the lives of the people of San Miguel. Added to this, whatever improvement or structural facilities for recreational purposes might do harm and damage to the place. It will alter the pristine beauty of the lake.

Local history along with oral testimonies (history) contain a wealth of details and stories that help reveal societal changes which impacted the lives of ordinary people. It teaches the people about their community because sometimes only a few people know the origin or history of certain community. Local history depicts shared experiences as often depicted from the oral histories/account/narratives. Hence, this study seeks to contribute to the writing of local history based on the oral accounts of the people. It is like history is all around us and is carried and passed down from generation to generation. From the various accounts on the origin of Lake Dasay to the people's narratives on their interactions with the lake and hearing how important Lake Dasay is to the people based on their narratives, thus, this study was conceived. People sometimes need not look far to see reflections of the past because our own community contains many sites, oral traditions and records with a rich history.

Lake Dasay's history is also the history of the people and the local community. Thus, various people's activities in the area are closely associated with the lake and its surroundings. Sadly, these activities and historical value are not accounted as far as written documents are concerned. Facts and figures had only conjured the blurred picture of this remarkable landscape. Nevertheless, reconstructing the past through this study may be ambitious as it seems, but this kind of study this will be a step forward to make and complete the whole history of the place. The lake has its own stories to tell and is conveyed through the lenses and voices of the people; most of which are just awaiting to be documented.

Overall, this research serves as a cursory study in the field of lake studies, offering both academic scholars and general readers a new perspective that would lead to a deeper understanding of how oral accounts/history can weave through culture, environmental stewardship, and the complex interplay between tradition and modernity in one of the three lakes in the province of Zamboanga del Sur.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Socio-Economic and Physical Profile, Municipality of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur. 2001 ed. (San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur, Region IX, Island of Mindanao, Philippines: Municipal Planning and Development Coordinating Office, 2001), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Brillo, Bing Baltazar C., “*The Status of Philippine Lake Studies: Scholarly Deficit in Social Science and Small-Lake Research*” *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2015): 78-101. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2618597>. Accessed on April 10, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, ed., *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898 vol.40* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903), 100-103.

<sup>4</sup> Consejo V. Laviña’s **Subanu Culture in Transition** gives description about the Subanens and its culture as a product of oral interviews of various key informants. From all of these extracted accounts, it provided various helpful insights in terms of the people’s beliefs, customs, and practices in relation to the areas they inhabit in accordance to their lifestyle as influenced by their environment around them.

<sup>5</sup> The book of Estefanio Argall Luceño, **History of Zamboanga Del Sur** which is greatly used in this study. This book contains an extensive account of local history of the Province of Zamboanga Del Sur (including Zamboanga Sibugay today). Luceño’s work is remarkable and important to this study as it is an important source of local history of Zamboanga Del Sur. Furthermore, this is the very first published edition about the history of the province. Indeed, it provided the people thorough knowledge about the area where they live in; there were backdrop of legends, tradition, and valuable data lifted from existing documents.

<sup>6</sup> The *timuay* is the traditional title for the communal leader who is also the chief arbiter of conflicts between the families of a community. They are the tribal chieftains of their community.

<sup>7</sup> The other name of the lake aside from “Danaw.” Mostly commonly used in official government documents referring to the lake. Origin had it that it is named after Mt. Dasay where the lake is situated at the foot of the said mountain. This description is from the records of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region IX.

<sup>8</sup> Lake Dasay is originally called “Danaw” by the locals especially the Subanens which means Lake or Lagoon. It is somewhat related to the term “Lanao or Ranao” of the Meranaos which means lake.



<sup>9</sup> In an interview with Mr. Joshua Singol, 62 years old, married, a “pure blooded Subanën”, a resident in the area since birth and works as a farmer.

<sup>10</sup> In an interview with Mr. Lope Sestoal, 69 years old, married, a migrant from Aurora, Zamboanga Del Sur, and ethnic affiliation is Cebuano, works as a farmer and a resident in the area for 50 years.

<sup>11</sup> Gutaran is a *Timuay* in the area in the 1950’s who accordingly knows a lot about Lake Dasay in the earlier days. Legends about the creation of Lake Dasay was handed down, generation by generation, as a form of oral history. So when people ask the Subanëns who live in the area about the beginning of the lake, most of them says, “According to Gutaran’s grandfather.”

<sup>12</sup> In an interview with Mr. Rosalino Sanlao before he died at the age of 93, married, pure-blooded Subanun, lives in the nearby Barangay of Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>13</sup> The Pacific Ocean sits on a huge slab of rock called the Pacific plate. This plate grinds and rubs against other plates surrounding it. The plate movements cause earthquakes and volcanoes in a zone that circles the whole Pacific Ocean. That’s why this zone is called the Ring of Fire.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Environment and Natural Sciences “*Lake Dasay Management Plan, 2019-2023*” (PENRO-R9: Pagadian City), 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Malay word for “Lake.” Lake Dasay is sometimes called as “Lake Danaw” by the native inhabitants especially the Subanëns. It is related to the term “Lanao or Ranao” of the Meranaos which means lake.

<sup>16</sup> Tribal Chieftain, Precy Buay-Marquialla, 64 years old, married, a pure-blooded Subanën, a resident in the area since birth, presently working in IPMR, Poblacion, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>17</sup> In an interview with Mr. Freddie A. Sanlao, 49, years old, mixed-blooded Subanën, lives in Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>18</sup> Department of Environment and Natural Sciences “*Lake Dasay Management Plan, 2019-2023*” (PENRO-R9: Pagadian City), 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Department of Environment and Natural Resources, *Integrated Approach Towards the Development of Lake Dasay at Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur* (Pagadian City: CENRO-R-IX, 2000), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Socio-Economic and Physical Profile, Municipality of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur. 2001 ed. (San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur, Region IX, Island of Mindanao, Philippines: Municipal Planning and Development Coordinating Office, 2001).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Lumbia (Scientific Name: *Metroxylon sagu roxb*) is a freshwater plant inhabiting the lake. Approximately, it occupies at least 40% of the lake shore, sporadically distributed in clumps, majority situated along the western rim/section of the waterbody.

<sup>23</sup> Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, ed., *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898 vol.40* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903), footnote no.5.

<sup>24</sup> Consejo V. Laviña, *Subanu Culture in Transition* (Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines: University Research Center, 1979), 36.

<sup>25</sup> Luceño, Estefanio A., *History of Zamboanga Del Sur*. Alfred Printers. Pagadian City. P. 25

<sup>26</sup> See Note 16.

<sup>27</sup> See Note 20.

<sup>28</sup> Luceño, Estefanio A., *History of Zamboanga Del Sur*. Alfred Printers. Pagadian City. P. 555

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 555.

<sup>29</sup> “Barangay Sayog Profile,” Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> In an interview with the grandson of Proculo Ocapan whose name cannot be disclosed as the informant wouldn’t let his name be known for personal reasons.

<sup>32</sup> The largest lake in Zamboanga Del Sur where the municipality got its name, Municipality of Lakewood. Lakewoods’ original inhabitants were the Subanëns who originally

hailed from the banks of Lake Lanao, somewhere in the Dansalan. Proof of this is the fact that even now, the Maranaos from Lake Lanao still has some Subanen words in their dialect. When the Islamic missionaries came to Lanao, the Maranaos, who were also living there, readily accepted the faith but the Subanëns did not. This eventually resulted in enmity between the two ethnicities, which ended with the Maranaos killing the Subanëns and taking their women and children as wives and slaves. The Subanëns finally decided to move westward to what is now known as Misamis Occidental. From there, they moved south towards the Zamboanga Peninsula, where they came upon a big body of water they called “Danaw Guiyawan”, which literally means “Lake of the Woods.” The Subanëns eventually settled in the place, since food was abundant in the area. When Gen. Leonard Wood, the governor of the Moro Province in 1904, ordered Capt. Cornelius Smith to explore the inner territories of Mindanao starting from Iligan to Misamis, they stumbled upon the lake, which the natives called “Danaw.” Capt. Smith renamed it “Lake Leonard Wood”, which eventually became “Lakewood.”

<sup>33</sup> The 3rd and smallest lake in the province of Zamboanga Del Sur is known as Lake Maragang in the Municipality of Tigbao, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>34</sup> Luceño, Estefanio A., *“History of Zamboanga Del Sur.”* Alfred Printers, Pagadian City. P.13

<sup>35</sup> In an interview with Mr. Rosalino Sanlao, age of 93, married, a pure-blooded Subanen, lives in the nearby Barangay of Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>36</sup> Busiso is a race of gigantic fishes which can swallow entire boats from Subanen beliefs; centuries-old chants are still being sung about the creatures; lives in Lake Wood in Zamboanga del Sur. From the excerpt of Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho’s episode aired last March 17, 2019, entitled “Matagal nang usapan-usapan at kinatatakutan ng ilan ang umano’y halimaw na nananahan sa lawa ng Lakewood, Zamboanga Del Sur na kung tawagin ay “busiso.” Isa umano itong kakaibang uri ng napakalaking isda na hindi lang kayang magpataob ng bangka, kung hindi kumakain din ng tao. Sinasabing mayroon “chant” na bawal bigkasin kapag naglalayag sa malawak at malalim na lawa dahil lalabas ang halimaw kapag nadinig ito o kaya naman ay may masamang mangyayari.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmLUGtBCIXg>

<sup>37</sup> An Okoy is the Visayan version of the merman. It is a humanoid creature that lives in the sea. This mythical creature has scaly skin and webbed feet. There are also some Okoys with a fishtail similar to a mermaid or sirena. These creatures drown their victims before consuming them.

<sup>38</sup> In an interview with Mr. Benito Linghag, 81 years old, married, a “pure-blooded”

Subanën, a resident of Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur, a farmer.

<sup>39</sup> Friend of the student who got drowned in the lake while they were swimming back in their high school days. The informant refused to be named as a sign of respect for his deceased friend.

<sup>40</sup> Maguire, J. M. (1998). *The T'boli Landscape*. University of Hawai'i Press.

<sup>41</sup> Aguilar, R. C. (2005). Managing the sacred lakes of Coron Island, Palawan, Philippines: Ensuring environmental protection and securing cultural integrity through indigenous community initiatives (M. L. Cuvin-Aralar, R. S. Punongbayan, A. Santos-Borja, L. V. Castillo, E. V. Manalili, & M. M. Mendoza (eds.)) [Conference paper]. Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA). <http://hdl.handle.net/10862/6140>

<sup>42</sup> In an interview with Mrs. Cordiana I. Albellar, 67 years old, a pure-blooded Subanën, a resident in the area for 30 years. She was born and raised in Dungos, Dinas, Zamboanga Del Sur and moved in the area together with her parents in 1986, presently the Barangay Secretary of Barangay Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>43</sup> In an interview with Mr. Rosalino Sanlao before he died at the age of 93, married, a pure-blooded Subanën, lived in the nearby Barangay of Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>44</sup> Tito C. Trapila, "Integrated Approach Towards the Development of Lake Dasay at Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur, Re-Entry Plan," 5<sup>th</sup> CENR Management Course, DENR-NRDC National Training Center, Caranglan Nueva Ecija, May 10- June 10, 2000.

<sup>45</sup> *Kaingin* or Slash-and-Burn method of farming.

<sup>46</sup> Socio-Economic and Physical Profile, Municipality of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur. 2001 ed. (San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur, Region IX, Island of Mindanao, Philippines: Municipal Planning and Development Coordinating Office, 2001), 10.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>48</sup> Enabling communities and expanding opportunities in San Miguel," vol. 3 Municipal Planning and Development Council, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur, 2012, 25.

<sup>49</sup> Kamauro, O. (1996). Ecotourism: Suicide or Development? Voices from Africa #6: Sustainable Development, UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service. United Nations News Service. Accessed on May 4, 2020.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Tribal Chieftain, Precy Buay-Marquialla, 64 years old, married, a pure-blooded Subanën, a resident in the area since birth, presently working in IPMR, Poblacion, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

<sup>52</sup>In 1997, the Philippine Congress enacted the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) which recognizes indigenous peoples' right to self-determination and provides mechanisms for the protection of indigenous ancestral domains and all resources therein. The IPRA adopted the concept of "free and prior informed consent" (FPIC) as a means to protect indigenous rights and interests and give them a voice in matters that affect them. FPIC in this context requires that indigenous communities be provided with adequate and accessible information, and that consensus is determined in accordance with indigenous peoples' customary laws and practices and free from any external manipulation or coercion. The IPRA requires FPIC prior to the extraction of resources from indigenous ancestral domains and lands. When implemented effectively, FPIC represents a critical tool in the realization of indigenous self-determination, promoting community participation in decision-making and mitigating the risk of social conflict around natural resource projects.

## REFERENCES

### *Reading Materials*

- Abramovitz, J.N. (1998), Putting a Value on Natures “Free” Services. *World Watch* January-February.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Retrieved from <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1>
- Combes, F. S.J. (1909). *Historia de las Islas de Mindanao, Jolo, y sus Adjacentes Natives in Southern Mindanao in Philippine Islands*, vol.40, Ohio: The Arthur Clark and Company.
- Blair, E.H., Robertson, A. (1903-1908). ed., *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company. Documents used:  
-The Natives of the Southern Islands, vol.40. 1690-1691;  
-Chapter IX- Of the nations of these islands and those adjacent to them;  
-Chapter XI- The settlers of these islands, and their origin;  
-Chapter XII- Beliefs and Superstitions of these islands
- Brillo, B.C. (2015). The Status of Philippine Lake Studies: Scholarly Deficit in Social Science and Small-Lake Research. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, vol. 15, no. 1: 78-101. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2618597>.
- Conway, G., Sajise, P., & Knowland, W. (1989), Lake Buhi: Resolving Conflicts in a Philippine Development Project. *Ambio* 18, no. 2: 128-35. [www.jstor.org/stable/4313544](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4313544).
- Dela Cruz, R.B. “The T’boli Tribe from the Backdrop of Tourism Development in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato: Some Unheard Voices.” *Tin-aw*, 2(1). <http://ejournals.ph/form/cite.php?id=13618>.
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources–Region IX. (2000). *Integrated Approach Towards the Development of Lake Dasay at Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur*.
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources- Region IX. (2019). *Lake Dasay Management Plan 2019- 2023*. PENRO, Zamboanga Del Sur.
- Department of History, Mindanao State University System. (2014). *A History of Filipino Muslims and Lumads of Minsupala: A Teaching and Learning Guide*.

- Diaz, C.P. (1997). Wetlands Sustain Life. *Canopy International* 23, no.1: January- February.
- Lavina, C. (1976). The Subanu Culture in Transition, *Papers in Mindanao Ethnography*.
- Luceño, E. A.(2001). *History of Zamboanga Del Sur*, 1st ed. Pagadian City: Alfred Printers.
- Maguire, J. M. (1998). *The T'boli Landscape*. University of Hawai'i Press.
- Matkowska, A. (2015) Oral Tradition Fieldwork Feature. *Legends of Lake Baikal: A Conversation with Agnieszka Matkowska*. Researchgate.net.
- Municipal Planning and Development Council of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur. (2012). *Enabling communities and expanding opportunities in San Miguel, vol.3*.
- Municipal Planning and Development Coordinating Office of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur. (2001). *Socio-Economic and Physical Profile, Municipality of San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur*.
- Oracion, E.G., & Hiponia, M.c. (2009). Nature and People Matter Conservation and Ecotourism in Balanan Lake, Negros Oriental. *Philippine Studies* 57, no. 1: 105-36. [www.jstor.org/stable/42633990](http://www.jstor.org/stable/42633990).
- Oosthoek, K. J. The Role of Oral History in Environmental History. Retrieved from <https://www.eh-resources.org/role-of-oral-history-in-environmental-history/>.
- Rockerfeller, L.A. Why Geography Matters in the Study of History and Historical Narratives. Retrieved from [http://www.thebattleofnewyork.com/walking\\_tour.php](http://www.thebattleofnewyork.com/walking_tour.php).
- Rodil, R.B. (2017). *Kasaysayan ng mga Pamayanan ng Mindanao at Arkipelago ng Sulu, 1596-1898 Aklat ng Bayan*, Manila: Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino at Pambansang Komisyon para sa Kultura at mga Sining.
- Tamayo, Z.M., Santos, R., Orozco, R. & Elegado, G., (2005). The Ecological Status of Lake Laguna De Bay, Philippines. *Aquatic Ecosystem Health & Management*. 5.127-138. [10.1080/14634980290031820](https://doi.org/10.1080/14634980290031820).
- Trapila, T.C. (2000). *Integrated Approach Towards the Development of Lake Dasay at Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur, Re-Entry Plan*. 5th CENR Management Course, DENR-NRDC National Training Center, Caranglan, Nueva Ecija, May 10-June 10.



Ulindang, F. (2009). "Lumad in Mindanao." Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts. Retrieved from <http://www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/articles-on-c-n-a/article.php?i=18>

Zapico, F.L., Martin, T.T., Penna, R.J. & Gonzales, J. (2008). Farming and Seed Conservation Practices of Rice Farmers in the Marginal Uplands of Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Philippines. [agris.fao.org](http://agris.fao.org). [https://www.academia.edu/1210967/Farming\\_and\\_seed\\_conservation\\_practices\\_of\\_rice\\_farmers\\_in\\_the\\_marginal\\_uplands\\_of\\_Lake\\_Sebu\\_South\\_Cotabato\\_Philippines](https://www.academia.edu/1210967/Farming_and_seed_conservation_practices_of_rice_farmers_in_the_marginal_uplands_of_Lake_Sebu_South_Cotabato_Philippines)

Zoleta, D.B. (1987). From the Mountains to the Lakebed: Resource Problems and Prospects in Buhi Watershed, Camarines Sur, Philippines. Yearbook of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers 49: 139-53. [www.jstor.org/stable/24040360](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24040360).

### ***Documentary (Video)***

GMA News and Public Affairs. "Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho: Halimaw sa Lawa ng Zamboanga?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmLUGtB CIXg>.

### ***Interviews***

Abadan, Alberto. 61 years old, married, a migrant from Negros Occidental and ethnic affiliation is Ilonggo. Work as a farmer, a resident in the area for 54 years.

Abadan, Analyn. 37 years old, single mom, born in Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay but raised in the area. Work as a housewife, a resident in the area for 33 years.

Abadan, Vivian. 56 years, married, a migrant from Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay and ethnic affiliation in Cebuano. Work as a farmer and a housewife, a resident in the area for 34 years.

Abella, Julito. 62 years old, married, a migrant from Kalasan, Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, and ethnic affiliation is Cebuano. Work as a farmer and a resident in the area for 56 years. The Barangay Captain in Barangay Sayog, Zamboanga del Sur.

Albellar, Concordia I. 68 years old, married, a pure-blooded Subanen, a resident in the area for 35 years. She was born and raised in Dungus, Dinas, Zamboanga Del Sur and moved in the area together with her parents in 1986, presently working as Barangay Secretary of Barangay Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

Buay, Renie L. 45 years old, married, a pure-blooded Subanën, presently the IPMR or Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative of Barangay Sayog, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur.

Grandson of Proculo Ocapan (the founder of San Miguel). The informant asked the researcher not to disclose his profile for personal reason, hence, the researcher respected his request.

Ligawan, Jimmy. 64 years old, married, a pure-blooded Subanën. Work as a farmer and a resident in the area since birth.

Linghag, Benito. 81 years old, married, a pure-blooded Subanen, a resident of Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur, a farmer.

Linghag, Celia Canday. 80 years old, married, a “pure-blooded Subanen”, born and raised in Sayog, San Miguel near the lake and now living in Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur.

Marquialla, Precy Buay. 65 years, a lady *timuay*, married, a pure-blooded Subanën, a tribal chieftain and presently working as IPMR or Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative in Poblacion, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur, a resident in the area since birth.

Macquiling, Claro. 62 years old, married, a migrant in the area from Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay, and ethnic affiliation is Cebuano, works as a farmer and a carpenter, a resident in the area for 60 years.

Martinez, Rogelio. 67 years old, married, a migrant from Dumingag, Zamboanga Del Sur, and ethnic affiliation is Cebuano, works as a farmer and carpenter, a resident in the area for 36 years.

Mr. S. Friend of the student who got drowned in the lake while they were swimming back in their high school days. The informant refused to be named as a sign of respect for his deceased friend.

Patulombon, Alberto. 70 years old, married, a migrant from Molave, Zamboanga Del Sur, and ethnic affiliation is Cebuano, works as a farmer, a resident in the area for 60 years.

Pongasi, Danilo. 47 years old, married, a migrant from Pagadian City, Zamboanga Del Sur and ethnic affiliation is Cebuano, works as a housewife and a resident in the area for 26 years.

Sanlao, Freddie A. 49 years old, mixed-blooded Subanën, lives in Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur.

Sanlao, Rosalino. 93 years old, married, a pure blooded Subanën, currently residing at Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur and works as a farmer.

Sestoal, Lope. 73 years old, a migrant from Aurora, Zamboanga Del Sur, and ethnic affiliation is Cebuano, works as a farmer and a resident in the area for 50 years.

Sanlao, Wilfredo. 68 years old, married, a pure-blooded Subanën, currently residing at Betinan, San Miguel, Zamboanga Del Sur and works as a farmer.

Singol, Joshua. 66 years old, married, a pure blooded Subanën, a resident in the area since birth and works as a farmer.

# **Filipino Po Ba Ako? Of Doubt and Mistrust in the Economy of Marginalization: A Volunteer's Experience Among the Hanunuo Mangyan Youth**

*By Carole Raymundo Diamante, DBA*

## **Introduction**

With the aim of becoming a high-trust society, there is a need to intensify efforts in promoting cultural sensitivity with and among our indigenous peoples. Such endeavor is a precondition for social cohesion and inclusion towards transformative nation building.

Vital for the survival of our human society are individuals who can encourage the next generation to adapt a worldview nurtured by both: the wisdom of the past and the vision of global unity in the future. *Kapwa* values could also provide cultural brakes to that runaway international economy we now face with all its social, environmental, and humanitarian impacts (De Guia, 2005).

## **The Mangyans of Mindoro**

Sitio Bait, Barangay Panaytayan in the municipality of Mansalay, in the province of Oriental Mindoro is home to the most populated tribal community of Hanunuo Mangyans. It is situated in the southern part of the island. Its population as determined by the 2020 Census was 12,010. This represented 20.32% of the total population of Mansalay.

The Hanuno'o Mangyans are the best known of the various groups called "Mangyan" living in the interior of the island of Mindoro. To an even greater extent than other such outsider-given names, "Mangyan" covers a wide range of meanings. In the Tagalog, Bikol, and Visayan languages of the central Philippines, the term combines the ideas of "savage," "mountaineer," and "pagan Negro," apparently once referring to Negritos rather than to Mangyan, who physically do not differ from lowland Filipinos. The word even came to mean "servant" or "debt-

slave,” much as, among the Tausug, captive slaves in general were called bisaya. In the usage of most Mindoro highlanders themselves, “Mangyan” equals “a person,” a fellow “tribesperson,” or “pagan.” The Hanuno’o, on the other hand, insist that they are the “authentic” Mangyan (hanuno’o means “true” in their language).

Mindoro presents one of the great anomalies of Philippine history. Whereas Cebu, Panay, and, above all, Manila retained and increased their regional importance under Spanish colonial rule, Mindoro lost its pre-Hispanic prominence. Finding mention in Chinese accounts of the 13th century, the island was the first place in the Philippines to enter the historical record under the name Mait (Ma-yi in modern Mandarin pronunciation).

In *Mindoro Highlanders: The Life of Swidden Agriculturalists* by Yasushi Kikuchi, the Spaniards who were based in Panay and groped towards Manila but first came to Mindoro in 1570. They called the coastal people “Moros,” noting their connections with Muslim Brunei, which they would discover the Tagalogs farther north also enjoyed. The coastal towns were defended by moats, 4.25 m (14 ft) thick walls, and culverins (small cannons). Their inhabitants were rich in gold and savvy enough to present the greedy Spaniards with fake gold pieces that deceived even the most expert. In addition, the Spaniards also recorded that “Chichimecos” inhabited the interior. (Kikuchi, 1984)

*By the 19th century, the island that had been the Philippines’ first recorded window to the outer world gained a reputation as a wild, mysterious, and inhospitable land. When Christian lowlanders (Tagalogs and Hiligaynon) began to settle the coasts, they looked on the natives as alien heathens ripe for exploitation. For a machete, Christians could demand rice crops from Mangyan in payment; Christian men would enter into sexual liaisons with Mangyan women, only to abandon them. The American colonial regime deepened the division by labeling the Mangyan as inferior to other Filipinos and designating Indian-style reservations for them.*

*The Mangyan response has been to seclude themselves even further and to avoid entering into any “reciprocal” relations with lowlanders, which they have long learned end up one-sided. They even distrust hierarchy among themselves, preferring egalitarian social structures. These characteristics have left them less able to assert their political rights in the manner that Cordillera and Muslim peoples have done in gaining a measure of autonomy. As the American regime in the end abandoned the policy of isolating the Mangyan, the Filipino government has favored simple integration, which would ultimately end the Mangyan existence as separate peoples. For instance, the Iraya of the northern highlands have been settled by the government in towns and have become wage laborers for Christians. (Lopez 1972)*

The Hanunuo Mangyans of Mindoro, in the long period of history had been marginalized by the dominant sectors of lowland society. Lowland forms in incursion were varied but they were persistently carried out not only in cultural but mostly in the political and economic sphere. As one researcher so aptly puts it: (cited by Gariguez, 1992)

*In truth there exists no Mangyan group today that had not been exposed to nor encroached upon by people coming from the lowlands - missionaries, land-grabbers, anthropologists, social workers, lumberjacks have long penetrated and disrupted the continuity or traditional way of life. (Lopez, 1976)*

In many instances, the pattern of subjugation and oppressive inter-relation characterizes the existing status quo. The exploitative terms of relationship between the Mangyans and the lowlanders cannot be rectified unless a radical orientation in terms of observing the basic framework of respect and sincere acceptance is established. The pattern of prejudice must end and the vision of equality must be pursued (Gariguez, 1992).

Studies or papers written on the Mangyans should be an instrument of empowerment and not just a form of incursion for which the Mangyans had long been subjected to.

Entering this process of dialogue with a corresponding personal engagement necessarily demands a committed involvement for the people and community. The research process seeks to accomplish the data gathering input while understanding the “flesh and blood” realities of the indigenous peoples as they share their stories, express their deepest longings and articulate their own view of the world.

Elders and community leaders have also raised their concerns about the deterioration of their cultural heritage given the sense of shame that is imbibed especially by those who go to school. This has moved communities and their partners to re-examine the kind of education provided by mainstream society. The following observations about mainstream education have been identified as the major reasons for the fragmenting sense of identity and devaluation of ancestry and heritage among many IP youth as according to ECIP Report of 2006:

- IPs are misrepresented in history, some statements bordering to discrimination; (pagan, uncivilized, etc.)
- Stress that indigenous life and culture is backward and implies that it should be ‘left behind’; (superstitions, unscientific, etc.)
- Discussion limited to surface culture (songs, clothes, etc.) leading to a shallow understanding of **IPs as a people** and **culture as a process**;



- Instills views and values that are contradictory to IP culture;
- **Not in touch with the local situation so content is not context-based and relevant;**
- Most teachers who are non-IP put less value the struggle for their ancestral domains and other fundamental rights, discouraging the indigenous youth to become participants in shaping the common future of the Earth.

## **Reclaiming and Enriching the IP Education System**

Given these reflections and articulations, some IP communities in partnership with Indigenous Peoples Assemblies (IPAs) and/or congregations have started to respond by reshaping the nature and approach of education interventions being undertaken. These are being done with the understanding that IPs as a people with their cultures could flourish only if rooted in the processes of their IKSPs as expressed in their education system. (ECIP Report of 2006)

Key differences of present efforts with previous efforts are the following:

- *Community-based.* In the past, efforts were focused on sending students to formal schools away from the community or setting up schools in the community but managed exclusively by outsiders. In emerging efforts, community-based is more than just the school or intervention being in the physical space of the community; rather, it is the participation of the community in setting-up and managing the school/intervention in all aspects. Thus, we revive our indigenous learning process wherein learning is a community act. Also, education activities also flow with the rhythm of community life instead of an artificial time frame imposed on the learners.
- *Seeks rootedness in the IKSPs that have been nurtured but which unfortunately have become stunted/are dying due to colonization and marginalization.* Previous efforts focused largely on inculcating content, skills and learning processes determined by the mainstream. Present efforts start with the content, skills and learning processes of the community and from there, complementation with the mainstream content, skills and learning processes follow.
- *Stresses identity, heritage and self-determination.* Previous efforts glossed over the context of the community since what was viewed as important was for the 'educated' to effectively be assimilated into mainstream society. Today, more and more efforts recognize that the education programs/interventions should be anchored on and responsive to the context of IP communities and thus, the focus on valuing heritage and identity, and asserting self-determination. Concretely, this kind of education helps the learner understand what it means to be an indigenous person, why we are marginalized, the impact of historical circumstances on the tribe, and what needs to be done to bring about meaningful change.

- *Focuses not only on cultural manifestations (songs, dances, stories, etc.) but also on culture as living process.* While there have been efforts to include cultural products like songs, dances, stories, artifacts, etc. in the curriculum, these only touch the surface of what culture is. What is needed is the appreciation of culture as process – how the cultural products came about, why they are changing, discussions on the impact of cultural change on communities and identity, the maintenance to intergenerational ties, etc. It is the understanding of cultural processes that will help IP youth to better understand why their community is what it is today and how to concretely maintain their community and culture as **a living entity**.
- *Seeks to be based on IP worldview (philosophy, psychology, spirituality, etc.)* Again, previous efforts were based on mainstream educational philosophies, psychology, etc. The aim now is to have educational programs/interventions that flow from the IP community's worldview. Creation as teacher, for example, emanates from an indigenous worldview. Including IP spirituality (eg. the sacredness of life and of creation) in our education is also another example.
- *Responsive to present needs and situation (complementation with DepEd competencies).* Equally important as being rooted in their culture and heritage is the IP youth's being able to face today's world and dynamics. Thus, the program or intervention should harness the necessary skills and impart the needed content and values for them to be able to be active participants in engaging the present times while shaping the future (not just to adapt and fit into a projected future).
- *Response seeks to be systematic, not reactive.* There were tendencies in the past to just focus on changing content and doing these changes only when problems arose that needed to be solved. With the present view, it is the whole system that has to be addressed, and it should be done systematically.

### **The problematique of nationhood among the Mangyan youth**

This paper posits the seemingly alienating attitude the Hanunuos of Bait Mansalay has towards being considered “Filipino”. Alongside the personal experiences, this “damuong” (outsider) attempts to understand where this alienation and dissociation emanates. The situations brought about by the incessant description and labeling of these people as indigenous, Mangyan, Hanunuos, katutubo imperceptively ingrained itself among the people of the mountains.

Kapwa is a Tagalog term widely used when addressing another with the intention of establishing a connection. It reflects a viewpoint that beholds the essential humanity recognizable in everyone, therefore linking people rather than separating them from each other. Enriquez, in the 70's felt that this orientation was an expression of “humanness at its highest level”. Why? Kapwa, beyond all outer trappings, looks for what people have in common, not whether

someone is rich or poor, not whether someone is young or old, man, woman, or child, but rather for the fundamental characteristics in people, that is, as human beings. According to this type of thinking, people always remain just people (tao lang) despite titles, prestigious positions or wealth. It's their behavior and their ethics that count (de Guia, 2005).

“Kapwa” in the studies by Katrin de Guia (2005) on Filipino mind and consciousness, as shared self, shared identity has yet to be felt and experienced by the Hanunuos. Experiences of being preferred, exploited, segregated, and oftentimes collectively tagged as “Mangyan” puts a critical minded youth to ask, “Filipino po ba ako?”

### **Equality questioned**

The road to self-determination, empowerment, confidence in being themselves and of course, equality with the lowlanders and fellow persons are the premiere goals that every Mangyan and all indigenous peoples are fighting for. However, there seems a disconnect or an alienation of some sort to this dream. While the Mangyan youth have often been taught that they are *kapwa* to all, many of the lowlanders do not share such radical thought.

Gleaned from the many narratives of the Mangyan students enrolled in lowland schools, colleges or universities, they still feel the discrimination, some are subtle, some extreme experiences as well.

*“Why are we always called Mangyan students? We never called them Tagalog students.”*

*“Why are our projects and assignments often different from them? Mostly interviews of our Elders about our way of life. Home tasks of our lowlander classmates never made them interview their grandparents for their way of cooking rice on stoves.”*

And many other stories that seemingly emphasized their “otherness” from their lowland counterparts.

Another concrete example of such alienating topics for the Mangyan youth is a science project in Junior High in a lowland school. It happened that there were Hanunuo students enrolled in that class.

*The subject is Science where the teacher assigned project by groups. The lowlanders were in groups and the katutubo students were grouped together sans a lowlander*

*member. The expected result is organic mosquito repellent. The katutubo students were tasked to bring the plants as it is assumed that those are available in the forest and the mountains. The lowlanders will do the process of extracting, boiling, condensing and filtering the juice from the herbs or plants.*

While the intention of the teacher is justifiable as the resources are available in the locale of the katutubo students, these Hanunuo youth merely take it in silence that they fell short of really learning the process that the project entailed. They felt that they were simply made observers of such learning processes. This is simply one example of alienating the Hanunuo youth. How are we *kapwa* here when we feel we are just us, among ourselves and they are there with themselves and well?

They often say, “ we respect your culture” but for the students, that implies, their culture is so different from the other. Hence the respect.

And a student from the mountains, told his little brother, (Diamante, 2017)

*Our culture is for us to embrace, to love and to protect, Because the people down there cannot take in this culture Therefore, as they respect us, we let them be Because we are different. It is this difference that they respect not us. We are not them, they are not us. We are Mangyans, they are Filipinos. Perhaps God made us only Mangyans, not Filipinos. (Sendrik Yaot, a student)*

When I was a volunteer in the mountains of southern Mindoro, I crafted an activity called “Reverse Immersion.” While most of Catholic schools would have immersions or service learning activities (that of bringing urban students to provinces or depressed areas around the city, either a day tour or a sleepover for 2 nights and 3 days with host families) this Reverse Immersion is one where I brought the indigenous youth to urban setting and wherein I requested several Catholic schools from the urban setting (Calapan City, Batangas City and Manila) to join this service learning project involving Mangyan students.

At first, I received very encouraging confirmations but as the date came nearer, only three schools joined in the activity. As expected, the Mangyan students were disappointed but still hopeful that they would be chosen. Only two (2) students per household may be accommodated by the welcoming homes. So it was and after the experience of a week’s stay in those generous homes, we did a sharing of their experiences. Of the 20 students welcomed in city homes, 16 of them said they were made to stay in one separate bedroom usually near the kitchen or the garage. Two pairs of students who stayed in a condominium were staying in the unit by themselves and their host families would come in the morning to tour them around the city. The families and the city students are very nice and generous but to the Mangyans, they felt that they were

simply given things but the city people never shared anything of their usual daily lives with them. They were visitors. They felt so strange in that kind of arrangement. Two students shared that as they were packing their things to leave the city homes, they saw the mother ask the helper to immediately clean the room where they stayed and put the bedsheets and pillowcases in separate plastic bags to be thrown away. They also noticed that they were given separate plates, spoons and forks during their stay and the host mom packed those as gifts to them, with the slippers, bath towels, toiletries they used. And they say, .. “*Mam, ganun din po ba pag kayo ang makikitulog sa bahay nila?*” (Mam, do they do that to you, too, if you ever do sleepovers with them?). (Diamante, 2017)

It was sheer surprise to the students who are used to always welcome students and strangers to their homes in the mountains. They knew how to share their lives, tasks in the farm, stories around the bonfire at night and would delight at the clumsiness and awkward ways of city folks with their simple life. They share their camote and cassava at breakfast, lunch and dinner. The host parents would even allow the guests to assist them in dressing the chicken for the despedida feast when the visitors are about to go. They join the kaingin, the charcoal burning, the harvest, the Pamag-uhan, the feast of the First Harvest which is sacred to them.

The Reverse Immersion somehow showed them nothing of the sharing of their city life, the traffic, the night life. Perhaps, they say, perhaps this is real city life. They do not have a life. What a pity!

As service learning activities usually aim to expose the learners to a social reality other than their own, they are henceforth made to see the broader spectrum of social, economic and political spectra of society. How are the processes of governance in society made by those in power which causes these economic disparity among citizens?

### **Politics and the Mangyans**

Political concerns continue to be a top down form of system as far as the Mangyan communities are concerned. Exchanges between indigenous and formal structures of governance to the extent that decentralization does not formally halt the persistence of the customary system, communities continue to question the current situation where indigenous institutions be allowed to define resource access, use, and control arrangements. Despite the conflicting property rights regime of custom law and state law, there are elements in indigenous institutions that are crucial for local governance to succeed. (Tauli-Corpuz, 2019)

Key elements are the following:

1. Positive values in the indigenous knowledge system (IKS), i.e., beliefs, practices, technology, materials and resources, that promote self-governance and which can be tapped to promote collaboration in governance.
2. Recognition of IP system (customary laws) and culture to enhance unity and cooperation of IP communities: continue to strengthen IP governance and justice system
3. Strengthen IP political structure at the community level and promote collective decision making on community issues: Acknowledge IP traditional leaders in their wisdom and knowledge of governing the tribe/ community
4. Institutionalize the participation of women IP leaders (Bai) in decision making processes.
5. Strengthen communal land ownership and protect the ancestral domain from destruction by mining, logging, agri-business and others; IP's traditional use and management of resources should be respected.
6. Enhance existing sustainable agricultural practices of I Ps and strengthen the collective use and management of IP resources for their livelihood and upliftment.
7. Organize a broad consultation on sustainable development for IPs and conduct a critical evaluation on IP resources: review government plans and implementation of projects which are destructive and violative of the indigenous peoples collective rights
8. Uphold the role of genuine IP leaders in community affairs and enhance the greater participation of women and youth.
9. Establish a network of IP leaders and other concerned sectors (i.e. church, academe, government employees) on good governance to promote IP rights and welfare in local governance and enhance greater cooperation of LGUs with civil society

Attempts, however, are made to bridge this seeming disparity among the government sectors and the IP communities in Mindoro. To date, in Oriental Mindoro, *Ahop Agate*, a Hanunuo Mangyan from south of the island has been appointed member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. Most barangay captains in Mangyan sitios are now from the tribes. A small number of LET passers are appointed principals in DepEd schools and many Mangyan teachers are teaching in public schools.

If such is the political governance among institutions, how has the cultural life of this Hanunuo affected the economic life of society, if indeed he is a part of it all?

In the case of the Hanunuos of Mindoro, the Catholic missionaries had been journeying with the locals in their struggle and fight for their land and the respect of their culture. It can be said that this tribe is the most documented and most studied community of people in comparison with the other tribes in Mindoro.



As most of them had embraced Christianity, these gentle Hanunuos had been catechized in the tenets of Christian equality. But a sad reality exists, that in practice, they are still in the margins of lowland society. They are mostly seen as recipients of generous donations, scholarships, medical missions, fund drives and the like.

However, too much of this generosity puts the community in sheer complacency at times. With the ancestral land as their wealth, these people now are called to empowerment and self-determination. As “stewards of creation”, they now feel the huge responsibility to care for the mountains, their home and their own.

Aboriginal spirituality is grounded on the earth. This belief underlines the prime importance of the connection of indigenous people to the land that constitutes their ancestral domain. Their spirituality had arisen from the narratives of their story-telling tradition about this deep connection to their ancestral lands, (Gaspar, 2023)

### ***Laudato Si* and the Indigenous peoples**

To lay down a foundation for inclusive growth, a high-trust and resilient society, and a globally competitive knowledge economy arising from such inclusivity enhancing the social fabric of local culture and values is needed. *Laudato Si* (2015) of Pope Francis validates the genius of traditional knowledge systems with regards to earth stewardship. As we commonly agree on such respect due to the sanctity of creation, a deeper resolve is wanting in the political and economic participation of the indigenous communities.

Pope Francis emphasized that it is indeed “essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions.” Further on, he reiterates that, “respect for our dignity as human beings often jars with the chaotic realities that people must endure in life. Yet this should not make us overlook the abandonment and neglect also experienced by some populations which lack access to essential services and where some workers are reduced to conditions of servitude, without rights or even hope of a more dignified life.”

It was easier for the Mangyans to understand their affinity to other Nature as Land had been their entire and constant worldview. It is this struggle for the ancestral domain which lowlanders had encroached and continue to grab from them that had been their legacy to the youth of the tribe.

Being witness to such land disputes that would take years, even decades or more to fight for, these highly impressionable Mangyan youth start to distrust the justice system, the legal

advocates, even the missionaries helping them in their struggle for the right to determine this ancestral domain.

Ecological education and in this regard, political education, can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere. Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life. Here, though, I would stress the great importance of the family, which is “the place in which life – the gift of God – can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth.”

Perhaps it is indeed the larger community, the lowlanders, the so-called developed people who must be taught “Kapwa”. Using the wisdom of *Laudato Si*, “We learn to reject self-interested pragmatism. If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence behavior, in this case, our behavior towards the indigenous groups.”(2015)

Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature and people.

Then and only then can I give an answer to that Mangyan youth’s query: “Mam, Filipino po ba ako?” To him, I shall say, “Oo, Filipino ka kasi Kapwa tayo Filipino.”

## References

Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples. (2006). Proceedings of the First ECIP-IPA National Convention on IP Education. May 9-12, 2006. Kidapawan City, Mindanao.

Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples – South Central Luzon Regional Consultation on IP Education. September 20-23, (2004). Quezon City.

Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples Strategic Planning Session. May 22-23, (2006). Baguio City.

Episcopal Commission on Indigenous Peoples – DADITAMA Regional Consultation on IP Education, February 26-28, (2006). Davao City.

Laudato Si. (2015). By Pope Francis. National Statistics Office: Government of the Philippines. <http://www.census.gov.ph> (November 16, 2020).

De Guia, K. (2015). *Kapwa: The Self in the Other*. Anvil Publishing. Quezon City.

- Diamante, C. (2012). Worldview as Basis for Indigenous Education System. *Journal of Indigenous Studies*. National Dong Hwa University, Hualien, Taiwan.
- Diamante, C. (2010) The Mangyan Youth at the Center of Transformative Learning Process. *Assumption College Higher Education Division Research Journal*.
- Diamante, C. (2017). The Hanunuo Youth and Mainstream Education. *Decolonization Studies Journal*. Charles Sturt University. Sydney, New South Wales.
- Gariguez, E. (2000), Decolonized and Liberating Research Process in Mangyan Studies. Unpublished lecture paper.
- Gaspar, K. (2022). Diwang Balaan/Balan: A Discourse on Pinoy Spirituality. Institute of Spirituality in Asia. QC.
- Kikuchi, Yasushi. (1984). Mindoro Highlanders: The Life of Swidden Agriculturalists. Quezon City: New Day Publishers.
- LeBar, Frank M., ed. (1972). *Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia*. Vol. 2, The Philippines and Formosa. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area Files Press.
- Lopez, Violeta P. 1976. *The Mangyans of Mindoro: An Ethnohistory*. University of Philippines Press. Quezon City.
- Maranan, E. et. al. (2022). CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art digital Edition. Retrieved from: URL: <https://epa.culturalcenter.gov.ph/1/2/2362/>
- Mayuga, Sylvia, and Alfred Yuson. (1987). *Philippines*. Hong Kong: APA Productions.
- Montenegro, M. (2018). Factors Affecting Mangyan Hanunuo Indigents in Brgy Benli, Bulalacao Oriental Mindoro in Continuing Basic Education. An Action Research.
- Or. E. (2017) "Promoting indigenous knowledge systems and language maintenance through the Indigenous Peoples Education Program: The cases of four Mangyan communities in Oriental Mindoro, Philippines." In the 5th International Conference on Language Documentation and Conservation (ICLDC). University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- Sinumlag, A. (2019). Mangyan tribes are Breaking out of Age-old marginalization.

- Steinhauer, E. (2002). Thoughts on An Indigenous Research Methodology. *Canadian Journal of Native Discrimination*. Vol 26, Issue 2, p. 69-81, 201. Edmonton.
- Tauli-Corpuz, V. (2006). The Resistance of the Indigenous Peoples of Asia Against Racism and Racila Discrimination. Retrieved from: [http://www.tebtebba.org/tebtebba\\_files/summit/wcar/racism.htm](http://www.tebtebba.org/tebtebba_files/summit/wcar/racism.htm).
- Tauli-Corpuz, V. (2019). Indigenous People's Governance and Political Life in the Philippines. *Asian Development Bank Journal*.
- Trumbull, E. and Maria Pacheco. (2005). *The Teacher's Guide to Diversity. Building a Knowledge Base. Volume 1: Human Development, Culture and Cognition*. Brown University.

# Manong's Lost Gem: Cinematic Contradictions in *Banaue: Stairway to the Sky*

by John Adrianfer Atienza

## Abstract

The current essay examines Gerardo de Leon's *Banaue: Stairway to the Sky* as a cinematic locus of political and cultural interrogations. The study argues that the film of Manong, as he was often called, embodies contradictions in representations and misrepresentations of the Ifugao on the filmic screen. On the one hand, the Ifugao are conflicted in the film because of the problematic cinematic adoption of its narratives and cultures as it touched on aspects of cultural appropriation. On the other hand, the Ifugao are highlighted in the film as their narrative becomes an essential basis for displaying the nation's rich culture and history. The study is a preliminary attempt to articulate and interrogate Manong's lost gem. It aims to answer the following working questions: What contradictions in the cinematic representation of the Ifugao do *Banaue* reveal? How does *Banaue* negotiate, in filmic and thematic terms, the representation and misrepresentation of the Ifugao concerning cultural appropriation, as well as its engagement with nationalist and feminist cinema?

**Keywords:** Gerardo de Leon; Philippine cinema; cultural appropriation; Ifugao

## Introduction

In 1975, the film *Banaue: Stairway to the Sky* was released. It was the last film by National Artist for Film Gerardo de Leon before his untimely passing and unfinished film, *Juan dela Cruz*. As one of the last films of a respected cinema personality, de Leon's *Banaue* is surprisingly underrated and overlooked. The film of Manong, as he is often called, is excluded from top-tier lists of the national cinema, even rarely mentioned in the list of films that belong to the second golden age of local cinema (the 1970s to early 1980s), and called to be a "lost gem" of the Philippine cinema (Sotto 2019; David 1990, 4-6; Mowelfund, 2018).

*Banaue* is a film about the cultural community of Ifugao and their quest for land. However, trouble emerges as another cultural community declares the Ifugao land theirs. The film is one of the earliest cinematic visualizations of the people of Ifugao after *Ifugao* (1954), also a de Leon film, and *Igorota* (1968) by Luis Nepomuceno. With its cultural gravity and cinematic importance, capped off by the film being profoundly untouched by any scholarly work, the current essay revisits *Banaue* and its embedded film politics and contradictions.

The current essay treats *Banaue* as a cinematic locus of political and cultural interrogations. In articulating the film, I contest that *Banaue* embodies contradictions in the cinematic representation of the Ifugao cultural community. I plan to detect these contradictions on two levels. On the one hand, I argue that *Banaue* carries problematic aspects of cultural appropriation in its usage of the Ifugao culture, specifically in its selection of actors and its overall focus narrative. However, on the other, I also contend that *Banaue* is an essential cinematic site that effectively displays the rich history and culture of the Ifugao, mainly seen in de Leon's known nationalist and his unknown feminist cinema.

I treat *Banaue* as a cultural text. I read the film in a symptomatic way, employing diagnostic critiques to explicate the hidden politics and discourses in the representation of the Ifugao (Kellner 1995). Overall, the study is a preliminary attempt to articulate and interrogate Manong's lost gem. It aims to answer the following working questions: What contradictions in the cinematic representation of the Ifugao does *Banaue* reveal? How does *Banaue* negotiate, in filmic and thematic terms, the representation and misrepresentation of the Ifugao concerning cultural appropriation, on the one hand, and nationalist and feminist cinema, on the other?

## Ifugao, Cultural Appropriation, Cinema

The narration and visualization of Ifugao stories stand for *Banaue's* cinematic focus. It is one of the few films in local cinema that display the traditions and customs of the Ifugao on the screen. Like most films on cultural communities, *Banaue* is a direct platform where audiences

can know and see their cultures, in the film's case, of the Ifugao. The film exhibited various traditions of the Ifugao, including headhunting and blood compacts between communities, religious burial ceremonies, narrative chants and hymns of Hudhud, and mating inside the *ulog*, an area where couples' compatibility is tested (Duluwan 1967). Daily activities of rituals, weaving, house building, and scenes of the communal erection of the rice terraces, which signify the culture of subsistence rice production among the Ifugao, are also rendered (McKay 2005, 461). In a specific scene, Apo Banal, the elder and patriarch of the community, commands his people to build a platform of plantations in the mountains, targeted to the heavens and *Kabunian*, the highest-ranking deity of the Ifugao; hence, the film's title, *Banaue: Stairway to the Sky*. The construction of the terraces began with an initiation ritual of draining a hog's blood in the utmost area of the mountain, a general practice of the Ifugao known for playing a significant role in their successful opposition against Spanish colonization (Lapeña and Acabado 2017).

Regardless of operating as a commendable cinematic site that renders the traditions and customs of the Ifugao, *Banaue* is confirmed to be awkward and complex in its visual delivery of the community's cultures. Filmic anxieties over its narrative and selection of artists emerge, attending to an interesting contestation on the excellent visual rendition of the cultural community in film. This becomes the locus of filmic interrogation as it consequently forms negotiations on the film's substance, producing questions on its visual interpretation and narrative display of culture.

The film stars top-notch actors of the period by the names of Nora Aunor and Christopher de Leon, alongside an outstanding supporting cast of Ronaldo Valdez, Johnny Delgado, and Gloria Sevilla, among others. In a way, de Leon's status as one of the best directors during that time, to be posthumously awarded a National Artist for Film in 1982, explains the casting. More apparent in the selection is the star value and market attraction that these actors transmit, which seemed to be an exemplary excess in the overall production of an epic during the 1970s. The film was budgeted with an enormous estimation of 1.6 million pesos, probably the highest Filipino cinematic output of the time (Vera 2014).

However, its casting and narrative focus prove dilemmatic as it touches on cultural appropriation issues. This engenders various aspects of allocations that crash sequentially towards cultural and economic planes. As Lenore Keeshig-Tobias (2002, 300) notes, cultural appropriation is the "taking, from a culture that is not one's own, intellectual property, cultural expressions and artifacts, history and ways of knowledge." In this idea, two factions collide with the dominant culture, the one that's taking or the appropriator of culture, and the subordinate culture, the one whose culture is being taken or appropriated. Conflict arises because the "taking" of cultures, typically of the dominant culture, often results in cultural misrepresentations. Following this, the dominant culture employs the appropriated culture as if it is their own, vastly different



from how the subordinate culture initially practiced it. As Cem Kiliçarslan (2020, 128) writes in his study of Native Americans in films, the “filmic narrative, which, due to its nature, is very prone to be abused for material pursuit, the result will be equally destructive and will render the [appropriation] problem eternally insoluble.” Hence, appropriation often results in exploitation, essentialization, and degradation of cultures that construct a missing link between the appropriator and the appropriated.

In the case of *Banaue*, the missing link casts cultural desecration on the people of Ifugao, wherein they are misrepresented through the film’s selection of artists. Aunor, de Leon, and the other actors do not have ethnic backgrounds linked to the Ifugao. These actors were preferred for production because of their economic value as stars, specifically Aunor, who was at the peak of her career at the production time. In this sense, the Ifugao are misrepresented, wherein audiences will fail to distinguish or recognize that the film’s actors or the exhibition of the community’s cultures were unrelated to the people of Ifugao due to the spectacle of cinema. These assertions place *Banaue* within the anxieties and complexities of problematic appropriations, wherein the people of Ifugao are communally displaced and culturally decontextualized in lieu of star value.

The commercial aspect of cinema further complicates *Banaue* as it makes the cultures of the Ifugao a viable commodity for visual consumption. Richard Rogers opines on the inevitable link between appropriation and commodification, especially if it is within the bounds of an economic system like cinema. According to Rogers (2006):

*In the conditions of capitalism, any object that enters the exchange system is inescapably commodified. Commodification abstracts the value of an object (or form or person) so that it can enter systems of exchange. In this process, the use-value and the specificity of the labor and social relations invested in the commodity are lost; it becomes equivalent to all other commodities. To create the appearance of difference (and hence value) amid this equivalence, additional meanings are attached to the commodity. The commodity becomes a fetish, a representation of values with no intrinsic relation to the object’s use-value, production, and circulation (p. 488).*

With this train of thought, *Banaue* abstracts the cultures of the Ifugao, putting them inside the exchange system and cinema market. Misrepresentations of the community transpire as they were transformed into a sellable product with supplementary interpretations through cinema, essentially detaching the film from the cultural realities of the people of Ifugao.

This cinematic issue of appropriation extends to the film’s narrative. The stories about the community in the film are loose yet riveted mainly in the personal story of Banawe. Despite the film’s visual display of the cultural practices of the Ifugao, the prioritization of the individual narrative of Banawe complicates the film’s overall structure as it effectively affects the filmic

process of employing the complete essence of the story. This complication is stressed by how the film underscores the sensual narrative and scenes on romantic affairs, including sexual encounters, of Banawe over the cultures of the Ifugao. Towards the end of the film, a vivid change in conflict can be perceived, shifting from the communal dispute on territories to the intricate clash of personal emotions. The latter involves Banawe's sentimentality, specifically on whom to present her romantic feelings, engaging sensuality with Sadek, Pugnoy, and Aruk. The presumable love cube turns out to be the film's central narrative. The shift reveals the complexities embedded within the film, wherein the romantic and sensual description of the film records as significant narratives of *Banaue* over the prior narrative of the community's survival and quest for land.

With this hierarchy of narratives, the film uses the narrative about Ifugao culture, including its geography, theme, and motif, as a mere background story to sustain and support its main cinematic narrative, that is, the sensuality of Banawe. In other words, despite the film premising itself on narrating the cultural locality of the Ifugao, it is detached from this as it prioritizes the romantic and sexual aspects of cinema, trashing its strong cultural display potential. With that, the film's aestheticization discloses its registration of depoliticization of the struggles and self-determination narratives of the Ifugao in the film.

Following these assertions, the people of Ifugao, particularly their cultures, are visible yet invisible on the film screen. Although the purpose of the film is evident, that is, to represent the people of Ifugao, making cultural appropriation in the film as necessary, it seats the directors or producers, including actors, who are often based in the metropole, as the people who have the power to create a film about cultural communities as though they are the only ones capable. This results in various complications in the film's representations of the cultural community. With the film's misrepresentations of its cultures, narratives, and geographies, the Ifugao people are abject in visibility and narrativity (Balce 2016). The film displaces them in exchange for economic and cinematic capital. In this case, the Ifugao does not matter compared to the selected superstars and actors. Their traditions, customs, and narratives of quest, struggle, and self-assertion are forgotten as they are placed in a marketable and profitable state. Hence, they are commodified to be enjoyed through the exploitative pockets of the film industry.

### **Ifugao, Nationalist, Feminist**

*Banaue* is a conflicted cinematic site where interesting contradictions in the filmic representation of the Ifugao happen. It makes the film complex, specifically in its cinematic treatment of the cultural community. The significance of the Ifugao in *Banaue* can be found in different yet related facets of feminist and nationalist themes of de Leon's cinema, serving as its strong cinematic recourse.

Severities of femininity are vividly rendered in the film, attesting to its cinematic exceptionality in line with its production context. Unknown to de Leon's cinema, the feminine theme of *Banawe* is striking. In his review, Noel Vera (2014) writes that Banawe could be the first proto-feminist of the Philippines. Indeed, the film performs extreme thematic elements of self-assertion and resistance fastened on discourses linked to femininity. It delivers filmic dissent concentrated on gender normativity encapsulated in the lead female character Banawe.

One pivotal moment in the film shows Banawe's assertion of ethnic and feminine defiance. Following a clash against another ethnic community, Banawe's father and others were decapitated, causing communal insecurity. The heads were seized by the attacking group and were taken as trophies, a common tradition that signifies prestige and power. With few men surviving the encounter, Banawe promises to avenge his father and recover his decapitated head. She then plans to attack the enemy's camp by organizing a light group of females:

*Banawe: We need to act, we don't have men to take revenge.*

*Ethnic Women 1: What about our children if we leave?*

*Ethnic Women 2: If we don't take revenge, our children will call us cowards, and they will also be cowards like us.*

*Ethnic Women 3: But what can we do? We are only women.*

*Ethnic Women 4: My husband taught me to hold a spear.*

*Ethnic Women 5: I know how to use a knife.*

*Ethnic Women 6: I also can.*

*Ethnic Women 7: I don't know anything but to hug my husband.*

*Banawe: You can quickly learn to embrace your enemy before stabbing him in the back (de Leon 1975).*

The dialogue appears to abridge the discourses on femininity in the Philippines. Hesitations and uncertainties about the self-capacity of women tied to their societal roles are shown in the scene. However, the enlightenment of feminine assertion significantly eclipses the hesitations and tensions as the women collectively mobilize their force of familial retribution. This was stressed by Banawe's last line of what seems to be a display of *carifio* brutal: embracing and killing. It presents the film's thematic execution via cinema of feminist ideologies alongside the injection and assertion of women's care and revenge.

The particular scene and dialogue recall the reputation of women during the pre-colonial period. William Henry Scott (1994) discusses the presence of an egalitarian society before the arrival of the Western colonizers, wherein issues on gender roles and social hierarchy were non-existent, meaning everyone matters in the community. This societal equality, in particular, is apparent in Ifugao communities as seen in their practices of agricultural, pastoral,

and horticultural functions (Barton 1969). In a way, this is the film's way of displaying the importance of women during that period.

Viewing *Banaue* in its context, the film proves to be thematically exceptional. De Leon's employment of a feminist lead in an epic narrative was unusual considering the cinematic period, especially his prior films. It seems to deconstruct and criticize normative values on gender dictated by established social institutions within the production period. The break from a conservative take on a pre-history film that primarily focuses on male leads registers the dissident nature of the film, marking it as one of the first feminist films of Philippine cinema. The cinematic initiative performs axiomatically vital as it appears first to inject the essence of indigenous feminism on the screens of local cinemas.

Underrated and often unmentioned, de Leon and his film locate themselves alongside other women-centered films of the decade, including Lino Brocka's *Insiang* (1976) and the long list of the feminist cinema of the 1980s, including the masterpieces of Ishmael Bernal in *Maynila by Night* (1980) and *Himala* (1982), Marilou Diaz-Abaya's trilogy of *Brutal* (1980), *Moral* (1982), *Karnal* (1983), and *Sister Stella L.* (1984) of Mike de Leon. Moreover, the illumination of *Banaue* as a women-centered epic sheds light on Aunor's masterclass acting as a feminist lead, which can be seen initially as dissenting in their cinematic integrities: as a politically conscious nurse in *Minsa'y Isang Gamu-gamu* (1976), a vindictive teenager in *Bona* (1980), an existential faith healer in *Himala* (1982), and an aggressive lesbian lawyer in *T-Bird at Ako* (1982), among others, slayed in both artistic prowess and the box-office in a traditionally male-dominated Philippine cinema.

*Banaue* further emphasizes its innate feminist subversion with its nationalist agenda, embedded in de Leon's powerful cinematic figurations of its female lead. Towards the film's denouement, Aruk asks Banawe about the latter's choice of love:

*Aruk: Are you still in love with Sadek?*

*Banawe: Yes, and I love you too. But what's more important is my love for my kababayan (de Leon 1975).*

This scene presents de Leon's dissection of his nationalist cinema via Banawe's performative assertion, precisely in his attempt to display societal or communal ideologies in the film. Banawe's assertion implicates the film's politics at the idea of love, processing it not merely as an affair of romance between two people but as a conception that can be genuinely societal, if not national. As Vera (2014) remarks in his review of the film, "Banawe reserves the right to love not just any man but all men; reserves the right to transcend the merely sensual and strive for the wholly societal, a remarkably complex and thought-provoking thesis for what was supposed to be just another caveman drama, with a popular Filipina celebrity at its center."

Banawe's love for *kababayan* recalls Prospero Covar's social structure of Philippine society that spans from kamag-anakan, kapisanan, pamayanan, to sambayanan, stressing the structural flow of intact relationship from family to nation (Aquino 2004, 111). This love is, moreover, effectively rooted in the intense interrelationship or *pakikipagkapwa* of the one's self with other people or *kababayan*, anchored on the idea of treating everyone as "not others" or "one of us," which can be reflected on a national scale (Enriquez 1978).

Further grounding this nationalist assertion, De Leon's love of *kababayan* in the film via Banawe is symbolic and allegorical of the nation. As Aileen Toohey (2005, 287) puts it, Filipino directors of the post-war era "such as Gerardo de Leon (*Banawe* [1975]), deployed the 'ethnic' as allegorical statements on societal concerns," specifically those linked with the search of a national identity in a time of crisis. This entails the film's narratives within the bounds of the nation, which can signify various facets but centrally lies in De Leon's agenda of nationalist awakening scoped in a scene that presented Banawe's sexual awakening after her romantic encounters.

The romantic struggles of enduring and resisting the intense touches and sensations of his lovers have made Banawe actualize what is possibly the real essence of love, that is, the love for her *kababayan* or her cultural community. To borrow from Vera (2014), this thought-provoking thesis of the film is relative to De Leon's nationalist cinema. He samples Banawe's actualization in the film as his filmic locus to present his motive of nationalist awakening. Simply put, the sexual awakening of Banawe is symbolic of the nationalist awakening. This employment marks De Leon's consistent integration of nationalist themes in his films that engages the audience in realizing that the highest form and real essence of love, as shown by Banawe, is love for the nation.

De Leon's framing of love of nation in the film is not thematically innocent. A look back on De Leon's cinema would prove and explain. The visual politics of nationalist cinema was initially apparent in De Leon's selection of the Ifugao as his film's central narrative. As one of the first films to visualize the Ifugao culture, *Banaue* acts as De Leon's platform to impart ethnic cultures visually, manifested in its cinematic display of the harmony between the Ifugao and the Kalinga. It would also be an attempt to visualize the dawn of the nation's history via narratives of people untouched by Western grasps of colonization, which can be ascribed as a version of "Cordillera historiophoty" that focuses on Cordillera history before colonialism via film (White 1988).

De Leon is not new in this kind of cinematic terrain. He has an extensive oeuvre of filmography that can be detected as nationalist in theme. In his career, the director produced numerous films that render history on the screen, including historical biopics of *Padre Burgos* (1949), *Sisa* (1951), *Diego Silang* (1951), local accounts in *Tayug: Ang Bayang Api* (1947) and *Ifugao*,

socio-political issues of post-war national crisis and class inequality through land reform as seen in *The Moises Padilla Story* (1961) and *Ang Daigdig ng Mga Api* (1965), and the classical adaptations of Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* (1961) and *El Filibusterismo* (1962) that express nationalist sentiments (Atienza 2022, 150).

In relation, Toohey (2005), using Bienvenido Lumbera's assertions on Philippine film, writes that:

*“This crafting of nation formation within mainstream Philippine cinema in the decades after the Pacific War drew on traditions in the visual arts that Lumbera categorized as ‘ethnic,’ namely the cultures of the non-Christian Filipinos found in Mindanao, Palawan and northern Luzon. In contemporary political discourse, Lumbera’s deployment of ‘ethnic’ would more aptly be applied to indigenous cultures. The appeal of the ‘ethnic’ was its association with exotic societies’ untouched’ by Spanish and American colonial rule. Creative artists such as film producers turned to the ‘ethnic’ when they ‘wanted to imagine a “pure” people that could be portrayed to contrast with Westernized Filipinos who have been “corrupted” by materialist greed and commercializing urbanization’. Major Filipino directors, such as Gerardo de Leon (Ifugao [1954] and Banaue [1975]), deployed the ‘ethnic’ as allegorical statements on societal concerns” (p. 287).*

De Leon's films form part of the post-war cinema radiation of patriotic sensibilities that promoted the rebuilding of the nation, including Philippine cinema, and building its identity after its devastating and traumatic world war experience (Arriola 2011, 108; Campos 2016, 356). With this, seeing the basis behind De Leon's selection of the Ifugao as his central cinematic premise in his unexpected last film is undemanding.

Following these, de Leon presents his nationalist agenda through his filmic retrospection of the nation's origins in narratives linked to cultural communities. These stand to his constant employment of history, culture, and nationalism in his cinema over the years, attesting to his magnificent role in preserving the national heritage and cultures of the Philippines via cinema. Still, *Banaue* is more exceptional because it attempts to disperse nationalist ideas through a feminine character. Hence, in addition to his cinematic display of cultural communities, the narratives in *Banaue* act as meditations that would not only mediate issues surrounding nationalist cinema, a constant of his films, but also construct assertions about the role of women in society, valorizing De Leon's known nationalist and highlighting his unknown feminist cinema.

These may not entirely disprove the cultural appropriation, commodification, and misrepresentation that *Banaue* emits. However, de Leon's masterclass background in creating films about culture and history becomes a valid basis that weakens the film's problematic

nature. As *Banaue's* director, the stories of the Ifugao in the film would become an essential and viable site in the exposition of the unique histories and narratives of the nation. Specifically, this is proven by how de Leon employs Aunor as the female lead and his use of Banawe's sexual awakening as a metaphor for nationalist awakening, employing both as recourses against the film's prioritization of sensual narratives.

## Conclusion

As a film of a well-known director of Philippine cinema, De Leon's *Banaue* deserves its spotlight as an essential film that attempted to display narratives and cultures of cultural communities, specifically of the Ifugao. Seemingly overlooked, the current essay desires to initiate a discourse on one of the lost gems of Philippine cinema academia. I examined *Banaue* as a cultural text that renders visual politics relating to the cinematic narration and visualization of the Ifugao. A film about a cultural community, *Banaue* specifically concerns the cinematic narration and visualization of the Ifugao, including its traditions and customs, narratives of quest and struggle, and ethnic geographies. However, the narration and visualization in the film become complicated as it embodies contrasting discourses in its cinematic display of the cultural community.

*Banaue* reveals the interesting contradictions in representations and misrepresentations of the Ifugao on the filmic screen. On the one hand, the Ifugao are conflicted in *Banaue* because of the problematic cinematic adoption of its narratives and cultures as it touched on aspects of cultural appropriation. *Banaue* decontextualized the cultural community from their ethnic realities, exploiting and commodifying their cultures. On the other hand, the Ifugao are highlighted in *Banaue* as they become an essential basis for displaying the nation's rich culture and history. Properly placed in the hands of an experienced director of cultural history, De Leon's known nationalist and unknown feminist cinema operate as the film's recourses, making the narrative of the Ifugao in the film significant, if not transformative, of nationalist and feminist ideals.



## References

- Aquino, C. (2004). "Mula sa Kinaroroonan: Kapwa, Kapatiran and Bayan in Philippine Social Science." *Asian Journal of Social Science* 32, no. 1: 105-139.
- Arriola, J. (2011). The Role of Language and Literary Adaptations in Shaping Early Tagalog Cinema: A Study in Popular-linguistic Nationalism. *Philippine Journal for Language Teaching* 51: 94-110.
- Atienza, J. A. (2022). Isang Panimulang Pag-aaral sa Pelikulang Historikal ng Sineng Filipino. *Tala Kasaysayan* 5, no. 1: 140-165.
- Balce, N. (2016). *Body Parts of Empire: Visual Abjection, Filipino Images, and the American Archive*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Barton, R. (1969). *Ifugao law*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Campos, P. (2016). *The End of National Cinema: Filipino Film at the Turn of the Century*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press.
- David, J. (1990). *The National Pastime: Contemporary Philippine Cinema*. Mandaluyong: Anvil Publishing, Inc.
- De Leon, G., dir. (1975). *Banaue: Stairway to the Sky*. Manila: NV Productions.
- Duluwan, L. (1967). The Ifugaos. *Unitas*, 40, no. 40: 4-52.
- Enriquez, V. (1978). "Kapwa: A Core Concept in Filipino Social Psychology." *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review* 47: 100-108.
- Kellner, D. (1995). *Media Culture: Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern*. New York: Routledge.
- Kiliçarslan, C. (2020). "The Reel Indian or the Real Indian?: The Three Modes of Representation of Native Americans in Western Movies." *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* 54: 105-134.
- Lapeña, Q. and S. Acabado. (2017). "Resistance through Rituals: The Role of Philippine "Native Pig" (*Sus Scrofa*) in Ifugao Feasting and Socio-political Organization." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 13: 583-594.

- McKay, D. (2005). "Rethinking Locality in Ifugao: Tribes, Domains, and Colonial Histories." *Philippine Studies* 53, no. 4: 459-490.
- Mowelfund. (2018). "Lost Gems of Philippine Cinema." Accessed March 31, 2023. <https://mowelfund.com/lost-gems-of-philippine-cinema/>.
- Rogers, R. (2006). "From Cultural Exchange to Transculturation: A Review and Reconceptualization of Cultural Appropriation." *Communication Theory* 16: 474-503.
- Scott, W. H. (1994). *Barangay: Sixteenth-century Philippine Culture and Society*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Sotto, A. (2019). The Life and Art of Gerardo de Leon. In *Direk: Essays on Filipino Filmmakers*, eds. Clodualdo del Mundo, Jr. and Shirely Lua, 21-26. Manila: De La Salle University Publishing House.
- Toohey, A. (2005). "'Badjao': Cinematic Representations of Difference in the Philippines." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36, no. 2: 281-312.
- Tsosie, R. (2002). "Reclaiming Native Stories: An Essay on Cultural Appropriation and Cultural Rights." *Arizona State Law Journal* 34: 299-358.
- Vera, N. (2014). "Banaue: Stairway to the Sky (Gerardo de Leon, 1975)." Accessed March 31, 2023. <https://criticafterdark.blogspot.com/2014/05/banaue-stairway-to-sky-gerardo-de-leon.html>
- White, H. (1988). "Historiography and Historiophoty." *The American Historical Review* 93, no. 5: 1193-1199.

# Surviving River: Ecocritical Lessons from the Selected Works of Merlinda Bobis, Merlie Alunan and Rebecca Añonuevo

*by Dinah T. Roma*

## Abstract

The function and state of our rivers, with their expansive ecosystems, offer a great lesson in the current ecocritical drive to foster awareness of how the earth can be sustained amid environmental ills. In this regard, using literary texts—poetry and fiction—can be argued as an effective way of imparting values like creativity, empathy, sensitivity, and ethical appreciation to students. Literary texts, such as the ones analyzed in this article, embody complex human experiences in our collective struggle for the earth’s sustainability.

**Keywords:** Disaster Literature, Ecocriticism, Eco poetics, River, Water

## Introduction

As someone raised in urban Manila, the notion of the river had been ghostly to me. The gray asphalt and concrete city grids had made my sight myopic, with my line of vision limited to the next building or house. The gray lines seemed to cut through everything. All I had learned about this body of water while growing up was from a narrow neighborhood creek, where my brother and I would collect fish to put in a jar. My family was living at the time in the south of Metro Manila in what is called Better Living Subdivision—a name that slowly reneged on its promise as suburban expansion took over the place. When it rained then, the stream would overflow, and we would be thrilled by how the rain splattered on the brackish water, making the fish appear as if dancing. That was how it seemed to our teenage eyes.

Despite those teenage years, everything I had come to know of my surroundings was in contrast to what I understood about the river—its meandering, flowing nature. Consequently, my perception of water lacked a sense of abundance. However, as my engagement with the urban space deepened and became problematic, I became increasingly aware that the river's energy remained a force to be reckoned with. It stood inert even as the city enticed people with its neon allure and frantic activity. The annual typhoons continued to cause familiar floods, yet the growing concern about their ferocity each year made me realize the intricate interconnections within the environment. It was only with the typhoons such as Uring (1991), Ondoy (2009), Yolanda (2013), and Odette (2021) did I begin to gain a sense of foreboding of how human actions have endangered bodies of water.

As a poet and teacher of literature, it was with words that I gained a sense of the river's immense spirit. In literary and spiritual writings, the river signifies the sheer current of life. It is abundance. It is wandering. There can be no measure, as it has no end or beginning. In ancient teachings, the river is fertility, wisdom, and passage to the divine. It tells a story through the upstream and downstream movement of its water, the utter mystery of the soft and, at times, rough surface keeping to itself the gurgling beneath that seeks to connect with larger bodies of water.

The world's greatest rivers—such as the Nile River (Northeastern Africa), Yangtze River (China), Ganges River (India), and Mekong River (in parts of Southeast Asia)—all possess historical and cultural value for their role in sustaining ecosystems as well as providing resources for societies throughout the millennia. They also are the keeper of human stories as people migrate from one place to another and settle along the riverbanks to build communities. As we know to believe: There is life wherever there is a source of water.

Thus, our ecocritical responsibility as educators calls upon us to teach the values of the river in the face of the world's urgent environmental problems. This becomes more pressing given how

rivers may not seem as visible to students or young people, in general, in urban areas. Because of this, they do not appreciate how ecosystems function or how they still are sustained amid environmental degradation. Yet, it is precisely this alienation from natural systems that makes education using ecocritical texts become of utter importance (Guanio-Uluru 2019).

I have often admitted that I have not been as forthright and committed to making my students aware of the interconnectivity of things. In moments of reflection, I would ask myself if I have prompted them enough: *What do you see, hear, and experience when reading poetry and fiction that speak of rivers? How can I make them more responsive to the words that describe the remarkable capacity of rivers to nourish life and destroy people and places instantly? To what ends can we make ourselves aware that even as we live in urban areas, we are separate from bodies of water?*

The symbolic representation of rivers in literature contributes to ecocritical thinking in the following ways: as a metaphor for life and time, as an indicator of vigorous change and interaction, as embodiments of ecological harmony and balance, as a metaphor for renewal and evolution, and as a symbol of environmental crisis and ruin.

Of the above meanings of the river, I am keen on looking at the latter in literary texts—the river as a symbol of environmental crisis and ruin. But while this facet of the river’s presence in literary texts cannot be divorced from the other aspects of its meanings, I am nonetheless interested in how literature inspires a deeper connection with the environment and fosters a sense of responsibility towards its preservation. Poetry and fiction, for example, offer stark reminders of the destructive impact of human activities on the natural environment. They can stir emotions and create a deep sense of empathy toward the natural world.

In my readings, three Filipino women writers have taught me about the value of the river. The lesson was grim. With the unstoppable ills of climate change caused by human practices, the river has turned against itself. There is a fundamental change taking place within the extremities of weather.

Literature has been a steady witness to unstoppable tragedies. And in the imaginative power of the word, we again see what has become of our world, of the incomprehensible loss climate change has borne upon the lives of people who had often lost the ability to size up their losses. Here, we see how words can transform when we mirror the needed climate action. The works of these three Filipina writers are a testimony to how the river has become the site of death and commemoration, a sign that “What we hear in their words is what we hear of the river”—challenged.

Like water, these women writers know too well the attendant images of dead, bloated bodies that must be fished out of the water to be freed from the entanglement of debris. Their literary

works bring attention to environmental issues, advocate for ecological consciousness, and inspire action to preserve rivers and the natural world. Their writings expose the threats of pollution, habitat destruction, and overexploitation that rivers face, urging readers to recognize the urgency of protecting them.

### **Merlinda Bobis: “The Fish-Hair Woman”**

*Paghaya. A drop of tear. A weeping. A body of water flowing endlessly. Rivulets of history. The flow of water deeply cut into the flesh of earth.*

“*Paghaya*. Deep weeping. *Pag-haaaa-ya*. The wail is in the middle syllable. For some, a stifled exhalation; for others, a near-scream, but always the breath travels the full distance from the groin to the gut, welling up to the throat. It is a weeping that is not about this or that moment. It has a history as long as the distance covered by that breath.” (Bobis 137)

The river, in its sweetest and pristine state, is where stories begin. In a perennial state, it flows continuously in tribute to the broader body of water—the ocean. It knows where its junctures are. In Merlinda Bobis’ third novel, *Fish Hair Woman*, the river is the site of memory aborted and reborn. Set in the mythical village of Iraya, the residents are caught in a brutal war waged by the state against the insurgents. The river is now murky, and from it wafts the stench of bodies that were casualties of the Total State War waged by the state against the suspected insurgents.

And it is also where the bodies of people caught in the flow of the stories ended up being either mutilated or unidentified. In the novel *Fish Hair Woman*, Estrella is the fish-hair woman with a twelve-meter hair who trawls for bodies in the river that are victims of the Total State War. They were the insurgents who were torn apart from their families and forced to hide in the forests.

Where once there were fireflies, now the river assails with its stench of decaying bodies. Ordered to clean up the region of anti-government forces, the military would sweep through the village and randomly arrest and detain anyone suspected of insurgent activities.

A novel seventeen years in the making, Filipino-Australian Merlinda Bobis’ award-winning “Fish-Hair Woman” (FHW) has spurred a growing critical review both in the Philippines and Australia on the areas of historical fiction, postcolonial trauma and literature, and feminist ecology, with its release in 2014.

An intricately woven narrative, the novel revisits recent Philippine history in the 1980s when

Bicol—an island known as the country’s hotbed for communism—was targeted by the state military for its brutal war on the insurgency.

A large part of the novel takes the form of an epistolary narrative. *A river of words, stories wanting to find their way to listeners. To the origins mired by hearts that had lost their anchors.* It is a love letter to an Australian journalist, Tony McIntyre, who had gone missing in the Philippines when he went to cover the Marcos regime’s neoimperialist war against communist insurgents—those men and women seeking to maintain ownership of their land and livelihood.

Everything in the novel meanders as rivers do, seeking their path’s origins. And in the wandering, there were times when no one could remember what one set out to do in the first place. Whether one has caught on to the story at the end, one does not know for sure.

Bobis successfully compares Philippine history to one of its rivers in this intricately woven novel. There was in its pristine state a flourishing that was as sweet as lemongrass and which offered life to its surroundings, to the people who would sit by its banks to tell stories to each other and to pass away the hours in each other’s company. Yet the river was also a witness to the harshness of history, being the site where dead and mutilated bodies were thrown during the fight of the State against insurgency. The creation of the character of Estrella, the fish-hair woman, serves as an antidote to the grime that had become of the river. That she fishes dead bodies out of it embodies how women have long been the guardian of these natural sites.

In its winding narrative arc, Merlinda Bobis’ novel enters a realm that cuts the past and present and tries to bridge the gaps between the imagination and the grim reality that frequently can only come in the flashflood of weeping.

### **Merlie Alunan: Ormoc Flashflood**

November 5, 1991. What I remembered the most was the merciless swiftness of it. All in fifteen minutes, the flash flood from the overflowing Anilao River caught the residents in the low-lying communities of Ormoc City in a fatal surprise. One magazine featured a chilling photo of an infant, his face frozen on the verge of a cry while his arms held up as if asking for help. His body was stiff and muddied. All these are recorded in perpetuity.

Mass graves. There were not enough coffins for the dead. An estimated 8,000 people were caught in the onslaught of water. These are the same images in Ormoc as in Tacloban after Yolanda leveled off many parts of the Visayan region. Bloated bodies. The carnage. The Anilao River cuts through the town. And there was a 10-foot surge. In five minutes, the water was already measuring up to the neck of an adult man. Everyone was in shock, with almost no time



to cry, as part of the city began submerging in the waters. The retrieval of the corpses again recalls the same vision in Merlinda Bobis' novel. An image that has now become iconic of the ruins brought about by climate change.

What caused the Ormoc flash floods? Flashflood of mud, water, debris, and logs. The overnight torrential rains caused by typhoon Uring caused a hydroelectric dam to burst. Many people never rose from their sleep. They were flooded away into the night. The mountainous area was gutted of vegetation.

In a definitive collection of Merlie Alunan's poems entitled *Tigom: Collected Poems*, "Calling the Names" stands out as the most poignant in Alunan's pursuit of poetry as homage. Written in memory of her kins who perished in the 1991 Ormoc flashflood, each poem in the particular section called "Lives" is a rich fabric of history and the personal. The words do not only aim for incantation, "How we waste our living days/not knowing how to spend them (22)," but as a way to ease the passage from life to death by remembering the deceased as enfleshed in a constellation of lives. The last honor one serves a loved one is narrating his life journey because "The dead go nowhere if their stories are unheard (ibid)."

Not a stranger to the wrath of the seas, Alunan has written about her dilemmas as caught between islands. For instance, her now iconic poem "Bringing the Dolls" speaks of a child's defiance against her mother's command to bring as little as possible on their literal and figurative crossing for a new life. On the water's surface, this critical musing for what counts in life is articulated and brought onto the land where life hastens to a daily grind. But the world of water in Alunan's poetry also assumes a violent form. And it is often against nature's fury that there is a poignant confrontation with life's fragility.

In her collection of poems entitled *Amina Among the Angels*, the deaths in her life due to the Ormoc flash flood were honored by calling out the names of the dead. Alunan herself had narrated how she was shocked to have learned of what happened in her hometown. Several of her relatives perished in the deluge. They were caught unaware by the flash flood in the same way many of the inhabitants never awoke.

In the poem "Rafael: Ormoc, A.D. 1991," Alunan names the brother who died. The lines are sparse and write starkly toward the tension of what happened on the night of the Ormoc flooding. The images of the people "huddled in any shelter they could find," "waiting for news," and "Hoping for the rare miracle of survival" are all apocalyptic. And in the background, one could infer the overflowing river giving way to a deforested mountain that could not hold the gushing water. Instead, it chased after the people in the low-lying area mercilessly. Alunan knows this fact of nature all too well. And all that she could do was call out their names.

***Rafael: Ormoc, A.D. 1991***

*First the rain. Then the flood  
rolling down the mountain,  
flushing the city to the sea  
in thirty minutes flat.  
Huddled in any shelter they could find,  
no one in the city slept that night.  
Waiting for news, counting the missing,  
the dead. Hoping for the rare miracle  
of survival. Everyone cold, hungry, terrified.  
Darkness but for the guttering candles  
and sooty kerosene lamps.  
The city streets littered with the drowned,  
like huge abandoned dolls, their arms held out,  
legs bent and spread as in prayer or embrace.*

**Rebecca Añonuevo: Ondoy's Onslaught**

On September 26, 2009, another devastating typhoon named Ondoy struck, leading to fatal flooding that paralyzed the entire Metro Manila. News reports from that time highlighted that the relentless rainfall brought about by the typhoon had a profound impact, affecting around five million individuals (Olan 2014). The typhoon's extraordinary deluge, equivalent to a month's worth of rainfall, inundated the Marikina River in less than 24 hours, resulting in the catastrophic bursting of its banks alongside the Manggahan Floodway. Tragically, the toll was immense, with the typhoon claiming the lives of 921 people.

Over a decade had passed since Ondoy, but the damage it caused the metropolis is claimed to have been unsurpassed. Memories of its torrential flooding still bring on fear, sorrow, and incredulity.

Poet Rebecca Añonuevo wrote a poem entitled "Isang Hapon sa Riverbanks" (*An Afternoon by the Riverbanks*) to describe the massive damage it caused to property and lives. That an entire issue of ANI's literary journal was devoted to commemorating the dark and grave night caused by Ondoy speaks significantly of how writers respond swiftly to chronicle the struggles of that tragic night.

The poem's first few lines are reminiscent of the quiet and the smooth-flowing river. The light coming from the park lit the children playing. But this is already the time after the waters have subsided when remembering is less painful.

The poem depicts a scene of merrymaking when the waters have washed away all deaths. There is perfection in where one finds oneself amid happiness. The light can be just as shimmering as the memory it recalls. Then suddenly, "Maraming bangkay ang sumabit dito," while pointing at the lamp posts and the tabletop, as the waitress serves the dishes "tokwang pulutan," or cut-up pork meat and tofu.

There is a shift in the imagery—from the corpses caught in the flash floods that, in their struggle, landed on the table. The gathering scene led to another possibility of another fatal vision—that of people wrestling to keep themselves above the floodwaters.

What poet Añonuevo does is counter the images of devastation brought about by Ondoy. The horrid details of people drowned underwater to that of people together singing, playing, listening to masses, going to church, and all these daily rituals defying the hardening of mud, the terror of what death may imply.

*"Ititindig ng bayan ang kanyang tuhod,  
Sisindihan paulit-ulit ang mga ilaw sa ilog."*

The imagery is akin to the fireflies by the river, but this time with candles that light up the path. The repetition of the act of lighting the river is an act that preserves our sense of community, a sense of safety that is threatened by the flooding that brought an entire metropolis down. A nation is on the verge of being overcome with the knowledge that the river lives with us. It is there but can be awakened anytime to bring us to our knees.

## Conclusion

Surrounded by the river, this apparent reality often escapes the notice of urban residents, especially those comfortably shut within air-conditioned condominiums or behind the safety of gated subdivisions. Such confinement creates a twin barrier, isolating us from the larger environment and different segments of society. When the usual rainfall occurs, it tends to register as a minor concern, hardly stirring any worry.

However, during times of social unrest and the onslaught of fierce typhoons, we are starkly reminded of our vulnerability, realizing that immunity to natural disasters and societal upheavals is a misbelief we can no longer afford.

The obligation to enhance our environmental awareness is now more pressing than ever. This call gains resonance by embracing the wisdom penned by our poets and woven into the narratives of our fiction writers. By doing so, the world can once again become our classroom, imparting invaluable lessons on how we can uphold the earth's sustainability for generations to come.

## References

- Alunan, M. (1997). *Amina Among the Angels*. University of the Philippines Press.
- . (2023). *Tigom: Collective Poems*. University of the Philippines Press.
- Bobis, M. (2012). *Fish Hair Woman*. Spinifex.
- Añonuevo, R. (2011). "Isang Hapon sa Riverbanks." *Ani 36 Disaster and Survival Issue*. Cultural Center of the Philippines.
- Guanio-Uluru, Lykke. Education for Sustainability Developing Ecocritical Circles in the Student Circle Classrooms. 13 June 2019. Volume & Issue: Volume 10 (2019) - Issue 1 (June 2019), pp. 5-19. <https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/dcse-2019-0002>  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2019-0002>
- Olan, Sarah Jane. Looking back: The records of Ondoy. September 26, 2014. <https://www.rappler.com/environment/disasters/70240-ondoy-records/>
- Ryan, John Charles (ed). *Southeast Asian Ecocriticism: Theories, Practices, Prospects (Ecocritical Theory and Practice)*. Lexington Books. 2017.
- Thorp, James H., Thoms, Martin C. The ecological nature of whole river macrosystems: new perspectives from the riverine ecosystem synthesis. *Front. Ecol. Evol.*, 16 June 2023 Sec. Population, Community, and Ecosystem Dynamics Volume 11 - 2023 <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fevo.2023.1184433/full>. | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2023.1184433>

# Delubyo at Depopulasyon sa *Awit ni Pulaw* ni E. B. Maranan

ni Mark Anthony S. Angeles

## Abstrak

Maituturing na isa sa mga pinakamatagumpay na kuwentong pambata ni Edgardo Maranan ang *Awit ni Pulaw*, na nagkamit ng Grand Prize sa Philippine Board on Books for Young People (PBBY)-Salanga Writer's Prize noong 1989, inilimbag sa maraming pagkakataon at bersiyon, at isinadula nang maraming ulit. Hinati sa tatlong yugto o episodyo ang pagbali sa muling pagsasalaysay ng paglikha ng mundo: una, ang kuwento nina Bathala at Bathaluman; ikalawa, ang kuwento nina Panganay at Bunso; at, ikatlo, ang “pagbabalik” o muling paglitaw ni Bathala sa ibabaw ng Lupa. Sa papel na ito, inilugar ang akda ni Maranan sa panitikang post-Martial Law at apokaliptisismong pangkapaligiran (*environmental apocalypticism*), gamit ang lapit ng ekokritisismo.

***Mga Susing Salita:*** panitikang pambata, post-Martial Law, ekokritisismo, Edgardo Maranan

## Introduksiyon

*Mayroong dahilan at nabubuhay ang lahat—  
Hangin, tubig, halaman, hayop at puno sa gubat.  
Bawat isa’y mahalaga, kapag isa’y napahamak...  
Simula na ng wakas...ang wakas ay pagkawasak.*

Ang saknong sa itaas ay sipi sa aklat pambatang *Awit ni Pulaw* ni E. B. Maranan, mula sa kuwentong pambatang nagkamit ng Grand Prize sa Philippine Board on Books for Young People (PBBY)-Salanga Writer’s Prize noong 1989. Ang saknong na ito ay bahagi ng awit ng ilog na si Pulaw, isa sa mga likha ni Bathala sa daigdig.

Natatangi ang “Awit ni Pulaw.” Una, dahil ipinapakita nito ang husay ni Maranan sa pagsulat ng kuwentong pambata. Ito ang una sa winning streak ni Maranan sa nasabing timpalak. Nagwagi ng Grand Prize ang kaniyang “Si Sibol at si Gunaw” noong 1990 at ang kaniyang “Si Sabel, Si Sabiong Lumba-Lumba, at ang Hiwaga sa Laot” noong 1991. Paglalarawan ni Maranan sa isang personal na panayam noong 2016, pawang tungkol sa kalikasan o kapaligiran at kontra sa mga kaaway ng kalikasan ang tatlong kuwento. Bukod sa mga ito, nagkamit din ng Karangalang Banggit sa parehong timpalak noong 1990 ang kaniyang “Ang Apoy sa Nayon ng Samba.”

Ikalawa, inilalarawan nito sa mga mambabasang paslit ang idea ng rekonstruksiyon pagkaraang maranasan ng komunidad ang epekto ng delubyo at depopulasyon, bilang isang kuwentong pambatang nagwagi at nalimbag sa isang panahon sa kasaysayan at panitikan ng bansa matapos ang paghahari ng diktadurang Marcos.

## Lokasyon ni Maranan sa Panitikan

Si Edgardo Barca Maranan—kilala rin bilang E. B. Maranan. Edgar B. Maranan, at Ed Maranan sa kaniyang mga akda—ay isinilang sa Baryo Cupang, Bauan, Batangas noong 7 Nobyembre 1946.

Lumaki sa Lungsod ng Baguio si Maranan at nagtapos ng hayskul sa St. Louis College. Noong 1963, kinatawan niya ang bansa sa *New York Herald Tribune* World Youth Forum. Nag-aral siya ng Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Service sa University of the Philippines (UP), Diliman at nakatapos noong 1967. Sa edad na 18, sumali siya sa Kabataang Makabayan. Sa isa sa kaniyang mga akda, isinulat niyang ang *The Forest: A Personal Record of the Huk Guerrilla Struggle in the Philippines* ni William J. Pomeroy ang dahilan kaya siya naging aktibista.

Nang magsimula ang Sigwa ng Unang Kuwarto, nagtuturo ng Political Science sa UP Diliman si Maranan. Sumapi siya sa lihim na kilusan nang ideklara ni dating Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos ang Batas Militar noong 1972. Hinuli siya noong 1976 at ikinulong nang mahigit dalawang taon sa Bicutan Rehabilitation Center. Sa Bicutan niya isinulat ang dulang “Ang Panahon ni Cristy” na nagwagi ng Unang Gantimpala sa categoryang Dulang Ganap ang Haba sa Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards (o Palanca) noong 1978. Nang makalaya, sumali siya sa grupong Galian sa Arte at Tula (GAT), saka naging opisyal ng Tunay na Alyansa ng Bayan Alay sa Katutubo (TABAK).

Naging fellow si Maranan sa Dumaguete Writers Workshop sa Silliman University noong 1972. Naging writer-in-residence siya sa Iowa International Writing Program noong 1985. Naging National Fellow for Poetry siya sa UP Creative Writing Center noong 1988. Ipinadala rin siya sa International Writers’ Residence sa Le Chateau de Lavigny, Switzerland noong 2006.

Umabot sa 35 premyo ang napanalunan ni Maranan sa Palanca para sa kaniyang mga dula, tula, sanaysay, maikling kuwento, at kuwentong pambata, hanggang sa kilalanin siya bilang Palanca Award Hall of Famer noong Setyembre 2000. Nagwagi din siya sa iba pang mga timpalak gaya ng Cultural Center of the Philippines Annual Literary Contest, Palihang Aurelio Tolentino Playwriting Competition, Surian ng Wikang Filipino, Philippines Free Press Literary Awards, Nick Joaquin Literary Prize for Fiction, Filamore Tabios Sr. Memorial Poetry Prize (Meritage Press, USA), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Writer’s Prize, at iba pa.

Kasama sa 50 aklat ni Maranan ang *Alab: Mga Tula at Agon: Poems*, kapuwa koleksiyon ng mga nagwagi niyang tula, na inilimbag ng UP Press noong 1982. Nagkamit din ng pagkilala mula sa National Book Awards ang *Kudaman: Isang Epiko ng Palawan na Inawit ni Usuy*, na isinalin nila ni Nicole Revel McDonald at inilimbag ng Ateneo de Manila University Press noong 1991. Inilimbag din ng Bookmark, Inc. ang marami sa kaniyang mga premyadong kuwentong pambata.

### ***Awit ni Pulaw, Isang Kuwentong Mulát***

Mulát at progresibo ang mga kuwentong pambata ni Maranan. Mulát, dahil nakabukas ang mga mata sa paglalarawan sa mga suliraning panlipunan, at progresibo, dahil naghahanap ng panlipunang pagbabago.

Kapuri-puri hindi lamang ang husay sa panulat ni Maranan, kundi maging ang panlipunang realismo at tapang sa pagtalakay sa mga paksa, gaya ng militarisasyon, usaping agraryo, at kalagayan ng mga pangkat etnolingguwistiko sa bansa (Evasco 2013). Halimbawa nito, ang



kaniyang “Pamana ng Bundok,” na nagwagi ng Unang Gantimpala sa kategoriyang Maikling Kuwentong Pambata sa Palanca noong 1989, ay tumalakay sa karahasan ng militar sa mga pamayanang kultural, habang ang kaniyang “Ang Ambahan ni Ambo,” na nagkamit ng Ikalawang Gantimpala sa parehong kategoriya ng Palanca noong 1991, ay tungkol sa ugnayan ng mga batang tagalungsod at batang Mangyan, gamit ang katutubong tulang ambahan (Tiamson-Rubin at Evasco 2001, 114-115).

Sa mga temang nakatas ni Torres-Yu sa halos 150 kuwentong pambatang may kaugnayan sa karahasan at kapayapaan, dalawa ang tangan ng *Awit ni Pulaw*: (1) kailangang matuto ang mga bata na magpahalaga sa kalikasan; at (2) dumaranas ng ligalig at kawalan ng kapayapaan ang tao kapag inaabuso ang kalikasan (2011, 17-18).

Nasubok na ng panahon at hindi na mapapasubalian ang angking kapangyarihan ng *Awit ni Pulaw*, lalo pa’t tumawid na ito sa iba pang mga wika at genre.

Ang unang bersiyon ng kuwento ni Maranan ay nalimbag noong 1992, sa tulong ng United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Samantala, inilimbag ng Transition Publications, Inc. ang aklat pambatang salin nito sa Ingles (*The Song of Pulaw*) noong 1992. Inilimbag naman ng Bookmark, Inc. noong 2007 ang bagong bersiyon ng manuskritong nagwagi sa PBBY kasama ng salin sa Ingles.

Sa panayam kay Maranan, sinabi niyang “pulo o isla ang kahulugan yata” ng *púlaw* “pero sa aking kuwento/libretto, naging pangalan ng ilog.” Isa ang “pulo” sa mga kahulugan ng nasabing salita (sa wikang Maguindanao) sa *UP Diksiyonaryong Filipino* (2009, 1027). Isinama na rin sa ikalawang edisyon ng diksiyonaryo ang kahulugang “kalungkutan na dulot ng pag-iisa” na mula sa *Vocabulario de la lengua Tagala* (2013, 431).

Mahihiwatigan sa *Awit ni Pulaw* ang minulang rehiyon ni Maranan. Ginagamit sa Timog Katagalugan ang mga binanggit na salitang gaya ng *bukal at bálóng* (“pinagmulan”), *lagunlong* (“tunog ng hangin sa gubat”), *linggal* (“ligalig”), *naglimayon* (“namasyal”), *nagtitibatib* (“pagdami ng dumi”), at *ragáy* (“tunog ng tambol”). Galing sa glosaryo ang mga kahulugang nabanggit.

Mahusay na natukoy ni Torres-Yu ang partikular na tema (“muling pagkabuhay sa daigdig at bagong simula”) at buod ng kuwento sa bersiyong 2007 (2011, 25). Nilikha ni Bathala at Bathaluman ang santinakpan at kalikasan. Sa lupang daigdig na nilikha ni Bathala, mahinagpis na aawitin ng ilog na si Pulaw, sa nayon ng Maulap, ang pagkawasak ng kalikasan. Lilikhain ni Bathala sina Lalaki at Babai. Matapos ang angaw na taon, makikilala ng mga mambabasa sina Panganay at Bunso, na naglalaro sa paanan ng Bundok Makulot. Paliwanag pa ni Torres-Yu:

*Dalawang estratehiya ng pagkukuwento ang ginamit: 1) ang pagtukoy sa panaginip ni Bathala samantalang naiidlip sa ilalim ng lupa na naglalarawan sa daigdig na nilikha ni Bathaluman—“mapayapa at maayos na daigdig,” na may mga taong “magkakaibigang tunay at pantay,” at nag-aaruga sa kalikasan; at 2) ang pag-awit ng isang ilog ng bagong simula.*

Noong 1990, kinomisyon ng children’s choir na University of the Philippines (UP) Cherubim and Seraphim si Maranan para isulat ang libretto batay sa kuwentong pambata. Ang produksyon ng dulang “Awit ni Pulaw” ay unang itinanghal noong 15 Agosto 1991, para sa pagdiriwang ng ika-20 anibersaryo ng nasabing pangkat ng mga batang mang-aawit. Si Pambansang Artista para sa Musika Dr. Ramon Santos ang naglapat ng musika. Iniba ang pangalan ng mga tauhan nang lalong tumining ang tunggalian sa kuwento:

*Ang “Awit ni Pulaw” ay tungkol sa wala-sa-lugar na pagkalikha ng mundo ng isang palalo, makasariling lalaking diyos na nagngangalang Igaddu, at ang kapahamakang nangyari nang sina Unang Lalaki at Unang Babae, ang mga ninuno nina Uttuy at Lin-Lin, ay pinahintulutang lapastanganin ang mundo, ang kapaligiran nito, at ang labat ng mga nilalang dito (Sa akin ang salin).*

Noong Hulyo 2016, sa pagdiriwang ng ika-45 anibersaryo ng UP Cherubim and Seraphim, muling itinanghal ang “Awit ni Pulaw” sa University Theater Stage, UP Diliman. Si Prof. Roselle Pineda ng UP Department of Art Studies ang tumayong direktor. Samantala, tumayong musical directors naman sina Eudenic Palaruan ng UP College of Music at Christopher Borela ng Philippine Madrigal Singers. Si Angel Lawenko-Baguilat ng UP Dance Company ang tumayong choreographer.

Nasa ikatlong panauhan ang tagapagsalaysay ng *Awit ni Pulaw* ni Maranan. Gayunman, ang bahagi ng kuwentong naganap sa Bundok Makulot—maaaring muling salaysay at/o adaptasyon ng mga katutubong naratibo sa bansa—ay magagamit na himaton sa pagpili ng rehistro ng wika. Ang totoo ng Bundok Makulot ay nasa Cuenca, Batangas.

Hindi lamang isang kuwentong pambata tungkol sa pangangalaga sa kalikasan ang akda ni Maranan. Sari-sari ang nibel nito—mula sa muling pagsasalaysay (*retelling*) o pagtatahi ng mga bahagi ng salaysay ng mga tradisyonal na kuwento ng ating bayan (mito, alamat, epiko, kuwentong bayan—sa anyong tula man o tuluyan) hanggang sa mensahe nitong apokaliptiko. Hinahamon nito ang hangganan ng kuwentong pambata at, sabihin pa, ng ano mang kuwentong pang-ekolohiya ang tema.

## Muling Pagsasalaysay sa mga Mito ng Paglikha

Ang pagpapahalaga natin sa mga katutubong salaysay ay iba sa pagpapahalaga ng mga nagsalaysay ng mga ito noong panahon bago tayo sakupin hanggang sa unang siglo ng pananakop ng mga Kastila. Itinuturing nating “panitikan” ang kanilang mga salaysay, gaya ng pagbasa natin ngayon sa mga nalathala at nakalimbag na teksto.

Ayon kay Rene Villanueva (2006), malayong maituring na pambata at hindi binuo sa kapakanan ng bata, ang mga alamat at mito, at marami sa tinatawag na kuwentong-bayan. Nalikha ang mga ito sa tinawag niyang “unang panahon” na hindi pa siyentipiko kung mag-isip ang ating mga ninuno. Dahil maipapalagay na bata pa ang mundo sa panahong iyon, maraming bagay ang nakapagtataka at nangangailangan ng paliwanag.

Dapat bihisan ng bagong kaalaman o halagahan ang muling pagsasalaysay para sa kontemporaryong lipunan. Paliwanag ni Villanueva, dapat mag-isip ang modernong kuwentista kung paano makapaglilingkod ang mga kuwentong-bayan sa kontemporaryong mambabasa. Dagdag pa niya:

*“Hindi sapat na muling isalaysay ang mga kuwento para marinig ng mga bagong tagapakinig o kaya ay muli silang isalaysay sa bagong anyo, gaya ng dulang musikal. O isalaysay lamang sila gamit ang modernong wika at mga kontemporaryong pamamaraang pansining.”*

Mahihimaton ito sa analohiya ng kritikong si Terry Eagleton (1996). Aniya, halimbawa, sa isang dalubhasa at arkeolohikong pananaliksik, may matuklasan pa tayo nang higit sa alam natin sa kung ano ang kahulugan ng dulang trahedya para sa mga sinaunang Griyego na unang nanood nito, napagtanto natin na malaki ang pagkakaiba ng pagpapakahulugang ito sa atin, at muli nating basahin ang mga dula sa diwa ng mas malalim na kaalamang ito.

Maaaring hindi na tayo masiyahan sa kanila, paalala ni Eagleton. Maaaring maunawaan na natin na nasiyahan tayo sa kanila dati dahil hindi natin sinasadyang basahin sila sa sariling oras natin. Kapag nangyari ito, maaaring hindi na mangusap ang dula nang may kahulugan gaya ng akala natin. Paliwanag pa niya:

*“Dahil sa katotohanang lagi tayong may interpretasyon sa mga akdang pampanitikan nang isinasaalang-alang ang mga sarili nating alalahanin na sa isang bahagi ng “ating sariling mga alalahanin,” wala tayong kakayahang gumawa pa ng iba, ang maaaring dahilan kung bakit ang halaga ng ilang mga akdang panitikan ay tila nananatili sa pagdaan ng mga siglo.” (10) (Sa akin ang salin).*

Muling inaakda ang lahat ng akdang pampanitikan, ayon kay Eagleton. Maaaring hindi maláy na ginagawa ito ng lipunang nagbabasa sa kanila. Wala umanong pagbabasa ng isang akda nang hindi sangkot ang “muling pagsulat.” Walang likha, o pagsusuri sa mga ito, na ipinapasa sa bagong pangkat ng mga tao nang hindi binabago. At maaaring hindi pa makilala ang orihinal sa prosesong ito.

Mahalagang maunawaan ang sitwasyong ito hindi lamang sa punto ng muling pagsasalaysay ng mga katutubong kuwento, kundi maging ng pagsusuri ng bigat ng isang akda sa usapin ng ekolohiya (ekokritisismo). Paliwanag pa ni Eagleton:

*“Walang akdang pampanitikan o tradisyon na mahalaga na, kabit ano pa ang pahayag ninuman tungkol dito. Ang “Halaga” ay isang terminong transitibo: nangangahulugan ito na anumang pinahahalagahan ng ilang partikular na tao sa ilang partikular na sitwasyon, ayon sa partikular na pamantayan at sa inilahad na layon” (Ibid.) (Sa akin ang salin).*

Ang mga mito, ayon kay Damiana Eugenio, ay malaking bahagi ng mahalagang genre ng katutubong panitikan. Sa kaniyang introduksiyon sa *The Myths*, ang ikalawang tomo sa *Philippine Folk Literature Series*, ipinaliwanag niyang kasama ng mga ito ang mga alamat at kuwentong bayan sa korpus ng mga katutubong naratibong tuluyan (xxi).

Para masinsin ang mga batayang katangian ng mga mito, sinipi ni Eugenio ang paghahambing ni William Bascom sa mito at alamat.

*“Ang mga mito ay mga prosang naratibo na itinuturing ng nakakarinig na komunidad bilang mga salaysay na totoong nangyari sa malayong nakaraan, para sa komunidad na nakaririnig ng kuwento. Tinatanggap sila sa pamamagitan ng pananampalataya; itinuturo na dapat paniwalaan; at maaaring banggitin bilang awtoridad bilang sagot sa kamangmangan, pagdududa, o kawalang-paniniwala. Pinakadiwa ng dogma ang mga mito; karaniwan silang sagrado; at madalas silang nauugnay sa teolohiya at ritwal. Karaniwang ang kanilang mga pangunahing tauhan ay hindi mga tao, ngunit madalas silang may mga katangian ng tao; sila ay mga hayop, diyos, o mga bayaning pangkultura na umiiral sa mas sinaunang mundo; sa daigdig na iba sa kasalukuyan, o sa ibang mundo, tulad ng kalangitan o ng underworld. Isinasalaysay ng mga mito ang mga katangian ng mga ibon, mga hayop, mga katangiang heograpikal, at mga penomeno ng kalikasan. Isinasalaysay rin ng mga ito ang mga gawain ng mga diyos, ang kanilang mga pag-iibigan, ang kanilang mga relasyon sa pamilya, ang kanilang pagkakaibigan at awayan, ang kanilang mga tagumpay at pagkatalo.”*

*“[Samantala,] ang mga alamat ay mga prosang naratibo na, gaya ng mga mito, ay itinuturing na mga totoong pangyayari ng tagapagsalaysay at ng kaniyang mga tagapakinig, ngunit nangyari sa isang panahon na hindi gaanong malayo, sa mundong gaya ngayon. Mas madalas na sekular kaysa sagrado ang mga alamat at tao ang mga pangunahing tauhan. Isinasalaysay ng mga ito ang tungkol sa mga migrasyon, mga digmaan, mga tagumpay, mga nagawang kabutihan ng mga bayani, mga pinuno, at mga hari, at magkakasunod na mga naghaharing dinastiya” (xxv) (Sa akin ang salin).*

Itinalâ din ni Eugenio ang pagkakategoryang tinawag niyang “Mga Motif na Pang-Mitolohiya” (“Mythological Motifs”). Hinalaw niya umano ito sa *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* ni Stith Thompson (xxiii).

Gaya ng nabanggit sa itaas, may sari-saring nibel ang akda ni Maranan. Maipapasok ang *Awit ni Pulaw* sa mahigit sa isa sa mga kategorya. Maaari itong hatiin sa tatlong yugto: una, ang kuwento nina Bathala at Bathaluman; ikalawa, ang kuwento nina Panganay at Bunso; at ikatlo, ang “pagbabalik” o muling paglitaw ni Bathala sa ibabaw ng Lupa. Ang bawat yugtong ito ay maaaring ipasok sa mga sumusunod na motif: *The Gods: Their Activities and Relationships, Cosmogony and Cosmology (The Creation of the Universe/Earth)*, at *World Calamities: The Great Flood/Deluge*.

Maaaring libakin ng marami ang pa-trilohiyang kuwento ng *Awit ni Pulaw*. Sa katunayan, puna ni Almario, dapat na payuhan ng isang mahusay na editor si “Ed Maranan upang putulan dahil lubhang mahabà ang kaniyang kuwentong ‘Ang Awit ni Pulaw’” (2017, 178). Sa madaling sabi, hindi ito pasok sa maikling maikling kuwentong pambata para sa mga pahina ng estandard na aklat pambata. Gayunman, lehitimo ang pagkakaroon ng maraming episodyo ng akda ni Maranan dahil gayon din naman ang katangian ng karamihan sa mga katutubong naratibo. Sa *Origins and Rise of the Filipino Novel: A Generic Study of the Novel Until 1940*, ipinaliwanag ni Resil Mojares ang ganitong pangyayari:

*“May mga simple at komplikadong naratibo. Ang pagkakaiba ng dalawang malawak na uring nabanggit ay maaaring mamenos dito: ang simpleng naratibo ay maikli, na binubuo ng isang episodyo o ng isang limitadong hanay ng mga insidente na buo na; sa kabilang banda, ang komplikadong naratibo ay binubuo ng isang malaking serye ng mga episodyo o isang buong siklo ng mga kuwento. Kailangang kilalanin na ang gayong pagkakaiba ay hindi sarado at pansamantala. Ang isang simpleng naratibo ay maaaring bahagi ng isang komplikadong naratibo; sa kabaligtaran, ang isang komplikadong naratibo ay maaaring binubuo ng isang buong serye ng mga simpleng naratibo” (9) (Sa akin ang salin).*

Wala sa haba ng salaysay ang pagbubukod sa mga ito, kundi sa takbo ng kuwento, batay sa kabuuang balangkas at tema. Kaya mahaba man o maikli—gaya ng hinihingi ng isang kuwentong pambata—maaaring mahati ang akda sa mga episodyo, gaya ng nabanggit nang mungkahing paghahati. Sabi pa ni Mojares, ang mga naratibo at uring naratibo ay nasa isang estado ng nagpapatuloy na pagbabago (*dynamic flux*) kung saan sila ay naghihiwalay, nagsasama-sama, namamatay o nagsisilang ng mga bagong elemento at anyo (11).

Mito ng paglikha ang unang yugto ng akda ni Maranan. Kuwento ito ng tuluyan nang nasirang relasyon ng mag-asawang Bathala at Bathaluman. Dahil hindi matiis ang kahambugan ng kaniyang asawa, lumayas si Bathaluman para “palipasin ang kanyang sama ng loob.” Pumailanlang siya hanggang sa makarating sa malayong sulok ng sansinukob. Doon, “lumikha siya ng sariling daigdig, na may sariling kalikasan, mga hiwaga at katuwaan.”

Gayong wala na sa eksena ang asawa, maituturing pa ring bahagi ng unang yugto ang sumunod na eksena. Sa daigdig ng Lupa—na itinumbas ni Maranan sa Planetang Earth—ay nagtayo si Bathala ng isang maliit na kubo sa tuktok ng bundok na natatakpan ng ulap. Gumawa siya ng mga haliging yari sa bakawan. Pawid ang bubong ng kubo, sawali ang mga dingding, at kawayan ang sahig. Ginawa niyang panghugpong at pantali ang mga baging na yantok. Kasunod nito, nagsagawa ng pagkakatalogo ng kaniyang mga nilikha si Bathala—isang paglalarawan ng panoramikong tanawin sa kalikasan: pagsipol ng mga himig ng hangin, pagbulong ng mga bato sa buhangin kapag inaagusan ng sapa, magkapanabay na pag-awit ng amihan at dahon, at iba pa.

Malupit si Bathala, ngunit marunong magtangi sa mga nilalang. Ang pinakakinagigiliwan niya ay ang ilog na siya mismo ang nagpangalan: Pulaw. Sa eksenang ito, ipapakilala si Pulaw. Ang kaniyang awit na nasulit sa isang saknong ay tila ba isang epigrapo ng kasunod na episodyo. Sa episodyong ito, kinausap ng ilog ang lumikha sa kaniya. Ipapaliwanag na dala ng “pamamanglaw,” nilikha ni Bathala ang unang pares ng Tao sa daigdig—sina Lalaki at Babai—gamit ang luwad at sari-saring bagay mula sa kapaligiran: sina Lalaki at Babai. Binasa ni Bathala ng sarili niyang laway ang mga nililok niyang katawan. Narito ang sumunod na nangyari batay sa kuwento:

*“Bigla siyang may naisip. Kumuha siya ng libag na nagtitibatib sa kanyang pusod, at isiniksik ito sa utak ng kanyang kahawig. Pagkatapos, binughan niya ng nag-aapoy na hininga ang dalawang nilikha, at inilubog ang mga ito sa ilog upang palamigin.”*

Mailulugar ang akda ni Maranan sa Katagalugan dahil sa pangalang Bathala. Gayunman, Sebwno ang Bathaluman. Bukod pa rito, ang paggamit ng libag ay maikakawing sa paglikha ni Melu ng sangkatuhan gamit ang kaniyang libag sa kuwento ng mga Bagobo.

Gaya ng kagustuhan ni Bathala—at marahil dahil nilikha niyang kawangis nila ng kaniyang esposa ang unang pares ng Tao—si Lalaki ang may kapangyarihan at si Babai ay naging tagasunod lamang. Gaya ni Bathaluman, hindi rin nagustuhan ni Babai ang kaniyang lugar sa relasyon.

### **Ekokritika sa *Awit ni Pulaw***

Habang matindi ang tunggalian ng lalaki at babae na ipinakita sa iminungkahing unang yugto ng akda ni Maranan, sa ikalawang yugto titining ang pagsusuri sa tunggalian sa larang ng ekolohiya. Sa ikalawang yugto rin matitiyak ang tagpuan ng kuwento.

Magsisimula ang ikalawang yugto sa dalawang batang naglalaro sa paanan ng Bundok Makulot, na gayon ang pangalan dahil “mula sa malayo, ang masinsin nitong luntiang gubat at kasukalan ay katulad ng makapal, kulot na buhok.” Ang dalawang bata ay nakatira sa nayon ng Maulap, na nakalatag sa dalisdis ng nasabing bundok.

Sa ikalawang yugto, tinalakay ang paniniwala ng ilang rehiyon na lumilindol at naliligalig ang kalikasan dahil “sabi ng matatanda, pabiling-biling [si Bathala] kapag may masamang panaginip, at umuungol.”

Mainam na gamitin ang ekokritisismo sa yugtong ito ng akda ni Maranan sa dalawang punto: una, dahil sa pagtalakay sa usaping pangkalikasan; at ikalawa, dahil sa maselang paggamit ng mga salita para dalhin ang usaping ito sa diskurso. Ayon kay Garrard, ginagawang posible ng ekokritisismo na kritikal na pag-aralan ang mga tropo (*trope*) na pinasimulan sa debateng may kaugnayan sa kapaligiran (2004, 14). Isang moral at politikal na tungkulin ng isang ekokritiko na harapin ang malawak at komplikadong mga krisis pang-ekolohiya, gamit ang mga kasangkapan sa panunuring pangkultura.

Inilangkap sa usapin tungkol sa kalikasan ang usapin ng kasarian. Isang araw, dumating sa nayon ang “isang pangkat ng kalalakihan, karamiha’y mga dayuhan.” Gaya ni Bathala at ni Lalaki, ang mga lalaking ito ay agresibo at ganid. Pansinin ang husay ni Maranan sa paglalantad ng pagkagahaman ng kalalakihan. Ipinaraan sa pag-awit ang kanilang pakay:

*“Kay laking mga puno, kay raming mga kahoy  
Sandamukal na troso, ang aking mapuputol!”*

*Sangkatutak na mina ng bakal at ginto  
Mahihiga ako nito, sa luho at tubo!*



*Kay sarap ng simoy, kay gandang tanawin  
Papakyawin ko nga't habati-hatiin!*

*Ako'y magtatayo ng mga pabrika  
Sa mababang sahod, papayag na sila!"*

Partikular at kalkulado ang mga katagang ginamit ni Maranan sa susunod na eksena. Sa isang iglap, ang malumanay na eksena sa bundok ay napalitan ng dahas na maikakabit lamang sa industriyalisasyon. Sumayaw ang kalalakihan. Nagtampisaw sila sa ilog na kanila ring nilabusaw. Nasindak ang mga isda dahil dito. Si Pulaw naman ay napangiwi at kinilabutan; saka nakaramdam “ng matinding pangamba at pagkatakot na noon lamang niya naranasan.”

Ang dating tahimik na nayon ng Maulap sa Bundok Makulot ay sinalakay ng mga kapitalista at turista. Pansinin ang paglalarawan ni Maranan:

*May nagpasok ng mga bulldoser at lagaring-makina. May nagdala ng mga gamit na pangmina sa bundok, at bakal na riles para sa mga yungib. Nagsidating ang mga tagasukat, arkitekto, inhinyero, dambuhalang sasakyang tagahakot ng lupa't bato, at mga tagabago ng hugis ng kalupaan. May ilang mayayamang namili ng lupa at ginawang plantasyon at bakasyunan ang paanan ng bundok.*

*At sa pagdaraan ng panahon, nalikha ang isang daigdig ng grasa at lansa, basura at bisyo, laswa at limahid, lungkot at linggal, sa loob at labas, sa ibabaw at ilalim, sa paligid ng Maulap, at sa buong bundok ng Makulot, hanggang makaabot ang pagbabago sa lahat ng lupain.*

Ang ganitong husay sa pagpili ng mga kataga para itulak ang atmospera ng kuwento ay maikakabit kay Charles Dickens. Sa ganitong gana, maaaring sabihin na ang paggamit ng salitang *nagtitibatib* sa unang yugto ay maaaring pahiwatig ng paparating na delubyo na dala ng kalalakihan. Ang delubyo, na tumutukoy sa malakas na buhos ng ulan na nagdadala ng malaking baha, ayon sa *UP Diksiyonaryong Filipino*, ay kasingkahulugan ng kataklismo, na tumutukoy naman sa isang marahas na aksiyong pisikal na nagdudulot ng pagbabago sa rabaw ng mundo (2009, 276, 592).

Saka naman papasok ang ikatlong yugto, na kung lalapatan ng ekokritisismo ay maiuugnay sa apokaliptisismong pangkapaligiran (*environmental apocalypticism*). Babala ni Carson, isa na mga nagpasimula ng nasabing kaisipan, ang pinakanakakaalarma sa lahat ng pag-atake ng tao sa kapaligiran ay ang kontaminasyon ng hangin, lupa, ilog, at dagat dala ng mga mapanganib at nakamamatay na sangkap (2002, 6).

Hindi na mababawi pa ang dating kondisyon ng kalikasan at ng mga bagay na may buhay matapos sirain ang mga ito ng sari-saring polusyon, ng magkakakawing na kasamaang pinasimulan ng tao. Ayon pa kay Carson,

*“Sa unibersal na kontaminasyon ng kapaligiran sa kasalukuyan, ang mga kemikal ay mapagbanta at di-gaanong kinikilalang kasosyo ng hunab (radiation) sa pagbabago ng mismong katutubong katangian ng mundo—ang mismong katutubong katangian ng buhay nito” (Ibid.) (Sa akin ang salin).*

Pinalawig pa ni Paul Ehrlich ang apokaliptisismong pangkapaligiran sa pagsasabing napakasagwâ ng mundo dahil sa labis nitong populasyon (*overpopulation*) at sa pagbisita ng mga salot, taggutom, at sakit (sinipi sa F. Buell 2010, 14).

Samantala, nagpatuloy ang pagsasalarawan ni Maranan sa pagkawasak ng kalikasan na dala ng mga tao. Nagsilikas ang mga ibon mula sa kagubatan ng Makulot at lumipad sa kung saan-saang lupalop. Naghanap sila ng “ibang gubat na mapupugaran, kung may natitira pa,” na hindi pa nasisira ng mga panginoong naglipana sa daigdig. Walang magawa ang mga ibon sa paghakot ng mga dambuhalang sasakyan sa “patong-patong na mga troso ng malalaking mulawin, nara, lawaan, kamagong, at iba pang mahuhusay at matitibay na matandang kahoy.” Binutas ang mga bundok ng mga makinang umaani ng mineral at mamahaling bato. Dahil sa pagtatayo ng mga pabrika at minahan, bumulwak ang umaasang kemikal sa mga ilog, bukal, at sapa. Habang ang mga taganayon ng Maulap naman ay napahimutok na lamang: “Namamatay ang ating mga halaman, nalalason ang ating mga isda!” Sa gitna nito, aawit na muli si Pulaw:

*Dugo ko’y mapait, may dagta ng lason  
Pinuksa ng salot ang bukal at bálong.  
Tubig na dati’y pambuhay at pang-inom  
Ngayon ay kamandag na bubuhos sa talon!*

Kung makapagsusulat lamang ng kasaysayan ng daigdig ang mga kagubatan, malamang na wala silang sasabihing maganda tungkol sa mga tao. Maliban sa mga katutubong naninirahan sa kagubatan, ang mga nilalang na “sibilisado” ay may ugaling sakupin at pangibabawan ang mga hindi nila gamay, gaya ng kalikasan (Broad at Cavanagh 1993, 8). Gayunman, may pangako ang sitwasyong ito:

*“Pumapasok tayo sa isang bayang sirâ na ang kapaligiran, isang bayang ang buhay ng mga magsasaka, mangingisda, at iba pa ay binago nang husto ng mabilisang pagkawasak (devastation) ng mga kapaligirang milenyo na ang tandâ. At ang pagkawasak na ito ang nagbubuklod sa mga biktima para kumilos at ipagtanggol ang kalikasan, at, sa huli, para ipagtanggol ang kinabukasan ng kanilang mga anak” (Ibid.) (Sa akin ang salin).*

Noong unang bahagi ng 2016, pinuna ng research group na IBON ang Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in the Philippines (JFC) para sa paglalatag nito ng agenda para sa pagkasira ng kapaligiran at pandarambong para sa susunod na administrasyon. Paliwanag pa nito:

*“Sa pagmimina, nagmungkahi ang JFC ng “mga agresibong hakbang” sa susunod na administrasyon, kasama ang pag-amyenda sa Mining Act sa kalagitnaan ng 2017 para ganap na mapagsilbihan ang mga interes ng malakihang pagmimina. Kabilang sa mga pangunahing probisyon ang 100% dayuhang pagmamay-ari ng malalaking minahan at paggarantiya sa mga kontrata sa loob ng 50 taon nang walang pagbabago maliban kung napagkasunduan ng bawat kampo. Sinabi ng IBON na ang Mining Act, sa kabila ng pagtutulak dito bilang blueprint para sa responsableng pagmimina, ay nagresulta sa hindi bababa sa 20 sakuna sa pagmimina na nakakaapekto sa mga ilog, kagubatan, sakahan, karagatan at kabuhayan ng mga tao mula nang ito ay isabatas” (Sa akin ang salin).*

Sa halip na tutukan ang agrikultura, inirekomenda ng JFC na unahin ang tinatawag na *high value crops*, gaya ng palm oil at rubber, at tanggalin din ang limitasyon sa pag-aari ng lupa para sa mga kapitalista. Lalo lamang wawasakin ng pagpapalawak ng mga plantasyong pinamamahalaan ng korporasyon ang saribuhay (*biodiversity*) at kagubatan. Kilala ang mga plantasyong nabanggit sa paggamit ng mga mapaminsalang pestisidyo at iba pang kimikal na nagdudulot ng polusyon sa lupa, tubig, at hangin.

Iniulat ni Bisenio (2024) na, sa ilalim naman ng Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 ng kasalukuyang administrasyon, nakatakda ang kontrol ng mga kontrata ng mga minahan sa bansa, sa kabila ng pagkawak ng mga kagubatan dahil sa deka-dekadang pagmimina ng ginto, nikel, tanso, at iba pang mineral para sa eksportasyon. Umabot sa 70% ang degradasyon ng mga kagubatan, bukod sa kabi-kabilang kumbersiyon ng lupa para sa kita. Pinapatay ng mahigit 4,000 ektaryang reclamation project ang mga bakawan, na nagiging dahilan ng pag-unti ng lamang dagat at huli ng mga mangingisda.

Para kay L. Buell, apokalipsis ang tanging pinakamakapangyarihang pangunahing talinghagang magagamit ng imahinasyong pangkalikasan (1995, 285). Sa *Awit ni Pulaw*, bagama’t isang alegorya, malinaw ang kahahantungan ng mga sumisira sa kalikasan. Kambal na lagim ang dumating—“isang malaganap na bagyo at isang lindol na yumanig sa buong daigdig”—bilang sagot ni Bathala, na nakikiramdam lamang pala sa ilalim ng Lupa, gaya ng paniniwala nina Panganay at Bunso.

Layunin ni Bathala ang depopulasyon ng lahat ng kaniyang mga lalang. Nalipol ang sangkatauhan at nadamay maging ang mga inosente. Ngunit sa pagdaan ng panahon, ang

nawasak namang kalikasan ay muling nilikha ni Bathala. Sa sandaling muli niyang lilikhain ang mga tao, bigla siyang nagdalawang-isip. Naalala niya ang kaniyang esposa.

Kung kasama ang Sangkatauhan sa “bagong panimula,” hindi iyon binanggit sa dulo ng kuwento. Gayunman, gumigitaw ang pag-asa mula rito. Sa isang tula ni Robinson Jeffers, binanggit niyang tiyak na sisibol muli ang buhay sa Lupa (1965, 73).

## **Panitikang Post-Martial Law at Climate Change**

Ani Tolentino (2008), may dalawang konsiderasyon sa kasaysayan ng panitikang pambata: ang mga puwersang politikal at kultural na institusyong nagluwal at nagpalaki nito; at ang laman ng akda. Sa tatlong pangunahing tampok sa laman ng mga akda, pasok ang *Awit ni Pulaw* sa una—ang henerosong panghihiram sa naunang tradisyon, tulad ng katutubong kuwento at kontemporaneong alamat (4). Nagaganap din ang subersiyon sa danas ng bata sa kuwentong pambata, sa kabila ng direktang kamay ng estado. Paliwanag pa ni Tolentino, ang bata ay “mag-aasta na kaiba sa dikta ng naunang kolonyalismo at ang kagyat na nakalipas na postkolonyal na diktadurang estado ng mga Marcos” (5).

Matapos ang diktadura, kailangang maipaunawa sa mga bata kung sino-sino ang mga biktima ng samot-saring karahasang dala ng rehimen. Sa *Awit ni Pulaw*, biktima ang mga bata—hindi humihinto sa pagtangis sina Panganay at Bunso, dahil naglaho ang kanilang mga kaibigang ibon at “hindi na sila makalangoy at makapagpaaraw sa ilog na ngayon ay patay na, may kamandag at may amoy.” Maaaring suriin ang mga nagwagi sa PBBY Salanga Prize mula 1984 hanggang 1986. Walang nagwagi ng Grand Prize noong 1987. Ang *Awit ni Pulaw*, na nagwagi noong 1989, ay bahagi na panahong maaaring tawaging panitikang post-Martial Law, sa partikular sa panitikang pambata. Una, nalikha ito sa panahon matapos mapatalsik ang diktadurang Marcos. Ikalawa, itinutulak ng *Awit ni Pulaw* ang mga usaping panlipunang hindi karaniwang tinatalakay sa panitikang pambata.

Obserbasyon ni Torres-Yu sa mga kuwento ng mga batang sumali sa timpalak, na nagluwal ng mga koleksiyong *May Kuwento Po Ako* (2006) at *Kuwentong Kalikasan, Katha ng Kabataan* (1999-2003), mapapansin ang mga sumusunod na tema:

May kuwento ang mga bata tungkol sa pagkakaibigan, domestikong karahasan laban sa bata, pagpapabaya sa bata, pag-abandona ng ina, pananakit ng kapwa bata, paglalabanan, batang katutubo at suliranin sa edukasyon, batang kabilang sa maralitang tagalungsod at problema sa kawalan ng pagkakataong makapag-aral, pagsali ng bata sa “people power revolution,” kamatayan at katarungang panlipunan, at mga isyung kaugnay ng kalikasan (141).

Pinapatunayan ng mga tema sa itaas, sa mga kuwentong pambatang isinulat mismo ng mga bata mula 1999, ang sinabi ni Treichel na hindi mga pasibong biktima ang mga bata: mayroon silang ahensiya, kaalaman, at kapasidad (2020, 27).

Mainam na kontribusyon din ang *Awit ni Pulaw* sa panitikang pambata tungkol sa *climate change* na epekto rin ng pagwasak ng tao sa kalikasan. Namumuhay ang mga bata at kabataan sa isang panahong mabuway at mapanganib, at ang mga epekto ng pandaigdigang *climate change* ay nagsimula nang tumagos at lumaganap sa kani-kanilang pang-araw-araw na buhay at mga komunidad (Rousell at Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles 2020, 1). Ayon pa kina Saguisag at Pricket, sa konteksto ng panitikang pambata, makabuluhang usapin sa ating panahon ang *climate change*; at ang pakikibaka para mapanahanan pa (*habitable*) ang ating planeta ay kinakailangang nakaangkla sa mga kilusan para sa katarungang panlahi, pang-ekonomiya, at panlipunan (2016, v-vi).

## Kongklusyon

Sa likod ng mga natamong gantimpala at iba pang pagkilala sa kuwentong pambata ni Maranan, sa loob ng halos tatlong dekada, mahalagang usisain kung bakit at paano nagkaroon ng katuturan at naging makabuluhan sa konteksto ng lipunang Filipino ang kaniyang *Awit ni Pulaw*. Malinaw at seryoso ang paglalarawan ni Maranan sa usaping pangkalikasan. Malinaw na hindi niya minamaliit ang kakayahan ng mga bata at ng kabataan dahil hindi niya pinalabnaw ang politika ng pagsalungat sa pagwasak sa kalikasan sa isinulat niyang kuwentong pambata. Ang kaniyang muling pagsasalaysay ay nilangkapan ng mga bagong kuwento na mababasa sa mga diyaryong hindi kontrolado ng mga kapitalista at ng administrasyon. Sa awit ni Pulaw, makikita pa ang paggamit ni Maranan ng chiasmus: wasak | wakas: ang epekto ng pagwasak sa kalikasan ay katapusan ng sangkatauhan. Sa kabila nito, muling mabubuo ang mundo. Gayunman, ang pag-asang ito sa pagsibol ay hindi tiyak na para din sa taong dahilan ng pagkawasak ng mundo.

Bilang kuwentong pambatang nagwagi sa timpalak at nalathala matapos ang People Power Revolution noong 1986, maipapakilala ang *Awit ni Pulaw* bilang bahagi ng panitikang post-Martial Law, sa partikular ng panitikang pambata. Kayâ naman mairerekomenda sa mga susunod na mananaliksik na pag-aralan ang lahat ng kuwentong pambata mula nang ideklara ng diktador na si Marcos ang Batas Militar hanggang sa pagkatapos ng 1986, at suriin ang mga pagbabagong naganap sa panitikang pambata, mula sa mga temang ginamit hanggang sa paraan ng pagpapaunawa sa mga batang mababasa sa mga terminong hindi nila ginagamit sa araw-araw, maliban sa mga nakukuha nila sa mga balita. Bukod dito, at dahil nabanggit nang ang usaping pangkasarian ay naisapin din nang mabuti sa usaping pangkalikasan, iminumungkahi pang basahin ang *Awit ni Pulaw* gamit ang lapit ng peministang ekokritisismo.

Panghuli, nabanggit ni de Vera (2012) na si Maranan ay isang manunulat na hindi humihinto sa pagsusulat. Nagbago na ang kontekstong ito noong 8 Mayo 2018, nang mamaalam si Maranan sa mundo. Kayâ isang hamon sa sinumang alagad ng panitikan na buhayng muli ang kaniyang mga akda sa anumang anyo, kasama na at lalo na ang *Awit ni Pulaw* na daghan ang dimensiyon.

### Talasanggunian

“Edgar B. Maranan: Writer.” *Agung XXI*, blg. 2 (Abril-Hunyo 2018): 68.

“UP restages pioneering children’s work ‘Awit ni Pulau.’” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Hulyo 2, 2016. <http://lifestyle.inquirer.net/232023/up-restages-pioneering-childrens-work-awit-ni-pulau/>.

Almario, Virgilio S. “Wanted: Editor.” Sa *Panitikang Pambata sa Filipinas: Mga Gunita, Talâ, Punat Pansin sa Kasaysayan*, 176–79. Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2017.

Almario, Virgilio S., ed. *UP Diksiyonaryong Filipino: Binagong Edisyon*. Ika-2 edisyon. Sentro ng Wikang Filipino, Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, Diliman, 2009.

Bascom, William. “The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives.” *The Journal of American Folklore* 78, blg. 307 (Enero-Marso 1965): 3–20.

Bisenio, Xandra Liza C. “Camouflaging climate inaction.” *IBON*, Hunyo 9, 2023. In-access noong Enero 31, 2024. <https://www.ibon.org/camouflaging-climate-inaction/>.

Broad, Robin, at John Cavanagh. *Plundering Paradise: The Struggle for the Environment in the Philippines*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Buell, Frederick. “A Short History of Environmental Apocalypse.” Sa *Future Ethics: Climate Change and Apocalyptic Imagination*, in-edit ni Stefan Skrimshire, 13–36. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press ng Harvard University Press, 1995.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring: Fourtieth Anniversary Edition*. Mariner Books, 2002.

- Chan, Joshua Ceasar, Victoria Atilano Domingo, at Roselle Pineda. "Awit ni Pulau." Facebook, Hulyo 15, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1700758796865351/>.
- Cimatu, Frank. "Edgar Maranan, poet and activist, dies." *Rappler*, Mayo 8, 2018. <https://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/arts-culture/202010-poet-activist-edgar-maranan-death/>.
- de Noceda, Juan José, at Pedro de Sanlucar. *Vocabulario de la lengua Tagala*. Isinalin nina Virgilio S. Almario, Elvin R. Ebreo, at Anna Maria M. Yglopaz. Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2013.
- De Vera, Ruel S. "The man who can't stop writing." *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Marso 3, 2012. <https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/37385/the-man-who-cant-stop-writing/>.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.
- Edgardo Maranan Legacy Site. "The Pomeroy Collection." In-access noong Enero 29, 2024. <https://edmaranan.tumblr.com/post/184684471600/the-pomeroy-collection>.
- Evasco, Eugene Y. "Sitwasyon ng Panitikang Pambata sa Pilipinas (2010-2012)." *panitikan.ph: Philippine Literature Portal*, Mayo 28, 2013. In-access noong Disyembre 15, 2016. <https://panitikan.ph/2013/05/28/sitwasyon-ng-panitikang-pambata-sa-pilipinas-2010-2012-ni-eugene-y-evasco/>.
- Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism: New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge, 2004.
- IBON Foundation. "Green Producerism: On Earth Day: IBON scores foreign chambers on anti-envi agenda for new admin." *IBON*, Abril 24, 2016. In-access noong Enero 22, 2024. <https://www.ibon.org/on-earth-day-ibon-scores-foreign-chambers-on-anti-envi-agenda-for-new-admin-2/>.
- Jeffers, Robinson. *Robinson Jeffers: Selected Poems*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.
- Maranan, E. B. *Ang Awit ni Pulaw*. Makati: The Bookmark, Inc., 1994.
- Mojares, Resil. *Origins and Rise of the Filipino Novel: A Generic Study of the Novel Until 1940*. University of the Philippines Press, 1983.
- Rousell, David, at Amy Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles. "A Systematic Review of Climate Change Education: Giving Children and Young People a 'Voice' and a 'Hand' in Redressing Climate Change." *Children's Geographies* 18, blg. 2 (2020): 191–208.



- Saguisag, Lara, at Matthew B. Prickett. "Introduction: Children's Rights and Children's Literature." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 40, blg. 2 (2016): v–xii.
- Tiamson-Rubin, Ligaya, at Eugene Y. Evasco. *Ang Sining ng Tula at Maikling Kuwentong Pambata*. Rex Book Store, Inc., 2001.
- Tolentino, Rolando B. "Ang Pinag-aagawang Bata sa Panitikang Pambata: Folklore, Media at Diskurso ng Bata." *Malay* 21, blg. 1 (2008): 1–2.
- Torres-Yu, Rosario. *Balagen: Edukasyong Pangkapayapaan at Panitikang Pambata*. University of the Philippines Press, 2011.
- Treichel, Pia. "Why Focus on Children: A Literature Review of Child-Centred Climate Change Adaptation Approaches." *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* 35, blg. 2 (2020): 26–33.
- Tujan, Antonio A., at Rosario Bella-Guzman. *Globalizing Philippine Mining*. IBON Foundation, Databank and Research Center, 1998.
- van den Top, Gerhard. *The Social Dynamics of Deforestation in the Philippines: Actions, Options and Motivations*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2003.
- Villanueva, Rene O. "Saan Nagpupunta ang Araw Kung Gabi? Pagsulat ng Kuwentong Pambata." U.P. Institute of Creative Writing, Pebrero 9, 2006.

# Metaphorical Structures of Love: A Reading of Select Love Poems from Victor Sugbo's *Inintokan*

by Jessa Amarille

## Abstract

Following Bagulaya's claim about Sugbo's poetry being heavily influenced by New Criticism, a claim reinforced by Alunan's statement in *Tinalunay* about the output of the UP Tacloban creative writing workshops as patterned after Anglo-American literature, this paper will analyze select poems from *Inintokan* that perhaps capture the New Critic sensibilities, particularly the poems that deal with the theme of love—including the sub-themes attraction, courtship, and genuine love. An analysis of Sugbo's poetry is hoped to add some insight into Waray poetics, particularly the poetics of modern or contemporary Waray poetry. Sugbo arguably aptly represents the contemporary Waray poets, having published a number of poetry collections in the past two decades: *Inintokan* (2008), *Taburos Han Dagat* (2014), *Poems from Ground Z* (2021), and *Gimata* (2022). To analyze the poems "Kun San-o Matataktak Inin Adlaw (When the Sun Will Drop Out of the Sky)," "Gugma (Love)," "Banabana (Approximations)," "Anicia," and "Paghupos han Rosal (To Keep a Gardenia)," I use the concepts of "metaphor," "metaphorical structuring," "internal limits" and "external limits" that Edith Tiempo discusses in her monograph *Six Poetry Formats and the Transforming Image: A Monograph on Free Verse* (2007). My paper discusses how Sugbo's work qualify as poetry under Tiempo's framework. It studies how themes on love are captured and conveyed through "metaphorical structures."

**Keywords:** Victor Sugbo, Waray literature, Waray poetry, love poems, metaphorical structures

How does one read Waray poetry? Against which literary standards does a critic evaluate a *siday*? Against whose sensibilities? In his essay “Poetry Without Tears: An Introduction to the Folk Poetry of Leyte and Samar,” David Genotiva writes:

*“...They would caution a critic, saying, that in studying poems in the vernacular, one must not use “Western” standards of criticism. This is a valid point. Criticism—in music, painting, or literature—would find it useful to trace the historical milieu to which a work belongs, since indeed no artist creates in a vacuum. However, there are critical verities which a thoughtful critic must adhere to, or else, criticism itself will succumb to sheer impressionism. Since poetry often transcends time and geographical location, the critical reader must learn to recognize distinct qualities identifiable in poetry—Eastern or Western—to distinguish a good or a bad poem.”<sup>1</sup>*

Genotiva might be referring to the study of Waray folk poetry, but the study of Waray poetry, from the Sanghiran period to the present, may share the same dilemma. Reviving and sustaining Waray (and Eastern Visayas) literature necessitate not only retrieval and documentation of historical, cultural, and literary materials but, at the same time, the weaving of a critical or theoretical framework that can genuinely and sufficiently unravel and understand the aesthetics and virtues of Waray literature.

The “pervasive[ness]” of the “mitotic quality”<sup>2</sup> the *siday* being written and published, but mostly aired by the AM station DYVL Aksyon Radyo, discouraged the writer and professor Victor N. Sugbo to publish his work: “...Victor N. Sugbo, trying to put together a new anthology of Waray writing in 1994, found his materials in forgotten chests, boxes, drawers, and *aparadores*, handwritten in crumbly notebooks that somehow escaped the tender mercies of termites, ants, and mice. Or he wrangled them from the mouths of half-drunk men and women with their faltering memories, for the Waray, in their cups tend to become sentimental and apt to express themselves in song or in verse...”<sup>3</sup>

Sugbo’s poetry saw the light of day when UP Tacloban started organizing creative writing workshops in the 1980s. Four faculty members of the college—William Remollo, David Genotiva, Merlie Alunan, and Victor Sugbo himself—ran these workshops that provided a platform for “poets from the grassroots.” At first, the poets, who were “[s]teeped in the poorly understood stylistics of the Sanghiran,” did not understand and accept the principles introduced by the workshop. It was the younger ones who “readily accepted the seemingly freer, looser style of contemporary versification borrowed from Anglo-American models.”<sup>4</sup> These models, after all, were not new to them anymore as their primary, secondary, and tertiary education are reliant on them with regard to teaching language and literature.

The creative writing workshops, one may claim, birthed collections of poetry written in Waray including Voltaire Oyzon's *An Maupay ha mga Waray ngan Iba nga mga Siday* (2008), Victor Sugbo's *Inintokan* (2008), Phil Harold Mercurio's *Ayaw Pagpudda an Tuog ug Iba pa nga mga Siday* (2010), Neil Lopido's *Ha Salog ug Iba nga mga Siday* (2010), and Janis Claire Salvacion's *Siso Sakradang ug Iba nga mga Siday ha Taguangkan* (2010).<sup>5</sup> Alunan describes these collections of poetry as exhibiting the "new poetics" of Waray literature.

*"...these new collections are total departures from the poetics of the Sanghiran poets. This means the poet must step down from the high perch of the public platform and speak now as one human being to another without the oratory and "fireworks display" of the traditional poet. The younger writers shift the site for poetry from issues of public concern to the intimate drama of human experience. Freed from the strictures of the meter and rhyme, poetic language may now try to explore the emotive and sensual nuances of experience. The new poetics opens the gateway for metaphoric inventiveness and originality, and allow for richer layering of meanings, heretofore ignored by earlier poets."*<sup>6</sup>

It is, therefore, safe to say that this new poetics that Alunan speaks of is, to a large extent, a kind of poetics that is heavily patterned after the Anglo-American text, in terms of language and style, but is carrying content that is connotative of specific human sentiments, emotions, and issues, albeit this time more private than public. These rather personal and intimate meanings can be found in Sugbo's poetry, particularly in his collection *Inintokan*.

In his book *Writing Literary History: Mode of Economic Production and Twentieth Century Waray Poetry*, Jose Duke Bagulaya, from the New Criticism vantage point, claims that Sugbo's poetry has a "conscious and privatized sense of aesthetics [that] forms his poetic praxis" (108). Bagulaya suggests that Sugbo's act of writing in Waray can be likened to "embarking on a mountain climbing adventure" as Sugbo explains that the reason why he continues to write in Waray is the thrill and excitement writing his own experience in the Waray language gives him (Arinto qtd. in Bagulaya 107). Bagulaya further explains:

*"...Sugbo's statements are a departure from the romantic notion of poetic spontaneity existent among the "siday" writers. Sugbo does not have a muse to rely on. He does not need inspiration in producing a poem. In that sense, his poetry is produced through a modern sensibility that is craft-oriented. The poem is planned, the way a modern city is planned. The poem is formed consciously through the use of the modern tools of metaphor, irony, and paradox. The poem then is a calculated act."*<sup>7</sup>

Bagulaya adds Sugbo’s “formulation of a persona” in his poems as manifestation of New Criticism’s influence on his poetry. Sugbo, in his notes in *Inintokan*, reveals his reliance on “characters” from his personal life, who would assume personas or serve as subjects in most of his poems, and the “adventure” that is writing in Waray that Bagulaya refers to.

*“Today, when I write in Waray, I still grope for the appropriate, if not precise, words. Each poem’s unfolding becomes always an invocation of the many rivers of words I shared with Inay Damiana, my father, my mother, Mano Busio, Mana Maria, Mano Mundo, Mana Poren, neighbors, and people I had met. Current dictionaries in Waray have never been adequate. In the end, one is left with his own well of memory and lexicon.”<sup>8</sup>*

Following Bagulaya’s claim about Sugbo’s poetry being heavily influenced by New Criticism, a claim reinforced by Alunan’s statement in *Tinalunay* about the output of the UP Tacloban creative writing workshops as patterned after Anglo-American literature, this paper will analyze select poems from *Inintokan* that perhaps capture the New Critic sensibilities, particularly the poems that deal with the theme of love—including the sub-themes sexual attraction, courtship, and genuine love. An analysis of Sugbo’s poetry is hoped to add some insight into Waray poetics, particularly the poetics of modern or contemporary Waray poetry. Sugbo arguably aptly represents the contemporary Waray poets, having published a number of poetry collections in the past two decades: *Inintokan* (2008), *Taburos Han Dagat* (2014), *Poems from Ground Z* (2021), and *Gimata* (2022).

To analyze the poems “Kun San-o Matataktak Inin Adlaw (When the Sun Will Drop Out of the Sky),” “Gugma (Love),” “Banabana (Approximations),” “Anicia,” and “Paghipos han Rosal (To Keep a Gardenia),” I will use the concepts of “metaphor,” “metaphorical structuring,” “internal limits” and “external limits” that Edith Tiempo discusses in her monograph *Six Poetry Formats and the Transforming Image: A Monograph on Free Verse* (2007). In this monograph, Tiempo makes sense of poetry as a genre, both in terms of form and content. She highlights the use of “metaphor,” a literary device that a poet cannot dispense with, if he/she is to craft a poem not disguising as prose.

*“...poetry has traditionally been acknowledged as indirect, as structured in metaphor; that is, the crucial idea of the poem—be it presented as plain statements—is articulated in metaphor, and that makes all the difference. A close scrutiny and research into our contemporary poetry and the poetry of the recent past show that in the poetic procedure, metaphor, manifested as image (or picture or situation), transforms the prosaic into poetic. The simplest definition, then, seems to be: Poetic versifying is casting the material in metaphor—or in image, if you will; dramatic, suggestive image or situation that transforms*

*the prose into poetry. Thus, we go by the fundamental distinction today, as authenticated in the creative procedure of our contemporary poetry and of the poetry of the recent past.*

*Without the structuring of metaphor there is no poetry.<sup>9</sup>*

One may claim that a poem's *raison d'être* is its metaphor. Versified lines cannot claim to be poetry without it. As Tiempo points out in her monograph, metaphor is used because it "enhances" and "goes beyond the bare presentation of literal statement and allows and facilitates the reader's right to make his own creative response, thereby in a real sense lending the individual enhancement to the metaphor, and the created work itself..."<sup>10</sup> In other words, the text becomes alive with the metaphor present. The metaphor ushers the reader *into* the text, making him/her an active participant in the meaning-making. The text lives on with every new reading of the text, as new and fresh meanings are generated.

According to Tiempo, the metaphor is structured through the use of image or "situation that is charged with symbolic meaning" and the use of "internal literary instruments".<sup>11</sup> It is through these devices that the poem reveals its "concept" or "meaning." The "conceptual aspect" and the "mechanical format" work together to package the theme into poetry. What are these internal literary instruments or alternatively termed by Tiempo as "internal limits"? And how are they different from what she refers as "external limits"? Tiempo defines them:

*"...inherent in the nature of the poetic structure are two consistent earmarks which are best designated here as the "external" and the "internal" limits. The external earmarks involve the particular mechanical format being used, which covers the length and formation of the lines (minimalist or long lines, stanzas or interludes), and of course the conventional features of meter, rhyme, rhythm, and, for special use, euphonic diction patterns [...], as well as juxtaposition, and typographical idiosyncrasies. These are the external limits, the earmarks that are more visible on the page.*

*The internal limits serve the conceptual aspect and have to do with the use of the less "visible" elements already mentioned, like tone, nuances, understatement, suggestiveness, indirection, thematic tension, contrast, ellipses, fresh stratagems and insights, inventive reproductive use of words, among many other subtleties and effects that shape the poetic meaning of the piece...<sup>12</sup>*

Does Sugbo's poetry qualify as poetry under Tiempo's framework? Does it have the elements of good poetry that Tiempo names? Do the poems make use of metaphor? How is this metaphor structured? What are the internal and external limits found in the poems?

“*Inintokan*,” as defined by the author, is “a Waray word whose root is derived from ‘*intok*,” which means “to knock against or into something.” Sugbo explains that *intok* is commonly used to refer to a thing “that breaks or chips off like glass.” He uses the term to capture what poetry writing is like: “...The process of writing a poem is similar to that of being hit by something—a thought, a memory, or a wave of feeling—that takes a small chip out of our humanity, and changes us” (Author’s Notes). Sugbo explains how the poems in the collection are organized: “The poems are organized around three themes or three ways of being “*intok*”: (1) “*nasabud*” or knocked against something, (2) “*natinggiran*” or chipped off, and (3) “*nakalambre*” or knocked into something to the point of breaking.”<sup>13</sup>

Among the poems in *Inintokan*, the love poems seem to be the more memorable ones. With their overall playful yet sufficiently moving tone, the poems greatly depend on the wonders that images and irony can do. The poems, individually, depict their own narrative, but a bigger universal narrative can be deduced if the reader chooses to weave them together, to read one in relation to the other. A closer look at the poems indeed yields this grouping: there are poems that depict the stage of attraction and flirtation (“*nasabud*”), poems that talk about courtship (“*natinggiran*”), and poems on falling in love and keeping that love (“*nakalambre*”).

In *Kun San-o Matataktak Inin Adlaw*,<sup>14</sup> in a matter of factly tone, the persona speaks about the sun falling from the sky and hitting him. One may right away think of the literal sun, the big ball of fire in the sky, but the poem opts not to keep the mystery for long. The second half of the first stanza reveals that the persona is not really talking about the sun but, rather about, one may assume, a woman:

<p><i>“Kun san-o matataktak inin adlaw Diri ako maaram Kay nauntogan naman ako kausa Mabaysay adto hiya sugad Han malinaw nga mga aga Nagpapalinpalin pa ngani an iya Pula nga saya”</i></p>	<p><i>“When the sun will drop out of the sky I do not know For I’d been hit on the head once She was beautiful like Those clear mornings Her red skirt was flapping In the wind”</i></p>
--	--

At this point, the reader can also infer that the persona means something else when he talks about the sun “drop[ping] out of the sky.” He goes on to share how it felt when he got hit by this sun: “Nanmula an inuntogan (Where I got hit turned red) / Namukatkat an akon pangitaan (I saw fireflies).” These lines suggest that the persona is referring to a different kind of “accident,” getting hit by this sun did not cause him pain, but rather rendered a dreamy vision. However, that moment has already passed, and in an act of surrender, he decides to stay in the shade to avoid the sun as “[he] might want it again”:



*"Hirayo na adto nga adlaw  
Mapuroko la anay ako ha hudlom  
Di pa ako magpipinasirak  
Kay bangin la mahirak"*

*"That day's so long ago  
I might as well sit here in the shade  
I'll keep out of the sun  
I might want it again"*

The poem ends with the persona declaring a statement of yet again, surrender, and perhaps, lucidity: "Kun san-o matataktak an adlaw (When the sun will drop out of the sky) / Pag-irignom lugod kita (Come. Let's drink more)." The persona does not actually finish the statement "Kun san-o matataktak an adlaw (When the sun will drop out of the sky)." The reader is left on their own to assume or imagine what will happen when this sun the persona talks about drops out of the sky. The persona instead finishes the statement with an invitation to drink—this act hinting at the persona's resignation to the fact that the "sun" or "woman" who is going to fall on him is, like the sun, bright and beautiful yet unreachable. Therefore, he sulks into a corner and drinks alcohol to drown his wanting.

In *Gugma* (Love),<sup>15</sup> the persona sounds irritated, almost resentful, of catching the love bug:

*"Ako nahasunit  
Ambot ano ini  
Nakakita man la ako  
Han imo mga buni."*

*"A splinter broke into my skin.  
How it happened:  
A glimpse  
Of your moles."*

*Ako nahasunit  
Ambot ano ini  
Kiniroan ta la ikaw  
Imo ako pinahungaw."*

*A splinter broke into my skin.  
How this happened:  
Just a wink  
Pierced like a balloon."*

*Ako nahasunit  
Ambot ano ini  
Tungud han imo katugnaw  
Ako yana tinutukwaw."*

*A splinter broke into my skin.  
How could this be?  
You were so cold  
Now I have a cold."*

While the previous poem likens being struck by love to getting hit by the sun, *Gugma* compares being captivated by love, or at least attraction, to "[a] splinter [breaking] into [his] skin"—like a splinter, so tiny yet so hard (or even impossible) to get rid of. To add, this tiny bug can be caught in the swiftest of moments—in "[a] glimpse" or "[j]ust a wink." The persona may first come off as indignant, comparing love to something that is bothersome, but his true feelings are implied by the last two lines of the poem. The persona is now also suffering from cold (or lovesickness!) because of the other person's "coldness." With the images present in the poem, and the repetition of the lines "Ako nahasunit (A splinter broke into my skin) / Ambot ano ini

(How this happened/How could this be)” in every stanza of the poem that gives the poem a playful and light tone, “Gugma” succeeds in capturing the brief yet meaningful and small yet pervasive qualities of love.

Courtship and the complications that come with it are what the poems *Banabana* (Approximations)<sup>16</sup> and *Anicia*<sup>17</sup> describe through the use of images, particularly those that can be found in the local scenery, easily accessible to the poet (and perhaps to the intended reader)—images that remind one of the rural landscape. In *Banabana*, being able to enter the home of, one may assume, the persona’s love interest, entails significant effort and sacrifice, and more importantly, courage. To establish how difficult it is, the poem presents instances like climbing a mountain, crossing a river, and other strenuous feats, parallel to the act of “[crossing] the threshold of [the lover’s] house”:

<i>Para maabot an pungkay han Amandewing Tulo ka adlaw an pagsinaka</i>	<i>“To reach the peak of Amandewing Three days to climb</i>
<i>Para dumangat ha kataisan hiton sapa han Tangnan Usa ka kulop nga pagbinugsay</i>	<i>To get to the Tangnan river’s source  One afternoon of rowing</i>
<i>Ugsa makauswag ngadto ha iyo balay Walo nga pagtanom</i>	<i>To cross the threshold of your house Eight seasons of sowing</i>
<i>Usa nga kadayaw bangin O un mil nga mga bukad hiton hasmin</i>	<i>One full moon perhaps Or a thousand blossoms of jasmine</i>
<i>Ngan usa ka dama hin tuba Para madaog inin kahadlok.”</i>	<i>And a jar of red palm wine To overcome this fear.”</i>

All these details prove to be useful in establishing the meaning of the poem, but the lines that break the poem’s composure are found in the third and last stanza. Their suggestiveness betrays (in a good way) the calm and calculative voice of the persona, revealing his real intention, which is to enter the woman’s home so he can, perhaps, ask for her hand, and his struggle to muster up the courage to do so. Alas, he turns to *tuba*—alcohol seems to be the resort in drowning sorrows brought by love and nursing the valor one needs to declare it.

The persona in *Anicia* seems to have found this courage and makes his feelings known to a woman named Anicia. But he does it in an indirect way—presenting all these images that may point to the persona’s impatience and intentions:

*“Nananahon pa la an mais  
Nananaha an panaon.  
Nagpipinamambo ka  
Adlaw ko nga huyayag.*

*“The corn was just sprouting new leaves  
The panaon was growing new shoots.  
You have been looking out the window  
My own white sun.*

*Nagbubusod an mais  
Panubol man han panaon.  
Nagsisinudlayon ka.  
Ha bintana nagugurugimlat.*

*The corn was flowering,  
The panaon was budding.  
There you were combing your hair  
By the window throwing glances.*

*Nagbari na han mais  
Nalukad na an panaon  
Palipak, di ka pa nakita  
Hinin karuyag sidngon?”*

*Time now to harvest corn  
For gathering the panaon fruit  
Thunder, can't you still see  
What I mean?”*

Familiar scenes and images from the countryside are also summoned in this poem to prove the persona's point. Images of agricultural activities—planting and harvesting—are placed side by side images that connote the persona's longing for this woman who also happens to be his “own white sun” who combs her hair by the window. The last two lines of the last stanza “Palipak, di ka pa nakita (Thunder, can't you still see) / Hinin karuyag sidngon? (What I mean)” give away the frustration that the persona feels because this certain Anicia, despite the passage of time (and perhaps the efforts of the persona) remains clueless to (or rather just dismissive of) the feelings of the persona.

But to love truly, one must learn to let go and distance oneself so that a space where this love can grow is created. This is what “Paghupos han Rosal (To Keep a Gardenia)”<sup>18</sup> is trying to impart:

*“An paghipos han rosas  
Diri pinaagi hin pagsanggi  
Pinapabay-an ini ha panahon  
Tubtob bumuskad an iya biyoos  
Tubtob pagsabwag han iya talambot  
Tubtob makasantop ka han iya kaputli*

*“To keep a gardenia  
You do not break it from a twig  
You leave it in the open  
Until its buds burst  
Until it throws its scent wide  
Until you are able to comprehend its  
whiteness*

*Ug mabingalimot ka ha iya  
Hasta nga di mo na mahisabtan  
An imo kalugarinon  
Nga dida han kawad-an ikaw  
Nasakop ngay-an.”*

*Until you forget her  
And you no longer understand  
Who or what you are  
And in that vast emptiness you learn  
That you have become her captive.”*

The poem uses the metaphor of tending to a plant to illustrate how it is to keep love. Just like the poems previously discussed, it builds on a related image (tending to a gardenia), and somewhere in the poem (in this poem it is towards the middle of the stanza), this image reveals its real gist. With the line “Ug mahingalimot ka ha iya (Until you forget her),” suddenly it is not about tending to the gardenia anymore. The reader is now confronted with a love story that is about a kind of love that is freeing and at the same time captivating: “Hasta nga di mo na mahisabran (And you no longer understand) / An imo kalugaringon (Who or what you are) / Nga dida han kawad-an ikaw (And in that vast emptiness you learn) / Nasakop ngay-an (That you have become her captive).”

The establishment of contemporary Waray poetics and criticism have a long way to go, but it is not impossible. In fact, with the available materials in Waray literature that scholars, especially those who come from the region and speak and/or care about the language and its literature, have gathered and documented, and the recently published works that we have, it is more than viable. There might be gaps that need to be filled, but the work must start and be sustained. Few have studied and already written about Waray literature, but more scholarship is needed to continue the discourse on Waray literature.

This paper is an attempt to add to the said discourse. Through reading and analyzing select love poems from Victor Sugbo’s collection *Inintokan* using Edith Tiempo’s concepts of metaphoric structuring in poetry, which the author believes to be a neutral and therefore safe ground, it is hoped that insight into Waray writing and sensibilities has been revealed. Waray contemporary poetry, even if written in a model that is “foreign,” i.e., Anglo-American or New Critic, can capture and express the Waray experience, culture, and ideals. However, it is acknowledged that there are limitations to this approach, and, therefore, a more inclusive and directed reading and writing of Waray contemporary literature is recommended.

## Bibliography

- Alunan, Merlie M., ed. *Tinalunay: Hinugpong nga Panurat nga Winaray*. Quezon City: UP Press, 2017.
- Bagulaya, Jose Duke S. *Writing Literary History: Mode of Economic Production and Twentieth Century Waray Poetry*. Quezon City: UP Press, 2006.
- Sugbo, Victor N. *Inintokan*. Quezon City: UP Press, 2008.
- Tiempo, Edith L. *Six Poetry Formats and the Transforming Image: A Monograph on Free Verse*. Quezon City: UP Press, 2007.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Alunan, Merlie M., ed. *Tinalunay: Hinugpong nga Panurat nga Winaray*. (Quezon City: UP Press, 2017), 472-473.

<sup>2</sup>“Mitotic verse is the term used by Resil Mojares to describe the near-uniformity of themes, insights, literary techniques, and modes of versification that characterized Visayan poetry from the early 1900s to as late as the 1960s or even beyond. Mojares was writing about Cebuano poetry, but he might as well have been referring to Waray poetry too... The dodeca-syllabic line, the quatrain, and the rhyme were imperatives of poetry that no poet worth his salt dared to trespass. These techniques were practiced with excellence by Iluminado Lucente and his contemporaries...” (Alunan, 91-92)

<sup>3</sup>Alunan, 222.

<sup>4</sup>Alunan, 223.

<sup>5</sup>Alunan, 224.

<sup>6</sup>Alunan, 224.

<sup>7</sup>Bagulaya, Jose Duke S. *Writing Literary History: Mode of Economic Production and Twentieth Century Waray Poetry*. (Quezon City: UP Press, 2006), 108.

<sup>8</sup> Sugbo, Victor N. Inintokan. (Quezon City: UP Press, 2008), Author's Notes.

<sup>9</sup> Tiempo, Edith L. Six Poetry Formats and the Transforming Image: A Monograph on Free Verse. (Quezon City: UP Press, 2007), 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Tiempo, 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Tiempo, 4-5.

<sup>12</sup> Tiempo, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Sugbo, Author's Notes.

<sup>14</sup> Sugbo, 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Sugbo, 24-25.

<sup>16</sup> Sugbo, 12-13.

<sup>17</sup> Sugbo, 52-53.

<sup>18</sup> Sugbo, 30-31.

# Pagsusuri sa mga Piling Muralya sa Sining Saysay

## Exhibit Gamit ang Semyolohiya ni Barthes

*nina Nikky F. Necessario at Cristy Allen L. Serote*

### Abstrak

Ang ‘Sining Saysay: Philippine History in Art’ ay isang exhibit na nakatalaga sa Gateway Gallery, Araneta Center, Cubao. Proyekto ito ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, University of the Philippine Alumni Association, at ng Araneta Center, kung saan itinampok ang tatlung (30) alumni ng nabanggit na unibersidad. Gumawa ang mga manlilikha ng 30 muralya na naglalahad ng kasaysayan ng Filipinas mula pre-kolonyal hanggang sa pangalawang administrasyong Aquino. Mula sa 30 muralya, sinuri ng mga mananaliksik ang piling apat (4) na muralya na naglalahad ng kasaysayan ng Filipinas noong panahon ng Batas Militar, matapos mapagtagumpayan ito, at ang mga sumunod na yugto hanggang Administrasyong Aquino. Gamit ang Semyolohiya ni Roland Barthes, tinukoy ng mga mananaliksik ang iba’t ibang ‘signs’ at simbolo sa mga muralya na sumalamin sa realidad ng lipunan sa iba’t ibang panahon ng bansa. Napag-alaman sa pag-aaral na bagaman may magagandang naging dulot ang Batas Militar sa bansa, higit ang mga naging pasakit nito sa lipunang Filipino. Natuklasan din ng mga mananaliksik na ang mga sumunod na yugto ng kasaysayan ay naging hakbang paahon ng mga Filipino mula sa kadilimang buhat ng mga Marcos. Ipinakita rito kung paanong unti-unting umunlad ang bansa gayundin ang pagpapakita ng mga mahahalagang bahagi ng bawat administrasyon.

***Mga Susing Salita:*** Denotasyon, Konotasyon, Roland Barthes, Semyolohiya, at Sining Saysay



## Introduksiyon

Binuksan ng Araneta Center, Cubao ang pintuan ng Gateway Gallery noong 2015 para sa exhibit na nagtatampok ng 30 muralyang tumatalakay sa kasaysayan ng Filipinas. Saklaw nito ang mga panahong mula pre-kolonyal hanggang sa Administrasyon ng Pangalawang Aquino. Ang ‘Sining Saysay: Philippine History in Art’ ay proyekto ng Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, University of the Philippines Alumni Association, at Araneta Center (Macas tal. 1-2). Bukod sa mga likhang-sining na may kaugnayan sa kasaysayan, may pitong tematikong pinta rin na naglalarawan at nagbibigay identidad sa kultura ng Filipinas. Sumangguni ang mga manlilikhang-sining sa dalawang historyador sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas upang siguraduhing wasto ang magiging paglalarawan sa bawat tagpo ng panahon sa kasaysayan ng bansa. Sina Dr. Serahin Quiazon at Prop. Ma. Luisa Camagay ang mga ekspertong kinonsulta ng mga manlilikhang-sining para sa proyektong ito (Macas tal. 10).

Matagumpay na sinalamin ng mga muralyang ito ang iba’t ibang karanasan ng mga Filipino sa bawat panahong inilalarawan nito. Naisalarawan rin ng mga muralya ang iba’t ibang isyung panlipunang lumitaw sa iba’t ibang yugto ng kasaysayan ng bansa. Pagpapatunay itong may kakayahan ang mga likhang-sining na maging midyum ng panlipunang dayalogo sapagkat nakahihikayat itong buksan ang mga mata ng madla upang makita ang iba’t ibang isyu at daing ng isang lipunan.

Tulad ng mga larawan, ang mga pinta ay nangangailangan din ng kritikal na pagbasa o pagsusuri dahil may mga mensahe at tema rin itong nais palitawin. Maipapakita sa kritikal na pagsusuri ang detalyadong pagpapakahulugan sa bawat pinta. Sa isasagawang pag-aaral, susuriin ng mga mananaliksik ang apat (4) na muralyang pumapaloob sa panahon ng Batas Militar hanggang sa pangalawang Administrasyong Aquino - sa pamamagitan ng Semyolohiya ni Roland Barthes.

Napili ng mga mananaliksik ang apat na partikular na muralya dahil: 1) ito ang pinakakontemporaryo sa mga makasaysayang akda, 2) maraming sanggunian ang pauna nang nabasa ng mga mananaliksik tungkol sa mga makasaysayang pangyayaring inilarawan ng mga piling muralya, at 3) malay nang nasaksihan ng mga mananaliksik ang mga huling piling muralya – ang panahon ng Administrasyong Macapagal-Arroyo at pangalawang Aquino.

Sa pag-aaral, tutukuyin ang mga nakapaloob na isyung panlipunan sa bawat imahen gayundin ang kalagayan ng Filipinas sa panahong ito. Ilalahad dito ang mga symbolismong ginamit sa bawat muralya pati na rin ang mga namayaning tema sa bawat likhang-sining sa lente ni Barthes.

## **Bakit Mahalaga ang Pinta at ang mga Likhang-Sining?**

Sa kasalukuyang panahon, hindi maitatangging marami-rami pa rin ang mababa ang pagtingin sa sining at kung minsan pa ay isinasantabi at isinasabahala ito. Gayunpaman, marami-rami rin ang naniniwalang mahalaga ang papel ng sining dahil hindi lamang basta karikitan ang dala nito, nagiging abenida ito para sa mas malalalim na diskurso – hindi lamang sa pagtalakay ng disenyo kung hindi pati sa politika, kasaysayan, at kultura.

Sabi nga ni Guillermo sa papel ni Saul, “Malaking papel ang ginagampanan ng kondisyon ng isang partikular na lipunan sa paghubog sa kontekstong makikita sa likhang sining. Ang mga pintura tulad ng isang mural ay maituturing na “sining na may tinig” sapagkat ito ay naglalahad ng mga kontemporaryong isyu at konsern na may malalim na epekto sa mga indibidwal ng lipunan.” Ang 30 muralya ay nagtataglay ng mga daynamikong pigura at mga popular na simbolo na nagpapakita ng mga kontradiksyon at alternatibo sa kasalukuyang lipunan. Nagsisilbing “tinig” ang mga muralyang ito para sa pagpaparating ng mga mensaheng nais ipabatid sa lipunan (Saul 97).

Sa kasalukuyang panahon, mas nagiging malawak ang abot ng sining sa masa dahil sa unti-unting pagbuo o paglagay ng mga likhang-sining sa mga pampublikong espasyo. Ang nasabing pamamaraan ay tinatawag na “re-centering” ng mga lungsod (Guazon 865). Kayâ naman, maituturing na bahagi ng “re-centering” na ito ang pagkakatagay ng mga muralya sa Sining Saysay sa Cubao dahil sa ito ay nakabahay sa isang mall – maituturing na pampublikong espasyo bagaman hindi kasing hayag ng sa mga lokal na komunidad.

Matuturing din talagang balwarte ng sining ang pook kung nasaan ang Gateway dahil naririto ang Araneta Coliseum at New Frontier Theater (dating Kia Theater) na ginaganapan ng mga konsiyerto at iba pang pagtatanghal. Bagaman malawak talaga ang akses tungo sa Gateway Mall dahil ito ang “gateway” o lagusan tungo sa iba-ibang bayan, pook din ito kung saan nagdudugtong ang dalawang estasyon ng tren – Araneta Center-Cubao ng LRT 2 at MRT – masasabi pa ring hindi ito gaano ka-pook pangmasa. Sa loob ng Araneta City na pinagtatayuan ng Gateway Mall, may mga pook pamilihan na mas pangmasa kagaya ng Ali Mall, SM Araneta City, at Farmers Market. Kung ikukumpara ang Gateway Mall sa mga nabanggit, tila mas mamahalin at mas may prestihiyo ang mga boutique, kainan, at tindahan sa Gateway. Gayundin, hindi rin naman bulgar ang ikalimang palapag ng Gateway kung saan naroroon ang Sining Saysay.

Sa kabuuan, may kakaibang hatak pa rin ang pagkakatagay nito sa mall dahil may buhat na prestihiyo ang mga lugar na kagaya nito kaysa mga pader sa lokal na komunidad kung saan maaari itong lapastanganin sa pamamagitan ng mga vandal. Gayunpaman, masasabing may

epekto ang pagkakalagak nito sa isang pampublikong espasyo kagaya ng Gateway Mall kaysa mga pampridadong art gallery - kung saan limitado ang akses ng madla at kadalasan may bayad at presyong kamahalan.

## Metodolohiya

Ang teoretikal na batayang gagamitin sa malalimang pagsusuri ng mga apat (4) na pinta ay ang Semyolohiya ng batikang pilosopo na si Roland Barthes. Ang Semyolohiya ay pag-aaral ng mga signos o tanda (signs). Sa mga pag-aaral na pumapatungkol sa Semyolohiya, tanyag ang pangalan ni Roland Barthes sa konsepto ng Mito na mababasa sa kanyang librong *Mythologies*. Ang aklat na ito ay isinulat ni Barthes noong 1957 na naglalayong masuri ang kakayahan ng mga kontemporaryong paniniwala sa pagbuo ng isang mito. Sinuri niya ang mga icon na ginagamit sa kulturang popular noong panahon niya tulad ng mga icon na ginagamit sa mga patalastas, isports, pagkain, at mga kilalang tao. Nilalayon niyang malaman ang mga tagong ideolohiya sa likod ng mga icon na ito kung saan sa palagay ni Barthes ay daan sa pagtuklas sa mga namamayaning ideolohiya.

Ibinase ni Barthes ang pag-aaral nito ng Mito sa pag-aaral ng tatlong kilalang pilosoper na sina Karl Marx, Ferdinand de Saussure, at Sigmund Freud. Una sa listahan ay si Karl Marx na naniniwala na ang kultura ay ginagamit ng mga may kapangyarihan upang lalong mapasunod ang mga nakakababang-uri. Ginagamit ang sining, relihiyon, at kung ano pang midyum upang itago ang mga masalimuot na katotohanan ng lipunan. Samantala, ginamit naman ni Barthes ang konsepto ng Sign ni Saussure at pinalalim niya ito na mas ipaliliwanag pa sa ibaba. Ang panghuling konsepto na pinaghalawan ni Barthes ay mula kay Sigmund Freud. Naniniwala si Freud na ang mga panaginip ng mga tao ay base sa mga di-malay na kaisipang halaw sa mga nararanasan, nakikita, at sa malay na diwa.

(1) Signifier	(2) Signified
(3) Sign	

*Fig. 1. Ang konsepto ng Sign ni Saussure*

Sa naunang pag-aaral ni Saussure, ang sign ay binubuo ng **signifier**, o ang biswal o acoustic na imahe at ng **signified**, o ang konsepto o mental na imahe. Halimbawa, ang *sign* na “aso” ay binubuo ng signifier na pasulat o pabigkas na salitang “aso,” at ng *signified* na konsepto ng aso. Sa pagpapalawig ni Barthes, nagkaroon siya ng sariling pagkokonteksto kung saan ipinakita niya sa kanyang ilang pag-aaral na ang ilang sign ay tumatayo bilang signifier sa isang panibagong signified. Halimbawa, ang imahen ng barbed wire ay maaaring intindihin bilang barbed wire, ngunit maaari din itong intindihin bilang *sign* ng panggigipit at karahasan ng

isang rehimen. Ipinakita sa kanyang pag-aaral na ang mga espesyal na sign na ito ay daan sa pagsiwalat ng mga ideolohikal na bagahe ng isang tanda.

Pinalawak niya ang Semiotika sa pagbuo ng mga **konotasyon** at **denotasyon** ng mga retrato bilang mga sistema ng signos. Ayon kay Barthes, ang isang imahe ay may aspektong estetikal at ideolohikal kung saan bukas ito sa pagbasa at pagpapakahulugan sa konotasyong lebel na magpapaliwanag kung paano nabuo ang mensahe sa interaksyong semyolohikal. Para kay Barthes, hindi lang basta pagpapangalan ang nabubuo ng tagapagsagisag (signifier) at sinasagisag (signified) sapagkat marami pang lebel ng pagpapakahulugan ang umaangkla sa kultura ng bawat bansa. Sinusubukan nitong matukoy ang kontekstong historikal at pagkakaugnay nito sa kontemporaryong pagpapahalaga upang manatili ang bisa nito. Tinawag din ni Barthes na “function signs” ang semiotic signs sapagkat sila ay parehong ginagamit at nagtataglay ng kahalagahan.

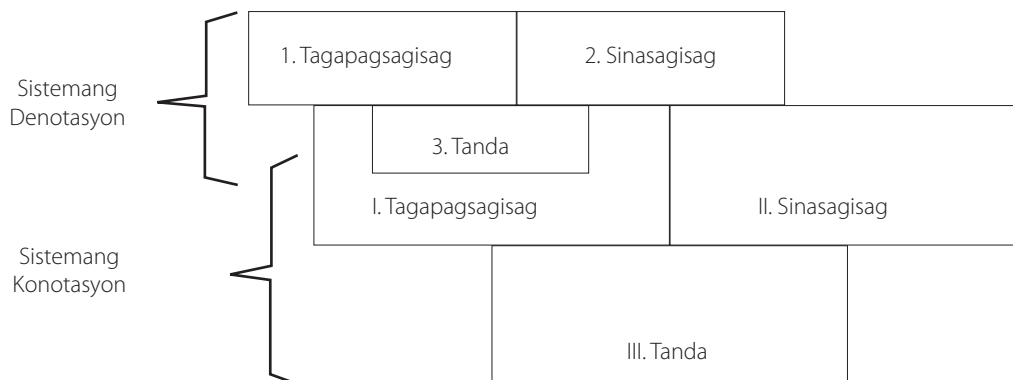


Fig. 2. Ang Semyolohikal na Sistema batay sa Myth Today ni Barthes (Ancheta, 2013)

Kung dadalumat pa ang pag-aaral ni Barthes sa Semyolohiya, makikita ang dalawang konsepto ng signos. Sa siste ng denotasyon, ang signos ay maaaring ilarawan bilang isang proseso, kung saan pinagbibigkis nito ang tagapagsagisag (signifier) at sinasagisag (signified), na makikita sa talahanayang nasa itaas. Sa nabuong pagsusuri, umiikot lamang ito sa mismong imahe kung saan magkatulong ang dalawa upang makabuo ng isang kongkretong tanda. Nabanggit din na ang binibigay na pagpapakahulugan ay hindi unibersal sapagkat nakadepende pa rin ito sa pag-unawa ng tumitingin o dumadalumat. Nagkakaroon lamang ng pare-parehong pagpapakahulugan kung ang ginamit na tagapagsagisag o signifier ay may palasak o *universal* na kahulugan.

Ngunit, hindi palaging ganito ang daloy ng pagbibigay ng kahulugan sapagkat may mga ilang pagkakataong ang isang larawan ay hindi simple o ordinaryo, kung kaya't nagpapakita o nagsisiwalat ito ng kahit anong mga mito o tanda. Sa ganitong suliranin, nakabuo si Barthes ng ikalawang sistema ng pagbibigay kahulugan sa signos at ito ay ang konotasyon. Sa talahanayan sa kabilang pahina, makikitang ang magiging tanda (sign) ay magiging tagapagsagisag (signifier) dahil magkakaroon na ito ng ideolohikal na pagpapakahulugan.

Mangyaring bibigyan pakahulugan ng mga mananaliksik ang piling mga muralya gamit ang Semyolohiya ni Barthes. Sa magiging pag-aaral, tatawaging icon ang mga espesyal na sign at susubukang ipakita ang mga diskursong ideolohikal na nakapailalim sa bawat pinta. Sa paggamit ng may-akda sa semyolohiya, malaki ang posibilidad na matukoy sa mga piling pinta ang mga icon na may bitbit na historikal at kultural na ideolohiya. Una, ilalahad ng mga mananaliksik ang denotasyon o ang mga literal na imaheng makikita sa muralya. Susundan naman ito ng paglalahad ng konotasyon o ng mas malalim na pakahulugan ng mga mananaliksik. Bilang nabanggit sa itaas na nakadepende sa bakgrawnd ng tumitingin ang magiging konotasyon, ang mga magiging pagtingin at pakahulugan ng mga mananaliksik ay batay sa kanilang mga naunang kaalaman at pananaliksik.

## **Pagsusuri**

Mula sa dalawampu't tatlong (23) muralyang naglarawan ng kasaysayan mula pre-kolonyal hanggang kontemporaryong panahon, at pitong (7) tematikong muralya, napili ng mga mananaliksik na suriin ang mga muralyang naglalahad ng panahon ng Batas Militar hanggang sa pangalawang Administrasyong Aquino bilang mga ito ang pinakasariwa. Bagaman nakita na ng mga mananaliksik ang mga likhang-sining sa personal, ang mga retrato sa papel na ito ay hinango lamang sa internet sa kadahilanang hindi pa nagkakaroon ng pagkakataong makabalik ang mga mananaliksik sa Sining Saysay, dahil sa pagkakaroon ng pandemya. Mangyaring binigyan ng tamang kredit ng mga mananaliksik ang mga pinagkuhaan ng mga retrato ng muralya.



*"Martial Law in the Philippines" ni Pablo Baen-Santos*

### **Ang Sigwa sa "Bagong Lipunan"**

Sa muralyang ito inilarawan ang lipunang Pilipino sa panahon ng Batas Militar. Makikita rito (mula kaliwa pakanan) ang mga grupo ng taong nagmamartsang may dalang bandera ng National Labor Union Center (NLUC), larawan ni Che Guevarra, at ng Komunismo; headline ng pagdedeklara ng Batas Militar; babaeng nakahandusay; babaeng may dalang nakarolyong pulang bandila; si dating Senador Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr.; nakakalat na nangtotortyur na kapulisan; barbed wire; larawan ng isang armadong lalaking may bandila ng Bangsamoro sa kanyang likuran; kamay na may hawak na pulang krus; si Imelda Marcos; pangkat ng mga kadre; si Jose Maria Sison; si Mao Tse Tung; at sama-samang mga taong nakasakay sa isang trak ng bumbero.

Ang mga nabanggit ang mga denotasyon sa nasabing muralya - mga literal na guhit at larawang makikita sa pinta. Ang ilan sa mga larawang ginuhit na binanggit sa pariralang ito na hindi na babanggitin sa susunod ay tinignan ng mga mananaliksik bilang literal ang kahulugan o ang mga imaheng nais nitong irepresenta.

Sa bahaging ito tatalakayin ang mga konotasyon ng mga larawang may pagbatay sa kasaysayan. Sa kaliwang banda ng muralya, makikita ang mga lupon ng kabataang mulat sa katotohanan ng "Bagong Lipunan" na kumiling sa makakaliwang ideolohiya upang lumaban sa maling pamamalakad nito. Litaw ang makakaliwang ideolohiya dahil sa kulay ng mga bandilang kanilang iwinawagayway gayundin dahil naroon ang mukha ni Che Guevara – kilalang rebolusyonaryo mula Cuba at ang watawat ng Komunismo.

*(Trigger warning: Rape)* Makikita rin sa gawing kaliwa ang babaeng nakahubad at nakahandusay pati na rin ang babaeng nasa likod ng headline ng pagkakadeklara ng Batas Militar. Nilalarawan nito ang literal na panggagahasa sa maraming babae noong panahon ng Batas Militar - partikular ang unang kaswaling naitala noon na si Lilosia Hilao. Hindi isolated case ang nangyari kay Hilao dahil marami pang mga eye witness na nabubuhay pa hanggang sa kasalukuyan ang pinapatay ng masasamang alaalang buhat ng Batas Militar. Ilan sa mga naitalang kaso ng panggagahasa ay ang ilan sa mga biktima sa Palembang Massacre noong 1972. Ilan sa mga matatapang na nagbahagi ng kanilang masalimuot na karanasan ay sina Amina Gunay, Juliet Corazon Lacdo-o, Lui Quiambao Manansala, Adora Faye de Vera, at iba pa. (Melencio 81-84). Masasabi ring paglalarawan ito sa panggagahasa sa Inang Bayan noong panahon ng Batas Militar. Maiuugnay rin sa pag-iyak ng mga bata sa larawang malapit sa larawan ng diktador na si Ferdinand Marcos, ang pag-iyak ng mga anak ng bayan para sa hustisya at kalayaan.

Nasa muralya rin ang larawan ni Sen. Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, Jr. - isa sa mga matinding kumalaban sa pamumuno ni Marcos - at ipininta itong black and white marahil dahil sa pagkapaslang nito noong panahon ng Batas Militar. Ang pagkapaslang sa senador ang isa sa mga naging hudyat ng pag-aalsa ng madla. Ayon nga sa pahayag ni Rep. Edcel Lagman ng Albay, ang pagpaslang kay Sen. Ninoy Aquino ang nag-highlight sa karahasan ng Batas Militar. Hindi lamang nito pinatindi ang oposisyon, naging mitsa ito ng pagsasama-sama ng mga pangkat na tumutuligsa sa mga Marcos (Mangaluz tal. 4-5).

Maliban sa iba pang larawan na literal naman ang sinasabi, makikita ang kamay na may pulang krus. Masasabing mahalaga ang symbolismong ito sa larawan dahil naging malaki ang papel ng relihiyon sa nangyaring mapayapang rebolusyon sa EDSA upang pabagsakin ang diktador. Bagaman sa panahon ngayon ay pina-iigting ang pagkahiwalay ng simbahan sa estado, noong panahon ng Batas Militar, namutawi ang pagkakaisang ipaglaban ang Inang Bayan bago ang mga sinusulong na interes ng bawat sektor. Si noong Archbishop (na naging Cardinal) Jaime Sin ay isa sa mga naging mukha at tagapanimula ng mapayapang rebolusyon noong 1986. Nakiisa ang simbahang katoliko sa mga tumiwalag na militar na nagtungo sa Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). Ang simbahang Katoliko rin ang isa sa mga maigting na nag-udyok ng pagpapatawag ng halalan para sa pagpapabagsak ng diktaturya. Malaki rin ang naging papel ng Radio Veritas, ang radyo ng simbahang Katoliko, sa pagpapakalap ng impormasyon sa madla upang tuluyang maorganisa ang People Power Revolution noong 1986 (Rivera 20).

Maliban sa estado at sa makikitang nakasama ito sa iba’t ibang tao na tumulong sa pagpapalaya ng Pilipinas na sina Jose Maria Sison, na pinuno ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas; ang mga kadre ng Bagong Hukbong Bayan na pinaiiralan ng kaisapang Mao Tse Tung, at ang pagkakaisa ng mga Pilipino ay makikita sa bandang ilalim ng muralya.



Makikita rin sa gawing kanan sa itaas ang larawan ni dating First Lady Imelda Marcos - na may hawak na sash na may sabling “The true, the good, and the beautiful” ngunit mala-lamok ang pakpak nito na taliwas sa pag-angkin nito na ito ay diwata. Alam nating ang mga lamok ay mga parasitikong insekto na masasabing siya ring naging gampanin ng mga Marcos dahil sa dami ng kanilang ninakaw mula sa bansa - na magpahanggang sa ngayon ay binabayaran pa rin ng mga mamamayan. Dahil sa pagpapahalaga sa “kagandahan” at “karangyahan” ng mga Marcos, nabuo ang terminong “Edifice Complex” na nangangahulugang paggamit ng pera ng bayan para sa pagpapatayo ng mga imprastrukturang may tinatagong politikal na agenda. Ilan sa mga ito ang Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (na hindi naman nagagamit ngayon), Cultural Center of the Philippines Complex, Manila Film Center (na gumuho at naging dahilan ng pagkamatay ng maraming trabahador), San Juanico Bridge (na ipinatayo bilang “regalo” para sa First Lady dahil sa ito ay tubong Leyte), at marami pang iba (Martial Law Museum tal. 1).

Sa gawing kanan din ng muralya, litaw ang kulay dilaw na maiuugnay sa puwersa ng partido ni Corazon Aquino - ang naulilang maybahay ni Sen. Aquino - na nagsilbing mukha ng demokrasya sa panahon ng pag-aalsa. Sa gawing kaliwa makikita naman ang malaking bahagi na kulay luntian na maaaring nagpapakita ng kasakiman (Ancheta 52) sa kapangyarihan ng diktador na naupo. Makikita ring pasok sa kulay luntian ang “FM” o ang mga inisyal ng diktador na maaaring paglalarawan na sakim ang diktador.

Samantala, makikita sa malaking bahagi ng muralya ang barbed wire na nagpapakita ng pagpiglas ng mga taong nasa muralya. Bagaman masasabing simbolo ito ng pagbabakod ng Batas Militar o pilit pagpipiit sa mga Pilipino, hindi nagpadaig ang mga ito dahil makikitang laging nasa likod ang mga barbed wire at nangingibabaw ang puwersang nakikibaka. Sa kabuuan, litaw ang tema ng karahasan sa muralyang ito ngunit hindi nagpaapi ang mga Pilipino na litaw na litaw sa naging pagpiglas ng mga ito laban sa mapanupil na diktaturya.

*Tungkol sa Pintor:* Si Pablo Baens “Adi” Santos ay kilala bilang isang social realist artist mula pa noong panahon ng Batas Militar. Isa siya sa mga estudyanteng nag-underground noong 70s at bahagi siya ng samahang Kaisahan, alternatibong samahan para sa manlilikhang kontra Marcos (Miclat tal. 2-3). Litaw sa mga likha ni Santos ang aktibismo dahil maliban sa siya mismo ay aktibista, naging manlilikhang sining din siya sa *The Manila Times* kung saan naging malapit siya sa mga mamamahayag na tumatalakay sa pakikibaka ng mga magsasaka, maralitang tagalungsod, at iba pang mga marhinalisadong pangkat (Gamalinda tal. 2).



## Ang Pag-angkin ng Demokrasya: Panahon Matapos ang Batas Militar, Unang Administrasyong Aquino



*“Filipinos Unite to End Martial Law” ni Angel C. Cacnio (Larawan mula sa WheninManila.com)*

Sa muralyang ito makikita ang naging hakbangin upang tuluyang mapalayas ang diktador sa puwesto. Mula kaliwa, pababa, tungong kanan makikita ang mga sumusunod: kumakaway na Ferdinand Marcos; helicopter na tumatakas; mga salitang “TULOY PA RIN ANG LABAN” na nakasulat sa pintang dilaw; inagurasyon ni Corazon ‘Cory’ Aquino; mga salitang “PAALAM SA INYO” na nakasulat sa pintang kulay asul; sa likod ni Cory makikita ang larawan ng pinaslang na asawang si Ninoy Aquino na nakaguhit ng black and white; katawang hinihila; si Cardinal Jaime Sin; sina Fidel V. Ramos, Juan Ponce Enrile, at Gringo Honasan; larawan ng mga madre at mga debotong nagtungong EDSA Revolution; isang lalaking nakadilaw na nakaturo ang mga daliri ng letrang “L” at obispong nasa likod nito; mga sundalong nakaupo sa tangke; at mga salitang “Reporma sa Bayan” na nakasulat sa pulang pinta. Muli, ang mga nabanggit ang mga denotasyon sa nasabing muralya - mga literal na guhit at larawang makikita sa pinta.

Ang mga larawang ipininta sa muralyang ito ay mula sa iba’t ibang mga larawan noong People Power sa EDSA at ilang mga pangyayaring naging hudyat ng pagkakaganap nito. Kung susubukang hanapin ang mga ito, kaagad itong bubungad sa inyong search engine kung itatype ang mga salitang “People Power Philippines”, “EDSA Revolution”, at kung ano pang mga salitang kaugnay nito.

Sa kaliwang banda ng muralya, makikita ang larawan ng mga Marcos na kumakaway habang may helicopter sa likod nito na nagpapakita ng kanilang pagtakas tungong Hawaii nang maganap ang People Power. May kalabuan at hindi gaanong madiin o malinaw ang stroke sa larawan nila marahil dahil sila ay pawala na - kumbaga ay pakupas na. Ang pangyayaring ito ang naging daan tungo sa pagpapatalis ng diktador kung saan nagsama-sama ang ilang mga sektor ng lipunan: simbahan, sibilyan, at militar.

Makikita rin dito ang bangkay ni Ninoy Aquino na nakaguhit ng black and white. Masasabing isa ang pangyayaring ito sa mga nagpaliyab ng damdamin ng mga Pilipino upang mag-aklas. Makikita na ang kulay ni Ninoy Aquino ay hindi buong black and white kundi may kaunting transisyon pa-dilaw. Maaaring bagaman namatay ito, simbolo ang kulay ng dilaw dahil ito ang nagharing kulay matapos mapatalis ang diktador. Makikitang litaw na litaw ang kulay dilaw dahil ito ang namutawing kulay o ang naging simbolo ng demokrasya dahilan sa partido ni Cory – ang naging mukha ng People Power. Ang lalaking nakadilaw na nakaturo ang mga daliri na parang letrang “L” ay simbolo ng Pilipinong lumalaban na nagtuloy sa pakikibaka sa tulong ng mga relihiyoso kaya mayroong obispo sa likod nito. Ang postura ring iyon ang kilalang postura ni Cory bilang ang ibig sabihin ng “L” ay “Laban”. Makikita rin na nakawagayway sa likod ang bandila ng Pilipinas dahil sa muli na itong malaya.

Samantala, nakatipon-tipon sa gitna ang mga nakibaka para sa kalayaan ng Pilipinas. Makikita rin sa muralya sina Fidel V. Ramos (sumunod na pangulo), Juan Ponce Enrile, at Gringo Honasan (parehong naging senador hindi kalaunan) - mga naging mukha ng kudeta laban sa kay Marcos. Ilang araw bago ang People Power, pinangunahan ni noong Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile ang kudeta na pinangunahan ni Col. Honasan laban sa rehimeng Marcos. Ito rin ay sinuportahan ng noo’y Armed Forces of the Philippines Vice Chief of Staff General Fidel Ramos (na kalaunan ay naging ika-12 pangulo ng bansa). Dahil sa banta ng pag-atake ng militar ni Marcos, kapit-pwersang nagbarikada ang masa upang protektahan ang mga nag-organisa ng kudeta (Amnesty tal. 4 at 7). Nasa kanilang tabi ang mga relihiyoso at ang mga deboto na buong tapang na umabante sa lansangan ng EDSA para sa kalayaan ng bansa. Naipaliwanag na rin sa naunang muralya ang naging papel ng simbhang katoliko gayundin ang pagkakaisa ng estado at ng simbahan.

Kung susuriin naman ang mga teksto, nakasulat sa dilaw ang mga salitang “TULOY PA RIN ANG LABAN” dahil sa ito ang naging moto ng partidong Aquino laban sa mga Marcos. Ang mga salitang “PAALAM SA INYO” ay isinulat sa kulay asul na nangangahulugan ng pagbubuklod-buklod. Masasabing nahati ang mga Pilipino nang mapalayas ang mga Marcos dahil sa malaki ang bilang ng kanilang mga tagasunod gayundin ang bilang ng mga Pilipinong nag-aklas laban sa nasabing administrasyon. Ang mga salitang “REPORMA SA BAYAN” ay nakapinta naman ng kulay pula. Ang kulay pula ay nangangahulugan ng katatagan (Ancheta 52) at ito ang pinakita ng mga Pilipino nang sila ay tumindig laban sa diktaturyang Marcos.

Sa kabilang banda, mangyaring hindi makikita sa muralyang ito ang ilan sa mga karanasan at mahahalagang pangyayari sa panahong Aquino kagaya ng pagkakatag ng Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) gayundin ang pagkakabuo ng Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (na ngayon ay Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao) sa hangaring mapag-aayos ang tunggaliang Moro. Isa rin sa hindi makikita sa muralyang ito ay ang nangyaring Mendiola Massacre noong taong 1987.

*Tungkol sa Pintor:* Dekoradong manlilikhang sining ang pintor na si Angel Cacnio. Ilan sa mga pinakakilalang likha ni Cacnio ay ang disenyo ng 25 at 50 centavos noong 1980s gayundin ang disenyo para sa baryang 1-centavo na may disenyo ni Lapu-lapu at baryang 5-centavo na may disenyo ni Tandang Sora (Rappler tal. 9). Kilala rin si Cacnio sa kanyang mga likhang nagtatampok ng kultura ng mga Pilipino lalo higit ng identidad (Tomada tal. 4).

### **“Philippines 2000” at ang Panahon ni Erap Para sa “Mahirap”**



*“Ramos/Estrada Administration” ni Michael Velasco*

Sa pintang ito mapapansin ang malaking imahe nina dating Pangulong Fidel V. Ramos at dating Pangulong Joseph “Erap” Estrada na nagsimula matapos ang unang Administrasyong Aquino. Ipinakita sa muralyang ito ang dalawang panig ng administrasyon ng dalawang dating pangulo. Sa kaliwang bahagi, makikita ang takbo ng pamamahala ni Ramos habang sa kanang bahagi ang kay Estrada.

Kapansin-pansin sa gitnang larawan ang isang pampubliko at natatanging sasakyan ng mga Pilipino - ang pampasaherong Jeepney. Sa pag-aaral ni Vinzons (2015), ang jeepney ay simbolismo ng pagka-Pilipino gayundin salamin ng bansa. Ang popularidad ng jeepney ay nakaugat sa kahirapan ng buhay sapagkat ipinapakita nito ang kalagayan ng drayber lalo higit ng mga pasaherong sumasakay rito. Ang paggamit ng jeepney ng mahihirap ay ginamit na

pamamaraan sa pangangampanya ni Erap dahil batid niyang mas makukuha nito ang simpatya ng masang Pilipino. Sa katunayan, ginamit niya ang konsepto ng jeep sa kanyang islogang “JEEP ni Erap” na ang ibig sabihin ay (Justice, Economy, Environment, and Peace; Joseph Ejercito Estrada for President). Ito ang tinatawag na pangmasang pormulang naging dahilan ng kanyang pagkapanalo noong 1998. Bukod rito, ang paglalagay kina Ramos at Estrada sa upuan ng drayber ay pagpapakitang sila ang maghahatid sa masang Pilipino ng hinahangad na kaunlaran.

Sa kabuuan, makikita ang pagtataguyod ng administrasyong Ramos ng mga programang makakatulong sa hangaring maging isang industriyalisadong at maunlad na bansa ang Filipinas. Sa muralyang ito, waring may nakapulupot na telang may tatlong kulay: bughaw, dilaw, at pula - mga kulay ng watawat ng bansa. Kung bibigyan ng konotasyong pagpapakahulugan, naging sentro ng dalawang opisyal, lalo higit ni Ramos, ang pagpapaunlad at pagpapahalaga sa Pilipinas. Mababatid ito sa mga ilang icon na nakapaloob sa pinta na naging simbolismo ng mga programa at repormang kanyang inilunsad. Nangunguna na rito ang nakapinta sa kaliwang bahagi “Philippines 2000” o “Pilipinas 2000” na isa sa mga naging tanyag na programa ng dating pangulo. Ang Pilipinas 2000 ay isang hakbangin tungo sa pagiging industriyalisado ng bansa sa taong 2000. Nilalayan nitong paunlarin ang ekonomiya kasabay ng pagpapabuti ng pamumuhay ng mga Pilipino. Patunay sa isang bahagi sa muralya ang pagusbong ng isang pampublikong sasakyan ng mga Pilipino - ang Philippine National Railways o PNR. Ang pagkakaroon nito ay tanda na ang isang bansa ay industriyalisado at dumadako na sa kaunlaran. Sa katunayan, ang Filipinas ang kauna-unahang bansang nagkaroon ng railroad system sa Timog-Silangang Asya.

Bukod pa rito, makikita ang “signal tower” na may denotatibong kahulugan ukol sa pagkakaroon ng epektibong pakikipagkomunikasyon. Ang pagkakaroon ng komunikasyon ay pagiging bukas sa pagitan ng dalawang tao kung saan maipapakita rin nito ang pagiging bukas ng mismong gobyerno sa mamumuhunan at madagdagan ang serbisyong pampubliko ng gobyerno. Dahil sa panahon ding ito inilunsad ang sistemang Build-Operate-Transfer o BOT Scheme. Bukod pa rito, naipakita rin sa obra ni Velasco, ang pagtatanim ng isang magsasaka at kamay na may na halaman na parehong may kinalaman sa agrikultura na isa sa mga pinalakas na sektor sa pamamahala ni Ramos. Isa sa mga programang pang-agrikultura niya ang pagtulong sa mga magsasaka na palaguin ang produksyon ng bigas at mais. Pagpapatunay itong balanse ang naging panunungkulan ni Ramos dahil hindi nito napapabayaang ang agrikultura sa kabila ng paghahangad na maging industriyalisadong bansa.

Kung titignan muli ang kamay na may hawak na halaman ay makikitang ang halaman ay munti pa lamang o bagong sibol, tanda ito ng bagong pagsisimula na maiugnay sa Pilipinas na umusbong palang sa panahong ito. Sa mga pagbabagong dala ni Ramos, hindi kataka-takang



ang Pilipinas ay nabansagang “Tiger Cub Economy in Asia.” Ang bansag na ito ay ibinibigay sa mga bansang nagkaroon ng mataas na paglago sa ekonomiya at inaasahang makakabilang sa mga bansang “Asian Tigers.” Kasamahan ng Filipinas ang mga bansang Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam at Thailand sa pagiging Tiger Cub habang ang mga itinuturing na Asian Tigers na bansa naman ay ang Hongkong, South Korea, Singapore, at Thailand (Chen 2022).

Naipakita rin sa muralya ang pagiging aktibo ng Administrasyong Ramos sa usaping pangkapayapaan sa pamamagitan ng imahe niya na nakikipagkamay sa lider ng Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) na si Nur Misuari. Dagdag pa rito, ang imahen ni Jiang Zemin mula sa Tsina na kinakamayan rin ni Ramos kung saan ipinapakita nito ang pag-iwas sa kaguluhan at pananatili sa mabuting ugnayan. Masasabing sa mga imaheng ito, ang pakikipagkamay ay tanda ng pakikipagsundo. Sa naging tugon ni Ramos sa mga usaping pangkapayapaan, nagkaroon siya ng rekonisyon at pinarangalan ng Peace Award ng UNESCO noong 1997.

Litaw rin sa gitna ng muralya na may nakasabit na isang banner na may nakalagay na “100 Kalayaan” na inilagay sa porma na parang isang finish line. Matatandaang ang taong 1998 ay ang ika-100 taong anibersaryo nang makamit ng Filipinas ang kalayaan mula sa mga Kastila. Bukod pa sa kontekstong ito, ang iba pang pagbasa sa elementong ito ay ang administrasyon ni Ramos ang panahon kung saan tunay na nakamit ang kalayaan sapagkat noong panahon ng dating Pangulo Cory Aquino ay mahina ang pundasyon ng kalayaan kahit pa sabihing sa kanyang panahon nakamit ang demokrasya mula sa diktaturyang Marcos.

Hindi lamang mga programa at reporma ang ibinahagi ni Velasco sa kanyang muralya sapagkat makikita rin sa mismong pinta ang relihiyon ni Ramos sa pamamagitan ng krus na nasa ibabaw. Matatandaang protestante si Ramos at siya ang naging kauna-unahang pangulo na di-katoliko. Binuksan din ni Velasco ang ilan sa mga naging malaking isyu sa administrasyong Ramos sa paglalagay ng Amphitheater ng Philippine Centennial International Exposition sapagkat ang proyektong ito ay may kakabit na malalang korapsyon. Dagdag pa rito, ginamit rin ni Ramos ang proyektong ito para sa pagpapalakas ng kanyang partidong Lakas para sa eleksiyon kaya inakusahan sila ng ilegal na pangangampanya. Sa kabila ng isyung ito, mas naipakita pa rin ng kabuuan ang positibong ambag ng Administrasyong Ramos: kasipagan, kapayapaan, kalayaan, at pagkamakabayan na susi sa kaunlaran.

Sa kanang bahagi ng muralya ay ipinakita naman ang bentahe ng Administrasyong Estrada. Kung ikukumpara sa kaliwang bahagi, masasabing kakaunti ang nailagay na detalye sa Administrasyong Erap sapagkat halos tatlong taon lamang ang kanyang naging termino dahil sa kanyang pagkakaalis bilang pangulo. Buhat sa mga ganitong kontrobersya na kinaharap ni Erap, mas ipinakita pa rin ng muralya ang mga naging programa at reporma ng kanyang administrasyon sa bansa. Naging tahimik ang muralya sa nangyaring mga problema ng

administrasyon tulad ng dumadaming kaso ng mga rebelde sa Mindanao lalo higit sa korupsiyon sa jueteng. Hindi rin nakita sa muralya ang Ikalawang Edsa Revolution na nagbunga ng pagpapataliks sa kanya bilang pangulo.

Mas ipinakita sa muralya ang sektor ng kahirapan sa lipunan. Ito ay tanda ng kanyang programang “Erap para sa mahirap” na tumutok sa pangangailangan ng mga marhinalisado tulad ng edukasyon, trabaho, kalusugan, pabahay. Bukod pa rito, ipinakita rin ang ilang mga proyekto ni Estrada tulad ng MRT (L3) noong 1999 sa pamamagitan ng imahen ng tren. Tulad din ni Ramos, naglunsad rin siya ng mga programang pang-agrikultura na tumutok sa pangkabuhayan ng mga magsasaka. Kapansin-pansin naman ang paggamit ng mga bata bilang mga taong tinugunan ng mga tulong sapagkat matindi ang pananalig ng rehimeng Estrada na malaki ang potensyal ng mga kabataan - na sila ang magdadala ng kaunlaran sa bansa. Ang kanyang islogang Erap para sa mahirap ang kanyang ginamit sa kanyang pangangampanya na naging susi ng kaniyang pagkapanalo. Kung susuriin ang islogang ito, ipinapakita nitong kabahagi siya ng mga mahihirap at masang Filipino sa paglaban sa mga elitistang patuloy na naghahari sa politika lalo higit sa lipunan.

Bagaman hindi ipinakita sa muralya ang mga naging problema ng administrasyon ni Erap, nagbigay pahiwatig pa rin ito batay sa ekspresyon ng mga mukha ng dalawang dating pangulo. Kung makikita ang mukha ni Ramos, ito ay nakangiti na para bang mababatid ang tagumpay ng administrasyon habang seryoso ang ginawang emosyon ni Estrada bilang tanda ng malalaking kahaharaping kontrobersya at suliranin.

Sa mga obrang nabuo ni Velasco, ito ang isa sa mga natatangi sapagkat kadalasan ang kanyang obra ay palaging pumapaksa sa kababaihan. Gayundin, inamin ng mismong pintor sa proseso ng kanyang pagbuo na hindi siya malay sa naging kontribusyon ng dalawang presidente kaya kinailangan niyang mapagbuti ang pananaliksik. Sa proseso ng kanyang pagbuo, nahirapan siya sa pananaliksik ng mga detayle at ang mismong paglalapat nito sa muralya (Defeo 124). Sa kabuuan ng obra, may mga ilang kontrobersya mang makikita sa nilalaman ng pinta, mas nanaig pa rin kay Velasco na ipakita ang positibong bahagi ng administrasyon ng dalawang pangulo sa pamamagitan ng pagtukoy sa mga programa at reporma ng dalawang pangulo.

*Tungkol sa Pintor:* Si Michael Myk Velasco (June 17 1980) ay isang muralist at portrait artist. Siya ay nagtapos sa Pamantasang ng Pilipinas Diliman sa kursong Batsilyer sa Fine Arts noong 2003. Bahagi rin siya ng mga organisasyong University of the Philippines Centennial Group at Filipino Portrait Artist Guild. Sa kanyang kasalukuyang karera, nagkaroon na siya ng anim na solong painting exhibitions at mahigit sa dalawampung group exhibition sa loob at labas ng bansa. Ang kanyang paghanga sa pigura ng babae ay nagtulak sa kanya para mabuo ang obrang gold leaf series mga imahen ng katawan ng babae sa iba’t ibang konteksto na napapalamutian ng gold at silver leaf (Blanza, 150).

## Siyam na Taong Panunungkulan ni Arroyo at ang Pagbabalik ng Aquino sa Malacañang



*“Democracy Continues” ni Grandier Gil C. Bella*

Sa pintang ito makikita ang tatlong mukha ng mga dating pangulo kung saan nagbigay si Gil Bella – ang pintor ng muralya – ng mga pangyayari sa bawat termino. Mula sa pagkakalagay ng imahen ng Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo na nanunumpa, mababatid na ang demokrasya ay muling nabuhay dahil sa matagumpay na pagpapatalsik sa posisyon ni Pangulong Estrada. Makikita rito ang imahen ng Birheng Maria - ang Shrine of Mary, Queen of Peace, Our Lady of EDSA o mas kilala bilang EDSA Shrine, at sa ibaba ay ang mukha ng dating pangulong Estrada na nakayuko. Masasabing ang Administrasyong Estrada ang isa sa mga pinakakontrobersyal na administrasyon dahil sa nangyaring “EDSA People Power II.” Nagsimula ang sigalot sa kanyang panunungkulan noong ibunyag ni Luis “Chavit” Singson ang pagbubulsa niya ng daan-daang milyong piso buhat sa jueteng at paggamit ng pondo ng bayan para sa kaniyang personal na interes.

Dagdag pa rito, pinakita rin sa muralya ang mga nakataas at nakakuyumos na mga kamao na tanda ng pagkakaisang politikal. Ito ay pangkaraniwang ginagamit na simbolismo ng komunismo gayundin tanda ng kalakasan, pagkakaisa, pagtutol, at pakikibaka. Mariing ipinakita ng mga Filipino ang pagtutol sa Administrasyong Estrada lalo higit nang hindi buksan ng Korte Suprema ang ikalawang sobre na naglalaman ng mga ebidensya laban sa dating pangulo. Sa dagok na ito, lumaganap ang mga prayer rally na mababatid sa muralya batay sa paglalagay ng pintor sa Birheng Maria. Ipinakita lamang na bukod sa pisikal na lakas, dasal ang isa sa mga naging sandata ng mga Filipino – bilang Kristiyanismo ang umiiral na rehiyon sa halos malaking bahagi ng bansa. Ang pagbaba ni Estrada sa kanyang puwesto ay nagbigay daan upang maihalal na pangulo ang bise-presidente noon na si Arroyo.

Sa pagpapatuloy, ipinakita rin ang naging takbo o daloy ng administrasyon ni Arroyo sa siyam na taong panunungkulan mula sa mga symbolismong ipinakita ni Gil Bella. Tulad ng nabanggit sa mga unang pahayag, ang kanyang pagiging pangulo pagkatapos ng Administrasyong Estrada ay may positibong implikasyon sa bansa at tanda na muling napakinggan ang boses ng mga Filipino. Naisadiwa nito ang pananaig ng demokrasya sa bansa. Bukod rito, makikita rin ang mga kontribusyon ng Administrasyong Arroyo sa anyong “gears” na kadalasang ginagamit sa mga sasakyan. Ang nilalaman ng bawat gear ay ang mga Filipinong nagtatrabaho na itinuturing na isa sa susi ng paglago ng ekonomiya. Ang mga Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) ang itinuring ng dating pangulo bilang “greatest export” sa kanyang State of the Nation Address (SONA). Akma ang konotasyong mga “bagong bayani” sapagkat sinasagip nila ang ekonomiya ng bansa sa krisis hanggang sa kasalukuyan. Buhat sa konseptong ito, ginamit rin ang eroplano bilang signos ng pagpasok ng globalisasyon na naging daan para sa maraming Filipino na mangibang-bansa.

Ngunit, hindi lamang mga kontrobersiya ni Estrada ang laman ng muralya sapagkat ipinakita rin nito ang mga kinaharap na isyu ng dating Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo sa kanyang administrasyon. Makikita sa pinta ang pigura ni Virgilio Garcilliano, opisyal ng Komisyon ng Halalan (Commission on Elections o COMELEC), na nakipagsabwatan kay Arroyo upang manipulahin ang mga boto sa halalan ng pagkapangulo. Ito ay naging mitsa nang malawakang pagprotesta laban sa pangulo gayundin ang paghahain ng mga impeachment. Mas naging matunog ang nasabing iskandalo sa katawagang “Hello, Garci.” Ang isa pang isyu na ipinakita sa obra ay imahe ni Jun Lozada na binansagang “whistleblower” sapagkat siya ang naglantad sa nangyaring anomalya sa ZTE Corporation sa Tsina para sa proyektong National Broadband Network (NBN). Sa mga anomalyang ito, maraming naging kasabwat si Arroyo at isa na rito ang ilang mga nasa militar kaya matutunghayan din sa pinta ang dating senador na si Antonio Trillanes IV na isa sa mga pinuno ng grupo ng Magdalo. Isa siya sa mga dating senador na tahasang naghayag ng hindi pagsang-ayon sa Administrasyong Arroyo.

Makikita rin sa muralya ang ilang mga naging problema ng administrasyon buhat sa mga sakuna at isyung politikal na yumanig sa kasaysayan ng Filipinas. Una na rito, ang Bagyong Ondoy na kumitil ng maraming buhay at nagdulot ng malaking halaga ng pinsala sa bansa. Kitang-kita ito sa mga taong waring naglalakad ng baha at sinusubukang lumikas. Sinasabing ang bagyong ito ay nagdulot ng lampas ulo hanggang lampas bubong na baha kaya maraming lugar sa NCR ang nalubog sa tubig. Buhat sa pangyayaring ito, nagdeklara si Arroyo ng state of calamity sa kalakhan ng NCR. Ikalawa, ang pagkakalagay ng mga mukha nina Ismael Mangundadatu at Andal Ampatuan Jr. Ito ay pagpapakita ng matinding pamumulitikang humantong sa pamamaslang na mas naging matunog sa tawag na Masaker sa Maguindanao (o Maguindanao Massacre). Makikita sa muralya ang nakatirik na tatlong kandila na tanda ng karumal-dumal na krimen at signos ng paghingi ng katarungan. Tinatayang 78 katao ang nasawi at karamihan



ng mga namatay ay mga mamamahayag. 32 ang tinatayang mga namatay na mamamahayag sa trahedyang ito kung kaya't nagmarka ito sa kasaysayan ng mga mamamahayag.

Sa kanang bahagi naman ng pinta, makikita ang pigura ng dating pangulong si Benigno Simeon “P-Noy” Cojuangco Aquino III na nanunumpa kay Justice Conchita Carpio Morales. Muling pinagkatiwalaan ng taongbayan ang isang Aquino at naniwala sa islogang “matuwid na daan.” Ipinakita ni Gil Bella ang administrasyong Aquino sa pamamagitan ng mga programang kanyang nailunsad tulad halimbawa ng mukha ng kabataang nakapang-uniporme at pisarang may nakasulat na K-12, sapagkat sa pamamahala niya inaprubahan ang programang K to 12 na tinutulan ng marami sa dahilang kaya namang makipagsabayan ng mga mag-aaral na Pilipino sa noong umiiral na sampung taong pangunahing edukasyon. Tila ba naging dagdag pahirap lamang ito sa mga magulang dahil sa hindi pa rin naman garantiya ang trabaho matapos ang K-12 - na ipinangako ng administrasyon habang ipinapasa pa lang ang malawakang pagbabagong ito sa sistema ng edukasyon. Gayunpaman, sinasabing ipinakita nito na pinalakas ng Administrasyong Aquino ang sektor pang-edukasyon. Ikalawa, makikita rin sa muralya ang mga matataas na gusali na tanda ng industriyalisasyon at magandang ekonomiya. Mababatid na muling binuhay ni Aquino ang manufacturing sector sa pamamagitan ng mga proyektong pang-industriyalisasyon. Sa katunayan, lumago ang ekonomiya ng 6-7% kada taon kaya ang dating “tiger cub” ay napalitan ng “Asia’s Rising Tiger” sa ekonomiya.

Bukod sa pagpapalago ng ekonomiya, isa rin sa layunin ni Aquino ang pagkakaroon ng magandang ugnayan sa Estados Unidos kaya narito ang pigura ng dating pangulo ng Estados Unidos na si Barack Obama. Binalak ng alyansang ito na palakasin ang depensa ng Pilipinas laban sa banta ng China sa pag-aangkin ng West Philippine Sea at suportahan ang Filipinas sa legal na pagmamay-ari nito. Sa konotasyong pagpapakahulugan, sumisimbolo rin ito sa muling pagyakap ng bansa sa mga dayuhan. Matatandaan din na noong 2015 ay tumungo sa Filipinas ang mga lider mula sa iba't ibang bansa para sa Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Meeting - at isa nga sa mga global na lider na dumating sa bansa ay ang pinuno ng Estados Unidos na si Obama. Maski na ganoon, alam natin na sa hindi kalaunan tila binebenta lang naman ng mga naghaharing-uri, ng mga nasa kapangyarihan, ang bansa para sa ‘cheap labor’ at patuloy na binubuksan ang pintuan ng bansa para sa mga neoliberal na polisiya, na kung saan mas makikinabang ang mga banyaga at muli, ang mga iilang nasa itaas ng tatsulok. Hindi tulad ng dalawang pangulo, wala pang mga kontrobersiya at isyu ang nakakabit sa administrasyon ni Aquino sapagkat nasa kalahati pa lamang ng termino si Aquino nang ipinta ni Gil Bella.

Ibinahagi rin ni Gil Bella ang mga ilang mahahalagang tagpo sa kasaysayan ng Filipinas lalo higit ang mga taong nagbigay karangalan dito. Ang ilan sa mga taong nagdala ng dangal sa bansa ay sina Manny Pacquiao (na naging senador at tumakbo bilang bise-presidente noong Halalan 2022) na tinaguriang pambansang kamao, si Efren Penaflorida na itinuring na CNN Hero

of the Year noong 2009 dahil sa karitong klasrum nito, at si Shamcey Supsup na nakakamit ng 3<sup>rd</sup> runner up sa Miss Universe noong 2011. Litaw na litaw rin sa pinta ang dalawang taong gumagamit ng isang Precinct Count Optical Scanner o PCOS machine. Taong 2010, ito ang unang pagkakataong naging automated ang pagboto at buhat rito sa mismong araw ng botohan ay natutukoy na rin ang naging resulta. Laking kaibahan nito sa tradisyunal na pagboto na inaabot ng 45 na araw sa pagbibilang. Bagaman ang memory card ay maliit lang, iginuhit itong malaki sa pinta dahil sa bigat ng naging implikasyon nito sa lipunan. Bagaman maituturing itong bentahe dahil bagong pamamaraan ito ng pagboto, nagkaroon pa rin ito ng malaking iskandalo - ang Smartmatic Scandal. Sinabing mas madaling isagawa ang pandaraya sa ganitong uri ng mga makina sapagkat memory card lang ang gamit nito. Makikita rin sa pinta ang nakaimprentang papel na may logo ng pamahalaan, ito ay tanda na nakasasalay rito ang kinabukasan ng ating pamahalaan lalo higit ng ating bansa.

Sa kabuuan, bakas sa muralya ang paggamit ng watawat bilang hulmahan ng naging pagpinta ng pintor, mapapansin din ang pag-akma ng mga kulay batay sa inilalahad nitong pangyayari. Kagaya ng sa kulay pulang madalas na i-ugnay sa karahasan, digmaan, pagkagalit, at kapahamakan - naging akma ito sa paglalahad ng pangit na mukha ng pulitika. Hindi katulad sa pula na ang laman ay negatibo, sinasalamin naman ng bughaw ang kapayapaan, katatagan, responsibilidad, at pag-unlad. Kapansin-pansin agad sa bahaging ito ang mukha ng dating Pangulong Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Sa bahaging dilaw ay makikita ang pigura ng dating pangulong si Benigno Simeon “P-Noy” Cojuangco Aquino III. Sinasabing ang kulay dilaw ay isa sa mga naging tatak ng pamilyang Aquino kung kaya’t maaaring isa rin ito sa mga dahilan kung bakit sa bahaging ito nakalagay si P-Noy. Sinasabing ang kulay ay tanda rin ng pag-asa at ito ay sumasalamin sa kanyang panunungkulan dahil sa sikat niyang tagline na “matuwid na daan” kung saan muling nanumbalik ang tiwala ng mga Pilipino sa gobyerno.

Batay sa sariling naratibo ni Bella, ibinahagi niya na ito ang kanyang pinakamabigat na proyekto dahil isinasaisip niya ang magiging implikasyon ng kanyang likhang-sining. Isinasaip niya muna ang magiging daloy ng kanyang muralya at sumangguni kay Propesor Camagay sa mga detalye na kaniyang ilalagay sa nilalaman ng pinta. Sa kabila ng sariling paniniwala, natutunan niyang maging obhektibo lalo higit kung kasaysayan ng Filipinas ang tinatalakay (Defeo 128). Kaya kung papansinin ang muralya, makikita ang positibo at negatibong mukha ng administrasyong Arroyo. Sa kabuuan, matagumpay pa rin niyang naipakita ang naging karanasan ng bansa sa patuloy na pakikibaka para sa kapayapaan at kaunlaran.

*Tungkol sa Pintor:* Si Bella ay ipinanganak noong 1972 sa Lungsod ng Cebu, at nagtapos ng Batsilyer sa Fine Arts sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, Diliman noong 1993. Habang nasa kolehiyo ay tinutukan ni Bella ang klasiko at renaissance na pamamaraan sa pagpinta. Nagkaroon siya ng karagdagang pagsasanay sa Gage Academy sa Estados Unidos, kung saan nilinang niya ang

kanyang interes sa dikotomiya ng tao at pakikibaka. Nakapagtrabaho siya bilang art director at graphic designer sa Filipino Cultural Heritage Society of Washington, Alecon Realty, Hope Publishing, International Artist Magazine, Pastel Journal, Phoenix-SIBS Publishing House, Quarter Group Publishing, Saint Francis of Assisi Publications, at Tawid Publications. Noong 2005 ay nagdesisyon siyang maging isang full-time na pintor. Kasapi siya sa Filipino Portrait Artists Guild, sa Philippine Pastel Artists, at sa Artalyer Workshop and Studio. Kilala ang kaniyang estilo bilang hyper-surrealism (Defeo 129).

## Kongklusyon

Matapos suriin ng mga mananaliksik ang apat (4) na likhang-sining sa exhibit ng Sining Saysay, nabatid ng mga mananaliksik ang mga imahen at mga representasyon na nais ipakita sa bawat lona. Bagaman hindi tinutukoy ng mga mananaliksik na malay ang mga manlilikhang-sining sa iba't ibang pakahulugan na nahinuha mula sa kanilang pagsusuri - naging makabuluhan ang pagbibigay ng pakahulugan ng mga ito batay sa kanilang kaalaman sa kasaysayan.

Makikita sa naging pagsusuri ng mga muralya ang paggamit ng teoretikal na balangkas kung saan ang denotasyon at konotasyon ang nagsilbing batayan sa naging pagsusuri sa apat na muralya. Mula sa maingat na pagsusuri ng mga mananaliksik, natukoy ang mga senyas na nasa denotatibong kahulugan dahil kakabit nito ang mga kahulugan na batid ng madla. Habang ang mga signos na nasa konotasyong lebel ay nakadepende sa personal na pag-uugnay sa sosyal na realidad na tinatamasa. Sa madaling salita, ito ay naging koleksyon ng iba't ibang denotasyon. Mababatid na mahalagang maunawaan ang naging proseso sapagkat nakatuon dito ang nabanggit na order ng signipikasyon, isinasadiwa ng signifier ang signified gayundin namamayani ang signifier dahil sa signified. Ang pagsipat sa larawan ay humiwalay na sa denotasyong pagpapakahulugan sapagkat hindi na ito nakakulong sa literal na konteksto ng larawan. Ang sistema ng konotasyon ay nagsilbing daan upang magkaroon ng malalim na pagtalakay sa larawan na labas sa literal na pinapakita nito. Gayunpaman, nais muling bigyang linaw ng mga mananaliksik na iba't ibang pag-aaral gayundin at sari-sariling mga kasanayan at kaalaman ang naging batis ng pakahulugan sa ilang konotasyon ng mga imahen.

Dagdag pa sa pagsusuri, makikita ang kultura ng mga Filipino sa pagtingin sa positibong aspekto ng buhay. Makikita ito dahil karamihan sa malalaking bahagi ng mga muralya ay pagtanaw sa mga magagandang naging ambag ng bawat administrasyon sa kani-kanilang mga pamumuno. Masasabing madilim ang naging tema ng unang muralyang sinuri na tungkol sa Batas Militar ngunit makikita sa malaking bahagi nito ang pagpiglas, paglaban, at patuloy na pakikibaka ng mga mamamayan laban sa diktaturang Marcos - at naging matagumpay ito. Gayundin sa susunod na muralya, pinatunayang hindi nagapi ang mga Filipino dahil nabigyan sila ng pagkakataong muling matamasa ang demokrasya at nakamit ito nang may pagkakaisa.

Buhay na buhay ang susunod na muralya bilang sinasabing sa mga panahong ito, unti-unting nakabangon ang Filipinas mula sa mga unos na hinarap nito mula sa madilim na panahon ng Batas Militar at mga krisis sa Administrasyong Aquino. Gayundin ang panghuling muralya na maski may ilang hindi magandang pangyayari sa mga nabanggit na iba't ibang administrasyon, malaking bahagi pa rin ng muralya ang nagpakita ng tagumpay—mula sa pagpapakita ng pag-unlad ng ekonomiya, at ang pagwagayway ng mga mukha ng ilang Filipinong nagbigay dangal sa bansa. Bagaman naging daan ito sa pagiging optimistiko ng mga Filipino, hindi pa rin basta-basta nakalilimot ang mga ito sa mga masalimuot na nangyari at/o mga iskandalong naganap sa bawat pamumuno.

Muli, kagaya ng nabanggit sa introduksiyon, ang mga pampublikong muralyang ito ay nagsisilbing tanda ng kasaysayan at kultura ng isang lipunan. Naisalarawan ng mga muralyang ito ang iba't ibang isyung panlipunan na lumitaw sa iba't ibang panahon. May kakayahan itong maging midyum ng panlipunang dayalogo sapagkat nakahihikayat itong buksan ang mata ng mga madla upang makita ang iba't ibang isyu at daing ng isang lipunan. Importanteng matunton at matuklasan ang mga lugar na kagaya nito, hindi lamang ng mga mag-aaral, ng mga nasa akademya, kung hindi ng lahat na may posibleng akses dito, bilang napakayaman sa mapupulot na karunungan hinggil kasaysayan at lipunan ang makukuha mula sa pagbisita sa mga exhibit kagaya nito - na siguradong hindi lamang nag-iisa sa bansa. Makikitang mahalaga ang papel ng sining dahil sa kakayahan nitong “maiparinig” ang mga “tinig” na nais iparating ng mga likhang ito.

Hindi dapat tingnan nang mababa ang mga manlilikhang sining at ang kanilang mga likha dahil ang mga ito ay may kabuluhan at may ambag sa lipunan—lalong-lalo sa kapangyarihan nitong maghatid ng mga mensaheng maaaring makapagpabago at makapagpakilos sa mga makakakita at higit na makaiintindi nito. Maliban sa pagpaparating nito ng mensahe sa madla, maaari rin itong maging mitsa ng diskursong maaaring maging daan sa pagmulat sa nakakarami.

Bunga ng kasaysayan ang sining. Kung gayon, ang isang likhang sining ay maituturing na *artifact*. Tulad ng isang *artifact*, tinutulungan nito ang isang bansa na kumilala at gumunita sa mga mahahalagang tagpo ng kasaysayan. Malinaw ang pinapaksa ng obra kung kaya't ang bunga ng pagsusuri ay tulay sa pagkakaroon ng malalim na kabatiran sa kasaysayan. Sinasalamin rin ng pag-aaral ang pangangailangang maging kritikal upang masugpo ang mga kumakalap na maling impormasyon sa nakaraan. Higit sa lahat, ipinapakita rin dito ang kakanyahan ng mga pinta na maging materyal sa pagtuturo at pagkatuto ng kasaysayan. Malaki pa rin ang gampanin ng mga paaralan, partikular ng mga guro sa mga asignaturang Filipino, Kasaysayan, at Araling Panlipunan, dahil sila ang magiging pangunahing batis ng impormasyon ng kabataan lalong-lalo sa mga usaping sitwasyon ng lipunan at kasaysayan na napakahalagang malaman upang masiguro ang pagiging malay nila sa kasalukuyang lipunan.

Gayunpaman, hindi lahat ng nasa mga institusyon ay may katuwiran ang kaalamang ipinalalaganap; mabuting maging mapagtanong, mapanigurado, at mapanuri pagdating sa mga tatanggaping impormasyon. Patuloy na kilalanin ang mga ugat at pinagmulan ng kasaysayan upang maiwasang maulit o mapigilan itong maulit lalo higit kung masalimuot ang hinaharap na buhat nito. Sa mabuting lagay, hangga't may mga ganitong uri ng likhang-sining, magpapatuloy ang pagkilala sa mga ugat na pinagmulan ng kasaysayan upang mapigilang maulit ang malabangungot na mga pangyayari. Nasa ating mga susunod na hakbang ang magiging tadhana ng hinaharap nating mga Filipino at ng ating lipunan.

## Sanggunian

- Ancheta, J. R. "Ang Pagbasa Ng Juan for All, All for Juan Ng Eat Bulaga at Ang Mito Ng 'Bayanihan of D Pipol.'" *Dalumat* 4.1-2 (2013): 47-60. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *Elements of Semiology*. London: Cape, 1967.
- Beltran, S. (2022, March 29). *SiningSaysay Philippine history in Art: The world's first historical art gallery*. When In Manila. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.wheninmanila.com/siningsaysay-philippine-history-in-art-the-worlds-first-historical-art-gallery/>
- Blanza, Lander. *Philippine Modernism: A Collection of Works from Established and UP-and Coming Talented Filipino Artist*. LPB ArtHouse Media, 2022.
- Chen, James. "Tiger Cub Economies: What They Mean, How They Work." Investopedia, 3 Oct. 2022, [www.investopedia.com/terms/t/tiger-cub economies.asp#:~:text=Tiger%20Cub%20economies%20is%20the,%2C%20South%20Korea%2C%20and%20Taiwan](http://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/tiger-cub-economies.asp#:~:text=Tiger%20Cub%20economies%20is%20the,%2C%20South%20Korea%2C%20and%20Taiwan). Accessed 29 Jan. 2024
- Defeo, Ruben. *SiningSaysay: Philippine History in Art*. Office of the President, University of the Philippines System, 2015.
- Edifice complex: Building on the backs of the Filipino people*. Martial Law Museum. (n.d.). <https://martiallawmuseum.ph/magalar/edifice-complex-building-on-the-backs-of-the-filipino-people/>
- EDSA People Power Revolution*. Amnesty Philippines. (2022, July 22). <https://www.amnesty.org.ph/2022/07/protestph-edsa-revolution/>

- Gamalinda, C. T. (2022, February 28). *The passionate nationalist Adi Baen Santos*. Philstar Life. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://philstarlife.com/geeky/113680-nationalist-adi-baen-santos>
- GMA News Online. (1970, January 1). *ARMM history and organization*. GMA News Online. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/content/112847/armm-history-and-organization/story/>
- Grandier Portfolio (2011). *Grandier Gil C. Bella*. Retrieved March 2023 from <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/2875516/the-parts-that-remake-the-whole-grandier-bella>
- Guazon, Tessa Maria. "Creative Mediations of the City: Contemporary Public Art as Compass of Metro Manila's Urban Conditions." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37.3 (2013): 864-78. Print.
- INQUIRER.net. (2007, February 1). *Farmers remember 'Mendiola Massacre' '20 years, still no justice' -- KMP*. Farmers remember 'mendiola massacre' - inquirer.net, Philippine News for Filipinos. Retrieved March 2023, from [https://web.archive.org/web/20080616035714/http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view\\_article.php?article\\_id=44709](https://web.archive.org/web/20080616035714/http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view_article.php?article_id=44709)
- Lacuata, R. C. (2015, February 6). *Sining Saysay traces ph history through art*. ABS. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/lifestyle/02/06/15/sining-saysay-traces-ph-history-through-art>
- Lakansining. "Sining Saysay, Gateway Mall, Cubao, Quezon City Part 2: Independence and the Continuing Fight for Identity." Blog post. Lakansining. 19 Jan. 2019. Web. May 2021.
- Macas, Trisha. "The 'Sining Saysay' Exhibit: A 15-minute History Lesson with Paintings." GMA News Online. GMA News Online, 01 Jan. 1970. Web. May 2021.
- Mangaluz, J. (2023, August 21). *Ninoy Aquino's death lit the path towards EDSA Revolution - Lagman*. INQUIRER.net. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1819505/fwd-ninoy-aquinos-death-lit-the-path-towards-edsa-revolution-lagman>
- Melencio, G. E. (2019). Stories of the Nameless: Eyewitness Accounts of Martial Law Survivors. *UP Los Banos Journal*, XVII, 81–84. /<https://www.ukdr.uplb.edu.ph/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4953&context=journal-articles>.

- “Mensahe ni Department of Transportation Secretary Jaime J. Bautista sa 131st Anniversary ng Philippine National Railways, ngayong araw, November 24, 2023.” [www.pnr.gov.ph/](http://www.pnr.gov.ph/). Accessed 29 Jan. 2024.
- Miclat, A. C. (2021, December 6). *Pablo Baens Santos: The social realist who told the truth*. The Diarist.ph. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.thediarist.ph/pable-baens-santos-the-social-realist-who-told-the-truth/>
- Rappler. (2021, July 14). *Renowned painter Angel Cacnio dies at 90*. RAPPLER. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/arts-culture/painter-angel-cacnio-dies/>
- Rivera, G. R. (2022, May 21). *The Impact of the Catholic Church on Mass Mobilization: A Comparison between the Church and protests in Chile and the Philippines* (thesis). Retrieved January 2024, from [chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://research.library.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1080&context=international\\_senior](chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://research.library.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1080&context=international_senior).
- Saul, Aileen Joy G. “4. Ipinintang Kamalayan Ukol Sa Kapayapaan: Pagbasa Sa Imahe Ng Mga Likhang Mural Ng Kolehiyong Mag-aaral Ng De La Salle Lipa.” *Dalumat Ejournal* 3.1 (2012): 95-104. Web.
- Tomada, N. M. (2008, June 22). *The obra that is Angel Cacnio*. Philstar.com. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://www.philstar.com/cebu-lifestyle/2008/06/22/68902/obra-angel-cacnio>
- Vinzons, Ignatius H. “Ang Diwa Ng Jeepney.” *Diwa E-Journal* 3 (2015). Print.
- Zulueta, L. B. (2016, January 11). *Angel C. Cacnio gets a fitting retrospective*. Lifestyle.inq. Retrieved March 2023, from <https://lifestyle.inquirer.net/219048/angel-c-cacnio-gets-a-fitting-retrospective/>

# Pahambing na Pagsusuri sa mga Isyung Panlipunang Itinatampok sa Ilang Akdang Salin mula sa mga Piling Bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya (Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, at Thailand)

*nina Marlon L. Miguel, LPT, MAEd at Philip A. Perida, LPT, MAEd*

## Abstrak

Sa pamamagitan ng pagsusuring pangnilalaman sa mga piling saling akda kagaya ng akdang “Mabuhay Ka, Anak Ko” mula sa Cambodia; “Ang Istorya ng Taxi Driver” ng Singapore; “Ang Mga Tiket sa Loterya ni Haji Zakaria” ng Indonesia; “Aanhin Nino Iyan?” ng Thailand, natuklasan ang mga suliraning panlipunan ng mga piling bansang ito kagaya ng prostitusyon, pagiging suwail ng mga anak sa kanilang magulang, karahasan ng digmaan, paglabag sa karapatang pantao, gutom, kawalan ng kapayapaan, pag-abuso ng gobyerno sa kapangyarihan, pagkalulong sa bisyo gaya ng sugal na may masamang epekto, paggawa ng krimen dulot ng matinding pangangailangan, at pagkasira ng moral ng tao. Ang mga suliraning ito ay kinatagpuan ng pag-iral sa Filipinas kagaya ng pambubugaw ng magulang sa anak, ang pag-iral ng cybersex, child trafficking, riot, terorismo, digmaaan sa Marawi, pagpaslang sa SAF-44, Oplan Tokhang, korapsiyon, Online Sabong, Huweteng, Lotto, pag-iral ng sindikato, modus at marami pa. Nagagawa ring mapunan ng mga akda ang pangangailangan ng mga Filipino na magkaroon ng kamalayan sa mga isyung panlipunan sa paraang naisasabuhay nila ang kabuluhan ng pagpapahalaga sa buhay at tungkulin, sa mga pinaghirapan at hinaharap, kalayaan, matuwid na landas ng pamumuhay, pagpapaighting ng mapanuring pag-iisip at pananaig ng katapatan at kabutihan.

***Mga Susing Salita:** isyung panlipunan, Timog Silangang Asya, saling-akda, panitikan at pagsusuri*



## Panimula

Makailang ulit nang pinatunayan na ang panitikan ay hindi lamang isang babasahing nag-uugat mula sa malikot na guniguni ng isang manunulat na maghahatid ng libangan sa mga mambabasa. Sa malalim na pagtanaw, ang panitikan ay may bitbit na kaalaman at kamalayan hinggil sa mga nangyayari sa paligid na nagiging daan upang mamulat ang mga mata't isip na matagal nang natutulog.

Bilang isang sining, hindi lamang ito bunga ng isang malikot na guniguni o malikhaing pag-iisip. Ito ay may tiyak na sinibulang panahon na naglalaman ng mga samu't sari at masalimuot na karanasan na maaaring tuwiran o hindi tuwirang naranasan ng isang manunulat. Kung gayon, tunay itong mapagtitibay mula sa binanggit ni Lumbera (2017) na ang kasaysayang pinagdaanan ng lipunang kinapalooban ng mga pangyayari sa naratibong akda ay mga pangunahing salik sa pagsusuri ng akda, sapagkat hinuhubog nito ang mga tauhan at pangyayaring pumapasok sa akda. Ang lipunan ay nagsisilbing tanghalan ng mga kaugalian, halagahan at mithiing binuhay ng mga taong kasangkot sa sigalot. Makita mula sa inilahad kung paanong nagkakaroon ng matibay na ugnayan ang lipunan at ang panitikang nalilikha sa bawat panahon at kung paanong ang mga ito ay nakapagmumulat ng kamalayan.

Kung gayon, ang panitikan ay sumasalamain sa mga katotohanan ngunit dahil isang anyo ng sining (Blakeley, 2022) isinaalang-alang ang pagpapalamuti sa mga pangyayari; may mga iilang binabago, may natatanging paraan ng paglalahad na naiiba sa ibang sulatin, may pagbibigay ng bagong bihis sa pangyayari ngunit hindi dapat mawala ang layuning maiparating nang tama ang mga idea at karanasan sa mambabasa, at tungkulin ng bawat mambabasa na ito ay kanilang matuklasan at maunawaan. Kayâ mapagtitibay ito mula sa isinaad ni Badayos (2008) na ang panitikan ay hindi lamang nakatuon sa pagbigay ng kahulugan kundi naroon din ang pagbuo ng kahulugan. Sa pagbuo ng kahulugang ito ay mahalaga ang ginagampanang papel ng panunuring pampanitikan, na ayon sa isang artikulo sa Master Class na pinamagatang “Literary Criticism Explained: 11 Critical Approaches to Literature,” ang pinakalayunin ng panunuring pampanitikan ay palawakin ang pang-unawa ng isang mambabasa sa pamamagitan ng pagbubuod, pagbibigay-kahulugan, at pagtuklas sa halaga nito. Hinahayaan ang bawat indibidwal na makabuo ng isang komprehensibong pagsusuri sa panitikan na maaring magbigay-kaalaman at humamon sa pag-iisip ng isang tao.

Mapalalakas kung gayon ang pagtanaw sa panunuring pampanitikan bilang isang intelektuwal na gawain na kinakailangan ng mayamang panahon sapagkat kasangkot dito ang gawaing pampag-iisip na lumalampas sa pagtukoy sa mga elemento ng isang akda, manapa'y isang pagbibigay-kulay at diwa sa isang akda. Kaya't hindi nakapagtataka kung bakit sinabi ni Rose Torres-Yu (2006) na ang panunuring pampanitikan ay hindi lamang isang mababaw na paksa na pumapatungkol sa mensaheng mayroon ang akda. Ito ay isang pagsasalaysay na tumatanglaw sa

halaga ng diskurso na nakapag-aambag sa kasaysayan at lipunang pinaghuhugutan nito. Sakop ng panunuri ang pagbuo ng isang makataong pagpapahalaga, at paglutas ng mga suliraning kinahaharap. Sa pamamagitan ng panunuri ay nabibigyan ng bagong bihis ang akda at higit nitong pinatitibay ang relasyon ng tao at panitikan.

Daan kung gayon ang panunuri sa mga akdang pampanitikan upang malapitan ding masilip ang lipunan kasama na ang mga suliraning lumulukob dito. Kaya nga't sa unti-unting pagkahubog ng malalim na pagkaunawa ng isang mambabasa sa kaniyang kaakuhan, ay dahan-dahan ding magiging malinaw sa kaniya ang masalimuot na pinag-ugatan ng kaniyang pag-iral o ng kanilang kolektibong pagkalahing maiuugat mula sa panghihimasok ng mga ugnayang pandaigdigang o kontinental na may malaking epekto sa kasalukuyan nilang pamumuhay. Mapagtitibay ang ganitong kaisipan sa inilahad nina Perez-Semorlan, et al. (2014), binanggit sa pag-aaral ni Nibalvos (2019), na ang panitikan ay nagsisilbi ring pambansang pamana na umuukit sa pagkakakilanlan o identidad ng isang lahi, kalakip nito ang nakaraan ng isang bansa na bahagi ng kaniyang kasaysayan na dapat lingunin sapagkat iyon ay nagsisilbing salamin ng tunay na katauhan ng mga mamamayan nito. Sa pagsasagawa nito ay hindi maaaring ipagsawalang-bahala ang pangangailangang silipin ang akda kaugnay ng lipunan.

Sa puntong ito ay makikita ang pangangailangang mahubog sa mambabasa ang kamalayan hinggil sa ugnayan ng kaniyang bansa sa ibang lahi, at ang pangangailangang ito ay natutugunan ng panitikan sa pamamagitan ng pagpapakilala ng iba't ibang kultura na, sa kabutihang palad, ay nagreresulta rin ng pagtatamo ng kultural na literasi. Ayon kay Austin (2022), sa tulong ng panitikan ay nagkakaroon ng mas malalim na kaalaman ang isang tao sa kultura na hahantong upang ito ay kaniyang mapahalagahan. Ganito rin ang inihahaing kaalaman nina dela Concha at Lamberto (2015) na binanggit sa pag-aaral nina Kabling et al (2018), na ang panitikan ay maituturing na salamin ng lahi na nagpapakita ng repleksyon sa kabuoan ng mga karanasan, kaugalian, paniniwala, pamahiin, kaisipan, at pangarap na ipinapahayag sa isang maganda at masining na paraan.

Hindi nakapagtataka kung bakit mula sa K-12 Gabay Pangkurikulum sa Filipino na suportado ng Atas Kagawaran Blg. 21 serye 2021 partikular na sa mga Pangunahing Pamantayan sa Bawat Yugto (mula taon 7 hanggang 10) ay isinaad na: “Sa dulo ng Baitang 10, naipamamalas ng mag-aaral ang kakayahang komunikatibo, replektibo/ mapanuring pag-iisip at pagpapahalagang pampanitikan sa tulong ng mga akdang rehiyonal, pambansa at salintekstong Asyano at pandaigdig upang matamo ang kultural na literasi.”

Gayundin sa bahaging “Pamantayan sa Bawat Baitang,” partikular sa baitang 9 na nagtatakdang: “Pagkatapos ng ikasiyam na baitang, naipamamalas ng mag-aaral ang kakayahang komunikatibo, mapanuring pag-iisip, at pag-unawa at pagpapahalagang pampanitikan gamit ang teknolohiya at iba't ibang uri ng teksto at saling-akdang Asyano upang mapatibay ang pagkakakilanlang Asyano.”

Malinaw na inilalahad mula sa kurikulum ng Kagawaran kung paano ang papel na ginagampanan ng panitikan, maging ng mga saling akdang Asyano, sa paglinang ng mapanuring pag-iisip, kakayahang komunikatibo, pagkakakilanlang Asyano at maging ng kultural na kamalayan at literasi. Sa mga pag-aaral, sinasabing mabuti ang naidudulot ng pagiging culturally literate dahil nakatutulong ito upang maunawaan, maiugnay at makapagsalamuha sa mga taong may iba't ibang pinagmulan; nagiging sensitibo at malay rin ang tao sa kultura ng iba, nalilintang ang kasanayang pangkomunikasyon at repleksiyong pansarili (Flavel et al. 2013); nababawasan din ang mga prejudice at hindi pagkakapantay-pantay (Anning, 2010).

Sa pagkakaroon ng kamalayan hinggil sa ibang kultura dulot ng panitikan ay nabubuksan din ang pinto ng mas malalim pang kamulatan hinggil sa ugnayan ng mga bansa o lahi na may malaking salik sa kasalukuyan nilang pamumuhay. Kagaya na lamang ng ugnayan ng mga nagkakaisang bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya na miyembro ng Association of Southeast Asian Nation o ASEAN na may layuning mapabilis ang pag-unlad ng ekonomiya, lipunan at kultura sa rehiyon, kabilang na rin ang pagsulong ng kapayapaan at estabilidad (ASEAN, 2008).

Mula sa mga layuning binanggit ng ASEAN, mas titingkad ang katotohanan na ang mga nilalayong matamo ng samahan ay maaaring mga bagay na kulang o mabagal sa mga bansang kasapi, kung kaya't nagkakaisa sila sa pagnanais na maipagpatuloy ang ugnayang ito tungo sa mabuting pamumuhay. Kung sisipatin mula sa lente ng kasaysayan at kasalukuyan, mababatid na noon pa ma'y nagaganap na ang ugnayan sa mga ito at nagpapatuloy hanggang ngayon. Isang magandang halimbawa ay ang sa kaso ng Filipinas at Thailand. Sinabi ni Chongkittavorn (2022) na noong panahon ng Malamig na Digmaan, ang Thailand at Filipinas ay itinuturing nang magkaibigan. Pareho ang dalawang ito na may matinding pagtuligsa sa komunismo at pumanig sa US bilang kaalyado. Kabilang din ang dalawang bansa sa Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, kilala bilang Kasunduan sa Maynila. Ang Thailand at Filipinas lamang ang dalawang bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya na nagpadala ng tropa sa digmaan na nagtamo ng kabuoang 1,368 na kaswalti at 116 na sundalong Filipinong napatay. Sa ngayon, makikita pa rin ang mga miniature flag ng dalawang bansa sa truce village ng Panmunjom. Kaya't sa kasalukuyan ay inaasahan ang muling pagtatag ng relasyon ng dalawang bansang ito sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni Marcos. Sa mga darating na buwan, ang dalawang bansa ay sinasabing mas magkakaroon ng estratehikong ugnayan. Higit sa lahat, ang kanilang mga pamamaraan ng kooperatiba ay magiging higit diumano kaysa dati. Natalakay ito nang makadaupang palad ng Pangulong Marcos, na noon ay kaluluklok lamang bilang pangulo ng Filipinas, ang ministro ng Thailand.

Masasabi rin na may ugnayan ang bansang Filipinas at Cambodia lalo pa't tinatayang may higit sa 7,000 Filipino ang nagtatrabaho at naninirahan dito, na karamihan din sa kanila ay nasa mataas na posisyon sa accounting, aviation, hospitality, edukasyon at iba pang industriya (Senase, 2022). Nagkaroon din ng talakayan ang mga eksperto hinggil sa mga kasalukuyang

proyekto at gawain ng Cambodia at Filipinas at nagbigay ng kanilang mga pananaw sa hinaharap pang mga ugnayan, noong Oktubre 19, 2022 (Foreign Service Institute, 2022).

Nariyan din ang bansang Singapore na sinasabing nabuo na ang diplomatikong relasyon sa Filipinas noon pang Mayo 1969. Ang bansang ito ay pinahahalagahang katuwang ng Filipinas. Sa mga nakalipas na taon, ang dalawang bansa ay nagdadalawan upang kumustahin ang kalagayan ng isa't isa. Ang pakikipagtulungang pang-ekonomiya ng Filipinas sa Singapore ay patuloy na lumalawak at umuunlad, sa katunayan ang bansang ito ang panlimang pinakamalaking kasosyo ng Filipinas sa buong mundo at pinakamalaki sa ASEAN. Idagdag pang tinatayang nasa 200 libong Pilipino ang nagtatrabaho sa naturang bansa (The Embassy of the Philippines Singapore, 2022).

Mapatutunayan ding ang Filipinas ay may magandang relasyon sa bansang Indonesia. Ayon sa artikulo ni Abad (2022), 70 taon na ang nakararaan nang maitatag ng dalawang bansa ang kanilang relasyong diplomatiko kung kaya't iniwasan ng mga ito ang kaguluhan. Kahit pa ang mga ito ay nagpapalit ng mga pinuno ay hindi naapektuhan ang kanilang relasyon. Sa katunayan ay magkasosyo ang dalawa sa kalakalan, kung kaya't nagtatamasa rin ang mga ito ng kasunduan sa iba't ibang industriya kabilang na ang satellite internet, suplay ng karbon, enerhiya, mga data center, konstraksiyon, at imprastruktura. Ayon pa sa United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, humigit-kumulang 8,745 katao na may lahing Indonesian ang naitala sa Mindanao noong 2016. Ang batas ng Indonesia ay naglalagay sa mga migranteng ito sa panganib na mawalan ng estado, ngunit ang dalawang bansa ay nagtutungan sa pagkumpirma ng kanilang pagkamamamayan.

Sa mga ugnayang nabanggit, magiging mas matibay kung gayon ang mga inihahaing layunin ng Kagawaran ng Edukasyon kung bakit mahalagang maging lunsaran ang mga saling akda na nagmula pa sa mga karatig bansa sa Asya, sapagkat mas nagiging malinaw kung paano nakikipag-ugnayan ang mga ito sa Filipinas, idagdag pa na naisusulong din ang panitikan. Ang pagsusulong na ito ay nakatutulong nang malaki sapagkat kagaya ng tinuran ni Lopez (2022), likas na sa bawat bansa sa Asya ang magkakaibang estilo ng panitikan, subalit ito ay sumasalamin sa kanilang pagkakatulad, kagaya ng mga tekstong sumasalamin sa kanilang relihiyon, espirituwalidad, kaugalian, tradisyon, pilosopiya sa buhay, at lalo na sa pakikibaka, na nagbibigay dahilan upang mahusay na maunawaan ang kulturang Asyano.

Sa usapin ng pakikibaka, maraming kinahaharap na suliranin ang bawat bansa lalo pa't kung ang mga ito ay mahihirap o papaunlad pa lamang. Ang mga suliranin at pakikibakang ito ay nakakaapekto sa kanilang pamumuhay. Natukoy sa iba't ibang pananaliksik ang mga suliraning panlipunang kinahaharap ng mga bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya kagaya na lamang ng kahirapan (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Roth, 2021), pagtupad sa tungkulin ng gobyerno at

pamumuno (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Harding, 2019; Roth, 2021), kawalan ng hanapbuhay at kita (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Prakash, 2018), karamdaman at salot (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Prakash, 2018; Roth, 2021), hamon ng globalisasyon sa ekonomiya at pinansiyal (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Harding, 2019; Mahmood, 2018), mabilisang urbanisasyon (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Prakash, 2018), isyung pangkasarian (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Roth, 2021), kalamidad at isyung pangkalikasan (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Prakash, 2018; Roth, 2021; Salamanca, 2022; Mahmood, 2018), malayang pagpapahayag, iba't ibang pang-aabuso, at karapatang pantao, (Cook at Pincus, 2014; Roth, 2021).

Tunay at lubhang marami ang mga suliraning umiiral sa bawat lipunan at ang lahat ng ito ay maiuugat sa kagagawan ng mga tao. Lumobo na nang lumobo ang mga isyu at lumikha ng samu't sari pang mga problema na nararanasan ngayong kasalukuyan, hindi lamang sa Asya o Timog Silangang Asya kundi maging sa halos buong mundo, ibig sabihin ay maituturing ang mga ito na isyung global. Bagaman makikitang hindi nabanggit nang kumpleto ang laksa-laksang mga isyung nararanasan ng mga bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya, datapwat ay nakatulong nang malaki ang mga ito upang mas maging malinaw ang tuuonin ng pag-aaral.

Mula sa mga limitasyong ito, nabuo ang layunin ng pag-aaral na suriin at tuklasin ang iba pang mga isyung panlipunan na kinahaharap at patuloy na nilalabanan ng mga ilang bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya (Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand at Filipinas), ngunit ang mga ito ay sinipat mula sa lente ng mga piling akdang salin sa Filipino na maituturing na kaibahan ng isinagawang pananaliksik sa mga nauna nang pag-aaral. Ito ay alinsunod din sa pagpapatunay na ang panitikan ay isang matatag na salamin o repleksiyon ng realidad, karanasan at buhay ng tao sa mundo.

## **Teoritikal na Batayan**

Sa pagsusuri ng mga piling saling akda mula sa panitikan ng ilang bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya, naging gabay ng mga mananaliksik ang Teoryang Sosyolohikal sa panitikan ni Witte at *Conflict Theory* ni Marx. Sinasabing ang paggamit ng dulog sosyolohikal sa panitikan ay may layuning magpakita ng mga kalagayan o isyung panlipunan, pamaraan ng mga karakter na masugpo ang mga suliranin na magiging modelo ng mga mambabasa upang masugpo ang parehong suliraning nararanasan kagaya ng kaapihan. Ang mga tunay na pangyayaring ito ang pinag-uugatan ng mga pananaw at saloobin ng karakter sapagkat ang panitikan ay produkto ng lipunan na nailuwal mula sa panahon at kasaysayan, kultura, ideolohiya, at kapaligiran. Ang mga akda sa ilalim ng dulog na ito ay sinusuri sa konteksto ng iba't ibang institusyong panlipunan at ang kaugnayan nito sa indibiduwal. Tumutugon ito sa tungkulin ng panitikan na imulat ang lipunan sa mga katotohanan at kagalingang panlipunan.

May layunin ang panitikan sa ilalim ng ganitong dulong na talakayin ang kalagayang sosyal, pamumuhay, pangyayaring nagtutulak ng karahasan, kaapihan, kadakilaan, kagitingan, kabayanihan ng tao, at gayundin ang tumugon sa mga kalagayang ito at humingi ng katugunan mula sa lipunan upang maiangat ang tao. Binibigyang pansin dito ang usapin ng kahalagahan at pananagutang panlipunan.

Sa kabilang banda, ang conflict theory naman ay naniniwalang ang lipunan ay nailalarawan sa pamamagitan ng malaganapang hindi pagkakapantay-pantay dahil sa uri ng lipunan, lahi, kasarian, at iba pang kadahilanan. Ang malawak na pagbabago sa lipunan ay kailangan upang mabawasan o maalis ang hindi pagkakapantay-pantay at lumikha ng isang makatao at patas na lipunan. Tinatanaw rin nito ang mga isyung panlipunan bilang umuusbong sa mga pundamental na kamalian sa anyo ng isang lipunan at parehong sumasalamin at nagpapatibay ng mga hindi pagkakapantay-pantay batay sa uri ng lipunan, lahi, kasarian, at iba pang dimensiyon. Ang mga matagumpay na solusyon sa mga suliraning panlipunan ay dapat na may kasamang malawakang pagbabago sa estruktura o pamamalakad ng lipunan.

Sa tulong ng mga dulong na ito ay naging malinaw kung paano binigyang interpretasyon ang mga akda. Naging tiyak kung anong bahagi at aspekto ng mga teksto ang binigyang tuon at binusising mabuti. Sa pamamagitan ng teoryang sosyolohikal sa panitikan ay naging malinaw ang pagtukoy at pag-unawa sa mga isyung panlipunang kinahaharap ng ilang bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya na mababanaag sa mga piling akdang salin. Ginamit naman ang conflict theory sa pagtalakay at pag-uugnay sa mga natuklasang isyung panlipunan ng piling bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya mula sa mga suliraning panlipunang kinahaharap ng Filipinas. Sa tulong ng dalawang teorya ay nalutas ang ikatlong suliranin ng pag-aaral na nakatuon sa pag-alam kung paano napupunan ng mga akdang salin mula sa mga bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya ang pangangailangang maging mulat at malay ng mga Filipino sa mga suliraning panlipunang kinahaharap.

### **Paglalahad ng Suliranin**

Sinagot sa pananaliksik na ito ang mga sumusunod na katanungan:

1. Ano-anong mga suliraning panlipunan ang maaaring masalamin mula sa mga piling akda ng ...ilang bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya?
2. Paano maihahambing ang mga suliraning ito sa mga isyung panlipunan na mayroon ang ...Filipinas?
3. Paano napupunan ng panitikan ng bawat bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya ang pangangailangan ...ng mga Filipino na maging mulat at malay sa mga napapanahong suliranin na kinahaharap?

## Saklaw at Limitasyon

Ang isinagawang pag-aaral ay nakatuon sa pahambing na pagsusuri sa mga isyung panlipunang sinasalamang ng mga piling akdang salin mula sa mga bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya, partikular na ang mga bansang Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, at Thailand na iniugnay sa Filipinas. Ito ang mga piniling bansa sapagkat ang mga ito ay may malapit na ugnayan sa bansang Filipinas. Sa ganitong pangyayari ay mas maiuugnay ang mga isyung panlipunang itinatampok sa mga akda mula sa mga nasabing bansa. Ang mga akdang pinili ay batay sa mga itinuturo sa kurikulum ng Filipino sa Kagawaran ng Edukasyon mula ika-siyam na antas hanggang ikasampu.

## Metodolohiya

### Disenyo ng Pag-aaral

Ang pananaliksik na ito ay isang kuwalitatibong pag-aaral sapagkat kasangkot dito ang proseso ng paggalugad na may layuning maunawaan nang malalim ang isang panlipunang penomena at karanasan ng mga tao sa halip na magbigay pansin sa mga lohikal at estadistikal na pamamaraan (University of Texas Arlington, 2023). Nilalayon din nitong maunawaan ang kahulugan ng buhay-buhay at pamumuhay ng mga indibiduwal maging ng mga pangkatauhang pangkalagayan (De Leon at Abuan, 2021). Binibigyang pansin sa ganitong uri ng pananaliksik ang pagbibigay diwa o “sense-making,” maging ang pag-unawa sa isang penomena sa halip na magbigay ng hinuha o paliwanag ukol dito (Bhattacharjee, 2012 mula sa aklat ni Mukul Gupta, 2011 binanggit kina dela Cruz et al., 2016).

Samantala, nabibilang din ito sa palarawang pagsusuri sapagkat tinatangka nitong mailarawan o matukoy ang kalikasan ng isang bagay sa pamamagitan ng mga iba't ibang bahagi nito (De Leon at Abuan, 2021). Inilalarawan din nito ang penomenang pinag-uukulan. Maaari itong sumagot sa ano, saan, kailan at paano ngunit hindi sa tanong na bakit (Bhat, 2023; McCombes, 2022).

### Instrumento ng Pananaliksik

Ang mga akdang sinuri ay mula sa mga bansang Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, at Thailand na masasabing may ugnayan sa bansang Filipinas. Ang mga akdang ito ay may saling pamagat sa Filipino at ang ilan din ay mayroon sa wikang Ingles. Sinuri ang mga akda kagaya ng “Mabuhay Ka, Anak Ko” na sinulat ni Pin Yathay mula sa bansang Cambodia na isinalin naman sa Filipino ni Ruth Elynia S. Mabanglo. Ang akdang ito ay batay sa sariling karanasan at kasawiang naranasan ng may akda sa panahon ng Khmer Rouge noong 1975. May orihinal itong titulo na “Stay Alive, My Son.”

Pangalawa ay ang “Ang Istorya ng Taxi Driver” ni Catherine Lim na nanggaling sa Singapore at isinalin naman ni Mauro R. Avena sa Filipino. Umiikot ang kuwento nito sa salaysay ng isang ama at drayber tungkol sa problema ng prostitusyon sa kanilang bansa na kinasangkutan din ng kaniyang anak. Pangatlo, “Ang Mga Tiket sa Loterya ni Haji Zakaria” na akdang nanggaling sa bansang Indonesia. Orihinal itong akda ni Mochtar Lubis at isinalin sa Filipino ni Erlinda S. Pinga na kuwento ng lalaking nalulong sa loterya at sa huli ay nagpakamatay. Panghuli, ang “Aanhin Ninyo Iyan” na isinulat ni Vilas Manwat mula sa bansang Thailand at isinalin sa Filipino ni Lualhati Bautista. Isinasalaysay rito ang isang krimen na napigilang mangyari ng pangunahing tauhan.

Naging batayan sa paghahanap ng mga ito ay ang aklat na *Pluma (9 at 10)*, mga module na ginagamit mula sa Kagawaran ng Edukasyon at ang mga kasangkapang elektroniko kagaya ng mga blog at e-journal. Sa tulong ng mga akdang saling ito ay nabigyang kasagutan ang mga suliranin ng pag-aaral, kagaya ng pagtukoy sa mga suliraning panlipunan na kinakaharap ng mga napiling bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya na iniugnay sa mga kinahaharap ng Filipinas, maging ang papel ng mga ito sa pagpuno ng pangangailangan ng mga Filipino na maging malay sa mga ganitong usapin.

### **Mga Naging Hakbang sa Panunuri ng mga Akda**

Wala na atang mas uuna pa sa pagbabasa kung isasagawa ang panunuring pampanitikan. Sa pagpili ng mga akda ay naging gabay ang mga suliraning binuo sa pag-aaral. Nagsimulang mangalap ang mga mananaliksik sa mga aklat, module at internet ng mga akdang galing sa Timog Silangang Asya na may salin sa Filipino at tinatalakay sa kurikulum ng Filipino mula sa antas Sekondarya.

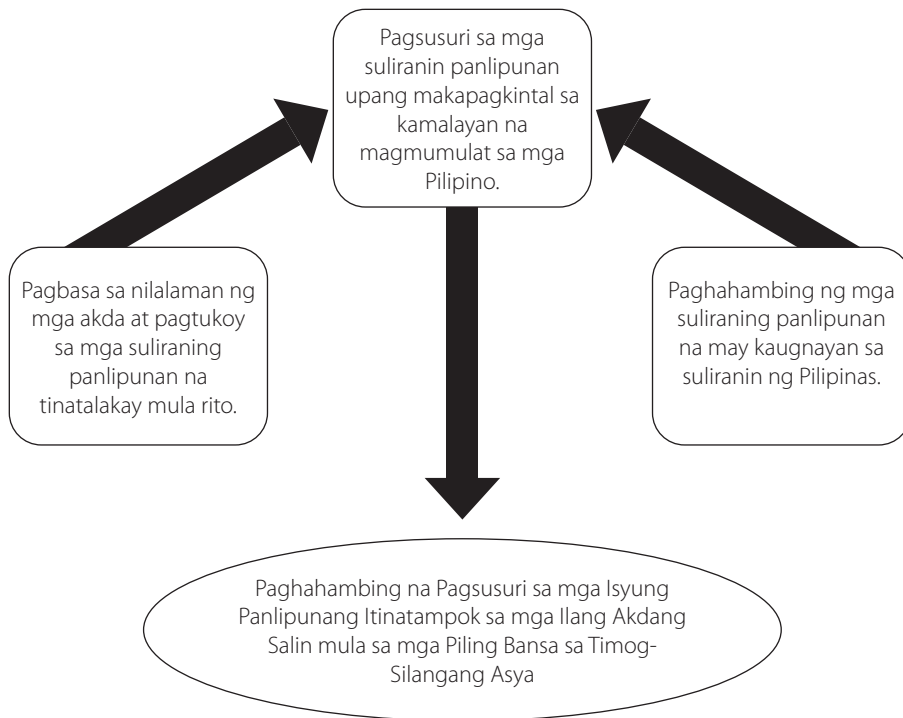
Masasabing marami ang mga akdang nagmula sa kapit-bahay sa Asya ng Filipinas subalit, hinimay ang mga ito at pinili yaong makapag-aambag ng tunay at malinaw na pag-unawa sa realidad ng kanilang bansa at pamumuhay at masasabing malayo sa nakasanayang makulay na paglalarawan sa pamumuhay ng mga tao doon. Naging salik din sa pagpili ng mga akdang ito ang kanilang pinagmulang bansa na may kaugnayan sa bansang Filipinas bagaman kung titingnan sa mapa ay hindi nakadikit ang Filipinas sa mga bansang Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand at Singapore subalit ang mga ito ay may koneksiyon halimbawa sa kalakalan, pagiging miyembro ng ASEAN at iba pa.

Matapos na mapili ang mga akda ay muling binasa ang mga ito dahil ang proseso ng pagsusuri sa mga datos ay pagsusuring pangnilalaman o content analysis. Ang mga pananaliksik na ginagamitan ng pagsusuring pangnilalaman ay nakasentro sa layuning masuri at mabusisi ang materyal ayon sa isang kaligiran (De Leon at Abuan, 2021). Isa rin itong kagamitan upang matukoy ang mga salita, tema o konsepto sa loob ng teksto na hahantong sa pag-aanalisa ng resulta (Lou, 2022; Columbia Public Health, 2023).



Naganap nang paulit-ulit ang masinsin at maingat na pagbasa sa mga akda kasabay ang pagtatala sa lahat ng mga mahahalagang impormasyong kinakailangan sa ikalulutas ng mga suliranin ng pag-aaral. Matapos ang pagbasa sa nilalaman ng mga akda, at nang natukoy ang mga suliraning panlipunan, ay sunod namang isinagawa ang paghahambing sa mga ito sa usaping panlipunang mayroon ang Filipinas, bagay namang nagbigay kasagutan sa ikalawang suliranin ng pag-aaral.

Nang maisagawa ito, sinuring muli ang mga usaping panlipunan, kung papaanong ang mga ito ay makapagkikintal sa kamalayan na mga Filipino hinggil sa kabuluhan ng pagiging malay sa mga usaping panlipunan. Ang mga naging prosesong ito ang naging dahilan kung bakit naisagawa ang pahambing na pagsusuri sa mga isyung panlipunan mula sa mga piling bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya. Sa ibaba ay ang modelo ng isinagawang pagsusuri:



**Figura 1.** *Daloy ng Proseso ng Pag-aaral*

## Resulta At Talakayan

### 1. Ang Panitikan Bilang Salamin ng Realidad at mga Isyung Panlipunan

#### *A. Ang Kuwento ng Taxi Drayber: Tagapaghatid Mula sa Pook ng Isyung Panlipunan sa Singapore*

Mula sa masusing paghihimay sa akdang “Ang Kuwento ng Taxi Driver,” mapatutunayang naging malinaw at natural ang daloy upang maipasilip sa mga mambabasa ang lipunang kinabibilangan ng tauhan. Sa pamamagitan ng pangunahing tauhang taxi drayber na siyang nagsasalaysay sa kuwento, naipakita kung paanong tanawin ang prostitusyon bilang salot at mapagwasak sa buhay ng kabataan sa kabila ng katotohanang ito ay itunuturing na propesyon. Mula sa pagdadrayber ng ama ay naisalaysay nito sa isang pasahero kung paano niya natuklasang nasasangkot ang kaniyang anak na prostitusyon. Ang pagsasalaysay ay nagbibigay-hudyat na naganap ang malawakan at mabilisang pagbabago sa bansang Singapore bilang maunlad na bansa. Ngunit kasabay ng mga pagbabagong ito ay ang mga itinuturing ding hindi mabuting dulot nito kagaya na lamang ng kabataang naging matigas ang ulo na hindi na sumusunod sa kanilang mga magulang. Gayunpaman, ang mas malubhang pagbabago ay ang pagkakasangkot ng mga ito sa prostitusyon. Mauulinagan din na hindi lamang kahirapan ang dahilan kung bakit nasasangkot ang kabataan sa pagbebenta ng kanilang laman kundi naroon ang sariling pagnanais marahil upang magkaroon ng salapi.

Sa pagkakalulong sa ganitong makamundong gawain ay natutuhan ng kabataan ang magsinungaling sa kanilang mga magulang, kagaya ni Lay Choo na anak ng drayber. Inaakala nilang itong anak ay nag-aaral nang mabuti, matalino, mabait, at desidado sa buhay dahil gabi na kung umuwi. Ngunit ang lahat ng ito ay naglaho nang matuklasan ng ama ang kaniyang sikreto na siya pala ay isa rin sa kabataang may makapal na make-up, maikli ang kasuotan at nagbebenta ng aliw. Sa ganitong mga pangyayari ay masasabing ang naging reaksiyon ng ama ay hindi naiiba mula sa mga posibleng maging reaksiyon ng mga tao sa lipunan hinggil sa prostitusyon—ang pandidiri, panghihinayang at pagkadisgusto. Mula sa pambubugbog ng ama sa kaniyang anak, ay magpapatunay ito kung paano niya tanawin ang prostitusyon bilang isang seryosong suliranin at nakahihiyang trabaho. Sa kabila nito, isang kabalintunaan kung tutuusin na ang mga prostityut at mismong prostitusyon ay tinitingnan bilang mababa ngunit patuloy na tinatangkilik.

Ang mga pagsasalaysay na ito ay naging mabisa upang gawing natural ang daloy at palutangin ang mga negatibong damdamin ng ama kaugnay ng prostitusyon. Ang paglalantad o pagsasalaysay sa isang kamalian, na ang paksa ay mismong anak, ay matibay na patunay ng hindi pagsang-ayon sa prostitusyon. Ang pagmamaneho nito habang inilalarawan ang bansa ay isang mabisang paraan upang salaminin ang tunay na nagaganap sa Singapore sa gitna ng mga nagtatayugan at makukulay na gusali.

Sa ginawang pagsusuri sa nilalaman ng akda ay masasabing lumutang ang mga suliraning panlipunan na kinahaharap ng bansang Singapore, kagaya ng prostitusyon o pagbebenta ng katawan upang kumita ng pera, at pagiging suwail ng anak sa kaniyang mga magulang. Naipakita ang mga ito dahil sa problemang kinaharap ng pangunahing tauhan nang muntik na niyang mapaslang ang kaniyang anak na dalaga dahil natuklasan niyang ito ay nagbebenta ng aliw sa mga banyaga, sa kabila ng pagtitiwalang isang mabuti at masipag na bata ang kaniyang anak. Maiuugnay ito sa artikulo ni Liang (2021) sa PKWA, nakagugulat man ngunit legal ang prostitusyon sa bansang Singapore. Sa katunayan ay kinokontrol ng gobyerno ang ilang brothel na umusbong noong ikadalawampung siglo na masasalamatin din sa historikal na nobelang *The Singapore Grip* ni James Gordon Farrell, (1978) (binanngit nina Maurya at Kumar, 2022), kung saan ay parehong maaaring magbigay ng seksuwal na serbisyo ang isang babaeng lokal o dayuhan ngunit kailangang ito ay sumailalim sa regular na medical check-up upang makapagtrabaho. Ang komersiyal sex na ito ay naging bahagi na rin ng ekonomiya at lipunan ng Singapore mula pa noong si Sir Stamford Raffles, na kinatawan ng British East India Company (E.I.C.) ay nakipagnegosasyon sa pagkuha ng Singapore noong 1819 (Herzog, 2017). Mapatutunayan sa akda kung paanong nakalalabas sa daan ang mga nagbebenta ng katawan. Ngunit sa kaso ng mga magulang na may mataas na pangarap sa kanilang mga anak na babae, ito ay isang malaking suliraning dapat solusyonan.

Ipinakikita rin ng akda ang lumalalang problema ng Singapore na kinasasangkutan ng mga kabataang nagiging drayber at pasahero ng mismong isyu. Inaakala ng mga magulang na ang kanilang mga anak ay nag-aaral nang mabuti subalit gumagawa pala ng kalokohan para lamang magkapera. Ipinasisilip din ang pagiging suwail sa pamamagitan ng pagsisinungaling sa magulang at hindi pagsasabi ng totoo sa kanilang mga ginagawang kalokohan. Ang pagsuway na ito ay maaaring dulot ng pagrerebelde na maituturing na isang unibersal na problema ng mga kabataan na ayon kay Pang (2017) ay madalas na nagaganap kapag hindi sila napagbibigyan sa kanilang mga kagustuhan tulad na lamang ng paglabas, paggala, at pakikisama sa kanilang mga kaibigan. Isang patunay na may pagnanais din sila ng kalayaan mula sa mga hindi makatuwirang ekspektasyon sa kanila.

***B. Mabuhay Ka, Anak Ko: Akdang Bumubuhay sa Gunita ng Nakalulunogs na Pagkawasak ng mga Buhay at Pag-Asa sa Bansang Cambodia***

Mula sa mabusising paghihimay sa akdang “Mabuhay Ka, Anak Ko” ay napalutang ang mga mahahalagang elemento na mayroon ito upang mapatingkad ang kulay at ganda. Hitik ang kuwento sa pagkakaroon ng mga tauhan na pinangungunahan ni Thay kabilang din ang kaniyang asawa na si Any at mga anak na sina Sudath, Nawath, at Staud. Si Thay bilang pangunahing tauhan ang tagpagsalaysay ng kuwento. Maituturing na isang istatikong tauhan sapagkat hindi naman nagbago ang kaniyang posisyon bilang isang huwarang mamamayan; kahit na nagkaroon ng isang hindi magandang karanasan sa kaniyang bayan dulot ng digmaan

ay pinili pa rin na maging mabuti hanggang sa huli at gawin ang lahat ng makakaya para sa kaniyang pamilya kahit na buhay niya ang kapalit. Si Thay ay isang mabuting asawa at ama sa kaniyang pamilya. Ang pangarap niya ay isang mapayapang pamumuhay para sa kanila, subalit ito ay hinamon ng pagkakataon at labis na nagdulot ng matinding kasawian sa kaniyang sarili.

Batay sa kaniyang pagsasalaysay ang kuwento ay naganap noong kasagsagan ng digmaang-bayan sa pagitan ng mga rebeldeng Khmer Rouge at mga militar. Matindi ang suliranin ng bayan sapagkat maraming mga sibilyan ang nadadamay at hindi naaaninag ang bakas ng kapayapaan. Ang mga pangyayaring ito ay nagsilbing tagpuan ng kuwento na isinalaysay ni Thay. Mula rito ay mababakas ang isang panahon sa Cambodia na puno ng karahasan, kawalang deriksyon, sapilitang pagpapalikas upang pagtrabahuhin sa malalayong bukirin nang walang anumang pahinga at sapat na pagkain, pang-aabuso ng mga nasa gobyerno sa kanilang kapangyarihan dahil sa malupit na pagpapatupad ng batas at pagkitil sa buhay ng mga inosente, at idagdag pa ang labis na pagpapahirap sa mga sibilyan na tutol sa malupit na pamamahala ng Khmer Rouge, na kung susuriing mabuti ay ito ang mga suliraning hinahanapan ng lunas sa kuwento. Samantala kung sisiliping mabuti ang paraan ng paglalahad ng kuwento ay makikita na ginamit ang paraang pagbabalik-tanaw, sapagkat mula sa karanasan ng may akda ay nasalamin sa pangunahing tauhan na si Thay ang isang di-makalilimutang pangyayari na isinalaysay sa kuwento kalakip ang ilang mga pagbabago sa pangalan, at kaganapan na malaking tulong sa pagpatingkad nito.

Sa pamamagitan ng mga mahahalagang elemento na mayroon ang kuwentong ito ay nailuwal ang mga mahahalagang sangkap na taglay nito, at mula rito ay nasilip ng mga mananaliksik ang mga problema sa lipunan ng Cambodia na kinabibilangan ng karahasang dulot ng digmaan, paglabag sa karapatang pantao, malawakang taggutom, kawalan ng kaayusan at kapayapaan, at pag-abuso ng gobyerno sa kapangyarihan. Ang mga ito ay naipakita sa daloy ng pangyayari sa kuwento sa pamamagitan ng pagsasalaysay ng pangunahing tauhang si Thay.

Ang mga pangyayaring ito ay masasalamin mula sa kasaysayan ng nasabing bansa na ayon sa University of Minnesota (2023), sa panahon ng digmaang nasa pagitan ng taong 1975-1979 ay tinatayang nasa 1.5 hanggang 3 milyong katao ang namatay sa kamay ng mga Khmer Rouge. Ang ganitong karahasan kagaya ng pagpatay ay hindi pa rin nasusugpo sa Cambodia hanggang sa kasalukuyan; sa katunayan, ayon sa ulat ng Country Report (2023), mataas pa rin ang kriminalidad sa bansang ito kabilang ang mga krimen sa lansangan. Ang mga sandata at pampasabog daw ng militar ay madaling makuha ng mga kriminal sa kabila ng pagsisikap ng mga awtoridad na kolektahin at sirain ang mga naturang armas. Ang mga armadong pagnanakaw ay madalas na nangyayari kung saan, ang mga dayuhang residente at bisita kabilang ang mga Amerikano ay nagiging biktima. Nakatanggap din ng ulat ang Embahada na ang mga silid sa hotel ng mga Amerikano sa Phnom Penh ay ninakawan habang ang mga nakatira ay natutulong. Idagdag pa ang sinabi sa artikulo ni Helling (2022), na sa kabila rin diumano ng mabilisang

pagiging popular ng bansa sa mga turista ay patuloy pa ring lumilitaw ang mga krimen, kaya't ang bansang ito ay maituturing lamang daw na katamtamang ligtas na puntahan.

**C. Ang mga Tiket sa Loterya ni Hadji Zakaria: Salamin ng Pagtataya sa Malagim na Resulta ng Adiksiyon sa Sugal sa Indonesia**

Sa tulong ng matalik na pagbasa, naging mabisang kasangkapan ang tauhan upang mabigyang-puwang ang usapin ng pagkalulong sa sugal at ang mga masasamang epekto nito. Sa kabila ng mga mabubuting katangian ni Haji Zakaria katulad ng pagiging positibo, matatag, mapagbigay at mabuti, pinalutang pa rin ang lasong dala ng pagsusugal sa mukha ng loterya. Ang mga katotohanan hinggil sa pag-iral ng sugal saan mang lipunan ay isang usaping hindi mapasusubalian. Ang pagdating ng tauhang si Ahmad na siyang anak ng kaibigang malapit ni Haji ang siyang nagbigay ng kalinawan kay Haji kung paanong nagiging mapanganib ang sugal sa buhay ng isang tao at ang mga sinasayang nito. Sa tulong din ng anak ni Haji na si Maryam ay naging malinaw kay Ahmad kung paanong ang dating mayaman, mapagbigay at madalas na bumibista sa Mecca ay naging mahirap at hindi na nakapupunta sa nasabing banal na lugar, ito ay dahil sa pagkalugi sa pagbili ng mga bond mula sa gobyerno noong panahon ng Hapones na inaasahan niyang kumita ng malaking interes subalit hindi siya binayaran ng gobyerno. Higit namang napalutang na malaking salik ang pagkalulong sa pagbili ng mga tiket sa loterya sa paghihirap nina Hadji na kung inipon sana ang mga perang ito ayon kay Ahmad ay umabot na sa milyon ang halaga. Ang katotohanang ito ay hindi natanggap ni Haji na dahilan kung bakit siya nabago at nabuhay sa lungkot na kaniyang pinaghugutan upang kitilin ang sariling buhay. Ang paraan ng pagsasalaysay ay masasabing pabalik-tanaw na nasa ikatlong panauhan, sa tulong din nito ay nailarawan at nabigyang-diin kung bakit nagiging isang seryosong usapin ang pagsusugal.

Sa pamamagitan ng isang masinsing pangingilates sa teksto, lumutang ang mga malalaking suliraning panlipunan sa Indonesia katulad ng pagkalulong sa bisyo ng sugal kaakibat ang mga masamang epekto nito sa kabuhayan. Mula sa mga artikulo ni Yeung (2011), sinabing patuloy pa raw na yumayabong ang sugal sa bansang ito dahil na rin sa suporta ng mga taong sila sana ang unang kumakalaban dito kagaya ng mga politiko, militar at mga pulis na tumatanggap ng salapi mula sa mga sugal. Kabalintuan mang pakinggan ngunit ayon sa Market Trends (2022), ang sugal ay itinuturing na ilegal sa bansang Indonesia ngunit umiiral ang maraming mga online site na puwedeng nilang bisitahin upang magsugal, kagaya ng Lucky Block, BK8, cmd368, 1xbet, 22bet at marami pang iba.

Ang paglala nito sa bansang Indonesia ay makikita rin sa pananaliksik nina Budiman et al (2022); ayon sa kanila, dahil sa pag-alagwa ng teknolohiya ay tumaas din ang krimen gamit ang sopistikadong *Modus Operandi* at ang krimeng ito ay mauuri bilang *cybercrime* kagaya ng paglaganap ng mga *modus operandi*. Isa sa mga kaso ng *cybercrime* na laganap sa ngayon ay ang

pagsusugal sa pamamagitan ng internet. Binanggit din na ang mga kabataan ay nalululong sa ganitong gawain na nagdudulot ng hindi maganda sa kanila, kagaya na lamang ng pag-ubos ng kanilang oras dito, napababayaan na rin nila ang kanilang kalusugan dahil sa pagkaunti nang mga gawaing pisikal, pumupurool din ang kanilang kakayahan sa pakikisalamuha at nagiging suliranin sa kanila ang pag-iwas sa adiksiyong ito. Isang realisasyon ito na nagiging isang malaking suliranin ang sugal sa bansang ito dahil na rin may malaking partisipasyon ang mga mahahalagang pinuno na sana'y malay sa mga masasamang epekto nito.

*D. Aanhin Nino Yan? Akdang Nagsisilbing Repleksiyon ng Isyung Kaugnay ng Pagpapahalagang Moral sa Thailand*

Sa isinagawang matalik na pagbasa sa kuwento ay lumutang ang mga mahahalagang elemento na mayroon ito. Kabilang dito ang pagkakaroon ng mga tauhan na mahahati sa dalawa—ang istatiko at dinamiko. Ang mga ito ay hayag na naisalaysay sa naging daloy ng pangyayari. Ang pagiging istatiko ay bakas na bakas sa katauhan ni Nai Phan na isang mabuti, responsable at maunawaing tauhan. Ang karakter niya ay salamin ng isang taong may pagmamahal sa kapayapaan at hindi ambisyon ang paghahangad ng salapi para maging mayaman. Sa di-inaasahang pagkakataon ay sinubok ang karakter ni Nai Phan ng isang binatang estranghero. Sa loob ng tindahan nito isang gabi ay naganap ang isang pangyayari na hahantong sana sa isang krimen, subalit ito ay hindi natuloy sapagkat ang pangunahing tauhan na si Nai Phan ay naging mahinahon sa kabila ng panganib at banta nito sa kanya.

Maituturing na hindi nagbago ang kaniyang karakter sa umpisa hanggang wakas sapagkat batay sa kuwento ay naliwanagan ang binatang estranghero sa mahinahong pakikiusap ni Nai Phan. Ang dating masama, at mapagbantang binata ay nagkaroon ng maliwanag na kaisipan at nangako na tatalikuran na ang paggawa ng masama na udyok lamang ng kagipitan kaya napilitang humawak sa patalim. Ang pangyayaring ito sa estranghero ang nagbigay ng konklusyon sa mga mananaliksik kung bakit dinamiko ang naging uri ng kaniyang karakter sapagkat nagbago siya sa huli.

Maituturing na ang suliranin sa kuwentong ito na kailangang hanapan ng lunas ay ang pagkapit sa patalim ng binatang estranghero dahil sa kagipitan. Ito ang nagtulak sa kanya upang gumawa ng krimen, dahil dito ay maaaring masira ang kaniyang moral at may buhay na mawawasak ang kay Nai Phan. Samantala ginamit naman ang pagbibigay pahiwatig at daloy ng kamalayan bilang paraan ng pagkukuwento na kung saan ay nabigyan ng hudyat at kahandaan ang mambabasa sa mga susunod pang pangyayari at napag-isip nang malalim kung paano nakaapekto sa kilos ng mga tauhan ang pagkakaroon ng mahinahong damdamin na ipinakita ni Nai Phan at malawak na pananaw ng binatang estranghero. Sa pamamagitan nito ay mas lalo pang napalalim ang bisa, kulay at tingkad nito bilang akda na tagapagmulat sa kaisipan ng mambabasa.

Sa pamamagitan ng mga mahahalagang elemento na mayroon ang kuwentong ito ay nailuwal ang mga mahahalagang sangkap na taglay nito at mula rito ay nasilip ng mga mananaliksik ang mga suliraning panlipunan sa Thailand, kagaya ng paggawa ng krimen dulot ng mahigpit na pangangailangan at pagkasira ng moral ng isang tao.

Ang ganitong pangyayari ay masasabing patuloy na nagaganap sa bansang Thailand. Mula sa naganap na sarbey noong 2020 ayon sa *The Asian Post* (2020), mas tumitindi ang pagkabahala ng mga Thai sa kanilang kaligtasan kung ikukumpara sa mga nakalipas na taon. Sa sarbey ng Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, o Suan Dusit Poll na isinagawa mula noong Enero 15-18 sa 1,365 katao sa buong bansa, kasabay ng sunod-sunod na balita ng malubhang krimen-kabilang na ang mga panggagahasa, pagnanakaw at pagbebenta ng droga na nagtapos sa isang nakawan sa tindahan ng ginto sa Lalawigan ng Lop Buri, lumalabas na ito raw ang resulta ng pagbagsak ng kanilang ekonomiya bunga ng mababang pagganap ng gobyerno. Ang paghina ng export, at tensiyon sa pagitan ng China at US, dahilan din umano ang lumalalang kalagayang panlipunan at mababang pamantayang moral ng bansang Thailand.

## **2. Ang Filipinas Bilang Anino ng mga Bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya**

### *A. Ang pag-iral ng prostitusyon at pagiging suwail sa magulang na inilahad sa akdang Singapore na **Ang Istorya ng Taxi Drayber***

Ang ganitong mga suliranin ay maiihalintulad din sa mga problemang kinahaharap ng mga kabataan dito sa Filipinas kung saan ay nasasangkot ang mga ito sa mga ilegal na gawain katulad ng cybersex o ang paraan ng pagbebenta ng katawan sa pamamagitan ng pagpapakita ng mga maseselang bahagi nito sa kanilang mga banyagang parokyano mula sa harap ng kumpyuter. Ang ganitong gawain ay maituturing na isang prostitusyon at ang gawaing ito ay mariing itinuturing na ilegal sa Filipinas. Malinaw itong makikita sa Artikulo 202 ng Binagong Kodigo Penal Bilang Sinusog ng Batas Blg. 10158 na nagsasabing ang babaeng nakikipagtalik o gumagawa ng kahalayan para sa pera o kita ay itinuturing na patutot o prostitute. Sinumang mapatunayang magkasala sa mga saklaw ng artikulong ito ay dapat parusahan ng arresto menor o multa na hindi higit sa 200 piso, at sa kaso ng *recidivism*, arresto mayor sa katamtamang panahon nito hanggang sa pagkakakulong correalational sa pinakamababang panahon o multa mula 200 hanggang 2,000 piso, o pareho, sa pagpapasya ng korte. Sa usaping ito, hindi rin ligtas sa cybersex ang ilang menor-de-edad na ibinubugaw mismo ng kanilang magulang para lamang magkaper. Kabilang sa pagbebenta ng laman na ito ang child trafficking na talamak sa mga malalayong probinsiya na kung saan ay nire-recruit ang mga bata para ibenta ang katawan sa mga banyagang kustomer na nagiging kalakaran din sa pagkita ng malaking pera.

Kung ihahambing ang kaso ng prostitusyon ng Singapore sa Filipinas, legal na itinuturing ang pagbebenta ng katawan sa kanila ngunit tinutulan ito ng marami lalo na ng mga magulang.



Samantalang sa kaso ng Filipinas ay ilegal man kung maituring ngunit napakatalamak at hindi napipigilan sa kabila ng pag-iral ng mga batas kagaya ng Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003. Idagdag pang ipinagbabawal ang mga menor-de-edad na masangkot dito sapagkat maituturing itong kaso ng panggagahasa. Subalit natuklasan mula sa ulat ni Redfern (2019) na nasasangkot na sa ganitong gawin ang mga batang wala pa sa hustong gulang. Ang ilang nasa gulang na 14 ay lumalahok na sa ganitong klase ng trabaho kagaya sa Angeles City, Pampanga na dating base ng mga amerikanong militar na matagal nang naging sentro ng “turismo sa seks”: ilegal na prostitusyon sa pagitan ng mga dayuhang lalaki at mga babaeng Pilipina na madalas ay tinedyer pa at naipit sa industriya, o mga kabataang babae na itinutulak sa sex trade sa pamamagitan ng panggigipit ng pamilya o kahirapan.

Mataas din ang antas ng rayot na kinasasangkutan ng mga kabataan sa kalunsuran na nakukuhanan ng CCTV. Bagaman ang away gang na ito ay hindi na bago, nakakabahalang nasasangkot na ang mga kabataan na dapat sana’y abala sa pagtupad ng kanilang mga hangarin at pangarap sa buhay. Makikita ang ganitong sitwasyon mula sa ulat ni Nelz (2022), kung saan, ang grupo ng kabataan ay nakikipagbasagan ng ulo sa kahabaan ng kalsada habang nagbabatuhan ng mga babasaging bote kaya’t nagkalat ang bubog sa kalye. Ipinakikita lamang nito na ang mga kabataan ay nagiging suwail sa batas at hindi sinusunod ang mga pangaral ng kanilang mga magulang na umiwas sa gulo.

*B. Ang pagpapaksa sa karahasang dulot ng digmaan, paglabag sa karapatang pantao, malawakang taggutom, kaguluhan, at pag-abuso ng gobyerno sa kapangyarihan mula sa akdang Cambodian na **Mabuhay Ka, Anak Ko***

Sa Filipinas maihalintulad din ang suliranin na may kaugnayan sa digmaan para ilarawan ang masaklap na pangyayari sa Lungsod ng Marawi, nang kubkubin ito ng mga teroristang Maute na nagresulta sa maraming bilang ng mga sibilyang naipit at mga sundalong namatay. Ang bakbakan sa Marawi sa pagitan ng puwersa ng pamahalaan ng Filipinas at mga militanteng Islamic State ng Iraq at ang Levant, kabilang ang mga pangkat ng Maute at Abu Sayyaf, na naganap mula Mayo hanggang Oktubre 2017, ay nagtagal ng limang buwan. Ang labanang ito ay naging pinakamahabang digmaan sa pook urban sa makabagong kasaysayan ng Filipinas. Ayon sa Amnesty International (2017), nagdulot ang digmaang ito ng pagkalagas ng dose-dosenang buhay at malawakang pagkasira ng mga tahanan at ari-arian sa gitna ng bakbakan. Maitatala rito kung paano tinarget ng mga militanteng kaalyado ng IS ang mga kristiyanong sibilyan para abusuhin ang hindi bababa sa 25 extrajudicial killings, malawakang paghostage, at malawakang pagnanakaw ng mga ari-arian ng sibilyan.

Maiuugnay rin ito sa hindi matapos-tapos na insurhensya sa pagitan ng mga rebeldeng komunistang NPA at puwersang militar ng bansa na hindi pa rin natatapos at nagdudulot ng mga engkwentro na dahilan upang maraming mga sundalo, sibilyan at rebelde ang namamatay.

Isa rin sa mga hindi makalilimutan ay ang Mamasapano Encounter na kinabibilangan ng SAF 44 kung saan ay maraming kapulisan ang napatay sa isang engkuwentro na hanggang sa kasalukuyan ay hindi pa rin nabibigyan ng hustisya sapagkat hindi tukoy kung sino ang dapat managot. Maituturing din na isang malawakang paglabag sa karapatang-pantao ang kampanya ng gobyerno ng administrasyong Duterte—ang Oplan Tokhang o Giyera Kontra Droga kung saan na maraming mga gumagamit ang hindi na nabigyan ng pagkakataong malitis sa hukuman.

Bagaman digmaan ang tampok ng akdang mula sa Cambodia ay makikita nang malinaw ang isyung kinaharap din ng Filipinas sa panahong nakikipagdigmaan ang bawat buhay mula sa kalabang hindi nakikita—ang COVID-19. Laganap ang pang-aabuso sa kapangyarihan sapagkat mismong mga pinuno ang lumalabag sa mga kautusan at protocol kagaya sa kaso ng senador na si Coco Pimentel na nilabag ang quarantine protocols. Bagaman alam niyang siya’y positibo sa COVID-19 ay pumunta pa rin siya sa hospital upang tulungan ang kaniyang asawang magsisilang ng bata (Gregorio, 2020). Gayunpaman ay hindi siya nanagot sa kaniyang paglabag habang ang mga normal na mamayang nakalabag ay nakatatanggap ng parusa kagaya ng pagkakabilanggo. Idagdag pa ang 15 bilyong korapsiyong kinasangkutan ng PhilHealth na natuklasan sa gitna ng pananalasa ng pandemya bunga ng mga irregularidad sa pagpapatupad ng pansamantalang mekanismo ng reimbursement ng korporasyon, na nagbibigay bayad sa mga ospital na apektado ng kalamidad tulad ng bagyo, upang matiyak ang kanilang patuloy na operasyon at pagkakaloob ng mga serbisyo sa pangangalagang pangkalusugan (Ravelo, 2020). Sa huli ay hindi nanagot ang dapat managot. Kaya masasabing ang kahirapan, korapsiyon, pang-aabuso sa kapangyarihan ay isang malinaw na halimbawa ng paglabag sa karapatang pantao at pinag-uugatan ng kaguluhan at kawalang kaayusan.

*C. Ang pagkatalung sa bisyo ng sugal at ang epekto nito sa kabuhayan na ipinakita ng akdang **Ang Tiket sa Loterya ni Hadji Zakaria** mula sa bansang Indonesia*

Ang suliranin ni Hadji Zakaria ay hindi nalalayo sa bisyo ng mga Filipino sa pagtaya sa sugal at pagkahumaling dito, dahil sa paniniwalang maaaring manalo ng limpak limpak na pera at makaahon sa kahirapan. Maraming anyo ng sugal ang maiiugnay sa Filipinas na nagdudulot ng pagkasira ng pamilya at pagbagsak ng kanilang kabuhayan tulad ng sabong at makabagong anyo nito na online sabong na tinatawag sa Pampang na talpak. Dahil sa online sabong na ito ay maraming buhay ang nawala.

Mababanggit sa ganitong usapin ang 34 na lalaking nawawala at hindi pa makumpirma kung buhay pa nga ba, sa ulat ni Tabbad (2022). Sinabing naghayag noon ang PNP na wala pa silang nakukuhang mapagkakatiwalang datos upang matunton ang mga naiulat na nawawalang tumatalpak noong 2021, bagaman ipinangakong matatamo ng mga pamilya ang hustisya ngunit hanggang ngayon ay hindi pa ito naibibigay. Dahil sa adiksiyon sa sabong ay may

magulang pang naibenta ang kaniyang anak upang makapagsabong. Hindi na rin mabilang ang mga pamilyang nagkawatak-watak at nawalan ng tahanan dahil sa pagkalulong sa gawaing ito.

Nariyan din ang pagtaya sa huweteng na parokyano ang maraming mga Filipino sa bawat sulok ng baryo, lalo na sa malalayong probinsya na kinabibilangan ng mga mahihirap. Imbes na pambili na sana ng pagkain ay itinataya pa nila rito dahil sa pag-asang manalo. Isang patunay sa pagkahumaling at pag-asa ng mga Filipino sa huweteng ay ang pagkakahirang nito bilang isa sa mga salita ng taon noong 2005. Ayon kay Añonuevo (2005), binago nito ang ugnayang pangkapangyarihan; kagaya sa Indonesia, mismong mga pinuno, politiko, mga pulis at iba pa ang sumasang-ayon dito sapagkat sila ay may nakukuhang porsiyento. Nanghimasok din ang sugal na ito sa usapin ng ekonomiya at kultura kaya't nagsilang din ito ng maraming mga salita na nagbago ang kahulugan at iniugnay sa malawak na usaping panlipunan. Hindi rin maihihiwalay ang pagtaya sa lotto na isang pagbabakasakaling maghahatid ng suwerte, ngunit sinasabing mas mataas pa ang tyansang tamaan ng kidlat ang isang tao kaysa manalo rito.

Kabilang din ang malaking perang ginagastos sa pagtaya sa Casino ng mga Filipino na nasa mas mataas na antas ng katayuan. Ngunit maging ito ay hindi rin nagdudulot ng mabuti sapagkat nagiging dahilan ito ng pagkasira ng pamilya at pagbagsak ng negosyo. Nahahati ang pananaw ng mga Filipino sa usapin ng sugal, dahil ang sugal na ito ay pinamamahalaan ng mga higanteng politiko at personalidad, gayundin ay ipinapako nito sa isipan ng mga Filipino na bagaman ito ay sugal, kabuhayan pa rin itong maituturing sa marami. Nagagawa rin nitong mas lalong paigtingin ang pananampalataya ng mga Filipino sa pagbabakasakaling manalo sa halip na gumawa ng paraan upang magtrabaho.

*D. Ang paggawa ng krimen dulot ng mahigpit na pangangailangan at pagkasira ng moral ng isang tao na nasuri sa akdang Thailand na **Aanhin Nino Yan?***

Maiugnay ang ganitong krimen sa iba't ibang anyo at madalas ay nangyayari ito sa Filipinas kaya nga't tila naging tradisyon nang lamanin ng iba't ibang pahayagan at balita ang usapin ng krimen. Ang iba't ibang anyo nito ay kinabibilangan ng panloloko tulad ng salisi gang, laglag barya gang, dura gang at budol-budol gang.

Nariyan din ang iba't ibang anyo ng iskam na marami ang naloloko at nabibiktima dahil sa pain nitong nangangako ng malaking halaga, na madalas ay kinakagat naman ng mga hindi mapanuring mga Filipino sa paniniwalang maaaring makuha at mapakinabangan ang mga alok na ito. Sa Artikulo 1338 ng *Kodigo Sibil ng Filipinas*, isinasaad na may pandaraya o scam kapag may paggamit na ng mapanlinlang na mga salita sa mga partidong nakipagkontrata, ang isa ay nakukumibinsi kung may pagpupumilit at panghihikayat na pumasok sa isang kasunduan na kung wala ang mga hinihingi ay hindi siya papayag.

Sa kabila ng mga umiiral na batas laban sa scamming kagaya ng Article 315, Revised Penal Code ay umiiral pa rin ang mga mapagsamantala at hindi natatakot na manloko. Sa katunayan ay nagkaroon ng iba't ibang uri ng internet fraud scam kagaya ng Boiler Room, Romances Scam, Lottery Scam, Banking and Online Account Scam (Card Skimming, Phishing, Email Spoofing), at Nigerian Scam (Nigerian 419 Scam, Check Operator Scam, Inheritance Scam, Emergency or Grandparent Scam) (Azurin at Doria, 2022).

Maibibilang din dito ang iba't ibang modus tulad ng rent tangay at iba pa, na ang pakay ay makapagnakaw ng pera na minsan ay humahantong pa sa isang malagim na krimen tulad ng pagpatay.

### **3. Ang Panitikan Bilang Tagapuno ng Pangangailangan Tungo sa Kamulatan**

#### *A. Nabibigyang diin ng mga akda ang pangangailangang maging isang mabuting mamamayan ng bansa*

Sa tulong ng pagiging maalam at malay sa mga suliraning panlipunan na ipinakikita sa akdang “Ang Istorya ng Taxi Drayber” ay namumulat ang mga Filipino na maging responsableng mamamayan ukol sa pangangalaga at pagtatanggol sa kaniyang karapatan, dignidad at dangal; na hindi ibebenta ang katawan dala ng kahirapan o matinding pangangailangan; na kaniyang isasaisip at isasaalang-alang ang marubdob na pagtingin sa katawan bilang bahagi ng kaakuhan, na hindi gagamitin para kumita ng salapi sa maling pamamaraan sa kabila ng mga mabibigat na suliraning pampersonal.

Palalalimin nito ang pagmamahal sa sarili at paiiralin ang konsensiya ukol sa panganib na maaaring matamo sa pagbebenta ng katawan. Maiiwasan din ang mga hindi inaasahang pagkakataon na nagsasangkot sa mga menor-de-edad sa cybersex at child trafficking dahil nagsisilbi ang panitikan na mata at boses na makatutulong upang mapalakas ang kampanya ng pamahalaan sa pagsupil sa mga ganitong klase ng aktibidad, kasabay ang pagmumulat sa mga magulang na protektahan ang kanilang mga anak, at paigtigin ang pagpapatupad ng batas ukol sa mga nambubugaw at umaabuso sa pagiging inosente ng kabataan.

#### *B. Napupunan ang pangangailangang irespeto ang mga magulang at sarili bilang miyembro ng pamilya*

Pupunan din nito ang pangangailangan ng mga Filipino lalo na ng mga kabataan na maging responsable at disiplinado sa pagsunod sa kani-kanilang mga magulang. Sa tulong ng mga akdang ito ay maikikintal sa puso at isipan nila ang halaga ng pagiging mabuting anak at pagkakaroon ng disiplina sa sarili na magtutuwid sa pagkakamali tungo sa landas ng kabutihan at matuwid na buhay kung saan ay may pag-iwas sa gulo.

### *C. Ang pagpapahalaga sa buhay at tungkuling ipinagkaloob sa bawat isa*

Samantala, sa tulong din ng akdang “Mabuhay Ka, Anak Ko” ay namumulat ang mga Filipino na punan ang kanilang kamalayan ukol sa pagpapahalaga sa buhay ng kapuwa, pagrespeto sa karapatan ng mga ito, pagtatanggol sa dignidad, at pagpapairal sa kapayapaan at kalayaan na mabuhay sa isang masaya, ligtas at makataong lipunan. Sa tulong nito ay naikikintal sa puso at isipan ng mga Filipino ang kahalagahan ng pagkakaroon ng isang bansa na malayo sa karahasan, kung saan ay ipinatutupad ang batas nang pantay-pantay; ang pagsasaalang-alang ng gobyerno sa mga desisyong makabubuti sa kapakanan ng nakararami; ang pagtupad nila nang buong husay sa kanilang mga tungkulin kagaya ng pagtatanggol sa mga mamamayan laban sa mga mapang-abuso; at ang halaga ng pagtututol sa anumang hakbang na maglalagay ng nakararami sa kapahamakan.

### *D. Ang halaga ng kalayaan para sa isang bansang naghahangad ng kasarinlan*

Pinupunan din nito ang pangangailangan ng mga Filipino na pahalagahan ang demokrasya bilang pundasyon ng kalayaan sa pagpapahayag ng saloobin, pagpili ng matapat na lider na mamamahala gayundin sa mabuting pagdedesiyon ng mga mamamayan nang may kalayaan. Sa ganitong pamamaraan ay matatamasa ng mga Filipino ang isang buhay na hindi kinokontrol o dinidiktahan ng sino man, lalo na ang kalayaang mangararap para sa bansa at sarili.

### *E. Ang pangangailangang maging malay sa halaga ng matuwid na landas ng pamumuhay*

Hindi rin matatawaran ang napakahalagang kakintalang iniwan ng akdang “Ang Tiket sa Loterya ni Hadji Zakaria” sa puso at isip ng mga Filipino, dahil pinupunan nito ang pangangailangan na umiwas sa bisyo na nagdudulot ng pagkalulong at mitsa ng pagkasira ng relasyon sa pamilya, Poong Lumikha, kabuhayan at sarili. Dahil dito, lumalawak ang pang-unawa ng mga Filipino sa masasamang bunga ng labis na pagkahilig sa bisyo at kawalan ng disiplina hinggil dito. Pinalalakas din ang malalim na pagtingin sa sarili at ang kakayahang mag-isip ng mga mabuting paraan sa pagkita ng pera at iwasan ang anumang pananamantala.

### *F. Ang pagpapahalaga sa mga bunga ng pawis at dugo tungo sa maayos na bukas*

Sa tulong ng mga isyung panlipunan na iniaalay ng mga akdang sinuri, natutugunan ng kamulatang ito ang pangangailangan ng mga Filipino na bigyang halaga ang kaniyang mga pinagpaguran at pinagpawisan, kasama ang paggamit sa mga ito sa tamang paraan at huwag igugol sa anumang uri ng sugal. Naglalayon ito na turuan ang bawat isa hinggil sa halaga ng paggamit sa mga pera sa pagpupundar ng kabuhayan na mag-aahon mula sa kahirapan, at ang paggamit sa mga ito para tustusan ang pangangailangan ng pamilya sa higit na ikakauunlad pa nila.

### *G. Ang pagpapaigting sa mapanuring pag-iisip bilang pananggala mula sa banta ng kapaligiran*

Samantala, sa akdang *Aanhin Nino Yan?* ay malinaw na pinupunan ang pangangailangan ng mga Pilipino na maging mapagmatyag, mapanuri at alisto sa anumang modus na maaaring magtulak sa kanila upang mapaniwala at mabiktima. Dahil dito, naiiwasan ng mga Filipino na sila ay maloko o kung hindi man ay maging malay at mulat mula sa mga modus, iskam at panloloko. Binibigyang babala rin nito ang publiko na maging maingat sa lahat ng pagkakataon para hindi mapahamak dahil maaaring naglipana ang mga masasamang loob na puwedeng gumawa ng masama para makapagnakaw.

### *H. Ang kabuluhan ng pananaig ng katapatan at kabutihan sa ano mang oras at pagkakataon*

Nag-iiwan din ito ng kakintalan sa mga Filipino na maging matapat at iwasan ang paggawa ng masamang bagay na nagtutulak sa pagkapit sa patalim. Bagkus ang nararapat ay matutong gumawa ng mabuti upang nang sa gayon ay maiwasan ang hindi katanggap-tanggap na gawi at hindi makasira ng buhay at tiwala ng kapwa. Itinuturo din nito ang mahigpit na pagtalima sa batas at gawing sentro ang paggawa ng kabutihan para sa isang malinis na pamumuhay.

## **Paglalagom At Kongklusyon**

Malinaw na pinalutang ng mga akdang ito ang mga umiiral na isyung panlipunan sa bawat bansa katulad ng prostitusyon at pagiging suwail ng anak sa kaniyang magulang sa Sinagpore; ang karahasan ng digmaan, paglabag sa karapatang pantao, taggutom, kawalan ng kapayapaan, at pag-abuso ng gobyerno sa kapangyarihan sa Cambodia; ang pagkalulong sa bisyo gaya ng sugal at epekto nito sa kabuhayan sa Indonesia; ang paggawa ng krimen dulot ng mahigpit na pangangailangan, at pagkasira ng moral ng isang tao sa Thailand. Ang mga suliraning ito ay malawakan ding umiiral sa Filipinas at nagsilang ng mga kakambal pang suliranin. Ngunit sa kabila nito, napupunan ng mga akda ang pangangailangang maging mulat sa paraang nabibigyang diin ang pangangailangang maging isang mabuting mamamayan ng bansa, irespeto ang mga magulang at sarili, ang pagpapahalaga sa buhay at tungkulin, ang halaga ng kalayaan para sa isang bansa, ang maging malay sa halaga ng matuwid na pamumuhay, pagpapahalaga sa mga pinaghirapan at hinaharap, ang pagpapaigting sa mapanuring pag-iisip at ang kabuluhan ng pananaig ng katapatan at kabutihan sa lahat ng pagkakataon.

Makikita mula sa mga akdang sinuri na ang mga bansa sa Timog Silangang Asya tulad ng Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, at Thailand ay napasukan ng mga global na suliraning panlipunan. Ito ang dahilan kung bakit patuloy ang mga tao sa mga bansang ito sa paggawa ng mga paraan, kagaya ng pagbuo ng mga samahan at pakikipagtulungan sa ibang bansa, upang matuldukan ang mga isyung kanilang kinahaharap sa araw-araw. Ngunit sa kabila ng

maraming organisasyon, hindi pa rin tuluyang naiwawaksi ang mga problema; sa halip ay patuloy na dumarami at tumitindi na waring kanser.

Sa ganitong paraan ay makikitang may mahalagang papel ang panitikan upang patuloy na maparinig ang boses, magsumigaw ng hinaing, at mangalampag sa mga kinauukulan sa pamamagitan ng paglalarawan sa malagim na sinapit ng mga taong nabubuhay sa laylayan ng lipunan. Ang mga akdang binanggit ay waring tahimik ngunit may matayog at sumisigaw na layuning gisingin ang bawat isa na gumawa ng mga solusyon para sa mga problemang panlipunan na mahalagang magsimula sa kani-kaniyang mga tahanan at sa mismong sarili na sa katagalan ay lalaganap. Kung gayon ang bayang sawi ay muling makababangon at mag-aalis sa lahat ng dusang iminumudmod ng mga isyung panlipunan.

### **Mga Sanggunian**

- Abad, M. (2022, September 05). *FAST FACTS: The ties that bind the Philippines and Indonesia*. Retrieved from Rappler.com: <https://tinyurl.com/yy78kkbf>
- Anning, B. (2010). *Embedding an Indigenous Graduate Attribute into University of Western Sydney's courses*. The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education).
- Association of Southeast Asian Nation*. (2008). ASEAN Secretariat. Retrieved from The ASEAN Charter: <https://tinyurl.com/yn7auu6e>
- Azurin, A. S., & Doria, J. B. (2022). *Common Types of Inernet Fraud Scam*. Retrieved from Anti Cyber Crime Group: <https://tinyurl.com/2xksw3zr>
- B., D. L., & Abuan, T. V. (2021). *Pananaliksik-Wika at Panitikan*. Manila: Lorimar Publishing Inc.
- Badayos, P. B. (2008). *Metodolohiya sa Pagtuturo at Pagkatuto ng/sa Fillipino: Mga Teorya, Simulain, at Estratehiya*. Manila: Mutya Publishing House Inc.
- Blakeley, S. (2022, February 13). *Connecting Art and Literature*. Retrieved from Study.com: <https://tinyurl.com/2djtxc wd>
- Budiman, R. (2022). The Impact of Online Gambling Among Indonesian. *IAIC Transactions on Sustainable Digital Innovation (ITSDI)* , 162-167.
- Cambodia*. (2023). Retrieved from University of Minnesota: <https://tinyurl.com/2mysrc6t>
- Content Analysis*. (2023, February 14). Retrieved from Columbia Public Health: <https://tinyurl.com/242t7h8z>



- Crime Information for Tourists in Cambodia.* (2023). Retrieved from Country Reports: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhv477r>
- Dela Cruz, A. R., Padrigon, C., & Mendoza, D. (2016). *Discipline and Ideas in the Social Sciences*. Manila: Phoenix Publishing House, Inc.
- Dios, L. A. (2014). *Literatur ng Iba't Ibang Rehiyon ng Pilipinas*. Manila: Grandwater Publishing.
- Equality Now.* (2021, November 23). Retrieved from Philippines – The Revised Penal Code As Amended By Act No. 10158 (March 27, 2012): <https://tinyurl.com/mpev996f>
- Five Reasons to Study Literature.* (2007, October 1). Retrieved from Home School View: <https://tinyurl.com/3w38js65>
- Flavell, H., Thackrah, R., & Hoffman, J. (2013). *Developing Indigenous Australian cultural competence: A model for implementing Indigenous content into curricula*. Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability.
- Gregorio, X. (2020, March 25). *Makati hospital berates Sen. Pimentel for violating quarantine protocols*. Retrieved from CNN Philippines: <https://tinyurl.com/3k8ppxyf>
- Harding, B. (2019, January 19). *Southeast Asia in 2019: Four Issues to Watch*. Retrieved from CSIS: <https://tinyurl.com/53pwsarw>
- Herzog, S. (2017). *Selling Sex in Singapore: The Development, Expansion, and Policing of Prostitution in an International Entrepôt*. Brill. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/chcpvuy4>
- Jay, N. (2022, March 07). *Intense Riot Between Groups of Male Teenagers Elicits Comments Online*. Retrieved from Philippine News: <https://tinyurl.com/2p883x5e>
- Kabiling, M. A., et al. (2018). *Pagsilip sa Akdang Kalupi*. Print.
- K to 12 Gabay Pangkurikulum Filipino (1-10)*. (2019). Retrieved from Kagawaran ng Edukasyon: <https://tinyurl.com/4uxr8ccu>
- Kenneth, Y. (2011, November 30 2011). *Uneasy Money*. Retrieved from Indonesia Expat: <https://tinyurl.com/3vxtkxjn>
- Liang, L. J. (2021). *Is Prostitution Legal in Singapore?* Retrieved from PKWA: <https://tinyurl.com/2p84ksus>

- Literary Criticism Explained: 11 Critical Approaches to Literature*. (2021, July 15). Retrieved from Masterclass.com: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/literary-criticism>
- Lopez, G. (2020, December 29). *Growth of Asian literature*. Retrieved from Ukiyoto: <https://tinyurl.com/2x5bctj>
- Lou, A. (2022, December 05). *Content Analysis | Guide, Methods & Examples*. Retrieved from Scribbr: <https://tinyurl.com/pf43wbca>
- Lumbera, V. L. (2017). *Suri: Pag-arok sa Likhang-Panitik/Probing the Literary Text*.
- Mahmood, I. P. (2019, August 29). *7 key challenges for the future of ASEAN - and how to solve them*. Retrieved from World Economic Forum: <https://tinyurl.com/3ftp6nhy>
- Maurya, P., & Kumar, N. (2022, November 14). *Race, sexuality and prostitution in colonial Singapore: reading J. G. Farrell's The Singapore Grip*. Retrieved from Taylor Francis Online: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8c7ktk>
- McCombes, S. (2022, October 10). *Scribbr*. Retrieved from Descriptive Research | Definition, Types, Methods & Examples: <https://tinyurl.com/2tb679ms>
- Nibalvos, I. M. (2019). Lipunan at Panitikan: Pag-uugat ng Kapilipinohan sa Pagbubuo ng Literaturang Pambansa. *Malay Journal*, 99-114.
- Pang, I. (2017, December 14). *Establishing A Relationship With Your Rebellious Teen*. Retrieved from Singapore's Child: <https://tinyurl.com/yttaumnc>
- Philippines: 'Battle of Marawi' leaves trail of death and destruction*. (2017, November 17). Retrieved from Amnesty International: <https://tinyurl.com/msw7ava2>
- Prakash, A. (2018, September). *Boiling Point*. Retrieved from International Monetary Fund: <https://tinyurl.com/3xfmw3ca>
- Protect Yourself From Fraud and Scam*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas: <https://tinyurl.com/mryt74zf>
- Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. (2023, January 20). Retrieved from University of Texas Arlington: <https://tinyurl.com/yp28mbpn>
- Ravelo, J. L. (2020, September 14). *Corruption allegations rock Philippine health insurance corporation amid COVID-19*. Retrieved from Devex: <https://tinyurl.com/mr6nctmd>

- Redfern, C. (2019, November 18). *In Philippine red-light district, an uphill struggle to battle trafficking and abuses*. Retrieved from The Washington Post: <https://tinyurl.com/2xj9mm88>
- Roth, K. (2021, June 24). *Thailand Events of 2021*. Retrieved from World Report 2022: <https://tinyurl.com/y5puhahf>
- Salamanca, A. (2022, October 6). *Loss and damage in Southeast Asia: current issues and ways forward*. Retrieved from SEI: <https://tinyurl.com/yc3kkvpb>
- Sarah, C., & Pincus, J. (2014). Poverty, Inequality, and Social Protection in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies*, 1-17. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/mpaj7kax>
- Senase, J. R. (2022, November 15). *President Marcos Jr meets Filipinos in Cambodia*. Retrieved from Khmer Times: <https://tinyurl.com/yfjpb9ym>
- Šlapkauskas, V. (2021). *The Significance of the Sociological Approach to Law for the Development of Jurisprudence*. Retrieved from Social Studies: <https://ojs.mruni.eu/ojs/societal-studies/article/view/1298#>:
- Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems*. (2023). Retrieved from Libraries: <https://tinyurl.com/2786dkee>
- Sophie, A. (2022, October 07). *The Importance of Literature in Modern Society*. Retrieved from findcourses.co.uk : <https://tinyurl.com/4ce24n2h>
- Tabbad, R. (2022, December 06). *34 nawawalang sabungero, 'di makumpirma kung buhay pa! — PNP*. Retrieved from Balita: <https://tinyurl.com/dbfprs54>
- Time to Strategise Thai-Philippine Ties*. (2022, July 05). Retrieved from ERIA: <https://tinyurl.com/4e9mpmue>
- Torres-Yu, R. (2006). *Kilates: Panunuring Pampanitikan* . University of the Philippines Press, 2006.

# Haikus in the Wilderness of Mt. Hamiguitan

*By Jovanie B. Garay*

## *Pitcher Plant*

A carnivorous  
pitcher plant eats butterfly  
trapped inside consumed.

## *Pygmy Forest*

Mossy-pygmy field  
dwarf old tress conquered by herd  
of giant tourists.

## *Tinagong Dagat*

A solemn lake rests  
On top of the mountain breast  
fogs adorned embraced.

## *Hidden Garden*

A hidden garden  
tress inside the forest den  
branches light at night.

# Ang Kinatumyan sa Mt. Hamiguitan

*By Jovanie B. Garay*

Diha'y milutaw nga bukid ibabaw  
sa panganod. A, ang pinuy-anan  
ni Magbabaya ug sa mga diwata!  
Basin ang gibug-aton

sa bukid, gisapwang sa panganod,  
ingon sa hulagway nga mipilit sa kanbas:  
puno sa mga kahoy apan dili dia'y lunhaw  
ang mga dahon kon tan-awon sa layo, pino  
nga asul, madanihon. Buot ko kining sak-on,

abton ang kinatumyan dayon  
mohigda sa hangin ingon sa bukid nga  
gapauraray, galantaw nako nga gialimut-an  
sa inalisngaw sa kainit sa yuta,

nagpaabot kon kanus-a  
moduaw ang uwan.

## The Summit of Mt. Hamiguitan

There rises a mountain atop  
the clouds. Ah, the shelter  
of Magbabaya and the fairies!  
Perhaps the weight

of the mountain, nestled by the clouds,  
resembles the image etched on canvas:  
full of trees not green leaves in the distant view,  
but fine blue, enchanting. I wish to climb,

reach the summit then  
lie in the wind as the mountain  
lounging, watching me steamed  
by haze from the warmth of the land,

waiting when the rain comes.

*Magbabaya is one of the tri-gods of faith of the Mandayas: Tagallang (God), Magbabaya (Nature), Mansilatan (Man).*

# The Yellow Shoes

By Hammim B. Casan

It was a friendly summer afternoon when my *Abuya*<sup>1</sup> came home with his cousins. *Abuya*, whose silver and disheveled hair clung to his forehead, reclined on our black couch, and removed his favorite yellow shoes. He asked me to boil some water and make some coffee for our visitors. My *Omeya*<sup>2</sup> initiated washing the mugs and put some *browa*<sup>3</sup> on the saucer and placed the tray of coffee on the small center table in our living room. *Omeya* seemed to have borrowed the elegance of each passing year and her brown eyes held a depth of understanding as she sat and joined them in their conversation. This was always our routine every time we received visitors at home. My parents often told me to never join the conversations of older relatives out of respect.

My *Abuya* and his paternal first cousins, Jalil and Amerol, were talking about the dispute they had when they visited our *Inged*<sup>4</sup> earlier that morning. *Bapa*<sup>5</sup> Jalil's gray shirt bore abstract patterns of perspiration and every step he took with his black shoes left dirty traces from his encounter in our *Inged*. He also had his bruise bandaged because he forcibly prevented an old woman, a distant relative, from harming my *Abuya*.

"*Insan*<sup>6</sup>, you could have been harmed if I had not immediately prevented Samiya from hurting you with her *sange*<sup>7</sup>," *Bapa* Jalil exclaimed as he pressed the power button of the electric fan which began to spin as if it had been waiting for this very moment to cast a breeze in the relentless summer heat.

"*Aydaw*<sup>8</sup>, Samiya is such a crazy old woman! I did not expect that she could really harm you with her *sange*" *Omeya* angrily responded. But *Abuya* thanked *Bapa* Jalil for saving him instead.

*Bapa* Engr. Amerol nodded and leaned forward as he sipped his steaming coffee. He then said, "Our family treated Samiya fairly because she is our relative; but they do not have the right to claim our grandfather's land just because they have been living and farming there for more than two decades now. Besides, everyone in our family and in our *Inged* knows that it is *Amadatu's* land."

“The problem is that neither Samiya nor any of her family are educated about the law. All these times, they were claiming that our 10 hectares of land was freely given to their parents by our *Amadatu*,” *Bapa* Jalil responded.

*Abuya* smirked, “Anyone would laugh at Samiya’s claims because nobody in our *Inged* would freely give his 10-hectare land to a distant relative and not to his immediate family. And it is true that everyone in our *Inged* knows that our *Amadatu* owns the land.”

Everyone sneered except my *Omeya*, and a deafening moment of silence followed. Each sipped their coffee and munched some *browa* while watching a random TV show. *Abuya* tightly held his cup of coffee and stared blankly at the wall. He seemed to be deeply consumed by what had happened earlier that morning.

“My *Insan*, I believe we need to go home. It is getting late in the afternoon; and I still need to close my grocery store,” *Bapa* Engr. Amerol intruded as he stood before the mirror to comb his once chaotic hair.

Our visitors shook hands with my father and bid their goodbyes to my *Omeya* before they left. “We shall soon call a family meeting to plan for our next action,” *Bapa* Engr. Amerol whispered to *Abuya*. He and *Bapa* Jalil walked away with the sun setting from the sky, casting darker shadows on the path ahead.

After our visitors left, my *Omeya* voiced her disappointment at my *Abuya*. She warned him to never meddle with that land dispute again. “You are not the sole owner of that 10-hectare land, Casim! You could have been harmed this morning while your other relatives are in the comforts of their homes doing what? Nothing!” *Omeya* lachrymously exclaimed.

*Abuya*, as defensive as he normally is, obnoxiously uttered, “Do not drag my family into this conversation! My deceased parents left me and my siblings with nothing. This 10-hectare land, if sold, could alleviate us and my siblings from our difficult living conditions.” *Omeya* sat still and her heart was heavy with emotions while her brown eyes glistened with unshed tears.

After a week, *Abuya* asked me to accompany him to their family meeting to talk about their 10-hectare land; but my *Omeya* would not allow me to accompany him to our *Inged*.

“Casim, do not bring Abdul with you to your meeting. What if something bad happens to him? God forbid. Your enemies will know who your son is, and it will be easier for them to find him in case of retaliation,” *Omeya* pleaded.



“*Omeya*, I need to be there to make sure that *Abuya* is safe. God also forbid, but what if *Babu Samiya* will again try to harm *Abuya* this time? I cannot just stay at home and do nothing. What would my uncles say about me? I must be there,” I calmly explained while *Abuya* looked at me with his vibrant and reassuring eyes.

It was a thirty-minute drive to *Inged*. While *Abuya* was driving, I grabbed the opportunity to ask him about the 10-hectare land. “*Abuya*, why did our family let this conflict happen?” I curiously asked. *Abuya* gazed at me and began to tell me what I needed to know about it.

“Several years ago, *Amadatu*, my paternal grandfather, was the owner of a 7-hectare piece of land. His third cousins, *Monacaya* and *Karim*, the parents of *Samiya*, borrowed 200,000 pesos from *Amadatu* for the dowry of their eldest son, *Nasser*,” *Abuya* narrated.

“*Monacaya* and *Karim* had nothing to pay for their debt, so they finally decided to give their 3-hectare land as payment. *Amadatu* did not hesitate to accept their payment because the said 3-hectare land is adjacent to his 7-hectare land,” *Abuya* added.

“Unfortunately, *Amadatu* did not register his 10-hectare land because he trusted his cousins. *Amadatu* was a figure of immense reverence in our *Inged*. He was a religious old man with his white beard cascading down to his chest and his eyes held the wisdom of ages. His home was a sanctuary for anyone in need. And because of *Amadatu*’s generosity, he also granted *Monacaya* and *Karim*’s request to build a temporary shelter in his 10-hectare land, for they had nowhere to go.” *Abuya* recounted.

“*Monacaya* and *Karim* passed away years after *Amadatu*’s passing. But their children, instead of being grateful, now have the audacity to claim that the entire 10-hectare land was freely given by *Amadatu* to their parents,” *Abuya* said disgustedly.

*Abuya* and I did not realize that we had already arrived at *Bapa* Engr. Amerol’s house. His house was a strong concrete bungalow that was painted *binaning* (yellow) and *mapoti* (white) inside. I observed that most houses built in our *Inged* are bungalows, some are painted while others are not. Perhaps it depends on who builds the house and who lives in it.

“*Assalamu alaikum*<sup>10!</sup>” *Abuya* greeted *Bapa* Engr. Amerol as he entered the house.

“*Wa alaikumusalaam*<sup>11!</sup> Please feel at home,” *Bapa* Engr. Amerol responded while we shook hands with the male family members there to greet and welcome each other.

“Is this Abdul? He’s taller and more handsome than you are, *Casim*!” *Babu* Soraya jokingly said. I kissed *Babu* Soraya’s right and left cheeks out of respect. *Babu* Soraya, the affluent

wife of *Bapa* Engr. Amerol, wore a luxurious silken black robe and sparkling pieces of golden jewelry. I joyously sat with the rest of the male visitors and family members.

*Bapa* Engr. Amerol, being an elder and highly educated member of the family, spearheaded the meeting. He started to acknowledge the presence of all the family members who were there. He also began to angrily narrate what happened two weeks ago when *Babu* Samiya almost harmed *Abuya*.

*Bapa* Jalil suddenly stood up and suggested that everyone must give a certain amount of money to fence and secure the 10-hectare land. “The fence marks our land, and also reminds Samiya’s family that it is not theirs to claim!” *Bapa* Jalil strongly emphasized; but many family members dismissed *Bapa* Jalil’s suggestion.

*Babu* Soraya responded, “Are we really spending for a fence that could be easily removed by Samiya’s family?”

*Bapa* Engr. Amerol suddenly stood and suggested that since everyone in our *Inged* knows that Amadatu really owns the 10-hectare land, then we can open it for sale. “I am certain that buyers will be interested because of our land’s strategic location.” He claimed.

*Abuya* stared at me and nodded at *Bapa* Engr. Amerol’s suggestion. “Everyone must look for interested buyers. This is the only way that we can claim and utilize our 10-hectare land. Imagine how much money each of us may receive from selling our land. It may even help some of us who are in really challenging living conditions.” *Abuya* proposed, and everyone agreed.

*Abuya* remained silent until we got home. It looked like he was carrying some heavy load that he could no longer sustain. I have not seen him like that in years. *Omeya* welcomed us at the door with her eyes sparkled with curiosity to ask about what transpired in the meeting.

“*Omeya*, we’ll just let *Abuya* discuss what happened during the meeting. Okay?” I tiredly said. *Abuya* sat on our black couch, lost in his thoughts, while the world continued to spin, oblivious to the fatigue that consumed him.

“Casim, what now?” *Omeya* patiently waited for a response.

*Abuya* briefly said “Well, I suggested that the land must be sold, and everyone agreed.” Their conversation abruptly ended.

*Omeya* called us for dinner. She said that she prepared our all-time favorite *badak*<sup>12</sup> soup, fried *bulad*<sup>13</sup>, and turmeric rice. *Omeya* always made sure that we were full at every mealtime. While

we were dining, she gently expressed her thoughts, “Casim, please do not put so much effort on your land. This would not do any good for us or for your children. Your efforts, and perhaps your life, cannot be compensated by any amount of money,” *Omeya* gently emphasized.

“I know, Sittie. I know” *Abuya* repeatedly said as he took a huge bite of the *badak* as if this was the food he had been seeking all his life.

*Omeya* then washed the plates after we dined, while *Abuya* pressed the TV remote control to watch the daily news report. *Abuya*’s cellphone suddenly rang, and it was *Bapa* Jalil. He found a land buyer – a private telecommunications company was interested in constructing satellite towers on the 10-hectare land.

“*Alhamdulillah*<sup>14</sup>. God is good. I will ask Engr. Amerol to call for a meeting so that we can sign the *kapasadan*<sup>15</sup> tomorrow” *Abuya* joyfully said.

I saw the sudden mood shift in *Abuya*. He became very happy while telling *Omeya* about the good news. They both planned about what they could possibly do for *Abuya*’s share of the money should the land be sold.

The morning came, and *Abuya* woke up early. He ate what was left of our food last night as his breakfast. He then reclined on our black couch and wore his favorite yellow shoes while *Omeya* was ironing his white shirt.

“Why do you always wear those yellow shoes? What would your relatives say about you if they notice that you are wearing the same rubber shoes every time?” *Omeya* smiled.

“Sittie, I feel more comfortable in these shoes. Besides, yellow is my favorite color,” *Abuya* smiled back at *Omeya*.

*Abuya* and I excitedly drove to *Inged* at *Bapa* Engr. Amerol’s house. Everyone was there. They were all signing the documents needed for the sale of their 10-hectare land.

“Casim, please sign here. Here’s the ballpen.” *Bapa* Engr. Amerol happily said.

“Let everyone sign first. I can always wait” *Abuya* replied while he patted down his pockets in search of his cellphone.

Everyone was busy signing five pieces of documents as *kapasadan*. Some of them needed assistance because they did not know where to put their signatures.

“Here is the hot water, and you may have your coffee” *Babu* Soraya invited us to drink coffee and have some *browa* which she prepared for everyone.

“How did you manage to look for a buyer?” *Abuya* asked *Bapa* Jalil.

“I called my friend who works for a telecommunications company. I told him that our 10-hectare land is ready for sale” *Bapa* Jalil proudly announced.

*Bapa* Jalil received a call from his friend informing him that their company is interested in buying the 10-hectare land. He was told to prepare the necessary documents and submit a photocopy of those to them.

As everyone was occupied with their activities, *Abuya* borrowed my phone because he left his at home. He said that he wanted to call *Omeya*. *Abuya* had to go outside due to the poor phone signal inside the house. It was always like this in our *Inged*, and I believed that the construction of a signal tower on the 10-hectare land would perhaps help in the unwinding of the mobile connection in our *Inged*.

After a few minutes, I decided to get some fresh air outside of the house, but I saw *Abuya* arguing with *Bapa* Nasser, the brother of *Babu* Samiya. *Bapa* Nasser’s veins throbbed while his face contorted with anger as he spoke.

“Your family does not have the right to sell our parents’ land. You don’t have any proof that the 10-hectare land is yours!” *Bapa* Nasser said angrily.

When the argument escalated, I saw *Bapa* Nasser immediately pull the trigger towards *Abuya*. I ran to rescue my *Abuya*, and *Bapa* Nasser also tried to point and shoot me, but I hid behind a cement wall. *Bapa* Nasser hurriedly rode his motorcycle and escaped. Everything happened in a split second.

All our relatives hurriedly went outside the house while I was holding my *Abuya* on the ground. *Abuya* held my hand while he struggled saying “*La illaha ilallaah, Muhammadur Rasullaah*”<sup>16</sup> before his breathing grew softer and softer, until it altogether ceased. My thoughts drifted back to the countless memories of my *Abuya*. I was crying and screaming my mind out because I couldn’t protect *Abuya*. I blamed myself.

“Please call for help! Help!” I screamed with dismay while my relatives were surprisingly staring at me, too. *Babu* Soraya screamed for help, too, while my uncles angrily rushed outside to find who the culprit was.

“Who did this? Who did this to your *Abuya*?” *Bapa Jalil* loudly exclaimed.

“It’s *Bapa Nasser*! I saw him! Please, arrest him! My *Abuya* must be avenged!” I was hysterical. My uncles hurriedly went to *Bapa Nasser*’s house, but he was not there. He and *Babu Samiya* had managed to escape.

My *Abuya* passed away before the ambulance came. I was so furious; and all I ever wanted was to avenge my *Abuya*’s death.

The news of my father’s passing arrived like lightning on a summer day. We went home bringing with us the remains of my *Abuya*; and my *Omeya* welcomed us with her trembling hands and her eyes bore with grief as if her world had shattered.

“Casiiiiim! I did warn you! You know that I did” *Omeya* screamed while crying.

We immediately wrapped *Abuya*’s body in a clean sheet of white cloth. “He must be buried before the next call for prayer,” the *Alim* emphasized. We immediately laid *Abuya* to rest in the 10-hectare land at our *Inged*.

That was a gloomy summer afternoon. The streets were quiet, as if the entire neighborhood had taken refuge indoors to escape the melancholic embrace of the day. We arrived at home with my uncles after we buried the remains of my *Abuya*. I reclined on our black sofa consumed with so much grief while my mother placed the tray of coffee and *browa* on the small center table in our living room. *Omeya* sat with us, but her brown eyes bore the weight of her anguish.

“Abdul, how do you plan to avenge your *Abuya*? May *Allaab*<sup>17</sup> (SWT) grant him the highest place in paradise.” *Bapa Engr. Amerol* asked.

“We must not let *Nasser* and his family get away from this. We will avenge your father whether you like it or not!” *Bapa Jalil* exclaimed.

I tightly held my cup of coffee while I was deeply consumed by what had happened. I nodded and stared blankly at *Abuya*’s favorite yellow shoes.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Abuya means father.

<sup>2</sup>Omeya means mother.

<sup>3</sup>Browa is a Meranaw flour-based pastry.

<sup>4</sup>Inged is a Meranaw word referring to a rural area.

<sup>5</sup>Bapa means uncle.

<sup>6</sup>Insan means cousin.

<sup>7</sup>Sanget is a Meranaw word for a sharp-blade often used in farming

<sup>8</sup>Aydaw is a Meranaw word for “ouch”.

<sup>9</sup>Amadatu usually means grandfather.

<sup>10</sup>Assalamu alaikum is an Arabic greeting that means “Peace be unto you”.

<sup>11</sup>Wa alaikumusalaam is an Arabic response that means “And unto you Peace”.

<sup>12</sup>Badak is a Meranaw term for jackfruit.

<sup>13</sup>Bulad is a sun-dried fish.

<sup>14</sup>Alhamdulillah is an Arabic word for “Praise be to God”.

<sup>15</sup>Kapasadan is a Meranaw word for “agreement”

<sup>16</sup>La illaha ilallaah, Muhammadur Rasullaah is an Arabic sentence which means “There is no God but Allaah, and Muhammad is His Messenger.

<sup>17</sup>Allaah subhanahu wa ta’ala (SWT) is an Arabic phrase that can be translated as “May God be gloried and exalted”.

## Tungkol sa mga May-akda/About the Authors

**Jessa Amarille** is an Assistant Professor at the Division of Humanities, University of the Philippines Tacloban College, where she teaches arts, communication, and literature courses. She earned a BA in Communication Arts from UP Tacloban in 2012 and finished an MA in English Studies (Anglo-American Literature) at UP Diliman. Her research interests include Chicana literature, Waray literature, ecopoetry, and ecocriticism.

Si **Mark Anthony S. Angeles** ay full-time instructor sa Departamento ng Filipino, Kolehiyo ng Edukasyon ng Unibersidad ng Santo Tomas. Natanggap niya ang master's degree sa Filipino: Malikhaing Pagsulat mula sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas, Diliman. Naging writer-in-residence siya ng International Writing Program sa University of Iowa, USA noong 2013. Isang multi-awarded na makata, kuwentista, at mananaysay, kasama sa mga aklat niya ang *Kuwento ng Dalawang Lungsod*, isang salin sa Filipino ng *A Tale of Two Cities* ni Charles Dickens, na inilathala ng Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino at National Commission for Culture and the Arts noong 2018. Kolumnista siya ng *Pinoy Weekly*, literary editor ng *bulatlat.com*, at features contributor ng *GMA News Online*. Noong 2021, inilathala ng University of the Philippines Press ang kaniyang aklat na *Ang Huling Emotero*, isang koleksiyon ng 144 dagli at isang kritikal na papel na tumalunton sa kasaysayan ng nasabing katutubong anyo sa bansa.

**John Adrianfer Atienza** teaches at the Social Science Department of Marist School Marikina. He is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Philippine Studies at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman. His research focuses on moving images and newsreels related to the Philippines, with his work featured in peer-reviewed journals such as *Humanities Diliman: A Philippine Journal of Humanities* (2021, 2024) and *Pelikula: A Journal of Philippine Cinema and Moving Image* (2022). He has also presented at conferences and workshops, including those hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (2023), Universität Bonn (2024), and the 12th KRITIKA La Salle (2024).

**Hammim B. Casan** is a Mëranaw and is currently a faculty member of the English Department of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mindanao State University Main Campus in Marawi City. His over a decade of teaching experience has shaped his perspectives on creative writing, comparative literature (specifically Asian and local literature), culture, and literary analysis. His diverse community involvements also inspired him to explore the relation between literature and civic engagement (with a concentration on peacebuilding) in his postgraduate studies. He also writes short stories, literary analyses about ecocriticism, local culture, gender, and peace.



With a diverse academic background in Literature, Theology, Philosophy, Education and a doctorate in Business Administration from the London School of Economics, **Carole Raymundo Diamante** stayed and lived in the mountains of Sitio Bait, Brgy. Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. She is a former professor at Assumption College San Lorenzo, Makati; De La Salle University, Manila, an adjunct professor at Alpen Adria University, Austria and University of Zurich for International Business. Her field of interest in research is mostly on indigenous concerns and business folders for indigenous communities. She is an active member of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Phils, a consultant and member of the Advisory Board of the Oriental Mindoro Heritage Council, and an on-call Senior Consultant of the Asian Development Bank on Indigenous Affairs and is involved in doing commissioned researches. She was convenor of two Bantula International Conferences, sponsored by NCCA-PCEP.

**Jovanie B. Garay** is an English instructor at Davao Oriental State University (DOOrSU). He writes poetry, short stories, and essays written in the Sugbuanong Binisaya language. His works have been published in *Bisaya Magazine* of Manila Bulletin, *Kabisdak Literary Lighthouse*, *Katitikan*, *Dagmay.online-Literary Journal* of Davao Writers Guild, and Ukiyoto Publishing Philippines. Garay's literary achievements include winning prizes in prestigious competitions such as Bathalad Mindanao (2019) held in Iligan City, LUDABI (2020) in Valencia City, and Sunday Club (2021) Tigi-sinulatay. He was selected as a fellow for Balak (Poetry) in the 59th Silliman University National Writers Workshop (SUNWW) in 2021 and the 21st Iyas National Writers' Workshop in 2022 for his sugilanon (fiction). Additionally, he has independently published two e-books: *Mga Lamat sa Balak* (2022), a collection of poetry, and "Panulo" (2022), a work of fiction. His recent writings have been featured in publications such as *Sands and Coral* of Silliman University, *Pagsubang 2023*, and *Kinaadman Journal*, Volume 44, published by Xavier University Cagayan.

Nakapagtapos si **Marlon Lopez Miguel** ng Batsilyer ng Edukasyong Pansekondarya Medyor sa Filipino sa Don Honorio Ventura State University (DHVSU). Sa naturang unibersidad din niya natapos ang kaniyang Master ng Sining sa Edukasyon-medyor sa Filipino. Nakapagtamo ng ilang akademikong yunit sa digring Doktor ng Pilosopiya sa Filipino Medyor sa Panitikan sa Politeknikong Unibersidad ng Pilipinas. Ngayon ay nag-aaral ng Doktor ng Pilosopiya sa Edukasyong Pangwika sa Filipino sa Pamantasang Normal ng Pilipinas. Nagtuturo ng mga elektib at specialized na kurso sa Filipino katulad ng KomFil, DalFil, SosLit, Panunuring Pampanitikan, Pamamahayag, at iba pa sa ilalim ng Kolehiyo ng Sining at Agham sa DHVSU. Nakapaglathala na rin ng kaniyang mga pagsasalin at nakapaglahad ng pananaliksik sa mga internasyonal na kumperensiya. Miyembro siya ng Pambansang Samahan sa Lingguwistika at Literaturang Filipino Inc. (PSLLF), Samahan ng mga Guro sa Intelektuwalisasyon ng Filipino, at Literature Educators Association of the Philippines.

Si **Nikky Necessario** ay nagtapos ng AB Philippine Studies major in Filipino in Mass Media sa Pamantasang De La Salle sa Maynila at kasalukuyang kumukuha ng masterado sa parehong programa at unibersidad. Mababasa ang ilan sa kaniyang mga isinulat sa *Agriculture Monthly* magazine ng Manila Bulletin taong 2019. Siya ay isang lingkod-bayan.

Nagtapos si **Philip Aguirre Perida** sa Don Honorio Ventura State University ng programang Batsilyer ng Edukasyong Pansekondarya medyor sa Filipino at Master ng Sining sa Edukasyon medyor sa Filipino. Kasukuyan siyang nasa digring Doktor ng Pilosopiya sa Filipino, medyor sa Panitikan sa Politeknikong Unibersidad ng Pilipinas. Bago naging instructor sa DHVSU ay nagserbisyo muna siya ng limang taon sa pampribadong paaralan sa San Fernando, Pampanga. Kabilang sa kaniyang mga naituro ay ang asignaturang Filipino sa elementarya at Sekondarya, Values Education at may karanasan sa pagtuturo ng Agham. Sa kasalukuyan ay mga Specialize at Gen. Ed na asignatura sa Filipino ang kaniyang mga itinuturo. Kasapi siya sa organisasyong, Ang Kampilan na may layuning ipabatid sa taumbayan ang kanilang mga karapatan bilang mamamayan at propesyonal na tao upang makaiwas sa anumang uri ng karahasan at pang-aabuso. Nakapagpresenta na rin ng pananaliksik sa mga internasyonal na kumperensiya.

**Dinah Roma** is a University Fellow and Professor of Creative Writing and Literature at De La Salle University. She is the author of four award-winning books of poetry—*A Feast of Origins* (2004, National Book Award for Poetry in English), *Geographies of Light* (UST 2011), *Naming the Ruins* (Vagabond Press, 2014), and *We Shall Write Love Poems Again* (2021, National Book Award for Poetry in English). In 2019, the Unyon ng mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas (UMPIL) conferred on her the Gawad Francisco Balagtas for Poetry in English, a lifetime achievement award. *Weaving Basey: A Poet's History of Home* (Katig, 2024) is her first collection of essays, which received the National Book Development Board Trust Fund Grant (2015) for the Local History and Culture Category.

Si **Cristy Allen L. Serote** ay buhat sa Lungsod Lucena sa lalawigan ng Quezon. Nagtapos siya ng kursong pagtuturo medyor sa Filipino sa Southern Luzon State University (cum laude). Kasalukuyang, instruktur ng kolehiyo sa Maryhill College, Inc. at isang gradwadong mag-aaral na tinatapos ang kaniyang tesis sa Pamantasang De La Salle-Maynila sa kursong Master sa Sining sa Araling Filipino Kultura, Wika, at Midya. Nakapaglathala na rin siya sa dyornal pananaliksik ng Polytechnic University of the Philippines na *Mabini Review*.

**Coleen Jean B. Templa** is an instructor handling History and other Social Sciences subjects in various undergraduate courses at the School of Arts and Sciences of the J.H. Cerilles State College at Mati, San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts in History degree (cum laude) from Mindanao State University Main Campus, Marawi City. She took her Masters in History at Mindanao State University Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan City. She holds dual eligibility, the Honor Graduate Eligibility or PD 907 and RA1080, for passing the Board Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers. Her research interests are Oral History, Geo-history, Environmental History, and Local History.





# TALAS

*Ang Talas: Interdisiplinaryong Journal sa Edukasyong Pangkultura* ay tugon sa pangangailangang maging sentro ng edukasyon ang kultura. Sa pamamagitan ng journal na ito, nabibigyan ng espasyo ang mga mananaliksik na maibahagi ang mga bagong pag-aaral tungkol sa iba't ibang aspekto ng kultura sa bansa. Inaasahan ding magsilbing hikayat at hamon ang journal na ito sa mas maraming mananaliksik upang lumahok sa produksiyon ng karunungan makabuluhan sa nagbabagong konteksto ng edukasyon, kultura, at lipunang Filipino.

ISSN 2545-9368

