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Editorial Notes

Margaret Helen F. Udarbe | 13

Procurement of Foreign-Funded Projects Through Executive Agreements as Potential Sources of Corruption in Government: Going Beyond the Case of Abaya vs. Ebdane

Myrish T. Cadapan-Antonio and
Ramon Antonio de Asis Ruperto | 19

A Note on the Waterbirds of Pulupandan, Negros Occidental, Philippines

Abner Bucol, Rogie Bacosa, Renee B. Paalan,
Jojie Linaugo, and Carmen Menes | 35

Endemic, Indigenous and Introduced Species in the Freshwater Ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga: Status, Diversity and Impacts

Annie Melinda Paz-Alberto,
Erlene S. Castro, Vincent Lainard Flores
and Maria Angelee V. Romero | 43

Learning Styles and Intelligences of the Mathematically Under-Prepared College Entrants in Silliman University

Millard R. Mamhot
and Alice A. Mamhot | 61

The State of Research and Publication at a Philippine University: Baseline Data for Enhanced Research and Development Initiatives

Gina A. Fontejon-Bonior | 80



CONTENTS

THEOLOGICAL FORUM PART 1

Theology of Struggle: Next Generation

113 | Karl James E. Villarme

The Making of a Theology of Struggle: A Testimony of Theological Praxis in the Philippines

115 | Erme R. Camba

Soup in the Oikos of God

144 | Revelation Enriquez Velunta

Theology of Struggle: Challenges and Prospects in a Globalized World

155 | Eleazar S. Fernandez

Pagsamba at Pakikibaka: Toward a Resistance Liturgics Approach to Christian Participation in the Struggle

171 | Ferdinand Ammang Anno

NOTES

Plato's Republic and its Relevance to Public Administration

187 | Jojema D. Indab

BOOK REVIEWS

Philippine—U.S. Jurisprudence Compared: A Book Review of Marcelino C. Maxino's *Cases and Issues for Philippine Comparative Study*

205 | David Padilla

Displacement, Gay Identity, and Filipinoness in Lawrence Lacambra Ypil's *The Highest Hiding Place*

208 | Oscar Tantoco Serquiña Jr.



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

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SILLIMAN JOURNAL





"To learn the value of money, it is not necessary
to know the nice things it can get for you,
you have to have experienced
the trouble of making it."

Philippe Hériat, *La Famille Boussardel*
(1946)

"The difference between a little money and no
money at all is enormous—and can shatter the
world. And the difference between a little money
and an enormous amount of money is very
slight—and that, also, can shatter the world."

Thornton Wilder, *The Matchmaker*
(1955)

"The world needs soup. Unfortunately,
millions of people cannot even have or afford
a decent cup of hot soup."

Revelation Enriquez Velunta
(2009)



EDITORIAL NOTES

Welcome to this issue of *Silliman Journal* where our cover showcases the work of local artist Hersley-Ven Casero. If you look closely, you may appreciate the intricacy and even the meaning behind such a painting, but I leave the interpretation up to you. Hersley-Ven is one of Dumaguete's up-and-coming artists and photographers, with works starting to get noticed in publications as diverse as the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Lonely Planet Magazine*. He is Instructor in the Fine Arts Program of Foundation University in

Dumaguete City, but his first shows as a painter and as a photographer have been with Silliman University's Cultural Affairs Committee. The mixed media painting "Money Rain" comes from his collection of works titled *The 365 Project: Incipient Ideas*.

This issue then aptly begins with an article on "Procurement of Foreign-Funded Projects through Executive Agreements," by our colleagues at the College of Law—Atty. Myrish Antonio and Atty. Ramon Ruperto who endeavor to guide us through the legal intricacies of how corruption may be prevented in the enactment of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reforms Act. The discussion is helpful especially to the lay reader who wants to understand government, policy, and transparency beyond what we read in the newspaper.

This first paper is followed by two studies in the natural sciences—on waterbirds in Negros Occidental and freshwater ecosystem species in Luzon. Biologist Abner Bucol and co-researchers—Rogie Bacosa, Renee Paalan, Jojie Linaugo, and Carmen Menes—tell us about the plight of waterbirds, lamenting the fact that most previous studies have been done on forest birds. Interestingly, they have found this area to be considerably rich in waterbirds, rivaling those of other wetlands in the Philippines in terms of species diversity. Hunting, however, continues.

Annie Melinda Paz and colleagues Erlene Castro, Vincent Flores, and Angelee Romero, in their study of endemic, indigenous and introduced species in the provinces of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga, also alert us to the negative effects of environmental degradation on freshwater ecosystems. They found that introduced species (foreign species "introduced and dispersed by direct or indirect human activity to a region or location outside the limits of its natural range") are in great numbers—something to be concerned about because this may lead to endemic and indigenous species displacement and extinction as well as loss of biodiversity in the freshwater ecosystems.

Meantime, in efforts to address the needs of mathematically under-prepared college entrants at Silliman University, mathematics professors Millard and Alice Mamhot report results of their research on "Learning Styles and Intelligences," and find that students generally prefer sensual thinking and recommending that an "excitement factor" be included in the teaching of mathematics.

Our final full-length article is based on a study by education professor Gina Fontejon-Bonior on "The State of Research and Publication" among faculty members at Silliman University. Strategies suggested for the development of an institutional-wide research and

publication culture—*i.e.*, through capacity building via mentoring, strengthening incentive systems, providing more dissemination opportunities, and identifying funding agencies—are both concrete and doable.

Readers Forum

In 2006, former *SJ* Editor Ceres Pioquinto instituted a Readers Forum in *SJ* and we have since endeavored to include this section once in every year of publication. This year's forum is a contribution from our colleagues at the Divinity School. Religious studies professor Karl Villaranea's invitation to discuss "the theology of struggle" was enthusiastically responded to by many. Part One is published in this issue. I especially wish to thank Karl for his efforts and commitment and for choosing to publish this *Theological Forum* in *SJ*. He introduces this section to us. The first four papers for this Forum are by Bishop Erme Camba of the Silliman University Divinity School, Professor Revelation Velunta of Union Theological Seminary in Dasmariñas, Cavite, Professor Eleazar Fernandez of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in New Brighton, Minnesota, and Professor Ferdinand Anno, also of Union Theological Seminary in Cavite.

Part Two papers to appear in *SJ* 2010, volume 51, number 2, are by former Vice President for Academic Affairs of Silliman University, Rev. Everett Mendoza, theologian Lester Edwin Ruiz who heads accreditation for theological schools in the US and Canada and is a member of the *SJ* overseas editorial board, and Professor Lizette Tapia of Union Theological Seminary in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Notes Section

Our lone essay in the Notes Section is by political science professor Jojema Indab who reflects on the relevance of Plato's *The Republic* to modern-day public administration, reasoning that Plato focused on issues that confront modern day governments and provides new insights to the theory and practice of public administration.

Review Section

We are privileged to have two book reviews in this issue of *SJ*. David Padilla, visiting professor at the College of Law, comments on *Cases and Issues for Philippine Comparative Study* (2004) by Marcelino Maxino,

visiting scholar also at the SU College of Law. University of the Philippines professor Oscar Serquiña reviews L. Lacambra Ypil's *The Highest Hiding Place: Poems* (2009) in an essay entitled "Displacement, Gay Identity, and *Filipinoness*."

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all contributors to this issue, the members of the 2009 *SJ* Editorial Board—both in and off campus—my dynamic editorial staff, our board of reviewers, and the Commission on Higher Education for the publication of this issue of *Silliman Journal*.

Literary legend depicts Emily Dickinson as an eccentric recluse who dressed only in white (Stanford, 2000). I leave you with one of her poems on Words:

*Your thoughts don't have words every day
They come a single time
Like signal esoteric sips
Of the communion Wine
Which while you taste so native seems
So easy so to be
You cannot comprehend its price
Nor its infrequency*

Margaret Helen F. Udarbe
Editor





Procurement of Foreign-Funded Projects Through Executive Agreements as Potential Sources of Corruption in Government: Going Beyond the Case of Abaya vs. Ebdane

Myrish T. Cadapan-Antonio¹
Ramon Antonio de Asis Ruperto²
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The enactment of the first comprehensive law on public procurement in the Philippines, Republic Act No. 9184, was regarded as a significant feat to the fight against corruption. Only five years after its enactment and while the Implementing Rules on foreign-assisted projects is still being formulated, a public procurement scandal erupted involving key government officials including the President herself and the First Gentleman. This infamous NBN-ZTE scandal was exposed shortly after the Philippine Supreme Court decided the case entitled *Abaya vs. Ebdane* which exempted procurement contracts made through executive agreement from the realm of RA 9184. During the Senate investigation of the controversy, reference to *Abaya vs. Ebdane* was numerously made. This jurisprudence and the said usage in this scandal creates legal and moral issues that the authors wish to dissect in the hope of awakening significant policy initiatives related thereto.

KEYWORDS: transparency, public procurement, contracts governed by executive agreements, potential sources of corruption, policy initiatives, Senate inquiry, exempt from Senate concurrence, overprice

INTRODUCTION

"The accomplice to the crime of corruption
is frequently our own indifference."

Bess Myerson

Over the past few years, allegations of corruption have been hounding our country. Corruption scandals involving prominent figures in the government have become common. Consequently, the Philippines has been cited as one of the most corrupt nations in Asia.³

In the country, corruption is usually seen in relation to government contracts, more specifically those involving public procurement.⁴ The prevalence of this kind of corruption can be traced to the government's function of purchasing supplies, infrastructure and consulting services to fulfill its mandate of providing goods and services to the public. This kind of corruption has allegedly become a practice among contractors for certain government agencies where procurement is a routine event, even to the extent of attaining a fixed markup over costs.⁵ The law applicable then was Executive Order No. 40.⁶

Admitting the defects of our government procurement system, Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), known as the Government Procurement Reforms Act⁷, was enacted on January 26, 2003, with the primary goal of curbing corruption. The law was intended to streamline all government procurement and had as guiding principles: transparency, competitiveness, a streamlined procurement process, system of accountability, and public monitoring.⁸

On paper, the law seems praiseworthy. However, the National Broadband Network-ZTE controversy investigated by the Philippine Senate last year has brought into attention some inconsistencies in the law, more specifically as regards the applicability of RA 9184 to the procurement of projects coming from foreign funding under an executive agreement. During one of the Senate hearings⁹, reference to "Abaya vs. Ebdane" was mentioned more than once. The said case involves a Supreme Court decision¹⁰ which judgment in part indicated that a contract purporting to be a result of an executive agreement is exempt from the bidding requirements of RA 9184. The implication of that ruling is significant in the NBN-ZTE controversy

since government officials involved in the deal insist that the ZTE contract is part of an executive agreement, and thus, not subject to public bidding under the procurement law.

This paper examines the implications and possible repercussions of the doctrine laid down by the Court in the case of *Abaya vs. Ebdane* on future government projects involving foreign funding through executive agreements. It is the authors' theory that the ruling in the case, unless timely modified or at least clarified, could be abused by unscrupulous executive officials who may have their own interpretations to give way to their selfish interests. Clothing foreign loans in the guise of executive agreements (which some of our leaders posit are valid even without Senate concurrence) in order to take them out of the realm of RA 9184, will most likely propagate, rather than prevent, corruption.

THE CASE OF ABAYA VS. EBDANE¹¹

Facts of the Case

Based on an agreement between the Governments of Japan and the Philippines, as expressed in the Exchange of Notes between their representatives, the Philippines was able to obtain from the Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) a loan to finance a road project. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the agency tasked to implement the project, published the Invitation to Prequalify and to Bid for the implementation of the project on November and December, 2002. Meanwhile, on January 26, 2003, RA 9184 took effect.

Of the contractors who responded to the invitation, eight were considered eligible to bid in accordance with the established prequalification criteria as concurred by the JBIC. Prior to the opening of the respective bid proposals, it was announced that the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) was in the amount of Seven Hundred Thirty-Eight Million Pesos (738,000,000 Php).

Private respondent China Road & Bridge Corporation (CRBC) was the lowest complying bidder with its proposal of P952 million or higher than the ABC. Thus, the DPWH issued a resolution recommending the award of the contract in favor of CRBC. Subsequently, a Contract of Agreement was entered into by and between the DPWH and CRBC for the implementation of the project.

Petitioners, as taxpayers, filed a suit seeking to nullify the DPWH resolution and to annul the contract of agreement for allegedly violating RA 9184. They invoked Section 31¹² of the said law which provides that bid prices exceeding the ABC shall be **disqualified** outright from participating in the bidding. *Since the bid of private respondent exceeded the ABC by more than P200 million, they should have been disqualified.* Consequently, the petitioners contended that the resolution was issued with grave abuse of discretion and the contract should be deemed void.

In arguing that RA 9184 was applicable, they reasoned out that while the loan agreement was executed prior thereto, the actual procurement or award of the contract was done after the effectivity of RA 9184.

On the other hand, the respondents argued that RA 9184 cannot be applied since the loan agreement was executed prior to the effectivity of said law. They added that the Invitation to Prequalify and to Bid was published before the effectivity of RA 9184.

They further characterized the loan agreement as an executive agreement and should be observed pursuant to the fundamental principle in international law of *pacta sunt servanda*.¹³

Respondents insisted that it is the prior law governing government purchases, Executive Order No. 40¹⁴, and not RA 9184, that should be applied. Under EO 40, the procurement should be governed by the terms and conditions of the loan agreement. Hence, the JBIC Procurement Guidelines, which prohibit the setting of ceilings on bid prices, should apply.

Respondents also invoked Memorandum Circular No. 108 which provides that in projects supported in whole or in part by foreign assistance awarded through international or local competitive bidding, when the loan/grant agreement so stipulates, the government agency concerned may award the contract to the lowest bidder even if his/its bid exceeds the approved agency estimate.

THE NBN-ZTE CONTROVERSY

The NBN-ZTE controversy involved allegations of corruption in the awarding of a multi-million dollar construction contract to Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE for the proposed government-managed National Broadband Network (NBN) that would improve government communications capabilities.

On 20 April 2007, Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) Secretary Leandro Mendoza and ZTE Vice President Yu Yong entered into a US\$329.5 million contract for the NBN. The said contract was alleged to be grossly overpriced based on controversial information from Jose 'Joey' de Venecia III that First Gentleman Mike Arroyo received \$70M and NEDA Secretary Romulo Neri \$200M in alleged bribe money. When the controversy broke out, the government was quick to reason that the contract was subject of an executive agreement which under the case of *Abaya vs. Ebdane*, must be complied with in good faith.

Following the rise of additional irregularities, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo cancelled the project in October 2007. On July 14, 2008, the Supreme Court dismissed all petitions questioning the constitutionality of the NBN-ZTE agreement, saying the petitions became moot when the project was cancelled.¹⁵

The *Abaya vs. Ebdane* case was decided before the NBN-ZTE controversy, however, the case was brought up several times during the Senate investigation of said controversy.¹⁶

Supreme Court's Ruling in Abaya

The bone of contention is the applicability of RA 9184 to the project in the case at bar in particular and to foreign-funded government projects in general.

The Supreme Court affirmed the stand of the respondents and held that the assailed resolution and the subsequent contract were valid since EO 40, not RA 9184, was the applicable law.

1. RA 9184 cannot be given retroactive application.

The Court noted that the Invitation to Prequalify and to Bid for the implementation of the project was published in two leading national newspapers before the effectivity of RA 9184. Thus, at that time, the law in effect was still EO 40. The Court held that RA 9184 cannot be applied retroactively because it is well-settled that a law or regulation has no retroactive application unless it expressly provides for retroactivity.¹⁷

Moreover, under the implementing rules (IRR-A)¹⁸ of said law¹⁹:

In all procurement activities, if the advertisement or invitation for bids was issued prior to the effectivity of the Act, the provisions of EO 40 and its IRR, PD 1594 and its

IRR, RA 7160 and its IRR, or other applicable laws, as the case may be, shall govern. xxx.

2. The award of the contract to private respondent was valid under EO 40.

Like RA 9184²⁰, Section 25 of EO 40 also provides that bid prices which exceed the ABC shall be disqualified from further participating in the bidding. However, EO 40 also expressly recognizes as an exception to its scope and application those government commitments with respect to bidding and award of contracts financed partly or wholly with funds from international financing institutions as well as from bilateral and other similar foreign sources.²¹

Moreover, Section 4 of RA No. 4860²² provides that in such cases, “the method and procedure in the comparison of bids shall be the subject to the agreement between the Philippine Government and the lending institution.” Thus, the procurement of goods and services for the project in the case at bar is governed by the loan agreement entered into by the government and the JBIC. Said loan agreement stipulated that the procurement is to be governed by the JBIC Procurement Guidelines, which in turn, provides that any procedure under which bids above or below a predetermined bid value assessment are automatically disqualified is not permitted²³ or to state simply, no bid ceilings shall be imposed. Hence, what will matter is simply the pronouncement of the lowest bid as the winning bidder.

Consequently, since these terms form part of the loan agreement, the government should observe the same. Hence, private respondent’s bid, although significantly higher than the ABC, was nevertheless the lowest evaluated bid.

3. The JBIC Guidelines of the loan agreement govern the procurement.

At any rate, even if RA 9184 were to be applied retroactively, the Court held that the terms of the Exchange of Notes and Loan Agreement would still govern the procurement. Such terms are embodied in the JBIC Procurements Guidelines.

In support of this, it cited Section 4 of RA 9184, which provides that any treaty or international or executive agreement affecting the subject matter of this Act to which the Philippine government is a signatory shall be observed.

The JBIC Procurements Guidelines forbids any procedure under which bids above or below a predetermined bid value assessment are

automatically disqualified. Otherwise stated, it absolutely prohibits the imposition of ceilings on bids.

4. The loan agreement taken in conjunction with the Exchange of Notes between the Japanese Government and the Philippine Government is an executive agreement.

The petitioners asserted that the loan agreement was neither a treaty, an international agreement nor an executive agreement. They argued that the parties to it were the Philippine Government and JBIC, a private entity which has a separate juridical personality from the Japanese Government.

However, the Supreme Court ruled that the loan agreement was pursuant to the Exchange of Notes executed by and between the Ambassador of Japan to the Philippines, and then Foreign Affairs Secretary Siazon, in behalf of their respective governments. The loan agreement was an integral part of the Exchange of Notes as it cannot be properly taken independent thereof. Under international law, an exchange of notes is considered a form of an executive agreement, which becomes binding through executive action without the need of a vote by the Senate or Congress.²⁴

ANALYSIS

It is important to note that the ruling of the Supreme Court in *Abaya* found RA 9184 inapplicable to the project primarily because the Invitation to Prequalify and to Bid for its implementation was conducted prior to the effectivity of said law. In the case, the Supreme Court further enunciated that even if such law was applied retroactively, it would still be the terms of the loan agreement—the JBIC guidelines that is, and not RA 9184, that would govern. This ruling seems to connote that RA 9184 will not cover procurement of goods, services or infrastructure for foreign-funded projects subject to international executive agreements.

This same theory in *Abaya* was also mentioned in a subsequent decision, *DBM-PS vs. Kolonwel Trading*²⁵:

Under the fundamental international principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, the RP, as borrower bound itself to perform in good faith the duties and obligations under Loan No. 7118-PH. Applying this postulate, the DBM IABAC, was legally obliged to comply with, or accord primacy to the WB guidelines on the conduct and implementation of

the bidding/procurement process in question.

Foreign loan agreements with international financial institutions, such as Loan No. 7118-PH, partake of an executive or international agreement within the purview of Sec. 4 of RA 9184. Significantly, whatever was stipulated in the loan agreement, shall primarily govern the procurement of goods necessary to implement the main project.

A similar assertion was made by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzales, who said that executive agreements do not fall under RA 9184 requiring all procurement activities be made through public bidding.²⁶

These pronouncements by the Supreme Court and a significant member of the Executive Department will render for naught the application of the Procurement Reform Law for projects assisted by foreign loans and subject of international agreements. While the law expressly provides that RA 9184 shall apply to the “procurement of infrastructure projects, goods and consulting services, regardless of source of funds, whether local or foreign,” there also includes a provision²⁷ which indicates that “any treaty or international or executive agreement affecting the subject matter of this Act to which the Philippine government is signatory shall be observed.” So the crux of the matter is, does RA 9184 give more significance to international agreements over protection of its sovereignty in domestic transactions?

The dilemma here is that most foreign loans are contracted through international agreements, usually in the form of executive agreements. While certainly this would seem to be the usual way of procuring assistance for procurements especially of infrastructure projects, the inconsistency in the law will give ample allowance for government to simply invoke the defense that the transaction was subject of an executive agreement to escape from the constitutional requirements of Senate concurrence and further, from coverage of RA 9184. This was the predicament in the ZTE controversy.

Our jurisprudence has long recognized the validity of executive agreements.²⁸ The power of the president to contract foreign loans is also provided by the Constitution.²⁹

Without subjecting it to the requirements of RA 9184 such as competitive bidding and no procurement higher than the ABC, there is a risk that foreign-funded projects will not be negotiated in accordance with what is best for the Filipino people at reasonable cost. In the *Abaya* case, the procurement of more than P200M higher than the agency’s budget was declared valid. The P200M difference could already have gone into other programs of government instead of just one highway! Add the fact that such may be shielded from the

check-and-balance power of the Senate by covering the transaction under the mantle of an executive agreement, it will then seem that the people are robbed of an adequate scrutiny into how precious public funds are spent.

Then again, if the law allows, what elbow room does one have to question the transaction?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Limit the scope of executive agreements

As mentioned earlier, the authority of the president to enter into executive agreements does not necessitate the agreement or concurrence of the Senate. In *Commissioner of Customs vs. Eastern Sea Trading*³⁰, it was held that while concurrence of Senate is required in treaties, the same is distinct from executive agreements, which may be validly entered into without such agreement. Executive Order 459 issued by then President Fidel V. Ramos defines an executive agreement as one similar to treaties except that it does not require legislative concurrence.³¹

To distinguish treaties from executive agreements, the Court held in that case that while treaties generally refer to basic political issues, changes in national policy and permanent international arrangements, executive agreements, which do not require such concurrence, refer to adjustments of detail carrying out well-established national policies, and temporary arrangements.

Those attempts to delineate the scope of executive privilege would seem insufficient. To cite an example, is the contracting of foreign loans to fund a local project within the coverage of executive agreement? The government officials involved in the ZTE controversy would like to think so. However, herein authors beg to disagree.

It is posited that such an undertaking involving a monumental amount of public funds (\$329 million in the case of the proposed ZTE deal) should be subjected to the checks-and-balances of our government system. One such process is Senate approval. It would then be logical to say that executive agreements should be subjected to Senate concurrence. In fact, a pending bill in the Senate by Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago proposes just that.³²

It is important to note that while funding may come from a foreign source, it is still very much a loan—to be shouldered by the

government through taxpayers' money in the years to come. These large disbursements of public funds should pass through the most stringent inspection. Thus, these agreements should be scrutinized thoroughly to determine its viability.

It would seem, however, that the greater problem with executive agreements is the lack of transparency. Indeed, prior to the Senate inquiry, details of the ZTE deal were practically unknown. Similarly, several other executive agreements were kept out of the public's eye until the matter was out in the open. It is even possible that there are still other executive agreements that the public may be unaware of. Who knows how many more of these kinds of agreements will be entered into in the future? The authors wish to posit that subjecting executive agreements to Senate inquiry is only one of the ways of scrutinizing these transactions. The Senate itself is marred by politics and politicians who owe allegiance to the Executive or the private corporations.

The public scrutiny of the ZTE deal after the whistle-blow of Joey de Venecia III led to a unilateral annulment by the President of the contract. This leads us to ask: If the whistle-blow was not undertaken, would the public have known? If the infamous overprized deal was not made public, would it have been annulled? Certainly a vigilant citizenry leads to a more transparent public procurement.

Another proposed solution would be to redefine procurements subject of international agreements as covered by RA 9184 and amend Section 4 of the same law.

Thus, while the authors agree that executive agreements are not invalid per se, the same should only cover, as mentioned in *Commissioner of Customs and Adolfo*, consular relations and other adjustments of detail carrying out well-established national policies, and temporary arrangements. Contracting a foreign loan, especially of such magnitude as the one in the ZTE deal, should not be considered subject of a mere executive agreement.

At any rate, the authors believe that this should be settled once and for all, perhaps through policy initiatives delineating in express terms the undertakings that can be subject of an executive agreement.

RA 9184 should be made applicable to foreign-funded projects contracted to international agreements

The effectiveness of RA 9184 is seriously hampered by the ruling in *Abaya*. As stated earlier, this doctrine would make RA 9184 practically

useless when it involves projects assisted by foreign loans through international agreements. RA 9184 is clear but is rendered ineffective by the ruling of the Supreme Court in the *Abaya* case.

Going beyond *Abaya*, an examination of RA 9184 actually creates an apparent confusion. Section 4 thereof states:

Scope and Application. This act shall apply to the Procurement of Infrastructure Projects, Goods and Consulting Services, regardless of source of funds, whether local or **foreign**, by all branches and instrumentalities of government, its departments, offices and agencies, including government-owned and/or-controlled corporations and local government units, subject to the provisions of Commonwealth Act No. 138. **Any treaty or international or executive agreement affecting the subject matter of this Act to which the Philippine government is signatory shall be observed.** (emphasis supplied)

Hence, although the scope of RA 9184 includes procurement from foreign sources of funds, the aforementioned provision seems to yield such application to procurements covered by any treaty or international or executive agreement, thereby exempting these kinds of agreements from the requirements of RA 9184 albeit due to the responsibility of fulfilling our obligations to a treaty in good faith under the *pacta sunt servanda* rule. What procurements would need to be subject of a treaty or executive agreement anyway?

The ruling of the Supreme Court in *Abaya* if taken in the spirit of the law seems to defeat the objectives of the law of transparency and competitiveness. It is unquestionable that the intention of the framers of this law was to include foreign funded contracts.³³ Yet, by virtue of the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, the Philippines must honor obligations under international law—sources thereof which include a treaty, international or executive agreement.³⁴

Under international law, an executive agreement is the law between the two contracting parties. Meanwhile, RA 9184 is the municipal law of the Philippines concerning procurement.

When a municipal law conflicts with international law, the first thing to do is to reconcile the two to give effect to both.³⁵ At first glance, it may seem impossible to do that, considering the two apparent conflicting statements in Section 4. However, it is important to note that they actually contain no direct contradiction to each other. What the provision merely states is that foreign-funded projects are within the scope of RA 9184, unless the agreement facilitating the same states otherwise. In this case, the latter's terms and conditions

as agreed by the government and the foreign party will be controlling and the government, as its duty under international law, should abide by these. Nevertheless, all other provisions of RA 9184 not in conflict with the terms and conditions set forth in the agreement on the matter of procurement procedures are still applicable. To put it differently, RA 9184 remains applicable no matter what, save for specific provisions thereof which would conflict with the terms stipulated in the agreement.

In *Abaya*, Sections 31 of RA 9184 and 5.06(e) of the JBIC guidelines contained contradictions. The former (Section 31 of RA 9184) provided that bid prices that exceed the ABC ceiling shall be disqualified outright from further participating in the bidding while that latter (JBIC Guidelines) categorically stipulated that no bid ceilings are permitted. This clear conflict would result in the latter prevailing over the former.

If RA 9184 would be applied, there would be failure of bidding because no bidder submitted a bid within or below the ABC. In the JBIC Guidelines, however, the lowest bidder regardless of the ABC will have to be proclaimed the winning bid.

The authors take note of a bill introduced by Senator Mar Roxas that seeks "the amendment of Section 4, RA 9184 by making it categorically clear that executive agreements involving foreign loans are expressly covered by the procurement rules and processes laid down under RA 9184."³⁶ This proposed legislation, if enacted, would definitely help resolve the aforementioned issue related to Section 4.

Finally, it is imperative that the implementing rules and regulations for foreign-funded procurement activities, the so-called "IRR-B"³⁷, be completed soonest. To date, only IRR-A³⁸ covering fully domestically-funded projects is available. Meantime, projects funded from foreign sources are governed by the guidelines of the International Financing Institution (IFI) pending the issuance of IRR-B. Unless and until IRR-B is issued, RA 9184 will probably not cover foreign-funded procurement activities especially those covered by executive agreements.

CONCLUSION

Corruption remains to be a continuing problem faced by the Philippines. According to the World Bank, an average of 20 to 30 % of the value of every contract in the Philippines is lost to corruption and

inefficiency—around P30 billion a year.³⁹ This comes from taxpayers' hard-earned money that would have gone to infrastructure projects, education, and livelihood programs for Juan dela Cruz.

The enactment of RA 9184 is certainly a step in the right direction for our country notwithstanding certain legislative lacuna that needs to be filled. In addition, stronger implementation of these provisions is needed in order to have the most out of the good intentions of the law. The legal realm is never constant; laws have to adapt to present circumstances. In the case of RA 9184, unscrupulous individuals will always try to get around it by finding defects and loopholes in the law, probably with the collusion of corrupt government officials. New methods to curb corruption may even evolve in the future. The reality of change brings aspirations and the awakening of the grim reality of the truth. It is, however, hoped through this Article that the government, especially the Legislative Branch of government, will soon be able to make significant amendments to prevent the evils sought to be avoided.

END NOTES

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³ According to the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC), in a grading system with zero as the best possible score and 10 the worst, the Philippines got 9.40. See Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. 'Most corrupt' tag on RP clarified, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 14, 2007, available at http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view_article.php?article_id=65696 (last accessed May 9, 2008).

⁴ Myrish T. Cadapan-Antonio, *Participation of Civil Society in Public Procurement: Case Studies from the Philippines*, *Public Contract Law Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (2007) citing J. Edgardo Campos & Jose Luis Syquia, *Managing the Politics of Reform: Overhauling the Legal Infrastructure of Public Procurement in the Philippines* (The World Bank, Working Paper No. 70, 2006) at 4.

⁵ Emmanuel S. de Dios and Ricardo D. Ferrer, *Corruption in the Philippines: Framework and context* (A study prepared for the Transparent and Accountable Governance Project), August 2000, at 20, available at <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/APCITY/UNPAN013133.pdf> (last accessed May 9, 2008).

⁶ This issuance dated October 8, 2001, consolidated procurement rules and procedures

for all national government agencies, government-owned or controlled corporations and government financial institutions.

⁷ “An Act Providing for the Modernization, Standardization and Regulation of the Procurement Activities of the Government and for other Purposes.”

⁸ RA 9184, § 3.

⁹ See Liveblogging of Manuel L. Quezon III and John Nery, *available at* <http://blogs.inquirer.net/current/2007/09/20/liveblogging-the-cootie-grooming-session> (last accessed May 9, 2008).

¹⁰ *Abaya vs. Ebdane*, G.R. No. 167919, February 14, 2007.

¹¹ PLARIDEL M. ABAYA, COMMODORE PLARIDEL C. GARCIA (retired) and PMA '59 FOUNDATION, INC., rep. by its President, COMMODORE CARLOS L. AGUSTIN (retired), Petitioners, vs. HON. SECRETARY HERMOGENES E. EBDANE, JR., in his capacity as Secretary of the DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS and HIGHWAYS, HON. SECRETARY EMILIA T. BONCODIN, in her capacity as Secretary of the DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET and MANAGEMENT, HON. SECRETARY CESAR V. PURISIMA, in his capacity as Secretary of the DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, HON. TREASURER NORMA L. LASALA, in her capacity as Treasurer of the Bureau of Treasury, and CHINA ROAD and BRIDGE CORPORATION, Respondents, G.R. No. 167919, February 14, 2007.

¹² Section 31. Ceiling for Bid Prices.—The ABC shall be the upper limit or ceiling for the Bid prices. Bid prices that exceed this ceiling shall be disqualified outright from further participating in the bidding. There shall be no lower limit to the amount of the award.

¹³ A basic principle of international law that “every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith” (Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties).

¹⁴ This issuance dated October 8, 2001, consolidated procurement rules and procedures for all national government agencies, government-owned or controlled corporations and government financial institutions.

¹⁵ “SC junks 3 petitions vs ZTE deal, says govt cancelled it,” GMA News, July 14, 2008, *available at* <http://www.gmanews.tv/story/106876/SC-junks-3-petitions-vs-ZTE-NBN-says-deal-was-cancelled>.

¹⁶ *Supra* note 6.

¹⁷ Civil Code, Article 4.

¹⁸ While IRR-A covers only domestically-funded procurement activities, the Court found no reason why such policy cannot be applied to foreign procurement projects. (“It would be incongruous, even absurd, to provide for the prospective application of RA 9184 with respect to domestically-funded procurement projects and, on the

other hand, as urged by the petitioners, apply RA 9184 retroactively with respect to foreign-funded procurement projects”).

¹⁹ Section 77—Transitory Provision.

²⁰ Section 31.

²¹ Sec. 1. xxx Nothing in this Order shall negate any existing and future government commitments with respect to the bidding and award of contracts financed partly or wholly with funds from international financing institutions as well as from bilateral and similar foreign sources.

²² An act authorizing the President to obtain foreign loans and credits, or to incur foreign indebtedness, as may be necessary to finance approved economic development purposes or projects, and to guarantee, in behalf of the Republic of the Philippines, foreign loans obtained or bonds issued by corporations owned or controlled by the government of the Philippines for economic development purposes.

²³ Section 5.06, Part II (International Competitive Bidding).

²⁴ Commissioner of Customs vs. Eastern Sea Trading, G.R. No. L-30650, July 31, 1970, citing Francis B. Sayre, *The Constitutionality of Trade Agreement Acts*, 39 Columbia L.R. 651.

²⁵ G.R. No. 175608, June 08, 2007.

²⁶ Tetch Torres, *DoJ says \$330-M broadband deal legal*, Philippine Daily Inquirer, July 31, 2007, available at <http://www.inquirer.net/specialreports/nbndeal/view.php?db=1&article=20070731-79831> (last accessed May 9, 2008).

²⁷ RA 9184, § 4.

²⁸ JOAQUIN G. BERNAS, S.J., *THE 1987 CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES: A COMMENTARY*, 2003 ed, at 903. In *Adolfo vs. CFI*, executive agreements are those which cover such subjects as commercial and consular relations, property relations like parent rights, trademark and copyrights, postal, navigation, settlement of private claims, tariff and trade matters.

²⁹ Philippine Constitution, Article VII, § 20.

³⁰ 3 SCRA 351 (1961).

³¹ Executive Order No. 459, November 25, 1997.

³² Senate Bill No. 1317—“An Act Mandating Concurrence to International Agreements and Executive Agreements,” filed July 24, 2007.

³³ See Deliberations of the Bicameral Conference Committee on the Disagreeing Provisions of Senate Bill No. 2248 and House Bill No. 4809, as cited in *Abaya* (G.R. No. 167919). Petitioner himself, then a member of the committee, put on record the

justification of including foreign funded contracts to the scope of RA 9184.

³⁴ Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Article 38(1).

³⁵ ISAGANI A. CRUZ, *INTERNATIONAL LAW*, 1993 ed., at 7.

³⁶ Senate Bill No. 1793—"An Act subjecting Treaties, International or Executive Agreements involving Funding in the Procurement of Infrastructure Projects, Goods, and Consulting Services, to be included in the Scope and Application of Philippine Procurement Laws, amending for the purpose Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and for other Purposes", filed October 22, 2007.

³⁷ Section 1 of IRR-A: "The IRR-B for foreign-funded procurement activities shall be the subject of a subsequent issuance."

³⁸ Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A, October 8, 2003.

³⁹ Darwin G. Amojelar, *Corruption, inefficiency cost govt P30B yearly*, The Manila Times, April 4, 2008, available at http://www.manilatimes.net/national/2008/apr/04/yehey/top_stories/20080404top4.html (last accessed May 9, 2008).

A Note on the Waterbirds of Pulupandan, Negros Occidental, Philippines

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Initial results of a survey on the waterbirds of Pulupandan, Negros Occidental conducted from July to October 2009 are presented. Thus far, 43 species are known, including one globally threatened species, the Philippine Duck *Anas luzonica* (Vulnerable). Majority of the species observed were migrants (31), others were residents (11), and only one endemic to the country.

KEYWORDS: ornithology, wetlands, waders, migrants, residents, endemic, Negros, conservation

INTRODUCTION

Very little work has been done on the avifauna of the Philippines (Kennedy, Gonzales, Dickinson, Miranda, & Fisher, 2000), especially with the waterbirds or waders (Magsalay & Kennedy, 2000), as forest birds received most attention from ornithologists and conservationists (Van Weerd & Der Ploeg, 2004).

Several sites in the Philippines are known as wintering grounds for migratory waterbirds, including the Olango Island in Mactan, Cebu, which is a wildlife sanctuary and a Ramsar Important Bird Area,

where thousands of birds were counted including the endangered Chinese Egret (Mapalo, 1994, 2001, 2002; see also Glick, 2005). Other important sites for wading birds are mentioned by Mapalo (1994, 2001), Custodio (2004) and Van Weerd and Der Ploeg (2004).

In the Western Visayas, the waterbirds are not well-studied although some studies have already been done. For example, M. Ebreo (1993) studied the biology of the Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* in Samponong Bolo, emphasizing the significance of the site as the sanctuary of the species.

The significance of Negros Occidental as habitat for waterbirds was highlighted when the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) filed cases against hunters who are members of a shooting club who posted several photos of wild ducks in the web.

METHODS

Site description

The site is located in Sitio Cavan, Barangay Tapong in the municipality of Pulupandan, adjacent to the mouth of the Bago River. Dominant vegetations include mangroves (mainly *Avicennia marina*, *Prosopis vidaliana*, and *Nypa fruticans*), coconut groves, and extensive reeds growing on the edges of fishponds.

Field techniques

Two transects (ca. 1.5 km each) were regularly traversed during observations in the morning, noon, and late afternoon between August 28 to September 2 and September 26 to October 2, 2009. Birds were identified and counted with the aid of binoculars and field guides (Kennedy et al., 2000; Fisher & Hicks, 2001). Listing of species as well as counting was repeated and only the maximum counts are presented here (Van Weerd & Der Ploeg, 2004). Aggregating species (e.g. ducks) were counted at their roosting sites or when they formed congregations when feeding (Bibby, Jones, & Marsden, 1998).

Mist nets were also employed near thickets and reeds. Captured species were weighed, and biometrics taken then photographed prior to release. Conservation status (IUCN) of species follows BirdLife International (2008).

RESULTS

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)

Eight birds were observed during the second visit (September 26 to October 2, 2009) although none was seen when the group first visited the study area in August 2009. This resident species in the Philippines is known to migrate locally depending on availability of suitable habitat. In this study, majority of the individuals sighted were of breeding plumage.

Philippine Duck (*Anas luzonica*)

In August 2009, more or less 350 species were observed in the area but counts increased to about 540 in September 2009. These were seen in a flock of wild ducks, which contain Wandering Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arcuata*. According to local informants, these ducks were already seen in large numbers as early as the 1970s and 1980s. However, the number greatly declined in the 1990s due to unregulated hunting activities. In early 2000, the number of these ducks increased in the area again when the local government, which aimed to be recognized for its environmental protection program, issued an ordinance prohibiting the hunting of waterbirds in all the wetlands of the municipality.

Great Egret (*Egretta alba*)

The highest count of egrets (6) was recorded on the first visit of the team in August 2009. However, only two were seen during the second visit in September 2009.

The distribution of the species given by Kennedy et al. (2000) does not include Negros Island. However, a distribution is expected, especially that this species is migrant. It was already seen by birdwatchers, including D. Baker (pers. comm.), in the 1990s in the fishponds of Tanjay and also recently (15 June 2009) by D. Baker and A. Bucol in the vicinity of Silliman University Marine Laboratory.

Javan Pond Heron (*Ardeola speciosa*)

At least 23 birds were counted in August and 35 birds were counted in the September-October survey in Cavan marsh and adjacent banks

of the Bago river. Both breeding and non-breeding plumage were observed. The only known *Ardeola* species in Negros and Panay is the *A. bacchus* (Kennedy et al., 2000). The highest count observed by the group was during the second visit with a total of 58 birds.

Chinese Pond Heron (*Ardeola bacchus*)

Two birds were seen on October 1, 2009 both in non-breeding plumage. All sightings of this species were all of immature birds and since it is quite difficult to separate this species from *A. speciosa*, this record is considered tentative and needs confirmation.

Wandering Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna arcuata*)

In August 2009, 250 birds were observed in the area while 634 were counted in September 2009. The species, on certain occasions, was observed together with Philippine Duck *Anas luzonica*.

Black-Crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

The species probably breeds in the country (Kennedy et al., 2000) as both adult and immature plumages were observed. The researchers did not find nesting or juvenile birds although the locals reported that they nest in the area.

Rufous-Night Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*)

Eleven birds were sighted on September 29, 2009; some were perching on trees.

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*)

Eleven birds were spotted on October 1, 2009 and consistently seen throughout the observation days. The species probably breed in the area as local guides were able to describe the nests and eggs of this heron. Ebreo (1993) studied the biology of this species in Samponong Bolo, Iloilo, Philippines.

Yellow bittern (*Ixobrychus sinensis*)

This species was spotted throughout the observation period, usually flying over reed beds and ponds.

Cinnamon Bittern (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*)

Six birds were seen on October 1, 2009 flying over reed beds and across fishponds.

Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

Five were seen on September 29, 2009. Both migrant and resident populations are found in the Philippines (Kennedy et al., 2000). With the aid of local hunters, the researchers were able to find two recent fledglings. Interestingly, neither of the two possessed orange-red flesh at the base of the upper mandible as illustrated by Kennedy et al. (2000).

DISCUSSION

Thus far, a total of 43 species of waterbirds are known in the study area (see Table 1), 31 of which are migrants and 11 are residents to the country while only one is endemic to the Philippines. The number of migrants is expected to increase as other migrants arrived in November during the southward migration and February-March during the northward migration (see Kennedy et al., 2000 for information of each species). The results of the subsequent surveys (February to May 2010) will be published in a subsequent report.

The Philippine Duck *Anas luzonica* (Vulnerable) is the only globally threatened species encountered during the survey. It was estimated that in a flock (ca 300) of ducks composed of this species and the Wandering Whistling Duck *D. arcuata*, about 80 were of *A. luzonica*. Van Weerd and Der Ploeg (2004) reported 1,320 birds in January 2002 in Malasi Lakes in Northern Luzon, Philippines. Although the counts reported herein are lower than those in Malasi Lakes and in Candaba Marsh in Luzon, it is suspected that the study site holds the highest population of the species in Negros Island. One of the researchers (A. Bucol) observed only 5-7 birds of this species in an abandoned mining pond in Basay, Negros Oriental, Philippines. This number indicates a significant decline due to hunting (P. Zante pers. comm.); at least a

thousand individuals existed in the area in the early 1990s (based on interviews with local hunters in the area). The total population of this species has been estimated at 2,500-10,000 individuals, and numbers are declining in most of its known areas (BirdLife International, 2008).

Using Kennedy et al.'s baseline (2000), the Javan Pond-Heron *A. speciosa* is a new record for Negros Island though it may have been recorded earlier by birdwatchers. Another possible reason is the presence of the migrant species *Ardeola bacchus*, since the immature forms of both species closely resemble.

The following species were not recorded during the survey but are expected to be found in the wetlands of Negros island (recorded by Kennedy et al., 2000): Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*; Watercock *Gallicrex cinnnerias*; Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*; Greater-painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*; and Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The wetland in Cavan, Pulupandan is considerably rich in terms of waterbirds with at least 43 species, rivaling those of other wetlands such as the Candaba Marsh in Luzon Island in terms of species diversity. This could be attributed to its topographic location, being adjacent to the Bago River. Its vast reed beds and mangroves serve as the habitat for waterbirds while the presence of fishponds nearby may also provide a source of food.

Conservation plans for the waterbirds of Pulupandan is currently being integrated in the local government unit's environmental program. Although the municipal government has banned hunting, some residents are still practicing occasional trapping with the use of local snares. Thus, an educational campaign should be done alongside enforcement.

AUTHORS' NOTE

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Table 1.

Counts of waterbirds in Cavan, Pulupandan, Negros Occidental in late July to late August 2009 and late September to early October, 2009.

English Name	Latin Name	Status	August	September
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	R	6	8
Philippine Duck	<i>Anas luzonica</i>	PE, Vu	230	540
Wandering Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna arcuata</i>	R	455	634
Great Egret	<i>Egretta alba</i>	M	6	2
Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	M	11	15
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	M	27	75
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	M	30	5
Black-Crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	M	46	36
Rufous-Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax caledonicus</i>	R	2	11
Little Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>	M	24	8
Javan Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola speciosa</i>	R	45	58
Chinese Pond-Heron	<i>Ardeola bacchus</i>	M	6	2
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	R	8	11
Yellow Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	R	11	18
Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	M	8	6
Barred Rail	<i>Gallirallus torquatus</i>	R	15	22
White-browed Crake	<i>Porzana cinerea</i>	R	17	10
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	R	2	1
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	R	8	5
Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Limicola falcinellus</i>	M	2	--
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	M	8	5
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	M	12	3
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	M	5	--
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	M	3	2
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	M	12	5
Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinerea</i>	M	2	4
Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	M	2	--
Grey-tailed Tattler	<i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>	M	5	6
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	M	4	8
Swinhoe's Snipe	<i>Gallinago megala</i>	M	--	1
Little Ringed-Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	M/R	2	1
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	M	2	4
Gray Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	M	25	17
Asian Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	M	12	3
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	M	--	2
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	M	1	--
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	M	45	86
Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	M	9	11
Great Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	M	5	9
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	M	23	14
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>	M	21	10
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	M	2	5
White-collared Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon chloris</i>	R	12	10
Total Number of Species		43	30	28

Note: PE—Philippine endemic; M—Migrant; R—Resident; Vu—Vulnerable (IUCN status based on BirdLife International 2008).

Endemic, Indigenous, and Introduced Species in the Freshwater Ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga: Status, Diversity, and Impacts

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This study was conducted to determine the diversity of endemic, indigenous, and introduced species and to identify the sources and the level of impacts of environmental degradation in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga provinces, Philippines. Five freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija were chosen as study areas, and the survey was done in the Pampanga Main rivers and in Candaba Swamp. In each study area in Nueva Ecija, three designated stations were used and in each station ten quadrats measuring 10m by 12m were randomly chosen while ten stations per study area were chosen in Pampanga. Survey, collection, identification, description, classification and observation as well as listing of organisms were conducted. Assessment of the environmental disturbances affecting the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga was also done to survey the sources and level of impacts of environmental degradation of the freshwater ecosystems.

Ten indigenous species, one endemic species and 16 introduced species were identified in the different freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija. There were 10 indigenous species, one endemic species and 12 introduced species identified in Candaba Swamp and Pampanga River in Pampanga. There are 18 indigenous species, 1 endemic species and 22 introduced species present in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga. The introduced species are more abundant and richer

compared to the endemic and indigenous species. Based on the assessment done regarding the sources and levels of impacts of environmental degradation of the freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija, major impacts were contributed by animal and solid wastes, biological pollution, recreational development and establishment of the hydroelectric power plant. Some identified sources of environmental degradation in the freshwater ecosystems of Pampanga are pollution, encroachment, conversion to agricultural purposes and siltation with moderate impacts.

This study has relevant implication to the status of freshwater ecosystems because proliferation of the introduced species may lead to endemic/indigenous species displacement and extinction as well as loss of biodiversity in the freshwater ecosystems.

KEYWORDS: diversity, endemic species, freshwater ecosystems, indigenous species, introduced species

The Philippine freshwater ecosystems are endowed with a rich diversity of flora (1,616 species) and fauna (3,675 species) (DENR, UNDP, 1997). These consist of algae, aquatic macrophytes, aquatic invertebrates, insects and fisheries, which represent the dominant components of the complex food webs that have evolved in the different freshwater ecosystems. While inventories of these groups have yet to cover the 78 lakes, 421 major rivers, and the four major swamps/marshes, the initial biodiversity records are impressive enough.

Endemic species are unique species that occur within a particular geographical area and nowhere else in the world (IUCN & WWF, 1994; Alberto, 2005). A species that is indigenous is native, but not unique for they are also native to other locations as well. These kinds of species are naturally born to a certain area, but they can also be found in other places. Presently, endemic and indigenous species of freshwater ecosystems are in danger of becoming extinct because many rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands are affected by pollution due to human activity.

An introduced species or foreign species is a species grown outside of its natural habitat (Bruton & Merron, 1985; De Silva, 1989). It is a species introduced and dispersed by direct or indirect human activity to a region or location outside the limits of its natural

range. There are many ways in which the introduction of non-native or exotic species negatively affects our environment and the diversity of life on our planet. Foreign species may be introduced deliberately (for ornamental, aesthetic, medicinal, or agricultural reasons by humans) or accidentally (through animal vectors, water discharge, movement of people, or by trading of nursery stock). In the Philippines, introduction of foreign/exotic species were intended for food production, food security, reforestation, and recreation. Today, these invasive species are posing major threats to humans and to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Studies have indicated that introduced species could alter the evolution of native species by competitive exclusion, niche displacement, predation and ultimate extinction (MacKinnon, 2002). These species are among the top drivers of environmental change globally, and are known to threaten food security, human health and economic development (Joshi, 2005).

In the Philippines, data on the impact of introduced species on various ecosystems are very limited; hence, this study was conducted to determine the status, diversity, and impacts of endemic, indigenous, and introduced species in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga in Central Luzon.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study were twofold: [a] to identify and classify the different endemic, indigenous and foreign/introduced species that are present in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga; and [b] to identify the sources and the level of impacts of environmental degradation in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga.

METHODOLOGY

Five freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija were chosen as the study areas namely: Talavera River, Talavera; Pampanga River, Palayan City; Tabuating River, San Leonardo; Paitan Lake, Cuyapo; and Pantabangan Dam, Pantabangan (Figure 1). In Pampanga, the survey was done in the Pampanga Main rivers in Apalit, San Simon and San Luis and in Candaba Swamp, Candaba (Figure 2). In each study

area in Nueva Ecija, three designated stations were used and in each station, 10 quadrats measuring 10m by 12m were randomly chosen while 10 stations per study area were used in Pampanga. Survey, collection, identification, description, classification and observation, as well as listing of organisms particularly the mollusks, crustaceans, fishes and macroflora present in all quadrats, were done. FishBase by Froese and Pauly (2006), Philippine Fisheries Profile by BFAR (2004) and Invasive Aquatic Animals in the Philippines by Guerrero (2002) were used as basis for the identification of the aquatic organisms. Authentication was made by fisheries technologists at the Freshwater Aquaculture Center of Central Luzon State University (CLSU), the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, Department of Agriculture, and by a taxonomist from the Zoology Division of the National Museum. The number of species, frequency (F), relative frequency (RF), dominance (Do), relative dominance (RDo), density (D), relative density (RD), and species importance value (SIV) of each species were determined (Alberto, 2005; Smith & Smith, 2000). The formula for the determination of SIV is $RF + RDo + RD$. The species diversity of each study area was also computed using the Shannon Diversity Index (Smith & Smith, 2000):

$$H' = - \sum_{i=1}^S p_i \ln(p_i)$$

where H' = Shannon index of diversit

p_i = proportion of species from the total species

\ln = natural logarithm

S = total number of species

An assessment of the environmental disturbances affecting the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga was also done to survey the sources and level of impacts of environmental degradation of the freshwater ecosystems (Alberto, 2005). This part was conducted by the researchers together with CENRO and DENR personnel in the selected study areas.

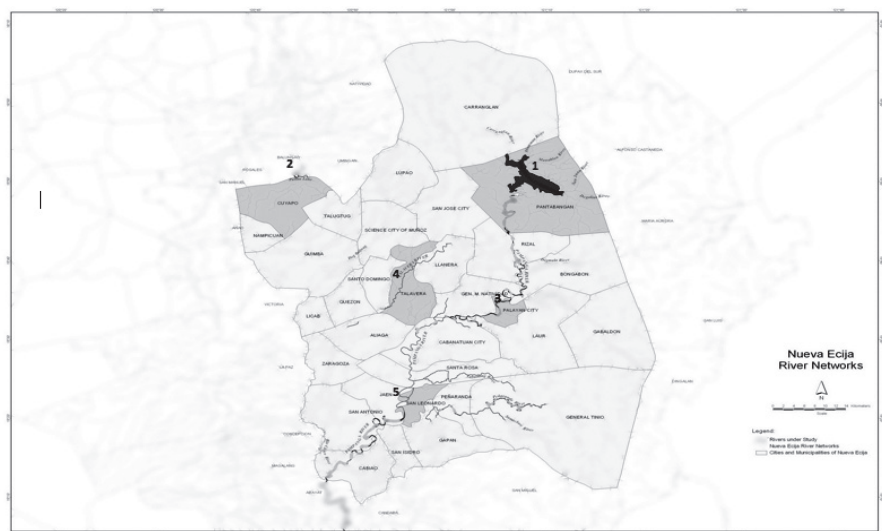


Figure 1. The sampling sites in Nueva Ecija.

Legend: 1—Pantabangan Dam, Pantabangan / 2—Paitan Lake, Cuyapo / 3—Pampanga River, Palayan City / 4—Talavera River, Talavera / 5—Tabuating River, San Leonardo.

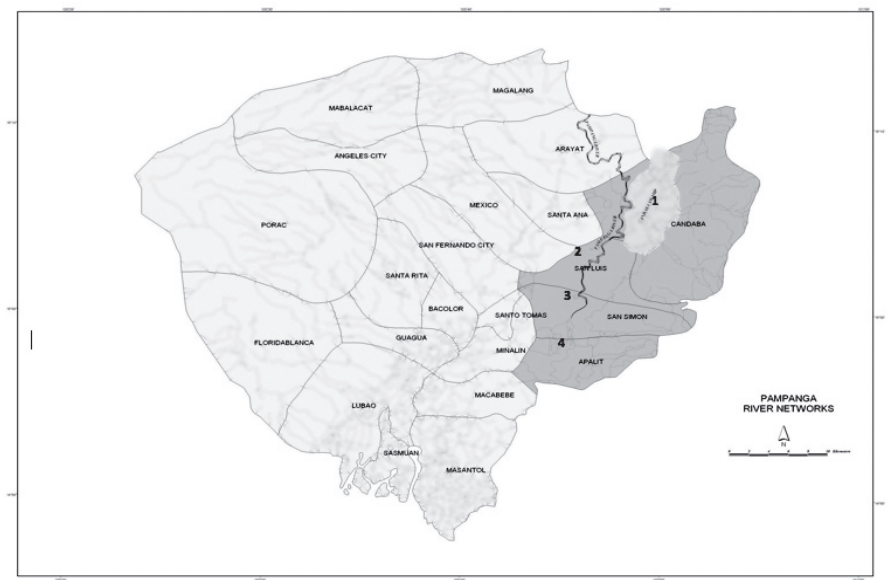


Figure 2. The sampling sites in Pampanga.

Legend: 1—Candaba Swamp, Candaba / 2—Pampanga River, San Luis / 3—Pampanga River, San Simon / 4—Pampanga River, Apalit

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Endemic and Indigenous Species in Nueva Ecija

One endemic species and ten indigenous species were identified in the different freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija: three freshwater fishes, two indigenous fishes (*Channa melasoma* and *Glossogobius giuris*) and one endemic fish (*Leiopotherapon plumbeus*); two species of freshwater crustaceans (*Macrobrachium idella* and *Metapenaeus ensis*); one species of freshwater mollusk (*Corbicula fluminea*); and five species of freshwater macroflora, namely *Polygonum barbatum*, *Hydrilla verticillata*, *Ipomoea aquatica*, *Commelina diffusa* and *Ludwigia hyssopifolia* (Table 1).

Corbicula fluminea and *Leiopotherapon plumbeus* registered the highest Species Importance Value among the collected freshwater animal species. *Ipomoea aquatica* had the highest Species Importance Value among the macroflora (Table 1). Not a single native species was found in Talavera River.

Results reveal that the indigenous organisms present in the freshwater ecosystems surveyed in Nueva Ecija are not diverse anymore, for all of them have very low relative values (Table 2). Even though Pantabangan Dam obtained the most number of species, the number of individuals per species is not numerous so it is still not diverse.

Table 1.

Species Importance Value (SIV) of the endemic and indigenous species in the freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija.

Species	Species Importance Value (%)			
	Pampanga River	Paitan Lake	Pantabangan Dam	Tabuating River
Fish				
<i>Leiopotherapon plumbeus</i>	126.55	29.24	31.91	
<i>Glossogobius giuris</i>	25.85	55.23	36.79	
<i>Channa melasoma</i>		27.35	22.06	
Mollusk				
<i>Corbicula fluminea</i>	10.65		15.17	273.07

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Table 1 (Continued...)

Species Importance Value (SIV) of the endemic and indigenous species in the freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija.

Species	Species Importance Value (%)			
	Pampanga River	Paitan Lake	Pantabangan Dam	Tabuating River
Crustacean				
<i>Metapenaeus ensis</i>				42.81
<i>Macrobrachium idella</i>		16.71	20.38	
Macroflora				
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	100.85	102.72	22.79	42.81
<i>Ludwigia hyssopifolia</i>	36.29			
<i>Polygonum barbatum</i>		69.77		
<i>Commelina diffusa</i>			99.05	
<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>			35.53	

Table 2.

Species diversity values of the indigenous species and introduced/foreign species in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija.

Freshwater Ecosystems	Total Number of Organisms		Species Diversity Value	
	Indigenous Species	Foreign Species	Indigenous Species	Foreign Species
Pampanga River	57	102	0.66	0.50
Tabuating River	59	84	0.39	0.87
Paitan Lake	74	492	0.70	0.45
Pantabangan Dam	107	92	0.77	0.83
Talavera River	0	37		0.82

Introduced Species in Nueva Ecija

A total of 16 freshwater introduced species were identified. Seven of these were freshwater fishes namely: Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), Walking Catfish (*Clarias batrachus*), Janitor fish (*Pterygoplichthys disjunctivus*), Large mouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), Rohu (*Labeo rohita*), Buan-buan (*Megalops cyprinoides*) and Gourami (*Trichopodus*

trichopterus). Five introduced species of freshwater mollusks were collected namely: Agurong or Pilipit (*Melanoides granifera*), Peewee (*Viviparus intertextus*), *Viviparus mweruensis*, Golden apple snail (*Pomacea canaliculata*) and Black sand shell or Sulib (*Ligumia latissima*). On the other hand, four introduced species of freshwater macroflora were collected namely: water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*), Malakaturay (*Sesbania sesban*), Stonewort (*Chara braunii*) and Baino (*Nymphaea pubesceus*) (See Table 3).

Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) was the most common and the most important introduced freshwater fish while *Pomacea canaliculata*, also called golden apple snail, was the most common and the most important introduced freshwater mollusk in the selected freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija. Moreover, *Eichornia crassipes* was the most common and the most important introduced freshwater macroflora found in the study areas (See Table 3).

The introduced species present in the surveyed freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija (Table 2) are not diverse, but it is quite alarming to note that the number of species (Table 3) and the number of individuals per species (Table 2) are higher compared to the endemic and indigenous species present in the study areas. Moreover, introduced species are present in Talavera River but there is no existence anymore of endemic and indigenous species in this river.

Table 3.

Species Importance Value (SIV) of the introduced species in the freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija.

Species	Species Importance Value (%)				
	Pampanga River	Paitan Lake	Pantabangan Dam	Tabuating River	Talavera River
Fish					
<i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	236.68	18.95	108.32	103.87	21.67
<i>Pterygoplichthys disjunctivus</i>				17.23	
<i>Megalops cyprinoides</i>		9.18		16.67	42.08
<i>Labeo rohita</i>					
<i>Clarias batrachus</i>		2.9	4.80	15.95	
<i>Micropterus salmoides</i>			12.26		
<i>Trichopodus trichopterus</i>			15.83		

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Table 3. (Continued...)

Species Importance Value (SIV) of the introduced species in the freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija.

Species	Species Importance Value (%)				
	Pampanga River	Paitan Lake	Pantabangan Dam	Tabuating River	Talavera River
Mollusk					
<i>Pomacea canaliculata</i>	15.33	39.82	83.43	24.23	128.69
<i>Melanoides granifera</i>					47.61
<i>Ligumia latissima</i>	6.35	9.35	115.64		
<i>Viviparus miveruensis</i>		4.28			
<i>Viviparus intertextus</i>		4.28			
Macroflora					
<i>Eichornia crassipes</i>	41.63	188.36		57.53	59.87
<i>Chara braunii</i>				64.64	
<i>Sesbania sesban</i>		19.65	4.80		
<i>Nymphaea pubesceus</i>		3.24			

Endemic, Indigenous and Introduced Species in Pampanga

There were 10 indigenous species, one endemic species (see Table 4) and 12 introduced species collected in Candaba Swamp and Pampanga River (Table 5). Five indigenous species of fish: *Dermogenys pusilla* (Halfbeak), *Glossogobius aureus* (Goby), *Hexanematichthys sagor* (River Catfish), *Channa striata* (Mudfish) and *Scatophagus argus* (Spotted Scat); one endemic fish—*Leiopotherapon plumbeus* (Silver Perch); and, two indigenous species of mollusks: the *Pila conica* (Native Snail) and *Corbicula manilensis* (Native Freshwater Clam) were collected. Two collected crustaceans were both indigenous species, *Macrobrachium idella* (freshwater shrimp) and *Macrobrachium rosenbergii* (giant freshwater prawn). *Dermogynes pusilla* (Halfbeak) had the highest Species Importance Value of 67.34 in Candaba Swamp and Pampanga River (Table 4).

Table 4.

Species Importance Value (SIV) of the collected indigenous and endemic species in Candaba Swamp and Pampanga River in Pampanga

Species	SIV (%)
Fishes	
<i>Dermogenys pusilla</i>	67.34
<i>Glossogobius aureus</i>	53.33
<i>Hexanemichthys sagor</i>	52.35
<i>Channa striata</i>	34.80
<i>Leipottherapon plumbeus</i>	17.66
<i>Scatophagus argus</i>	0.46
Mollusk	
<i>Pila conica</i>	40.10
<i>Corbicula fluminea</i>	3.59
Crustacean	
<i>Macrobrachium idella</i>	15.32
<i>Macrobrachium rosenbergii</i>	4.74
Macroflora	
<i>Ipomea aquatica</i>	10.28

Nine species were identified as introduced fish species, namely *Oreochromis niloticus* (Tilapia), *Cyprinus carpio* (Carp), *Labeo rohita* (Rohu), *Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* (Silver Carp), *Clarias gariepinus* (Catfish), *Pterygoplichthys disjunctivus* (Vermiculated Sailfin Catfish), *Trichogaster pectoralis* (Gourami), *Trichopodus trichopterus* (Gourami), and *Gambusia affinis* (Mosquito Fish) (Table 5). Two mollusks were collected: *Pomacaea canaliculata* (Golden Apple Snail) and *Cristaria plicata* (Freshwater Clam). In addition, there was only one collected introduced macroflora in Pampanga River and Candaba Swamp—the *Eichornia crassipes* (Water Hyacinth).

Among the introduced species collected, Golden Apple Snail (*P. canaliculata*) had the highest Species Importance Value of 83.90 followed by Tilapia (*O. niloticus*) with 75.56 (Table 5).

All the study areas had low species diversity values for both the indigenous/endemic species (0.16) and the introduced species (0.19) in Pampanga. However, from the results obtained the foreign species registered higher number of species and total number of organisms (4825) compared to indigenous species (3753).

Table 5.

Species Importance Value (SIV) of the introduced species in Candaba Swamp and Pampanga River in Pampanga.

Species	SIV (%)
Fish	
<i>Oreochromis niloticus</i>	75.56
<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	60.80
<i>Clarias gariepinus</i>	4.87
<i>Trichogaster pectoralis</i>	18.57
<i>Labeo rohita</i>	11.84
<i>Hypostomus plecostomus</i>	11.44
<i>Gambusia affinis</i>	3.96
<i>Trichopodus trichopterus</i>	6.20
<i>Hypophthalmichthys molitrix</i>	0.84
Mollusk	
<i>Pomacea canaliculata</i>	83.9
<i>Cristaria plicata</i>	3.90
Macroflora	
<i>Eichornia crassipes</i>	4.71

Sources of Environmental Degradation of the Freshwater Ecosystems in Nueva Ecija and Pampanga

Based on the assessment done regarding the sources and level of impacts of environmental degradation of the selected freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija oil spill, laundry soap, toxic chemical hazards and encroachment had moderate impacts on Talavera River. However, in Pampanga River of Palayan City, only the use of laundry soap recorded a moderate impact. In Tabuating River, pollution such as animal wastes, solid wastes and biological pollution of introduced or alien species contributed major impacts to the river. These may result in loss of precious natural resources or habitat, loss of biodiversity, loss of aquatic ecosystems value, disruption of the local economics or socio-economics, loss of valuable wildlife and damage to water quality.

On the other hand, in Paitan Lake, dredging of water recorded a moderate impact on the lake. In Pantabangan Dam, recreational development and establishment of the hydroelectric power plant contributed major impacts in the area while biological pollution or

introduction of alien or exotic species had moderate impacts on the environmental degradation of the dam. These may result in wildlife extinction, reduction of aquatic productivity, extinction of the native freshwater species and the destruction of the ecological habitat of the native freshwater species. Among the five study areas, Tabuating River in San Leonardo was the most polluted but many introduced species still existed.

Some identified sources of environmental degradation in aquatic ecosystems of Candaba Swamp were solid wastes, animal wastes and laundry soap disposal; encroachment and conversion to agricultural purpose that have moderate impacts on loss of precious natural resources/habitat, damage to water ways quality, adverse effect on other water use, adverse effects on agriculture and downstream water quality, loss of aquatic ecosystem value critical for proper species growth, impairment of beneficial water uses, loss of precious ecology, disease hazards, reduced aquatic productivity, adverse impact on quality of water for new settlers and downstream users and disruption in periodic water flow and changes in water quantity and quality.

However, the sources of environmental degradation in the aquatic ecosystems of Pampanga River were pollution, siltation, encroachment, quarrying, inorganic fertilizer run-off and environmental aesthetic degradation that had moderate impacts on the loss of precious natural resources/habitat, loss of biodiversity, damage to waterways quality, adverse effect on other water use, adverse effect on aquaculture and downstream water quality, serious aquaculture loss, loss of aquatic ecosystem value, hazards to endangered species, loss of aesthetic value/loss of environmental scenic value, impairment of beneficial water uses, loss of precious ecology, disease hazards aquatic productivity, reduced aquatic productivity, and disruption periodically of water flow and changes in water quantity and quality.

DISCUSSION

Previous studies revealed that endemic/indigenous freshwater organisms such as mollusks and crustacean species in Carranglan freshwater ecosystem, Talavera River, Gapan River, San Jose City River and Valdefuente River in Nueva Ecija are no longer diverse (Salvador & Alberto, 2000; Mendoza et al., 2005; Garcia & Alberto, 2005) due to environmental stresses that are present in those ecosystems. Two freshwater mollusks, namely *Melanoides granifera*

and *Viviparus intertextus* and three freshwater crustaceans such as *Palaemonetes paludosus*, *Palaemonetes* sp., and *Paratelphusa* sp. were found in the freshwater ecosystem of Carranglan, Nueva Ecija (Mendoza et al., 2005). Most of the identified species in Carranglan freshwater ecosystem are foreign species except *Paratelphusa* sp. whose status is not yet established in the Philippines. Five freshwater mollusks namely *Melanoides granifera*, *Melanoides tuberculata*, *Ampullaria* sp., *Indoplanorbis exustus*, and *Corbicula fluminea* were found in Valdefuente River, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija (Garcia & Alberto, 2005). Talavera River and Gapan River had only two identified freshwater mollusks such as *Melanoides granifera* and *Corbicula fluminea* (Garcia & Alberto, 2005). Only two indigenous species were identified, *Corbicula fluminea* and *Indoplanorbis exustus*. *Metapenaeus ensis*, an indigenous freshwater crustacean, was found in Gapan River, Gapan and Valdefuente River, Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija (Salvador & Alberto, 2000). *Paratelphusa* sp. was identified also in Valdefuente River. Two foreign species namely, *Macrobrachium* lar and *Palaemonetes paludosus* were found in San Jose City River, San Jose City, Nueva Ecija. Present findings corroborate the previous findings with regard to the low diversity of the indigenous species in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija.

However, the study indicates that the only endemic species, *Leiopotherapon plumbeus*, commonly called Ayungin/Lukaok, is still present in Nueva Ecija freshwater ecosystems and obtained the highest species importance value among the collected freshwater fish species particularly in Pantabangan Dam, Pantanbangan, Paitan Lake, Cuyapo and Pampanga River in Palayan City. This species is very common in the freshwater ecosystems for they can easily adapt to the environment and they usually feed on zoobenthos such as small insects, crustaceans and small fish (Froese & Pauly, 2006). The freshwater ecosystems are still conducive to the habitation of this species due to the availability of food in those ecosystems.

On the other hand, *Corbicula fluminea* is the most important indigenous freshwater mollusk species in Nueva Ecija. Its habitat, which is along the riverbanks and under the rocks, is not affected by the environmental pressures. It is ovoviviparous wherein it reproduces rapidly during its early maturity and its fecundity is high; hence, their abundance in the areas (Heard, 1977; Korniusshin & Glaubrecht, 2002). Freshwater mussels generally are intolerant to environmental perturbations and tend to concentrate pollutants in their tissues due to their sessile filter-feeding habits (Cummings &

Mayer, 1992).

Moreover, results revealed that *Ipomea aquatica* (Kangkong) garnered the highest importance value among freshwater macroflora in Nueva Ecija and Pampanga freshwater ecosystems. This aquatic flora usually thrives on the riverside where the water current is calm especially in standing bodies of water. It is very common due to its utilization for human consumption. It is easy to culture due to its rapid growth and it can easily grow and adapt to muddy-sandy substratum. Because of its ability to float on water, it is widely distributed in an open water body.

The high species importance value of *Dermogenys pusilla* in Pampanga Rivers and Candaba Swamp, on the other hand, could be attributed to the presence of worms, crustaceans, and insects that serve as their primary food in the said areas.

With regard to introduced species in Nueva Ecija, Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*) has the highest importance value because this species serves as food and source of income to the people living near these freshwater ecosystems. In addition, this fish species is very easy to culture and the people are fond of eating this fish.

Tilapias have great impact on local biodiversity because they dominate the fish biomass of waters in which they become established and compete with indigenous species for food, habitat and breeding sites. They also displace other fish through their aggressive behavior in defending their nests. In addition, tilapias can survive even in poor water quality, can tolerate wide range of environmental conditions, and can adapt to variety of cultured condition (Vera Cruz, 1997). Moreover, its abundance is attributed to its efficiency in reproduction that allows easy and rapid propagation in various tropical and subtropical environments that partially explains the economic interest in these species for fish culture. Likewise, tilapia has precocious sexual maturation that can occur as early as three months and depends on genetic factors, environmental factors such as temperature, food availability, social factors, and so on (Pullin & McConnel, 1982).

Among the introduced species collected, Golden Apple Snail (*P. canaliculata*) had the highest Species Importance Value. The vast dominance of Golden Apple Snail (GAS) in the freshwater ecosystems in Pampanga could be attributed to the presence of muddy bottom of the swamp where the species burrow. GAS can reach reproductive maturity in two months and attain high population densities in the presence of natural predators. It tends to leave the water in the morning and in the evening to lay bright pink batches of 25-200 eggs.

Without water, GAS becomes inactive, but it is able to burrow into the mud and hibernate for several months, re-emerging when water is again available (Cagauan & Joshi, 2002).

Eichornia crassipes also known as water hyacinth is the most common introduced freshwater macroflora in the freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija and Pampanga. It is a free-floating (but sometimes rooted) freshwater plant of the family Pontederiaceae that has proven to be a significant economic and ecological burden to many sub-tropical and tropical regions of the world. It is listed as one of the most productive plants on earth. Water hyacinth has invaded freshwater ecosystems in over 50 countries on five continents. It is especially pervasive throughout Southeast Asia, southeastern United States, central and western Africa, and Central America (Bartodziej & Weymouth, 1995; Brendock, 2003; Lu et al., 2007; Martinez Jimenez & Gomez Balandra, 2007). The habitats for this plant have ranged from shallow temporary ponds, marshes, lakes, rivers and reservoirs. A broad spectrum of physico-chemical environments characterizes these habitats. They range from clean waters that are poor in major nutrients such as rivers and reservoirs to highly polluted waters with large amounts of nutrients and organic matter, as is the case in sewage lagoons (Gopal, 1987). In this study, this plant occurred in polluted Tabuating River in Nueva Ecija as well as in other freshwater ecosystems with moderate pollution.

All the study areas had low species diversity for both endemic/indigenous species and introduced species in Nueva Ecija and Pampanga that could be attributed to presence of environmental disturbances such as pollution like animal wastes and solid wastes, oil spill, toxic chemical hazards, encroachment, conversion to agricultural purposes, siltation, dredging of water, recreational development and establishment of hydroelectric power plant and biological pollution which is the introduction of exotic species. All of these anthropogenic activities could lead to loss of precious habitats of the organisms and loss of biodiversity. Several factors are responsible for the decline of diversity in the freshwater ecosystems in Nueva Ecija and Pampanga. But, attention must be given to the proliferation of introduced species in the freshwater ecosystems included in this study. Once the exotic/foreign species are introduced to an ecosystem with no natural predators or competitors and become established in the ecosystem, these species can become aggressive and dangerously invasive like tilapia, carp and catfish (Matthews, 2004); golden apple snail (Guerrero, 2002 and Joshi, 2005) and water hyacinth (Brendock, 2003

and Matthews, 2004). Competition from exotic/foreign/introduced species is a potential threat to native species.

CONCLUSION

There are 18 indigenous species, one endemic species, and 22 introduced species present in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga. The introduced species in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga are more abundant and richer compared to the endemic and indigenous species. This result is very alarming for this might lead to species displacement and extinction of the native species because of the evident biological pollution. This may result in the destruction of ecological balance in the freshwater ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and Pampanga in the upcoming years.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources regularly monitor the freshwater ecosystems particularly with regard to the inventory of aquatic species;
- Public awareness on the environmental status of the various freshwater ecosystems be done;
- Establishment of fish sanctuaries be done to maintain the indigenous species left in the freshwater ecosystem;
- Restocking of indigenous freshwater species in the area be done; and,
- Researches be conducted and technology be designed on the propagation of indigenous species.

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Learning Styles and Intelligences of the Mathematically Under-Prepared College Entrants in Silliman University

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This study was conducted to primarily find out the preferred learning style and dominant intelligence of mathematically under-prepared students or those taking the Math 1 (Pre-College Algebra) subject. In order to have a frame of reference, a parallel survey was conducted with the regular College Algebra (or Math 11) students using the same instrument. Seven sections of both Pre-College Algebra and College Algebra students were taken as respondents for the study.

Results reveal that among the four general learning styles, both Math 1 and Math 11 students preferred sensual thinking (mastery style). However, they differ significantly on the intuitive thinking (understanding style) as Math 11 students are more inclined to this style than the Math 1 students. For the dominant type of intelligence, Math 1 students were more into Interpersonal Intelligence alone, while for Math 11 students, Musical as well as Interpersonal Intelligences.

It is recommended that teachers apply excitement factor in their activities such that interaction occurs among students, use is made of their senses, and practical application is realized in what they are doing. At the same time, these activities should not only allow physical participation but also entail mental stimulation.

KEYWORDS: learning styles, multiple intelligences, mathematics teaching, mathematically under-prepared students, pre-college algebra, entrance examination, connected knower, problem-posing method, cooperative learning

INTRODUCTION

In a survey of 261 Pre-College Algebra first year students in school year 2009–2010 on the question why students dislike math, 206 or 78.93% said that students dislike math because “Math forces one to give the correct answer.” This was followed by “Bad experience in the high school” (55.94%) and “Bad teacher” (50.57%).

In the same survey, the question on what subject was their favorite in high school, 101 or 38.7% said English. Moreover, the survey revealed that Mathematics ranks 7th among favorite high school subjects with only 16.48%. However, on the question on whether Math is a useless subject or not, only 20 or 7% said that it is useless.

These results show that the dislike for mathematics is not from the subject per se but from external factors such as teaching and relating the subject to the outside world when discussed in the classroom. The reason why students rank English as their favorite subject may be attributed to the fact that students are most of the time communicating or interacting with each other in English. In addition, English as a subject could be immediately related to the language frequently used in these students’ environment and activities—they watch English movies or TV programs, listen to English songs, and chat or email using English.

The dislike due to lack of relevance of math to the outside world may have been aggravated when the subject is taught without drawing the students’ creativity. Having a fixed answer and forcing students to fit their thinking to it could be taken as an affront to the students in their freedom and liberty to think. It could then be noted that “Bad Teacher” and “Bad experience in the high school” are inter-related answers.

According to Keast (2008), when teaching is done with an authoritative figure and imparts information to the students with such information not relevant to the students’ reality or life, this approach of teaching is called traditional approach. In the traditional approach, classrooms are conducive for individual activities whereby students are not encouraged to interact. What makes this scenario worse is the fact that the answers to the individual activities are always fixed or known, leaving students with no opportunity to express their creative style or to discover new things. As a result of this traditional approach, students perceive learning mathematics as different from other learning experiences, such as learning science or other subjects. It is therefore clear from the survey that the participants were coming

from classes that were taught using a traditional approach.

The second approach, on the other hand, according to Keast, is the one which focuses on “connected knowers” (Gilligan, 1982; Blenky et al., 1986 in Keast, 2008). This distinct style of reasoning and learning develops students from their own perspective of being a knower. This style believes that students “trust knowledge that comes from personal experience rather than being handed down from authority” (p. 53). In this approach, teachers prefer to connect with this knower inside each student—to understand him/her, his/her subjectivism and knowledge. Moreover, teachers try to view knowledge not as a cold and impersonal entity given in the classroom; instead, they try to fuse knowledge with the students’ emotions and personalities because teachers are aware that students “value learning and knowledge that is woven into their personal relationships, surroundings and environment” (p. 53).

In these two approaches, Freire (1990) labels the former as “banking education”, while the latter as “problem-posing method.” In “banking education,” the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposit which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. In the “problem-posing method,” on the other hand, the students are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world and with the world, thus allowing them to feel constantly challenged and obliged to respond to that challenge.

The authors believe that problem-posing method is more appropriate to mathematics teaching because according to Lee-Chua (2001) a math student needs to understand the concepts of the subject and not its superficialities of the problems or solutions or any presentation exhibited. Without understanding of the mathematical concepts, the mathematical expressions and symbols, such as x and y remain to be plain expressions and symbols which are useless to a student. Thus, to understand these expressions, the learner needs to have some grasp of their meaning and relationship to other symbols and expressions, and this can only be pursued once he/she starts asking questions about them. The teacher then, to be effective, should know and understand these questions from the perspective of the students in order to answer them comprehensively. Thus, answers may range from very short ones like “yes” or “no” to theoretical answers that date back to the time of Pythagoras or Fibonacci.

Given these information in the teaching of mathematics, the

researchers realized and identified two things that teachers should consider to effectively develop the students from the perspective of the knower, and these are [1] they must have knowledge on the style for which the students is receptive to, and [2] they must be aware of the faculties or intelligences that the knower possesses to facilitate better communication. This realization paved way to a research study on the learning styles and the kinds of intelligences of Silliman University students.

In June 2006, the Silliman University administration approved the offering of Math 1 or Pre-College Algebra to cater to the needs of mathematically under-prepared college entrants who applied for admission to the university but who fell short of the required percentile rank for admission. In Silliman University, students are admitted when they pass the SUAPE or Silliman University Admission and Placement Examination, wherein the minimum passing SUAPE percentile rank is 40. However, an "on probation status" is given to those who obtain a rank between 20 and 39. From among these college entrants who are placed on probation status, only those who attained a SUAPE Math-component raw score of less than 25 would be required to enroll in Pre-College Algebra or Math 1; those who obtained a SUAPE Math-component raw score of 25 or better would be allowed to enroll in the regular College Algebra course called Math 11, which is a general education subject. However, those college entrants who would be refused admission to Silliman University may opt to stay but are expected to enroll in Math 1. This method of sorting was based on a study by Kilat (2006).

With this scenario, there is a need to look into how Silliman University Math Department can help these mathematically-challenged entrants of the university. The present research, then, aimed to characterize these students enrolled in the Pre-Algebra course in terms of Learning Styles and Intelligences. Specifically, this study was interested to answer the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of mathematically under-prepared students, or those who are taking Math 1 in terms of learning styles and type of intelligence?
2. Is there a significant difference among the different learning styles between Math 1 and Math 11 students?
3. Is there a significant difference among the different types of intelligences between Math 1 and Math 11 students?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the United States, according to Gardner (2006), culture and the schools focus most of their attention on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence; thus, articulate or logical people of their culture are usually the ones that are highly esteemed. Reality shows that many children who have these gifts do not receive much reinforcement in school. In fact, most children end up being labeled as “learning-disabled,” having “ADD or attention deficit disorder,” or simply, “underachievers” even though their unique ways of thinking and learning are not addressed appropriately by a heavily-linguistic or logical-mathematical classroom. Equal attention should also be given on individuals who show gifts in the other intelligences: the artists, architects, musicians, naturalists, designers, dancers, therapists, entrepreneurs as they also enrich the world where all people live.

The theory of multiple intelligences proposes a major transformation in the way schools should be run. It suggests that teachers be trained to present their lessons in a wide variety of ways using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and other media.

In line with mathematics classroom settings, findings from previous studies show that there are a number of factors that have effect on students’ mathematical abilities. These factors are math anxiety (Arem, 1993; Scarpello, 2007), parental support (Lee–Chua, 2007), knowledge of English language (Esmeralda, 1989), study habits (Nochefranca, 1980), and aptitude for math (Smith, 1991).

In relation to this present study, a previous research was conducted in Silliman University to determine whether the program has achieved its goal of reducing the percentage of failure in College Algebra. The study showed that the percentage of failure before the program was implemented was significantly reduced from 10.98% to 7.20%. Likewise, the decrease on the percentage of those who obtain grades of less than 2.0 (Average) to F (failure) was also significant from 36.77% to 29.67% (Mamhot, Mamhot, & Kilat, 2007). Since the School Year 2006–2007, the Mathematics Department has about five sections of Pre–algebra course. These results indicate that the SUAPE Math–component plays an important role in identifying students who might be mathematically under–prepared to take the regular College Algebra course.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To find out the preferred learning styles of Math 1 and Math 11 students, the researchers used the four learning styles outlined by Silver, Strong, and Perini (2000). These are Mastery Style, Interpersonal Style, Understanding Style, and Self-expressive Style. These learning styles are based on Jung's (1923 in Silver et al., 2000) two fundamental cognitive functions of the brain, which are perception and judgment. Perception helps the person in absorbing. According to Jung (1923 in Silver, et al., 2000), perception or absorbing knowledge may be through sensing or through intuition, while processing the knowledge may be through thinking or through feeling. From these fundamental functions and sub-functions, there could then be four ways for which people can absorb and process knowledge, and these are: sensing followed by thinking (ST), sensing followed by feeling (SF), intuition followed by thinking (NT), and intuition followed by feeling (NF). These four ways are illustrated in figure 1 below.

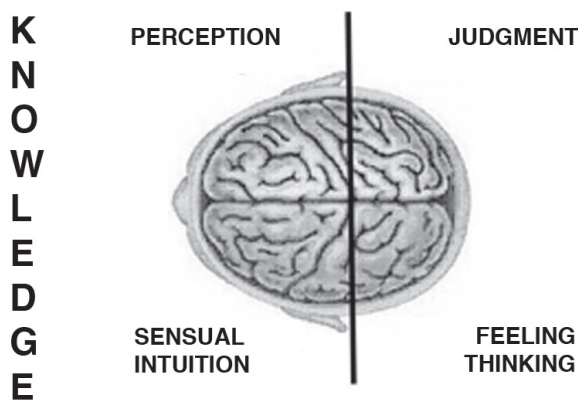


Figure 1. Theory of Learning Based on Carl Jung's Four Dimensions of Personality

Then connecting these to styles, Silver et al. (2000) characterized these as ST to be Mastery Style, SF as Interpersonal Style, NT as Understanding Style, and NF as Self-expressive Style.

Relative to their learning propensity, individuals who prefer to learn through Mastery Style learn best from drill, demonstration, practice, and hands-on experience. Individuals who prefer to learn through interpersonal style learn best through group experiences

and projects, loving attention, personal expression and personal encounters, and role playing. Those who prefer Understanding Style learn best from lectures, reading, logical discussions and debates, and projects of personal interests. Finally, those individuals who prefer to learn through Self-expressive style learn best from creative and artistic activities, open-ended discussions of personal and social values, and activities that enlighten and enhance like myths, human achievement, dramas and other people-oriented activities (Silver et al., 2000).

As for the analysis on the dominant type of intelligence of Math 1 and Math 11 students, a framework on different intelligences was used. It is said that the intelligences or faculties that people may need to understand from the knower could be gleaned based on the theory of multiple intelligences by Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard University. Gardner (2006) proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. These intelligences are Linguistic intelligence ("word smart"), Logical-mathematical intelligence, ("number/reasoning smart"), Spatial intelligence ("picture smart"), Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence ("body smart"), Musical intelligence ("music smart"), Interpersonal intelligence ("people smart"), Intrapersonal intelligence ("self smart"), Naturalist intelligence ("nature smart").

The Linguistically intelligent individuals like to read, write, and tell stories, as they are good at memorizing and learn best by saying, hearing, and seeing words. The Logical-mathematically intelligent people like to figure out things, such as doing experiments. They also work with numbers, ask questions, and explore patterns and relationships. Thus, these individuals are good at math, reasoning, logic, and problem-solving; and they learn best by categorizing, classifying, and working with abstracts and relationships. The Spatially intelligent ones like to draw, build, design, create things, daydream, look at pictures, watch movies, and play with machines as they are good in sensing changes, solving puzzles, and reading maps and charts. They learn best by visualizing, dreaming, or activities that use the mind's eye. The Bodily-Kinesthetically intelligent people like to move around, touch, talk, and use body language, making them good at physical activities, such as dance, sports, and play-act. They learn best by touching, moving, interacting with space and processing knowledge through body sensations. The Musically intelligent individuals like to sing, hum tunes, listen to music, play an instrument, and respond to music. However, this interest in music is not just simple interest because they are really good at it — in picking

up sounds, remembering melodies, noticing pitches or rhythms, and keeping time. With this intelligence, they learn best through rhythm, melody, and music. The Interpersonally intelligent persons like to have lots of friends, to talk to people, and to join groups as they are good at understanding people, leading others, organizing, communicating, manipulating and mediating conflicts. They learn best by sharing, comparing, relating, cooperating and interviewing. In contrast, Intra-personally intelligent individuals like to work alone and pursue their own interests. They are good at understanding self, focusing inward on feelings and dreams, following instincts, pursuing goals and being original, and they learn best by working alone or self-paced instruction, and having own space (E-world Resource Centers, Inc., 2003). Finally, Naturalistic people are more in tune with nature, making them sensitive to changes in the environment they are in, and they are often interested in nurturing and exploring the environment. They learn best by describing features of things.

The location of these different types in the brain is shown in figure 2 below:

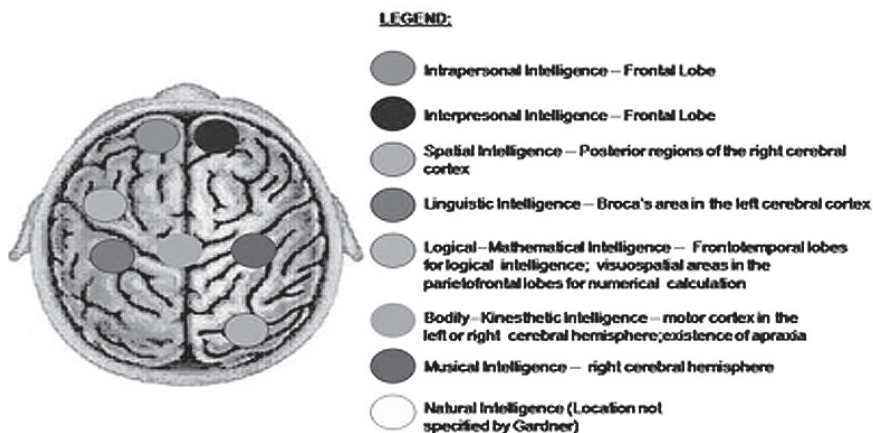


Figure 2. Location of Gardner's Intelligences in the Human Brain

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The nature of the research study was comparative: distinguishing between the college entrants who were enrolled in Math 1 upon

admission to the university, and those enrolled in Math 11 (College Algebra). However, in comparing these two respondents, more emphasis was done on the characteristics of the under-prepared students.

Respondents

During the school year 2009–2010, a total of seven sections were created for the Pre-Algebra course, and all these seven sections were included for the study. For Math 11, the total number of sections created for the same school year was 17; thus, for uniformity, the researchers randomly chose seven sections to be included in the study. However, in the actual analysis of the data, the total numbers of respondents for each questionnaire were the following: For the learning styles questionnaires, a total of 261 students participated from Math 1 sections, and 265 students from Math 11; while for the intelligences questionnaires, a total of 206 students from Math 1 and 213 students from Math 11.

Instrument

This study used two questionnaires: one for determining the learning styles, and the other one for identifying the types of intelligence. With the help of Dr. Noel Yasi, the Guidance Director of Negros Oriental State University, learning style and intelligences inventories were prepared by the researchers based on Carl Jung's (1923 in Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2000) theory of personality and Howard Gardner's (2006) theory of intelligences, respectively. The questionnaire for learning styles consisted of 20 questions, while for intelligences, 31 questions. Each of the questions in the learning style inventory has four sub-questions for which the respondent ranks from highest (four) to lowest (one). Each of the four sub-questions represents each of the four learning styles. As for the intelligences inventory, the eight intelligences are distributed to the 31 questions with four questions for each of the seven types of intelligences and three questions for the eighth type of intelligence. For each of these questions, the respondent gives a weight according to how the question suits his/her personality. If the respondent feels that the situation described by the question fits him/her best, then he/she responds by answering "Y" for yes; if not, he/she writes "N". If he/she is undecided, he/she writes "0"; and if it is halfway between yes and no, he/she writes "H".

Procedure

These questionnaires were administered to seven sections in Math 1 and to seven sections in Math 11. The administration of the questionnaires was done in two phases: the first phase was for the learning styles conducted on July 2009; the second phase, for intelligences, was conducted on October 2009. In the collation of data, the sub-questions were grouped according to the four learning styles. Averages were used to determine which learning style is preferred for a particular respondent. Same procedure was done in determining the dominant type of intelligence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Styles Between Math 1 and Math 11 Students

After the data on learning styles were encoded and analyzed, the order of learning preferences of both Math 1 and Math 11 students was identified. This is presented in figure 3 below:

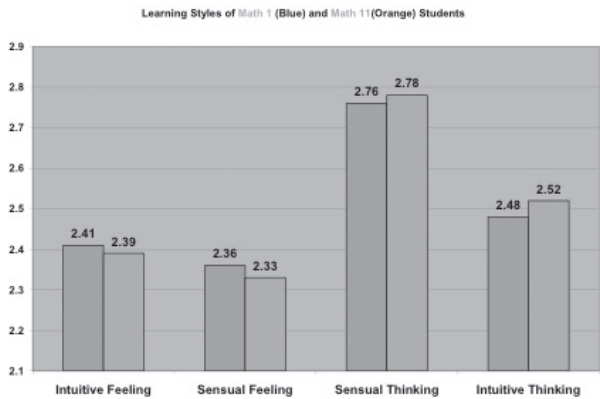


Figure 3. Learning Styles of Math1 and Math 11 Students

As can be seen from figure 3, it can be noted that both groups have the same order of preference: Sensual Thinking, Intuitive Thinking, Intuitive Feeling, and Sensual Feeling. What makes this interesting is the finding that majority are sensual thinkers. Sensual thinkers, according to Silver et al. (2000), are students who are most likely realistic and practical. Moreover, they are very active, and they cannot

remain seated while listening to a lecture or a speech; they rather do an activity. With the majority of Math 1 and Math 11 students being sensual thinkers, this may imply that these students tend to prefer physical activities in class, rather than answering exercises or problem sets or listen to explanations of solution of complex mathematical examples on the board. As suggested earlier, the best teaching approach to math is one that involves students in the processing of concepts (Lee-Chua, 2001). In this way, students are encouraged to actively participate, allowing them to do logical thinking while doing physical activities.

Looking deeper into the data, a statistical tool was used to determine whether a significant difference exists between the two groups of respondents’ preference. The result is presented in table 1 below:

Table 1.
Difference of Learning Styles between Math 1 and Math 11 Students

Learning Style	Mean Math 11	Mean Math 1	Mean Difference	t-test for Equality of Means (t-value)	p-value (Two-tailed test)	Remarks
1. Intuitive Feeling (NF)	2.39	2.41	-0.02	-1.11	0.267	Not Significant
2. Sensual Feeling (SF)	2.33	2.36	-0.03	-1.32	0.186	Not Significant
3. Sensual Thinking (ST)	2.78	2.76	0.02	0.83	0.405	Not significant
4. Intuitive Thinking (NT)	2.52	2.48	0.047	1.98	0.047	Significant

Despite the same order of preference of learning style, it can be noted from table 1 that there is a significant difference in terms of intuitive thinking between Math 1 and Math 11 students. This may imply that Math 11 students are possibly more intuitive thinkers than Math 1 students. According to Silver et al. (2000), intuitive

thinkers could think through things by themselves; or, in a traditional mathematics classroom, they could possibly work by themselves in solving math problems. As described earlier, most mathematics classrooms employ the traditional approach and this means that most activities are conducive for individual survival. Given this significant difference between the two groups of respondents, this could contribute to the affirmation of Math 1 students being under-prepared – they could not endure or tolerate the condition of working or solving problems individually.

Types of Intelligence Between Math 1 and Math 11 students

From the data gathered, the order of the type of intelligences for Math 1 and Math 11 students is presented in figure 4 below:

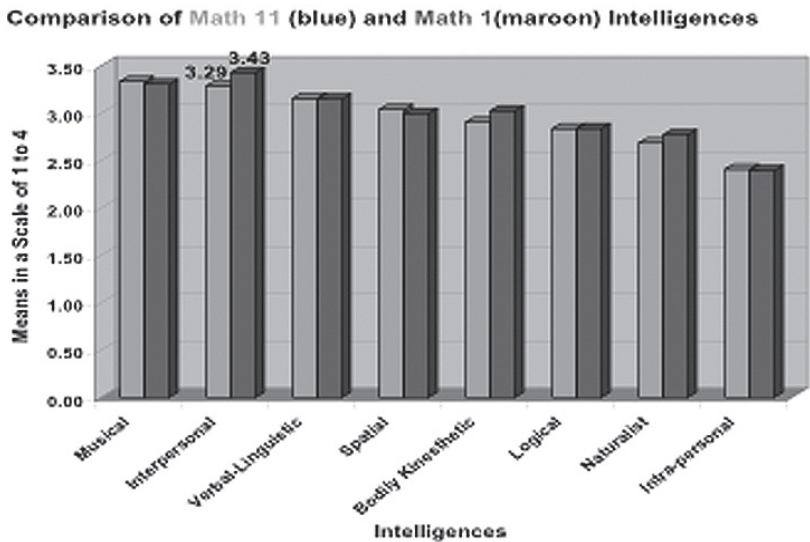


Figure 4. Comparison of Math 11 and Math 1 intelligences

From figure 4 above, the order of types of intelligence among Math 1 students, from highest to lowest, is: Interpersonal, Musical, Verbal-Linguistic, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Spatial, Mathematics-Logical, Naturalist, and Intrapersonal. As for Math 11 students, the order is: Musical, Interpersonal, Verbal-Linguistic, Spatial, Body-Kinesthetic, Mathematics-Logical, Naturalist, and Intrapersonal.

As indicated, the dominant type of intelligence is interpersonal.

According to Gardner (2006), this dominant type of intelligence enables people gifted with this to distinguish the different kinds of moods other people have. Moreover, they know how to read other people’s intentions, thus allowing them to respond correctly to those people’s actions. This finding could imply that under-prepared students, though they learn logically, know how to interact and to communicate with other people. This supports the suggestion cited earlier for math teachers to give opportunities or activities that allow students to interact with them, teachers, and with other classmates, such as interactive discussions or group works. This is supported by Mark Wahl (1999) as he explained that students with strong interpersonal intelligence have excellent group skills, show empathy for others, and demonstrate leadership. In addition, they are continually drawn into social situations. Another interesting highlight on this figure is the result of Intrapersonal intelligence as the least preferred as this affirms that this group of students are not into learning through individualized tasks or activities. This finding on interpersonal intelligence as the dominant type of intelligence among Math 1 is quite distinct or it could not be possibly questioned as the difference between its mean and the next type’s mean is significantly different. This is shown in table 2 below:

Table 2.
Significantly Different Means of Math 1 Students

Math 1	Mean	sd	Significantly Different Means	
1. Interpersonal	3.43	0.59	3.43	
2. Musical	3.30	0.49	3.30	
3. Linguistic	3.15	0.53	3.15	
4. Bodily-Kinesthetic	3.02	0.56		3.02*
5. Spatial	3.00	0.52		3.00*
6. Logical	2.84	0.62		2.84*
7. Naturalist	2.77	0.57		2.77*
8. Intrapersonal	2.39	0.64		2.39

*means on the same column do not differ significantly

In comparison to Math 1 students, Interpersonal Intelligence only comes second for Math 11 students, with Musical intelligence as first. This perhaps supports the previous finding that Math 11 students are more intuitive than Math 1 (refer to Table 2), meaning they could work individually which is expected from mathematics classroom settings.

However, the difference of these two types of intelligence’s means does not differ significantly, as presented in table 3 below:

Table 3.
Significantly Different Means of Math 11 Students

Math 11	Mean	sd	Significantly Different Means	
Musical	3.33	0.54	3.33*	
Interpersonal	3.29	0.64	3.29*	
Linguistic	3.16	0.53	3.16	
Spatial	3.04	0.46	3.04	
Bodily-Kinesthetic	2.90	0.58	2.90*	
Logical	2.84	0.65	2.84*	
Naturalist	2.68	0.59		2.68
Intrapersonal	2.41	0.64		2.41

*means on the same column do not differ significantly

As seen in Table 3 above, Musical Intelligence and Interpersonal Intelligence do not differ significantly which could be understood that most Math 11 students could have either of the two types of intelligence. This could further imply that for Math 11 students, though they learn through interaction, it is not the only way they could. This is because having the Musical Intelligence, Math 11 students could recognize patterns, rhythms, and symbols which could be translated to the symbols and expressions that are present in mathematics. This recognition and translation could be done individually. Also, as having the Interpersonal Intelligence, they could work with other people in finding solutions in a given mathematical problem or expression.

A deeper understanding on these two groups is a comparison of the means of these two groups of respondents’ types of intelligences (Table 4) in the next page:

Table 4.

Difference of Learning Styles between Math 1 and Math 11 Students

Intelligences	Mean		Mean Difference	t-test for Equality of Means (t-value)	p-value (Two-tailed test)	Remarks
	Math 1	Math 11				
Interpersonal	3.43	3.29	0.14	2.35	0.02	Significant
Musical 3.30	3.33	-0.03	-0.57	0.57		Not sig.
Linguistic	3.15	3.16	-0.01	-0.15	0.88	Not sig.
Bodily-Kinesthetic	3.02	2.90	0.12	2.18	0.03	Significant
Spatial 3.00	3.04	-0.04	-0.86	0.39		Not sig.
Logical 2.84	2.84	0	0.03	0.98		Not Sig
Naturalist	2.77	2.68	0.09	1.59	0.11	Not Sig
Intrapersonal	2.39	2.41	-0.02	-0.21	0.84	Not Sig

In using the t-test for the differences of means, it was found that only Interpersonal Intelligence and Body-Kinesthetic Intelligence are significantly different. This may well mean that most Math 1 students, having a greater mean, are more into understanding, relating, and interacting with other people than most Math 11 students. In addition, this could also mean that Math 1 students are more into physical activities as they have a greater mean in the Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence. These significant differences would only corroborate with the previous discussion on Math 1 students preferring classroom activities that involve them physically, and exercises that allow them to dynamically participate in the process of solving problems. Through this experience, students would be able to understand concepts better which is what every mathematics classroom’s primary goal is as suggested by Lee-Chua (2001).

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study aimed to determine the preferred learning style and the dominant type of intelligence of mathematically under-prepared students of Silliman University. In achieving these goals and verifying factors that affected these results, a comparative study was done between these under-prepared students who are taking the preparatory course Math 1 and those who are considered to be

prepared students who are taking Math 11. Moreover, these students prefer the sensing-thinking or mastery style as their learning style, and they dominantly have Interpersonal Intelligence. As for the results of Math 11 students, their dominant learning style is sensing-thinking; however, this group of students has two dominant types of intelligence: Musical and Interpersonal.

With these descriptions of the two groups of respondents, the researchers concluded that Math 1 students are receptive using their senses and process knowledge by thinking. Adding their having Interpersonal Intelligence, it could be said that Math 1 students prefer to interact with other people and to use their senses in acquiring knowledge. In comparison, Math 11 students, though they are also sensual thinkers, have a significantly higher intuitive-thinking style. This means that they could also receive knowledge using the mind or through imagination and process by thinking. This is further supported by their two dominant types of intelligence because, first, being musically-inclined, they can recognize patterns or use their imagination in understanding patterns; and second, having interpersonal intelligence, they could also work with others using their senses and, as indicated earlier, process by thinking.

With these results, the researchers would recommend two things. First, since Math 1 students are not likely receptive to teaching that process knowledge through thinking but are more receptive through sensual thinking (mastery style) and based on the suggestion of Silver et al. (2000), it is recommended that in teaching students who prefer sensing-thinking (mastery style), the teacher should employ drills, hands-on experience, and practices that have immediate and practical use. In connection with their dominant type of intelligence, the Interpersonal, Wahl (1999) suggests that math teachers of students with strong Interpersonal intelligence should incorporate in their teaching the anecdotes and the history behind the material their students are using. Moreover, the effective methods for these students are cooperative learning and cross-cultural lessons. In short, teachers should introduce activities that involve interaction among students that make use of their senses and that allow them to realize practical application in what they are doing.

Because the findings on Math 1 students' preferred learning style and dominant type of intelligence encourage the ideas of Wahl (1999) on cooperative learning and Silver (2000) on interactive classroom setting, the researchers propose that math teachers could possibly employ one teaching strategy: applying the excitement factor.

According to James Bjork (2004 in Wallis 2004) of the US National Institute on Alcohol and Alcoholism in Maryland, teens have immature nucleus accumbens in their adolescent stage, so that at this stage they have motivational deficit which means that either they can have an excitement factor or a low effort factor for doing things. Since it seems difficult to uphold a low effort factor in a math class, a math teacher has no choice but to apply high excitement factor. This factor involves actions not only from the teacher but also from the students. Further, with this excitement factor, teachers offer students activities inside the classroom that do not only allow physical participation—team work, communication, and interaction—but also entail mental stimulation—thinking, planning, and organizing.

The theory of multiple intelligences and learning styles attracts educators because it offers different pathways for students to learn as well as for teachers to teach (Hoerr, 2002). And certainly it is not exclusive to mathematics. In the book of Silver et al., examples abound on how to teach a given subject matter using a specific learning style. Hence, techniques in teaching with the knowledge on students' intelligence and learning style undoubtedly bring success to the teaching and learning processes.

The effectiveness of the multiple intelligence theory is supported by the findings of a study conducted in Harvard University known as "Project Zero." The study showed that 78% of 41 schools realized gains on standardized achievement; 63% of these attributed the growth to practices inspired by multiple intelligences theory. Seventy-eight percent of the schools reported improved performances of students having learning difficulties; 80% reported improvement in parent participation; and 81% reported on improved student discipline.

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The State of Research and Publication at a Philippine University: Baseline Data for Enhanced Research and Development Initiatives

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This paper reviews the literature on whether productivity in research and publication should be considered a standard in higher education institutions. Moreover, it discusses the national, institutional, and personal barriers to faculty engagement in research and publication and strategies that facilitate such productivity. Finally, findings on an investigation on the state of research and publication at a Philippine university are presented. The study aims to determine [1] the percentage of college teachers who are productive in research and publication; [2] the factors that facilitate and constrain research and publication productivity; and [3] mechanisms and infrastructure that are already in place in the University and how these may be enhanced to further stimulate a culture of research and publication. Results show that from 1997-2007, only 47% of the faculty engaged in research, of which only 29% have published their output in scholarly publications. Among the commonly identified reasons for the lack of productivity are [1] teaching tasks; [2] lack of necessary writing skill needed to produce a publishable report; [3] housework and family responsibility; [4] lack of knowledge on how to repackage their theses/dissertation to meet the technical and requirements of particular journals; and, [5] absence of information on the procedures and dynamics of getting a work published. Those who are productive cited the following as the factors that stimulate in research and publication: [1] the belief that research is integral to their professional growth as a teacher; [2] accreditation; [3] incentives for research; and [4] promotion in rank. The following strategies were suggested by the respondents to strengthen the culture of research and publication in the University: [1] establishing a mentoring system where faculty members who have already conducted research and published their research findings closely supervise and coach those who have not yet engaged in research and publication; [2] crediting at least six units to faculty who engage in research, the credit

awarded only once the output has been published in scholarly journals; [3] conducting workshops on how to get a work published in appropriate journals; [4] facilitating a system of wider and more frequent dissemination of research and development opportunities from concerned offices; and, [5] identifying more funding agencies to support research and development activities of the faculty.

KEYWORDS: Research in higher education; research culture; state of research and publication-Philippines; faculty engagement in research-barriers and motivation; research and development

INTRODUCTION

Research is a key function of a university. In fact, “teaching and research are widely regarded as the two core activities of academics” (Zubrick, Reid, & Rossiter, 2001). Research, as a primary function of the academia, is a “prime source of knowledge and innovation at national, regional and international levels” and is closely linked to national and international development (Meek, Teichler, & Kearney, 2009, p. 12). Thus, , the interplay between teaching and research is widely accepted as an indicator of institutional quality (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999, p. 17 in Zubrick, Reid, & Rossiter, 2001 p. 5).

Bernardo (2009) posited that research is valuable because it engages the faculty in a “conversation” in which a “group of people are taking turns in advancing ideas relating to a particular question or inquiry.” Bernardo further argued that publishing the research “brings the conversation to a wider public” and provides a venue for other scholars to examine the quality of one’s contribution to the dialogue. Moreover, research and publication and the review of related literature that is integral to the process, “push the conversation forward or towards some positive direction.” In addition to this crucial function, research and publication also enhance institutional reputation through higher accreditation status, as well as tenure and promotion of the faculty.

However, according to the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge 2001-2009, “overall, the situation of research universities in low-income countries remains bleak.” In general, external funding for research and publication favor institutions in

the first world economies. In fact, some twenty-two of the world's elite twenty-five research universities (known as "Super RUs") are located in one country, the United States of America" (Meek, Teichler, & Kearney, 2009, p. 12). Moreover, the 2007 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report noted that "there are only 94.3 scientific researchers per million people in the least developed countries (LDCs), against 313 in the other developing countries (ODCs) and 3,728 in rich countries" (cited in Vessuri, 2008, p. 121). This is a challenge to universities in LCDs since it is widely held among academics that to contribute to nation building, one must not only be a consumer of information but also be actively engaged in the process of inquiry and creation of new knowledge through research and publication. In fact, in a review of the programs of the *UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge* from 2001 to 2009, Meek, Teichler, & Kearney (2009) reiterated that "even the poorest nations require research capacity, or access to research findings, to progress; and so it could be argued that support for the principle of a research university in these contexts is more urgent than ever before. Reaching this goal and maintaining the quality and relevance of these essential institutions require national commitment and must remain a major objective for international cooperation..." (p. 12).

This also remains a challenge in the Philippines. A developing country, the Philippines also lags behind in research and publication. In fact, in describing the state of research and publication in the country, Lacanilao (2009) noted that not only is the country behind in research and publication, many of those who publish their research findings do so in journals that are "not adequately peer-reviewed and accessible for international verification." Thus, the information merely becomes part of "gray literature" (p.1). In advancing her argument, Lacanilao cited Bagarinao's review of the publication performance of five ASEAN countries from 1980-2006, which shows that although the Philippines was ahead of Indonesia and Vietnam in the 1980's, the continued decline in research and publication placed the country in the lowest rank in the mid 1990s compared to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The study also showed that "the Philippines is not only behind in publications, but it has also shown the slowest growth rate among the five countries throughout the covered period." Lacanilao also noted that when she plotted the Human Development Index (HDI) trends of the five countries in Bagarinao's review, she noticed that "their performance in research matches with their performance in development. The Philippines,

with its lowest scientific productivity, also has the lowest growth rate in development.”

This paper furthers the discussion on the state of research and publication in Philippine higher education institution (HEI). Particularly, it presents the findings in a study conducted at a Philippine university, particularly Silliman University, which is home to colleges and departments identified by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as Center of Excellence (COE)¹.

It must be noted, however, that although the University distinguishes itself in terms of its relatively high accreditation status and has been identified by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as a Center of Excellence (COE), it seems that the general observation, especially by accrediting agencies, is that the university has not yet developed a robust culture of research and publication. During accreditations, the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU), the accrediting agency Silliman is affiliated with consistently noted the need for the University to strengthen its research and publication component. It appears that the majority of academic personnel are not engaged in research and publication despite the productive merits stipulated in the University the Faculty Salary Adjustment Scheme (FSAS), and even with call for papers from the University publication arm, the *Silliman Journal*. If publication at the *Silliman Journal*, one of the oldest academic publications in the country, being in existence for more than 50 years now, is an indicator of faculty involvement in research, it may be observed that Silliman college faculty has done poorly. In fact, in the golden anniversary issue of *Silliman Journal* (Volume 45, No 1 January-June 2004), former Editor-in-Chief and chair of the *SJ* Editorial Board Ceres Pioquinto says:

For the past several years, constituting an issue purely from members of the Silliman University faculty submissions has been for us among the greatest challenges. If this issue is any indication, then the state of publication in campus leaves little to be desired. Of the eleven full-length as well as shorter articles represented in this issue, only three are written by members of the faculty, representing roughly 1% of the

¹Centers of Excellence (COEs) and Centers of Development (CODs) are “either public or private higher education institutions (HEIs) which have demonstrated the highest degree or level of standard along the areas of instruction, research, and extension. They provide institutional leadership in all aspects of development in specific areas of discipline in the various regions by providing networking arrangements to help ensure the accelerated development of HEIs in their respective service areas” (www.ched.gov.ph).

entire faculty population (2004, p.14).

On the other hand, the University is also recognized for the research accomplishments of some of its college faculty. In fact, since the establishment of the CHED REPUBLICA Awards for outstanding research and publications in 1994, five faculty members have already received the award. This includes research and publication in the natural sciences, *i.e.*, Paalan, R., Alcala, E., & Averia, L., 2005; Abesamis, R., 2007; and Alcala, A., 2009; as well as in the social sciences, *i.e.*, Oracion, E., 2005; Cleope, E., 2009 (Oracion, Personal interview, September 2009).

In general, however, the widespread perception remains that research and publication are not a strong component of the university's academic culture. It appears that the faculty has not embraced the culture of research as part of their identity as university teachers. This research was conducted to validate such observation so that appropriate strategies may be identified to enhance research and development initiatives.

The study was conducted from 2008-2009 to identify [a] the extent to which faculty members engaged in research as well as the publication of their research findings; [b] the factors that facilitate and those that constrain or limit faculty engagement in research and publication; and [c] strategies or infrastructures that the faculty believe would stimulate faculty engagement in research and publication. Moreover, existing University infrastructures aimed at further improving productivity in research and publication are identified.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Unlike the medieval university that focuses only on teaching as its function, "today's university is expected to "perform a trifocal function that is instruction, research and service to community." In its modern sense, a university is an institution that does not just teach or transmit knowledge but one that also generates new knowledge and information through research" (Gonzales, 2004). This presupposes that a rich culture of research is an integral function of any university worthy of its name. Research culture refers to "the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that members of a HEI hold about research and that determines how they perceive, think about, and behave with respect to research activities" (Schein, 2004, in Teehankee, 2009).

However, educators do not agree that all institutions of higher education (HEIs) develop a rich culture of research and publication. In fact, there appears to be at least five positions and observations on HEI participation in research and publication. The first position concerns universities like Silliman University where the majority are undergraduate students. Sterner (1999), in her study on "Faculty attitudes toward involvement in grant-related activities at a predominantly undergraduate institution (PUI)," stated that some educators have argued that higher education institutions focus on improving "the quality of teaching and undergraduate learning," not on research since instruction is the primary function of an academic institution (Astin & Chang, 1995).

The second position is that HEIs must require its faculty to actively engage in research "as the primary force for strengthening and enhancing student learning and for the continued improvement of humankind through increased knowledge and understanding" (Platter, 1995). Paul and Rubin (1984) argued that productive researchers make better teachers. In advancing their argument, they described the two facets of good teaching: [1] ability to communicate with and motivate students; and [2] content mastery. They further argued that the first greatly influences students' evaluation of teachers and relegates the more important aspect of teaching to a subordinate position. However, content knowledge is integral to good teaching. This necessitates the teaching of current material; and the selection of material to be taught. "A teacher who reads the current literature will read both fruitful and sterile ideas. Thus, this second aspect of good teaching, the ability to determine in advance which ideas will turn out to be useful and to teach those rather than the less useful ideas" is also developed. In fact, they further argued that even if the faculty publishes their work in "obscure" journals, it is still good because publishing in any journal "requires reading major journals, so that one is at least aware of the progress being made" (p. 143).

In relating good teaching and scholarship, Zubrick, Reid, and Rositter (2001) argued that good teaching only qualifies as scholarship when "[1] teachers' lessons properly emerge from enquiry and build upon existing knowledge; [2] teachers' engagement with their subjects and their students is creative and progressive; [3] teachers' efforts are productive of learning and strategies for learning; [4] results of their efforts are open to public evaluation; and [5] they convey academic and disciplinary values and ways of thinking" (p.7).

The third position is that faculty engagement in research is

the obligation of research universities particularly in knowledge-driven economies² (Davis, Evans, & Hickey, 2006). Thus, research universities based on the research background and qualifications of the faculty must be identified, so external funding may be funneled to more productive activities.

These arguments are also shared by Filipino scholars. Bernardo (2006) posited that not everyone in the university may be expected to conduct research. He further argued that “research should NOT be a function and quality required of HEIs” and reiterated that

some HEIs could play an important role in attaining national development goals, even if these institutions do not have any research activities or functions. For such institutions, it might not be appropriate to evaluate institutional quality in terms of research-related criteria since their claims to relevance and status within higher education system is not related to the knowledge-generation processes (p.112).

A similar position is also advanced by Kearney (2009) when she suggested that one strategy to develop higher education, research, and innovation (HERI) may be to “identify key institutions for focused investments, in order to avoid spreading resources for research too thinly.” Kearney corroborated Bienenstock’s position that

the role of universities, as opposed to research institutes, needs to be clarified. In higher education, resources for research may be concentrated so that at least one university will develop capacity for in-country research training in critical fields. Such research universities are characterized by top graduates, cutting-edge research, and vigorous technology transfer. Their critical dimensions are a concentration of talent, abundance of resources and favourable governance, which combine to assure excellence in graduate education and research output (Bienenstock, 2006, in Kearney, 2009, p.14).

The importance of identifying and further developing such research universities is reiterated by Kearney (2009) when she

² A knowledge-based economy can be defined as: ‘an economy in which the production, distribution and use of knowledge is the main driver of growth, wealth creation, and employment across all industries’ (Department of Industry, Training and Research, in Andrews, 2004, p. 4). Accordingly, a knowledge-based economy is reliant on harnessing the human and social capital produced by knowledge workers for growth and prosperity. Adapting to a knowledge-based economy requires a significant shift in thinking—at government, academic, corporate and personal levels. It stands to reason that education broadly, and higher education in particular, has an important role to play in the development of new knowledge practices and processes (Davis, Evans, & Hickey, 2006, p. 231).

emphasized that “nurturing research universities is perhaps the single strongest component of knowledge-based systems, due to their crucial social, economic and cultural impact” (p.22).

On the other hand, Owen (2009) disagrees with this position when he reiterated that “if research, the scholarly and systematic search for new and the testing of existing knowledge, and teaching, the systematic dissemination of knowledge, are two sides of one coin, the debate should not focus on whether faculty at small universities should participate in research, but on how to maintain and build up the research enterprise at small universities” (p. 5).

The fourth perspective on the role of research in higher education institutions is that universities broaden the definition of research to “encompass activities that go far beyond traditional expectations of scientific research and publication in peer reviewed journals” to include “integrative interdisciplinary activities, application (problem-solving) activities, and teaching activities” (Boyer, 1990, cited in Williams, 1995, p.1). This may include conducting action research, which may be aimed at documenting teaching practices, not primarily for publication in peer-reviewed journals, but for presentation and discussion during seminars and conferences (Nunan, 2003).

The fifth position on faculty engagement in research and publication relates to the perceived changing motivation for HEIs to engage in research and development activities. Some educators are concerned that faculty engagement in grant writing and research is primarily driven not by its direct and positive impact on the quality (substance) of teaching (Rauckhorst, 1988 in Sterner, 1999) but by the value accorded to faculty who generate income for the university through funded research (Barnett, R. 1992; Brew, A. 1999). In Canada, Polster (2007) in her research on “The nature and implications of the growing importance of research grants to Canadian universities and academics” noted that Canadian academics are pressured to continually apply for research grants or risk losing their jobs. This is illustrated when “several interviewees suggested that the old imperative to ‘publish or perish’ is being displaced by another – ‘provide or perish.’” Academics who bring in money through research grants become more influential and are accorded more power and privileges. It may be observed that “in the big universities, not to get big funding means that you will lose your voice” (Paul 2004, p. 240). Polster further noted that

not only are grants a condition of (some) academics doing their research, but they are

also becoming an increasingly important factor in all academics' ability to get, keep, or advance in a university job. This transformation stems in part from university administrators' growing interest in faculty members' financial contributions to their institution. It also stems from the equation of research grants with academic excellence (which is being extended from institutions to individuals) and from the mutually reinforcing dynamics between academics' granting record and reputation. (p. 602).

In the United States, it has been noted that "increased emphasis on securing external support for research and scholarly activities is related to the escalating costs of operating an institution of higher education and the simultaneous decline in state and federal support (Donaldson, 1991; Dooley, 1995; Gallaher & Daniel, 1989; McShane & Douzenis, 1987; Meyer, 1991). Gallagher and Daniel (1989) have projected that the role of externally supported research will grow in importance over time" and concluded that universities continue to rely on external funds or risk losing some of their academic programs (Sternier, 1999).

Burgoon (1988, in Sternier, 1999) however, countered that grant writing to pursue external funds for research "extends far beyond financial gain," and considered it as "both a means to, and a by-product of, scholarly excellence" (p. 256). Burgoon listed the following potential benefits of writing grants: [1] instructive and useful scholarly lessons, [2] the opportunity for faculty to engage in research that will advance theoretical knowledge in their discipline, and [3] the opportunity for students to engage in a hands-on research experience under faculty supervision, thereby enhancing the quality of undergraduate and graduate education."

Strategies that develop a culture of research and publication

Higher education institutions particularly in knowledge-driven western universities have systematically implemented strategies and established infrastructures aimed at developing a culture of research among its faculty. Based on their literature review on research productivity from 1960 through 1990, Bland and Ruffin (1992) identified "12 characteristics consistently present in research-conducive environments: [1] clear goals that serve a coordinating function, [2] research emphasis, [3] distinctive culture, [4] positive group climate, [5] assertive participative governance, [6] decentralized organization, [7] frequent communication, [8] accessible resources, particularly human, [9] sufficient size, age, and diversity of the

research group, [10] appropriate rewards, [11] concentration on recruitment and selection, and [12] leadership with research expertise and skill in both initiating appropriate organizational structure and using participatory management practices" (p. 1).

Monahan (1993) also identified four most popular reasons for faculty involvement in writing research grant proposals and subsequent engagement in research as follows: [1] to gain released time, [2] to engage in research and explore promising ideas, [3] to acquire needed equipment, and [4] to build a professional reputation" (in Sterner, 1999). Other strategies and infrastructures cited in the literature include tenure and promotion, recognition in campus-wide publications; fund generation for the institution; support in sourcing funds and coaching in proposal writing (Churchman & Hellweg, 1981; Davis & O'Hanlon, 1992; Monahan, 1993 in Sterner, 1999).

Mishler (1987) suggested establishing support mechanisms and providing incentives. Support mechanisms may be in the form of [1] physical resources such as allocating laboratory or other space for faculty engaged in sponsored research and providing state-of-the-art equipment required to carry out research activities; or [2] human resources such as [a] creating a pool of research assistants to assist faculty in conducting research and generating pilot data for external grant proposals; and [b] identifying research mentors and others to assist faculty in funded research efforts. As regards incentives, the university may [1] implement a merit system to provide salary enhancements or travel funds to faculty involved in extramural projects, and [2] provide reduced teaching loads/released time for involvement in sponsored research. Teachers may also be encouraged to prioritize developing the skills necessary to secure sponsored funds and engaging in research that complements instruction (Sterner, 1999).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education expects higher education institutions (HEIs) to engage in research. In fact, recognizing the need for more faculty involvement in research, the Commission on Higher Education developed a "ten-year National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA) to "delineate the policies, priorities, strategies, procedures, and guidelines for promotion, encouragement, support of research in the public and private colleges and universities in the Philippines." The National Higher Education Research goal was to establish and inculcate a culture of research in Philippine higher education institutions. Particularly, it aims to [1] increase the research productivity of Philippine higher

education institutions and individuals; [2] establish a system of research-based policy environment through periodic commissioned researches; and [3] establish support structures that would ensure long-term sustainability of research activities in Philippine higher education institutions (Alcala, Padua, & Lachica, 2009). Particularly, CHED promulgated The Higher Education Act of 1994 or RA 7722, which articulates its higher education research framework and the mechanisms aimed at enhancing faculty involvement in research including the creation of the *Republica Awards* for outstanding research and publications (Salazar-Clemen, 2006, p. 97).

However, Sison (2006), in describing the success story of the University of Santo Tomas (UST), reiterates that “incentives alone do not create a culture of research in the university.” Based on this observation, UST created “a research infrastructure” that consists of the following: [a] graduate education and mentoring; [b] facilitating external support; [c] resource mobilization; and [d] research management through the creation of the Office of Research and Development (ORD), and the University Research Council (URC) to supervise the newly-created eight Specialized Research Centers.

Sison (1996) posits that a few years after the creation of the aforementioned research infrastructure, UST made it to the list of the *Top Ten International Publications* as indicated in the *National Citation Report*, 1981-June 1997 by the Institute for Scientific Information. Recognition from the *National Citation Report* is based not only on the quantity of publication in peer-refereed journal but also on the quality of such publications as indicated by how frequently they are cited by other reputable publications. Sison further emphasized that

...citations are the most commonly used performance indicator in measuring the quality and impact of research (Garfield & Welljans-Dorof, 1992). The Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) collects citation data and publishes these annually in Science Citation Index (SCI) (Testa, 2000). The principle is based on the “practice that during the process of research, relevant literature is surveyed and articles are selected for citation are done on the basis of their relative quality. Quality may be taken as degree to which the cited articles have made an impact on and improved understanding in the subject area” (Lee, 2004, p. 28).

Moreover, recognized international ranking of universities such as the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University rankings, and the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) emphasize faculty engagement in research and publication. For example, the Times

Higher Education criteria slants heavily on faculty track record in research and publication, namely 40% for review of research quality and 20% for citations per faculty (Cruz, 2007). Thus, institutional reputation hinges primarily on faculty citations in other credible, peer-refereed journals.

Barriers to academics' engagement in research and publication

According to McShane and Douzenis (1987), research fund remains as the main factor for the academics' lack of engagement in research and publication (in Sterner, 1999). Moreover, the following have been identified as common debilitating factors: [1] lack of time, [2] insufficient knowledge of the grant process and of grant sources, [3] lack of institutional resources, [4] inadequate equipment and facilities, [5] lack of administrative support, and [6] no system of rewards (Gallaher & Daniel, 1989; Monahan, 1993; Stahler & Tash, 1992).

Moreover, Sterner (1999) noted that the faculty in the primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs) identified the following obstacles to engagement in research and publication: [1] heavy teaching loads, [2] unawareness of the importance of grant activity in the tenure and promotion process, [3] lack of graduate students, [4] difficulty in attracting high quality faculty, and [5] limited contact with other professionals in their field (Churchman & Hellweg, 1981; Donaldson, 1991; Monahan, 1993; Owen, 1992).

Silliman University may be considered PUI in the sense that a majority of its more than 6,000 students are in the undergraduate level. However, Silliman University recognizes research as among its key functions as an HEI. This is articulated in the thrust of the University, the FIRE: faith, instruction, research, and instruction (FIRE).

This paper presents the landscape of research and publication engagement of college faculty at Silliman University. The investigation seeks to: [a] generate baseline data on the number of faculty members engaged in research and publication from 1997-2007; [b] determine the factors that encourage faculty engagement in research and publication as well as those that constrain it; and c) identify strategies and infrastructures that the respondents believe need to be prioritized by the University as these would stimulate research and publication engagement among the faculty. The goal is to provide Silliman University baseline data so that the strategies and infrastructures may be reviewed and enhanced.

Particularly, the research questions are as follows:

1. What percentage of SU college faculty is engaged in research and publication in the past ten years?
2. What factors facilitate research and publication among the faculty?
3. What constraints the performance of research and publication among the faculty?
4. What mechanisms and infrastructure are already in place at Silliman and how may these be enhanced to further stimulate a culture of research and publication at SU?

METHOD

The study was conducted through questionnaire survey and interview with lead informants. The participants are academics from 5 of the 13 colleges and schools in the University. These colleges were selected because they have been identified by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as Centers of Excellence (COE) and Centers of Development (COD), and are therefore mandated to demonstrate leadership in research engagements. These colleges include the College of Education (COEd) and the College of Nursing (CON); as well as the colleges recognized by CHED as Centers of Development (COD), namely the College of Computer Studies (CCS) and the College of Business Administration (CBA). Moreover, the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) was included in this research because a) the Biology Department, which belongs to the College of Arts is also recognized by CHED as a Center of Development; b) CAS serves all units in the University in terms of general education courses, and c) CAS, being the largest department in the University, has the most number of faculty members. As such, this research may be considered as an investigation on the performance of the centers of excellence and development in Silliman University, and to identify the facilitating and mitigating factors that encourage or constrain faculty engagement in research in COEs and CODs.

According to Gay and Diehl (in Bustamante, 2010), the minimum acceptable sample for descriptive studies like this is 10-20% of the population while correlation studies would require 30% with a recommended margin of error of 0.05 or 0.01. In this study the sample per department is at least 50%, and the sample per college are as follows: Arts and Sciences, 80%; Education, 93%; College of Nursing, 63%; College of Business Administration, 53%; and College of Computer Studies, 90%. In sum, 107 of the 137 full time faculty

members of the aforementioned 5 colleges (78%) participated in the study.

A questionnaire was designed to generate answers to the research questions. It was then piloted in a similarly situated context so that further refinements could be made in terms of the formulation of the statements and the content. To ensure a higher response rate, a second wave of survey, particularly aimed at those who failed to return the first set of questionnaires, was conducted. The second set of questionnaires had exactly the same items; however, the cover letter was modified to underscore the importance of the research to the University and the colleges concerned; and the letter was addressed to specific faculty members.

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews with lead informants were conducted. The interviewees include the director of the Silliman Research and Development Center (RDC), who is also a Republica awardee, a faculty member who is a prolific writer and active researcher, a novice researcher, and faculty members who have not yet engaged in research and publication. The interviews were conducted to solicit more suggestions on strategies and infrastructures that would most likely widen faculty participation in research projects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the data gathered from the initial survey. Table 1 presents a comparative data on faculty involvement in research. The presentation shows the sample *vis a vis* the population, the percentage of the sample who engaged in research from 1997-2007, as well as those who published their research output in the same period. Also, motivations for faculty engagement in research as well as reasons for their non-engagement in research are presented comparatively, using both the frequency and its percentage in relation to the total sample per college.

A similar presentation is shown as regards faculty engagement or non-engagement in publication, as well as in the strategies and infrastructure the respondents felt would stimulate faculty engagement in research and publication. Research, in this study, refers to quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of approaches used to investigate field-related phenomenon as articulated in the research questions (Nunan, 2003). Publication refers to research output reports published in academic journals. In this study, any graduate research, i.e., thesis or dissertation reformatted or rewritten and accepted for

journal publication is considered a publication.

The tables are presented immediately after the discussion. Moreover, interview data are incorporated whenever they are deemed relevant to the discussion of the quantitative data.

Faculty Engagement in Research and Publication

As shown in the Table 1, 107 of the 137 (78%) of the faculty in the five Colleges identified in this study responded to the questionnaires. Of this number, 47 (44%) engaged in research projects and 29 (27%) published their research output. The college with the highest frequency in terms of faculty engagement in research is the College of Nursing (67%). This is followed by the College of Arts and Sciences (49%), the College of Business Administration (33%), the College of Education (29%), and the College of Computer Studies (11%). In terms of faculty engagement in publication, the College of Arts and Sciences ranked 1st with 37% of the respondents having published their research output. This is followed by the College of Education (21%), the College of Nursing (17%), the College of Business Administration (11%), and the College of Computer Studies. See Table 1.

Table 1

Faculty Engagement in Research and Publication (1997-2007)

Academic Units	Total Full Time Faculty	Retrieved Questionnaires (%)	Respondents with Research (%)	Respondents with Publication (%)
CAS	76	63 (83%)	31 (49%)	23 (37%)
COEd	15	14 (93%)	4 (29%)	3 (21%%)
CON	19	12 (63%)	8 (67%)	2 (17%)
CCS	10	9 (90%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)
CBA	17	9 (53%)	3 (33%)	1 (11%)
TOTAL	137	107 (78%)	47 (44%)	29 (27%)

Factors that facilitate faculty engagement in research and publication

For faculty members engaged in research, the main motivation is their belief that research establishes their credibility in the profession as well

as validates the University status during accreditation. The response also showed that institutional infrastructures such as incentives given by the University for research and publication, and productivity in terms of research and publication as a requirement for promotion in rank also encouraged the faculty to engage in research. It is also noteworthy that attendance in conferences where papers are read has also been pointed out as a factor encouraging other participants to engage in research. This was supported in the interviews, where most of the interviewees recounted being challenged to write research proposals and to engage in research when they saw that the research projects presented during the conferences were “doable.”

Table 2

Reasons for Engagement in Research

Reasons	CAS (n=63)	COEd (n=14)	CON (n=12)	CCS (n=9)	CBA (n=9)	TOTAL (N=107)
1. Belief that research is part of professional growth	21 (33%)	5 (36%)	6 (50%)	0	1 (11%)	33 (31%)
2. Knowledge that research is a plus factor in accreditations	16 (25%)	3 (21%)	7 (58%)	0	3 (33%)	29 (27 %)
3. Awareness of the Silliman University cash incentives for research and publication	13 (21%)	4 (29%)	5 (42%)	0	2	24 (22%)
4. Thesis/dissertation requirement	11 (18%)	4 (29%)	1 (8%)	2 (22%)	3 (33%)	21 (20%)
5. Knowledge that research is a requirement for promotion in rank	11 (18%)	4 (29%)	5 (42%)	0	1 (11%)	21 (20%)
6. Inspiration from other participants who presented research outputs in conferences attended	11 (18%)	3 (21%)	3 (25%)	0	2 (22%)	19 (18%)
7. Inspiration from colleagues in the department who also conducted research	6 (10%)	3 (21%)	6 (50%)	0	2 (22%)	17 (16%)

Table continued in the next page...

Table 2 (Continued...)

Reasons for Engagement in Research

Reasons	CAS (n=63)	COEd (n=14)	CON (n=12)	CCS (n=9)	CBA (n=9)	TOTAL (N=107)
8. Mentoring by a colleague	7 (11%)	2 (14%)	5 (42%)	0	0 (0%)	14 (13%)
9. Inspiration to conduct research during the CHED Research Zonal Center workshop on research proposal writing	6 (10%)	2 (14%)	2 (17%)	0	3 (33%)	13 (12%)
10. Information about agencies that provide funding for research	7 (11%)	2 (14%)	2 (17%)	0	1 (11%)	12 (11%)
11. Information on the benefits of research and publication engagement during the during research proposal writing workshops conducted by the CRD	3 (5%)	2 (14%)	2 (17%)	0	1 (11%)	8 (8%)

Other reasons that have also been identified by the respondents from the various colleges as sources of motivation to conduct research are as follows: [1] exposure to professional organizations; [2] being invited by a national professional organization to present a paper at its next conference; [3] intellectual engagement/enrichment from participation in local, national, and international conferences; [4] pride at being tasked by a supervisor to write research reports; [5] personal interest in research as it is “a welcome change from the limited world of the classroom”; [6] previous experience in research even before becoming a teacher; and [7] opportunity to travel abroad.

It must also be noted that experience in research during the undergraduate course or as a graduate research assistant has been identified both in the survey and the interview as a motivating factor for engaging in research activities. A respondent from the Biology department exemplified this when he wrote: *“I started as a graduate research assistant at the Marine Laboratory. Initially, I wanted research only. I did not know that whatever research you have done and presented or published had anything to do with teaching; I learned that later.”*

A similar idea was emphasized by one of the interviewees. He

said that he got “hooked” on research as a graduate research assistant, primarily because his professors were constantly engaged in research projects. It was then that he realized that research provides not only a viable source of funding but also a source of professional and personal satisfaction. He recalled having “fun” doing research in the various communities, and “feeling good” that he was becoming a part of a recognized research group in the University at that time.

Barriers to faculty engagement in research and publication

Those who did not conduct any research from 1997-2007 attributed their inability to engage in research projects primarily to their heavy teaching load and housework and other family responsibilities. However, it is rather interesting to note that while 26% of the respondents cited teaching overload as a deterrent to research engagement, a good number of them (14%) also indicated their preference for teaching overload over research activities.

As shown in Table 3, teaching overload has been identified by the greater number of respondents as the main debilitating factor for their non-engagement in research. This is followed by house work and other family responsibilities, lack of awareness of research opportunities and sources for funding for research, and preference for teaching overload. Teaching overload has also been repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees as the main reason for faculty non-involvement in research. The interviewees reiterated that many teachers are too busy and preoccupied with lesson preparation and other routine teaching and evaluation activities such as checking voluminous papers, which leave them neither the time nor the energy to conduct research. Similar observations may be drawn from the National Norms for the 2007-2008 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey in the United States, which show that while the faculty recognize the importance of engaging in research and sourcing “external funding” through research, “41.1 percent of the respondents spend 13 hours or more per week in preparing for their classes and 19.6 percent of the respondents spend 13 hours or more for scheduled teaching (DeAngelo, Hurtado, Pryor, Kelly, Santos, & Korn, 2008).

Another reason that has also been mentioned during the interviews is the “absence of a culture of research” in the department or the college. The prevalent comment was that since their deans and department heads are not even conducting research, they do not feel the value of doing the same.

Table 3

Reasons for Non-engagement in Research

Reasons	CAS (n=63)	COEd (n=14)	CON (n=12)	CCS (n=9)	CBA (n=9)	TOTAL (N=107)
1. Too busy because of teaching load	17 (27%)	5 (36%)	3 (25%)	0	3 (33%)	28 (26%)
2. House work and other family responsibilities	15 (24%)	5 (36%)	2 (17%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	25 (23%)
3. Not aware of any research opportunities or funding	10 (16%)	4 (29%)	0	1	0	15 (14%)
4. Preference for teaching overload over conduct of research	9 (14%)	4 (29%)	0	0	2 (22%)	15 (14%)
5. Admin and colleagues' non-engagement in research	8 (13%)	2 (14%)	0	1 (11%)	0	11 (10%)
6. Feeling of inadequacy and lack of competence in writing research proposals or conducting research	7 (11%)	4 (29%)	0	0	0	11 (10%)
7. Lack of knowledge on whom to approach regarding research possibilities and proposals	6 (10%)	2 (14%)	0	1 (11%)	0	9 (8%)
8. Lack of emphasis on research as a thrust in the college/department	4 (6%)	2 (14%)	0	0	0	6 (6%)
9. Belief that teachers must focus on teaching, NOT research	4 (6%)	1 7%)	0	0	0	5 (5%)
10. Too many committee assignments	2 (3%)	2 (14%)	2 (17%)	0	1 (11%)	7 (7%)
11. Too many administrative tasks	1 (2%)	2 (14%)	0	0	0	3 (3%)

Factors that motivate the faculty to engage in publication

It appears that the main motivating factors for faculty engagement

in publication are [1] professional growth, *i.e.*, that publication is integral to one’s professional growth and professional credibility; and [2] monetary and promotion incentives for publication of research-based articles. Mentoring by colleagues in the department who have already published also motivate those who have conducted research to publish their research findings in scholarly journals. On the other hand, the few researchers who failed to publish cited teaching load, poor writing skills, and lack of access to information on the research process and funding agencies that would finance publication of research as among the reasons for their inability to publish their research findings. See Table 4.

Table 4.

Reasons for Non-engagement in Publication

Reasons	CAS (n=63)	COEd (n=14)	CON (n=12)	CCS (n=9)	CBA (n=9)	TOTAL (N=107)
1. Too busy with teaching tasks	2 (3%)	3 (21%)	5 (42%)	0	2 (22%)	12 (11%)
2. Feeling of inadequacy in terms of writing skills to write a publishable report	1 (2%)	4 (29%)	2 (17%)	0	1 (11%)	8 (8%)
3. Lack of knowledge on how to re-package graduate thesis/ dissertation into publishable format	1 (2%)	3 (21%)	0	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	7 (7%)
4. Lack of knowledge on the procedures and dynamics of getting published	1 (2%)	3 (21%)	0	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	6 (6%)
5. Lack of knowledge of any funding agency willing to finance the publication of research output	1 (2%)	1 (7%)	0	0	1 (11%)	3 (3%)
6. Apprehension that the output may NOT be accepted for publication	0	3 (21%)	2 (17%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	7 (7%)

Table continued in the next page...

Table 4 (Continued...)

Reasons for Non-engagement in Publication

Reasons	CAS (n=63)	COEd (n=14)	CON (n=12)	CCS (n=9)	CBA (n=9)	TOTAL (N=107)
7. Too busy with housework and other personal responsibilities	0	3 (21%)	5 (42%)	0	2 (22%)	10 (9%)
8. Lack of knowledge of any scholarly journal in the discipline or area of specialization	0	2 (14%)	0	0	1 (11%)	3 (3%)
9. Funding for publishing thesis/dissertation not included in thesis/dissertation grant	0	1 (7%)	2 (17%)	0	2 (22%)	5 (5%)
10. Cost of publishing at Silliman Press	0	0	2 (17%)	0	1 (11%)	3 (3%)
11. Belief that <i>Silliman Journal</i> focuses only on natural sciences	0	0	0	0	1 (11%)	1 (1%)

Consistent with the reasons for faculty non-engagement in research, the main “pull factors” for faculty publication are teaching overload, housework, and other personal responsibilities. Most of the respondents felt that they are not competent enough to write research proposals or research report and fear that their research article will be rejected by journals. This is followed by another related reason—the lack of knowledge of the procedures and dynamics of getting their research article published.

It must also be noted that during the interviews, one of the respondents lamented the fact that the Faculty Salary Adjustment Scheme (FSAS) puts a ceiling on the number of publication one may get credit for in a given year. He stated that “in reputable universities like the University of the Philippines, there is no cap on the number of researches and publication a professor may be given cash incentives for.” He reasoned that the ceiling curtails faculty initiative and engagement in research. He reiterated that the role of the faculty is to seek to contribute to the body of knowledge through research, while the role of the administration is to seek sources so that

faculty who play their roles well, who bring in revenues in terms of research funding, and who contribute to the distinction of Silliman as a reputable institution are sufficiently compensated and recognized.

On the other hand, another interviewee emphasized that the University's incentive package should already encourage concerned faculty to engage in research and publication. He reiterated that in addition to the FSAS cash incentives and incentives in terms promotion in rank, the University has assigned some faculty members "research loads," equivalent to three or six units. On the other hand, the RDC director Enrique Oracion expressed his reservation on the granting of research loads to faculty members who intend to research or have submitted research proposals for such purpose. Oracion said that there were instances when faculty members given such research loads failed to pursue their intention of conducting research or may have started collecting data but did not complete the whole research process or submit their research output. Yet, they have already been paid for the three or six-unit research load. Oracion, therefore, emphasized that the cash incentive may be a more effective strategy since the incentive is not awarded until after the research output has been presented in a research symposium organized for such purpose or when the research article has been accepted in peer-refereed academic journal. This not only facilitates faculty engagement in research and publication but provides a mechanism where the quality of research and publication is ensured.

This is consistent with the recommendation of Alcala, Padua, and Lachica (2009) in their evaluation of the National Higher Education Research Agenda –I, which was implemented from 1997 to 2008. They noted that even with the incentives and capacity building activities, there was "low effectiveness index for capability building programs for individuals (author:trainee ratio)." They therefore recommended that "capability building programs that will be supported by CHED will henceforth be output-based i.e. should result in publishable papers," or "purposive" rather than "ad hoc."

Moreover, the University, through the Research and Development Center (RDC), offers faculty development grant for research in the amount of P50,000 for teachers who have not yet established their names as researchers, so that with their initial research experience, they would be trusted by external funding sources when they submit research proposals in the future. The RDC, in collaboration with the *Silliman Journal* and the College of Education Center for Excellence in Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CELTA), has in 2008 started

conducting a series of workshops on writing research proposals, conducting research, and writing for publication to empower interested faculty and departments to engage in research in their respective areas of specializations and write research articles for publication. On the other hand, majority of the faculty-respondents reiterated that even with better incentives for faculty productivity in research and publication, many are not engaged in research and publication because of the lack of a mentoring system and capacity building activities in each department or college. The respondents reiterated that the same few individuals are engaged in research and publication because they have already established networks and have already “figured out” the mechanism and processes for proposal or grant writing, research, and publication. “It is also more or less the same people who will get the incentives year after year,” said one respondent.

In the experience of CHED National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA), 283 capacity building activities were conducted from 1998-2007. These were “mostly in a form of seminars, workshops, and focused group discussions” aimed at developing or honing participants’ research skills including skill in preparing research proposals, writing for refereed journals, and skills needed for paper presentations “The effectiveness of the capability building activity is reflected in the number of proposal submitted after the activity” (Alcala, Padua, and Lachica, 2009). However, it was noted that the effectiveness index of the capacity building activities were low in terms of author-trainee ration. Thus, the evaluators suggested strengthening the Senior Visiting Fellows Program (SVFP) by ensuring that [a] each SVF takes care of mentoring at least three HEIs through regular monthly consultations for two years; and [b] the SVF receives a competitive monthly support from CHED/HEI. This is similar to the suggestion of some respondents in this study that mentors should be granted an honorarium equivalent to a three or six-unit load, but that such be awarded to the mentor after the publication of his/her mentee’s article in an accredited peer-reviewed journal.

Strategies that stimulate research and publication activities

As shown in Table 5, the most frequently identified strategies that stimulate research and publication activities among the faculty are: [1] granting of extra 3 or six-unit load; [2] establishing a mentoring system where experienced researchers and writers coach and closely

supervise those who have just started to engage in research and publication; and [3] conducting a series of workshops on the procedures and dynamics of getting one’s work published in particular journals. The faculty respondents also believe that the concerned office in the University must identify and tap funding agencies where research proposals may be submitted. Such office should also conduct a series of workshops to develop among the faculty skills in research proposal writing, conducting research, and writing the research article for specific journals. This was also reiterated during the interviews, especially with the interviewee who had little or no experience in research and publication.

Table 5

Suggested strategies and infrastructure

Strategies and Infrastructure	CAS (n=63)	COEd (n=14)	CON (n=12)	CCS (n=9)	CBA (n=9)	TOTAL (N=107)
1. Granting of 6-unit credit to faculty who engage in research	10 (16%)	8 (57%)	10 (83%)	5 (56%)	2 (22%)	35 (33%)
2. Establishment of a mentoring system	8 (13%)	9 (64%)	8 (67%)	5 (56%)	3 (33%)	33 (31%)
3. Workshops on how the procedures and dynamics of getting published in particular journals	6 (10%)	10 (71%)	7 (57%)	5 (56%)	3 (33%)	31 (29%)
4. Identifying and tapping funding agencies to fund research and development activities	8 (13%)	10 (71%)	8 (67%)	3 (33%)	0	29 (27%)
5. Allotting a 3-unit research load in the teacher’s full load	7 (11%)	5 (36%)	8 (67%)	3 (33%)	3 (33%)	26 (24%)
6. Facilitating a system of wider and more frequent dissemination of research and development opportunities by concerned offices	6 (10%)	8 (57%)	7 (58%)	3 (33%)	1 (11%)	25 (23%)

Table continued in the next page...

Table 5 (Continued...)

Suggested strategies and infrastructure

Strategies and Infrastructure	CAS (n=63)	COEd (n=14)	CON (n=12)	CCS (n=9)	CBA (n=9)	TOTAL (N=107)
7. Providing faculty with a list of journals for the various areas of specialization	7 (11%)	2 (14%)	4 (33%)	3 (33%)	1 (11%)	17 (16%)
8. Encouraging administrators to conduct research by specifying that their 6-unit overload to include 3units of research	3 (5%)	6 (43%)	4 (33%)	0	1 (11%)	14 (13%)
9. Silliman Press printing cost re-examined	3 (5%)	5 (36%)	1 (8%)	0	2 (22%)	11 (10%)
10. Limiting teaching overload to only 6 units to encourage faculty to engage in research	3 (5%)	7 (50%)	4 (33%)	1 (11%)	0	15 (14%)
11. Limiting committee assignments	2 (3%)	4 (29%)	4 (33%)	0	0	10 (9%)

Other strategies suggested by the faculty during informal interviews, and as additional notes written on the questionnaire, include the following: [1] make research productivity a condition for assigning overloads, that is, that “only faculty members who engage in research shall be allowed an overload of more than six units” so that teachers who wish to have teaching overload will be compelled to engage in research; [2] propose a mechanism that facilitates a “publish or perish” system in the University, in consultation with the SUFA; [3] provide as many faculty members equal opportunity to attend conferences so they will be encouraged to participate in research projects and present their own research outputs; [4] provide an incentive, e.g., unit load or cash incentive to researchers who mentor junior faculty or colleagues, to be awarded only after the mentee has already published the research report; and [5] conduct more workshops on how to repackage thesis and dissertation output,

write research proposals. The respondents also suggested that workshops on how to write research articles for particular refereed, nationally or internationally circulated journals should be done at the department level.

An interviewee suggested that the incentives given to the faculty every year should not be awarded based solely on the evaluation done by the instruction office but should include points for research and publication. The same interviewee also suggested that research and publication be considered a criterion in the nomination and selection of department chairs and college deans, so that the administrators themselves demonstrate leadership in research and development activities.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of RQ 1, data show that in terms of research engagement of the faculty, the College of Nursing ranks first with 67% of its faculty having conducted research from 1997-2007, followed by the College of Arts and Sciences with 49%, the College of Business Administration (33%), the College of Education (29%), and the College of Computer Studies (11%). Moreover, as regards publication, the College of Arts and Sciences ranked 1st with 37% of its faculty having published. This is followed by the College of Education (21%) and the College of Business Administration (11%). At the time this research was conducted, none of the respondents from the College of Computer Studies reported having published their research output.

As for RQ 2, the following are the top five factors that faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences, Education, Nursing, CBS, and CCS believe motivated them to engage in research: [1] the belief that research is integral to their professional growth as a teacher; [2] accreditation; [3] incentives for research; [4] promotion in rank, and [5] thesis/dissertation requirements. On the other hand, the following are the five most frequently identified reasons for their non-engagement in research: [1] preoccupation with teaching and preference for teaching overload; [2] housework; [3] lack of awareness of any research opportunities or funding; [4] administrators' and colleagues' non-engagement in research; and, [5] lack of competence and expertise in writing proposals or writing for publication.

As for productivity through publication, those who published are motivated to do so because of the following: [1] professional

growth; [2] incentives for publication; [3] professional credibility; [4] invitations by colleagues to participate in research projects; and, [5] accreditation. The majority of the respondents who have not published from 1997-2007 were unable to do so because of the following: [1] teaching tasks; [2] the belief that they do *not* have the necessary writing skill needed to produce a publishable report; [3] housework and family responsibility; [4] lack of knowledge on how to repackage their theses/dissertation to meet the technical and requirements of particular journals; and [5] lack of knowledge of the procedures and dynamics of getting a work published.

As for RQ 3, the respondents suggested the following strategies and infrastructure to improve or widen faculty participation in research projects and to publish their research output: [1] establishing a mentoring system where faculty members who have already conducted research and published their research findings closely supervise and coach those who have not yet engaged in research and publication; [2] crediting at least six units to faculty who engage in research, the credit awarded only once the output has been published in scholarly journals; [3] conducting workshops on how to get a work published in appropriate journals; [4] facilitating a system of wider and more frequent dissemination of research and development opportunities from concerned offices; and, [5] tapping more funding agencies to fund the research and development activities of the faculty. It is also worth noting that the both the RDC director and the faculty respondents emphasized the crucial role of capacity building activities particularly mentoring in cultivating a rich research culture. Moreover, they reiterated that for this to be productive, the mentors should be granted commensurate honorarium payable only when their mentee's work has already been published in credible, accredited peer-refereed journals.

It may be concluded from the findings of this study that Silliman University faculty engagement in research and publication activities has not yet reached a level of maturity where a rich culture of research is clearly demonstrated. Data from both the survey and the interviews suggest that although some members of the college faculty are recognized nationally and internationally for their notable contributions in their fields through their research work, the majority of Silliman University faculty has yet to engage in research and publication. Moreover, although infrastructures for research and development at Silliman University are in place, these have not been systematically or fully utilized to support faculty research endeavors.

For instance, although incentives for productivity and publication are in place, more or less the same few individuals earn these rewards because of the lack of localized and systematic capacity building and mentoring program in each college or department. Such department or college-based capacity building and peer coaching program may broaden faculty engagement in research and publication.

Silliman University may need to re-examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing infrastructures aimed at stimulating research and publication activities among college faculty. If the COEs and CODs are to be the bench mark of status of the University in terms of research and publication, it is clear from the data that much has yet to be done. Silliman University's thrust, Faith, Instruction, Research and Extension (FIRE), articulates the University's commitment to Christian education and the trifocal function of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Silliman sees itself as a research institution. Thus, it must re-evaluate the implementation of existing infrastructures to ensure that the University is not only accomplished in terms of a few of its faculty who have built a reputation in their field of specialization, but also in the increased number of faculty members who have made such distinction. It may also be deduced that the Silliman University experience in terms of faculty engagement in research and publication is a microcosm of the larger Philippine context. In fact, in evaluating the CHED National Higher Education Research Agenda(NHERA) - I, which was implemented from 1997 to 2008, Alcala, Padua, and Lachica (2009) reiterated that despite the infrastructure established by CHED through the Zonal Research Centers (ZRCs),

it is sad to note... that only 107 of the 511 HEIs were involved in these research activities spearheaded by the ZRC—which only account for 22 per cent of the HEIs. This means only about one in every five HEIs were involved in research involving the ZRCs.

This investigation may therefore be replicated in other similarly situated contexts, in the Philippines and Other Developing Countries (CODs) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). As Meek, Teichler, & Kearney (2009) emphasized in their review of the programs of the *UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge* from 2001 to 2009, "even the poorest nations require research capacity, or access to research findings, to progress; and so it could be argued that support for the principle of a research university in these contexts is more urgent than ever" (p. 12).

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THEOLOGICAL
FORUM

PART 1



INTRODUCTION

Theology of Struggle: Next Generation

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Since it burst forth in the theological scene as one of the most creative and original local articulations of Filipino theology and one that has generated, as a theological theme, profound and provocative theological reflections from Filipino theologians in the late 70s up to the early 90s, Theology of Struggle has been on a hiatus. Except for a few scholarly attempts to articulate and develop it further, it has not been explicitly present in the theological agenda of most Filipino theologians today. It has neither been actively pursued in major theological centers in the country nor discussed among lay and pastors alike. Once heralded as an important movement for social transformation, Theology of Struggle has now become, for the most part, a passive participant.

There are equally important reasons why there is a need to revive and push the theological project forward. The primary reason, however, is it being a theological necessity. As the new millennium dawned and new realities emerged, the Filipino people faced new and various challenges. If it wishes to remain relevant to the Filipino people and faithful to its commitment to the messianic mission of

Jesus, theology must speak and respond to these challenges in new and creative ways. It must continue to provide critical reflections and offer concrete proposals that respond to contemporary issues hounding Filipino society today. What has been started must be continued with more intensity and commitment to the task. New issues have emerged that need and must be dealt with through a new and bolder theological response. This is an important task for theology and an urgent one for Theology of Struggle today.

It was envisioned, therefore, that contemporary theologians, church workers (lay and clergy), community workers, and teachers who are committed to such project would gather in a theological forum in order to discuss the task at hand. This forum provides a space to remember and reflect, and look forward collectively to the work of, and the vocation for, liberation and justice in the Philippines. It was hoped as well that through this venue, a theological community would emerge, a community where fermentation of theological ideas are nurtured and enriched.

The Making of a Theology of Struggle: A Testimony of Theological Praxis in the Philippines

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“Some kind of liberation process is going on in our country in which Christians are involved and out of which faith reflections are beginning to emerge. To be more accurate, I am more inclined to describe what is going on as a struggle towards liberation. The faith reflections that have arisen could probably become the basis for a ‘theology of struggle.’ Either way not much has yet been written in systematic fashion.”

Louie Hechanova

(1983)¹

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, Dr. Levi Oracion suggested to the Divinity School faculty to pick up the writing of this Philippine “theology of struggle” (ToS). In 2001, he published his first book.

My participation and self-appointed task since the 1980s had been to help facilitate the articulation of the ToS particularly among Protestants. My hope continues to be for Filipino theologians to leave a record of Christian interpretation of our people’s struggle so that the generations to come may say, in the words of Jose Rizal, “Not all were asleep during the night.”²

My happy task is to talk about the history of this theological praxis with and among our people in their struggle for freedom and self-determination in the past five hundred years, but specially focused on the recent past. This paper is a testimony from the Protestant experience and limited to my readings and participation in the making of the theology of struggle.

THE SEARCH FOR A THEOLOGY IN AND FOR THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE

Way back in the early 1980's at the height of the struggle against the Marcos Dictatorship, there were many Christians, priests, nuns, pastors and deaconesses who were deeply involved. As a matter of fact, some had gone underground.

Many militant Christians were not bothered about the articulation of the Faith. They dismissed the institutional churches, specially the Roman Catholic Church, as conservative, fascist and collaborators.³ But soon they were isolated from the mainline churches. The few Christians in church leadership positions, together with others who were concerned about expanding the participation of Christians in the struggle against the Marcos Dictatorship, searched for theological articulation to explain their participation in the people's struggle.⁴ They asked questions such as: "What is the responsibility of the Church in social transformation?" "Is armed struggle justified in an atmosphere of structural violence?" "Is God present in the struggle for human rights?" "If Jesus was living during the Marcos Regime, what would he do?"

To lend support to such theological search of involved youth, militant pastors, priests and nuns and bishops, some Institutions started to offer informal alternative theological education. It was also at this time that seminary classes included ideological discussions, in which Latin America's Liberation Theology played a significant role. It was then that theological field education became a theological seedbed and breeding ground of militant Protestant Pastors.⁵

In January, 1981, a consultation was held on the theme "Faith, Theology and Religion in the Context of Filipino Struggle for Full Humanization." It was called "theological" because the sponsoring institutions were the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) and the Institute of Religion and Culture Philippines (IRC), and the invited participants were theological professors, pastors, priests and Christian educators. The objective was to articulate anew the Faith within the contemporary Philippine situation.

The organizers were conscious of the fact that articulations of the Faith are not complete if the greater masses of society are not represented and so they invited leaders of people's organizations: labourer, peasant, urban poor, fisherfolk, and a tribal Filipino

organizer of Basic Christian Community.⁶

It was a very different theological consultation. Participants in traditional Theological Consultations are usually professional theologians, theological professors, Bible scholars and other professionals related to religious discipline. Experts are invited to present papers prepared way ahead of time. Many Theological Consultations are held in air conditioned hotel. But in this consultation no papers were presented. It was held in a common religious seminar house with simple living facilities. Instead of prepared papers, people came to share their faith experiences, their analysis of local, regional and national situation.⁷

It was obvious that the dominant participants were the so-called “educated” middle class professionals of the Church. As a matter of fact English was used as the medium of communication. It was only when the representatives from the people’s organizations started sharing their experiences and reflections that we realized that they could not speak English well. The Tribal Filipinos (TF) representative could not even speak Pilipino that she had to be translated for the sake of the participants who did not understand her dialect.

What surprised us middle class folks was the clear and logical articulation by the representatives of the people’s organization regarding their socio-economic condition, the military harassments, the tortures, the political situations of their region vis-a-vis the national situation. We were taken aback by their audacity to indict the Church for not doing what the Christian Faith speaks about in terms of love, justice, freedom and respect for human beings.

While the professors were sharing how they teach the Faith and how we bishops and pastors preach and teach work within the contemporary situation, here was a group of Christians who spoke from the raw life living with and among the poor, the deprived and the oppressed, as they themselves come from that class. They spoke about their aspirations as human beings created by God, just like anyone of us.

The TF-BCC organizer could not even pronounce the word “theologian.” She kept calling us “technologists” even when we tried to correct her. Used intentionally or not, her description of us was correct; indeed we were technocrats of the Church. Her very strong words, her impassioned talk continued to reverberate in my ears for years. I tried to capture that talk into written form. This is what she said:

You, *technologists* [sic], are here to express the Faith in the contemporary situation. But do you really know what you are talking about regarding the Philippine situation? Certainly you can express the Faith in your beautiful language with choiced [sic] words, just as you have the luxury of time and money so you can *technologize* [sic] Many of you think that we of the masses do not have Faith because we do not express the faith the way you do. Don't ever tell us that we do not have faith if we do not usually go to church. We are also Christians like you. But we have our own priorities. Perhaps your priority is to find words to express the Faith. That is your problem. Our problem is where to get our next meal. Now will you please tell us how to express the Faith on an empty stomach? Can your "technologizing" [sic] give us our next meal, protect us from torture and harassments when we organize and hold strikes and rallies as we fight for our rights as human beings? Can your "technologizing" [sic] offer food to our malnourished children?

The other representatives of the people's organizations joined in, supporting each other's point of view, practically telling us that the Church had become irrelevant. In a nutshell they said unless the Church transformed itself and lived and worked with the people the way Jesus did his ministry, the words that the Church preaches were "sayang."

After some moment of silence, perhaps letting the speeches and testimonies of the representatives of the masses sink in our consciousness, one of the professors stood up and spoke slowly and softly, almost timidly:

If the Church is really that irrelevant, let us work for the dissolution of the Church; perhaps, in God's own time, a new Community will rise, one whose faith commitment is equal to the task of being with, incarnated among the people. Perhaps this is where we must be moving, that is, towards bringing about the Church of the Poor.

Compared to traditional theological consultation, no collection of speeches or papers came out of this consultation. The camaraderie and depth of understanding and fellowship among the participants were enough to forge the way for a more multi-sectoral commitment for the transformation of both Church and Society in the Philippines.

The only Statement that came out spoke truly of commitment to the people's cause. In part we said: "...we are challenged to join in the struggle towards social transformation. We are enjoined:

1. To embrace wholeheartedly, like Christ, the life-and-death struggles of the people without regard to our narrow and petty concerns;
2. To study the concrete social situation so that we may know and understand the problems and the forces at work within;

3. To examine our lifestyle, values and attitudes against those of the majority who are poor, deprived and oppressed in our society;
4. To form a continuing program of conscientization, organization and mobilization based on the method of "action-reflection-action" and direct contact and solidarity with the masses;
5. To organize our ranks so that we can more effectively carry on our task and function for the sake of the people."

The Institute of Religion and Culture Philippines (IRC) captures such commitment in its programs with the motto: "Faith in the service of the people."⁸

THE BIRTHING OF A "TECHNOLOGIAN" OF STRUGGLE

The Institute of Religion and Culture, Philippines (IRC), a propagator of the theology of struggle, asked one of those present in that meeting in 1981, a theologian trained in existential theology, to write a book on the experiences of people in the struggle. He presented an outline and an introduction of his work to a group that included leaders and organizers of peasants, labourers, indigenous people as well as pastors and theology professors. I was not there but I learned that the group made a strong criticism of his theology and he was not able to write that book. He had to learn it the hard way even when his "conversion experience" in the struggle occurred earlier. Here's how he tells about that earlier "conversion experience":

The day after martial law was declared on September 21, 1972, a group of radical students from Silliman University in Dumaguete City sought refuge at my home... I was flattered when the students told me that they chose to come to my home because I was one person they could trust for they know I understood their commitment to the people's cause. I told them they were welcome to stay in my house for the day but I asked to be excused for the moment for, being Sunday, my family and I had to go to church. But a brash young fellow shot back at me and told me that at that particular historical hour, God could not possibly be at the church. God must be with people who were being hunted by the military. That insolent remark hit me like a cannonball right between my eyes, but I could not talk him down for I knew he was right. We went to church anyway, but the student's sharp theological observation kept ringing in my ears all throughout the worship service. When we came back home we gave them a good lunch, and provided them with jackets, clothes, shoes and other things they might need as they plunged into their long struggle for justice and freedom. I had begun my gradual theological turn from theological existentialism towards a new way of seeing things and a new perception of God and world then struggled to be born in my breast, nameless as yet, but powerful and authentic. Existentialism

sought meaning in an inhuman and meaningless world; what I felt burning within me was the revelation of the possibility of a real human and meaningful world. But I knew I had to struggle for it.⁹

We got him involved in rallies. One time we persuaded him to say a few words of greetings at Liwasang Bonifacio to a mammoth crowd chanting against the US-Marcos dictatorship. He testified about that terrifying experience of speaking in front of a machine gun the police mounted directly pointing at the stage. We sent him to the farmers in the rural areas. One time he saw the bodies of farmers tortured by the military. He came back preaching strongly on issues of human rights. He sought to talk with the revolutionary leaders in the hills to have a feel of the situation and dangers of living with people on the run. After a stint with the World Council of Churches, Dr. Levi Oracion came back to write his theological reflections in his book, *God with Us: Reflections on the Theology of Struggle in the Philippines*.

PRECURSORS OF THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

The theology of struggle can be traced in the felt need of theological articulation from the underside of society as early as the 1960's. Some of us in the Inter-Seminary Program of Field Education (ISPFE)¹⁰ started using the term "experiential theology."¹¹ The Urban-Rural Mission (URM) of the Christian Conference of Asia used the term "theology in action."¹² Charles Avila wrote a small book called *Peasant Theology*.

"Grassroots Theology"

The first term acknowledged by theologians, before ToS, arose from the "marriage" of the pastoral Basic Christian Communities (BCC) methodology (influenced from Latin America) and the socio-political Community Organizing (CO) approach. Originally adopting the organizing approach of Saul Alinsky, Filipino community organizers developed its own socio-political organizing approach.¹³ These two approaches resulted in many people's organizations in both rural and urban Philippines in the mid 70's. The welding of BCC and CO created the Roman Catholic BCC-CO in 1978 and expanded ecumenically through the NCCP.¹⁴

BCC-CO evolved a method of doing theology called "faith-life reflections." These reflections were later named "Grassroots

Theology.” Grassroots theology stressed the importance of obtaining an authentic and sympathetic understanding of the people’s life situation through actual lived experience with them. It affirmed the trustworthiness and reliability of grassroots people’s insights about life and about the Christian Faith. Their experiences—pain, aspirations, and struggles—as well as faith and witness are the very stuff that constitutes a genuine Filipino theology. Grassroots theology asserted that the real theologians are the struggling poor and the formally trained theologians are to take the role of “technicians.”

This approach of theologizing was reported during the First Asian Theological Conference in 1979 held in Sri Lanka.¹⁵ Fr. Carlos Abesamis summarized the five components of this approach. He wrote:

Theological reflection is an activity of interpreting contemporary life-situation in the light of Faith, and that accordingly, theological reflection is [1] based on contemporary life-situation and history, which is [2] seriously and scientifically analysed, and [3] seen in the light of faith which is biblical-historical and [3a] with the help of native wisdom or native religion; [4] such a theological reflection must lead to transforming action; and [5] *the doers of theological reflection and the creators of real Filipino theology are the grassroots poor themselves.*¹⁶ (emphasis mine)

As the ToS developed, the first four elements listed by Fr. Abesamis were affirmed. But the idea of the grassroots poor as the doers and creators of Filipino theology has created some tensions. Sr. Theresa Dagdag noted that some theologians questioned the idea that the people are the authors of theology. Others said, “Leave theology to the theologians.” The question was on who should really do theology—the grassroots people or the middle class professional theologians?

The tension was resolved finally, and this was reported during the 1981 Delhi Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). The report affirmed both grassroots and professional theologians as genuine theologians, “*provided their reflections stem from the perspective of the liberated consciousness of both the grassroots and the middle class.*” To avoid ambiguity, the report clarified that “*taken in a wider sense, the faith-based life-interpretations of the grassroots, expressed and shared in their prayer sessions, liturgy, storytelling, drama, songs, and poems, are genuine theology. But in its formal sense, as an art and science, theology is a discipline that requires technical competence.*”¹⁷ (emphasis mine)

“People’s Theology”

There was a brief attempt by some Protestant theologians associated with the ECD to “mine” through field research theological insights of people from the organized communities. This is not the same as lived experience with the people. The raw products contained a popular theology, a sort of politicised folk Christianity that regards faith as an ideological weapon of the oppressed in the fight for freedom. Called “People’s Theology,” two volumes were published: *Out of the Valley of Dry Bones: Faith in Struggle, Book I* (1984), *Book II* (1990)—something like the Gospel in Solentiname.¹⁸

THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

Fr. Louie Hechanova, CSsR, is known as the person who originally proposed the name “theology of struggle.” In a lecture sometime in the mid-1970’s, Fr. Louie observed that involved Christians had tried to reflect theologically from the point of view of the Latin American Liberation Theology. But the Philippine situation was *intensely undergoing a process towards liberation*. Fr. Louie, who was deeply involved in the struggle of the most oppressed peasant labour force, the *sacadas* (transient workers) of Negros Oriental, said that the people’s experience was a “struggle towards liberation” and so he proposed that the emerging Filipino theology be named “theology of struggle.”¹⁹ Anne Harris says that the term was suggested by Fr. Louie in 1982 at the air conditioned library of St. Scholastica’s College in Manila.

So far, I find Ann Harris book, *Dare to Struggle, Be Not Afraid* as the most comprehensive study on the development of the ToS. Ann Harris is a lecturer in Religious Studies at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. She was in the Philippines in 1986 during the euphoria of the People Power Revolution when Cory Aquino took over the Presidency. She came again in 1995-1996 and in 1998 to do extensive research, interviewing all people involved in the development of the ToS. Her book came out in 2003. She believes that the Christian for National Liberation (CNL) has a strong influence in the development of ToS. She attempted a summary definition of ToS as follows:

The theology of struggle was, and continues to be, the response of socially concerned

Christians who, after experiencing conversion as a result of living and working among the poor, found themselves committed to a new way of 'being' Christian.²⁰

The only other study I found is by James R. Wheelchel, an Evangelical, who is not at all sympathetic to the cause of ToS.²¹

EARLY PRAXIS OF THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

Former Catholic priest Fr. Edicio de la Torre was an early practitioner and articulator of the theology of struggle. While teaching in the Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay City, he went into peasant organizing. Giving clear analysis of the Philippine society in a distinct "de la Torre way," Fr. Ed articulates Christian theology in words and stories easily understood by the farmers. Fr. Ed went underground when the Christian for National Liberation (CNL) that he co-founded was declared subversive. He was arrested and detained by the military.

Fr. Ed tells a now classic story about the danger and risks in espousing the theology of struggle. He was among a hundred political detainees who would usually get together to discuss issues of common concern. In one of such meetings, they decided to tell about the reasons why they were detained. Some were in jail because they were leaders or members of labour unions. Some were jailed because they led mass movements and rallies. Others were detained because they were leading student strikes. Still others were in jail because they were suspected of being connected with the armed struggle. The journalists were in jail because they wrote articles critical to the government. When it came to Fr. Ed's turn, he said: "I am in jail because I was doing theology." There was laughter in the group, for how can theology be that dangerous?²²

There was no written theology of struggle at the time. It was much later that theologians who joined the struggle realized that the theology of struggle was being written in the lives of the people. As Fr. Ed puts it: "*The emerging theology of struggle takes the form of testimonies, as martyrs speak to us after their death in their testaments of faith. We also keep them alive through songs and poems in the midst of our tears and struggle. Some future editors can compile these materials (I emphasized the fact that the materials are both written and oral) according to the needs of the communities that will emerge.*"²³

Karl Gaspar in 1988 wrote:

If you want to know about the theology of struggle (ToS), the indigenous theology emerging in the Philippines, do not look for a book. There isn't one, and none may be written soon.... Fortunately, this new theology has been communicated in another language, a language no different from that used by the Israelites before the Bible was written. Then as now, ToS uses literary forms—songs, poems, stories, letters, plays; as well as murals, paintings, illustrations, mime, body movements, dance and symbols. This is perhaps why one must look at culture and liturgy if he or she is to understand ToS.²⁴

An example of ToS painting that came out of the experiences of the *sacadas* (seasonal sugar workers) and became popular in international circles is "The Angry Christ." A few collections of revolutionary songs or poetry appeared in small volumes, mostly in mimeographed forms. I do not know if a collection of those materials have ever been published as theological writings. But I know that theologians have used many of those songs, prayers, poems and short testimonies in writing articles and books for purposes of theological reflections.

The EBF planned an anthology of those writings, but it never came out. Perhaps the Divinity School can pick up the project and do the collection and publication of such anthology. Karl Gaspar himself used a selected number of these materials to explain the emerging theology of struggle from the people. For example, we have this prayer of Abdon Almonicar, a farmer who speaks about faith-life integration from the Biblical-historical perspective:

Lord of History, we offer to you this soil as a symbol of the land we till...We, landless peasants, have only one dream—to own a piece of land. Why must it take so long before this dream is fulfilled? In a few years' time, I will be dead. I would like to see my dream come true before I die, so that I have something tangible to leave my children. But powerful men who want to take our land, so that they can convert the cornfields into a ranch, have a better assurance of securing the land title. Help us in our struggle, Lord. Give us the courage to continue with our attempt to have a strong peasants' organization, so we can continue our struggle for this land.

The following poem by Tranquilino Cabarubias is a testimony that the theology of struggle empowers people to take up the cross:

I fear no death's spectre
Nor lament the bestial holocaust
Deprived of a proper resting place.
It matters not if my children
My wife, friends and kin
See me not breathe my last
For they know the form of death,
Wickedly devised by the powers-that-be

That awaits those who struggle
That divine justice may reign in the land.

Trank, as he was fondly called, became a threat to the “powers-that-be” and the ire of the military. He was murdered on October 9, 1983.²⁵

IRC’s magazine *Kalinangan* included liturgical materials with photographs capturing clergy in liturgical celebrations with fists raised in solidarity with the people as they sing and pray, religious women standing behind political banners, and people from all walks of life at protest gatherings. The tone was clearly one of resistance. The God being celebrated is tangible, walking with the people as they pray and struggle for a better future. Here is an example of a Statement of Belief:

*We believe in God who is not in some far distant places
but here in our midst.
We see him in the struggles of the people:
in the demands of the students for their rights and welfare,
in the struggle of the squatters against ejection and poverty,
in the demands of the workers for higher wages and
for the abolition of inhuman factory conditions,
in the struggle of the peasants for land of their own
and to be free of feudal oppression,
in the struggle of Third World Countries against imperialism
which makes the rich richer and poor poorer.
In faith we commit ourselves and our wills to God.
His great love compels us to join in the struggles of the people.
We believe that by God’s grace and power
we can help create a world of love and freedom for every person.*

(From *Kalinangan Liturgical Aids*, 1986, p. 11)

The theology of struggle appeared in many ecumenical and inter-faith liturgical celebrations called *Pagsambang Bayan* (People’s Worship or People’s Mass) that contained mainly prayers, testimonies, songs and poetry such as above. Such worship services were held in open plazas or on the streets. It must also be told that in those People’s Mass no one asked the question whether one is Catholic or Protestant, Indigenous person of Tribal Filipinos, or even Muslim. People just worshipped together.

HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF STRUGGLE AS CONTEXT FOR THEOLOGIZING

"Bayan Ko" had been considered as the second Philippine National Anthem, and it was sung in most rallies during the Marcos Dictatorship.²⁶ Can a theologian of struggle reflect theologically on this anthem? Obviously, yes.

Composed by Jose Corazon de Jesus in 1928, long before the martial law era, "Bayan Ko" is a nostalgic lamentation of the vestigial remains of a lost struggle in the past. Levi Oracion says it speaks to the sense of people-hood harboured by the poor and so it has been elevated into a battle hymn. The Anthem imbibes the spirit of struggle and hope for freedom from slavery; thus, becoming a rallying point to awaken people to the reality of their situation and to struggle in order to bring about the liberation that they long crave for. The Story of the Exodus was a favourite of theologians of the struggle.

Like many who write on the ToS, Oracion talks about the "four times over" colonization of the Philippines (Spanish, American, Japanese, and American again) and the response of the Filipino people in a continuing struggle. ToS theologians speak again and again of the Filipino people's struggle through 350 years of Spanish rule fighting in some 300 revolts, the longest of which was 85 years. The people finally united to launch the Philippine Revolution of 1998 and won the war against Spain, only to be sold to United States for \$20 Million. The first Republic in Asia was short-lived and once again the Philippines became a colony, this time by a new imperialist power, the United States of America. This brought about the Philippine-American war (1899-1913), the longest American war that killed over a million Filipinos or 15% of the Filipino population at that time.²⁷

Dr. Eleazer Fernandez, like Oracion, gives emphasis on the Filipino history of resistance and struggle. He quotes the nationalist historian Renato Constantino who said that "the only way a history of the Philippines can be Filipino is to write on the basis of the struggles of the people, for in these struggles the Filipino emerged.... Filipino resistance to colonial oppression is the unifying thread of Philippine history."²⁸

Dr. Everett Mendoza provides documentary references of this history in his book, *Radical and Evangelical: Portrait of a Filipino Christian*. He says, "The decisive factor that led to the success of American colonial designs in the Philippines was the total co-option of the Filipino elite whose economic interests and political ambitions had

been successfully grafted into the fabric of U.S. colonialism and neo-colonialism up to the present.”²⁹ I am underscoring the phrase “up to the present” because this is the context of the continuing struggle against neo-colonization today, a situation where the Filipino socio-political elite collaborates with the colonizer, and an invitation for continuing the work on the theology of struggle.

PRAXIS OF A CHURCH IN THE STRUGGLE: THE IGLESIA FILIPINA INDEPENDIENTE (IFI)

The Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) exemplifies a Church that bravely stood against the American government’s suppression of the spirit of nationalism in the early decades of the 1900s. It was born in 1902 from the Union Obrero Demacrata, the first labour union in the Philippines. After their widespread participation in the Philippine Revolution of 1998 and their declaration of independence from the Roman Catholic Church, the Iglesia Filipina Independiente fought the US Colonial Government through their religious rituals and practices. When the US Government in the Philippines passed the Anti Sedition Law in 1901 banning all advocacy of independence punishable by law, the new church chose to call itself “independent.” When the American Colonial Government passed the Anti-Brigandage Act in 1902 declaring all armed struggle against America as brigandage, the IFI adorned their local churches with the pictures of Jose Rizal and the three martyred priests “to continue to inspire the people to emulate the lives of our heroes” who fought Spain.

When the Anti-Flag Law was passed in 1907 banning the display of the Philippine National Flag and the singing of the Philippine National Anthem, the IFI used the national colours as vestments of the priests and the altar table cloth. The Philippine National Anthem was sung as part of the liturgy of the Eucharist. They also painted the Virgin Mary dressed in the Filipino flag. And so in every celebration of the Eucharist and every religious procession, the National Flag is displayed and paraded and the National Anthem sung.

The Americans could not do anything about it because of the avowed separation of church and state. It must be told that the first Supreme Bishop of the IFI, Bishop Gregorio Aglipay, was a general in the Philippine Revolutionary Army. Such tradition of struggle continues and today the Iglesia Filipina Independiente is one of the most militant churches in the Philippines. Many of their priests

and bishops are leaders and practitioners of ToS. Among the recent victims was Bishop Ramento.³⁰

Since colonialism and neo-colonialism continues up to the present, Mendoza says that in the context of contemporary Philippine reality, theology must deal with the question of revolution specifically shaped by a historical struggle for national sovereignty against colonial and imperialist domination and for the social emancipation of oppressed classes against the local elites."³¹

A BTR ON THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE BY A WOMAN THEOLOGIAN

In 2002, "Cry OUT NOW" was organized as an advocacy group in the struggle against the presence of U.S. troops in the country. An example of a Biblical-Theological Reflection (BTR), a term popularized in the theology of struggle, was delivered by Sr. Pat Fox, NDS, a convenor of "Cry OUT NOW." In her theologizing, Sr. Pat spoke of the tradition of Joseph, Rachel's son, who was sold to slavery by his brothers. Badly beaten, Joseph was taken to Egypt. As they passed by her mother's tomb in Bethlehem, he cried out to his mother and she answered him that God would prevail and he would return to his land as a free man. Sr. Pat said that Jeremiah heard the cry of Rachel when the Israelites were brought to Babylonia: "A voice is heard on high, wailing, bitter weeping, Rachel weeps for her children; she refuses to be consoled" (Jeremiah 31:15). Matthew also heard the loud and unrestrained weeping of Rachel when Herod ordered the massacre of male infants up to two years old at the time of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:18). Sr. Pat expanded her reflections (I can imagine Sr. Pat emotionally) saying:

Surely we can still hear the loud weeping of Rachel with the decision of the Macapagal-Arroyo government to allow foreign troops into the country, purportedly to help in the fight against a small band of bandits. The Philippine Army has been un-leashing its might in southern Mindanao for some time now yet has failed to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf. Instead we have witnessed the slaughter of innocents, the displacement of whole communities, the increase in human rights abuses, ruination of agricultural lands and properties, and ecological destruction. Rachel weeps with the children traumatized by this war, the families in refugee centres unsure of their future and lacking basic services. And what do they ask: to be allowed to return to their homes, to farm again, to go to school. Jesus said: 'What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for an egg?' (Luke 11:11). Why then does this Government offer foreign troops when the requests of the people are for justice, not war?"

Then the militant nun concludes: "Let us listen to the cry of the poor and join them in their journey towards justice, freedom and independence. Only then will the weeping of Rachel be turned to joy."

SOME PRACTITIONERS OF THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

My re-birth in the Christian ministry occurred when I was Executive Coordinator of the Inter-Seminary Program of Field Education. In the process of negotiating for placements of seminarians, I became immersed in the life of the poor. I used to bring my UTS students in "Church and Philippines Society" to the squatters in Manila to listen to a lecture on the struggles of the urban poor by a 16-year-old girl who grew up in slums of Manila who did not finish high school. Starting as a Community Organizer at the age of 11, this girl could explain laws and ordinances affecting the urban poor. I became more and more convinced that the poor can be the primary bearers of the struggle. Theological articulation may be done by the professional theologians.

The Roman Catholic nuns were much ahead of Protestants. My first encounter with Sr. Mary John Manansan, OSB, PhD in Philosophy and Linguistics, was when she was marching with labour union in the first labour strike under Martial Law. A popular speaker and teacher on women's issues and a respected theologian specially involved in the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, Sr. Mary John was President of St. Scholastica's College in Manila. One of the founders of the IRC, Sr. Mary John continues to be Chairperson of GABRIELA, the most militant national women's organization in the Philippines. Nuns left their convents to live in the slum areas among the urban poor. Rural missionaries lived in remote rural areas among the poor farmers. I worked with nuns who were strong advocates of human rights.

In 1988, a former General Secretary of UCCP, was among the 19 church people branded by the military as communists. Sounding like Dom Helder Camara, Bishop Estanislao Abainza wrote:

If to help the poor and needy, the oppressed and the exploited in their quest for a more abundant life as promised by Jesus is to be branded a communist, so be it. My Christianity demands of me that aside from loving God with all my heart, soul and mind, I must also love my neighbour.... If such a Christian commitment is to become vulnerable to labelling of 'subversive,' 'communist,' and 'leftist,' then I am

glad to accept the categorization. I have a cloud of witnesses who have been similarly accused, Christians and non-Christians alike. I am certain that I will not be the last.³²

The basic ingredient of the ToS is deep commitment to the task of socio-political and economic transformation towards freedom, justice, self-determination, even at the cost of suffering and death. Rev. Luzminda Gran, a UCCP woman minister, was brutally shot, together with her husband, because she organized peasants and led rallies as part of her pastoral task. "Doing theology of struggle" is indeed a dangerous business as Ed de la Torre used to say.

PROPAGATORS OF THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

Among the most active alternative educational institutions and propagators of the ToS are the [1] Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, Philippines (EATWOT- Philippines) organized 1976, [2] WCC related-Ecumenical Centre for Development (ECD) (1977), [3] Roman Catholic-based Socio-Pastoral Institute (SPI) (1979), [4] Protestant-based ecumenical program called the Institute of Religion and Culture, Philippines (IRC) (1980), and [5] Ecumenical Bishops Forum (EBF) (1984).

Among the mainline Philippine Protestant churches, the most active in ToS education and organizing is the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) and the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), and the official ecumenical voice is the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP). NCCP published a two-volume collection of NCCP statements or social teachings. In the Roman Catholic Church the most active is the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) of Men and Women. All these churches and organizations have contributed to the list of martyrs of the theology of struggle.

Books on the ToS use articles from *Kalinangan* magazine of IRC, the series of pamphlets and tracts of SPI and *Tugon* of the NCCP. IRC and SPI later published collections of articles and pamphlets. The UCCP in cooperation with the Philippine Bible Society issued a Revised Standard Version of the Bible with a supplement of UCCP statements many of which could be considered subversive by the Marcos government.³³

The IRC started with a program called IPIL (Instituto sa Pag-aaral ng Iglesia at Lipunan) and developed and published 12 module courses

called "Bible in Context" to propagate the theology of struggle among the pastors, lay workers and youth leaders where Biblical themes are studied side by side with Philippine history and the people's struggle for freedom and life abundance. In connection with these seminars, IRC produced "The Captive Land," an audio-visual presentation of Philippine History from the point of view of the people." A new version called "Captive Land Revisited" is now available on CD. In addition, IRC published four modules of Facilitator's Resource Books on women's struggle³⁴ and commissioned the composition of 16 songs on women situation and struggle.³⁵

The EBF made the Theology of Struggle as a major project and held many consultations on the various issues related to it. The bishops requested the Forum for Inter-Discipline Endeavours and Studies (FIDES) and the Theologians for Renewal, Unity and Social Transformation (THRUST), two militant research and writing groups, to be their partners. In a consultation of EBF, FIDES and THRUST members held on February 4-8, 1985, the first lineaments on the Theology of Struggle was outlined. EBF planned five books on ToS. So far two books of collected writings have been published from this cooperative endeavour: [1] *Religion and Society: Towards a Theology of Struggle* Book I, and [2] *Witness and Hope Amid Struggle: Towards a Theology and Spirituality of Struggle* Book II. The Forum also published a collection of their socio-political statement called "...To Walk Humbly with God and Man..."³⁶ EBF publishes a magazine *Micah's Call*.

EATWOT Philippines has produced many articles and common studies on the Theology of Struggle.³⁷ It must be noted that both the Christian Conference of Asia and the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) also publish articles by Filipino theologians of struggle.³⁸

In 1986, a preliminary sketch of the Theology of Struggle was presented in a cultural-liturgical form and presented in public at the Cultural Centre of the Philippines called "Pumipiglas: Teolohiya ng Bayan (Breaking Free: Theology of the People)."³⁹ It was directed by Karl Gaspar and rendered by the Redemptorist novices. Karl Gaspar also wrote a book of reflections from prison.⁴⁰

SYSTEMATIZING THE ARTICULATION OF THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

The re-education process through a renewed effort in biblico-historical studies brought about new theological interpretations of life, of God and the world from the point of view of struggle. The report of the Filipino delegations at the 5th International Conference of EATWOT in New Delhi, India in 1981 records the following changes:

1. Human life is no longer just a period of trial to be rewarded or punished in an afterlife; it has value in its own terms and opposes whatever is dehumanizing in this life.
2. Salvation is no longer simply eternal bliss and beatific vision for the embodied soul in heaven above, but a new world of justice, resurrection, and life in a future that challenges us to make something of that future actual today.
3. God is no longer someone who watches us from "up there" but someone involved in our history of struggle for justice and the life of abundance that Jesus spoke of.
4. Faith and religion are not a collection of historical truths but have to do with a saving history that continues in our day.⁴¹

To my knowledge, there are only two theologians who consciously attempted the systematic articulation of the theology of struggle: [1] Dr. Eliezar Fernandez who made it the subject of his doctoral dissertation, and [2] Dr. Levi Oracion who has written three books. Fernandez's *Towards a Theology of Struggle* is a proposal for theological construction dealing with the following theological themes:

- Context (Christians in the Struggle and the Emergence of the Theology of Struggle: A Theological Reading of the Philippine Context);
- Eschatology (Cry for Deliverance: Suffering, Hope, and Politics of Struggle);
- The Human (Struggle for Historical Selfhood and Humanity);
- Christology (The Christ-Praxis of a People: The "Pasyon," Death, and Resurrection of the "Sambayanang Pilipino);
- The Church (A Search for an Ecclesiology of Struggle, Peoplehood, and Human dwelling); and
- Hermeneutics (In Search of a Theological Method).⁴²

Fernandez summarizes the nature of the theology of struggle as:

1. a reflexive/reflective activity of Filipino communities involved in the struggle;
2. a struggle that is discerned in light of the Christian Faith, through the vehicle of traditions or Scripture, which are interpreted appropriately;
3. informed by the contemporary situation (both domestic and global) through the agency of various analytical and critical theories;
4. the interpretations and analysis of which are carried out through Filipino idioms and
5. for the continuation of the liberating struggle of the Filipino people (praxis).

Levi Oracion's first book, *God With Us: Reflections on the Theology of Struggle in the Philippines*, is a systematic reflection on theological themes described in such chapter titles as: A Cauldron of Resentment, Perspective of the Theology of Struggle, The God Who Lures Us in the Struggle, The Nature and Predicament of the Human Reality, Jesus Christ: God's Struggle With Us, In Us and For Us, God's Dialectic of Salvation, A People Comes Forth, Christian Life and the Spirit, and A New Historic Beginning.

Luna Dingayan, former Formation staff of IRC and currently Dean of the Ecumenical Theological Seminary experiments on a field based action-reflection seminary curriculum and has been writing on the Christology of Struggle.⁴³

Current Filipino theology of struggle gives voice to the struggle of women in theological praxis. The emancipation of women from cultural and religious traditions is a necessary subject in the current theology of struggle.⁴⁴ Christology is a pre-occupation of theologians of struggle. Even Filipino feminist theologians are not bothered by the question of a male saviour. Jesus is looked at as fully liberated human being. Sr. Virginia Fabella said:

In the person and praxis of Jesus are found the grounds of our liberation from all oppression and discrimination: whether political or economic, religious or cultural, or based on gender, race or ethnicity. Therefore, the image of Jesus as liberator is consistent with my Christology, for example, pointed out that the maleness of Jesus is a historical accident rather than an ontological necessity in the liberation process. Jesus liberates both men and women.⁴⁵

Everett Mendoza's book, *Radical and Evangelical: Portrait of a Filipino Christian*, is a critique of Latin American liberation theology from the perspective of a Protestant in the Philippines. Taking off from Tillich's Protestant principle, Mendoza aimed at "discovering some basic principles of evangelical thought to bear upon radical politics" to serve in the struggle of the Filipino people to which he is deeply committed.

Dr. Gordon Zerbe has a 21-page well documented paper entitled "Constructions of Paul in Filipino Theology of Struggle" which he presented to Paul and Politics Group during the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Atlanta on November 2003 and sent to the *Asia Journal of Theology*. I do not know if this has been published at all.

Among us, who have written and lectured on subjects on or related to the Theology of Struggle, or have participated in committees and study groups and organized consultations and study groups, and helped propagate the theology of struggle, are Bishop Benito Dominguez, Prof. Elizabeth Dominguez, Dr. Noriel Capulong, Mrs. Henie Camba.

We should mention also the name of Sr. Chayong Battung (the "honorary bishop" of the EBF) with the EBF Secretariat who guided the publication of the two EBF volumes and planned many consultations. Bishop Julio Labayen needs to be recognized as one who strongly supports the ToS as major Project and has written and continues to write books on the Church of the Poor.

THE CONTINUING PRAXIS OF THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

Dr. Feliciano Cariño aptly summarizes the Theology of Struggle in this way: "The Theology of Struggle is not about theology as such. Its primary concern is the Philippine struggle itself: how to participate in the struggle as Christians, how to make available in that struggle the resources of the Christian life and tradition, how to make alive Christian spirituality in that struggle."

He adds that the Theology of Struggle is a theology from the underside. Its theme is about God and God's relationship with the world. It is narrative, testimony and address. "It is **narrative** of involvement, the involvement of those who are with the poor in their struggle. It is **testimony** of Christians who are involved with the poor,

and carries with it their experience and their reflection. It is **addressed** to the church to level with its commitment to and option for the poor and with the demands of faith. It is addressed to society at large and to those who are in power who must be transformed in order to give way to the demands of the poor and to God's justice." Furthermore, he says, that the Theology of Struggle is a political theology for it takes political options seriously and deals directly with ideological questions.⁴⁶

AN INCLUSIVE ECUMENICAL ECCLESIA

The ecclesiology of the Theology of Struggle has a radical ecumenical character. The UCCP puts it as "the spirit of new ecumenism which goes beyond the traditional denominational lines. This new ecumenism has come out of the Church's ministry in identity with the people's struggle for justice, peace and freedom. Its main objective is the restoration of the individual to full human-hood and the transformation of society to usher in the Reign of God."⁴⁷

Levi Oracion describes this new ecumenical ecclesia as "a human fellowship whose form is amorphous, whose membership is indefinite and informal, whose creedal affirmation is a constellation of simple Christian beliefs, whose ritual practice is free-wheeling, whose human authority is non-existent, and whose mission is non-religious, but they are a body who are committed to the same struggle and whose paramount faith is that God will be faithful and true to God's primal covenant God revealed in the Bible—that God is always on the side of the poor and those truly hungering and thirsting for God's righteousness."⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

I would like to close this paper with similar words I used in a homily at the International Ecumenical Conference in New York City in 1983 at the height of our struggle against the Marcos Dictatorship:

Friends, if you are looking for the militant ecumenical community do not look for them in the Manila Cathedral or the National Offices of the UCCP or the Headquarters of the UMC, not even the NCCP because, as in the words of Albert H. Van den Heuvel: "The Church is there, where people are emptying themselves, making themselves

as nothing, where people serve, not just a little, but in the total service which has been imitated from the Messiah-Servant and in which the cross comes into view; there, where the solidarity with fellowmen [and women] is not merely preached but is actually demonstrated.”⁴⁹

The Theology of Struggle continues to be in the making in the lives of the struggling people in the Philippines. As in the recent past, many would not hesitate to add to the list of the martyrs who gave their lives to serve the people as their commitment in this theological praxis.



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ENDNOTES

The original version of this paper was presented at Emmanuel College of Victoria University, University of Toronto, Canada on March 21, 2002 as part of the “Asian Theology Conversation Series,” sponsored by their Centre for Asian Theology. Bishop Erme R. Camba, a former General Secretary of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, is co-founder of the Institute of Religion and Culture Philippines (IRC) and the Ecumenical Bishops Forum (EBF), both precursors and propagators of the ToS.

¹ Hechanova, L. (1983). The Christ of liberation. In *With raging hope*, 1. Quezon City, Philippines: SPI and Claretian Publications, 1983, p. 13.

² From Jose Rizal’s *El Filibusterismo* (*Reign of Greed: A Complete Translation From the Spanish*), Quezon City, Philippines, Giraffe Books, 1997. Although Rizal, the “*ilustrado*” provided the written articulation to inspire the Philippine Revolution, many Filipino nationalists insist that the revolutionary mass leader Andres Bonifacio is national hero of the Philippines. It is significant to name both because they symbolize the participation of both the “*ilustrados*” and the grassroots mass majority in the Filipino people’s struggle against Spain.

³ Fr. Pedro V. Salgado, OP, provides historical documentation of the collaboration of the Church hierarchy with governments in the Philippines in his “Church and Violence: The Philippine Experience,” *Doing Theology with Asian Resources: Theology and Politics*, 1. Singapore, ATESEA, 1993, pp. 169-190. He says: All throughout the centuries, from Spanish times up to the present day, the Church hierarchy has always used violence to further what it considered the best interests of the Church. On the other hand, a small section of the Church, led by the priests, used violence

as a weapon for the defence and promotion of the interest of the poor," p. 169 (Cf. Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines: 1898-1916: An Inquiry Into the American Colonial Mentality*. This book documents the American Protestant collaboration with the American government.).

⁴ For example, the Student Christian Movement (SCM) became so militant. The members were more articulate in ideological discussions and analysis of Philippine Society that the churches isolated them from their youth organizations. The government considered them as one within the ambit of the left and, therefore, Communist. They were challenged to explain the "C" in SCM. And so they asked senior SCMs to help them. They ask for the Seminars on "Church and Society" and "Bible in Context" offered by the Institute of Religion and Culture, Philippines.

⁵ For example, three General Secretaries and several bishops of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines were products of this alternative theological education. Three of them were community organizers before they came back to church work and slowly rose from the ranks to be elected to responsible church positions.

⁶ The various organized sectors during Martial Rule included peasants, laborers, tribal Filipinos, professionals, the church sector (nuns, priests, seminarians, pastors, deaconesses, bishops). There were hundreds of organizations. Various militant alliances were formed. Triggered by the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. the widest informal Anti-Marcos alliances included businesspeople. This brought about the ouster of Marcos. It is sad to note that the people's movement had been co-opted once again by the major institutional church, the "illustrados," the business people as well as the military. True to form, the US, which propped up the dictatorship, came to bring the dictator out of the country and supposedly to lend a hand, but in reality to be able to keep its foothold in the Philippines. **And so the struggle goes on.**

⁷ As a founding member and an officer of the Board of Directors IRC, I was in that milestone Consultation. The account related in this paper came from my notes of the Consultation and originally written as part of the Inaugural Subir Biswas Memorial Lectures I delivered in Madras, India on the Silver Anniversary of the India URM, 1985.

⁸ The Rev. Luna Dingayan, former staff of IRC and his wife Perla Pascua wrote/composed the IRC hymn on this theme. This hymn has found its way into the new Hymnal for a Faith Journey of the UCCP.

⁹ Oracion, L.V. (2001). *God With Us: Reflection on the Theology of Struggle in the Philippines*. Dumaguete City, Divinity School, Silliman University, 2001, p.9.

¹⁰ The Inter-Seminary Program of Field Education was a cooperative effort of five seminaries that offered two months theological field education immersion program for seminarians. The areas of immersion included living and working with organized peasants in the countryside, labour unions in picket lines, Muslim and Indigenous Filipinos. Other exposures included the work among prostituted women and street children. Some seminarians were employed as common labourers in factories and sweatshops.

¹¹ Fr. Ciriaco Lagunzad is a former minister of UCCP but became a priest of the Episcopal Church of the Philippines (ECP). A former Director of ISPFE, he used the term “experiential theology” in consultations he organized and in his reports and articles on theological field education.

¹² A collection of papers, Bible Studies, poems and liturgies presented and used in the Consultation on Theology in Action were published in a small book of the same title in 1971. The collection included lectures of Fr. Ed de la Torre.

¹³ Saul Alinsky’s method of organizing which started in Chicago was issue-oriented. Filipinos turned it into a socio-political approach to organizing. For example, the government authorities would plan to demolish the shanties of urban poor squatters; in the Alinsky approach the people would be organized into a pressure group to prevent the government from demolishing their houses. In the Filipino CO approach, the people are helped to ask the prior question as to why there are urban poor and why there is general poverty in the land. The Community Organizers facilitate people’s understanding of the connection between the squatters’ issues to land grabbing in the rural areas that drives people to look for work in the city. They would then inquire into low wages and poor working conditions and the collusion of Filipino elite with the multi-national corporations that make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The awareness building, tedious work as it is, led to the downfall of Marcos dictatorship. It took some twenty years of community organizing.

¹⁴ The most prominent Protestant associated earlier with the Alinsky approach and later BCC-CO is the Rev. Henry Aguilan of the Urban-Rural programs of the UCCP and later on of the NCCP. Rev. Aguilan was the first one who collected and circulated the social statements of the UCCP. He was known in Tondo, Manila as strongly associated with the militant Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO).

¹⁵ Abesamis, C.H. (1980). Faith and Life Reflections from the Grassroots in the Philippines. In V. Fabella (Ed.), *Asia’s struggle for full humanity: Towards a relevant theology* (pp. 123-139). Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

¹⁶ Fabella, V. (Ed.). *Asia’s struggle for full humanity: towards a relevant theology*. p. 128.

¹⁷ Dagdag, T. (1992). Emerging theology in the Philippines today. In *Currents in Philippine theology: Kalinangan Book Series II* (pp. 77-78). Quezon City, Philippines: IRC. The Philippine report is summarized in Virginia Fabella and Sergio Torres, Eds., *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology* (Papers from the Fifth International Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, Aug. 17-29, 1981, New Delhi, India), pp. 73-74

¹⁸ Dr. Everett Mendoza, “Theology in the Philippines: The future of Local Theologies in an Age of Globalization” (presented in the Silliman Divinity School to SEAGST M. Theol. students from Hanil University, Feb. 1999; and Rev. Reuel Norman O. Marigza, “The Future of Filipino Theology: Some Perspectives and Prospects Developing A Theology in the Service of the People,” presented to the Basic Ecumenical Course Program of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Jan., 2001. Ernesto Cardenal’s *Gospel in Solentiname* (Four Vols), Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, was

a collection of conversation commentaries on the Gospel read each Sunday mass by the peasants of Nicaragua during the struggle against the Dictator Somoza.

¹⁹ Louie Hechanova, "The Christ of Liberation," *With Raging Hope*, 1, Quezon City, Philippines, SPI and Claretian Publications, 1983, p. 13. Eleazar Fernandez makes a concise story of the origin of the term "theology of struggle," in his book, *Toward a Theology of Struggle*, Maryknoll New York, Orbis Books, 1994, pp. 23-24. Cf. Victoria Narciso-Apuan, et al., eds., *Witness and Hope Amid Struggle: Towards a Theology and Spirituality of Struggle, Book II*, Quezon City, Phils, EBF, FIDES and SPI, 1991 p.7.

²⁰ Anne Harris, *Dare to Struggle, Be Not Afraid: The 'Theology of Struggle' in the Philippines*, Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2003. Her definition is on p. 2.

²¹ James R. Whelchel, *The Path to Liberation: Theology of Struggle in the Philippines*, Quezon City, New Day Publishers, 1995. Whelchel used to be with the Campus Crusade for Christ and teaches in the International School of Theology-Asia (ISOT) in Pasig City. The subtitle "Theology of Struggle in the Philippines" is a misnomer for he completely identifies ToS with the Latin American Liberation Theology. In contrast with Ann Harris who did an extensive field research, Whelchel used mainly readings on Liberation Theology. True to his evangelical stance he criticizes Liberation Theology and, therefore, ToS, as unbiblical and an ideological captivity of the Gospel.

²² Edicio de la Torre, *Touching Ground, Taking Roots*, Manila, SPI, 1986, p. 1 as retold by Dr. Filiciano Carino, Sr. Mary Rosario Battung, RGS, et al. *Religion and Society: Towards a Theology of Struggle Book I*, Manila, Forum for Inter-disciplinary Endeavours and Studies (FIDES), 1988, p. xiii.

²³ "A Theology of Struggle," IRC, *Currents in Philippine Theology*, Quezon City, Kalinangan Book Series II, pp.64-65.

²⁴ Karl Gaspar, "Doing Theology (in a Situation) of Struggle," Sr. Mary Rosario Battung, RGS, et al, eds. *Religion and Society: Towards a Theology of Struggle Book I*, pp. 45-46.

²⁵ Karl Gaspar, *Ibid.* , pp. 54,63-64.

²⁶ The introductory stanza of the anthem speaks of a beloved country called Pilipinas, beautiful Pearl of the Orient. But unfortunate in its failed dreams Pilipinas continues to weep in poverty. The anthem moves on to speak of the Philippines as a beautiful woman, ensconced in gold and flowers, who ought to be cradled in love. Captivated at the sight of her, foreigners took her captive and threw her in suffering and pain. The imagery shifts to that of a bird, born free to soar; imprison it in a cage and it will furiously beat its wings to be free. Then the song moves to a crescendo speaking of the joy of living in one's own land where there are no slaves, and people are free. For surely oppressed people will fight and the east will turn red in the brightness of liberation.

²⁷ Levi Oracion makes a brief comprehensive historical survey of the struggle of the Filipino people in Chapter One "Our History From the Eyes of Faith," of his new

book *Rumours of A Divine-Human Synergy in Our Midst: Towards a Faithful Rejoinder to the Ministry of Jesus of Nazareth* (to be published by the New Day Publishers, QC, 2010).

²⁸ Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: Revisited*, 1, QC, 1975, p. 11 as quoted in Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Toward a Theology of Struggle*, Maryknoll New York, Orbis Books, 1994, p. 8.

²⁹ Everett Mendoza, *Radical and Evangelical: Portrait of a Filipino Christian*, Manila, New Day Publishers, 1999, p.11.

³⁰ This historical sketch was taken from the Montreal Iglesia Filipina Independiente Parish of St. Paul Statement "Terminate Balikatan 02-1!" dated 14 February 2002.

³¹ Mendoza, *Radical and Evangelical: Portrait of a Filipino Christian*, p. 13.

³² Victoria Narciso-Apuan, et al., eds., *Witness and Hope Amid Struggle Book II*, Manila, FIDES, EBF,SPI, 1991, p. 51.

³³ For example, the UCCP was the first Church that officially issued statements against the "one man rule in the Philippines" at the height of martial rule. One month after the ouster of Marcos, the UCCP issued "A Statement of Protest Against U.S. Interventionist Policy Towards the Philippines." It was reported that a member of the church was killed mistakenly for bringing around a red book. The red book turned out to be this Bible. For a comprehensive study of the witness of the UCCP, see Melanio La Guardia Aonan, doctoral dissertation published as *Ecumenical and Prophetic: The Witness of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines*, Quezon, City, Philippines, Claretian Publications, 1998.

³⁴ Prepared by Rebecca C. Assidillo, the Resource Books are: Module 1: Women's Orientation Course; Module 2: Women in the Bible; Module 3: "God-Images, Language and Liturgy;" Module 4: "Men and Women: Co-Disciples, Co-Ministers."

³⁵ Gerry Dadap: "Himig Kababaihan." This is on tape.

³⁶ Sr. Mary Rosario Battung, RGS, et al., eds. *Religion and Society: Towards a Theology of Struggle Book I*, Manila, Forum for Inter-disciplinary Endeavours and Studies (FIDES), 1988; and Victoria Narciso-Apuan, et al., eds., *Witness and Hope Amid Struggle: Towards a Theology and Spirituality of Struggle Book II*, Manila, FIDES, EBF,SPI, 1991

³⁷ See EATWOT books edited by Virginia Fabella and/or Sergio Torres or K.C. Abraham; specially the articles and reports written by Fr. Carlos Abesamis, Elizabeth Dominguez, Elizabeth Tapia, Sr. Rosario Battung: Cf. Mary John Manansan, "Redefining Religious Commitment in the Philippine Context," Virginia Fabella, M.M., and Sun Ai Lee Park, eds., *We Dare to Dream*, pp. 101-114. Among the books published by EATWOT are:

1. *The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Underside of History* (1976);
2. *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity: Towards a Relevant Theology* (1980)
3. *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology* (1983)
4. *We Dare to Dream: Doing Theology as Asian Women* (1989)

5. *Asian Christian Spirituality: Reclaiming Traditions* (1992)

6. *Third World Theologies: Commonalities and Divergences* (1994, 2nd Printing)

³⁸ E.g, the CTC Bulletin of CCA and the ATESEA Series since 1993: Yeow Choo Lak, ed. *Doing Theology With Asian Resources*.

³⁹ Published as a book with the same title by SPI n 1986.

⁴⁰ Karl Gaspar, *How Long: Prison Reflections from the Philippines*, edited by Helen Graham and Breda Noonan, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books; Melbourne Australia, Dove Communications, 1986, c. 1984.

⁴¹ Fabella and Sergio Torres, eds., *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*, p. 74

⁴² Fernandez, Eleazar S. *Toward a Theology of Struggle*, Maryknoll New York, Orbis Books, 1994

⁴³ See Luna L. Dingayan, "Towards a Christology of Struggle: A Proposal for Understanding the Christ," in Yeow Choo Lak, ed., *Doing Theology With Asian Eyes: Theology and Politics*, ATESEA, 1993.

⁴⁴ Fabella, Sr. Viginia, *Beyond Bonding. A Third World Women's Theological Journey*, Manila, EATWOT and Institute of Women Studies, 1993. Cf, IRC's the four modules on women Issues mentioned earlier.

⁴⁵ Kwok Pui-Lan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, Cleveland, The Pilgrim Press, 2000, pp. 84.

⁴⁶ Victoria Narciso-Apuan, *Witness and Hope Amid Struggle: Towards a Theology and Spirituality of Struggle Book II*, pp. 11-14. Dr. Filiciano Carino was former General Secretary of the NCCP and former General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia.

⁴⁷ "Policy Statement on Ecumenical Relations," Council of Bishops, 1986, Special Supplement, p. 39, *The Bible* (RSV) (a joint publication of the Philippine Bible Society and the UCCP on the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the UCCP), 1988. Bishop Laverne Mercado, former General Secretary of the NCCP puts it this way: "Ecumenism in the Philippines has developed to a certain degree from ecumenism as an inter-confessional activity to ecumenism as a dimension of Christian life, from inter-church cooperation to inter-faith relationships, from church concern to service to the world, an ecumenism that goes beyond ecclesial frontiers into the larger struggle for peace, justice and unity of the whole human society." Mercado, "Towards a New Ecumenical Vision," quoted in Fernandez, *Towards a Theology of Struggle*, p. 153. from NCCP *Tugon*, pp. 190-191.

⁴⁸ Oracion, *God With Us*, p. 209. Cf. Fernandez, section on "A New Ecclesial Paradigm," *Towards a Theology of Struggle*, pp. 143-157.

⁴⁹ Albert van den Heuvel, *The Humiliation of the Church*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1966.

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Soup in the Oikos of God

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“...When Jacob had cooked soup, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, ‘Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.’ Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, ‘First sell me your birthright.’ Esau said, ‘Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?’ And Jacob said, ‘First swear to me’; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil soup; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

Genesis 25: 29-34

THE WORLD NEEDS SOUP

The world needs soup. Unfortunately, millions of people cannot even have or afford a decent cup of hot soup. Many in this country are so poor they gargle water for breakfast, take hot water for lunch, and force themselves to sleep at night in place of supper. *Mas emphatic sa Tagalog: Marami tayong kababayan na mumog ang agahan, nilagang tubig ang tanghalian, at tulog ang hapunan.*

Kailangan ng mundo ang sopas. When Esau, in the Genesis text above, came to his brother, he was close to death. And he asked for soup. For billions of dispossessed people who struggle against death forces every day, John 10: 10's promise of life abundant is actually a hot bowl of soup. For countless people who face the violence of starvation each and every moment of their lives, God's shalom is a hot bowl of soup.

When our sisters and brothers' homes and livelihood are destroyed by flash floods, our relief operations bring soup. When we

offer feeding programs to our malnourished grade school children, we bring them soup. When our churches and church-related institutions welcome the homeless and street-children into our “soup kitchens,” guess what we offer them?

But as Matthew 25: 31-46 and Luke 4: 18-19 remind and challenge us, soup is more than food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty. It is also just wages for workers, homes for the homeless, justice for the oppressed, care for the sick and dying, welcome to the stranger, land for the landless, liberation for those in bondage and captivity, solidarity with those whose only hope is God.

The United States of America has resources to feed 40 billion people. That figure is six times the current population of the world, yet, according to UNICEF 25,000 children—5 years old or younger—die each day due to poverty. UNICEF estimates that it will only take 6 billion dollars annually to make sure that everyone on earth receives basic education. It will take 9 billion dollars each year to make sure that everyone gets safe water and sanitation. Twelve billion dollars a year would ensure that all women will receive reproductive health services, while 13 billion will ensure that each human being will receive basic health care. Yet, we know that three out of every four people in the world survive on 1 dollar or less than 50 pesos a day. The world—especially that larger part of the world that calls itself Christian—apparently does not prioritize or find it important to allocate funds, services or resources to provide the “soup” for food, education, and basic health care.

Consider these figures: The United States spends 8 billion dollars each year on cosmetics. Europe spends 11 billion a year on ice cream. The US and Europe spend 12 billion annually on perfume and 17 billion a year on pet food. Japan spends 35 billion annually on business entertainment. Europeans spend 50 billion a year on cigarettes and 105 billion on alcoholic drinks. And, most unfortunate of all, the world spends 780 billion each year on weapons of mass destruction, on the most effective and efficient implements to kill people.¹

And to bring these figures closer to home: Filipinos spend 7 billion pesos a year on whitening soap. Pitong bilyong piso taon-taon ang ginagastos natin para sa sabong pampaputi.

WHAT ECUMENISM?

Over half a century ago, in Prapat, the very first regional ecumenical

organization, the East Asia Christian Conference, was organized. At that time many in the West seemed against the conference that brought together ecumenical leaders from Asia and Africa who were united against colonialism and Western hegemony. Prapat became a landmark in Asia's ecumenical history as it set out to overcome the West's domination of the ecumenical journey. Prapat made clear the direction that the Asian churches intended to take: to become the subjects, not objects, of ecumenical history. The united declaration was "working together for our common task."

Unfortunately, the Congress of Asian Theologians' meeting in Chiangmai in 2004 noted that Asia, almost 50 years after Prapat, remains "dependent on financial support from mother churches in Europe or America, and that the present state of ecumenism and the churches in Asia reflect the fragmentation of these churches and their limited, exclusive theologies. It is an ecumenism tending towards stagnation and the protection of the status quo of churches in the *Pax Americana*. D. T. Niles' "Christianity as a potted plant" in Asia is, today, actually more of a transplanted forest! Ecumenism in Asia has become an "us" and "them" affair.²

Laura Donaldson, a Cherokee, convicts us when she wrote in *Semeia* 75:

What civilization invented the most brutal system of conquest and exploitation the world has ever known? Christian. Who made slavery the basis for capitalist expansion? Christians. What religion has been the most responsible for the genocide of aboriginal peoples? Christianity. In my view, the Christian church has a much more substantial record of pure evil than any final good.

The first one thousand years of Christianity was one millennium of war and destruction in the name of Jesus Christ. And those "civilizing missions" have not stopped. Even today, the most oppressive and dehumanizing societies are led by "Christian" centurions who have no qualms maiming and destroying those who are not "one of them." And we know at least two of these Christian "centurions." One was in the White House for two terms. The other is still in Malacañang.

The July 2006 Manila Declaration³ of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches says:

Western Christianity has been closely related to empire since Roman days. Since then it has spread throughout the world, and now it is being used to provide ideological legitimization for today's empire. Globalized Christendom and the 'crusades' it embarks upon today are symbiotically intertwined with global capital and the power of the global empire. In its triumphalistic pursuits, it discounts if not condemns all

other religious faiths and cultures. The indigenous religions of many communities are destroyed and Islam is vilified.

The convergence of Christian religion with Western modernity has destroyed the religious and cultural life of peoples and their communities throughout the world. The powers and principalities of the global market and empire are being baptized by these theological distortions of 'Christianity', which promote religious conflicts and bigotry globally.

The Christian religion of empire treats others as 'gentiles' to be conquered, as the 'evil empire' to be destroyed, or as the 'axis of evil' to be eradicated from the earth. The empire claims that the 'goodness' of the empire must overcome these 'evils'. Its false messianic spirit is imbued with the demonic.

These false claims destroy the integrity of faiths, and radically erode the identity of Christian faith in Jesus Christ. As the spirit of empire penetrates souls, the power of global empire possesses the bodies of all living beings. Lord of its domain, it builds temples for the global market to serve Profit (Mammon).

The empire uses 'democracy' as an umbrella term for the kind of political regime that it would like to see installed all over the world. Bringing democracy to countries that do not yet have it is claimed as the defining purpose of US foreign policy. For the US, democracies abroad are regimes that support or follow its dictates.

Poverty is our fault. Many of us, who take pride in being called Christian, have either collaborated with empire or have pretended it is not our responsibility or have simply stopped caring.

In the feeding of the five thousand, found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Jesus, seeing the *hungry* multitudes, tells his disciples, tells us—who love to call ourselves his disciples—to *give them something to eat*. And what do the disciples do? They tell Jesus, "Send the crowd away" and "Are we going to spend our own money to feed them?" and "Six months wages worth of bread would not be enough to feed them." It has been 2,000 years. We are still coming up with excuses. In the story, a young child offers what he had, five loaves and two fish, in response to Jesus' challenge.

Today, the multitudes are still hungry and we are still making up excuses.

WHICH JESUS

Close your eyes for a moment. Imagine Jesus, the one many of us call our Personal Lord and Savior. If the Jesus we imagine looks like an American or European movie star, white, blond, and with blue eyes, then we are following the wrong Jesus. If the Jesus we imagine is the same Jesus who told McKinley to take possession of the Philippines, and told Bush to bomb Afghanistan and Iraq, then we are following

the wrong Jesus. If we imagine the same Jesus that Gloria Arroyo prays to before she gives the orders to General Jovito Palparan to abduct and harass our priests, nuns, pastors, church workers, and militant grassroots organizers, then we are following the wrong Jesus. If the Jesus we imagine tells us to build huge buildings and air-conditioned chapels in his honor instead of reaching out to the poor and the marginalized among us, then we are following the wrong Jesus. If the Jesus we imagine has prepared a mansion in heaven for us, and wants us to spend eternity with him in an other-worldly place, and has no problems when his followers kill people and cultures in his name, then, definitely, we are following the wrong Jesus.

If the Jesus we imagine has no problem with poverty, does not care to address its root causes and its eradication, and believes that being poor is either God's will or is a result of indolence or is a test of faith, then we are following the wrong Jesus.

Millions of people worship this Jesus, what the World Alliance of Reformed Churches calls the Constantinian Jesus. Patron. Emperor. King of Kings. Lord of Lords. Master of the Universe. Millions follow this Imperial Jesus. Millions have been killed and massacred in the name of this Jesus.

We are so used to that word "Gospel," that it has lost its original meaning. But in antiquity, when the Roman empire went off and conquered another land in the name of their god Caesar, and killed all the men, raped all the women, and destroyed all the homes, the soldiers would come back parading throughout the land announcing "the Gospel according to Caesar," the Good News of the latest victory of Caesar, that another land had been conquered for their god Caesar, and that Caesar's enemies had been killed.⁴

When the Gospel of Mark announces the "beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God," he actually announces the most radical, subversive proclamation during that time—Jesus is Lord, and not Caesar; God's reign has come, and Rome's has come to an end. Put in another way, in Greek the empire was called *basileia*; the emperor, *basileus*. For almost everyone in the empire, Rome was *basileia*; Caesar was *basileus*. I said, almost, because for Christians, God's reign was *basileia*; Jesus was *basileus*.

In Jesus' alternative or counter-empire, there was only one commandment: love for neighbor, especially the least. In Luke 10:28, Jesus tells a lawyer that love for God and love for neighbor is one commandment. He tells the parable of the Samaritan to make his point.

Paul summarizes all the commandments in Romans 13:9 and in Galatians 5:14 as love for neighbor. James is more explicit in 2:15-17 when he wrote, "If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace... and yet do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?" The message of the Johannine letters is straight-forward: if you say you love God, whom you do not see, but not your brothers and sisters, whom you see, then you are a liar. In Mark 17: 21, Jesus tells a rich young man, "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor... then come follow me."

Now, if the Jesus we imagine is the Jesus of the Gospels, the compassionate Jesus whose insides were crushed at the sight of injustice, the Jesus who gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, who visited the sick and the imprisoned, who welcomed strangers, and clothed the naked, who proclaimed liberty to the captives, and who gave his life so that others may live, the one who told the rich to sell everything they have and give all the proceeds to the poor, then, my dear friends, we are following the right Jesus.

The WARC calls this Jesus the Galilean One. The One who left heaven to be with us. The One who is not in Jerusalem where we expect him to be. The One who is in Galilee where we do not want him to be, among the poor and the marginalized are. The One who left his followers only a single commandment: "Love your neighbor." The One whom the Empire eventually executed.

And those who follow this "Executed God" are persecuted, harassed, and, yes, like him, murdered. And many of his followers in the Philippines are called communists or, worse, terrorists!

The world does not need pre-cooked or instant noodle soup. This is the recipe of the Constantinian Jesus and his followers. Dole-outs. Always with strings attached.

More importantly, the world does not need people like Jacob who used soup to take advantage of his famished brother.

GOD'S OIKOS: WE ARE FAMILY—ALL OF US

More often than not, we define ecumenism as "us" and "them." Insiders and outsiders. Saved and unsaved. Christian and not. Now, if God is our parent, as Jesus taught us, then all of us are brothers and sisters. All of us.

Contrary to what Cain said, we are each others' keepers.

God's household is God's project. The members of God's oikos depend on whom God chooses to be part of it. It is, and never will be, our choice. Let us look at four episodes from the biblical narratives that are quite familiar to most of us:

1. 1 Samuel 16: Jesse and his seven oldest sons underestimated David. No one, not his father, nor his brothers, not even David, thought that David was worthy to be king. But God chose the least of Jesse's sons. *God's oikos includes family members who are in the margins.*
2. The Story of Jonah: Jonah disobeys God because he wanted God to destroy the "evil" empire. But God saves Nineveh. God saves whomever God wants to save. *God's oikos includes those we hate and despise.*
3. Luke 10: 25-37: Samaritans were bastards, demon-possessed, and worshipped the wrong God. It is the Samaritan who serves as keeper of his wounded brother. *God's oikos includes those we think do not deserve to be God's people.*
4. Matthew 25: 31-46: Both blessed and cursed were judged with one standard—being each other's keepers. *God's oikos includes those who do not expect to be part of it yet do exactly what brothers and sisters should do for each other.*

The blessed were not blessed because they did what they did for God's sake. They were blessed because they did what they did for people's sake. A parent's greatest joy is for his/her children to care for each other, not to outdo each other in gaining the parent's favor.

The jeepney has been described as a Filipino home on wheels.⁵ There is always space for the unexpected visitor, the complete stranger around our dining tables. There is always space for the unexpected passenger in a jeepney. "*Ang siyaman nagiging sampuan.*" God's oikos has space for the most unexpected, even the most unwelcome member because, let me reiterate, *God's oikos is God's project, not ours.*

If God is our parent, then we are brothers and sisters. We are family. *Sa pamilya ng Dios, walang anak sa loob at anak sa labas. Lahat anak.* We are each other's keepers. We were during the time of Cain, during the time of Jacob. We are now.

Every moment of our lives, God, our parent, is asking us—where is your sister, where is your brother?

But the answer to God's question, I believe, is more than just echoing and re-echoing the response of the young child with the five

loaves and two fish and following the example of the Samaritan. God's *oikos* is not divided among those "who are for us" and "those who are against us." God's *oikos* is not made up of "Good Samaritans" and "Bad Priests, Levites, and Robbers." It is not divided between "Greedy Jacobs" and "Starving Esaus." Our world is not made up of "Selfless Children with Bread and Fish to Share" and "Selfish Adults Who Do Not Want to Share."

God's *oikos* is made up of flesh-and-blood priests and Levites who, for reasons we can only try to fathom, chose not to stop to help a fellow Jew, so close to death. I do not believe for a second that they made their choice so easily. Most of us have been through this road before. We made the hard choice not to help, not to do something and we have had to live with the pain of our choices. The real world is also made up of people, like the wounded Jew, who find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. And like them, we have asked the same question over and over and over: "Why do good people suffer?" And the more poignant one: "Why is there too much suffering in the world?"

The real world is also made up of Samaritans who are ready, willing, and able to help anyone who needs help. Yes, many of us have gone through this road too. We even call our churches and multi-purpose cooperatives, Good Samaritan. And yet, we ask ourselves would we be willing to help if we arrived on the scene earlier while the crime was being committed, while the assault was being perpetrated, while the bandits and robbers were still there?

God's *oikos*, my friends, lest we forget is also made up of bandits and robbers. *The word is lestes in Greek. It is the same word used to describe zealots, rebels, and freedom fighters.* The lestes were made up mostly of dispossessed farmers and runaway slaves. The American Occupation Forces in the Philippines called Macario Sakay and his forces, bandits and robbers. We called them Katipuneros and heroes of the revolution.

And, lastly, and, I think, more importantly for us who pride ourselves in being called church workers, the real world is made up of innkeepers, those who are dedicated to alleviate human suffering—whether caused by war, conflict, or natural disaster—with open minds and hearts to all people. Yes, to all people—priests, Levites, Jews, Samaritans, bandits, freedom fighters, but especially to those who are the least among the least, those whose only hope is God. Welcoming the complete stranger, the wounded, the least, and offering sanctuary, safe haven, relief.

Ecumenical relations are fundamentally about being each other's keepers. Ecumenical relations are fundamentally about each one making sure that the other has soup.

THE PARABLE OF THE STONE SOUP

A long time ago in a barrio far away came a very old woman. She was probably just passing by because she took the dusty road that bordered the small community. Because it was almost dark, she stopped by the roadside and began to build a fire. She took out an earthen pot from the bag she lugged around and, after filling it with water, set it over the fire. Out of the same bag she brought out a small river stone and a pinch of rock salt and put these in the pot.

An old woman alone by the road is hard to miss. Soon children were upon her. "Lola (Grandma)," they asked, "what are you doing?" "I'm cooking soup," she answered, "why don't you join me?" They sure did and after a while there was a huge circle of children gathered around the fire as the old lady narrated stories about elves and fairies and dragons. It was late. It was dark and the children were still out so their parents began looking for them. They eventually found them with the old lady. "Lola," they asked, "what are you doing?" "I'm cooking soup," she answered, "why don't you join me?" They sure did and after a while there was a huge circle of children with their parents gathered around the fire as the old lady continued telling stories of elves and fairies and dragons.

"Lola," a mother volunteered, "I still have leftover meat at home. We can put it in the pot." "We have vegetables we can add to the pot too!" another remarked. And so everyone brought back what they could and put these in the pot. Eventually, the whole community shared not just stories but a hot pot of soup that began with a cold river stone and a pinch of rock salt.⁶

The world needs soup. But, the world does not need pre-cooked or instant noodle soup. The soup that can meet the world's hunger, as Mother Mary John Mananzan⁷ puts it, is the soup we cook together. Each one contributing what each can. Because we are each other's keepers. That soup could mean food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, just wages for workers, homes for the homeless, justice for the oppressed, care for the sick and dying, land for the landless, liberation for those in bondage and captivity, solidarity with those whose only hope is God.

Those of us who call ourselves Christian do not have the monopoly on soup.

Cain was wrong, Jacob was wrong. We are each other's keepers. We are—all of us—brothers and sisters. *Kapatid, igsoon, kabsat*. *Kapatid* is from *Patid ng Bituka*. We are parts of one gut. We, all of us—Christians, Moslems, Jews, Buddhists, Priests, Levites, Samaritans, Innkeepers, *Lestes*, and those who are so unlike us—are family. **God's oikos.**

Joan Baez's song was right. It has always been right. No one is an island. No one stands alone. Each one's joy is joy to me. Each one's grief is my own. We need one another so I will defend. Each one is my brother, each one is my sister.⁸ Each one is my friend. *Kapatid, igsoon, kabsat*.

There is much to do.

Come, it is time for us, sisters and brothers, to cook...



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ENDNOTES

This essay is based on the paper "The World Needs Soup" Velunta presented during the Annual Mission Lectures of Maryhill School of Theology, 25 May 2009 and on the paper "Be There. Be Hope" he presented at the UMCOR training in Tagaytay City, 23 July 2009.

¹ Statistics available from Anup Shah, Poverty Facts and Stats, GlobalIssues.org, Last updated: Sunday, March 22, 2009.

² From discussions and presentations at the Hong Kong Consultations of the *Rerouting Ecumenism in Asia Project* of the Christian Conference of Asia, 9-12 November 2006.

³ Presented by Kim Yong Bock at Philippine Christian University, 21 July 2006. The document is available online at <http://www.peaceforlife.org/resources/faithresist/2006/06-0715-ecumenical.html>.

⁴ Available at http://www.fatherjohndear.org/sermons_homilies/repent_believe.html

⁵ For more on decolonizing readings of the Bible and Jeepney Hermeneutics, check

out the *Union Seminary Bulletin*, 1, 3, and 4 (UTS, 2002, 2007), The National Council of Churches in the Philippines' journal *Tugon*, 14, 1 and 2, or visit <http://jeepney.blogspot.com>.

⁶From *Anumang Hiram Kung Hindi Masikip ay Maluwang: Iba't-Ibang Anyo ng Teolohiyang Pumipiglas*, Revelation Velunta, Ed. (Union Theological Seminary, 2006), pp. 4-5.

⁷ Aside from Mother Mary John Mananzan's ideas, many arguments in this brief essay resonate with insights from John Dominic Crossan and the members of the Jesus Seminar, Mark Kline Taylor, Ched Myers, Daniel Patte, Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, Renate Rose, William Herzog, Laura Donaldson, Elizabeth and Ben Dominguez, Lizette Tapia-Raquel, Arche Ligo, Melinda Grace Aoanan, and Fr. Carlos Abesamis.

⁸ "No Man is an Island"

By Joan Baez

No man is an island,
No man stands alone,
Each man's joy is joy to me,
Each man's grief is my own.

We need one another,
So I will defend,
Each man as my brother,
Each man as my friend.

I saw the people gather,
I heard the music start,
The song that they were singing,
Is ringing in my heart.

No man is an island,
Way out in the blue,
We all look to the one above,
For our strength to renew.

When I help my brother,
Then I know that I,
Plant the seed of friendship,
That will never die.

Theology of Struggle: Challenges and Prospects in a Globalized World¹

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I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Filipino students of Catholic Theological Union for giving me this opportunity to share with you my theological musing on a particular genre of Filipino theology—the theology of struggle. At some point in my life, I had the privilege to reflect on and write about it, but a change in location directed my focus on the more immediate concerns of my new context. My present location in the U.S. has shifted the focus of my writing projects from *Toward a Theology of Struggle* (based on the Philippine context) to *A Dream Unfinished and Realizing the America of Our Hearts* (U.S. context)—but I have always thought about revisiting the theology of struggle. Your invitation has provided me the opportunity to do this.

Revisiting the theology of struggle reminds me of my yearly visits to the Philippines. In the past seven years, my summer months (June to August) have been mostly devoted to the Philippines. In spite of my frequent visits, I always experience nostalgia for the place it once was—particularly to that childhood place where the river embraces

the ocean, and where the ocean seems to remember. As my nostalgia begins to fly, reminiscing and savoring the past, the reality of gravity always brings me down and reminds me that though continuities exist, the place that my nostalgia is seeking to bring back to life in the present has changed, and so have I.

I have changed and so has the place. My decision to settle in the U.S., if only momentarily, has given me a hermeneutical edge in understanding the contested terrain of identity, belonging, and perspective. Reflecting on my identity, in the Philippines I was simply a Filipino. But a dramatic change happened in my identity when I decided to settle in the U.S.: I became a racial-ethnic minority, and that has been a source of pain—though of creativity as well.³ Not only that, I became a part of the Filipino diaspora establishing a residence in the belly of the empire. What I thought would be only a couple of years turned into five and then a decade and more. I give you this brief account of my social location because it bears, whether implicitly or explicitly, on the way I revisit and reconstruct the theology of struggle.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE?

The theology of struggle has not been a topic of public conversation—or at least not that I know—in the past few years. Not surprisingly, this silence has led some people to ask: What has happened to the theology of struggle? Is it still alive or is it already dead? Or, are the theologians of struggle suffering from struggle fatigue, something similar to what is called in the Philippines as “EDSA fatigue”?⁴

True, the theology of struggle is not stirring much God-talk these days, but that does not mean that it is already dead. Even as God-talk is more subdued, the theology of struggle is still alive and it continues to nourish in a quiet way those who have opted to struggle against the idols of death. The theology of struggle is alive in the hearts of those who are suffering and struggling to make sense of their faith in the midst of grinding poverty and the continuing betrayal of the people’s dream. It is alive in the hearts of those who are seeking to be faithful to the liberating and reconciling love of God in Jesus the Christ in the midst of rampant corruption and vicious cycle of violence. It is alive among those who have summoned courage in the face of a threat to their lives, a threat made real in the pile of victims of the current

Philippine government's project code named "calibrated preemptive response" (CPR), which mimics the "preemptive strike" doctrine of the arrogant empire. This courage is not the absence of fear, but it rests on the belief that there is something more important than fear—that not even fear can hold one from pursuing the new and better tomorrow.

Even as the God-walk of the faithful testifies that the theology of struggle is alive, this is not a justification for remaining quiet. The God-walk of those inspired by the theology of struggle must spring forth into God-talk, just as the God-talk must nourish their God-walk. And the God-talk must be loud and clear, for the darkness around us is deep. Maintaining silence is no protection from a system determined to silence anybody who speaks truth to power. Moreover, it is not only that silence is not a protection. Silence, to paraphrase José Comblin, is a lie when truth needs to be spoken.⁵

So theologians of the struggle need to reclaim their voice and give thought to the faith of struggling Christians, particularly those who are dying before their time. This theological voicing entails risk, but risk we must. Of course, theological God-talk does not always entail risk. To my students I say that the only risk you get for talking and writing theology is that you do not get much money! But, within a repressive context, there can be a life-threatening risk in doing theology. That was what happened to a dear friend, the late Reverend Edison Lapuz, one of the recent victims of the murderous regime in the Philippines. He was murdered by the defenders of the status-quo because he advocated for the rights of the poor and exposed the system's lies. Last summer I had the privilege of meeting his wife and two children. In the presence of a small gathered community I made the pledge to make Edison's memory live in my teaching, writing, and speaking.

This solemn pledge reminds me of a *kababayan* and a fellow traveler, Carlos Bulosan. From the day of his arrival on the shores of the arrogant empire, Carlos experienced and witnessed the suffering of his country folks and other minorities. An incident in his life made him so outraged that he wanted to get his gun, that "small little bit of metal" that seemed, he wrote, "my only friend and comfort in this alien country." But his brother grabbed the gun away from him. Nevertheless, Carlos vowed to fight back! He fought not with bullets, but with his writings. In an impassioned prose, he said: "They can't silence me anymore! I'll tell the world what they have done to me!" Remembering the hardships of his parents and the poor peasants of

northern Philippines, Carlos made the pledge sobbing: "Yes, I will be a writer and make all of you live again in my words."⁶ Carlos found a medium that would give voice to his pain, rage and dreams. Writing, Carlos soon found out, is a political act.

If writing is a political act, following Bulosan, articulating and writing a theology of struggle is, likewise, a political act. This is not to conflate the distinction between theology and politics, but to say that theological discourse is a political act as much as it is theological. Moreover, it is not to subordinate theology to politics but to say that theology itself is a realm of political engagement.

THE CONTEXT AND BASIC THRUSTS OF THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE

How does the theology of struggle engage in the arena of theological struggle? What are some of its basic features and main thrusts? I am sorry that I can only give a cursory account of the main tenets of this theological movement in this public presentation. After doing this, I would like to address the challenges and prospects of the theology of struggle, particularly in our highly globalized world.

The most immediate context that gave birth to the theology of struggle was the social unrest that saturated the Philippine landscape, the repressive Martial Law years (1972-1986), the rise of various people's movements, and the active involvement of some Christians in people's movements. The early proponents of the theology of struggle articulated it within the context of a nationalist and democratic struggle against domestic oppression and global intervention. Its roots, however, go as deep as the struggles of the early Filipinos against the Spanish invaders and the streams that have nourished it to birth are diverse. The most visible stream is the rise of people's movements for national emancipation around the world and then followed by liberation movements, which have found theological expressions in the rise of contextual theologies and, more particularly, liberation theologies.

The theology of struggle belongs to the genre of liberation theology. Its direction is still liberation, but the focus is on the struggle. In keeping with the spirit of liberation theology, the notion of a preferential option for the poor remains central to the theology of struggle. This option does not rest on the belief that the wealthy are outside of God's love or that the poor are morally better than

the wealthy, but stems from the most basic reason that the poor are already dying before their time. The theological undergirding for this option, however, is God's option in Jesus who, himself, became the poor and the crucified. In the context of oppression, to love God truly is to opt for the victims not only because the love for God can only be expressed through the love of neighbor, but because "God is love in the neighbor."⁷

Consistent, I believe, with the preferential option for the poor is the option to view reality from the point of view of the poor. This does not mean that the poor always think correct thoughts or that they always have correct ideas about the world and how things need to be done, but we take their point of view because their plight is a nagging reminder that things are not right and they are not all right! It is not because they have a monopoly of the essential and unchangeable truth, but because their emaciated and desecrated bodies embody the truth of what our will to truth/power has done. It is not because they **have** the truth, but because they **are** the truth vis-a-vis the system's lie.

If we pursue further the consequences of the option for the poor in relation to how we do theology, it means that the poor and vulnerable must be the main historical subjects and theological interlocutors of our theological constructions. Moreover, it means that we must start with their context and with their nagging questions. It is easy to confuse our questions with their questions. Reinhold Niebuhr, a Christian theologian, "claimed that there is nothing more irrelevant than the answer to an unasked question."⁸ Robert McAfee Brown pursues Niebuhr's point as he argues that "confusing the question one has been asked with the question one is prepared to answer is equally irrelevant."⁹ (I can only hope that I do not confuse **your** questions with the questions I am prepared to answer).

What kinds of questions are the main interlocutors of the theology of struggle posing to the theological task? With what urgent concerns are they grappling and wrestling today? How are we to deal with them in the task of theological construction?

The questions that the suffering and struggling Filipinos bring to bear on the theological task are not the result of the gradual erosion of the religious world they inhabit because of the assault of modern science and the growing secularization of society. The springboard of their questions is their empty and growling stomachs, emaciated bodies, and the continuing betrayal of their dreams by political leaders. Starting from this location where God's seeming absence calls

out for divine justice (theodicy), they have raised their anguished questions: How can we believe in a just and loving God when we are suffering from terrible injustice? How can we worship the Lord of all when we have to deal with those who lord over us, deciding who will live, starve, and be tortured? How can we speak of the church as a covenanted community when it has broken its covenant with the downtrodden? How can we grapple with trinitarian God-talk when we are grappling with another form of unholy trinity—the absence of breakfast, lunch, and supper?

These questions point to the pervasive and dominant pattern that runs through the narrative fabric of the lives of common Filipinos. The dominant pattern that has emerged from the interweaving of the yarns of people's experience and varied socio-cultural tradition is a pattern of suffering, fatalism, struggle, and hope. From the early beginnings of the formation of the Filipino nation, the narrative fabric of suffering started to take shape as a result of the so-called "liberation" projects of the colonial masters and their local allies. The Filipino people are among the most "liberated" people in the world. Nationalist Filipino historian Renato Constantino puts it this way:

First came the Spaniards who "liberated" them from the enslavement of the devil," next came the Americans who "liberated" them from Spanish oppression, then the Japanese who "liberated" them from American imperialism, then the Americans again who "liberated" them from the Japanese fascists. After every "liberation" they found their country occupied by foreign "benefactors."¹⁰

Suffering has become so pervasive that it has created a culture of suffering. Beyond the glaring and pervasive poverty, we can discern this culture of suffering in the day-to-day conversations, songs, poems and stories that people share.

When life is perceived as a narrative of suffering and with no end in sight, it is not a surprise that fatalism has been woven into the fabric along with suffering. Providing the sacred canopy to fatalism is the theology that justifies the precarious plight of the people as the way things are or the will of God. This theology is buttressed by the religio-cultural attitudes of *kapalaran* (literally the lines on one's palm) or *gulong ng palad* (wheel of fortune) and *bahala na* (What will be will be, or come what may). In the wheel of life, there are times when one is up and other times when one is down. Caught in what appears to be an inevitable cruel fate, common Filipinos can only think of life in terms of *kapalaran* or *gulong ng palad*. When this fatalistic worldview is compounded with economic hardships, such as having a family of

eight children with only P500.00 (\$10.00) a day salary, what else is there to say but, *bahala na*.

But suffering woven with fatalism is not the only narrative. There are other aspects of Filipino culture and religion that seem to bring balance to fatalism or resignation. Even the term *bahala na* may have a positive spin. It could mean total surrender to God as in *bahala na ang Dios* (It is up to God whatever the outcome be), which may have been derived from the word *Ba[t]hala* (God).¹¹

Though many have accepted their plight with resignation, the Filipino people have a long history of struggle. Filipino history is not only a history of suffering, exploitation and betrayal to local and foreign powers, it is also a history of resistance and struggle. The resistance of Lapu-Lapu against the forces of Fernando de Magallanes, in which the latter was killed, gave birth to an important tradition in Philippine history—resistance to foreign domination. This narrative of resistance and struggle persisted under the U.S. colonial rule, and the brief period of Japanese rule. More recently, we can discern this narrative of resistance and struggle in the people's power revolution against the dictator Ferdinand Marcos and President Joseph Estrada, in the most recent attempt to oust President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and in the continuing resistance against the terror of globalization.

In this narrative of suffering, fatalism, struggle and hope Christianity has played an important role. On the one hand it has provided religious legitimation for suffering and fatalism; on the other hand it has provided a theological articulation for struggle and hope.

If the narrative of suffering is pervasive, it is not a surprise, says Benigno Beltran, that "the image of the Crucified One, head bowed, mouth agape in excruciating agony, provides consolation and an outlet for pent-up emotions of sympathy and tragedy for the ignorant and the heavy-laden." The image of the Crucified God, continues Beltran, "increases the resolve to survive.... In the sight of the Cross, Christians live in acceptance and trust in the suffering God who remains faithful in his love for the sinful human beings."¹²

True, the image of the suffering and crucified Christ is prevalent and is often interpreted through the lens of passive acceptance and endurance of suffering, but a tradition of suffering that struggles is also present. The Revolution of 1896 against the Spanish conquistadors and the People's Power Revolution of 1986 that toppled the Marcos dictatorship 90 years later, both point to the tradition of the disenfranchised's love of the crucified Christ as a liberating force.¹³

While the resurrection tradition is not totally absent in popular religious expressions, it is weak in comparison to the crucifixion tradition. We can cite some reasons: People are already exhausted from the Good Friday event, and the weather itself (hot summer) does not suggest the emergence of a new life from winter to spring as in temperate countries. Nevertheless, if the Holy Week celebration has the Pasyon (passion narrative), the resurrection celebration has the salubong (Virgin Mary's dawn meeting with the resurrected Jesus).

The resurrection tradition needs to take hold in the lives of the common people. It is central to the New Testament message, and the people's desperate situation demands it. Yet, if it is really to take hold in people's lives, any interpretation of the resurrection must be rooted in the people's experience of daily crucifixions. This, I believe, is where the theology of struggle must start in talking about resurrection and hope. The notion of a grand resurrection somewhere and someday may not be totally absent in the people's consciousness, but this grand resurrection makes sense only when we reinterpret resurrection as that which happens to people on the other side of the various kinds of deaths in the here and now.

Resurrection in the midst of the various kinds of deaths may be hard to find in the lives of "little people" and those who are dying before their time, but they are not totally absent. They are present in the midst of death—present even in the cemetery. This is true in the life of Aling Panchang. She has lived in the North Cemetery (Manila) since 1955. Sometime in 1960, at the request of her son who had acquired a small piece of land and house at a relocation site, she joined him. But the situation in the relocation site was so desperate that, in the words of Aling Panchang, "I couldn't stand it anymore. I came back to the cemetery after a month—and have not left since. I think I might stay here—forever."¹⁴ Living in the cemetery, where there was peace, was, for Aling Panchang, a resurrection experience.

Indeed, it is hard to find grand moments of resurrection. For those who are barely making it in life, like Aling Panchang, survival is already a foretaste of resurrection. It is in this most banal experience of resurrection that we need to set Jesus' resurrection. With Jesus' resurrection embodying their very own resurrection, the common people are enabled to read their history with new eyes: It is a history of survival, struggle, and of not giving up whatever little ray of hope is present.

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

I have articulated in a cursory manner the pervasive narrative and main thrusts of the theology of struggle. What are the new challenges that the theology of struggle must address in our globalized world? How must it respond for its continuing viability and vitality? In what direction does it need to go?

In the manner that I started my presentation by taking account of the poor as the main interlocutor of the theology of struggle, I also would like to explore the theology of struggle's challenges and prospects. If the theology of struggle is serious about its claim that the main interlocutor is the poor, it must not remain a theology *for* the poor but must truly become a theology *of* the poor. Put differently, it must become a people's theology.

Pursuing the consequences of this point, this means that the theology of struggle must take seriously the religious world and expressions of the poor, or what is commonly called popular religiosity. If popular religiosity is the day-to-day religiosity that informs and shapes the lives of people, theologians of struggle cannot continue to ignore this reality if they care about making the good news of God's liberating and reconciling love in Christ take hold in the lives of common people. This is not a wholesale and uncritical embrace of the religious world of the common people, but a matter of being open to God's revelation through their "faithful-intuitions" (*sensus fidelium*) and of letting their "faithful-intuitions" bear on the content of our theology and the manner in which we do it.¹⁵

Moreover, in the spirit of taking serious account of the life of the poor, I suggest that theologians of struggle expand the notion of the poor. Marxism opened our eyes to the predicament as well as the revolutionary potential of the working classes, but we need to broaden our view of the poor to include other forms of marginalization, such as social status, gender, ethnicity, age, and others. This act of broadening should not be construed as mere addition of other essentialized categories of marginalization into the mix. Rather, I suggest that it must be construed in a non-essentialized, non-additive and interlocking framework.

What is this non-essentialized, non-additive, and interlocking hermeneutic framework? This framework calls us to stop essentializing what is historical and stop focusing on an essentialized category of marginalization. Rather, it calls us to give a "thick" historical account

of a particular form of marginalization and sharpen our analytical focus on the social structures that allow for profound differences.¹⁶ Our experience of a specific form of marginalization is influenced by the extent to which we are affected by other forms of marginalization.¹⁷ As there is no generic experience of classism by all poor, likewise, there is no generic experience of sexism by all women, as womanist theologians have argued so clearly. When we recognize this we have begun the journey of liberating ourselves from homogenizing or muting other people's experience of marginalization even as we continue to seek common grounds of connection.

Moreover, a non-generic, non-additive and interlocking structural approach to various forms of marginalization calls our attention to the fact that our position in the interlocking structure of marginalization is not always the same—that we assume different positions. If so, we must be vigilant that even as we claim marginalization in one category, we may be privileged in another. This is very crucial in maintaining prophetic agency at all times and in various circumstances of our lives. Our failure to take account of our multiple locations in the interlocking structures of marginalization makes us oblivious, following Michel Foucault, of the regimes of truth we create and perpetuate that are oppressive to others.¹⁸ Counter-hegemonic discourse does not escape from becoming a new hegemony by claiming that it is beyond the power-knowledge nexus, but only by exposing the power-knowledge nexus of all forms of discourse and critiquing them in light of the plight of the most vulnerable.¹⁹

With the notion of the poor embracing various forms of marginalization, we have broadened and deepened the notion of agency. Agency is broadened in the sense that it encompasses individuals, groups and communities with different experiences of marginalization; and it is deepened in the sense that agency is not identified with the autonomous self-generating subject of modern liberalism—pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps. Rather, agency is born in the tensions and counter-pressures that are formed when individuals and groups get in touch with the repressions of life. Here, new forms of agency and resistance emerge that might take us beyond the dichotomy of materialism and idealism.²⁰

To pursue the consequences of a broadened notion of an agent whose shape corresponds to multiple forms of marginalization, I say that the agent must confront the various forms of marginalization on multiple fronts at once. "While we may say at any given moment that one issue is particularly crucial," following Charlotte Bunch, "it is

important that work be done on other aspects of the changes we need at the same time.”²¹ Struggle against one form of marginalization cannot be postponed for the reason that it may sidetrack the people’s movement from the struggle for national liberation.

In an increasingly globalized world, the interlocking forms of marginalization, multiple fronts of engagement, and agency need to be construed in the interweaving of the global and the local. One’s experience of a certain form of marginalization is not only affected by other forms of marginalization locally, but also globally. Likewise, agency and multiple-front strategy must be set in this globalized context. While citizens of the global North are at a relative advantage over citizens of the global South, citizens of the global North have not been spared by predatory globalization. Thirdworldization is happening in the heartland of the global North. This common experience provides an entry point for the development of a much broader shared agency through new forms of solidarity among marginalized groups around the world. What has been referred to as “globalization from below” is an expression of this developing globally interconnected new sense of agency.²²

Even as the focus of the theology of struggle is on the Philippine context, it must see itself and articulate its views in relation to the interweaving of the global and the local. It must see itself as a stream within the global flows of ideological-theological movements along with feminist, liberation and ecological movements.²³ It has a contribution to make in strengthening the “anti-systemic forces” of religion against the destructive forces of the global market and in developing a politically engaged spirituality.

Along with other theologies, the theology of struggle must engage in a theological critique of the market, exposing its religiosity and idolatrous practices. In the context of massive poverty, Filipinos have been vulnerable to the lure of mammon—the God of the market. Market values—organized around commodification and exchange—have eroded traditional Filipino values. In this global market exchange not only labor but also sex is commodified. Wanting to escape poverty, many Filipinas have been victims of sex trafficking and cyber sex. This is an area in which the theology of struggle is called to contribute its theological critique.

When the domestic economy does not offer any avenue for livable wage, working abroad has been the only hope for many Filipinos to get out of their miserable situation. Under this condition, the theology of struggle must travel with the Filipino diaspora and articulate their

pains and longings. It must take the Filipino diaspora experience as an entry point and resource for theological reflection. Moreover, it must articulate an ecclesiology that supports the diaspora's search for home in a foreign land as well as relevant ministries for families that are left behind.

With the Philippines identified by the Bush administration as a "second front" on the war on terror, another area that the theology of struggle needs to address is the relationship between predatory globalization and the war on terror and how this war on terror is being used by the Philippine government to quell people's movements for transformation. The theology of struggle must participate with other theologies in undermining the terrorism discourse of the American empire and in exposing its own terrorism. If "terrorists" can assume the guise of "freedom fighters," it is equally true that "terrorism can assume the guise of war against terrorism."²⁴

If the struggle against multiple forms of marginalization cannot be done alone whether locally or globally, so the struggle for global peace cannot be accomplished by one religious faith. A line attributed to Swiss theologian Hans Küng is well put: "Peace among nations will be impossible without peace among religions. And peace would be no peace among religions without dialogue."²⁵ The challenge to engage in dialogue with people of different religious faiths is crucial in the Philippines, particularly with Muslim Filipinos. It seems to me that the theology of struggle has neglected this aspect because it has been focused on the economic aspect of the struggle. It may also be the case that the theology of struggle has become at home in the dominant Christian milieu of the Philippines. With years of mistrust and hostilities between Christian and Muslim Filipinos, the theology of struggle has an immense and crucial task of articulating a theology of religion that is both faithful to the gospel of Christ and open to the gifts of other faiths.

The vision of a new and better tomorrow to which the theology of struggle has committed itself is greater than itself. If it were not, then it would not really be worth pursuing. I do not have a utopian blueprint of this new and better tomorrow, but only an atopic imagining nourished by the pains and longings of the struggling people and kindled by the life and witness of the One who was crucified for midwifing God's shalom.²⁶ This atopic imagining of a new and better tomorrow can easily be dismissed as an impossible dream. This, however, is enough reason to pursue it in a society whose imagination has been narrowed to the possible. The atopian politics of the new

and better tomorrow explodes the common notion of politics as the science of the possible by enlarging our notion of the possible and making what has been normally considered impossible come within the range of the possible.

Drawing what has been normally considered impossible within the range of the possible and then making it a reality require committed people. Giving birth to a new tomorrow requires committed people who are willing to take the risk to make our dreams come true. The risk must be taken, for to not take the risk is, in fact, to maintain and bless the current social arrangement that is creating marginalization. Developing and nurturing a politically engaged spirituality among members of the Body of Christ is a crucial task for the theology of struggle.

The journey toward a new and better tomorrow is long and protracted. How can we keep on going? Our dogged determination to arrive at the destination may rob us of that toward which we have been aspiring. Even as we continue to focus on our destination, we must not forget that the journey is constitutive of the destination, or that the destination is already embedded in the journey. When we see and experience the journey as constitutive of the destination, then we have found home while still on the way or have found home on the journey. Or, to use the words of Nelle Morton, "the journey is home."²⁷

I say that the theology of struggle's focus on the struggle can only survive the onslaught of persecution when it lives with the understanding that the journey is constitutive of the destination and, conversely, that the destination is already embedded in the journey. Put differently, the theology of struggle can maintain its viability and vitality only when it lives with the understanding that the struggle itself (the journey) is already an experience or a foretaste of liberation (the destination) and, conversely, that liberation is already embedded in the struggle. Experiencing the foretaste of liberation in the struggle is finding home in the struggle. And when we have truly found home in the struggle, God dwells in that home and we have found home in God.



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END NOTES

¹ Public lecture presented at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, May 2, 2006.

² At this juncture I am reminded of a story of a young boy who goes to the woods day after day. His father took note of this strange habit and asked his child: "My son, why do you go out to the woods each day?" The son responded: "I go there to find God." At this the father gently reprimanded his son: "Don't you know that God is the same everywhere?" The son replied: "Yes, father, but I am not the same everywhere." If the boy is not the same everywhere, so I believe that God is NOT the same everywhere either—even as God is also the same. Moreover, the place is not the same. Unknown, cited in *Reflections on the Nature of God*, ed. Michael Reagan (Philadelphia and London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2004), 110.

³ For a similar but opposite trajectory, see Michael Lapsley, a priest from New Zealand who worked for many years in South Africa. He said: "Before I went to South Africa, I thought of myself as a human being. On arrival in South Africa, my humanness was removed and I became a white man." Cited in Clemens Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 47-48.

⁴ EDSA (Epifanio de los Santo Avenue) refers to the street where people gathered to oust the long-time dictator Ferdinand Marcos (1986) and also Joseph Estrada. EDSA has become the short hand name for the People's Power movement.

⁵ José Comblin, *The Church and National Security State* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 15.

⁶ Carlos Bulosan, cited in Ronald Takaki, *In the Heart of Filipino America: Immigrants from the Pacific Isles* (New York and Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1995), 90.

⁷ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 15th Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 115.

⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr cited by Robert McAfee Brown, Gustavo Gutiérrez: *An Introduction to Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 85.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*, vol. 1, in collaboration with Letizia Constantino (Quezon City, Philippines: Renato Constantino, 1975), 12.

¹¹ Tomas Andres, *Understanding Filipino Values: A Management Approach* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1981), 66. It may be due to the people's belief in Bathala's lavish generosity that the dominant risk-taking and venturesome trait of Filipinos arose: "Bathala will always take care." See Jose Landa Jocano, *Folk Christianity: A Preliminary Study of Conversion and Patterning of Christian Experience in the Philippines*, Monograph Series, No. 1 (Quezon City, Philippines: Trinity College of

Quezon City, 1981), 5.

¹² Benigno Beltran, *Christology of the Inarticulate: An Inquiry into the Filipino Understanding of Jesus the Christ* (Manila, Philippines: Divine Word Publications, 1987), 123.

¹³ Joseph Frary, "The Philippines: February 1986 in Retrospect," *Asian Journal of Theology*, 1:2 (1987); Allan J. Delotavo, "A Reflection on the Images of Christ in Filipino Culture," *Asian Journal of Theology*, 3:2 (1989).

¹⁴ Ed Gerlock, "The Living and the Dead," in *Signs of Hope: Stories of Hope in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1990), 75.

¹⁵ Orlando Espin, "Tradition and Popular Religion: An Understanding of the Sensus Fidelium," in *Frontiers of Hispanic Theology in the United States*, ed. Allan Figueroa Deck (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 63.

¹⁶ Aida Hortado, *The Color of Privilege: Three Blasphemies on Race and Feminism* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 42. Also Patricia Zavella, "The Problematic Relationship of Feminism and Chicana Studies," *Women's Studies* 17: 123-134.

¹⁷ See Eleazar S. Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), 31-52.

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The Crossroad Press, 1984), 51-75.

¹⁹ Fernandez, *Reimagining the Human: Theological Anthropology in Response to Systemic Evil*, 16.

²⁰ Joerg Rieger, "Liberating God-Talk: Postcolonialism and the Challenge of the Margins," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Catherine Keller et. al (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), 218.

²¹ Charlotte Bunch, "Going Public with Our Vision," in *Experiencing Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, ed. Virginia Cyrus (Mountain View California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1993), 389.

²² Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, *Globalization from Below: Power of Solidarity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 2000).

²³ Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 15-20.

²⁴ Lee Griffith, *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), x.

²⁵ Hans Küng, cited by Gustav Niebuhr, in "Interfaith America," *Presbyterian Church U.S.A. News* (May 19, 2003). See, Paul Knitter, *Introducing to Theologies of Religions*

(Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 245.

²⁶ See Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 198-199.

²⁷ Nelle Morton, *The Journey is Home* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1985).

Pagsamba at Pakikibaka:
**Toward a Resistance Liturgics Approach
 to Christian Participation in the Struggle**

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My re-reading of the Theology of Struggle proceeds from my interest in resistance rites and liturgical renewal in the context of Christian participation in a peoples' *pakikibaka* (struggle). My thesis is that liturgical renewal and the struggle impact each other—that there is mutuality between the two especially at this stage in our peoples' protracted struggle and at this very stage in our ecumenical theological work. This mutuality I propose should help define Christian participation in the struggle for a just and better world.

**SEVERAL SPRINGS, ONE STREAM:
 THE THEOLOGIES OF STRUGGLE**

Several approaches to dissecting and mapping the theologies of struggle had been proposed, but as the body of literature on this theological genre suggests, there are some identifiable streams of

articulations/reflections but which politics-wise stream to a single flow—toward the agenda and praxis of a people's struggle.

One stream of reflections is on the reception and promotion of the human quest for justice as an agency of evangelisation. This particular stream focuses on the core drama of radical politics and that of the broader revolutionary ecumenism in the struggle. Christians who are directly or organisationally engaged in the national liberation movement stress this focus more. 'Traditional approaches to spirituality,' so they say, and in Oracion's words, 'hold little or no room for people who believe that God calls them to a life of direct involvement in the public arena in order to struggle against powers of injustice and oppression' (2001, p. 132).

Another stream locates itself in the realm of ecclesiastical reform where the struggle wrestles with traditional theological themes. Theological articulations direct themselves more on the prophetic rebuttal of the ecclesiocentric orientation of the church and its doctrines (Fernandez, 1994). These result from a resolution on the part of Christian activists to also shift their focus to the institutional church as a strategic site of conflict. This particular school is identified more with Christian activism in institutions, administrative offices, and the academe, and is centred on the more fundamental task of church reform.

A third stream is more oriented towards the struggle as seen and experienced by the movement's very subjects. It deals with the issues of identity, and the cultural and social particularities of peoples and communities. The emphasis is on the pastoral theological evaluation of the people's religio-cultural transcripts, or the popular and explicitly religious comprehension and expression of the struggle. This is particularly strong among lay people and clerics who are doing ministries among peoples and communities.

The fourth stream of reflections situates itself in all of the above but which primarily magnifies and advances as its locus the issues, concerns, and the agency of women in the transformation process. One of the positive developments in the history of the Philippine liberation movement was its birthing of egalitarian feminism/feminist egalitarianism (San Juan, 1986). The democratic and nationalist politics in the country, in particular, helped in the politicisation and publication of the woman voice—in what San Juan writes as the 'breaching of sacred mythographies and boundaries of patriarchy (1986, p. 50).' The integration of the woman question expanded not only the struggle's programmatic vision; it also added an important

critical dimension that is more penetrating in its dissection of the politics of domination.

All the above approaches and locations stream toward the one single flow of struggle. They express the growing plurality of discourses and political work in the communities of resistance. Indeed, the focus on evangelisation and the politics of struggle, the emphasis on theological deconstruction and ecclesial reform, the explorations on popular theology, and the woman question all indicate an expanding, pluralising and maturing politics of resistance. But to reiterate the whole point of grassroots/popular theologising, the hierarchical, theological and clerical forms of participation or intervention, however crucial, do not constitute the whole of Christian formal representation in the Struggle. Christian participation is not restricted to direct and indirect ecclesiastical or clerical involvement. The locus of Christian life remains that of the lay and the local, the *laos-in-community*. How Christianity is appropriated and lived by people in their localities is no less legitimate than as espoused by its enlightened priests and scribes. Christianity's presence in the *pakikibaka* story is largely how it took form in the *masa's* creatively multimodal religio-politics.

THE PASYON MOTIF OF TEOLOHIYANG PUMIPIGLAS

Historians like Agoncillo and Constantino were among the firsts who argued that the motor of the most crucial movement in Philippine history was ignited from below by the masses. However, it was not until Sturvetant (1976) and Iletto (1989) that the 'history from below' school was spelled out more as one of procession from popular religion to political religion. They re-presented how the religio-political helped ignite the conflagration which led to a full-blown nationalist and democratic movement. Owing chiefly to Sturvetant's and Iletto's seminal works, popular Christianity was surfaced or re-presented as having played a key role in the mobilisation of the anti-colonial struggle.

Iletto's thesis on the religious nature of the 19th and early 20th centuries' popular uprisings proceeded from his focused study of the *pasyon*.¹ According to Iletto, the *pasyon* has become an occasion for commoners to bring in and reflect on their deeply shared memories and living stories of humiliation and suffering. In time, the ritual chanting evolved to articulate most poignantly the mind and *saloobin* (the will/internal resolve) of the Filipino *masa*. In the *pasyon* the

people's language-seeking resistance has found an ally, a mode of articulation, its 'grammar of dissent' (Molina-Azurin, 1989). This history 'from below', thus, expanded the horizons of understanding the role Christianity played in the anti-colonial and democratic struggle in the Philippines.

Before Sturvetant, Iletto, and Vicente Rafael (1993) the history of Christian participation in the anti-colonial struggle always starts with the mid-nineteenth century 'GomBurZa story' (i.e., 'Filipinisation'/'Secularization' controversy). The phenomenon of Christian participation, however, dates back to as early as the early stages of Christianisation in the country. Rafael, in his investigation of Christian conversion in Tagalog society under early Spanish rule from late 16th to early 18th century, proposed that theological linguistic translation and the reception process during conversion and formative/ indigenisation stages were critical (1993). The inability of Spanish missionaries and the *Indios* to meet on a common religious language, he posited, has resulted in an evasion of, and subsequently, the undermining and the gradual crumbling of the colonial order. The conclusions of Rafael, what he generally calls the 'contraction of colonialism' and the dissident re-interpretation of the Christian story, show the initial stages of a popular development of a more revolutionary religio-political consciousness. The history from below, in other words, widened the frame of Christian participation to include the out-of-church, laicised and popular expressions of Philippine Christianity.

POPULAR RELIGIOSITY IN THE PRESENT-DAY STRUGGLE

To this day, mass mobilisations continue to parade symbols and images that reflect the relocation of the movement, among the mass of its adherents, into the narratives of this Filipino revolutionary tradition. The suffering of the poor, for example, continues to be interpreted as a mass experience of *kalbaryo* (Christ's Calvary) where the cross and the crucifixion are prominent symbols. The people's increasing identification with the cross as shown in surveys on Filipino popular Christology is indicative of the *masa's* increasing ability to translate one of the core symbols of Christianity in terms that are relevant and responsive to their continuing quest for social justice and better living condition (Beltran, 1987).

In the Basic Christian Communities and People's Theology

programs, the social condition was viewed from the lenses of people's culture and religion (Nadeau, 2002). The Christian tradition [ex., creed and cult] and indigenous religiosity were made to converge in the context of the community's increasing socio-political awareness, self-assertion, and self-insertion into the public. The result was a grassroots spirituality of struggle that also creatively articulated the people's hopes and visions more through popular media that are symbolic and religious. These articulations effectively regain for the people their sense of identity and self-determination. They are statements of the capacity of the socially handicapped and marginalised to appropriate and create new religio-cultural symbols—challenging the hegemonic claims of the dominant class over cultural production and interpretation.

LITERALISATION AND DE-LITERALISATION OF PAKIKIBAKA

At the peak of its literary activity, ToS has effectively made 'technicians' or 'second moment' theologians of grassroots theologians. This development, at one point, helped to amplify alternative theological voices for a wider global audience. Corollary to this local, regional and global networking was the coinage and popularization of the English phrase 'theology of struggle.' However, a significant piece of work is yet to be written on the English titling of the theological discourse that expounds ToS in relation to, for example, the South and East Asians' intentional use of *Minjung* (South Korea) and *Dalit* (India) to accentuate the indigeneity of their theology. ToS at this literary level remains the 'technician's' enterprise and had risked undermining the purported collaborative task in the doing of genuinely grassroots theology.

At the heart of this building 'gap' was the thrust of literalising theological discourse and the consequent obscuring of the inarticulate *masa*. Later experience showed how ToS tilted more toward traditional theological spaces: theological fora/conferences, and the *academia*, where ToS as a theological proposition now has to make itself primarily accountable to. It was the same direction Latin American Liberation Theology took: toward apologetics (Althaus-Reid, 2000). "Liberationists," Althaus-Reid observed, "wanted to be recognised as adults on an equal footing with their colleagues abroad ... [showing] the desire to be seen as equals and not different in the sense of

difference.”

The theological community and the academe, in their classical sense are, however, institutions established on the basis of their methodological moderation on matters of effecting radical change. This moderation, not to mention the pressure of capitalisation, political and ideological control, and institutional survival, is popularly read as a privileged ‘ivory tower’-like position that can afford the luxury of critical distancing and detachment from the life and death issues of peoples and communities. Gary Granada, a social activist and songwriter pointed out this ‘suspicion’ sharply and poignantly in his song “Bahay,” an elegy to the *barong-barong* of the urban poor,

isang bantog na senador ang unang nilapitan ko;
at dalubhasang propesor ng isang kolehiyo;
ang pinagpala sa mundo: ang diaryo at ang pulpito,
**lahat sila ay nagkasundo na ang tawag sa ganito
ay bahay**

As suggested in criticisms like the above, ToS has become an apologetical exercise seeking the ear of equally assertive establishments. In no time, dogmatic re-assertions within the people’s movement has conspired with the lure of moderation, of pluralist politics, and other forms of democratic engagement to bring about a critical *sangandaan* (crossroad) in the ToS. The confusion that followed marked this political moment, and was so patent that, apart from research publications and foreign commentaries, the ToS had virtually waned. There are, at the moment, no words from the primary articulators, still vocationally active, as to the state of ToS.

But [by bracketing off ‘Marx’ or ‘Marxist thought’ in the following critique of Liberation Theology] the British political theologian, Alistair Kee, offers a helpful clue to the maze surrounding the perceived ‘silencing’ of ToS.

[There] are theologians who used to speak well of [the Struggle] when [revolution] was more fashionable. But now in a period dominated by the resurgence of capitalism and its ideology, neo-liberalism, they now have taken fright. Their bespoke theology has now been remodelled to reflect the values of the entrepreneurial culture. In this they stand in a historic tradition: when challenged with their previous associations with [revolutionaries] they are now quick to deny they ever knew [them]. (1990, p. xi).

While these words may speak to a few individuals or even institutions, theologians of the struggle may put forward an argument in paradox:

the 'declining' currency of ToS as a theological discourse is its resurgence or actualisation in the realm pointed to as its natural habitat, the *sona* of struggle (Fernandez, 1991). The theology of struggle is the people's 'Christo-praxis,' meaning, participation is its reflection, or discipleship is its very text. It consummates its being in its political incarnation in the *pakikibaka*. European readers like Alistair Kee have tragically misunderstood Latin American Liberation Theology. This is in part due to the transformation of the said discourse, unnecessarily, into a new kind of apologetics that has picked the *academia* as its primary audience. What has been overlooked is that 'liberation' as a praxis is primarily, as rightly pointed out by the Sri-Lankan theologian, R.S. Sugirtharajah, an "emancipatory meta-story and a potent symbol for those whose rights have been neglected, circumvented, or put in abeyance" (1998, p. 15). This pastoral nature of liberation theologies has to be equally re-emphasised in ToS. It is from this pastoral location and vocation that the theology is being forged: to help provide the communities of resistance, at the least, Christian presence, and at the most, religious resources that people may find helpful in their protracted struggle. The ToS remains aimed at, according to Carino, 'the sharpening of the Philippine struggle itself and how the Christians are participating and contributing fully in that struggle'.

Deliteralisation

The shift from 'struggle' to '*pakikibaka/pakigbisog/pannakidangadang*' or the struggle's 'de-literalisation' is thus a way of affirming the social, political and indigenous location of the struggle. It can be seen as an attempt at 'vernacular hermeneutics,' which, according to Sugirtharajah, is "about being nearer home and getting closer to the roots" (2001). The 'vernacular,' however, is not simply a 'home' or the 'indigene,' but the dynamic, resisting postcolonial margin. *Pakikibaka*'s use in this paper is also to emphasise the heightened level of self-awareness and self-identification of a considerable number of Filipinos in the course of their long-drawn struggle. The Filipino sociologist Randy David spelled out this point of correspondence between language and struggle, of indigenisation and socio-political reality:

A nation's own language or languages grow in proportion to its consciousness of nationhood [They fade when the people's aspirations shift to modernity and

participation in the larger world]. Their decline is also an index of the marginalization of the masses in the nation's life (2004, p. A15).

The use of '*pakikibaka*' is a recognition of the reality of an onrushing counter-tide to the process of marginalisation, that is, the increasing self-assertion of the masses vis-à-vis the politics of nation and empire-building. *Makibaka, huwag matakot* (Dare to struggle, be not afraid)! continues to be the struggle's mantra expressing a growing and surging democratic and nationalist consciousness among the silenced and subjugated. To use the Filipino word '*pakikibaka/pakigbisog/dangadang*' is thus an attempt to align the ethos of our reflections to this particular politico-cultural current.

DELITERALIZATION AND THE LITURGIES OF STRUGGLE

Secondly, and I propose in a rather arbitrary turn, that deliteralisation means a return to what is essentially the ToS. It amplifies the realm of grounded symbols and ritualization as an agency in the theological sustenance and spiritual formation of our peoples in their struggle. It thus opens fresh discussions on liturgical renewal/resistance liturgics as elemental to our participation in the broader ecumenical strivings for the full life.

In the struggle, the theological moment, as powerfully illustrated in Ceres Alabado's *Kangkong 1896*, is when the smoke of battle is clearing and we ask ourselves, like Alabado's boy *katipunero*, "*Nandito rin kaya ang buwan at ang Diyos?*" It was not asked while the 'bullets are criss-crossing and piercing bodies'. The theological moment is that point when those in the struggle discern and celebrate the higher purposes—the sacred—the divine in things that are as profane as the means available in the questing for justice and better life.

I had been sharing for some time now my interest in the ritualizations of the communities of resistance. It is at the point of ritualization that I read theology and sense a theological moment. Ritualization is when the two poles: that of the transcendent or the sacred and the human/creation's condition or the profane meet. In the Christian context, ritualization is our liturgy and worship. It is when we objectify our connection with the sacred and articulate our faith through objective symbols.

This is my proposition: that our theological work in the struggle

may proceed from that liturgical-sacramental moment when we ask ourselves: *Nandito rin kaya ang buwan at ang Diyos?* This also leads us to grounding our reflections and articulations in what is traditionally and essentially prophetic in our life-work as a faith community – our liturgy and worship.

In *Marx and the Bible*, J.P. Miranda (1977) spent a whole chapter debunking “alsoism” —i.e., “the cult and ‘also’ the Christian work for justice” as an unhealthy and pharisaic juxtaposition. Miranda’s stinging critique of the Christian *cultus* is a helpful material in the re-conception and re-presentation of a politically engaged Christian liturgy. In a simple statement, Miranda was saying that Christians should drop their cult if they are to fully engage in the promotion of “interhuman justice” (1977, p. 53). Miranda’s thesis may find resonance in Everett Mendoza’s suggestion for a Filipino Protestant theology and ethics of struggle (1999). But a conscious effort to explore its negative liturgical implications is nowhere in Mendoza’s “portrait of a Filipino Christian.” Both theologians have taken political work as the starting point of their discourse, and may be, together with an aggregate of perspectives, aimed more at emphasising in various propositions the need to redefine *cultus* as *leitourgia*, and *leitourgia* as “interhuman justice.” But reversing the deduction process is equally re-defining of interhuman justice—anthropologically—as the *cultus* of the Christian community.

If the Christological constitute the normative in the Christian liturgy, then a clue to a synthesis of cult and interhuman justice is not beyond conceptual and practical realisation. Miranda’s anti-*cultus* has obviously ignored the works of the cult’s more progressive apologists, of social scientists working on the cultic significations of direct socio-political action, and vice versa, and the praxis of communities of resistance. His critique is also, in effect, dismissive of grassroots processes of and religio-cultural resourcing for the struggle. Movement scholars, drawing from behavioural and social sciences are showing the contrary: the power of the *cultus* to stir human passions for interhuman and ecological justice. It is from this corrective by Movement scholarship that this study works to understand and celebrate the *cultus* of *pakikibaka*. Hence, deliteralisation or the use of the word ‘*pakikibaka*’ also comes as a re-assertion of the relevance, value and potency of the Christian *cultus* in the praxis of resistance.

THE LITURGICAL ALTERNATIVE: A RETURN TO THE OLD SYNTHESIS

Earlier theological articulations of the struggle were framed by a fundamentally "liturgical theology" that shaped from the *pasyon* ritualisations of those in the struggle. "Liturgical theology," as phrased at this point, conforms more to the following appropriation by de la Torre (1986), which, essentially, is a return to the old synthesis of reason, theology, liturgy on the one hand and action, life, and worship on the other in a more defined socio-historical context.

As I understand it, liturgy comes from two Greek words: *laos*, meaning people, and *ergon*, meaning work. Given these two root words, you can have two translations of liturgy with opposite emphasis, *laos-ergon* can be translated as 'public works', and liturgy is like a project done by those in power, using the money of the people to keep them from being restless. The opposite translation is *laos-ergon* as 'mass action'. Mass action is usually from below and directed against those in power. It is democratic, but can also be disorganised. It is very alive, and expresses the spontaneous sentiments of participants. In liturgy as mass action, we do not go to mass (as if it were the priest's mass and we merely witness a performance); we celebrate mass. It is something we ourselves do. (de la Torre, 1986, p. 176).

Furthermore, in a more liturgico-cultural approach to doing ToS, Karl Gaspar, perhaps the primary exponent of the "third stream" approach identified above, proceeds from protest performances, which he calls 'koreo,' an abridge of the word 'choreography' (Gaspar, 1988). In a work that sets out his methodology in *Pumipiglas: Teolohiya ng Bayan (Struggle: A Theology of the People)*, Gaspar further opined that

the most substantial [articulation of the ToS] so far has not been through the written word. The "language" used has been more symbolic and, therefore, more related to images, symbols, life expressions bursting out in the arts (songs, poems, artwork, plays and the like). One cannot begin or explain what ToS is without first tapping the richness of this source. This is why the form it has taken attempts to approximate the reality of the source. For church people this has been primarily liturgical: prayer-rallies, funeral masses for martyrs, Passion plays, ecumenical liturgical celebrations on human rights issues and the like. For many of us in our society, this has ties to nationalist cultural productions that have erupted in the cultural scene that pulsates with the people's outrage at their oppression and their struggle for liberation. (1986, p. vi)

Secondly, commitment to "right" action or the 'contemplative action' itself is popularly perceived as a liturgical act. To our *masa*, theology, social work, catechism, bible studies, and the other

ministries of the church are religious rites. Priests, ministers, sisters, even lay pastors are people of the robe and figures of sacramental significance. *'Tumahimik na kayo at nandito na si Apo Padi/Pastor* (Be quiet/still/solemn as Father/Pastor is around) echoes this popular perception and response to the presence of a cleric or church worker in a crowd. Priesthood is always associated with liturgy and vice versa (de la Torre, 1986). Their presence instantaneously signals *misa* (mass) or *kulto* (worship service) or *paluwalo* (prayers). This deeply cultural association of religion or the church and ritual shaped the way in which Christian participation in the struggle is being perceived. Christian activist involvement is understood as a liturgical act. Likewise, to work with church people in their political work is participation in a liturgical act.

THAT WE MAY REMEMBER

Finally, the celebration of a *daigdig na sagana* (just and abundant world) has always been central to the narrative and ritualisation of the Christian rite. In the liturgy the church realises itself as a body that is organically connected (*ka-patid*) to the present conditions of marginalisation—and the vision of redemption that this [condition of marginality] generates. In the Word and the sacraments, the liturgy embraces the quest for wholeness and the struggle for fuller humanity as its own. This helps illuminate the struggle and raw passions of the poor and marginalised. Conversely, in the *sona* of struggle, the liturgy becomes the rite of the new world, sign of the “new heaven and the new earth.” It is also the rite that moves people to resist, and to celebrate their humanity and the wholeness of everything that is. The broken bread is also the *fiesta grande* (grand banquet) that narrates and celebrates the many stories of passage, and of becoming, including those stories that the withering old world has consigned to insignificance—the lives and love of Eden, Juvy, Leima, Joel, William, Andy, Raul, Isaias, Edison, Romy, Noli, Pepe, and all the other martyrs who gave their lives for the least of their sisters and brothers. We raise the bread and cup in their name that our people, the body of Christ, and the new world may remember...



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END NOTES

¹ The *pasyon* generally and popularly refers to religious activities during *semana santa*. It is more fully associated with the sung narration of a story of salvation centered on the passion of Christ, and its theatrical rendition in the *senakulo* (de Mesa in Javellana, 1994: 220-233). Written in at least seven major Filipino languages, the *pasyon* consists of 3,150 rhymed five-lined stanzas that include apocryphal stories (CPM, 1964; Chupungco, 1995: 104). As a communal rite, friends and neighbors come around to sing portions of the story after which they serve food, in a meal that retains, to this day, sacral undertones (Chupungco, *Ibid.*).

² Which include among others his Sri Lankan contemporary Tisssa Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation* (London, 1977) and Latin American peers like Rafael Avila, *Apuntes sobre las implicaciones socio-politicas de la Eucaristia* (Bogota, 1977).

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NOTES



Plato's Republic and Its Relevance to Public Administration

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This paper aims to examine Plato's philosophy as portrayed in his book *The Republic* and to analyze its relevance to the field of public administration. Although *The Republic* belongs to the genre of writing known as utopia, it actually grew out of an actual situation that it sought to reform—the state of moral and political life in Athens during the Peloponnesian War. Plato's theory of the state and government and his solutions to the problems of governance is discussed in relation to contemporary public administration. Plato's ideas are often criticized for their contradiction to the democratic principles and the ethos of human nature. Despite its limitations, Plato's *The Republic* is still relevant in contemporary times because it deals with important questions about the nature of human beings and society, about ends and means for the individual and the state. It focuses on issues that confront modern day governments and provides new insights to the theory and practice of public administration.

KEYWORDS: eclectic, utopia, justice, specialization, allegory of the cave, communism and governance

INTRODUCTION

Public administration is an eclectic or “borrowing” field of study. As it expanded its concerns, it began to draw from the ideas and strategies of other disciplines such as psychology, economics, sociology, history and even operations research (Garson & Overman, 1983, cited in Reyes, 2003). Such interdisciplinary orientation offers

students and practitioners the opportunity to learn from various works and contribute to the development of new concepts and techniques to enrich both the theory and practice of public administration.

This paper seeks to examine Plato's political philosophy as portrayed in his book *The Republic* and to analyze if it has some relevance to public administration. The discussion focuses on his ideas about the state and government and their role in the administration of public affairs and the attainment of individual and societal goals. The presentation is divided into six main parts: a brief background of Plato's life and major influences; the nature of his work *The Republic*; theory of the state and justice; theory of government; Plato's solutions to the problems in governance; relevance to public administration; critique of his ideas; and the conclusion.

Plato's Life and Major Influences

Plato was born into an eminent family in Athens in 427 B.C. (Sabine, 1961). His parents were of distinguished lineage; his mother Perictione traced her descent from the great lawgiver Solon and another relative was a member of the oligarchical clique that ruled Athens for a certain period (Morgan, 1992). Perhaps one would attribute his critical attitude towards democracy to his aristocratic birth. However, such fact can be interpreted otherwise since his student, Aristotle, who was not a nobility by birth and not even an Athenian showed the same distrust towards the rule of the majority (Sabine, 1967). His close association with some of Athens' leaders was a major factor that could have influenced his earlier plan to embark on a political career, which he later on abandoned because of his own negative experience with Athenian government, especially with the condemnation of his mentor Socrates (Kagan, 1965). Coming to adulthood at the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War, he witnessed the crushing defeat of Athens in the hands of Sparta. In a way, Athens' defeat was proof of the inferiority of the democratic form of government compared to the more disciplined oligarchical state of Sparta. The situation after the war was made worse by some vicious in fighting between the oligarchic and democratic factions within Athens (McLelland, 1996).

Another outstanding fact of Plato's intellectual development was his association with Socrates from whom he derived the controlling view of his political philosophy that "virtue is knowledge" and there is an "objective good" that can be acquired through study and logical investigation (Sabine, 1961). In 399, the democratic faction that gained

control of Athenian government executed Socrates for the charge of impiety and for corrupting young minds. However, it was the moral and political implications of Socrates' teachings that appeared to be the real reason for his condemnation. Socrates was an outspoken critic of Athenian democracy, especially the lack of competence and knowledge on the part of the chosen leaders (Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967).

When Plato was 40 years old, he made his first visit to Italy and Sicily. While in Sicily, he met Dion, the brother-in-law of the tyrant of Syracuse, Dionysius I. Dion became his friend and student and he was hoping that through him he could help reform the government of Syracuse that he found defective. However, he failed to realize his plan during the reign of Dionysius I (Morgan, 1992). Many years later, he returned to Sicily with the intention of helping Dion with the education and training of the young King Dionysius II who succeeded his father. Unfortunately, the youthful ruler was not really keen in studying philosophy. He also refused to implement Plato's suggested reforms that he found too radical (Morgan, 1992).

After his unsuccessful ventures in Sicily he spent most of his remaining years teaching in the Academy, the school that he established sometime in 387 BC, leaving behind unfinished his last work, *The Laws* (Sabine, 1961).

It is difficult to evaluate the extent of Plato's influence on specific individuals or movements but Barker in his book *Plato and His Predecessors* mentioned Plato's influence in Cicero's *De Republica*, Sir Thomas Moore's *The Utopia*, Rousseau's *Social Contract Theory* and in the works of Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism (Barker, 1946).

The Republic

Plato wrote more than a dozen compositions called dialogues. His political philosophy can be found mainly in three of his dialogues namely: *The Republic*, *The Statesman*, and *The Laws* (Sabine, 1961).

The Republic which is one of his more popular works belongs to the genre of writings known as utopia. A utopia is the author's model of a perfect society containing his own moral values and describing a way of life that he considers desirable (Kagan, 1965). The work actually has an alternate title "On Justice," that in fact seems to be the more fitting title as Plato was led to construct his ideal state by his attempt to describe what justice is.

The Republic is written in a prose dialogue where the chief characters are historical personages including Socrates who is the leading speaker. The ideas in the book are presented using the Socratic method—also known as “eristic” or “dialectic.” This involves the process of question and answer as a way of arriving at the truth (The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967).

Although The Republic is considered a Utopia, it actually grew out of an actual situation that it sought to reform—the state of moral and political life in Athens that Plato judged to be bad. Ebenstein described the Republic as the first work that deserves to be called political science in the sense that it applies systematic reasoning and critical inquiry to political ideas and institutions. It unites dialectical reasoning with poetic imagery and symbolism (Ebenstein & Ebenstein, 2000). According to Cross and Woosley (1991), in the Republic, Plato succeeded in “combining reforming zeal with philosophical analysis of the highest order.”

Theory of the State

According to Plato, the state is a creation of necessity. It arises out of the need of humankind and is the result of mutual satisfaction of needs by persons with capacities to supplement each other. This is clearly stated in Book II of The Republic.

A state, I said, arises, as I conceive, out of the needs of mankind; no one is self sufficient, but all of us have many wants. Then as we have many wants, and many persons are needed to supply them, one takes a helper for one purpose and another for another; and when their partners and helpers are gathered together in one habitation, the body of inhabitants is termed a state.

For Plato, the state is not a product of convention or custom; rather it is the result of a natural process. His concept differs from the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau that trace the origin of states to the contract or agreement entered into by the governed and the sovereign.

Furthermore, in his theory, the state is considered the most important association to which the people could devote themselves and that gave them meaning, value and happiness. In Book III of The Republic, it is stated that “the interest of the state is to be the rule of their lives” and “the several classes will receive the proportion of happiness which natures assign to them.”

Plato also introduced the pyramidal form of organization in the

state composed of three social classes: a) the biggest group at the bottom composed of those who are fit to work but not to rule (artisans, farmers, craftsmen); b) the middle level group composed of those who are fit to rule but only under the direction of others (auxiliaries); and c) the smallest group at the top composed of those who are fit to rule and make decisions for the state (Philosopher kings) (Please refer to Book IV of *The Republic*). His three divisions in society have a parallel situation in the individual soul that is composed of three elements with corresponding virtues: the rational (wisdom), the spirited (courage), and the appetitive (temperance). The characteristic trait of the ruling class is wisdom, just as courage is the trademark of the fighters and appetite is the distinctive characteristic of the working population. The close relationship between the state and the individual is embodied in a statement in Book IV of *The Republic*: "The states are as men are, they grow out of human character."

Closely related to Plato's theory of the state is his concept of justice. Justice serves as the integrating principle of his state because it binds the different classes together. It is the harmonious union of individuals, with each one having found his life work in accordance with his natural function and training. It is both a public and private virtue (Sabine, 1961). This means a proper interrelationship of the three functions, whether of the state or of the faculties of the individual. As mentioned in Book IV of *The Republic*:

Seeing then, I said, that there are three distinct classes, any meddling of one with another, is the greatest harm to the state, and maybe most justly termed evil-doing.

...when each class, money-makers, auxiliaries, and guardians, attends to what belongs to it, each doing its own work in this city—that will be justice, and will make the city just.

Theory of Government

Plato described his ideal government as the rule of the wisest or the rule of philosopher kings. This is well expressed in his often quoted statement in Book V of *The Republic*:

Unless philosophers bear kingly rule in cities, or those who are now called kings and princes become genuine and adequate philosophers, and political power and philosophy are brought together, and unless the numerous natures who at present pursue either politics or philosophy, the one to the exclusion of the other, are forcibly debarred from this behavior, there will be no respite from evil...

His theory of government is indeed elitist because philosophy is only for the few who have the capacity to acquire such knowledge, for as Plato describes it in *The Republic* "a whole people cannot be a people of philosophers."

Following this line of thinking, government then is the art depending on exact knowledge of the "objective good." Such truth according to Plato is eternal and unchangeable, and it can be perceived by the use of speculative and intuitive faculties of the philosophical person (Ebenstein & Ebenstein, 2000). It is only the philosopher king who has the right to rule because he has the vision of the Good and is able "to contemplate the realities themselves as they are for ever in the same unchanging state." The degree of importance Plato attached to study and training as the means towards the attainment of such knowledge is reflected in his lengthy discussion about a well arranged and systematic process of education for the guardian class.

Moreover, he viewed government as the art whose purpose is the good of the ruled, not the ruler. In Book III of *The Republic*, it is stated that "our purpose in founding the state is the greatest happiness of the whole. ...The well-being of the whole is all that matters; but it must be a true well-being; we are constructing a city, not a fun-fair." In a way Plato was saying that although the state will be governed by wisdom, it has to be anchored on the right kind of values. As expressed in Book VII of *The Republic*, "... for only in the state which offers this, will they rule who are truly rich, not in silver and gold, but in virtue and wisdom, which are the true blessings of life."

According to Plato, his ideal form of government can only be obtained if the difficulties and hindrances in governance can be solved. The first problem is the ignorance and incompetence of the political leaders which he considered as the "special curse of democracies". He described the leaders as those who "know nothing except the ignoble art of pandering to the great beast (the Athenian Society)." The second problem is selfishness, party-struggle and factionalism (Sabine 1961). In Book III of *The Republic*, he said that "For indeed any city however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich; they are at war with one another."

PLATO'S SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS OF GOVERNANCE

For Plato, the establishment of his ideal form of government will

greatly depend on how the conditions for good citizenship may be developed through education and how the hindrances for effective governance may be removed through his theory of communism.

Theory of Education

Plato considered education as the primary tool to remove the hindrances from the path of the statesman. It is the positive means by which human nature can be shaped towards the right direction to produce a harmonious state (Sabine, 1961). Education plays an important role in preventing abuses and corruption in the state. As quoted in Book III of *The Republic*: "A really good education will furnish the best safeguard...and if the citizens are well educated, they will easily see their way through other matters."

Plato's educational system is state controlled and composed of an elementary as well as higher education curriculum. The elementary education which the future guardians will have to undergo from age one to 20 years is composed of gymnastics and music and will culminate in military training. Gymnastics which include physical exercise and proper diet is designed to develop endurance and courage while music which deals with literary courses like poetry and playing of musical instruments is intended to temper and correct the spirited part of individuals and to elicit the nascent power of reasoning. Higher education will start with the study of mathematics and other sciences (from ages 20-30 years) and another five years for the study of dialectics to prepare them for the 15 years devoted to philosophy. Mathematics is the ladder from the object of sense to the object of thought while dialectics is the tool towards the attainment of the highest form of knowledge, the Idea of the Good. At age 50, one becomes a full pledged philosopher king who can spend most of his time in contemplation and ruling of the state (Please refer to Books II-VII of *The Republic* for a detailed discussion of Plato's educational system).

In the Allegory of the Cave, Plato described the effects of education on the individual and the stages towards the acquisition of the highest form of knowledge (Book VII of *The Republic*). The first stage is the state of chained prisoners looking at shadows—the stage of illusion and perverted opinion. Somehow this reflects contemporary times where people's values, needs and wants are shaped by forces like the media, political ideology, the prevailing socioeconomic system and lately by globalization and information technology. Thus people

live in some kind of shadow world, like chained prisoners looking only at one direction or what Herbert Marcuse described as being "one dimensional." The second is the state of released prisoners looking at the original in the cave that cast the shadows—the stage of belief (common sense assurance). This is followed by the third stage characterized by thinking and mathematical reasoning with the ascent of released prisoners out of the cave and now looking at shadows and reflection of the upper world. The last is the state of released prisoners looking at the heavenly bodies and finally the Sun itself which symbolizes the knowledge of the Form of the Good (Cross & Woosley, 1991).

In Plato's educational system, the state assumes an interventionist role supervising every aspect of the process, including censorship of learning materials to ensure that the right kind of values and knowledge are acquired by the future guardians. This act of the state is justified in Book II of *The Republic* which says that "a young person cannot judge what is allegorical and what is literal; anything that he receives in his mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be made of virtuous thought."

It is also significant to note that it is in the educative process where Plato finds justification for his belief in the equality of men and women. This can be seen in a statement from Book V where he argued that "the same education which makes a man a good guardian will make a woman a good guardian, for their original nature is the same."

Theory of Communism

The other way to remove the hindrances to good governance is through the implementation of a system of communal life. Plato's theory of communism covers two aspects: a) prohibition of private property, whether houses, land or money to the rulers and the provision that they shall live in barracks and have their meals at a common table, and b) abolition of marriages and family life and the substitution of regulated breeding at the behest of the rulers for the purpose of securing the best possible offspring (Books IV- V of *The Republic*).

The abolition of private property for the guardian class is designed to cure the greed of leaders and to prevent selfishness and divisiveness that often result from proprietary concerns. The state regulated relationship between the male and female guardians was primarily intended to produce excellent offspring who could be reared by the

state to become the future philosopher kings. Above all, his prescribed communal lifestyle for the guardian class is directed towards securing the unity of the state which he considers the most important goal. For Plato, the aim in forming the state is not the happiness of one class but the greatest happiness of the whole. He further justified his theory of communism in a passage in Book III where he said:

But should they ever acquire homes or land or moneys of their own, they will become good housekeepers and husbands instead of guardians; enemies and tyrants instead of allies of citizens; hating and being hated, plotting and being plotted against, they will pass their whole life in much greater terror of internal than external enemies..."

RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Plato's *The Republic* as a philosophical work is relevant to public administration and governance as it provides insights that help define the vision and purpose for the existence of a government and its bureaucracy. Philosophical inquiry seeks to find answers to the question "Public administration for what and for whom?" In the Philippine context, philosophizing is needed, especially with the dismal state of public administration in the country (Ocampo, 1993). According to Thomas, "the philosophical study of administration leads to the discovery not only of the scientific principles but also of ethical standards" (1978 cited in Ocampo, 1993, p. 22). With the issues of graft, corruption and bad governance that plague the present government, one is led to ask the question, "Whose government is this? Are the policies and programs for the benefit of the Filipino people and the less privileged or are they formulated and implemented to serve the interests of the elite and foreign powers?" Without a clear definition of its goal or purpose, such government will have no direction and can easily be used as instrument for power seeking.

Perhaps it would help our Filipino lawmakers and executives to review and read again the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, specifically the Preamble, Declaration of Principles and State Policies and the Bill of rights to get a better perspective of the goals and aspirations of the Filipino polity. Even Plato made a clear definition of the purpose of his ideal government when he said that all persons, particularly the philosopher kings "must think of the land they dwell in as a mother and nurse, whom they must take thought for and defend against any attack, and of their fellow citizens as born

of the same soil" (Book IV). According to Plato, although the state will best be governed by reason and wisdom, it has to be guided by public interest and the wellbeing of the whole community. This particular view can be compared to Wamsley's concept that the priority concerns of public administration should be the values of responsiveness, representativeness and responsibility, and not just the quest for economy, efficiency and effectiveness (Wamsley & Wolf, 1996). Governance should therefore be based on a "philosophy of public administration that combines ethics, art and science" (Ocampo, 1993).

Plato's idea of the state as an association that depends on reciprocal need share some commonality with Nigro's definition of public administration as "a cooperative group effort in a public setting" (Nigro & Nigro, 1992, p. 11). In *The Republic*, the state is considered the most important association to which the people could devote themselves and which gives them meaning and happiness. This is somewhat akin to Vonstein's concept of the state as "the highest level of association, a necessary institution to cope with strife, especially at the lower level of such organization" (cited in Rutgers, 1994).

The pyramidal organization of Plato's state is quite similar to the hierarchical structure of Weber's bureaucratic model where the lower offices are under the control of the higher ones. His concept of social classes, which is based on specialization of functions in society, can be compared to the merit and fitness principle of the bureaucratic model of Weber, which emphasizes the ability of persons to perform particular tasks and responsibilities (cited in Fay, 1989). Plato's view of justice as the harmonious union of individuals performing the specific tasks assigned to them supports the division of labor or specialization concept that is another attribute of the bureaucratic model. Furthermore, his view that knowledge of the "good life," both for the individual and the state can be acquired through study and philosophical inquiry implies that the right kind of politics and governance can be the legitimate object of rigorous and rational analysis. This can be compared to contemporary public administration's preoccupation with the scientific mindset and technical knowledge (Adams, 1992). It also has some similarities with Weber's rational legal authority and Taylor's scientific management model.

The theory that governance should be assigned only to those who are chosen and qualified, by nature and nurture, may sound elitist and undemocratic. However, this would have some significance for

societies that are suffering in the hands of officials who do not really have the qualifications for leadership and administration. Advocates of democracy might insist that political rulers be selected by popular voting, but this is ideal only if the voters have sufficient background of the candidates and also if the conditions for peaceful, clean, and honest elections are present. Plato believed that leaders should be highly trained and guided by the right kind of values, willing to sacrifice their personal happiness for the welfare of the state. To avoid factionalism, party struggles and divided loyalties that characterized the political leadership in Athens during his time, he proposed communal families and properties for the guardian class. Aside from his own brand of communism, he also considered a well planned system of education as the other road for better government and public service. However, his prolonged and intensive educational training was only for the future rulers, something that contradicts the democratic tenet that education is for everybody. His proposed solutions to the evils of his day that are still prevalent in modern societies may appear too extreme and utopian but at least Plato did not only identify the issues but also formulated solutions to address not just the symptoms but the root causes of the problems.

Table 1 is offered as a summary of comparisons.

Table 1.

Plato’ Ideas About the State and Government Compared with Contemporary Concepts in Public Administration

Plato’s Ideas	Concepts in Public Administration
A. State arises out of the needs of humankind and is the result of mutual satisfaction of needs by persons with the capacity to supplement each other.	A. “A cooperative group effort in a public setting.” (Part of the definition of public administration by Nigro, 1992, p. 11).
B. State as the most important human association. “The interest of the state is to be the rule of their lives” and in the state “the several classes will receive the proportion of happiness which nature assigns to them.” (Book III of <i>The Republic</i>)	B. According to Vonstein, the state in the highest level of association, a necessary institution to cope with strife, conflict at the lower level of social organization.” (Cited in Rutgers 1994, p. 406)

C. Pyramidal form of organization in society composed of three social classes (philosopher kings, auxiliaries, artisans)

D. Division in society, based on functions and the capacity of individuals to perform such functions.

E. Justice as the harmonious union of individuals, each of whom has found his/her life in accordance with his/her natural functions and training.

F. Government as the rule of the wisest—art depending on the knowledge of Objective Good attained through study and logical investigation.

G. Government which is for the good of the ruled, not the ruler. "The well being of the whole is all that matters." (From Book II, *The Republic*)

H. Rule of philosopher king which is not merely based on the knowledge they have acquired but also on the values they have learned.

C. Hierarchical structure of Weber's bureaucratic model where the lower offices are under the control of the higher ones (Weber cited in Fay, 1989, p. 31)

D. Merit and Fitness principle in Weber's bureaucratic model (Weber cited in Fay, 1989, p. 31)

E. Specialization and division of labor in Weber's bureaucratic model (Weber cited in Fay, 1989, p. 31)

F. Preoccupation of contemporary public administration with scientific mindset and technical knowledge (Adams, 1992, p. 365)

G. Importance of public interest. Scientific management should have normative grounding (importance of values like responsiveness, responsibility and representativeness) (Wamsley, 1996, p. 355).

H. Government which has to be anchored on a philosophy of public administration that combines art, science and ethics (Ocampo, 1993).

CRITIQUE OF PLATO'S IDEAS

A. Plato's theory of government does not recognize the democratic principle that all individuals have the capacity for participation in performing the task of leadership and governance. In the process of education, as in the system of communism, the lower class (artisans, craftspersons, and so on) are not included. In a way, Plato is saying that they do not need training for citizenship because they have no part in the political life of the state since they do not have the capacity for it. It is somewhat paradoxical that in seeking the highest degree of unity, Plato has created class distinctions and divisions within the state.

B. Plato's theory of government fails to consider a basic tenet of

constitutional democracy that government must be subject to the institutional restraints and the rule of law. This is a logical consequence of his view of government as the rule of the wisest. His absolute trust in the wisdom of the Philosopher kings can be seen in his statement that the rulers can even resort to lying if they deem it necessary for the state: "...if anyone, then, is to practice deception, either of the country's enemies or on its citizens, it must be the rulers of the commonwealth, acting for its benefit: no one else may meddle with this privilege" (Book III). But according to Aristotle, "Even the wisest ruler cannot dispense with the law because the law has an impersonal quality which no man, however good, can attain (cited in Sabine, 1961, pp. 92-93). He described the law as "reason unaffected by desire." It is significant to note that Plato changed his view regarding the role of law when he was writing *The Laws* where he admitted its importance in governance. One should consider the fact that about thirty years lapsed between the writing of *The Republic* and *The Laws*. One can sense in *The Republic* the enthusiasm of Plato's maturity and in *The Laws* the disillusionment that comes with age, perhaps accentuated by his failure to find enough men to train as philosopher kings (Sabine, 1961).

C. Plato's theory of Communism was too radical and contradicted human nature. Aristotle, in Book I of *Politics*, made some criticisms about Plato's ideas saying that they are brilliant and suggestive but too radical and speculative. They are never common place and too great a departure from common experience (cited in Sabine, 1961). A similar critique is made by Griffith when he said that Plato's ideal republic is impossible because the lifestyle he is advocating for the guardian class is against nature and contradicts that which is human—love of what is one's own (Griffith, 1983, pp. 35-36). To deprive people of their families and possessions is against nature, for they would be required to give up what they know and love.

D. Plato's concept of the truth as absolute and unchanging is challenged by the modern view of truth as more relative and empirical. Modern philosophers insist that truth is intimately related to experience and is not something that exists prior to people, but that it is constantly made and remade (Ebenstein & Ebenstein, 2000, p. 27). This is characteristic of the postmodern movement that denies the existence of any ultimate truths and relies on concrete experiences over abstract principles. Truth is relative and reality is based on the individual's

interpretation of the situation and the world in which he/she lives ("Postmodernism," n.d.).

E. Philosophy and ruling are considered by some political thinkers and philosophers as incompatible, either from the more theoretical view or from the practical perspective. According to Spinoza, philosophy is dangerous for ruling since states are governed by passion, not reason. He claimed that "such as persuade themselves that man distracted by politics can ever be induced to live according to the bare dictates of reason must be dreaming of the poetic golden age or of a stage play" (as quoted in Kagan, 1965, p. 157). On the other hand, according to Kant, ruling is dangerous for philosophy: "That kings should philosophize or philosophers become kings is not to be expected. But neither is it to be desired, for the possession of power is inevitably fatal to the free exercise of reason" (as quoted in Kagan, 1965, p. 157). Sidney Hook, in his book *Philosophy and Public Policy*, discussed the incompatibility between philosophy and ruling from a more practical perspective. He said that the very virtue of the thinker or man of vision which is prolonged contemplation is a drawback in decision making, especially when time is too limited. Also, a philosopher cannot, without great difficulty, give his loyalty to any nation, cause or party but only to the truth as he sees it. Thus, as a rule, philosophers as philosophers are not likely to make good public officials, citing the political careers of John Stuart Mill and De Tocqueville which he considered as quite ordinary. Philosophers are better as critics than as intellectual laureates of the status quo (Hook, 1980).

CONCLUSION

The Republic, although written about 2500 years ago, is still relevant in contemporary times, including in the field of public administration. Plato's views about the state and government touch on themes that are of significance to administration, and governance. These include issues on the role of the state, importance of scientific management in public affairs, and the need for a philosophy or theory of public administration that combines science, art and ethics. Plato's *Republic* has provided new perspectives for Public Administration not only for its scholars and practitioners but for other concerned citizens as well.

Even if it is not a blueprint of political life, *The Republic* raises

important questions about the nature of the human being and of society, about ends and means for the individual and the state. It focuses on issues that confront present day governments including the relationship between wisdom and virtue, equality between men and women, private property, the nature of justice, loyalty and patriotism, censorship, and the role of education in promoting good governance (Griffith, 1983). More importantly, Plato asked the questions that matter most in the social and political life—What is the “good life” and how can this be attained? What is the best way to govern the people towards the attainment of the “good life”? Perhaps many would find his answers revolutionary and uncommon, but at least he asked the right questions.

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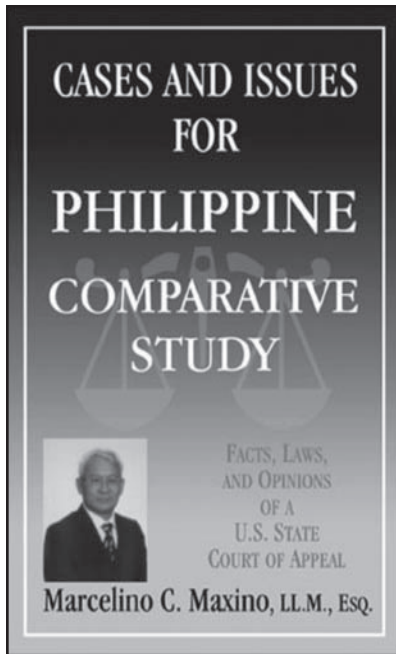
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BOOK REVIEWS





Marcelino C. Maxino

**Cases and Issues for
Philippine Comparative
Study: Facts, Laws, and
Opinions of a U.S. State
Court of Appeal**

Pullman, WA: Ulyssian
Publications, 2004, 288 pages.

**Philippine—U.S. Jurisprudence Compared:
A Book Review**

By David Padilla

Marcelino Maxino, a remarkable man, has written a remarkable book. *Cases and Issues for Philippine Comparative Study* is a text book organized for law students, practitioners and scholars that also aims at the general reading market, primarily a Philippine readership. But this reviewer, a US lawyer, found it fascinating and would recommend it to colleagues in the American bar as well as readers interested in how the American legal system works and some important similarities and differences with the Philippine judicial system.

Cases and Issues consists in a short but helpful introduction followed by nineteen individual appellate cases decided by the California Court of Appeal during the 1990s and first years of this decade. Of these fourteen are unpublished decisions, three published, one a California Supreme Court case and the last one a legal memorandum prepared

by the author and rejected by the Court of Appeal, but in effect, later adopted by the Supreme Court when it reversed the Court below in a wonderful instance of "I told you so."

To appreciate this work it would be useful to know a bit about the author. Marcelino Maxino, a graduate of Silliman University College of Law, taught and practiced law in his home town of Dumaguete for many years. Teaching stints at Silliman and Foundation Universities were capped by his deanship and subsequent presidency of the latter--a position he held for six years. All this was followed by a post graduate fellowship at the University of Michigan which launched his interest in comparative law.

Then, at the age of 47, he emigrated to California and, with borrowed review materials, prepared for and passed that State's bar examination. The California bar, by the way, considered one of the toughest in the US, appears laughably easy by comparison with the Philippine bar exam where in a good year maybe 28% pass the first time around.

Following a stint in private practice, during his second or perhaps third or fourth career, Mr. Maxino successfully competed for the position of judicial attorney for the California Court of Appeal. In the thirteen years he spent at the Court he drafted over 500 case decisions, most of which were adopted and constitute part of the present day common law of California.

The cases contained in this volume, all apparently drafted originally by the author, include both criminal as well as civil holdings. They identify, analyse and decide numerous substantive, procedural and evidentiary issues. They illustrate the complexities of the American federal legal system and tackle constitutional questions at both the state and national levels.

It is interesting to note that California has a reputation for innovation in law and most practitioners in the US would probably consider its judiciary a hotbed of liberal activists, red meat for persons of a conservative bent. Yet in case after case the California Court of Appeal affirms trial court decisions where the criminal defendant/appellant objects to prosecutions' tactics, police practices and judges' instructions to juries. Again and again the Court finds no error or harmless error. Thoughtful criminals might want to consider a change of venue before committing the misdeeds of their profession.

One of the pleasures of this book can be found in the small introductions which precede each case. Here Mr. Maxino places the matter in context and points out the differences and similarities in

practice and law in California and the Philippines, respectively. For starters, the Philippines has a unitary legal system more continental than Anglo-American in origin, not surprising for a country that was a Spanish colony for three centuries and later an American one for 46 years. In addition, in the Philippines the judge of first instance is the trier of law and fact and both of these are reviewable on appeal. Further, there is no jury in Philippine law.

And yet the similarities between the two countries' constitutions are uncanny. Due process and Fourth Amendment protections, for instance, are practically identical.

The reader also experiences the pleasure of reading cases drafted in a masterly fashion where the issues and reasoning are concise and simply put. The same goes for the restatement of the relevant laws and rules. Existing precedents are distinguished or applied as on point with economy of verbiage and great clarity.

I do have a couple of nits to pick, however. Before the issuance of the next edition, I would urge the author (and family team of researchers, editors, copywriters, typists, et al) to talk with the publisher regarding the quality of print which varies at times and detracts from the book's aesthetics.

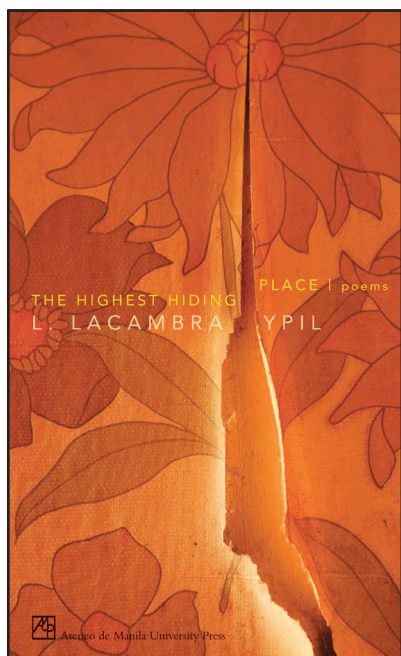
I would also suggest that in a future edition (and I hope there is one) cases, though unpublished, be dated, so as to be able to be placed in a temporal context. Also, I think it would be very useful for teachers and students if questions were posed following each case. These would stimulate thought and classroom discussion and could highlight further comparative jurisprudence of the two countries.

Charles Dickens supposedly said that "the law is an ass." I suspect that had he read *Cases and Issues*, he would have concluded that the California Court of Appeal, its judges, judicial attorneys-led by its senior member "don't suffer fools lightly."



ABOUT THE REVIEWER

David Padilla is the retired Assistant Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. He spent 27 years with the Organization of American States. He has taught at the American University, the University of Pretoria, the National University of Rwanda, and, since 2006, has been a visiting lecturer in law at the Silliman University College of Law. He has been the recipient of five Fulbright fellowships. He holds degrees from the University of Detroit, the University of Pennsylvania, George Washington University and Harvard University. He is a former Peace Corps volunteer.



L. Lacambra Ypil Jr.

The Highest Hiding Place: Poems

Quezon City, Philippines:
Ateneo de Manila University
Press, 2009, 79 pages.

Displacement, Gay Identity, and Filipinoness in Lawrence Lacambra Ypil's *The Highest Hiding Place*

By Oscar Tantoco Serquiña Jr.

Collected into what is now the book *The Highest Hiding Place* (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009), the poems of Lawrence Lacambra Ypil show a collective yearning for desire, voice, and identity. They tackle the various topics that move us and shake us in this sun-tanned country of ours, such as childhood, love, alienation, gayness, and other discoveries that an individual enamored and challenged by both the demands of art and memory confronts day by day.

The beauty and pleasure that one meaningfully experiences in L. Lacambra Ypil's first poetry collection are hinted at the book title itself. Through the poet's perspicacious and artistic eye, a reader is brought and introduced, in fits of nostalgia, surprise, and humor, to the varying zones of the past and present, to the characters of a different time

linked to the now, and to the various events packed with sincerity and frivolity that one may only witness, albeit in a stealthy distance, in “the highest hiding place.” There is certitude in the vibe and rhythm of these poems, one that affects the reader as he or she flits about from page per revelatory page, inflicting him or her, fortunately or unfortunately, with a sense of stability and occasional surges at the heart. *The Highest Hiding Place* is a collection of poems borne out of internal longings, of wishful remembering, and of attempts to memorialize people, places, and events that are once confined in and need to liberate from the landscapes of memory.

In this collection, Ypil carries his readers back to what the poet Merlie Alunan calls the “infinite dimension of the world we experience daily.” We see in this book a swarm of unnamed individuals (boys or girls alike in their sheer playfulness and drama), the plain sensible events (a picnic, a revisit to an old, alienating place), and many ruminations on both reality and art. Amusingly, the pieces in this book seem to be engaged in a dialogue with one another: talks between mother and son, father and son, among men, among men and their significant others, among other things. It is in the highest hiding place that the poetic eye finds a vantage point where it can watch and eavesdrop to all these movements, narratives, and conversations. Through his poems, Ypil constructs a world that is able to evolve and come to life, disturbing or placating the reader with the personal and the private, the spoken and the unutterable.

(DIS)PLACE, (DIS)COVER: GAY IDENTITY AND FILIPINONESS ON THE PAGE

Within the context of *The Highest Hiding Place*, the search for or the assertion of one’s identity is what is being contended with. Identity here hinges upon several roles, responsibilities, and personages. Through the various profiles that Ypil writes about, the reader vicariously experiences or is constantly reminded of life’s complexities, secrets, and discoveries. By writing about the private moments of a person as a son, a friend, a poet, Ypil attempts to connect the private life to the public sphere. The reader soon realizes that the poems, despite their intimacy and isolation, are not really too personal at all, because what they fully articulate are the same foibles that he or she has in reality.

Remarkably, in subtle hints and intimations, the book articulates the Filipino people’s ways of life, which include our frustrations,

the various portraits and profiles we know and encounter, and the individual and collective triumphs and tribulations that we face and battle with each day. This means to say that Ypil's book is *here* and *ours*, since it celebrates, through words and emotions, the Filipino memory. It carves out a space that nurtures the identities that are often unspoken by or unknown to many. These are the identities that deserve to be uncovered from the hidden to the public spheres, to be problematized and uttered on the page and in discussions, always never forgotten and set aside, inasmuch as they are constitutive of what we call the Filipino life.

However, in spite of this determined faith in Ypil's work as truly Filipino in terms of feel, sound, and experience, some questions regarding *Filipinoness* still need to be asked and clarified. For instance, what is *Filipino*? At a time when almost everything remains no longer authentic, given the effects of globalization, colonization, neo-colonialism, and post-colonialism, how is it even possible to identify an identity that is purely *Filipino*, one that is left untainted by the years of being in conversation with other countries, especially with those who had colonized (and are still colonizing) us for a long span of time? Is using native images enough in claiming that one literary piece is *Filipino*? Does talking about our folklore, our myths, our legends, the many themes and narratives of love, despair, and nationhood that inflict and excite our people certify the *Filipinoness* of a text? Is it about having the Filipino people as the audience in mind, the Philippines as subject, the plight of our lives as theme? Does writing in our traditional forms solidify the identity of a text as *Filipino*? How important is it to label a piece of literature *Filipino*? So what if it is *Filipino*? These queries are valid and pressing because they challenge our notions of here and there, ours and theirs, and the various ambivalences and certainties found in between these dichotomies.

In Ypil's work, *Filipinoness* is not heralded but whispered, as each poem carries an effort to describe our landscape and dramatize the Filipino experience. Reading Ypil's poems evokes a sense of familiarity and homeliness. What these pieces impress upon the Filipino reader are a common individuality, a similar tone and manner in speech, and a palpable affinity for the same terrain. They carry recognizable images and instances of our childhoods, families, and homes. In the poem "Being a Son" (15), for instance, Ypil relates a childhood filled with expectations from his father. The poem starts off with a memory of the persona's dad's repetitive life of "touching other people's/ bodies, opening, holding a stick/ into a woman's mouth...." Unfortunately,

this life is also demanded from the persona. Following what he truly wants, the persona however chooses to stand at the "Edge of the bed. / Edge of the world as I knew it. / And I could be anyone" despite being "part of [his father's] making, part of his wish." At the tail end of the poem, the persona uncovers his personal preference for art over the medical profession. He writes:

I could be anything, really.
 Even if I knew I was part
 of his making, part of his wish,
 part of the bad dream he could not wake up from
 when he was young, in an old afternoon,
 sleeping, the well outside his house
 opening its secret mouth, deep into the world

where he knew fish were moving,
 the earth shifting its feet, and his son
 of many suns of many years
 to come was making
 his mind move the wind.

Ypil also presents the disparities between the past and the present, youth and maturity, loss and life. Ypil tries to reclaim, recall, interpret, reason out, and reveal a life that is always reconstructed in the poet's mind. As he walks down memory lane, he conjures up the places and objects of remembrance. In "Visiting Danao" (37), Ypil tackles alienation and detachment from a childhood province. He goes back to a town whose language he does not know. In there he is confronted by people's bucolic manners and beliefs. Having no cable connection, talking under the heat of the sun, drinking plant syrups as a cure for an itch are some of the situations Ypil glosses over. With a tinge of resignation and pity, he concludes: "At the back of the knee was the space/ for the breath of a word: Taga-diri. / At the back of the head was the roof/ of a lonely, lonely mouth." Such dislocation occurs more often than not during reunions and homecomings. This feeling recurs in most Filipinos who have been away from their own provinces and have stayed for a long time in the Metro or elsewhere. In the poem, the persona recognizes the difference between his present frame of mind and the life that the province is currently showing him. Apart from the physical disconnection from the place, the persona feels that it is at the linguistic level where detachment is at its most poignant and painful: "There was a language/ and it was not ours. / /"

Ypil is fond of writing about recognizable spaces. In "Esteban Abada

Street" (56), he lyrically illustrates how one's poetic mind capably captures all that it sees and translates them into one coherent artwork. Ypil touches on the various images he witnesses in that place, where the night sky is accompanied by a full moon, where two dogs are romancing in a dark street, and where stars "carve the same eye in the sky." These are the physical views that one sees in the everyday. No matter how mundane and immaterial they may seem, Ypil, being a poet who draws most of his poems from "lived lives," uses these images in expressing several layers of emotions, such as passion, romance, and attachment.

Interestingly, the poem also shows how gayness can be subtly communicated without being too loud or sentimental or explicit. In the fourth stanza of the poem, Ypil writes: "And the shape of a man/ that disappears in the sharp/ corner of the night/ becomes a quick allegory/ of despair. / /" Obviously, the poet refers to a gay man's experience of finding temporary happiness from gigolos, setting aside the sordid fact that the latter, in whatever way, cannot reciprocate the former's fervour and facility for love. However, the gay man is resilient, fully capable of recovering from this "quick allegory of despair." At the end, after all the movements and gestures and figures he has witnessed, the poet arrives at an artistic conclusion: "No real words are said/ or loud enough here/ except in the head. / /"

In the poem "Photographs of my Father" (38), Ypil writes about how art capably links various generations through the histories it cradles and transmits to the present. Ypil forwards that the permanence of art bears the idea that semblances and dissimilarities between the then and now, the you and me, the them and us could always be compared and contrasted, as long as art objects—a picture, a piece of literature, a sculpture, among other things—remain preserved in our midst. They serve as constant reminders of the lives that preceded us as well as points of reference which we can turn to once our culture and society turn unstable. With a photo of his father as example, Ypil expresses how art ably archives and memorializes a life, in spite or precisely because of the numerous catastrophes and passages of time. Ypil notes: "This worn photo of another age,/ survivor of twenty typhoons,/ two droughts and a decade/ of dictatorship, passed the years/ / in a box at the bottom/ of the drawer to reach me/ here, at the table with Mom and Dad/ on a Saturday night."

Moreover, the photos document the physical features of the persona's father which he also resembles ("My mother says we look so much alike. / Maybe the eyebrows, thick/ and fierce, or the nose, very / *Filipino*, my friends like to say."). In these lines, Ypil begins another

poem about repressed gayness, conformity, and familial expectations that turn out to be suffocating in many ways for a person in search for or in the process of unfolding his real identity. He articulates: "My mother insists on the similarity, / says *Maybe you just have different eyes.* / While I let the argument pass, / look at my father, and take a sip / from the glass of water I've been drinking / for the past two hours. / " While the mother claims several facts about her son, the persona on the other hand remains quiet and doubtful. At the back of the persona's head, he could perhaps be feeling a bit hindered by these declarations, since they imply that he should be like his father. As a result, this makes the persona conform to the norm, perhaps to save his family from embarrassment, since he agrees that "I am too much like them not to forget." Such painful reality always happens to gay men who belong to traditional families. In the Philippines, given our highly patriarchal society, this translates to giving up one's real orientation / preferences and assuming the duties of a stereotypical man. This includes marrying the opposite sex, becoming a father to children of his own, fending for his family, among other things.

"Bad Driver, Good Lover", a sub-poem in "Paradise Village: Sketches" (48), tackles the fantasies of a gay man, whose object of affection is obviously a desirable and charming driver ("Because he's just too hot / for us to touch / / we'll only watch / him get down shirtless / /"). It is interesting to note that desire in this poem is locked in the mind of the persona, and eroticism towards the desired can only happen from a distance. There is obsession going on in here, especially because the persona and his companions are willing, no matter how tongue-in-cheek it seems, to take the risk of getting near the driver ("Who cares / now if we want to cross / / the lane, and hit the truck / and get ourselves a wreck / / of wrong and reckless / turns. We want to pull him / / over now."). But in the end, like in any of his poems that deal with gayness, Ypil refuses to give his persona all out liberty to express his emotions. Fear becomes the major obstacle in this, especially that the community where the persona comes from is a small one, and any act, decent or otherwise, can be easily known to people. In the end, the persona wishes: "We hope he does / not know our mothers well."

The poems cited above are complex and remarkable in many ways. They talk about discoveries and displacements, chronicle testimonies and silences, and privilege disruptions and hesitations as a form of subversion. Through the silent confessions that Ypil focuses on and utters in his poems, he highlights an identity that wants to break free. Needless to say, he gives this identity voice and accords it the space

in which it can be recognized and celebrated. Indeed, the poems are meditations whose foci shift from one territory to the next, from one frame to the next, described in a lyrical and poetic vision. Helen Vendler writes: "Poetry is the great means in which one identity reaches out to another, tries to explain itself to another, brings up images to clarify itself, finds a diction that speaks its mind, and finds a stylized form to enact its appeal." We feel the presence of the lives lived in these poems. In many ways, we revel in the comfort and accessibility they bring about. As Ypil repeats the same sentiments and utterances about his favored subjects and ideas, we readers undoubtedly also "become the eye/ that shouldn't be. The one/ that stays awake when no one sees" ("My Mother's Dolls"). The life that exists on the page reflects our own. The lives and identities we witness pull us toward the nexus of art and reality. Ypil then shows that whatever the poems talk about, act out, and live are the same circumstances that we, the readers, share and go through.

Undeniably, Ypil's works belong to this landscape, to our imagination, to the journeys that we undergo as a people. They are indeed *Filipino* because they perform our actions and portray the cultural ambivalences that we have towards ourselves. No matter how middle class Ypil's subject position is, his works validly and flexibly extend to the material conditions that many of our fellowmen encounter day per embittered day. Needless to say, the book's primary goal is to celebrate memory, as it always is in literature, no matter how excruciating or exciting the modes of memory are. It thrives in emotions and associations, affirming the confluence of pain, seduction, fear, love, and desire that the poet feels about the world and its people.

As a work that is Filipino, *The Highest Hiding Place* evidently carries Ypil's deepest ambiguities and certainties as a poet. From one poem to another, an identity is formed through the various recurring and converging images, situations, and personages introduced. It seems that in most parts of the collection, Ypil's gaze is directed at the past and the people populating it. The physical and mental spaces that these poems inhabit move from the province to the city as the memory of the poet flits about from the then and now. Indeed, one can never get enough of Ypil's chartering of the self. After all, his concerns are also ours. When he writes about his family, he also talks about our connection with our family, however resentful or impassioned it may be. When he deals with displacement, and aloofness, and amazement, aren't those the same feelings or conceptions that we have as we embark on an alienating journey to the city? When he tackles lust, desire, and

the stealthy life and love of a gay man, aren't those the same surges of intensity that we, the desirer, feel towards the desired? Aren't those the same quandaries that we share as we stand on the crossroads of our lives? Indeed, most of the poems in Ypil's collection are rich in identity. These poems carry recognizable voices that reverberate in the same fields of experience that we have. The self in these poems partially becomes the selves that we contain in us.

Almost always, silence is what remains after reading Ypil's poems; an evident technique that the poet employs in order to leave a lasting impression on his readers. Louis Simpson writes: "I believe that all true poets feel a sense of dedication, and that this comes to them in solitude and silence.... To apprehend the silence of the universe is to wish to break it, to speak to those who are in the same boat with ourselves." Ypil's poetry "feeds on silence" and indulges in it; that when a word, or phrase, or stanza, or even a whole poem crackles and extends its playfulness on the page through its imagery and sound, one relishes the occasion with equal or even greater satisfaction.

Ultimately, Ypil's poems bring his voice to the fore and let it speak the identity it bears. This ownership of voice and identity in the poems of L. Lacambra Ypil is surely the start of its ascension into being one of the better works published and read in our country today. And in the light of the voices and identities being heard and seen in the Philippine literary landscape, it is up to Ypil how to sustain his own work and remain steadfast with whatever he has impressively started.



ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Oscar Tantoco Serquiña Jr. is graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Speech Communication. While taking his MA degree in Comparative Literature, he also serves as the youngest faculty member of the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts (DSCTA) at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, where he teaches practical speech fundamentals. He was a fellow for poetry at the 10th UST National Writers Workshop in 2009.



SILLIMAN JOURNAL

Volume 50 Number 2 2009

MYRISH T. CADAPAN-ANTONIO AND RAMON ANTONIO DE ASIS RUPERTO
Procurement of Foreign-Funded Projects Through Executive Agreements as Potential Sources
of Corruption in Government: Going Beyond the Case of Abaya vs. Ebdane

ABNER BUCOL, ROGIE BACOSA, RENEE B. PAALAN,
JOJIE LINAUGO, AND CARMEN MENES
A Note on the Waterbirds of Pulupandan, Negros Occidental, Philippines

ANNIE MELINDA PAZ-ALBERTO, ERLENE S. CASTRO,
VINCENT LAINARD FLORES, AND MARIA ANGELEE V. ROMERO
Endemic, Indigenous and Introduced Species in the Freshwater Ecosystems of Nueva Ecija and
Pampanga: Status, Diversity and Impacts

MILLARD R. MAMHOT AND ALICE A. MAMHOT
Learning Styles and Intelligences of the Mathematically Under-Prepared
College Entrants in Silliman University

GINA A. FONTEJON-BONIOR
The State of Research and Publication at a Philippine University:
Baseline Data for an Enhanced Research and Development Initiatives

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

KARL JAMES E. VILLARMEA
Theology of Struggle: Next Generation—An Introduction

ERME R. CAMBA
The Making of a Theology of Struggle: A Testimony of Theological Praxis in the Philippines

REVELATION ENRIQUEZ VELUNTA
Soup in the *Oikos* of God

ELEAZAR S. FERNANDEZ
Theology of Struggle: Challenges and Prospects in a Globalized World

FERDINAND AMMANG ANNO
Pagsamba at Pakikibaka: Toward a Resistance Liturgics Approach to Christian Participation
in the Struggle

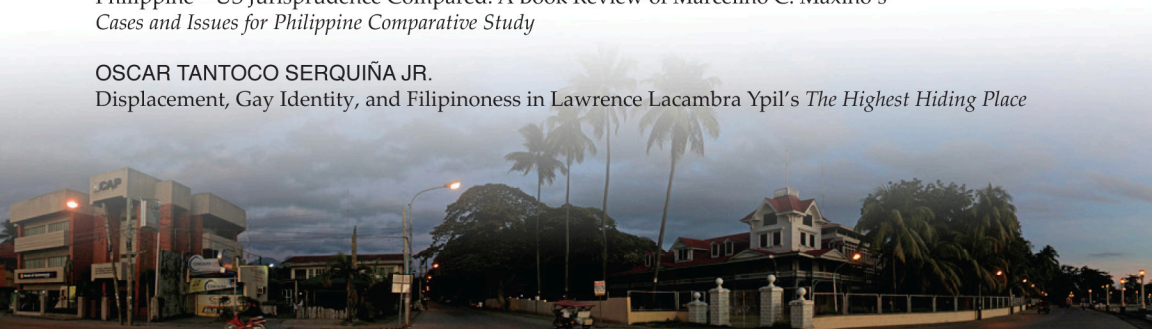
NOTES

JOJEMA D. INDAB
Plato's *The Republic* and Its Relevance to Public Administration

REVIEWS

DAVID PADILLA
Philippine—US Jurisprudence Compared: A Book Review of Marcelino C. Maxino's
Cases and Issues for Philippine Comparative Study

OSCAR TANTOCO SERQUIÑA JR.
Displacement, Gay Identity, and Filipinoness in Lawrence Lacambra Ypil's *The Highest Hiding Place*



PANORAMIC PHOTO OF THE RIZAL BOULEVARD BY HERSHEY-VEN CASERO