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

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SILLIMAN JOURNAL





"Lock up your libraries if you like;
but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set
upon the freedom of my mind."

Virginia Woolf

(1929)

"I don't want to end up
simply having visited this world."

Mary Oliver

(1992)



EDITORIAL NOTES

I welcome all of you to the latest issue of *Silliman Journal*, one that is as diverse as it could possibly get, with contributions from theology and the humanities, social and natural sciences, and literature and the arts. The cover art entitled "Egghead" is by Paul Benzi Sebastian Florendo who is currently with the Creative Design Department of Foundation University in Dumaguete City, Philippines.

Aptly, our first article is entitled "Identity As Not-[Im]Possibilities of an Interreligious Dialogue from the Fringes" by one of Silliman

University's visiting researchers/lecturers Giovanni Maltese from the University of Heidelberg, Germany. Gio sets his thesis on a backdrop of ideas by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben as applied to interreligious dialogue, but concludes that his "essay does not claim to have any original solutions, but wishes to be an essay in its most literal sense: an attempt to operationalize different instruments which may allow a fresh naming of the new old problems and which may help us to describe them, guessing that this might inspire us to *"pagtuo, paglaom ug gugma"* [faith, hope, and love].

Maltese's paper is followed by "Dynamics of Battered Filipino Women" where psychologists Alicia Estrellado and Rose Marie Clemeña attempt a validation of an "abuse model" developed in a previous study published in the *Philippine Journal of Psychology* in 2009. The qualitative study of twenty women shows that the model can be useful for understanding the concerns of women survivors of abuse.

Third, psychologist Emmanuel Hernani describes therapeutic adventure programming as utilized with a mixed clientele of 302 participants in Cebu City, central Philippines. The program included, among others, risk exercises with debriefing, Gestalt therapy, focused group discussion, and interviews.

The full-length articles are rounded up by three studies from the natural sciences. First, Racquel Chua describes the "Antioxidant Potential of Selected Indigenous Fruits Using In Vitro Lipid Peroxidation Assay." Kel studied indigenous fruits grown in the Cordillera region such as ayosep, bitungol, kalamondin, marble tomato, native lacatan, native passion fruit, pinit, rattan, tamarillo, and tumok. All the fruits exhibited greater antioxidant potential than Vitamin E with native passion fruit and rattan exhibiting the greatest antioxidant potential.

Finally, Abner Bucol and colleagues report on two researches done at the Gigantes and Sicogon Islands of Iloilo Province, central Philippines—the first is a study on vertebrate biodiversity, the other on the areas' forest resources.

READERS FORUM

This year's Readers Forum is a continuation of the Theological Forum begun in the second issue of *SJ* 2009, volume 50. In that issue, Karl Villaranea introduced the Forum's theme—*Theology of Struggle* (ToS)—with discourses by Erme Camba, Revelation Velunta, Eleazar Fernandez, and Ferdinand Ammang Anno. The current issue includes the ToS essays of Everett Mendoza, Lester Edwin Ruiz, and Lizette

Tapia-Raquel.

NOTES SECTION

We have a bit of a mix in this issue's Notes Section. First, religious studies professor Karl Villaranea expounds on Marx's ideas about freedom. One reviewer asked us "Is anyone still interested in Marx and his ideas?" Karl apparently is, and invites our interest in the topic.

The second contribution in the Notes Section is composed of two brief essays by the writer, resident director of the 2010 National Writers Workshop in Dumaguete City, Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas, the first on the occasion of the workshop's opening program, and the other on the occasion of the closing (at the end of three weeks) of the same workshop, poignantly titled "I'm Home."

Finally, J. Neil Garcia begins "On the Question of Poetry and Rage" by reflecting upon Conchitina Cruz' essay that takes the position of poetry as response to the rage brought about by horrific events such as the Maguindanao massacre. Neil ends almost with an apology: "I find I am—as yet—unable to write a poem about this massacre's unspeakable and maddeningly complex 'text' ... but see, this is just me."

REVIEW SECTION

Our lone contribution to this issue's Review Section is by Ian Rosales Casocot. "Don't Look Away" is a critique of the 2009 film *Kinatay* written by Armando Lao and directed by Brillante Mendoza. Watching the film was, in Ian's words, a "visceral journey through Manila's dark underbelly" that has "stayed with me with a malevolent power I can't exactly define—it is a prickling under my skin, a kind of labored breathing, a haunted voice that plagues the consciousness. It comes and goes, and when it does descend, it unsettles—as it must." That kind of a review urges one to get a copy of the movie, fear notwithstanding.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful as always to our contributors, reviewers, editorial staff, and loyal readers. Special thanks go to the talented Ian Casocot who not only lays out the *SJ* and works closely with Silliman Press, but also invites contributions in various genre and expands our publishing network. I also wish to thank my friend and colleague Allan Bernardo for helping us recruit contributions to *SJ* from interested and interesting

scholars outside of Silliman University.

The 1993 Nobel Prize for Literature recipient Toni Morrison has said: "We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives."

Margaret Helen F. Udarbe

Editor





Identity As Not-(Im)Possibilities of an Interreligious Dialogue From the Fringes: Exploring Giorgio Agamben and the Interreligious Dialogue¹

Giovanni Maltese
University of Heidelberg

The present essay explores if and how selected political concepts developed by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben can be applied to difficulties frequently met in interreligious encounters. Using Agambian concepts such as 'Homo Sacer' and 'The Cut of Apelles', this paper discusses problems of representation, identity and inclusion/exclusion, which are structurally inherent in interreligious dialogues. The essay concludes sketching the potential of Agamben's category of 'messianic-suspended identity' in connection with a method of radical historization for the interreligious dialogue.

KEYWORDS: interreligious dialogue, identity, exclusion, inclusion, representation, homo sacer, Messianic suspension

(IM)POSSIBILITIES OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE?

In June 2009 the *World Council of Religious Leaders*, the *Hindu American Foundation*, and the *American Jewish Committee* held a conference in which leaders of both religions dialogued. The Hindu delegation was headed by Swami Aydeshananda Giri, of the *Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha*. The Jewish part was led by the International Director of Interreligious Affairs Rabbi David Rosen. The conference culminated in a final paper stating, along with commonalities between the two religions, "the need for a continued cooperation in order to safeguard

¹ This paper was presented on 19 January 2010 for the Horace B. Silliman Lecture Series organized by the Philosophy Department and School of Public Affairs and Governance, Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines. I thank Uli Harlass and the *SJ* Reviewer for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

peace and harmony” (Evers 2009, 230). The first Jewish-Hindu-Dialogue of this kind took place in New Delhi in February 2007. One of its significant outcomes was the statement that both religions “share a history of persecution” (Evers 2009, 230).

However, what some praised to be a positive “new form of interreligious dialogue” (Evers 2009, 230), others observed with mistrust. In fact, Muslim leaders expressed a suspicion that these dialogue encounters aimed “at forming an anti-Muslim coalition” (Evers 2009, 230). This suspicion was anything but surprising, considering the participation of right-wing Hindu politicians who “are not normally dialogue-minded” (Evers 2009, 230). Furthermore it remains unclear if and how this statement was received or even noticed by the persons who identify themselves as Jews and Hindus.

This example illustrates three structural problems of representation inherent to interreligious dialogues aiming at “safeguard[ing] peace and harmony” (Evers 2009, 230). *Firstly*, the problem of exclusion of ‘the other’, i.e., *interreligious exclusion* of all those who are not present at the dialogue session, with regard to all the different religious affiliations, which are co-responsible in the “safeguard[ing of] peace and harmony.” *Secondly*, the problem of representation *within one’s own* religious community (*intrareligious exclusion*). *Thirdly*, the problem of self-representation or identification with very dialogue-partner’s comprehension of one’s own religious community, i.e. one’s own tradition of conflict with the religious community of the dialogue-partner (*intrasubjective exclusion*).

With regard to the *first problem*, the given example does not need much explanation: those representatives who came together happened to create a new meta-identity, based on a commonality. However, this move to include ‘Jews’ and ‘Hindus’ under the meta-identity, the essence of which was later defined by the common statement, resulted in the exclusion of others. And this *interreligious exclusion* turned out to be interpreted as a menace for those standing ‘outside’ the dialogue (in this case Muslims), resulting in the opposite of ‘peace and harmony’. Had the dialogue-partners also included Muslims, it might have been another group finding itself outside of the newly created meta-identity. Unless *all existing*² religious communities come together, there will always be some outsider who might become suspicious. But is it possible to gather *all existing* religious communities? Instances like the *World Parliament of Religion* seem to

² Italics are to notify, that this is just a hypothetical sentence; we cannot discuss the epistemology implied here.

point in the right direction at first glance. A closer look, however, reveals the epistemic framework of that communication, i.e. the fact that rules and language are dictated by Western representatives and Western scholars of religion, and thus producing an asymmetry which results in a subtle epistemic exclusion, perhaps even in “epistemic violence” (Gottschalk 2007; King 2007; Mandair 2007).³

With regard to the *second problem* the question has to be raised, as to how the final statement, drafted in the given example, was received by the very people forming those represented religious communities. Who did actually take notice of it? Would those who are exposed to situations where peace and harmony is needed subscribe to that statement? It might prove almost impossible to find this out, as there will always be *intrareligious* misrepresentations within religious communities and representatives (Hutter 2008)—even for religious communities like the Catholic Church, although this is arguably the only large religious group, with a long tradition of hierarchical organization (Hung Nguyen Quang 2008). As a result, a structurally unavoidable *intrareligious* exclusion, meaning that some people who would say ‘we don’t see ourselves represented there’, is added to the *interreligious* exclusion mentioned before.

With regard to the *third problem*, our example can illustrate another exclusion, which is the most difficult one to describe: the *intrasubjective* exclusion. Those individual subjects who stated a common “history of persecution” made up a new meta-identity by reflecting the history of their religion(s) and locating themselves within it. But what if their relation had been one of persecutor-persecuted? What would they have identified themselves as, had one of the dialogue-partners accused the other of being part of ‘those who used to be our persecutors’? In this case, “peace and harmony” could only be achieved by the dialoguing subject’s self-exclusion from that which is temporarily understood as the history of the religions dialoguing. The problem of representation would in this case lead to the dialoguing subject’s *self-exclusion* from dark moments of his/her own religion’s history (or those events which are mentioned as representatives of one’s religion’s history). At least in terms of the individual subject’s self-distancing from certain events, saying: ‘I don’t see myself represented in those moments of violence’, this *intrasubjective exclusion* would most probably take place, otherwise no dialogue could ever lead towards peace and harmony.

³ Of course this is a perspective informed by postcolonial studies (see for example Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Bhabha, 1994).

Given these problems one may ask: *Is interreligious dialogue worth having it at all? How can these structural problems of representation and identity be adequately described? Are there concepts which openly address epistemological and political implications of these problems?*

My intention is not to paint a cynical picture of interreligious enterprises, but to enhance analytical categories for assessing interreligious encounters in a self-critical way. The three problem areas show that, when talking about interreligious dialogues such as the one in our example, the line of distinction between 'genuine religious' and 'political' intentions, as well as 'private' and 'public' interests, is very blurry. Given a globally increasing "politicization of religion" (Bielefeldt and Heitmeyer 1998), this calls for more differentiated concepts of identity and representation in matters of interreligious dialogue.⁴ This essay, therefore, explores if and how selected political concepts developed by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben can be applied to difficulties frequently met in interreligious encounters. Using Agambian concepts such as 'Homo Sacer' and 'The Cut of Apelles', it discusses problems of representation, identity and inclusion/exclusion, which are structurally inherent in interreligious dialogues. In the conclusion, we will sketch the potential of Agamben's category⁵ of 'messianic-suspended identity' in connection with a method of radical historization for the interreligious dialogue.

GIORGIO AGAMBEN'S THOUGHT AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

In the following paragraph we will introduce Agamben's best known concept, the *Homo Sacer*, and briefly show why categories of liminality are useful for our task. Along the three problems outlined earlier, we will then discuss some other concepts that help us articulate what we have called *interreligious*, *intrareligious* and *intrasubjective* exclusion.

⁴ This is especially valid if one considers the transnational aspects of today's politics, religion and migration. Netherland-based Filipino Scholar Gemma Cruz-Chia, who has done research on Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong, can say "that any study of migrants that ignores the role of religion will most likely be incomplete and skewed", pointing to Sociologist Timothy Smith's thesis "that immigration itself is a 'theologizing their experience'" (Cruz-Chia, 2007, p. 212).

⁵ The term category is used here not in the Kantian sense, but synonymous to tool of analysis.

Homo Sacer and Citation: The Outside That Is Inside, and the Inclusive Face of Exclusion

The work of Giorgio Agamben, Italian scholar of law and philosopher, struggles with the question whether or not non-exclusive politics can be conceptualized. For Agamben, this implies the search for historical moments in which political and 'religious'⁶ exclusion can be studied and a description of its intersection with power and law. This description allows him to develop *paradigms* (Agamben 2008a) he locates right on the border between exclusion and inclusion. For the scope of our essay, these "zones of indecidability or indifference" allow to conceptualize political problems from an epistemological point of view and offer new categories for the quest of political exclusion (Raulff 2004, 612).⁷

Agamben's "best known" (Levi and Rothberg 2003, 23) category is the *Homo Sacer*. In ancient Roman law, the *Homo Sacer* was a human being who could be killed by anybody without being guilty of committing murder. However, this human being could not be sacrificed. The *Homo Sacer* was thus banned and excluded from the community. The ban stripped the *Homo Sacer* of his public life, leaving him his mere biological life. In other words, the *Homo Sacer* was deprived of his⁸ *zoe* (**zwh.**) which, following Aristotle, is the social life lived in public, but still had his *bios* (**bi,oj**), his bare organic life. This status made him a creature legally dead and yet alive (Agamben 1998). According to Agamben, *Homo Sacer* is a category that is right on the "threshold" (Agamben 2005, 138ff; Vacarme 2004, 117) of exclusion and inclusion. If one looks at the face of the *Homo Sacer*, one is looking at the inclusive face of exclusion.⁹ The fact of being stripped of his legal, social and public life excluded the *Homo Sacer*

⁶ Agamben's distinction between political, religious, cultural and ethnic is not always clear.

⁷ It is important to note, that a large part of Agamben's work, especially for example the tetralogy *Homo Sacer* genealogical in character. This historical analysis, however, is not that of an Historian, but that of a Philosopher who seeks to find paradigms for forging new epistemological categories. This is an important aspect, since Agamben's work has been vehemently criticized from the historic-methodological point of view, as can be seen in the reaction to Agamben's paradigmatic comparison between the rightlessness of Guantanamo detainees and the lack of rights of the detainees in the Nazi's concentration camps (Raulff, 2004, pp. 610–615).

⁸ Technically speaking *Homo Sacer* could be both, male or female. For reasons of space and clearance, however, in the whole paper, we will have to avoid the gendered formulation his/her.

⁹ This paradox is present *ab ipsa polysemia adjectivi as sacer*, which means both sacred and cursed.

from the community, but since he was still biologically alive and thus interacting with the community (in order to continue his biological life) he was simultaneously¹⁰ part of the community. According to Agamben, the *Homo Sacer* is a historical and concrete instance of the paradox zone of indifference, where the outside is inside and vice-versa.¹¹ This construct will help us look at the paradoxical nature of interreligious dialogues displayed in the problems of identity and representation.

The Withdrawal of the All, First Glances at the Cut of Apelles and First Implications for *Interreligious* and *Intrareligious* Exclusion

The Withdrawal of the All

Interreligious dialogue is about identities that come together and through their very act of communicating happen to construct a common meta-world, i.e., common history, common language etc., sometimes abstractly formulated in final statements. Even when differences prevail the commonalities, this newly constructed common meta-world is not always intelligible for so-called outsiders of the very dialogue sessions. This applies both to outsiders from other religious communities (*interreligious* exclusion) as well as to those of the same religious community (*intrareligious* exclusion).

¹⁰ For Agamben, this paradoxical simultaneousness is also displayed in the polysemy of the Italian term *bando* (Agamben, 1998).

¹¹ There are two more concepts which exemplify the antinomy of inside/outside-simultaneity. Epistemologically speaking, Agamben finds this paradox in the concept of *paradigm*. Paradigm, from the Greek “paradigme [... **para-deigmh*,] what shows itself beside” (Agamben, 2002), though Agamben’s point here is more apologetic in nature. Agamben illustrates it with a grammatical paradigm, which is meaning within a grammar lesson is derived from the fact that it has been emptied. ‘I love you’ as a paradigm of conjugation (I love you, You love..., He/She/It loves... etc.) is emptied of its original meaning. ‘I love you’ is completely taken out of any context of meaning, stripped off its original meaning. Yet it is able to show the system of language (grammar) in which ‘I love you’ may be pronounced in a meaningful way. The paradigm is something that stands outside its context; something that has been excluded from its context, but is not completely meaningless, since it still belongs to the original context. Otherwise it would not be possible to use it as example for explaining grammar. Almost the same could be said of the concept of *Citation* (Agamben, 2005, 138ff). Agamben affirms that the essence and powerful subversiveness of a citation relies on the fact, that the new meaning performed by it constitutively and simultaneously holds together the old and the new context of the quote. A citation makes the most sense if one knows the original context it is taken from. At the same time, this context is crossed out, while the present context is dominant. The citation, therefore, contains two meanings at the same time, which are mutually constitutive. For ontological implications see also Jacques Derrida’s concept of “*sous rature*”, (Derrida, 1990, 77ff), and additionally, in relation to Agamben’s discussion on the “nominal sentence” (Agamben, 2005, 127ff), Judith Butler’s “performative signifiers” (Butler, 1993, 208ff). Paradigm and Citation, thus, illustrate the outside, that draws its meaning from the context it has been ‘cut’ or removed from.

With regard to the different streams within the same religion, Catholic Feminist theologian Maura O'Neill shows that the distance between dialogue participant of *religion A* and dialogue participant of *religion B* is often smaller than the distance between a traditional and a progressive member of the same religion (O'Neill 2007, 8–16).¹² Unfortunately, however, she does not articulate it as a structural problem. Therefore, O'Neill's thesis that there cannot be a successful *interreligious* dialogue if there is no *intrareligious* dialogue, will fall short in terms of fairness and efficacy, if the idea of *inter-* and *intrareligious* dialogues claims to achieve a comprehensive, equal and just representation of all those who ought to be effected by it.¹³ The relation between "the all and the part [... is] dialectic" (Agamben 2005, 55ff), meaning it cannot be seized. In other words: the "all" withdraws from being grasped.¹⁴ Attempts to grasp it fail in the face of an insurmountable "remnant" (Agamben 2005, 53ff). In the last part of this paper we will relate this to the Agambian category of the messianic identity and investigate the possibilities of this impossibility, taking seriously what Agamben calls "unusually dialectic" (Agamben 2005, 55ff). As for now however, let us put the 'unusual' aspect into brackets and focus on the basic concept: the impossibility of comprehensive representation, i.e., the withdrawal of the all.

The Cut of Apelles

Agamben illustrates this concept with the Plinian story of a

contest between Apelles and Protogenes. [...] Protogenes draws such a fine line that seems not to have been drawn by the paintbrush of any human being. But Apelles, using his brush divides his rival's line in two with an even finer line, cutting it

¹² And this may be even more the case with regards to different regional contexts, which calls for more interdisciplinarity between theologians and scholars from religious studies, ethnology, sociology, etc.

¹³ This is also the Achilles heel of Habermasian approaches to interreligious dialogue, see (Biebricher, 2005, 248; 240–242). For a discussion of the implications for poststructuralist and post-Marxist politics, see (Laclau, 1996; Laclau, 2007). As already mentioned, examples like the *World Parliament of Religions* and their *World Ethics* seem to be understood by all, but their reasonability applies only to those who share the same concept of reason and its political agenda. Postcolonial Studies have shown that certain concepts of 'reason' can be Trojan horses of a certain politics, if not of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988). This must be honestly said, especially when the material content of the *World Ethics* is decidedly shared, which is obviously my own case.

¹⁴ Cf. the Aristotelian bonmot, which states that the whole is always more than just the sum of its parts (Metaphysics, VII, 1041b).

lengthwise in half. (Agamben 2005, 50ff)

The cut of Apelles hints to the possibility that every line, no matter how fine it may be, bears in itself the possibility of being cut in its own turn, thus displaying an *infinite* potential of resistance against *definite* cuts.

According to Agamben, every (further) cut produces a rest, a remnant. Likewise, every attempt of complete identification and representation of people and their actual religion *de facto* collapses vis-à-vis the resistance of the remnant. Accordingly, the real people at the center of the dialogue's efforts are

neither the all nor the part, neither the majority nor the minority. Instead [... they are] that, which can never coincide with itself, as all or as part, that which infinitely remains or resists in each division, and, with all due respect to those who govern us [or claim to embody representation in another way] never allows us to be reduced to majority or minority. This remnant is the figure, or the substantiality assumed by a people in a decisive moment, and as such is the only real political subject. (Agamben 2005, 49ff)

This is not to evoke a spirit of pessimism, but to make clear that so-called results of interreligious dialogues are always to be seen with a contrite modesty¹⁵: they do not always affect the believers positively. Often the believers or adherents of the religion are not even aware of any results (Husistein 2008, 234; Wettach-Zeit 2008, 232; Micksch 2009, 84).¹⁶

On the other hand, if certain final statements drafted at the end of interreligious dialogues had obliging character, it would result in the religion's implosion. The commonly constructed world would lead into a system of mutual rights and privileges, which inevitably leads to a religious form of subjectivation.¹⁷ Accordingly, those not

¹⁵ Though its epistemology is not shared, this expression is borrowed from Amos Yong's realistic approach, whose most important feature is a Peircean "contrite fallibilism" (Yong, 2000, p. 100).

¹⁶ With regard to newer ecumenical dialogues, see Walter Hollenweger's critique (for example Hollenweger, 1999) and the special issue in *Pneuma*, 2008, 30 (2) and Macchia's Editorial (Macchia, 2008).

¹⁷ Our understanding of *subjectivation* draws on Michel Foucault studies on power (Foucault, 1994a; Foucault, 1994b). In modern times, man perceives himself as an individual who possesses freedom and rights. By the setting of rights and privileges and making them personally available, a process of individualization takes place, which offers the human being the emancipation from object towards subject. This move, however, from object to subject, puts a yoke on the individual's neck: he becomes sub-jectus to a (meta-)system of rights and duties (Agamben, 1998, 119f). Following this concept of subjectivity, the subject's presumed freedom and rights is at the price of one's own subjectivation, in the literal sense of the latin term *sub-jectus* i.e. being thrown under (as participium passivum of *subjacere*).

willing to follow the usually highly sophisticated argumentations of their representatives would find themselves virtually excluded from their religion. If some of them, then, formed a new religious (sub) identity, the latter would represent the outside of the inside. In any case the religious person is stripped off its public-religious *bíos* within the 'original' context and becomes a *Homo Sacer* of its own religion, a *homo sacer suae religionis*.¹⁸ Of course the *homo sacer suae religionis*, who is left behind only with his religious *zoè*, is arguably less tragic than the implications of the biopolitics Agamben is concerned with. Yet on an abstract level, this helps to conceptualize the paradox identities of religious (sub)identities which represent the outside of their original (read: former) religion.

Also from an *intrareligious* perspective, this may be useful to further conceptualize the identity of the so-called apostates and link it to the mechanism of exclusions, since such religiously excluded do not simply disappear, despite being meticulously silenced in the chronicles and histories written by "the so-called high culture" (Bergunder 2009, 245ff). They are still there and in some way still continue to have relationships to their original context, etc.¹⁹ Furthermore, a unity-fostering understanding of the 'apostate' or 'sect' is probably easier achieved if s/he is understood as *homo sacer suae religionis*. His/her ambivalent and paradox identity, which questions the original context and yet is very alike his/her former context, is well explained by these categories of liminality.²⁰ The concept of *homo sacer suae religionis* is

¹⁸ In classical Latin *sacer* stands with the *genitivus possessivus*, the *dativus* is used only in pre- and post-classical Latin. Yet it could be constructed also with a *dativus commodi*, meaning that the *homo* is *sacer* from the point of view of or for his religion, such as in *homo pro sua religione sacer*. With regard to Latin style, it should read *homo suae religionis sacer* or even better *homo suae propriae religionis sacer* or respectively *homo suae (propriae) religioni sacer*. Here, the shortest and simplest variant was preferred. I thank Stefan Meisters for helping me work this out.

¹⁹ Looking at the history of the Christian context, one could argue that one of the major and best documented schisms, the protestant reformation, (which, all but reformation, ended up in being initially regarded as religion, and at least confession or denomination), could be negotiated politically only after the so-called *Religionsgespräche*. Thus the religious-political *Pax Augustana*, which celebrated its 450th birthday recently, is among other factors the outcome of these *Religionsgespräche*. A central document of this is the *Confessio Augustana* (Bornkamm, 1956), which constructs an inclusive protestant meta-identity at the cost of the so-called Anabaptists and Spiritualists, who were stigmatized and excluded (CA, §§ 5; 9; 16; 17). Another example are the conservative sects within the Catholic church, which are critic of the Second Vatican Council, and which are now being (re)embraced by the politics of Pope Benedict XIV. Best known, since some Holocaust-denying expressions by Bishop Richard Williamson (Lipstadt 2010, 571), is the case of the *Society of St. Pius X* and the interreligious implications of their opposition to *Nostra Aetate* (Beinert, 2009; Bischof, 2009; Hünemann, 2009)

²⁰ See also the discussion on the Agambian notion of 'paradigm' and 'citation' under 2.1, footnote 11.

thus a prolific instrument for the study of history of religion, in so far as it plainly addresses the constitutive but hybrid mutuality²¹ between normality and anomaly.²² With regards to the impossibilities of interreligious dialogue, structurally rooted in the performative exclusion of any process of identity-making or representation, this raises the question whether religious desubjectivation is possible and how an engagement into the interreligious dialogue as identity-free non-subject can be conceptualized. This question will be addressed in the last part of this essay.

The State of Exception: Declaration of Anomy as Legitimization of a 'New Norm(ality)'

As we have already hinted, the sovereign power as the power to establish new laws or new sets of norms (i.e. new 'normalities'), such as those powers who reduce a person to its bare life (*Homo Sacer*, **zwh.**), requires the annulations of the public life (**bi,oj**) and this in turn requires a legitimization. Agamben's research of the apex of totalitarianism in modernity, which according to him, is the Nazi concentration camps, leads him to the concept of the state of exception (Raulff 2004, 609). Following, one might argue somehow uncritically, Carl Schmitt's Definition of "*Ausnahmezustand*" (Agamben 2008b, especially 53) that he finds the pattern of emergency being the legitimization *par excellence* for grasping absolute sovereignty by cancelling the *bíos*.

Originally understood as something extraordinary, an exception, which should have validity only for a limited period of time, [...] a historical transformation has made it the normal form of governance. [...] The state of exception establishes a hidden but fundamental relationship between law and the absence of law. It is a void, a blank and this empty space is constitutive of the legal system. (Raulff 2004, 609)

According to Agamben the emergence of new systems (be it legal, political or otherwise identity-related) is somehow linked

²¹ For the poststructuralist notion of 'hybridity,' see Bhabha (Bhabha, 1994; Rutherford, 1990). This genealogical approach, which studies the history of religion with focus on discontinuities rather than on continuities, and tries to explain consistencies instead of inconsistencies, draws from the works of scholar of religious studies Michael Bergunder (Bergunder, 2007; Bergunder, 2009a; Bergunder, 2010) and Jörg Hausteine (Hausteine, forthcoming). Although their postcolonial approach is informed by a Derridean epistemology and opposes Agamben's metaphysical framework.

²² The Agambian concept of 'anomy' as a precondition of normality or, put in another way, normality as a result of 'anomy' means that a new form of norm (i.e. rule or law) is legitimated by a declaration of lawlessness, thus factual *anomy* for the greek **anomoj**. Agamben follows Carl Schmitt's thesis, which defines sovereign who decides on the exception. In the next chapter we will discuss the concept of 'anomy.'

to the declaring of an emergency. The state of exception is the best rationale for justifying discontinuity. It allows the introduction of a new element of sovereignty (e.g. law, norm), yet under the alibi of the provisionality—especially when the issue of fear and security is instrumentalized.²³ The exception constitutes the link between continuity and discontinuity, e.g. between new and old law, because

in the exception what is excluded from the norm does not simply have no bearing on the law, on the contrary, the law maintains itself in relation to the exception in the form of its own self-suspension. The norm is applied [...] to the exception disapplying itself, in withdrawing itself from it. [...] It] is not a mere exclusion, but an inclusive exclusion, an *ex-ceptio* in the literal sense of the term: a seizing of the outside. (Agamben 2005, 104f)

Philosophically speaking, this is again a grey zone. If Agamben's thought is consequently continued, it leads to the thesis that (a new) normality is constituted by the declaration of anomy. The success of establishing a new system (such as a meta-identity) is related to the success of establishing new norms that regulate its elements. Such an establishment of new norms requires the annulation of the old norms on the one hand; on the other hand, it also requires the setting new boundaries, within which these norms apply. Boundaries in turn imply exclusion as they decide about the inside and the outside. For Agamben this exclusion (actually an inclusive exclusion) is most easily achieved under exceptional circumstances. Eventually this development may become a new state of normality, which might hide the encoded and constituting anomy, without being able to erase it. Normality thus requires and is constituted by anomy (Agamben 1998; Agamben 2005, 104ff; 108ff; Raulff 2004, 611).

The implications for the interreligious dialogue are obvious. Radicalization, reformation, and splitting of religious identities and systems often go hand in hand with some declaration of a state of exception as legitimization. It may start with a sense of exceptional or chaotic disorder, which calls for an urgent intervention in order to safeguard some 'collective interests' or the 'purity of a religion's identity'. This state of exceptional or chaotic disorder could be understood as caused by 'the religion fatal decay due to a stray from the roots'; 'the religion's accommodation of unconventional principles'; but it could also

²³ Such as in the moral panics-campaigns of the Bush-administration, which launched to legitimate an exceptional treatment for terrorists (and people suspected to be terrorists), such as waterboarding (Zizek, 2007) and Guantanamo, which is still there, also after President Obama's promotion to Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

be called 'desperate need for global peace and harmony'. In any case it gives legitimization for exceptional measures, which could be both isolation and radicalization, or openness for interreligious dialogue.²⁴ Meanwhile, as we have seen in relation to the previously sketched Jewish-Hindu dialogue, there is a high potential of abuse of interreligious dialogue. This raises the quest of intentionality with regard to the participants in the interreligious dialogue. Under the pretext of exceptional conditions²⁵ unusual coalitions come into being, which give rise to new (meta)identities. However, this rise of new (meta)identities is problematic from the viewpoint of those who are necessarily excluded as a consequence of the impossibility of comprehensive representation and thus represent the remnant. This is problematic. However, if the non-excluded are successful in establishing their new (meta)identity, "the state of exception [...] become[s ...] the normal form of governance" (Raulff 2004, 609).²⁶ It is the forms of the state of exception, implicitly or explicitly found in rationales underlying interreligious dialogues, that describe an epistemological point of contact between our reflections so far and the political concepts of Giorgio Agamben and give us fresh insight in what we called the problem of *interreligious* exclusion. However, this point of contact is not merely epistemological. We will have to consider the relation between public and private vis-à-vis a certain concept of religion before we turn to some concepts which help us to discuss the third problem: the issue of *intrasubjective exclusion*.

Religion Between the Private and the Public

In terms of applying Agamben's philosophical categories to interreligious dialogue, the present essay could be criticized as

²⁴ We are not evaluating these 'causes' here, nor are we analyzing their ideological thrust. On the descriptive and formal level they are equivalent, in as they can be used to legitimate a state of exception.

²⁵ In terms of abstractions, exceptional conditions' and declared, state of exception are very alike, they differ in range, effectiveness and on the level of representation on which they are uttered.

²⁶ Politically speaking, the danger of the state of exception becoming the normal form of governance, is certainly one of the motives why some "[l]awyers led by Senate President Jovito Salonga filed five separate positions, asking the Supreme Court to nullify President Arroyo's declaration of martial law [state of exception] in Maguindanao" when she had declared the state of exception in parts of Mindanao, after the horrible massacre in the Southern Philippines on 24 November 2009. A few days later the "[t]he Ampatuan clan, ... [which was presumably responsible for the massacre], who gave President Macapagal-Arroyo [...] controversial victories in the 2004 and 2007 elections, were labeled rebels" by the same President (Eguerra et al., 2009).

farfetched, being too far away from the concrete material theme of Agamben's work. Therefore at this point it might be useful to consider religion between private and public.²⁷

Against the predictions of several wannabe-prophets standing in the tradition of the secularization thesis, religion is all but on the way of extinction (Giordan 2008, 203f). Headings such as "Dio é tornato" (Stark and Introvigne 2003) or "La revanche de dieu" (Kepel 1991) suggest that religion is booming. Though the implicit Eurocentrism and (Hegelian) teleology underlying several secularization theories have to be criticized, one has to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water, and confuse the increase of religious grassroots-movements or spirituality with the decline of membership in institutionalized forms of religion (Casanova 2001, 418–419). The thesis, according to which religion in modern societies concerns only the inward person has been strongly contested. Despite religious pluralization, religion is far from being just a private matter.²⁸ The modern concept of religion, substantially drawing from Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence" (The Christian Faith, § 4; cf. Bergunder 2009)²⁹ which *de-fines* (i.e. limits) religion's locus to the private, has to be reconsidered. But religion cannot be detached from private issues either. As discursive formation, religion has its locus right at the threshold between the private and the public, which according to Agamben is to be understood more as "dipolarities" than as "di-chotomies" (Raulff 2004, 612). Agamben's plea for viewing these oppositions "[...] not substantial, but tensional" and his call to "a logic of the field, as in physics, where it is impossible to draw a line clearly and separate two different substances, [where] the polarity is present and acts at each point of the field" (Raulff 2004, 612; cf. Agamben 2002) can help us in

²⁷ Due to time constraints, we will have to refrain from elaborating on a definition of religion. Thus, in what follows, we will *ex negativo* deal with definitions of religion, which seem to be misleading in the light of the recent global developments and their relation to the discussion on interreligious dialogue. The notion of religion implied here tries to avoid both a functional and substantial definition of religion, thus, historicizing and conceptualizing it through a genealogical and discourse-oriented approach (for further readings see the introductory sections in Kippenberg & von Stuckrad, 2003; or Hock, 2002).

²⁸ The communitarian relations and (identity)political implications of religious individuals, however understood, therefore, seem to weaken well-intended suggestions of focusing more on "Spirituality as a chance for intercultural theology" (Giordan, 2008) or interreligious dialogue.

²⁹ It is important to note that Schleiermacher's concept of "Geselligkeit" and his notion of plural interests in the context of his Kant-critique also allows an opening towards the public character of religion (Welker, 1999).

formulating our questions concerning the interreligious dialogue and understand non-Schleiermacherian—sometimes wrongly referred to non-Western—concepts of religion, when we engage in interreligious dialogue.³⁰ Here I am particularly referring to language systems, in which there is no word for religion as understood ‘inwardly’ and accordingly the dichotomy church/state, sacred/secular is repeatedly a stumbling block, though as a consequence of globalization, language is obviously adapting to the Western-dominated discourse.

The state of exception as *locus* and *rationale* in which distinguishing lines are dissolved and borders are crossed (such as the difference between public and private, between personal history and collective history) make these categories promising with regard to our question here. Interreligious dialogues, as an encounter between individuals of delegates who identify themselves as part of a collective identity called ‘religion XY’, inevitably presents a political moment and stumble into the same structural impossibilities of representation, which are inherent in political systems (Laclau 2007).

The Messianic, the Cut of Apelles and the Remnant, *Katargein*, *Astheneia* and Being As Not: Intrasubjective Exclusion and Categories of Identitylessness?

So far the carryover of our essay should be understood as a tool for reformulating questions or blurred spots linked to the wider topic of interreligious dialogue. What has repeatedly emerged throughout our discussion is the problem of identity and its implicit constitutive exclusion which calls for a “desubjectivation”³¹ (Vacarme 2004, 116) or an identity that is non-exclusive.³² The following Agambian concepts will be not only analytical but also synthetic, as they will positively ask whether and how forms of non-identity are applicable within the interreligious dialogue.

³⁰ Schleiermacher’s definition of religion as “feeling of absolute dependence” has been criticized by many Western thinkers, yet it is irreducible to the present notion of the discourse on religion (Bergunder, 2009b).

³¹ On subjectivation/desubjectivation see 2.2.2, especially footnote , 17.

³² Non-exclusive identities, in the sense of a non-exclusivist position, are, practically speaking, very common among religious people with academic background or at least enough intercultural experience. Hence, what is attempted here might seem to be trivial. However, a systematic and/or theoretical reflection of such an identity position is rarely ventured. An introductory overview of the underlying classification exclusivist-inclusivist-pluralist can be found in (Yong, 2000, p. 39; Knitter, 2002; Bernhardt, 2005).

The Messianic, the Remnant and the Cut of Apelles Revisited

In his "Commentary on the Letter to the Romans" (Agamben 2005) Agamben suggests a reading which understands *Romans* as a "fundamental messianic text" (Agamben 2005, 1). The center of gravity of this commentary is the concept of the "Messianic" which functions as a radical "Aufhebung" (suspension) of law, time, class, politics and identity (Agamben 2005, 1ff; 99ff).³³ The Messianic draws its potential of subversiveness and resistance from the fact that it does not set up a positive counter-essentialism or counter-identity. On the contrary, it cuts the existing, celebrating its awareness of the dissolving of static identity at every new encounter. In this sense, it does not raise essentialist claims. "Instead of proposing a universal principle, [... it] divides the division. And what remains is the new but indefinable subject, which is always left over or behind because it can be on all sides, both on the side of the non-Jews as well as the Jews" (Vacarme 2004, 122).

How does this work? Let's go back to the cut of Apelles and the idea of the remnant. The cut of Apelles hints at the possibility that every line, no matter how fine it may be, bears in itself the possibility of being cut in its own turn, thus displaying an *infinite* potential of resistance against definite cuts. In the light of our former consideration pertaining to our complex, pluralistic and transreligiously cut reality, Agamben's notion of *the Messianic* simply takes the impossibility of identification and representation seriously. It is radically aware of the paradox constituting identity. In order to understand the 'positive potential' of this, we will have to look at three more concepts and then draw some programmatic conclusions.

Astheneia and Katargein

According to Agamben, the concrete reality of Paul's addressees drew a line between mankind, dividing humanity into two kinds: Jews (i.e. circumcised) and non-Jews (uncircumcised). However, this

³³ Though for Paul's Romans the Messianic is constituted by faith in Jesus as Christ/Messiah, the following transfer of Agamben's concept does not imply fideistic belief in the Person of Jesus Christ, not even in terms of historical person. It is sufficient to understand the Messianic as a discursive or theoretical concept for a chosen self-denial in the context of interreligious dialogue. Christians, who believe in Jesus Christ could, of course, add to this theoretical aspect a theological rationale for engaging interreligious dialogue with this attitude and elaborate on the implication of one's belief in the Word made flesh. Thanks to Markus Rackow for bringing this objection to my mind.

mutual exclusion, this form of subjectivation was no longer valid for Paul, after his encounter with Messiah (i.e. Christ). For Agamben's Paul, the *factum* Jesus Christ suspends every difference among mankind (Gal. 3:28).³⁴ It cuts the conventional identity-line, showing that among the *fleshly* circumcised there are *breathly* uncircumcised and vice versa (Agamben 2005, 51). It annuls the given categories: "Circumcision is nothing" (Agamben 2005, 23)—and empowers those standing on the fringes. It introduces a new kind of viewing (collective) people both suspending the old identities and questioning any new kinds of identity. It is a perspective that radically takes into account the margins, a point of view which stands right on the threshold. Agamben calls this identity *remnant*. The remnant-identity stands for "the impossibility of the Jews and the non-Jews to coincide with themselves; they are something like a remnant [...] between every identity and itself" (Agamben 2005, 52). Therefore the remnant-identity is a kind of *non*-identity (or suspended identity), the characteristic of which is the radical weakness (**avsqenei,a l**), a radical surrender of coincidence with itself, a radical giving away of identity resulting in a lack of power ("adynamia" Agamben 2005, 95ff; 97). It is in this move, in this moment of "de-activating" (Agamben 2005, 97) and questioning, that an identity is conceived which actually does not claim positive essentials.³⁵ Agamben describes this act of questioning with the Pauline term of *katargein* (***katarge,w**), which he translates as "I make inoperative, I deactivate, I suspend the efficacy" (Agamben 2005, 95).³⁶

Yet *katargein* does not imply destruction which clings to a new form of totalization or subjectivation: it is a subtle de-construction which is non-essentialistic because of its very withdrawing from being a new identity. Its negation of the existent does not lead to a 'better form' but is constituted by a radical self-emptying (***keno,w**)³⁷, a giving away that results in powerlessness (adynamia).

³⁴ "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus".

³⁵ Radical weakness as characteristic is understood hereas (self-)negation, thus it is not a positive essential.

³⁶ It is this consciously accepted (better: received) lack of power, that distinguishes this concept from trivializations, such as 'Why can't we all just be friends?'

³⁷ I admit, that the concept of *kenos* is used here, which stems from another Pauline letter, Phil 2:5ff, is based on a distinction between form and content, which is problematic in the context of poststructuralist philosophy. It may serve as a 'Christian metaphor' for the Agambian talk about *adynamia* and *katargein*, which works with rather tensional than dichotomous abstractions.

Identity As Not

How do these abstract reflections apply to concrete persons in time and space? This is shown by the concept of *As Not* (w`j mh.). For Paul the consequence of the Messianic was not a matter of being somebody else, but of letting one's identity go, of celebrating the de-activation of one's own subjectivity" (1Cor 7:29-32): [...] time contracted itself, the rest is, that [...] those having wives may be as not [...] having, [...] those weeping [...], rejoicing [...], buying [...], possessing [...], using [...], as not" (Agamben 2005, 23). According to Agamben, the subtleness lies in the fact that Paul is not calling to become somebody else, but to *remain* what one is and yet perceiving one's identity as having undergone the process of messianic liberation. The element of remaining is important, as it is the *locus* of celebrating the de-activation (katargein) of one's identity,³⁸ thus being freed from subjectivation. This would actually lead to a new understanding of one's own history as seen from the *kairòs* point of view ("Jetztzeit" Agamben 2005, 143).

The notion of remaining has been misunderstood as intellectually highly sophisticated camouflage of quietism (Vacarme 2004) or, in Weberian terms, "eschatological indifference" (Agamben 2005, 23). Yet for Agamben "the messianic tension does not tend toward an elsewhere, nor does it exhaust itself in indifference between one thing and its opposite (Agamben 2005, 24). It rather "revokes a condition and radically puts it into question" (Agamben 2005, 23). It is a liberating cut of the very line, which represents the subjectivating cutting of identities. "The messianic vocation dislocates and, above all, nullifies the entire subject" (Agamben 2005, 41). Yet at the same time it encourages to remain, making use of the given identity now celebrated as non-identity.

The point here is that the Messianic makes out of a structural impossibility a possibility as it takes the resistance of the remnant seriously and identifies with this unseen potential lurking at the fringes of identity, which never coincides with itself. The remnant-identity appears at the fringes to de-activate the given. But it withdraws positive appropriations. In its radical weakness, it resists totalization, universalization and the kind of "positivism [... and ...] essentialism

³⁸ It might be helpful to draw parallels between this concept of non-identity and the *ego-lessness* suggested by the Indian scholar of religious studies Vengal Chakkarai (Chakkarai, 1993, pp. 78–82). Yet Agamben's notion of *remaining* seems to be a regulative for not falling into what has been criticized as "internalization of oppression" (Orevillo-Montenegro, 2006, p. 25) which leads to an oppressive(!) sacrifice attitude.

[...] in which the position of the [...speaking subject] remains unquestioned" (Spivak 1988, 295f). Talking about it corresponds to hinting at it, such as pointing to a trace (Derrida 2001, 289). To foster this metaphor, messianic remaining, thus, means being a trace, which does not contain anything, but it is not meaningless (dissolved in a whatever), neither. A trace points to something concrete, by the very fact that it lacks it. It is empty.³⁹

(IM)POSSIBILITY OF NON-IDENTITY: TOWARDS AN INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AS NOT

The most common objection to [...] interreligious dialogue is that those who usually attend these meetings are people who are already 'converts to the cause of dialogue' [...] Even worse is the [...] cynical remark that interreligious dialogue is the field where those people meet who are not at home in any given religious tradition [...] Is dialogue just *l'art pour l'art*? (Evers 2008).

We have come to see how interreligious dialogue fails for reasons of representation, in what we called the withdrawal of the all and the resistance of the remnant. We then approached in-between-categories such as *Homo Sacer* and others and used them as a lens for formulating some problems connected to interreligious dialogue, pointing to the political nature of religion, especially in relation to the private/public-dichotomy. What has repeatedly shown up is the call for an approach daring to move on the threshold between exclusion and inclusion and later on the quest for desubjectivation which avoids the totalizing or universalizing essentialisms mentioned before. This concluding part will sketch how this walk on the tightrope could look like, as it asks: *What could it mean to take an astheneia-inspired As-Not-stand when engaging in interreligious encounter?* As already stated, we will be able to do this only in a very experimental and programmatic way.

Ex negativo: (Suspended) Identity-As Not and Relativism

One of the main objections to an engagement in interreligious dialogue with this *as-not*-approach could be the charge of relativism. Yet, we have seen before that an *As-Not*-position in interreligious

³⁹ Jürgen Moltmann's understanding of a radical self-emptying of the God-man (kenosis), which peaks in God's absence at Calvary (Deus absconditus), and culminates in its empty grave (resurrectio), helped me conceptualize this (Moltmann, 1974). See also 2.5, footnote 37.

dialogue does not mean indifference, since it also implies a *remaining* in the position where one is. The question follows: How is it possible to stop holding one's identity and yet remain in it? According to Agamben, Paul exhorts a slave to live 'as not being a slave' and yet to remain in the calling of slave (Agamben 2005, 26f). This means neither resigning to be a slave, nor claiming to be a freeman. At most, it could be paraphrased with being a non-slave.⁴⁰ What is central here is a specific negation of the status, which questions one's own given identity. It means distancing oneself from one's own identity, yet without grasping a counter-identity and asserting the opposite.

To Be or Not to Be: Historization as a Move Towards a Self-emptying, De-activating Remnant-identity

With regard to interreligious dialogue this suspension of identity, the mentioned desubjection, i.e., distancing oneself from one's own identity, could be achieved by a radical historization.⁴¹ Interreligious dialogue As Not means interreligious dialogue opened up for a historization of one's identity. Historization is understood here as a genealogical (diachronous) and archaeological (synchronous) reconstruction, which tries to overcome the chimera of origin and that of teleology (Foucault 1977), such as it is used in postcolonial and cultural studies. An important feature of this understanding is the formal openness of the corpus of historical sources. Such a historization includes a bold and earnest dealing with one's history of exclusions (active and passive), leading to an increased sensitivity for the way the other sees oneself, as the latter is usually the outcome of 'the past'⁴². This move of distancing oneself may lead to a self-exclusion from certain moments of one's own history of identity (i.e. genealogy), thus assuming the non-identity of the remnant. Applying this Cut of Apelles to one's own religious identity, one deliberately becomes a *homo sacer suae religionis*, thus incorporating the outside that is inside.

⁴⁰ Or in the wake of Derrida and Agambian's notion of the Nominal Sentence: Being a non slave.

⁴¹ What follows draws from Michael Bergunder's formal definition of religion and religious movements, such as Esotericism (Bergunder, 2010) and Global Pentecostalism (Bergunder, 2007; Bergunder, 2009a). Operationalizing insights from cultural and postcolonial studies, his work is unique in its attempt to define the object of research of religious studies without essentialistic criteria and keeping the promise of thorough methodological transparency.

⁴² We put the past in inverted comma, since the bringing together of the contingent events that represent what is called the past is a performative act taking place in the present.

Further the genealogical-archeological thrust of the suggested earnest historization (in concreto: its opening up the corpus of sources) would mean being open for new data which will resist unquestioned essentialisms due to its very openness. The self-emptying of one's own identity and yet remaining in it, by genealogically tracing it back and locating it within a given religious collective identity (the latter representing the synchronous operation), results in a radical astheneia: One is not clinging to one's claims, and neither does one negate them, assuming to be somebody else. This kind of historization makes way for a de-activation of identity, which allows to be closer to the 'other' in certain questions and matters than to one's 'own camp'. In exemplum, this application of the Cut of Apelles means: non-Christian(s) dialoguing with non-non-Christian(s).⁴³ At the same time, this kind of historization, which considers the archive as open, invites other *homines sacri suae religionis* of this kind to join the dialogue table, hence showing at least an awareness of the problem of representation and a way of frankly addressing the mechanisms of subjectivation of one's fabric of religion, going beyond the private/public-dichotomy.

(C)losing Remarks

In this essay, we have done no more than pointing out certain difficulties and articulating them in relation to some Agambian categories, walking along three set of problems which we have called *interreligious*, *intrareligious*, and *intrasubjective exclusion*. In the last section we have identified identity as a neuralgic point of these problems and ventured some reflections on non-identity and desubjectivation. While we might have found possibilities of dialogue lurking beneath the surface of some impossibilities of dialogue, there are new and old questions which remain unsolved. One may raise the fundamental question about the (Foucauldian) ubiquity of power underlying these categories as well as Agamben's historical and argumentative soundness in regards to them (Passavant 2007). Moreover, one may ask whether historization will not lead to elitism anyhow, as most of the people who consider themselves somehow

⁴³ Additionally to the *Messianic*, especially the *Pneumatic of Romans* (unfortunately omitted by Agamben, arguably due to his relying on Benjamin) offers prolific avenues of articulation for such an approach from within a *non-non-Christian* framework. A promising starting point could be the *theologia religionum* of Chinese-American Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong (2000) and its exemplification in his latest book on interreligious dialogue entitled *Hospitality and the Other* (Yong 2008). Freed from its legacy to Percian realism this could offer fruitful venues for our discussion.

adherent to a religion do not have access to the corpus of sources (this could turn out to be the new old problem of representation)⁴⁴. Finally one may ask: ‘Who makes and safeguards the rules for such a historization?’—at this point we have come full circle with our reflection on the state of exception—and dismiss the whole attempt to transfer Agamben’s epistemological categories to interreligious dialogue vis-à-vis ‘concrete conflicts and suffering’⁴⁵ also due to religious matters. Therefore, this essay does not claim to have any original solutions, but wishes to be an essay in its most literal sense: an attempt to operationalize different instruments which may allow a fresh naming of the new old problems and which may help us to describe them, guessing that this might inspire us to “*pagtuo, paglaom ug gugma...*”⁴⁶

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⁴⁴ Such as Thomas Biebricher’s ‘backdoor elitism’ mentioned before (Biebricher 2005, 248; 240–242) or in the sense of Gayatri Spivak’s self-critical tone in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (Spivak 1988).

⁴⁵ Such as Filipino theologian Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro’s compelling critique of Wong Wai-Ching postcolonial and post feministic concept of “Woman as Subject-in-Process”-Christology: “How can an unstable subject resist an empire’s complex network that seeks to secure its hegemony over the world and to suck the world’s lifeblood in order to feed its own political and economic machineries?” (Biebricher 2005, 248; 240–242). She keeps on alarming us on the danger of postcolonialism accommodating neocolonialism, when she affirms “that postcolonial theory reads” expressions of people struggling against injustice “as a discourse in cultural and literary criticism [which] ‘seeks to constitute the world in the self-image of intellectuals who view themselves [...] as postcolonial’” – whereas her (liberationist) approach accused of essentializing “describe the[...] concrete historical conditions” of the author’s mentioned expressions. Connecting with Filipino postcolonial critic E. San Juan, Jr. she argues that “the urgent-life-or-death questions are simply ignored by postcolonial theory” (Orevillo-Montenegro 2006, 174–176). What she withholds is a methodological discussion of the questions of representation (Who are the women in need of liberation? Discussing theologians and narratively illustrating them with episodes might call for further empirical validity) and an epistemological discussion of the base of such a dialectic approach of “urgent-life-or-death” postulates or “concrete historical” reality. Though hers is a theological point, the formal trait of her argument (as well as, what she is silent about) applies to our poststructural and postcolonial approach which is inspired by Agamben’s thought.

⁴⁶ “...to believe/faith, hope and love...” (1Cor 13: 13).

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Dynamics of Battered Filipino Women: Validating a Dynamics of Abuse Model

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This study was designed to validate Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña's (2007) Dynamics of Abuse Model. It also aimed to further explore and analyze dynamics of Filipino battered women. A qualitative study of 20 battered women was conducted using in-depth interview. Participants reported 19 categories of abuse, 20 categories of contributing factors to abuse, 16 categories of effects of abuse on women's perception of self, view of the world, sense of well-being, and interpersonal relationships, and 13 categories of coping strategies. Responses were coded based on Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña's model. The study demonstrated that Dynamics of Abuse Model can be useful as a conceptual framework for understanding concerns of battered women. Implications for counseling practice and research are discussed.

KEYWORDS: battered Filipino women, model validation, dynamics of abuse model, forms of abuse, contributing factors, effects of abuse, coping strategies

Domestic violence is a phenomenon occurring in almost all societies. In 2009, the Philippine National Police (PNP) reported 9,485 cases of violence against women, 5,285 of which were committed by a spouse or partner. Based on the PNP data from 1997-2009, abuse by an intimate partner accounts for 45.5% of all violence against women cases nationwide (Philippine Commission on Women, 2010). It was observed that cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) increased since the implementation of RA 9262, otherwise known as "Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004." The vast information dissemination of the law and its strict implementation trend may have caused the rise of reporting IPV cases.

The statistics imply that violence against women is a serious

problem. It represents a hidden hindrance to economic and social development. Likewise, it drains women's energy, undermines their self-confidence and compromises their health, thus, depriving society of their meaningful participation.

There are several perspectives to explain the dynamics of violence against women. Models for violence are found within the family, the mass media, and society at large (Bandura, 1977). Violence against women occurs within a sociocultural context. Sociocultural theories postulate that violence is a cultural attitude reflected in the glorification of violent behavior in the mass media. Society reflects a permissive attitude toward violence in the willingness to accept aggression as a part of daily living (Felix & Paz-Ingente, 2003). This implies that the foundation of many forms of abuse, such as women abuse, child abuse, and elder abuse, underlies the overwhelming acceptance of the use of violence in society (Viano, 1992).

In addition to the sociocultural perspective, gender role research has contributed significant findings. Walker (1979) argues that the childhood sex-role socialization of women is conducive to women battering. Boys are taught to display strength while girls are taught to be passive and yield control to men. This traditional sex-role socialization has the effect of socializing girls to become victims and boys to become perpetrators of violence.

Although sociocultural and gender variables may be recognized as factors in women abuse, some researchers believe that the problem of violence is couched within the family dynamics. There has been mounting support emerging for the linkages between women's victimization by their spouses and earlier childhood experiences, such as being exposed to and/or being the target of violence in the family of origin. Battered women were more likely to come from homes where the father displayed male dominant, controlling qualities, rigid sex role patterns and harsh punishments (McNeal & Amato, 1998). However, few research studies have been done to determine ways in which women incorporate early experiences with violence in their adult lives and how these affect the emergence and continuation of violence in intimate relationships (Heise, 1998).

Merry (2009) acknowledges the perpetrator's responsibility in women abuse and assigns blame to the perpetrator. This perspective recognizes that battered women have little or no responsibility for their victimization and, therefore, being dehumanized. However, this perspective sometimes hides the choices and power that battered women have in their hands. Hence, it is also important to recognize

the reality of women's victimization and the perspective on choice and responsibility as being dynamic and multiple (Bartky, 1990). Responsible action can make radical progressive change which requires that battered women acknowledge their own investments in their choices and responsibilities as well as their accountability to themselves and others.

Other models that offer vital insights into aspects of violence against women, specifically intimate partner violence (IPV), include Boss's (2002) Contextual Model of Family Stress that highlighted three dimensions (the stressor event, the resources available, and the perception or meaning attached to abuse) that are involved in intimate partner abuse. The model also included contextual factors (culture, economy, development, and history) that may affect the three components of the model. Rolling and Brosi (2010) applied the model to one battered woman's experience for assessment purposes, offering insights for possible intervention.

In a study by Eisikovits, Goldbatt, and Winstok (1999), a theoretical model was developed to provide an analysis of abuse based on accounts given by cohabiting partners. Content analysis produced content categories based on accounts related to what happened in the violent event, why the abuse happened, and the meanings attached to the abuse. Relationships among the content categories were analyzed along intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social areas.

In terms of battered women's stay/leave decision-making process, Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980) provided ways of comprehending and predicting factors associated with battered women's decision to stay in or leave an abusive relationship (Choice & Lamke, 1997; Le & Agnew, 2003). The model insinuated that battered women make logical decisions based on the cost-benefit ratio intrinsic in the intimate relationship. In line with this, Rhatigan and Axsom (2006) replicated and extended research using the Investment Model to comprehend battered women's commitment to violent relationships. Results revealed that each of the factors (relationship satisfaction, quality alternatives, and investments) involved in the Investment Model contributed to women's commitment to the relationship.

In a special issue of the *Philippine Journal of Psychology* (2007) devoted to psychological research on abuse in intimate and family relationships, Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007) reported conducting case studies of five battered women using a conceptual framework of the dynamics of abuse. Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña's

study is important because it incorporated variables (forms of abuse, contributing factors, effects of abuse, and the coping mechanisms used) in understanding the dynamics of abuse of battered Filipino women. Although the model seems helpful for understanding battered women’s experiences of abuse, the intrapersonal and interpersonal factors that contributed to abuse, the effects of abuse on women, and the coping strategies used, the study was based on only five cases of battered Filipino women. There was a need to validate the conceptual framework of the dynamics of abuse to enhance future theoretical and empirical work. Hence, the purpose of this study was to validate Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña’s (2007) model of dynamics of abuse as well as further explore and analyze dynamics of battered Filipino women.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is guided by the conceptual framework of dynamics of abuse developed by Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007). Dynamics of abuse refers to the abuse experienced by the women, the factors they perceive to contribute to the abuse, the effects of abuse on them and the coping mechanisms they employ (Figure 1).

Woman battering can take various forms, which may range from physical, emotional, and verbal, to economic and sexual. Section 3 of Republic Act No. 9262 defines violence against women as “any act or a series of acts committed by any person against a woman who

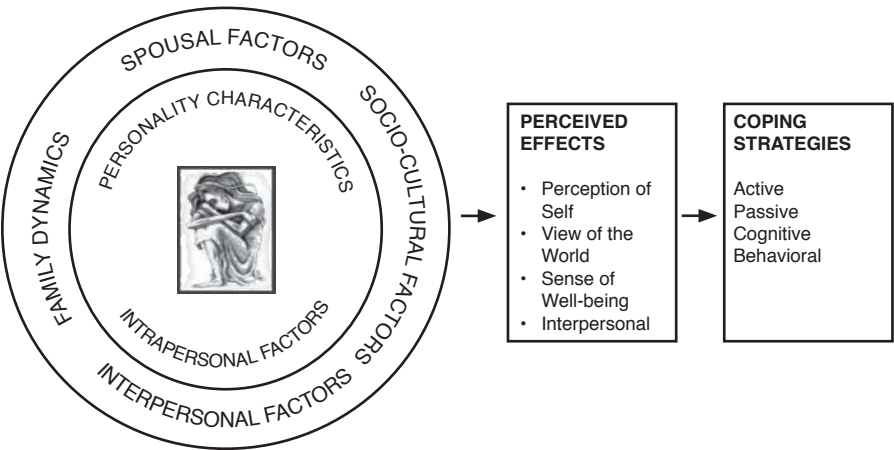


Figure 1. Dynamics of Abuse.

is his wife, former wife, or against a woman with whom the person has or had a sexual or dating relationship, or with whom he has a common child, which result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering, or economic abuse including threats of such acts, battery, assault, coercion, harassment or arbitrary deprivation of liberty.”

Intrapersonal and interpersonal factors are seen as contributing factors to violence against women. Intrapersonal factors (depicted in the inner circle in Figure 1) refer to the personality characteristics of women that made them vulnerable to abuse. Battered women are reported to exhibit characteristics such as learned helplessness, passivity, a feeling of being overwhelmed, low self-esteem, and self blame (Walker, 1979). These distinctive characteristics of battered women are often assumed to be products of abuse. However, it is difficult to determine whether these characteristics are caused by the trauma of abuse or are prevalent before the abuse.

Interpersonal factors include family dynamics, spousal factors, and socio-cultural issues. Family dynamics refers to battered women’s experiences in the family of origin that made them susceptible to abuse. Some investigations have implied that having been exposed to violence increases the possibility of getting involved with an abusive partner, possibly just like their fathers (Simons, Johnson, Beamen & Conge, 1993). Dynamics of intimate partner violence is better understood by exploring factors linked to men who abuse them. Intergenerational transmission theory suggests that abusers come from a violent home and are abused themselves (Gortner, Gollan, & Jacobson, 1997). Some social learning theories explain that experiences with violence and exposure to parental spousal abuse predispose the male partner to follow the role that he learned in childhood (Kalmuss & Seletzer, 1989; Straus & Smith, 1990). Likewise, women’s vulnerability to abuse may be explained by looking into issues situated in a broader socio-cultural context, focusing on the structure of society within which the violence takes place (Coleman & Strauss, 1986).

Abuse may greatly affect the battered woman’s life by influencing the manner in which she lives, such as her interpersonal relationships, how she sees herself, how she views her environment and the challenges she is or is not willing to face.

In response to the effects of abuse, women focus on what can

be done about the troubling event or condition. Women cope with violence in a variety of ways, which can be classified into two dimensions. The first involves the distinction between *active* and *passive* strategies (Holahan & Moos, 1987). Active coping refers to the individual's attempt to change the situation, such as leaving the abusive relationship. Passive strategies, on the other hand, include avoidant efforts such as enduring the abuse. The second dimension distinguishes between *cognitive* and *behavioral* strategies (Holahan & Moos, 1995). Behavioral coping includes observable action done to reduce stress, whereas cognitive coping is an attempt to change one's perception about the abuse.

METHOD

Research Design

The study employed the qualitative approach using in-depth interview to explore the dynamics of Filipino battered women. Story telling was encouraged because it led to the unfolding of personal histories as well as the broader social discourse that shaped women's understanding of their lives.

Participants

The participants in the study were 20 battered women selected using non-random, purposive sampling method. The demographic information (Table 1) shows that the average age of the participants was 32.3 years, with a range from 20 to 57. The average duration of being with the abusive partner was 9.65 years, with a range from 2 to 25 years. Of the 20 participants, 65% (n=13) have left the relationship. For these women, the average duration of having been with their partner was 8.76 years. Those who continued their relationships have stayed with their partners for an average of 11.28 years. Seven of the participants were housewives and eight were working. The five unemployed participants have left their abusive partners and are staying in a substitute home care for women. Based on the women's occupation (present and previous) and educational attainment, it can be inferred that most of the participants belonged to the low socioeconomic status.

Table 1

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Battered Women, N=20.

Variables	Categories	F
Age	55-59	1
	50-54	0
	45-49	2
	40-44	2
	35-39	2
	30-34	3
	25-29	5
	20-24	5
Educational Attainment	Elementary	5
	High School	8
	College	7
Occupation	Housewife	7
	Yaya (Nanny)	2
	Beautician	2
	Vendor	1
	Support staff	1
	Sewer	1
	Sales lady	1
	Unemployed	5
Marital Status	Separated	13
	Living with Partner	7
Years of Marriage	1-5	7
	6-10	4
	11-15	5
	16-20	2
	21-25	2
Number of Children	0-2	8
	3-5	9
	6-8	3

Participants were selected upon the recommendation of professionals working with them, on the basis of the following criteria: [a] the participants have been victims of intimate partner abuse for at least one year; and [b] there was no manifestation of significant impaired mental state at the time of recruitment for the study.

INSTRUMENTS

Personal Information Sheet. This researcher-made personal information sheet included the following information: participant's name, age, educational attainment, occupation, marital status, years of marriage or stay with abusive partner, and number of children.

Interview Guide Questions. A semi-structured Interview Guide, developed for this study, consisted of 15 questions based on a broad reading of the literature with a focus on the main theme relating to the dynamics of women battering. The questions were divided into four sections, the first section dealing with forms of abuse experienced by the participants. The second set of questions focused on the causative factors of women battering, which evaluated family dynamics, intrapersonal factors, spousal, and socio-cultural factors, as perceived by the women. The third set of questions dealt with the effects of abuse on battered women's perception of the self, view of the world, sense of well-being and interpersonal relationship. The final set of questions focused on the coping strategies the battered women employed.

PROCEDURE

Twenty participants were identified/recruited from three centers that gave assistance to women on various issues. The first site (n=11, 55%), was a non-government organization that provided crisis intervention services to women victims/survivors of violence. The second site (n=5, 25%) was a complete facility established as a substitute home care for women. The third site was a baranggay community-based center in Manila (n=4, 20%), that handled community problems such as domestic violence.

An appropriate introduction of the primary researcher and the purpose of the study started off the interview. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the interview data. Each participant was interviewed for approximately 45 to 90 minutes at a venue with sufficient privacy. The participants were also informed of their right to decline from answering questions they felt uncomfortable with and to terminate the interview whenever they wanted. With the participants' permission, a microcassette recorder was used to

document participants' accounts and verbalized thoughts of the battering experience.

Taped interviews were transcribed verbatim. Two raters (professionals with adequate knowledge in clinical and counseling psychology and who have worked with battered women and have done research in this area) were given the task of independently analyzing the protocols.

The procedures for the content analysis of the data consisted of the following: a) The team (primary researcher and raters) read all transcripts several times for the purpose of immersing themselves in the participants' world as articulated in their narratives, b) the team differentiated parts of the description, identifying meaning units to organize data for later analysis; and c) lengthy and complex materials were organized around themes found in the protocols. When disagreements occurred, the team discussed their ideas until a consensus was reached on the categories.

RESULTS

Forms of Abuse

The nature of the intimate partner abuse experienced by the women in the study was not uniform. Instead, they struggled with various combinations of physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and economical abuse (Table 2). The severity of each form of abuse also varied.

Physical abuse. Without exception, the battered women in the study suffered physical abuse at the hands of their partners. Likewise, all of them experienced abuse more than once; most of them not being able to tell the number of times they had been physically abused by their partners. Their experience of physical abuse ranged from simple assault to assault and battering with a dangerous weapon. The following statements of participants are illustrative of this finding:

He would hurt me, slap, punch me. I would get all beaten up. He could easily drag my body all around because I am thin.

Everytime he would come home with eyes ablaze, I do not know what would happen to me. There would be times he would be holding a knife and I would be cut in many places. You see these are my scars on my arms from the cuts I would get every time he would have knife in hand. I shield my face for fear of being hit; that is why the cuts are all on my arms.

Table 2

Forms of Abuse Experienced by the Women, N=20.

Domain	Categories	F
Physical	<i>Simple Assault and Battering</i>	
	Punched	10
	Slapped	8
	Pulled hair, dragged by hair	6
	Pushed, thrown, dragged	5
	Choked	4
	<i>Assault and Battering with a Dangerous Weapon</i>	
	Kicked, butted repeatedly with head	14
	Threatened with a knife/gun	6
	Attacked with hard objects	4
	Stabbed with knife	1
Psychological	Verbal Abuse	20
	Isolation	5
	Husband's womanizing	4
	Intimidation	2
	Child exploited	1
Economic	No/Inadequate financial support	8
	Mishandling of family income	4
Sexual	Marital rape/forced sex	5
	Unwanted sexual practice	2
	Exploitation through prostitution	1

Psychological abuse. All of the participants experienced psychological abuse (Table 2), which included uttering put downs and degrading remarks. Some women said that they felt they were held by their husbands/partners against their will. One woman's agony was revealed in the following words:

I feel so degraded with what he does to me but I cannot complain because he will beat me up. He often says a lot of things to my face, but what I really could not take was when he told me I was worthless, that I was just trash. So I felt of no use to him and that I was dispensable. I thought just because I have no money of my own he treats me like that.

The study also revealed that the husband/partner's womanizing was another category of psychological abuse experienced by four of

the women in the study. As one of the women put it:

He always insults me for every little misunderstanding. His insults keep wracking my brain. But the most painful thing he did to me was his philandering. I can accept physical violence but not his other women. That is truly painful.

Apparent in two participants' experience of psychological abuse was intimidation that included looks, gestures or actions meant to remind them of their partners' capacity for physical violence such as punching walls, destroying things or displaying weapons. Two women shared painful experiences that involved their children who were molested/exploited by their partners. One woman shared her painful experiences when her daughter was exploited by her partner:

My daughter confided to me that while she was peeing in the bathroom a man came and touched her private part, and fingered her. My daughter was a bit dazed. I feared for her. I stomached being subjected to all the disgusting things he does, but I would not allow him to do the same to my daughter.

Economic abuse. Money was found to be another tool by which men further controlled their partners, ensuring their financial dependence on them. This takes the form of abuse classified as economic. This was accounted by eight of the participants in the study.

Oftentimes, he would come home cursing, demanding what I spend for with the money he brings home. Where else would I spend it? He only gives me a small amount. His pay is so little, and we need the money to buy milk, then our food. How could he expect that there would still be money left? In the most recent incident, he kicked me so hard I flew against the window frame; I had a blackeye.

Sexual abuse. Eight women revealed that they were sexually abused by their intimate partners. Five of them said that they had been made to have sex with their partners against their will. Two women were forced to perform unwanted sexual practices or degrading acts before or during intercourse and one participant was sold to her partner's friends in exchange for shabu. Some of them made these confessions:

Whenever my husband is high on shabu, he would rape me but I would fight him off. He would take off my dress by force, sometimes he would rip off my clothes despite my pleas. We would end up getting physical with each other. He also wanted different (sexual) positions. I really do not want to do it but I am too weak to fight.

One time, my husband asked me to use something. We used a shiny foil with a flame under it. I found out it was shabu. I went limp, then I felt there were men touching me, stroking different parts of my body. I could not do anything because there were many of them.

The next morning, I was so mad at my husband. I found out he sold me in exchange of shabu. That became my life, whenever my husband needed shabu, he would make others use me.

Contributing Factors

When the women were asked about the contributing factors to abuse, they gave various explanations which were classified as intrapersonal and interpersonal factors (Table 3).

Intrapersonal factors. Personality characteristics of the women were given by the women themselves as possible explanations for the abuse (Table 3). Most of the women perceived themselves to have tendencies toward exhibiting long-suffering, martyr-like traits like being self-sacrificing, submissive, and passive. As one of them said:

When I was young, I had an attitude of just keeping quiet even if I am being mistreated. I would just cry it out; I do not fight back. When I was scolded, I would keep quiet. I am the type of person who does not complain. I am a martyr.

The women also reported exhibiting self-esteem deficit and difficult temperament that may have triggered the abuse. Some participants blamed themselves for the abuse they experienced. To quote the participants' insightful words:

I was like a dog gone astray. I had no house to call my own. The street was my home. I was brave, but that was just a front. I had to fight back but I was weak. My life had no direction. Wherever my feet took me that's where I went. There was nowhere to go. It seemed I was worth nothing.

I was searching for love but I was gullible. If there was someone courting me, pretending to love, I could not see right through him. That was how things were. I was hungry for love.

Interpersonal factors. Family dynamics, spousal factors, and socio-cultural issues were also perceived as contributing factors to violence against women. Parental neglect, history of abuse, parental violence, and parental indulgence were the experiences of the women in their family of origin that they thought might explain their vulnerability to abuse. The following utterance of the participants exemplifies these findings:

My mother gave me away to her rich relative. I did not want to but my mother told me I had no choice because by going there, I would have food to eat and I would not get sick. It upset me a lot but I could not do anything. I felt bad because my mother knew they had turn me into a helper in the house, but she still left me. That time, I loved my mother so much, but I felt I

Table 3.

Contributing Factors to Abuse on Women.

Domains	Categories	F
Intrapersonal Factors	<i>Personality Characteristics</i>	
	Self-Sacrificing, Submissive, Passive	15
	Low Self-Esteem	8
	Self blame	5
	Difficult Temperament	5
	Gullible	2
Interpersonal Factors	<i>Family Dynamics</i>	
	Parental Neglect	17
	History of Abuse in the Family	13
	Parental Discord/Violence	14
	Parental Indulgence	1
	<i>Spousal Factors</i>	
	Personality Problem (Possessive, Lack of Impulse control, communication deficiency)	18
	Parental Neglect	13
	Use of Drugs	13
	Parental Discord/Violence	12
	History of Physical Abuse	8
	History of Delinquency	7
	Parental Indulgence	3
	<i>Socio-cultural Factors</i>	
	Traditional Sex-Role Expectation	18
	Indifferent Law Enforcer	10
	Social Stigma	5
	Religious Influence	4

was unimportant to her.

When I was a child, it seemed like I had no parents. Nobody looked after me. I would go to school with a bag with holes, the edge of my skirt would be unhemmed. Often, I would come home and there would be no food. I experienced eating food which my playmates have dropped on the ground. My mother left us all alone. She lived like a single woman ever since she and my father separated.

The women also shared insights on what and how their partners contributed to abuse. Personality problems, parental neglect, use of drugs, violent upbringing, parental discord, history of delinquency,

Table 4.

Perceived Effects of Abuse on Women.

Themes	Categories	F
Perception of Self	Low self-esteem	18
	Loss of identity	6
	Self pity	4
	Sex object	4
View of the World	Pessimism	18
	Fear of the future, uncertainty	11
	Optimism	2
Sense of Well-being	Depression	17
	Suicidal thoughts/attempts	8
	Anxiety	5
	Feeling of going crazy	4
	Somatic symptoms	4
Interpersonal	Loss of trust	10
	Social withdrawal/isolation due to shame	9
	Displaced anger to children	4
	Need social interaction	1

and parental indulgence were the spousal factors perceived by them as providing an explanation for women abuse. One woman said:

At times, angry or not, my husband throws anything he lays his hands on. I have asked him to control himself because he has smashed almost all of our plates. Even our walls are full of holes because if he fails to hit me, he hits the wall.

In terms of the socio-cultural factors, almost all of the participants believed that women abuse is a product of traditional sex-role expectations. Likewise, the social stigma of coming from a broken family and religious influence seemed important in explaining women battering.

Perceived Effects

Self-perceived effects of abuse (Table 4) revolved around the women’s perception of self, their view of the world, sense of wellbeing, and

interpersonal relationships.

Perception of self. Most of the women expressed the view that their self-esteem deteriorated as a result of the abuse. Related to this was a sense of weakened identity. Some of the participants expressed self-pity and a feeling of being treated like a sex object. The following retrospectives testify to the depth to which women felt their self-esteem had been shattered within the abusive relationship:

I sort of think so lowly of myself, like I am a maid. I am a blind follower. I have really lost trust in myself. I am like a robot.

He never loved me. He treats me like a dirty rag. I look at myself as trash. I do house work, I serve my husband, I cook for him, I feed him. After meals, he leaves the table, takes a bath, gets dressed, leaves and comes back at midnight. After slaving for him, this is what I get.

View of the world. Most of the women in the study spoke of pessimism in terms of loss of hope that they could change the damaging circumstances in their lives. Some of the participants expressed uncertainty about the future not only for themselves but more so for their children. However, two women were still positive about their outlook in life. The following responses are two different effects of abuse on women's view of the world:

I cannot understand the fear that grips me every waking moment. I am jobless. I am afraid for me and my children now and more so in the future. I am not even sure if my children still have a future to look forward to.

I am not losing hope. I still have a clear view of life. Even if that happened to me, I still have beautiful plans for my children. I don't want to lose hope or to become disheartened because I would not be able to think straight.

Sense of wellbeing. The feeling of depression was very evident in most of the women interviewed. Some of them said that they felt their circumstances were so extreme that the depression they suffered rendered them suicidal. Likewise, high anxiety level, feeling of going crazy, and impairment of health, as seen in weight change and other stress symptoms, were experienced by some participants. The effects of abuse on the women's well being are mirrored in the following statements:

I feel so insignificant. Imagine, I have no job, nothing to lean on. The most painful part is that my children were taken away from me. I feel so weak. It seems there is no hope for me. I was suicidal then.

Table 5.

Coping Strategies Of Battered Women.

Themes	Categories	F
Passive	Tolerate/endure abuse	20
	Cry	18
	Pray	16
	Denial/ignore abuse	4
	Keep busy with work	4
Passive-Cognitive	Hopeful that partner will change	4
Active-Behavioral	Seek help	18
	Leave	13
	Talk with partner	6
	Try to be a better wife	5
	Fight back	5
	Have extra-marital affair	4
	Press charges	4

I hear some things, I close my eyes but I cannot sleep. I am haunted by my husband’s voice. I am not sure if I am asleep but I hear his voice, his cursing. The painful episodes in my life seem to come back to me, particularly his beatings. I thought I was going crazy.

Interpersonal relationships. Another psychological effect of abuse was the profound sense of betrayal of trust apparent in half of the women in the study. The experience of abuse gave rise to shame, leading some women to withdraw from social interaction. There were also some participants who displaced their anger to their children. These findings are quite evident in the following responses:

I lost my trust in others. My mother was supposed to be the first to take care of me but she left me. Then my husband who is supposed to fight for me is the one who hurts me. Who, then, could I trust?

I became irritable. My children bore the brunt of my anger. I felt sorry after yelling at them and hitting them, but I could not control myself. Sometimes, I hit them for no reason at all.

Coping Strategies of Battered Women

Coping strategies used by the participants (Table 5) were classified

into four, namely, passive, passive-cognitive, active, and active-behavioral.

All of the women tended to be passive, simply tolerating or enduring the abuse. Most of them found crying and praying as helpful means to lessen the pain they were experiencing. A few women tried to deny or ignore the abuse and kept themselves busy at work.

Another coping strategy used by some women was considered as passive-cognitive because there was no active attempt to change their situation; they simply tried to change the way they thought of their situation by being hopeful that their partners will change.

The women were not entirely passive victims of abuse, however, because almost all of them also made attempts to change their situation. They employed active behavioral coping strategies. Almost all of the women tried to seek alternative means of managing the situation such as seeking help from relatives, baranggay officials, the pastor, or the police. One of the women said:

I may be ashamed. I always run to my family. I go home because I am annoyed with the abuse being committed by my husband. Sometimes I stayed there for a week or until I have rested from all the cursing and punches of my husband.

The women who believed that their situation was getting worse opted to leave their abusive partners. A few women tried to talk with their partners when the situation was peaceful and calm. Some women tried to fight back, whereas others tried to get even by having extra marital affair, or pressed charges against their abusive partners. However, some women chose to become better wives. The following responses are indicative of these findings:

Even if he hurts me, I try to be a good wife. I cook for him, I do the laundry, I am almost his slave. I do that so that he would feel that I can revenge but I did not. I want to make him feel that I am a good wife for him to feel guilty.

My husband insulted me so much. He said that I am ugly and that nobody will ever like me. I believed him until I had a textmate. We met. We had a date several times. We went to see a movie, and he put his arms around my shoulders. He made me feel that he likes me. I was able to prove that I am not ugly.

DISCUSSION

The central aim of this study was to examine the comprehensiveness of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña's (2007) Dynamics of Abuse Model

by exploring and analyzing battered women's experiences of abuse, contributing factors to abuse, effects of abuse, and coping strategies.

Forms of Abuse

Physical abuse was the most obvious and the most visible form of abuse suffered by all the women in this study at the hands of their abusive partners. Most of the incidents of physical abuse, particularly the most lethal, happened when the abusive partners were under the influence of drugs. This finding was also revealed in the study of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007). However, other categories of physical abuse were reported by the participants in the present study. Some participants experienced being dragged by their hair and choked to death. One participant almost died because she was stabbed by her partner with a kitchen knife.

Any kind of aggression is accompanied by psychological abuse, the most common of which is verbal in nature. Compared to those in the earlier study of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007), participants in this study divulged more categories of psychological abuse.

Their abusive partners' intimidating looks, gestures, and actions (such as smashing or throwing things, and displaying guns or knives) reminded the women of their partners' potential for physical abuse. Abusers also used isolation so that women would feel alone in their struggle. Womanizing was likewise perceived as a form of psychological abuse. The emotional suffering experienced by a participant when she learned that her daughter was exploited by her partner in exchange for shabu was still another form of psychological abuse. All the women said that psychological abuse was just as hurtful and as weakening as physical abuse. Psychological abuse may even be more incapacitating and harmful for the woman's day-to-day functioning (Coker, Smith, Mckeown, & King, 2000).

Economic abuse was experienced by most housewives who, having no paying jobs, were financially dependent on their partners. Money was found to be another tool by which men could further control the women (Estrellado & Salazar-Clemeña, 2007).

The usual case of sexual abuse experienced by the women was that of non-consensual sex. It is significant to note, however, that only one used the term "marital rape" in reference to this, whereas others were reluctant to share their experiences in this regard. This is consistent with the findings obtained by Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007). Traditionally, Filipino women accept that part of

their role in marriage is to satisfy the sexual needs of their intimate partners. This may explain why it is difficult for them to understand the concept of rape in marriage or to consider this behavior as a crime (Arugaan sa Kalakasan, 1994).

Two more categories of sexual abuse were reported in the present investigation that were not cited in the earlier study (Estrellado & Salazar-Clemeña, 2007). Two women were forced to perform unwanted sexual practices or degrading acts before or during sexual intercourse and one participant was sold to her partner's friends and forced to have sex with them in exchange for shabu.

Contributing Factors

Abuse in intimate relationships is a problem with numerous causes determined by many variables, most of them attributed by the women to their abusive partners. The battered women believed that the personality problems of their abusive partners could have contributed to the abuse. This finding is prominent in the present study, however, this was not revealed in the case studies of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007). The small number of participants may have posed limitations for the previous study.

Most of the women's perception of their partner's use of drugs as contributing to abuse is consistent with findings of studies showing substance use as a condition that co-exists with violence against women (Estrellado & Salazar-Clemeña, 2007; van Wormer, 2007; Leonard & Blane, 1992). However, alcohol intoxication or drug use could in fact be an excuse for abusive behavior rather than the precipitating factor that triggers violent behavior (van Wormer, 2007; Leonard & Blane, 1992).

Traditional sex role expectations and indifferent law enforcers as socio-cultural factors contributing to women abuse provided support for Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña's (2007) study. Traditional sex role expectations involve subordination of women and unequal gender relations, that could be partly explained by the structuring of the family system, as reflected in the structuring of society (Felix & Paz-Ingente, 2003). In the Philippines, women are brought up to be passive and submissive (Arugaan sa Kalakasan, 1994). While men are taught to be tough, cool, and aggressive, women are generally socialized to nurture men and alleviate their emotional burden, to become a *tagasalo* (catcher or rescuer) (Rodrigo, 1990; Carandang, 1987).

Most of the women tried to seek help but were deprived of assistance because domestic violence is generally viewed as a "private matter." Acts of violence in the home were therefore largely ignored by relatives, law enforcers, and even church leaders who are expected to help. This indifference of relatives and authorities regarding abuse on women could further perpetuate the phenomenon of women battering.

The present study revealed other categories such as social stigma and religious influence as other socio-cultural factors contributing to women abuse.

Dynamics of the family of origin of both the battered women and their intimate partners also contribute to the abuse of women. This finding corroborates those of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007). Most of the women and their partners came from troubled and dysfunctional families. They were abused, neglected, abandoned, had witnessed or experienced abuse in their family of origin. As victims of childhood abuse, the women might have been accustomed to being treated with indifference or cruelty; hence, they may have learned to believe that such treatment was normal and inevitable. Results of Cascardi, O'Leary and Lawrence's (1995) study suggest that women who were raised in an abusive home environment would have a higher probability of marital relationships marked by overall distress and conflict. Marital relationships of most of the participants' parents were described to be discordant. They may have thus provided these women with an unhealthy pattern of marriage to follow in their own intimate relationships.

The participants expressed awareness that their partners began to learn abuse/violence at an early age, as they grew up witnessing their fathers abuse their mothers, or being also physically or psychologically abused as children. In their families, it seemed that male dominance was never questioned. It was difficult for them to unlearn male dominance and violence as a way of relating to others. Empirical evidence over the past decade on the relationship between marital violence and children's behavioral problems clearly indicates that children growing up in families marked with violence are at high risk for behavioral problems (Kalmuss & Seletzer, 1989). The key determinant of these problems was ineffective child rearing in the family of origin. This happened when the family atmosphere lacked discipline, supervision, and affection. Instead of disciplining them for misbehavior or helping them improve with love and care, their parents may have disciplined them simply out of irritation. Without

proper discipline, children grow up with poor impulse control and insufficient boundaries.

The present study identified parental indulgence and history of delinquency as other categories of family dynamics and spousal factor not found in the 2007 study of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña.

Finally, the present study supported the study of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007) that the personality characteristics of the women themselves (e.g., being self-sacrificing, tolerant, submissive, and having low self-esteem) help explain abuse. *Pagtitiis* (to tolerate/endure) and *pagtitimpi* (to suppress) are highly valued Filipino traditions used as tools to make oneself loved—a strong Filipino need (Lapuz, 1978). Likewise, a large part of a Filipina's self-worth becomes dependent on her ability to take responsibility for others or to be a *tagasalo* (catcher or rescuer; Carandang, 1987). Hence she enjoys this role indefinitely or until such time as she gets physically drained or burnt out (Carandang, 1987). Being enduring, yielding, and responsible are given importance in the concept of femininity in the Filipino culture.

Low self-esteem was another characteristic that could have made the women vulnerable to abuse. They might have felt they did not deserve to be treated well. Likewise, their lack of self-worth may have made them attracted to men who gave them the impression of being strong and macho.

In addition to self-sacrificing traits and low self-esteem, the present study identified two personality characteristics perceived to contribute to abuse—difficult temperament and being gullible.

Some participants' poor impulse control was yet another factor that could have triggered the abuse. With both partners having difficult temperaments, a simple discussion of issues led to heated arguments and most of the time, to violence.

Gullibility, as mentioned by two participants, could explain why they failed to make the right choice for a partner. Having been abused or abandoned earlier, they easily fell in love with any man who came into their lives. They could not wait to test the sincerity of the man's intention. They said they knew there was something wrong with their ability to choose a partner who would treat them with respect; however, the longing for somebody to love them could have been intense.

Effects of Abuse

Low self-esteem was central in the discussion of the effects of abuse on

women. Almost all of the participants expressed the belief that their self-esteem crumbled as a result of the continued abuse experienced at the hands of their partners. Abuse eats away battered women's sense of self-worth, trust in their perceptions, and self-concept (La Violette & Barnett, 2000).

Hopelessness, feeling of uncertainty and fear of the future characterized the participants' view of the world. Most women in the study felt hopeless that they could still change the circumstances in their lives.

Depression was one of the foremost emotional responses of the participants. The daily impact of living in a context of fear, brought about by the abuse, is directly related to depression (Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992). However, depending on the degree to which the women felt that their circumstances were unbearable and hopeless, the severity of their depression varied. For those who felt that their circumstances were so intense, the depression precipitated thoughts or acts of suicide. For these women, depression rendered them unable to reflect and find ways of changing the situation. This made their abusers gain even more control over them. There were also some participants who became very anxious and reported somatic complaints. These findings are in line with reports that the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder in abused women is associated with high levels of anxiety and depression (Mertin & Mohr, 2000), low self-esteem, and a general failure to adjust in day-to-day functioning (Campbell, 2002).

The abuse had further repercussions on the interpersonal relationships of the participants. One significant effect was the profound sense of betrayal of trust. They felt that their ability to trust or to form new relationships and friendships had been damaged. The results of the study likewise revealed that the abuse also affected women's parenting behavior. The women disclosed that they became irritable and displaced their anger on their children. As stated by Walker (2000), battered women are eight times more likely to be violent toward their children when they are actively in an abusive relationship compared to when they have decided to end that relationship.

These findings are consistent with the study of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007) showing that low self-esteem, depression, feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness, suicidal ideation/ attempts, anxiety, loss of trust, and displacement of anger to children are the effects of abuse on women.

The present study reveals other categories of effects of abuse on battered women: loss of identity, self pity, belief that they were sex objects, optimism, feelings of being crazy, social withdrawal/isolation due to shame, and need for social interaction.

The participants further cited a weakened sense of identity as another effect of abuse. As they became disturbed by the constant beatings, humiliation and put downs, they felt that they no longer were able to identify who they are. Because they were unable to draw upon their personal resources of identity, they lost more power in the relationship. Given this scenario, some women expressed self pity and felt they were going crazy.

For the women who experienced sexual abuse, they felt they were not human beings but simply sex objects. Instead of being loved and taken care of, they felt used and exploited.

The experience of abuse also gave rise to shame. Some women chose to distance themselves from others because they learned to feel shame. This sense of shame was intensified by their sense of inadequacy. Moreover, their loss of self-worth may have stirred on the realization that abuse is a sign of their failure to achieve intimate and familial ideals and dreams (Mills, 1998).

In spite of the horrifying experiences of abuse, however, two women were still optimistic about life. Rather than giving rise to despair, they preferred to have the sense of hope that there is a better life after the abuse. Hope springs from the fact that they have decided to end their abusive relationship. This time, they need social interaction and to be in control of their lives.

Coping Strategies

Abusive relationships created circumstances under which women utilized coping strategies to preserve their psychological functioning and physical wellbeing so as to manage the demands of taxing situations.

Initially, all women in the study used passive strategies in coping with the abuse. They tried to endure the abuse as much as they could. Most of them cried to unburden themselves while others prayed hard for divine intervention. However, for a few, there was denial. They could not face the reality that their partners would want to hurt them. As explained by Carlson (1997), denial as a defense mechanism can help maintain internal stability and coherence to prevent a collapse of one's worldview and cognitive as well as emotional functioning.

The women also utilized some active, behavioral, and cognitive coping strategies. A few consoled themselves with the hope that their husbands would still change and strived to become better wives. Those who decided to remain with their abusive partners nurtured the hope that the relationship in which they have invested so much would not be a complete failure. They may also have considered the length of their relationship and economic factors. Some women have lived with their partners for more than 10 years. As Resbult and Martz (1995) found, a longer relationship was predictive of a higher level of commitment. Likewise, Hilton (1992) observed that battered women clearly face great economic impediments when attempting to leave their abusive partner. In many instances, the decision is dependent on the women's assessment of what is best for their children.

However, when the change they were hoping for did not happen, most of the women left their abusive partners. There were factors that forced these women to end the relationship: the realization that their partners were unwilling to change, the recognition of the long-term emotional damage they were suffering, and the awareness that the abuse had begun to take a toll on their children. Leaving was the only way to end the abuse and the only option that could guarantee that they could maintain control over their lives (Rusbult & Martz, 1995).

In addition to the coping strategies of being passive and tolerant of the abuse, talking to abusive partners, hoping for change, seeking help and leaving abusive partners, which had been revealed earlier (Estrellado & Salazar-Clemeña, 2007), other ways of coping reported by participants in the present study included trying to fight back, attempting to get even by having extra marital affair, or pressing charges against their abusive partners. Others kept themselves busy with their work while a few chose to become better wives.

Model Validation

The results of this study validate and further expand the Dynamics of Abuse Model of Estrellado and Salazar-Clemeña (2007). The dynamics of battered women could be explained through the factors included in the model—forms of abuse, contributing factors (intrapersonal and interpersonal), effects of abuse, and coping strategies. This study revealed, however, other specific items under some of these factors (e.g., stabbed with knife and exploitation through prostitution as forms of abuse, feeling of going crazy and social withdrawal due to shame as effects of abuse) that could help provide a more comprehensive

explanation of the phenomenon of women battering.

Implications for Counseling Practice

Counselors can benefit from using the Dynamics of Abuse Model (Estrellado & Salazar-Clemeña, 2007), with additional inputs from this study in helping women victims of abuse. When counseling victims of spouse violence, counselors can help them to a) understand that the abuse, whatever form it takes, is associated with numerous psychological problems, b) achieve more realistic and accurate perception about the abuse experience and its effect on them and their children, and c) strengthen coping strategies that women deem appropriate based on the cost and benefits of the various coping strategies. Counselors need to be careful about pushing women victims of abuse toward more active and assertive coping strategies, however. Such plan may be insensitive to how the women appraise the problem and its effect on their psychological well-being.

Another salient finding of the study indicates that abuse can influence maternal parenting behavior. Some of the women admitted they tended to displace their anger to their children, supporting the notion that battering is one experience that has a negative impact on the women's ability to parent their children adequately. This may be an important contribution to the literature of domestic violence because it adds a new perspective in understanding the dynamics of these families. Considering that the experience of battering made it difficult for these women to use appropriate child-rearing practices, the children may be at risk for developing personality problem behavior. This finding suggests the importance of intervention programs for women victims of abuse to help them develop appropriate parenting skills.

Low self-esteem was found to be both a contributing factor as well as an effect of abuse. Counselors' intervention strategies (preventive and remedial) can therefore focus on improving the self-esteem of women vulnerable to abuse as well as those who have been victimized.

Results from this study also highlighted sources of strength for the women that may be significant for counselors and other helping professionals (especially those working with battered women) to consider. One obvious resource for them was their faith and the support of their church. Given these findings, clinicians developing prevention or intervention strategies around issues of intimate partner abuse should also consider the role of religion and spirituality in

understanding and responding to abuse. Likewise, practitioners may work closely with church leaders in preparing them to adequately address women abuse.

The study is limited by its small size, demographic variables of the participants, and interview format and questions asked. Future validation of the conceptual framework can employ a larger sample with different demographic background.

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Therapeutic Adventure Programming with Mixed Population in Cebu, Philippines

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This paper analyzed the experiences of 302 participants in a brief therapeutic adventure program sponsored by the social welfare institution of the Philippines. Participants were children victims of abuse, women in difficult circumstances, persons with disability, youth in conflict with the law, agency workers and volunteers. The program included risk exercises with intermittent debriefing. In-depth processing using Gestalt Therapy commonly asked questions; focused group discussion, and post-activity interview concluded the activity. Results showed the clients' perceived effectiveness through learning outcomes on personal, relational, and organizational components; technical, ethical, and cultural issues salient to experiential activities specific to the types of clientele.

KEYWORDS: psychology, psychotherapy, counseling, experiential education, adventure programming, leisure and recreation, rehabilitation, Philippine psychology

INTRODUCTION

Adventure programming has been widely used in the field of industry, education, and psychology. In the Philippines, the early 90s saw the birth of Adventure Programming as organizations particularly big corporations begun to apply the modality to their leadership, teambuilding, and management trainings. In the clinical and rehabilitation settings, there were no known therapeutic adventure programs until the middle part of the new millennium when the modality was introduced and applied to special education, drug rehabilitation; and to other institutionalized populations.

I have conducted a lot of adventure programs with a range of clientele from company executives to substance dependents. These

events paved the way to this program that focuses on the effect of applying therapeutic adventure programming to heterogeneous population and aims to add to the existing literature that focus only on homogeneous clientele. My research shows that Therapeutic Adventure Programming (TAP) is not only applicable and effective with heterogeneous populations; it also indicates that TAP, when applied with heterogeneous groups, effect phenomena not readily observable in homogenous populations and with other types of programming.

Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group or TAPG (2008) defines therapeutic adventure program or Adventure Therapy as an adventure-based practice that uses the philosophy of experiential education therapeutically within the fields of mental health, corrections, education, and other human service fields.

Researches on the efficacy of Therapeutic Adventure Programming (TAP) or Adventure Therapy (AT) are vast particularly to homogenous population. Staunton (2003) used Therapeutic Adventure Programming to diagnose clients. Others have used TAP with adolescents (Combs, 2010; Fischer & Attah, 2001; Guthrie, 2005; Long, 2001; Larson, 2007; Hill, 2007; Knott, 2004), on individuals with disabilities (Herbert, 1998; Hernani, Gacasan, & Sentina, 2008), with gay/bisexual men living with HIV-AIDS (Bidell, 2010); adolescents with cancer (Epstein, Stevens, Kagan, Yamada, Beamer, Bilodeau & Baruchel, 2004); cancer patients (Burke, 2002), women in midlife transition (Kluge, 2007), woman survivors of trauma (Ross, 2003), and multi-family group (Swank & Daire, 2010).

Program objectives and orientations distinguish one AP program from another. Adventure programming may be recreational, developmental, therapeutic and educational or a combination of these. Interestingly, TAPG (2008) definition clarifies the misconception that adventure therapy or therapeutic adventure distinguishes itself from other types of outdoor programs which are devoid of educative and therapeutic intentions. In line with this notion, theory and application of adventure or outdoor experiences emphasize that adventure activity alone does not guarantee deep-level therapeutic growth and change; instead, it is the processing of the actual experience with the client that promotes the therapeutic process (Davis-Berman, 1995).

The inclination of this program is therapeutic because of the inherent design of the grouping, challenges and initiatives; and philosophy which is an important program element (Marsh, 1999).

Applicable humanistic principles and tested experiential framework laid the foundation of the program which is noticeable in the adherence of taking initiative, making decisions, and accountability for the results (AEE in Brennan, 2004). Empathy, authenticity, dialogue, and process are also embedded in each stage of the program. Hence, the modality is grounded on the different theories espoused by humanistic-experiential modalities (Neil, 2008). Along this thought, Gestalt therapy (Perls, 1969; Stevens, 1971) is employed to enhance the phenomenological experience of the clients in the program.

One of the concerns of adventure programming is the appropriateness of the challenges or initiatives (Leberman & Martin, 2002). This 10-hour program is acceptable since researches pointed out that existing research reported no difference on the outcome of any program; short-term, intensive programming or longer-term, intermittent programming and suggests the significant relationship between overall length of time and overall size of outcome (Neill, 2006). In fact, Hahn (1958, cited in Neill, 2008), the founder of Outward Bound programs, was known to conduct short, intensive program and intermittent program over several years and justified the following Adventure Programming (AP) advantages: [1] AP can be packaged and flexibly delivered in a variety of settings; [2] AP removes participants from the constraints of home, school, or work settings, thereby freeing up the participant to try out new roles and behaviors; [3] a more intense experience can be created and sustained; in so doing, more dramatic change can be leveraged; [4] AP allows deeper encounter with others and the environment; and [5] AP allows a greater variety of unique program locations to be accessed. In the Philippine setting, the duration of typical in house activities vary from half day (4 hours) to two days format (16 hours). Observation and feedback from other adventure providers shows average time allotment for adventure activity is eight hours. For outdoor adventure programs like mountaineering, trekking, kayaking and camping, the activity could take three days or even one week.

Therapeutic adventure programming is a new modality in the Philippines; its papers and articles are quite scant and limited. My study does not only aim to introduce AP but also to answer the question of therapeutic adventure programming applicability and effectiveness to different institutionalized population particularly to women and children victims of abuse, persons with disability, and youthful offenders.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used the qualitative research method through a narrative-analytical presentation of participant's experiences. I utilized questionnaire, interview, observation, focus group discussion (FGD) and triangulation of the responses solicited from the center residents, who were the primary participants; center personnel and volunteer facilitators were the participant observers.

This study was conducted in the outdoors of a regional center. Meal preparation; challenges and initiatives; group debriefing and processing; and the culminating activity were held in the area.

Research Respondents

Respondent and participant are used interchangeably in this study; they were divided into two clusters: the residents and the staff-volunteers cluster. The 302 therapeutic adventure program participants were classified into three clusters: agency residents (n=192), agency personnel (n=81), and volunteer-facilitators (n=39). The residents cluster, considered as the identified clients, were composed of children in conflict with the law (CICL) or youth at risk (n= 42); persons with disability or PWD (n=60); women in difficult circumstances (n=30); and children victims of abuse and neglect (n=60).

The participants were diverse in clinical classification; other than the general terms like persons with disability, this participant group can further be classified as person with cerebral palsy, hearing or visual impairment, and orthopedic concern.

Child abuse victims can be sub-classified further as children victims of incestuous rape, act of lasciviousness, attempted rape, child trafficking, prostitution, neglect, and abandonment. A report from the center volunteers also confirmed that there were children diagnosed with psychological problems apart from the child abuse categorization.

The women cluster categorized into woman victim of prostitution, domestic violence, spousal abuse and trafficking and some have concurrent clinical diagnosis like depression, anti-social personality disorder, substance dependency, post-partum depression, post traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety disorder.

Children in conflict with law otherwise known as youthful offenders or juvenile delinquents can be said to be involved in theft,

attempted murder, burglary, drug use and trade, rape and homicide. The staff working in the center concerned reported that some residents are diagnosed with conduct disorder, substance-induced psychological problem, attention deficit disorder and substance abuse. Each diagnosis was made during their admission to the center that caters their respective case.

Graduate school students enrolled in education, counseling and psychiatric nursing; adventure enthusiasts; school counselors; and psychologists made up the team of volunteers.

All participants except for the facilitator-volunteer were from the four DSWD centers in the province, namely: Area Vocation and Rehabilitation Center (AVRC) which offers psychosocial rehabilitation and vocational programs to persons with disability; Home for Girls for children victims of abuse and neglect; Haven for victims of domestic violence and prostitution; and the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth Offender (RRCY) which is a treatment community for children and adolescents who are in conflict with the law.

The Program Design

Participants were divided into 10 groups with randomly assigned members per team. The team members included persons with disability, children victim of abuse, woman victim of domestic violence, institution's personnel and volunteer facilitators. The agency staff's role in the team was to act as co-facilitator to the volunteers. They also acted as the assistant to the facilitator whenever needed. The volunteer facilitators took charge of the activity's instruction and group orientation and were also tasked to spot each member of the team.

In this program, some activities were modified to address the perceived necessities of each clientele. In fact, activities designed for broad daylight were still conducted with changes. Activity props were devised to meet the needs of all participants who were randomly assigned. Hence, it could be construed that it was an adapted adventure program. Albeit the modification, other activities were left with its original design. In cases where risks were high, participants were given more time to plan and decide. Also, in each team, participants with special needs were paired with those who have no impairment to act as their buddy, a member who could give support while the group provided the communal foundation. Labels and stereotypical roles were removed during orientation and expectation setting to give

each participant a chance to explore other roles and functions.

Initiatives differed from one another in terms of type, length and built-in objectives' respective degree of difficulty and perceived risk. Hence, longer activities were likely difficult activities. Moreover, to meet the requirement of adaptability, instructions were inclined to suggest empowerment of those individuals who would less likely participate because of physical and emotional constraints.

Research instruments

There were five research instruments in this study: [1] the researcher-constructed perception of effectiveness questionnaire, [2] the Gestalt inquiry tool, [3] process documentation, [4] self-report, and [5] Focus Group Discussion (FGD) outputs.

Researcher-made questionnaire and interview tools were utilized in data gathering especially with the respondent-participants. The researcher-made questionnaire was a set of questions that solicited the perception of effectiveness of the activity. The perception is scaled from point 5 which is *very effective* to point 1 which is *least effective*. There were also questions that solicited narrative feedback regarding the activity. For example, some questions solicited information on what activity are to be removed and retained if the program would be implemented again. The respondents were also asked what activity they liked best and what its inherent benefits were. Volunteer facilitators and personnel assisted the respondents who cannot read and write because of their deficiencies. Agency personnel were given the same questionnaire and their responses were also treated similarly with those of agency residents.

Answers from participants who were assisted and those who can answer on their own were clarified through follow-up verbal questions to facilitate deeper understanding of each response.

The process questions of Gestalt Therapy that are also utilized in coaching and organizational consulting other than in counseling and therapy were employed to provide depth and eloquence to the person's experience. Aside from thinking, feeling, and doing, the method would also help the client focus on the self and the environment. The questions included:

1. How do you feel now? (Perls, 1969)
2. What are you feeling now?(Perls, 1969)
3. What are you aware of now?(Perls,1969)

4. What are you doing with your_____? (Depending on obvious gesture)
5. What are you thinking?
6. What are you imagining?
7. What are you avoiding?
8. What are you afraid of?
9. What is stopping you?
10. What do you want?

Unlike Gestalt processing which was used during the activity, FGD was utilized after each activity. All teams shared the same set of FGD questions that included the following: [a] what have you experienced? [b] what have you learned? [c] how would you relate or apply your experience/learning to life?

The unstructured recording and self-report of the process documenter were also considered as research instrument. Free-flowing in content, both protocols were collated with the paper and pencil test and interview results. Volunteers' self-report, and perception of effectiveness composed the post-activity assessment while FGD process documentation output was made up during the activity assessment.

Research procedure

Before the conduct of the program, I presented an adapted adventure program to persons with disability. Inspired by the outcome, the four center directors, and their agency personnel along with volunteers, convened to formulate a program for the four target clientele. The formulated program included two aspects of the research: content and agenda of the adventure program and evaluation protocol. Content and agenda incorporated the different activities, time frame, and objectives while evaluation protocol included the post-assessment strategies such as self-report, focus group discussion, questionnaire, and guide interview.

Thereafter, after the convocation, personnel from the four different centers briefed the volunteers on the nature of the clientele: the number of participants, classification and categories, restrictions and other concerns. Center staff and facilitators also met to discuss concerns like security, task, and logistic needs. Volunteer police brigade was tapped to assist the security personnel in preventing gang fights, sexual harassment, and absconding of residents. The

volunteers also conducted site visits and actual exercises to test the applicability of the activity.

As the designated lead facilitator processes the client's experiences using the Gestalt method, the assigned process documenter would record the narrative accounts, non-verbal expressions, and other experiences of all group members in free flowing format. Each activity concluded with focus group discussion.

Participants' answers were descriptively cross-analyzed and distinct features were collated according to each category and format. Aside from collating the responses, a specific case analysis was also developed using all the gathered data including observations, impressions and statements of each respondent. After the cross-case analysis, varied responses were presented in thematic format. The results of the individual and cross-case analysis were presented thematically according to the patterns found in the results of focus group discussion, process documentation, and written questionnaire, and interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants reported that the activity was effective and further asserted that none of the activities should be removed. As stated by the client respondents, they would like the program to continue because it is the only avenue where they could freely participate. Their sets of responses are mostly akin to the answers given on what activity should be retained. The adventure program activities are said to be well suited to their capacity and its design allows all of them to participate. Likewise, the staff recommended that the program should be continued because of the observed efficacy to the clients and to the organization. Notwithstanding the comments against time management and tasking, staff affirmed the inherent multi-directional component of the program. For them it is a package of personal, relational and organizational exercises. Volunteers also suggested that the program should be retained because no other program could promote holistic health other than the adventure program. As one participant reported, "not only that it is environmentally friendly, it is personally enhancing as well".

In a nutshell, joining together different types of clients in one brief adventure program delivered similar outcomes to programs with homogeneous or specific clientele. Definitely, the team composition

produced another form of dynamics not commonly observed in single population. This observation is exemplified by the following circumstances: youthful offenders' transcendence of their stigma actualized their ability to lead the group; the insightful listening recognized by the children while attending to the group process; the children's anaclitic syndrome to the presence of older women in the group, which would likely prove that children victims of abuse would exhibit different form of attachment atypical to non-victims. Also worth mentioning is the passive attitude of some women victims of violence to the adventure program which may have been different if the program was solely for their group. Also, the presence of the staff and volunteers may also be a factor that affected the performance of the women participants.

While challenges or initiatives are important requisites for personal and team dynamics, it is apparent that merging of diverse clientele contributed to the effectiveness of the program; therefore human factor, *per se*, is the *sine qua non* of an adventure program and not the challenge elements. In this study, participants reported positive behavioral and perceptual changes. This perceived and observed change unfolded in such a brief period of encounter with other participants, staff, and environment.

With the therapeutic expectation, participants reported self confidence, self knowledge, outdoor enhancing skills, independent living, and self reliance that are similar to other adventure outcomes (Combs, 2001; Fischer et al., 2001; Glass, 2001; Guthrie, 2005). Therapeutic factors (Yalom, 2005) that can be observed in inpatient groups such as hope, altruism, insight, catharsis, self-understanding and responsibility can also be observed. Hope is defined as the participant's expectation of positive outcome. This positive outlook of the future was commonly cited by youthful offenders who are serving time for crimes. This was an acknowledgment of the redeeming component of the initiatives that tested the empathy of most youthful offenders. By identifying with the predicaments experienced by the PWDs, youthful offenders underwent profound experiences—among those who internalized their experience with the participants with disability, some felt lucky, while others disclosed compassion. In totality, the crux of their respective experiences suggested redemption of dignity, worthiness, and usefulness. Self-worth is perceived to be closely related with hope because participants who felt useful likewise felt dignified. Self-reports with this theme typically came from the youthful offenders and persons with disability. The former professed

moral stigma as an impediment while the latter perceived physical constraints that hindered them from activities. With initiative, the two groups explored the possibilities of going beyond their perceived limitations and thus found redemption. Remarkably, in this activity, youthful offenders' observed behaviors contradicted their stereotyped labels as well as the typecast deficiencies of persons with disability.

Working with people with disabilities is viewed either from compensation or transcendence viewpoint (Paige & Carpenter, cited in Neill, 1986). The compensation approach describes people with disabilities as having suffered loss and inadequacy and the job of a professional helper is to assist, teach and advice in order to compensate. On the other hand, transcendence approach, which is utilized in the program, advocates empowerment and collaboration. In the PWD context, other participants were acknowledged as facilitators of experience whose involvement and support to team members led to performance of initiatives. Participants with disability also reported a sense of belongingness, and enhanced positive self-concept, empathy and care from other participants who came from the other centers. This group, most of all, appreciated the presence of youthful offenders in their respective teams.

Children respondents perceived the activity differently; thus, their reports were mostly on attachment and catharsis. The children's anacletic identification toward the older participants and to the facilitators accentuated the positiveness of mixing participants of different ages in one group. Catharsis and vicarious insight from shared problem were also reported as outputs brought about by their participation to the different initiatives. Also, appreciation of initiating new tasks and guidance of the older participants were found to be helpful as well.

Very little feedback was drawn out from the women's group, majority of whom reported the alleviation of boredom and loneliness as primary benefit. Also reported were interpersonal gains of meeting friends and learning from others. This group also appreciated the cathartic outcome of the Gestalt processing.

Facilitators who considered Gestalt questions helpful in processing reported that there were participants who were taken aback by the spontaneity and frankness of the inquiry. Staff who were also present during the processing, described the method as direct and confrontational. It was the first time that participants experienced Gestalt processing, which emphasizes the here and now, as well as contact, flow and awareness which the participants may not have

recognized at that moment. As such, there was voluntary disclosure of personal information and sharing of personal problems to the group. The phenomenological emphasis and the cathartic element of the Gestalt method allowed the volunteers to be active facilitators in guiding the participants who did not focus on the here and now back to their current experience.

Cohesiveness in group activity is a widely researched group property. Yalom (2005), who included it among therapeutic factors in group therapy efficacy research, defined cohesiveness as the attractiveness of a group for its members. Cohesiveness is a significant research component in the adventure program spectrum (Neill, 2001). In this research, it was treated as a component of group support. For instance, persons with visual impairment led one of the groups in crossing a 20 foot plank. A youthful offender consoled a person with orthopedic impairment after an emotional exercise. Another good example were the responses of the PWDs and the children's group to the performance of youthful offenders in each team. Accordingly, youthful offenders served as leaders, facilitators, and spotters and specifically, their manifested leadership capacities benefited the whole group and demonstrated the inaccuracy of stereotypical description given to them. In the activity, they followed the instruction, listened to others, led the group in undergoing the exercises, and spotted the children and PWDs. Youthful offenders are said to be stubborn, passive-aggressive, and defiant participants by some staff and in the agency context; there was a history of petty offenses ascribed to the group in the past. Thus, there existed some doubts from most personnel and some volunteers. In this scenario however, youthful offenders were seen as big brother to children participants because they would spot the children and individuals with disability participants; thus, they played a significant role in the involvement of these two groups in the activity. Conclusively, the reported impact of group initiatives to youthful offenders also acted as catalyst for other participants.

Youthful offenders were removed from their usual environment because the therapeutic benefits of the activity might be impeded if it was done in their area of origin. As observed, the new environment, the people, and the venue, invited the participants to try new sets of roles. As such, youthful offenders were freed of their imposed roles in the center that reportedly included rigid religious outlook as purported by one of the personnel.

The same role was also played by the woman participants from

another center. This group also watched over their colleagues but unlike the youthful offenders, they would assert their authority and would command others on what to do (though a few just became passive participants). The facilitator witnessed ambivalent responses to this group. As reported by the facilitator and staff, while others actively participated in the exercises, others just stayed with the other participants, acting like surrogate mothers.

Respondents also reported the benefit of insight while listening—they learned from the mistakes of others. Participants reported ease in discussion although not all disclosed relevant personal concerns. For instance, children from the girl's center divulged that they were told not to talk. Not only that did this hamper the expressive process, it also limited the participation of the children in the activity. Nevertheless, had all the children obeyed the instruction, the researcher would not have known of such a restriction. Not only did the women's group act as surrogates, they seemed to be aloof and the most detached of the four groups.

Another highlight of the program was self-management. Groups were left to manage their own process and encouraged to treat every member as indispensable entity. This has been proven and tested in this context. Common barriers known by normal populations cannot surpass the limitations experienced by each group. Notwithstanding the unfamiliarity and each other's opinion, the client's label and physical and clinical concerns also posed problems. However, transcending these barriers, co-participants supported each other. The facilitator and staff also observed these altruistic behaviors. Participants with an amputation guided their visually deprived-group members while participants with hearing disability were observed to scaffold their peers who had difficulty standing and moving. Group dynamics like brainstorming, planning, problem-solving, and decision-making were ubiquitously initiated by each team, suggesting that this group of participants is similar to any normal population in any respect.

One profound report of participants (including the volunteers) was vicarious learning. Bandura (1977) postulated that people more likely adopt behaviors that are similar (to the observer), admirable, and have a functional value. There are also modalities such as the 12 steps fellowship and some group therapy formats that affirmed the benefit of listening—attendees would learn from others by just listening to the sharing. In the group format, participants reported that their similar concerns were addressed by just listening to their peers. Others found valuable information that was useful to them in

their predicament.

Participants acknowledged the significance of communication. Most of the participants asserted that they could express their feelings as well as thoughts and talk to one another. It was in the debriefing sessions that respondents can talk and where catharsis was commonly reported. Respondents may also have benefited from feedback which is a good element for self-development. As remarked by one respondent, "the activity allowed him to express his feelings towards other people."

Participants also reported ease in sharing although not all of them disclosed relevant personal concerns. Even though a few had been sanctioned against squealing, the rest of the group participants regarded the activity as an opportunity for healthy interaction and disclosed personal and domestic issues that could not be easily disclosed in ordinary group settings.

One vignette worth mentioning is the observation on how puns were treated. This concern was raised by most of the volunteers who observed that tease would become taunt, which may be seen as offensive to an outsider. Surprisingly, as the tease or taunt occurs, the subject of the pun seems to become more motivated to complete the task at hand. Also, participants seemed to become closer to one other. However, it is also noted that this phenomenon is observable only between older group members particularly among persons of disability. In particular, the other participants refrained from giving jeers to the children victims of abuse. Zingers or puns, considered taboo in other cultural milieu, were treated in the context of its use. Though discouraged in the activity, participants are still given freedom to be spontaneous and authentic; thus, jokes and euphemisms which are culturally considered harmless, unless evoked in violent and insulting manner, are treated as amusing anecdotes.

Another vignette is the criticism initiated by one observer in conjoining female victims of abuse with male participants. There are other experts who also got apprehensive with the set up for fear that trauma may ensue because of this mix up. Admittedly, the proponent purposively designed the activity to facilitate individual and group processes which of course include pathognomonic dimensions; thus, clinical contingencies were readied for the client's traumatogenic expressions which the volunteer- facilitators were already briefed on through a series of facilitator's upgrading workshops.

Another issue was the verboten set against children respondents. Before the activity, the staff in charge for the children victim of abuse

prohibited their wards from entertaining and mingling with the male youthful offenders. The children were also admonished from disclosing personal information to other participants. Thus, among all the participants, the child abuse victims exhibited more anxiety than excitement. This observation can be amply described with the statement of one of the girls who said that they are afraid to fully participate because of the presence of their houseparent who were observing their behavior.

A concern also on how the juvenile offenders are treated. Critics suggested that the group should be treated with stern and vigilance; because for the censors, allowing them to participate freely might invite contempt to existing authority. These critics perceived adventure program as full of fun and frolic that would invite wantonness. In addition, security and safety of the program were given due considerations because of the participation of youthful offenders. However, the same terms—safety and security-- could be given to the feelings of other participants who were with youthful offenders. Problem solving and relational skills learned in the streets were put into use. As such, delegates from the center for boys were often tasked as leaders. Although there were older participants coming from the other centers, the group chose them because of the challenging situation that needs their skills and talents. Stereotyping almost cost the participation of the youthful offenders. Before the activity, discussion would lead to labeling and prejudice against them. In the activity, they found hope, respect and encouragement because of the sense of altruism these participants showed to the other residents. Also, the inherent benefits of the program were questioned by some quarters. Doubtful of the program's efficacy and effectiveness to deliver the institutions objectives, criticism are centered on each activity and not on the process that evolved.

In conclusion, this paper answers the question of therapeutic adventure programming's applicability and effectiveness to mixed participants particularly to women and children victims of abuse, persons with disability, and youthful offenders. Further, this study thematically shows the interpersonal dynamics of the recipients within and between groups that are not likely ubiquitous in homogeneous population.

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Antioxidant Potential of Selected Indigenous Fruits Using *In Vitro* Lipid Peroxidation Assay

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This study was primarily concerned in determining the antioxidant potential of the edible parts of selected indigenous fruits grown in the Cordillera region namely ayosep (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), bitungol (*Flacourtia indica*), kalamondin (*Citrofortunella microcarpa*), marble tomato (*Lycopersicon pimpinellifolium*), native lacatan (*Musa paradisiaca*), native passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis*), pinit (*Rubus copelandii*), rattan (*Calamus mollis*), tamarillo (*Cyphomandra betacea*) and tumok (*Musa troglodytarum*) as compared to Vitamin E. Antioxidant potential of the extracts was tested and measured using *In Vitro* Lipid Peroxidation Assay as indicated by absorbance value in mAU and % Lipid Peroxidation Inhibition. Based on this test, all the fruits exhibited greater antioxidant potential than Vitamin E. Native passion fruit and rattan exhibited the greatest antioxidant potential and therefore, ranked 1.

KEYWORDS: absorbance value, antioxidant potential, indigenous fruits, *In Vitro* Lipid Peroxidation Assay, natural antioxidants

INTRODUCTION

Today, the important role of dietary antioxidants in maintaining integrity of living organisms is gaining recognition. Researches continue to grow regarding the importance of antioxidants as healthful components of food. Antioxidants are substances that delay or inhibit oxidative damage (Choy, Bezie, & Cho, 2000; Langseth, 1993). New data are constantly gathered to show the role of oxidative stress and the involvement of free radicals in the pathogenesis of degenerative diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases (Vaya & Aviram, 2001; Khor, 2001). The most likely and practical way to fight degenerative diseases is to improve body antioxidant status which could be achieved by higher consumption of vegetables

and fruits (Halvorsen et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2000; Ou et al., 2002). Studies have shown that increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables is associated with lower incidence of disease.

Recent studies have shown that protective mechanisms of fruits are thought to be attributed to the presence of natural antioxidants (Adom & Liu, 2002; Pellegrini et al., 2003). Studies on the antioxidant potential of common Philippine fruits such as bignay, kalumpit, tiesa, durian, bago (Philippine News Agency, 2009), katmon, rambutan, kamias, pomelo (Philippine Alternative Medicine, 2011), papaya ("Papaya," n.d.), guava (United States Department of Agriculture, 2007), mangosteen ("Mangosteen," n.d.), and noni ("Noni," n.d.) were reported. However, information on the chemical composition and antioxidant potential of indigenous fruits that are native and occurring naturally in the Cordillera region has not yet been done.

Therefore, identification of physiologically active constituents and investigation on the antioxidant potential of the following selected indigenous fruits namely ayosep (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), bitungol (*Flacourtia indica*), kalamondin (*Citrofortunella microcarpa*), marble tomato (*Lycopersicon pimpinellifolium*), native lacatan (*Musa paradisiaca*), native passion fruit (*Passiflora edulis*), pinit (*Rubus copelandii*), rattan (*Calamus mollis*), tamarillo (*Cyphomandra betacea*) and tumok (*Musa troglodytarum*) has been carried out.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Phytochemical Screening of Fruits

The secondary metabolites such as alkaloids, steroids, anthraquinones, saponins, polyphenols, flavonoids, and tannins present in the edible portion of the fruits were determined using preliminary and confirmatory tests (Aguinaldo et al., 2004). The presence of alkaloids was detected using Mayer's and Dragendorff's tests and for the others the following were used: steroids using Keller-Killiani test for deoxysugars; Liebermann-Burchard test for unsaturated sterols and Kedde test for unsaturated lactones; anthraquinones using Borntrager's and modified Borntrager's tests; flavonoids such as leucoanthocyanins using Bate Smith and Metcalf test; flavonoids containing cyanidin-y-benzopyrene nucleus using Wilstatter "cyanidin" test; froth test for saponins while tannins and polyphenols using Gelatin and Ferric chloride tests; and, Guignard test for cyanogenic glycoside.

Preparation of Fruit Extracts and Control

Approximately 20 g of edible fruit portion including seeds or peelings was homogenized with 80 ml of 100% methanol (Tedia) in a blender (Kyowa KB 11096) for 1 min and was filtered through filter paper (No.1, Whatman Inc.). The residue was re-extracted using 20 mL methanol and then filtered. The extracts were combined and concentrated to a volume of 40 ml using a rotary evaporator (Heidolph) under partial vacuum at 80 °C (Mahattanatawee, 2006). The fruit extracts obtained through rotary evaporation were used in *In vitro* Lipid Peroxidation Assay. Liver homogenate with ferric chloride and commercially available Vitamin E (200 units) served as the positive control while liver homogenate treated with ferric chloride was the negative control.

Preparation of Homogenate

The liver of normal Wistar rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), an albino laboratory rat commonly used in biological and medical research was used in the study. After dissection, the specimen was perfused with ice cold 0.9% sodium chloride (NaCl) or Normal Saline Solution (NSS) to maintain normal cell turgidity and to avoid rapid oxidation. The tissue was homogenized at a concentration of 10 % w/v in 1.15% of potassium chloride (KCl) dissolved in distilled water using a mortar and pestle and was centrifuged at 3,000 rpm for 10 minutes to obtain the rat liver homogenate.

In Vitro Inhibition of Lipid Peroxidation

Lipid peroxidation is a well established mechanism of cellular injury in both plants and animals. It is used as indicator of oxidative stress in cells and tissues (Oxford Biomedical Research, 2010; Oxis Research, 2010). The following steps were done in the study: Two drops (100 uL) of the fresh extract from the selected fruit were mixed with 0.5 ml of the homogenate. Lipid peroxidation was induced by adding two drops (100 uL) of 10% ferric chloride (FeCl₃). Two drops (100 uL) of the commercially available 200 IU α tocopherol Vitamin E (Squibb) capsule, 0.5 ml homogenate and 2 drops FeCl₃ solution were used as a standard (positive control) while the negative control was composed of 0.5 mL liver homogenate and 2 drops (100 uL) 10% ferric chloride only. The mixtures were incubated at 37 deg. C for 20 minutes and the

reaction was stopped by adding 2 ml of ice cold 0.25N hydrochloric acid (HCl) containing 15% Trichloroacetic acid, 0.38 % thiobarbituric acid and 0.05 % butylated hydroxy toluene. All tubes were heated at 80 deg. C for 15 minutes. Mixtures were centrifuged at 4,000 rpm for 5 minutes. Measurement of absorbance in milli-absorbance unit (mAU) of the supernatant was done using UV Vis spectrophotometer Dual Beam 550 (Labomed) at 532 nm. Calculation of % Inhibition of Lipid Peroxidation using the formula: % Inhibition = $[(AB - AA) / AB] \times 100$ where: AB- absorption of negative control sample; AA – absorption of tested extract solution (Rathee et al., 2006; Sourì et al., 2008; Sundararajan et al., 2006).

Statistical Analysis

Quantitative data on absorbance values of the fruits and controls measured using *In vitro* Lipid Peroxidation assay in five replicates were treated statistically using one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The 0.05 level of significance was used in testing the significance between two means. To locate where the difference lies, a follow up test, Tukey method was used. Finally, ranking was done to determine which among the fruits had the highest and lowest antioxidant potential.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phytochemical Constituents of the Fruits

Results (Table 1) show the presence of alkaloids in ayosep, native passion fruit, kalamondin, marble tomato, and tamarillo. According to Herraiz and Galisteo (2003), alkaloids such as aromatic β carboline alkaloids are present in fruits such as in raisins, grape, grape juice and wine. In the study they conducted using 2'2'- azino-bis or ABTS assay, alkaloids acted as antioxidants and free radical scavengers when absorbed and accumulated in the body. Steroids are present in all the fruits studied except lacatan and tumok. Steroids possess antioxidant properties. Plant phytosterols, such as β sitosterol found in peanuts, have anti-cancer health effects in several cases such as stomach, colon, breast and prostate cancer, and help lower LDL cholesterol level by blocking its absorption (Awad & Fink, 2000; Moriusi, 2006).

Saponins are present in all the fruits except ayosep, bitungol and tumok. Saponins work as antioxidants by inhibiting formation of free

Table 1.

Phytochemical Analysis Data of the Fruit Extracts

Family	Fruit Species	A	S	N	P	O	T	F	C
Arecaceae	Rattan (<i>C. mollis</i>)	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
Ericaceae	Ayosep (<i>V. angustifolium</i>)	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
Flacourtiaceae	Bitungol (<i>F. indica</i>)	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	-
Musaceae	Native lacatan (<i>M. paradisiaca</i>)	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-
Musaceae	Tumok (<i>M. troglodytarum</i>)	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
Passifloraceae	Native passion (<i>P. edulis</i>)	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-
Rosaceae	Pinit (<i>R. copelandii</i>)	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-
Rutaceae	Kalamondin (<i>C. microcarpa</i>)	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-
Solanaceae	Marble tomato (<i>L. pimpinellifolium</i>)	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
Solanaceae	Tamarillo (<i>C. betacea</i>)	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-
Arecaceae	Rattan (<i>C. mollis</i>)	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
Ericaceae	Ayosep (<i>V. angustifolium</i>)	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-
Flacourtiaceae	Bitungol (<i>F. indica</i>)	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	-
Musaceae	Native lacatan (<i>M. paradisiaca</i>)	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-
Musaceae	Tumok (<i>M. troglodytarum</i>)	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
Passifloraceae	Native passion (<i>P. edulis</i>)	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	-
Rosaceae	Pinit (<i>R. copelandii</i>)	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-
Rutaceae	Kalamondin (<i>C. microcarpa</i>)	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-
Solanaceae	Marble tomato (<i>L. pimpinellifolium</i>)	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-
Solanaceae	Tamarillo (<i>C. betacea</i>)	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-

LEGEND : A- Alkaloids; S- Steroids; N- Anthraquinones; P- Saponins; O- Polyphenols; T- Tannins; F- Flavonoids; and C- Cyanogenic glycosides (+ positive, - negative)

radicals (Balandrin, 2003). Polyphenols are present in all the fruits except marble tomato. Tannins are present only in rattan and bitungol. Tannins and polyphenols are powerful free radical scavengers and antioxidants (Mayer, 2005). The antioxidant activity of polyphenols are mainly due to their redox properties which play an important role in adsorbing and neutralizing free radicals, quenching oxygen or decomposing peroxides (Karou et al., 2005). Phenolic compounds such as caffeic, ferulic and gallic acid exhibit high free radical scavenging activities (Chen & Yen, 2007; Manach et al., 2004; Naczsk & Shahidi, 2004).

Flavonoids are present only in ayosep, bitungol, pinit, and tamarillo. Flavonoids such as quercetin and kaempferol in tea, apples and berries possess antioxidative and radical scavenging activities (Bor et al., 2006; Pietta, 2000). Flavonoids such as quercetin in citrus fruits and ferulic acids in grains have been demonstrated to have anti-inflammatory, anti-allergenic, anti-aging and anticarcinogenic activity (Cody, 1986; Havsteen, 1983; Adom & Liu, 2002). Anthraquinones and cyanogenic glycosides are absent in all the fruits. Thus, the antioxidant potential of the fruits is not contributed by the said compounds.

Antioxidant Potential of the Fruits

The mean absorbance values and % lipid peroxidation inhibition of the various fruit extracts and controls in five replicates (Table 2) shows that all the fruits in this study possess antioxidant potential as indicated by their lower mean absorbance as compared to the positive control. A lower absorbance value indicates lesser amount of malondialdehyde formed as a byproduct of lipid peroxidation (McBride & Kraemer, 1999). It also implies higher % lipid peroxidation inhibition. Vitamin E and ferric chloride had an absorbance value of 0.8396 and 0.969 mAU. Native passion fruit has the lowest absorbance value in mAU (0.0942), and highest % lipid peroxidation inhibition (90.3%) followed by rattan (0.150) and ayosep (0.225). The fruit with the highest absorbance value (0.6396) and lowest % lipid peroxidation inhibition (34%) is marble tomato, followed by the two banana species, lacatan (0.5474) and tumok (0.4667).

Table 2.

Mean Absorbance Values (mAU) and % of Lipid Peroxidation Inhibition (LPI) of the Fruit Extracts and Controls

Family	Fruit Species	Mean (mAU)	% LPI	Rank
Passifloraceae	Native passion (<i>P. edulis</i>)	0.0942	90.3	1
Arecaceae	Rattan (<i>C. mollis</i>)	0.150	84.5	2
Ericaceae	Ayosep (<i>V. angustifolium</i>)	0.225	76.8	3
Rutaceae	Kalamondin (<i>C. microcarpa</i>)	0.253	73.9	4
Rosaceae	Pinit (<i>R. copelandii</i>)	0.259	73.3	5
Flacourtiaceae	Bitungol (<i>F. indica</i>)	0.3506	63.8	6
Solanaceae	Tamarillo (<i>C. betacea</i>)	0.439	54.7	7
Musaceae	Tumok (<i>M. troglodytarum</i>)	0.4667	51.8	8
Musaceae	Native lacatan (<i>M.paradisiaca</i>)	0.5474	43.5	9
Solanaceae	Marble tomato (<i>L. pimpinellifolium</i>)	0.6396	34	10
Positive control (Homogenate+ 10% Ferric chloride solution + Vitamin E)		0.8396	13.4	
Negative control (Homogenate + 10% Ferric chloride solution)		0.969	0	

To further analyze and interpret the data gathered, the absorbance values of the different fruit extracts and controls were subjected to statistical treatment, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Table 3.

ANOVA for the Test of Significance of Absorbance Values Between Fruits and Control

Sources of Variations	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value	Tabular Value	Interpretation
Between Groups	4.0849	11	0.3714	520.684	1.9946	Significant
Within Groups	0.03423	48	0.000713			
Total	4.1191					

The data (Table 3) show that the computed F-value of 520.684 is greater than the tabular value of 1.9946 implying significant difference. This means that the antioxidant potential between and among the fruits also between fruits and controls greatly differ from each other. To determine where the significance lies, a follow-up test, the Tukey method, was employed.

Table 4.

Multiple Comparison Test of the Absorbance Values of Fruits and Controls Using Tukey method

FRUIT/ CONTROL	T	I	P	A	B	U	L	K	M	F	E
R	0.289	0.109	0.0558	0.075	0.201	0.317	0.397	0.103	0.490	0.819	0.690
T		0.179	0.3448	0.214	0.0884	0.028	0.108	0.186	0.201	0.530	0.401
I			0.165	0.0342	0.091	0.207	0.288	0.0062	0.380	0.710	0.580
P				0.131	0.256	0.372	0.453	0.159	0.545	0.875	0.745
A					0.126	0.242	0.322	0.028	0.415	0.744	0.615
B						0.116	0.197	0.0976	0.289	0.618	0.489
U							0.081	0.2136	0.173	0.502	0.373
L								0.2944	0.092	0.422	0.292
K									0.387	0.716	0.587
M										0.329	0.200
F											0.1294

NOTE: Honestly Significant Difference (HSD): 0.0582
[Mean difference (MD) > HSD value, significant; MD ≤ HSD value, not significant]

LEGEND: Rattan (R), Tamarillo (T), Pinit (I), Passion (P), Ayosep (A), Bitungol (B), Tumok (U), Lacatan (L), Kalamondin (K), Marble Tomato (M), Ferric chloride (F), and Vitamin E (E)

Mean difference is significant

Controls

Mean difference is not significant

Fruit samples

In showing the multiple comparisons of each selected fruit with other fruits using Tukey method (Table 4), if the mean difference in the absorbance value is higher than the HSD value of 0.0582, it implies that the difference is significant. Thus, it indicates that the antioxidant potential of the fruit is significantly different from the fruit to which it is compared. However, if the mean difference in the absorbance value is lower than or equal to the HSD value, it implies that the difference is not significant. Therefore, the antioxidant potential of the fruit is the same with the antioxidant potential of the fruit to which it is compared. The mean differences in the absorbance values of the fruits as compared to the negative and positive control are all higher than the HSD value implying that the difference is significant. This infers that all the fruits possess antioxidant potential higher than the controls. Along with these, the final ranking of the fruits (Table 5) based on their absorbance value indicating their antioxidant potential using Tukey method shows some important results.

Table 5.

Antioxidant Potential Ranking of the Fruits

Family	Fruits	Mean Absorbance Value (mAU)	A	S	P	O	T	F	Rank
Passifloraceae	Native Passion Fruit	0.0942	+	+	+	+	-	-	1
Arecaceae	Rattan	0.150	-	+	+	+	+	-	
Ericaceae	Ayosep	0.225	+	+	-	-	-	+	2
Rutaceae	Kalamondin	0.253	+	+	+	+	-	-	
Rosaceae	Pinit	0.259	-	+	+	+	-	+	
Flacourtiaceae	Bitungol	0.3506	-	+	-	+	+	+	3
Solanaceae	Tamarillo	0.439	+	+	+	-	-	+	4
Musaceae	Tumok	0.4667	-	-	-	+	-	-	
Musaceae	Native Lacatan	0.5474	-	-	+	+	-	-	5
Solanaceae	Marble Tomato	0.6396	+	+	+	-	-	-	6

LEGEND: A—Alkaloids; S—Steroids; P—Saponins; O—Polyphenols; T—Tannins; and F—Flavonoids (+ positive, - negative)

Native passion fruit and rattan are both ranked 1. Based on the phytochemical results, both contain four different phytochemicals. Steroids, saponins and polyphenols are present in both fruits while alkaloids are only present in passion fruit and tannins only in rattan. Each constituent exhibits antioxidant activity. The presence of these constituents may signify that both fruits contain phytochemicals that work together in a synergistic action to inhibit *in vitro* lipid peroxidation.

Chaudiere and Ferrari-Iliu (1999) state that different antioxidant metabolites may have synergistic and interdependent effects on one another. In their study, antioxidants degraded peroxides and free radicals through co-operative interactions. Intracellular antioxidants such as ascorbate, glutathione, and carotenoids among others worked together to degrade superoxide and hydroperoxides. Ascorbate and glutathione scavenge oxidizing free radicals by means of hydrogen atom transfer while carotenoids are secondary scavengers of free radicals but physical quenchers of singlet oxygen. According to Adom and Liu (2002) and Svilaas et al. (2004), recent research has shown that the complex mixture of phytochemicals in food provides better protective health benefits than single phytochemicals through a combination of additive and or synergistic effects. Highest levels of antioxidants in the form of special phytochemicals called polyphenols and thiols (flavones, anthocyanins, ellagic acid, isoflavones, stilbenoids, etc.) present in fruits such as berries work together in synergistic ways (Vertuani, Angusti, & Manfredini, 2004). In this study, the combination of four phytochemicals in both passion fruit and rattan resulted in their highest antioxidant potential. Although alkaloids are absent in rattan, tannins are present which may equal the potential activity of alkaloids in native passion fruit (EPPA, 2002). Tannins and alkaloids possess antioxidant property. Both are active principles in scavenging nitric oxide (NO) (Bor et al., 2006).

Among all the fruits, marble tomato had the lowest antioxidant potential as indicated by its highest absorbance value. This may be due to the absence of polyphenolic compounds such as flavonoids that contribute strong antioxidant activity. Flavonoids act as strong superoxide and hydroxyl scavenger during lipid peroxidation (Middleton, Kandaswami, & Theoharides, 2000). Chelation of free iron is another property of flavonoids that contributes to preventing oxidative reactions (Mazza & Oomah, 2000). However, based on the phytochemical results, marble tomatoes contain alkaloids, phytosterols and saponins which possess antioxidant properties. The

presence of these constituents did not yield a high antioxidant potential since according to Vertuani et al. (2004), some phytochemicals when present in fruits together with other compounds may exhibit poor reactivity and weak interaction with each other. Negative interactions (interferences) occur when certain components of the mixture inhibit the biological activity of pharmacologically active compounds by reducing their stability or bioavailability. In teas, proanthocyanidins interfere with caffeine. Mixture of plant flavonoids has shown inhibitory influence on ATPase enzymes (Lila & Raskin, 2005). In addition, marble tomatoes contain lycopene. Several studies have indicated that lycopene is an effective antioxidant and free radical scavenger (Chen et al., 2001; Rao & Agarwat, 2000). But there were reports that the contribution of phenolic compounds to antioxidant activity was much greater than Vitamin C and carotenoids such as lycopene (Mahattanatawee, 2006). Thus, carotenoids are not particularly good quenchers of peroxy radicals relative to phenolics (Prior, Wu, & Schaich, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The presence of bioactive phytochemicals such as alkaloids, steroids, saponins, polyphenols, flavonoids and tannins are responsible for the antioxidant potential of the fruits. All the fruits possess greater antioxidant potential than Vitamin E (200 IU). The daily requirement for Vitamin E is 200 to 400 IU. Therefore, the fruits tested in this study are recommended to be eaten daily than intake of commercially available vitamin E. Among the ten fruits tested, native passion fruit (Passifloraceae) possesses the greatest antioxidant potential. Marble tomato (Solanaceae), on the other hand, possesses the lowest antioxidant potential followed by native lacatan and tumok (Musaceae). Fruits belonging to Arecaceae (rattan), Ericaceae (ayosep), Flacourtiaceae (bitungol), Passifloraceae (native passion fruit), Rosaceae (pinit), and Rutaceae (kalamondin) exhibit high antioxidant potential *in vitro*. The antioxidant potential between and among the fruits are significantly different except between rattan and native passion fruit and among ayosep, kalamondin and pinit where the antioxidant potential is equal between and among them respectively.

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The Vertebrate Biodiversity of the Gigantes and Sicogon Islands, Iloilo Province, Philippines

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The biodiversity of the Gigantes and Sicogon Islands and associated islets are presented and discussed based on a study conducted from December 2009 to May 2010. Pertinent data on the biophysical conditions of caves in the Gigantes are also presented. Observations on the biology of the Critically Endangered Gigante Limestone Frog (*Platymantis insulatus*) and the Endangered Gigante Narrow-disked Gecko (*Gekko gigante*) such as population density, behaviour, and reproductive biology are also presented. Threats to the biodiversity of these islands are discussed with corresponding recommendations. A preliminary discussion on the zoogeography of the two islands is also provided.

KEYWORDS: biodiversity, Gigantes Islands, Panay Island, zoogeography

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is one of the 17 megadiverse countries in the world, with high species richness and endemism (Heaney & Regalado, 1998; Ong, Afuang, & Rosell-Ambal, 2002; Brown & Diesmos, 2009). In terms of biodiversity priority, Philippines is considered one of the world's top 25 global conservation hotspots with several species threatened by extirpation (Myers et al., 2000).

The herpetofauna of the Gigantes, Sicogon and other nearby offshore islands have been studied by Brown and Alcala (1970, 1978,

1980), Brown and Alcala (2000), Ferner et al. (2000), and Alcala and Alcala (2005). The avifauna on these islands has been studied by Rabor (1938) and Alcala and Sanguila (1969). However, the mammals have not been studied in the past. These vertebrate groups are the subject of the present survey.

Description of the Study Area

We surveyed the three islands and their associated islets off the municipality of Carles in northeast Iloilo province, namely Gigante Norte, Gigante Sur, and Sicogon (Figure 1).

Gigantes Sur (481 ha; population 6,096) is composed primarily of karst forests (Figure 2) on the east with patches of ipil-ipil (*Leucaena leucocephala*). A thin strip of flat land exists only along the coastline. At the north of the island is an extensive fishpond area converted from mangrove forest. The rest of the island is grassland (*Imperata cylindrica*) interspersed with scrub. A small part of the island (i.e. close to the shoreline) is planted with fruit trees and coconuts. The associated islets of Gigante Sur were also visited on the dates indicated below: Bantigui (2 ha; population 5–10) on 15 January 2010; Cabugao Dako (10 ha; transient population c. 5) and Cabugao Gamay (c. 7–8 ha) on 16 January 2010; and Balabagon (5–6 ha; transient population c. 15) on 15–16 January 2010.

Gigante Norte (599 ha; population 6,919) has similar features as Gigante South being primarily karst formation. It was visited

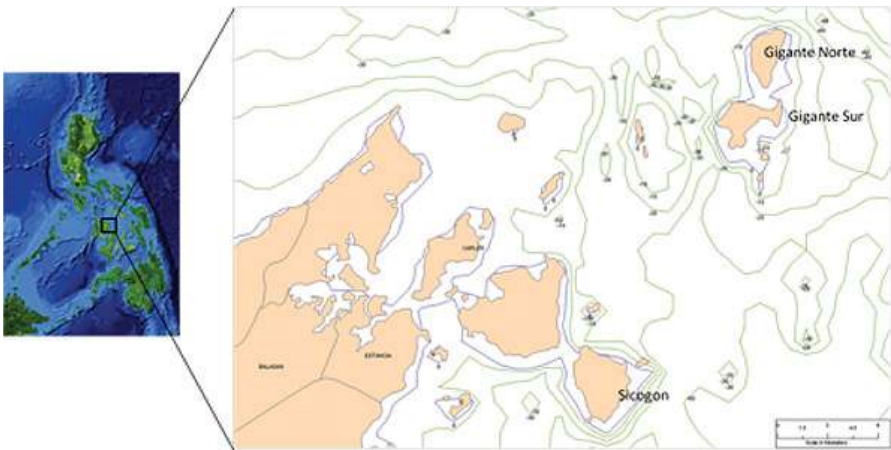


Figure 1. A map showing the three islands covered by the study (Gigante Norte, Gigante Sur, and Sicogon).



Figure 2. View of a typical karst landscape in Gigante Sur.



Figure 3. A non-karst forestland on Sicogon Island (viewed from the eastern side).

on the following dates: 16-21 December 2009; 21-24 February 2010; 1 March 2010; and 13-16 May 2010. The islets of Gigantillo (< 1 ha) and Gigantuna (< 1 ha), located about 0.7 km east of Asluman, North Gigante and north of Bulubadiang islet (c. 1.5 ha; transient population c. 10) and Uay Dahon Islet (2 ha; population c. 5, resort workers) were visited on 17 January 2010.

Sicogon Island is a non-karst island. The soil is predominantly clay (Dela Cruz, Vilorio, & Abadilla, 1980). The vegetation on the western part of the island is composed of mixed grassland and is devoted to agriculture, while the eastern part is forested (circa 300 ha). Most of the forest area is classified as timberland (Figure 3) and is presently under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the local government of Carles. Our study on Sicogon Island was limited to only four days due to security reasons.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted 13-19 December 2009, 13-20 January 2010, 21-28 February 2010, 14 April 2010, and 15 May 2010. Although the sampling months fell within the dry season, intermittent rains were experienced on several occasions.

The primary method used to study birds in the area is through observation. Birds were identified and counted with the aid of binoculars (Bushnell 10×50, Focus 8×23, 10×60) and the field guide *Birds of the Philippines* by Kennedy et al. (2000). Online databases such as those of the Oriental Bird Club (www.orientalbirdimages.org) and the Internet Bird Collection (ibc.lynxeds.com) were referred to by the observers. The bird sightings were supplemented with photographs (using a digital camera) and audio recordings (Sanyo TCM and Sony IC digital recorder). Monofilament mist nets (6m×4m and 6m×12m) were also used to capture birds during our initial survey in December 2009. This was, however, discontinued due to poor results. The nets were difficult to set up on rough limestone and presented risk to the researchers who had to go through sharp-edged rocks and deep crevices.

Bats were sampled using the same mist nets used to capture birds while non-volant mammals were directly observed. Mist nets were placed near fruiting trees and flyways to optimize capture. Species identification was based on available taxonomic references (Heaney et al., 1998; Sedlock & Ingle, 2010).

The herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles) were surveyed following the methods used by Alcala and Alcala (2005). This was conducted during certain times of the day and during night time with the aid of head-mounted flashlights. Species identification was based on Alcala and Brown (1998) for frogs and Brown and Alcala (1978, 1980) and Alcala (1986) for reptiles.

The study also took temperature and relative humidity readings in the caves using mercury-based field thermometers, sling psychrometer, and digital hygrometer during each visit. It also conducted population counts using the plotting and cruising methods (Alcala & Alcala, 2005). This was undertaken during the months of December 13-21 2009, January 13-21 2010, February 21 -March 01, 2010 and May 15 2010.

We visited 17 caves in the Gigantes and recorded ambient temperature and relative humidity readings. Temperature and relative humidity readings were conducted on the following dates: 13, 14, 15, 18 and 19 December 2009 and 13 January 2010. The rest of the dates already indicated above were allocated to survey the other vertebrate groups such as birds and mammals.

The caves visited can be considered wet, considering the high relative humidity (RH) values (>80%), although on two occasions, RH values fluctuated to about 75% in Pawikan Cave and Longon-longon Cave. None of the caves contain stagnant or running water. The sizes of caves covered in this study ranged from ca. 1.0m to 6.5m wide and 2.0m to 35.0m long. All the caves visited were located in the low land (<150m above sea level). Some of the caves visited were along the shorelines of the islets and main islands of Gigantes Norte and Sur.

The study also employed informal interviews with the locals. This was primarily done to supplement our field sampling efforts and to list species that have not been encountered during our stay in the area. A retrospective account of some species we failed to encounter was also used to supplement our study.

RESULTS

Climatic and Biophysical Conditions of the Study Area

The climate in the study area can be categorized as type III, according to the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services (PAGASA) with seasons not very pronounced; relatively dry from November to April and wet during the rest of the year. The

conduct of the survey (December 2009 to June 2010) partly coincided with an El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) event (Yumul et al., 2010). Yumul et al. (2010) showed that the Western Visayas (including the study area) was affected by dry spells during the ENSO Event. Data from PAG-ASA weather station in Dumangas, Iloilo showed reduced amount of precipitation (5.2-33mm) in the Iloilo province from December 2009 through March 2010.

Based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) virtual station ([www.http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/satellite/virtual_station/philippines_virtual_stations.html#VisayanSea_philippines](http://coralreefwatch.noaa.gov/satellite/virtual_station/philippines_virtual_stations.html#VisayanSea_philippines)) data, the sea surface temperatures (SST) in the Visayan Sea ranged from 26-31°C, with an increasing trend from January to August 2010. SST readings gradually dropped from 31°C to 30°C by September 2010, then 29-30°C as of December 2, 2010. Our data on ambient temperatures in the Gigantes were mainly between 26-30°C between the months of February to June 2010. In one occasion (20 January 2010), the highest temperature reading reached 32°C in an open area in Gabi, Gigante Sur. Alcala and Alcala (2005) recorded air temperatures ranging from 25-31°C in 2004 and 2005.

Air temperature readings in caves

Air temperature readings in cave entrances (Table 1) ranged from 26-28°C (27.44 ± 0.20 S.E.) while our hygrometer readings (relative humidity) ranged from 75-92% (87.44 ± 1.08 S.E.). The inner cave's ambient temperatures, ranging from 25-28°C (26.5 ± 0.21 S.E.), were slightly lower than the entrance temperature readings.

Herpetofauna

A total of 44 species in 11 families of herpetofauna are presently known from the study sites, 24 of which were observed during the study (Table 2). These include three species of sea snakes belonging to two genera. Among the three islands, Gigante Sur has the highest number of species (30), followed by Sicogon (26), and Gigante Norte (15).

The study was also able to follow up on two island endemic herpetofauna living in limestone habitats, the Island Forest Frog (*Platymantis insulatus*) and Gigante Narrow-disked Gecko (*Gekko gigante*). We noted that of the 17 caves visited, nine were inhabited by *P. insulatus* while 13 were inhabited by *Gekko gigante*. In addition to

this, we also discovered that both *P. insulatus* and *G. gigante* inhabited the Bulubadiang Islet, Gigante Norte. They were found in limestone fissures and crevices at least one meter below the surface. Although this cave was visited by Silliman University researchers during the early 2000s, the species were only observed during our study.

Biological observations on the Gigante Endemic Herpetofauna

*Gigante Limestone Forest-Frog *Platymantis insulatus* Brown & Alcala (Figure 4)*

We provide a detailed observation on the biology of the Limestone Frog (*Platymantis insulatus*) because it is crucial to determine whether or not it was affected by the recent ENSO Event.



Figure 4. The Gigante endemic frog *Platymantis insulatus*.



Figure 5. *Platymantis insulatus* congregating in a hole (left) during an ENSO Event but left the same hole (right) during the onset of *La Niña*.

Population density vs. physical conditions

During the 2009-2010 ENSO Event, the population density of *P. insulatus* was estimated at $5\text{--}6.7$ individuals/ $100\text{m}^2 \pm 0.48\text{--}0.67$ S.E. (50-67 individuals per hectare) in the vicinity of the caves and sometimes absent in the vicinity of the 13 caves out of the 16 that we visited. In the cave interior, the population density ranges from $1.0\text{--}4.30$ individuals/ $100\text{m}^2 \pm 0.33\text{--}1.86$ S.E. (100-430 individuals per hectare). These estimates were made during an El Niño event. These values are lower than those reported by Alcalá and Alcalá (2005). They estimated the population of the species at 400-638 individuals per hectare, sometimes reaching 1000 individuals per hectare during the rainy months in 2004-2005.

We also observed that *P. insulatus* was generally found in moist and cooler portions of the caves particularly near the entrance and in moist crevices. Except for the Harpa Cave which showed no frog signs, despite having the lowest temperature and highest humidity readings (Table 1), the rest of the wet caves were observed to be inhabited by the species. We think the species' absence in the cave may be due to the high human disturbance that included diggings for supposed treasure-hunting activities. Conversely, we generally did not observe the species in dry caves with high temperature readings (e.g. Elepante Cave). In addition, one of the authors (AB) visited three caves in the adjacent islet of Cabugao Daku in February 2010 and observed only three *P. insulatus* inhabiting a single dry cave. This suggests that the islet is poorly habitable due to the dry conditions of the caves. A summary of these observations is found in Table 1.

Observed congregations

We observed at least 18 individuals congregating inside a small hole (Figure 5) measuring ca. $15\text{cm} \times 10\text{cm}$ on 15 May 2010, when the place was still relatively dry. The mean temperature at that time was between $27\text{--}28^\circ\text{C}$ with humidity readings of 70-80%. The hole was devoid of water but had relatively high moisture content. This congregational behavior is the first to be observed within the species. On the other hand, we have observed non-cave species like *Kaloula picta* congregating in pairs and sometimes in groups in ground soil and decomposing material (e.g., coconut shells) during dry season but were in state of stupor, presumably aestivating, on Negros Island. Active congregational behavior is usually associated with group

survival such as to reduce moisture loss during the dry season and may as well be a form of social interaction within the species.

Observations on reproductive behavior

We observed at least five gravid females in Pawikan Cave in May 2010. One gravid female specimen we dissected contained 22 to 24 eggs on each ovary (circa 46 eggs in both ovaries). About 50% (11–12 eggs) contained yellowish ova with a yolk diameter of about 2.0 mm. The presence of gravid females inside the cave indicate that the species utilize the cave for breeding (and probably egg-laying) and that the reproductive behavior of *P. insulatus* is not affected by the dry spells brought about by the ENSO Event, allowing them to breed under such conditions. The reproductive biology of the *P. insulatus* requires more study and investigation. The species is most likely a direct developer like any other Philippine species of *Platymantis*.

Although no egg of *P. insulatus* was found inside any of the caves we visited, we encountered juveniles near the vegetated cave entrances in Gigante Sur (Danao-danao and Pawikan caves) on 13 December 2009. The following month, we also observed froglets (with snout-vent length of circa. 10mm) outside the caves in moist forest floor. We suspect that the juveniles and froglets were hatched either inside the caves or in deep crevices and only went outside to feed. This appears in consonance with an earlier observation by Alcala and Alcala (2005) with the froglets of another limestone cave species, *P. spelaeus*, on Negros Island. The ability of limestone-associated species to survive during dry season can very well be explained by the fact that they live in cooler and moist microhabitats such as caves and crevices. The presence of juveniles and froglets during an ENSO Event further supports our earlier findings that limestone cave habitats tend to ensure the survival of the species.

Observed escape response

When handled, the frog often secreted through its cloaca a slimy fluid, which may allow the animal to escape. This escape response behavior has also been observed with another species, *P. paengi*, found on mainland Panay. Although cloacal ejecta is associated with egg-laying (for sticking their eggs to substrates), it has not been reported as a mechanism for evasion from capture (e.g., Alcala, 1962; Alcala & Brown, 1982).



Figure 6. The Gigante Narrow-disked Gecko *Gekko gigante*.

Gigante Narrow-disked Gecko Gekko gigante Brown & Alcala (Figure 6)

The species was observed in most caves that we visited during daytime but can be found also in karst forests and adjacent Ipil-ipil (*L. leucocephala*) plantations. Because they are usually found in cave roofs during the survey and estimation on surface area is difficult and unreliable, we can only present counts of the species.

The highest count of this species is in Wawa Cave with 22 individuals. About 16 individuals were also counted in Gintagoan Cave, a small coastal cave in Gigante Norte on 16 December 2009 (Table 4). In addition, several eggs (about 12–15 per clutch) were observed in this cave. Unlike most of the caves in Gigantes, these caves are less disturbed by humans. The rest of the caves have been destroyed by humans; for example, cooking inside the cave resulted in accumulation of soot on cave walls and roofs.

At night, the species often feed on trees, cliffs, and on a few occasions on the ground close to limestone walls. A juvenile *Gekko gigante* was observed being chased by the snake *Chrysopelea paradisi* at the entrance of Pawikan Cave.

Avifauna

The total number of bird species observed in the entire study site is 87

species (Table 4). At least 33 species have been observed in Sicogon. The bird study also documented 42 new records for the Gigantes and 12 new records for Sicogon. Our study observed more species (42 species in Gigantes and 12 species in Sicogon) compared to Kennedy et al. (2000) which listed only 35 species for Gigantes Island and 28 species in Sicogon.

However, we were not able to encounter some of the species Kennedy et al. (2000) reported. They are the Blue-breasted Quail (*Coturnix chinensis*), Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker (*Dendrocopus maculatus*), Mangrove Blue Flycatcher (*Cyornis rufigastra*), White-vented Whistler (*Pachycephala homeyeri*), and Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*). It is possible that we missed them during the survey or they may have disappeared from the island in recent years. Details on the avifauna of the Gigantes are discussed in a separate paper.

In Sicogon, certain species listed by Kennedy et al. (2000) were not encountered, probably because of the short period (4 days) of observation due to security reasons. Another reason is the contraction of the forest cover in the island as a result of farming expansion and charcoal production. There is reason to believe that the Visayan Hornbill (*Penelopides panini*), which is presently an Endangered species (BirdLife International, 2008), may have disappeared from the island.

Mammals

A total of 14 species of mammals were observed during the study, of which 11 species were bats (Table 5). Majority of the species captured were *Rousettus amplexicaudatus* (38 individuals mist-netted in the Gigante Norte Island and 21 individuals in the Gigante Sur). In addition, five species of insectivorous bats were observed roosting in some caves but at very low density (ca 1 to 12 individuals per cave).

The only large mammal observed was the Long-tailed Macaque *Macaca fascicularis* on the three major islands (Sicogon, Gigante Norte, and Gigante Sur). In Sicogon and Gigante Sur, most of the sightings were in cliffs with thick vegetation. On one occasion, a group of five individuals was seen gleaning in the intertidal area of Sicogon.

Because of its affinity to the mainland Panay, certain Negros-Panay endemic mammals probably existed on Sicogon in the past, such as the Visayan Spotted Deer (*Rusa alfredi*) and the Visayan Warty Pig (*Sus cebifrons*). These species are presently considered by the World Conservation Union as Critically Endangered and Endangered, respectively (IUCN, 2010).

DISCUSSION

The Gigantes and Sicogon islands off northeastern Panay in the western Visayan Sea is considered part of the Central Visayan Pleistocene Ice-Age Island (Heaney, 1986). The former are primarily karst islands, which also serve as land-bridge between the Pleistocene Islands of Panay, Cebu, Negros and Masbate in the Visayan Sea (Brown & Alcala, 2000), while the latter was probably once connected to the mainland Panay during the Pleistocene when the sea level was about 120m lower than the current level (Heaney, 1986).

Ferner et al. (2000) listed the herpetofauna of Panay, including the small associated islands like the Gigantes and Sicogon. Their list for the Gigantes did not include *Cosymbotus* (= *Hemidactylus*) *platyurus*, *Cerberus rynchops*, *Rhinella marina* (formerly *Bufo marinus*) and *Kaloula conjuncta*. These four species of herpetofauna were observed during our study. These species are relatively common in houses and in the vicinity of human dwellings.

The restricted range of *G. gigante* and *P. insulatus* in the karst areas of the Gigante Islands indicates the importance of limestone habitats in the evolution of these two island endemics (Alcala & Alcala, 2005). This role is further illustrated by the presence of other limestone endemic frogs such as *P. speleaus* on Negros Island (Brown & Alcala, 1982), *P. bayani* on Samar (Siler et al., 2009), *P. paengi* on northwest Panay (Siler et al. 2007) and *P. biak* on Luzon (Siler et al., 2010) as well as the gekkonids such as *Gekko ernstkelleri* on northwest Panay (Rosler et al., 2006), and *G. carusadensis* on Luzon (Linkem et al., 2010).

Dunson and Minton (1978) reported 13 species of sea snakes from the Gigantes including *Laticauda colubrina* and *L. laticaudata*, which we encountered in the rocky shores of Gigante Sur and the islets of Dyakit-dyakit, Pulupandan, and Uay Dahon. We think that the population of the two *Laticauda* species may have declined over the years to judge from the loss of coral reefs, which are the snakes' feeding grounds (Elfes et al., in manuscript). *Laticauda* species appear to be particularly vulnerable because the eels and catfish (*Plotosus* spp.) they feed on coral reefs are harvested extensively often through the use of chemical poisons such as cyanide. In addition, the Near Threatened species *L. semifasciata* (see Elfes et al., in manuscript), which was reported by Dunson and Minton (1978) in the Gigantes, was not encountered during the survey. There is a need to make an assessment of sea snakes and coral reefs in the Gigantes.

Threats to the biodiversity of the Gigantes and Sicogon

The caves we visited were generally disturbed with some caves showing signs of drying up. The disturbance was mainly attributed to human activities like treasure hunting, guano collection, and the use of caves for waste disposal. Cave surface disturbance in the form of deforestation is also evident on the islands of the Gigantes. Forest species together with cultivated species like Ipil-ipil (*L. leucocephala*) are indiscriminately harvested for timber and charcoal. The cutting of trees is driven primarily by the demand for fuel wood. This has significantly caused the rapid decline of forest cover particularly on the two Islands of Gigantes. Loss of forest cover has resulted in the exposure of the karst landscape and consequently the drying up of caves in the area making it less habitable for the cave-dwelling animals.

The proposed conversion of the forestland in Sicogon into a plantation of rattan (*Calamus* sp.) may lead to the disappearance of most forest-dwelling species, including the flying foxes (*Pteropus pumilus* and *P. hypomelanus*) that roosted in trees. As observed during the survey, several hardwood species like narra (*Pterocarpus indicus*) were illegally poached from the forestland, presently being managed by the DENR. In addition, slash-and-burn farming (*kaingin*) and production of charcoal have encroached into the forested portion of the island.

Aside from habitat destruction, collection of *Gekko* species by the locals for the supposed “foreign buyers” may be considered as the most recent threat to the endemic gekkonid species. Although *Gekko gecko* appeared as the target for this so-called “buying and selling” of *Gekko*, the minimum weight target of 300g is considered. Apparently, the locals collect any species of the genus *Gekko* (including *Gekko gigante*) and bring them to the mainland (Estancia town) to be weighed, only to be released anywhere as the lizards fall short of the required weight of 300g (L. Cordova, pers. comm.).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The presence of endemic species on the islands of the Gigantes and Sicogon makes the area significantly important in terms of research

and conservation. The distinct and unique distribution of species among neighbouring islands presents an interesting perspective on island biogeography and isolation. On the other hand, the presence of threats on the island endemics and their habitats is a great challenge to the sustainable management of the area. Some of the more pressing matters that need to be immediately addressed to preserve the species and their habitats are suggested as follows:

- The remaining Sicoogon Forest should be preserved and denuded timberland areas replanted with indigenous species to sustain the watershed and local source of water and support local wildlife habitats.
- Information, Education and Communication (IEC) should be intensively undertaken in the Gigantes islands so that protection of caves and sustainable use of resources can be promoted, pursued, and undertaken.
- A strategy to allocate vacant areas for agroforestry production should be developed and implemented so that locals will have source of wood to use for cooking and other household uses.
- The regulatory and monitoring capability should be strengthened by providing regular funds to the Bantay Dagat/Bantay Gubat task force.

Moreover, the study further encourages local academic /research institutions and government line agencies like DENR and DA to cooperate in the monitoring and management of biodiversity in the area.

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Table 1.

Population densities of *Platymantis insulatus* during an ENSO event in 2009-2010.

Site	Date	Cave Entrance		No. of Plots	Mean Density (ind./100m ² ±S.E.)		Cave Interior		RH (%)	No. of Plots	Mean Density (ind./100m ² ±S.E.)	
		Ambient Temp. (°C)	RH (%)				Ambient Temp. (°C)	RH (%)				
Danao-danao Cave 1	13-Dec-09	28.0	87	3	absent		27.0		91.5	3	2.0±0.58	
Danao-danao Cave 2	13-Dec-09	26.0	92	3	0.67±0.67		26.0		92	3	3.67±1.20	
Danao-danao Cave 3	13-Dec-09	28.0	87	3	0.67±0.67		27.0		91.5	2	2.0	
Wawa Cave	14-Dec-09	28.0	87	2	absent		28.0		87	3	1.67±0.33	
Elepante Cave	16-Jun-10	28.0	82	1	absent		28.0		82	1	absent	
Pawikan Cave	16-Jun-10	28.0	82	4	2.75±0.48		28.0		82	10	4.30±1.86	
Bulubadiang Cave	14-Dec-09	28.0	82	2	absent		28.0		75	3	1.0±0.57	
Bakwitan Cave 1	15-Dec-09	26.0	92	4	0.50±0.50		26.0		92	1	absent	
Bakwitan Cave 2	18-Dec-09	28.0	87	2	absent		26.0		92	3	2.38±0.88	
Lapus-lapus Cave	18-Dec-09	27.0	91.5	2	absent		26.0		92	2	1.5±0.5	
Langub Cave	18-Dec-09	28.0	87	2	absent		27.0		92	4	absent	
Gintago-an Cave	18-Dec-09	28.0	87	2	absent		28.0		87	2	absent	
Harpa Cave	18-Dec-09	27.0	91.5	2	absent		27.0		91.5	1	absent	
Longon-longon Cave	19-Dec-09	26.0	92	2	absent		25.0		92	4	absent	
Cabugao Dako 1	19-Dec-09	27.0	75	2	absent		27.0		93	2	3.5±0.50	
Cabugao Dako 2	13-Jan-10	28.0	87	2	absent		27.0		93	2	absent	
Cabugao Dako 3	13-Jan-10	28.0	87	2	absent		27.0		93	2	absent	
	13-Jan-10	28.0	87	2	absent		27.0		93	1	3.0	

Table 2.

List of amphibians and reptiles known from Gigantes and Sicogon Islands.

Family	Species	Gigante Norte	Site Gigante Sur	Sicogon
Ceratobatrachidae	<i>Platymantis insulatus</i>	X, F, AA	X, BA1, F	F
	<i>Platymantis dorsalis</i>			F
Ranidae	<i>Platymantis corrugatus</i>		X, BA1, F	X, F
	<i>Fejervarya cancrivora</i>	X	X, BA1	F
	<i>Polypedates leucomystax</i>		X, F	
	<i>Limnonectes visayanus</i>			F
	<i>Occidozyga laevis</i>			
Microhylidae	<i>Kaloula conjuncta</i>	X		
Bufonidae	<i>Rhinella marina</i>	X	X	X
	<i>Hemidactylus frenatus</i>	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F
	<i>Hemidactylus platyurus</i>	X	X	X
	<i>Gehyra mutilata</i>	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F
	<i>Gekko gigante</i>	X, BA2, F, A, AA	X, BA2, F, A, AA	
Gekkonidae	<i>Gekko mindorensis</i>			X, BA2, F
	<i>Gekko gekko</i>	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F
	<i>Lepidodactylus lugubris</i>	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F	X, BA2, F
	<i>Cyrtodactylus amulatus</i>			F
	<i>Cyrtodactylus philippinicus</i>			F
	<i>Emoia atrocostata</i>		X, B	
	<i>Brachymeles talinis</i>			F

Continued in the next page...

Table 2. (Continued...)

List of amphibians and reptiles known from Gigantes and Sicoogon Islands.

Family	Species	Gigante Norte	Site Gigante Sur	Sicoogon
Elaphidae	<i>Lanprolepis smaragdina philippinica</i>	X, BA3, F	X, BA3, F	X, BA3, F
	<i>Mabuia multicaarinata borealis</i>	X\BA3, F	X\BA3, F	F
	<i>Sphenomorphus jagori grandis</i>		X\BA3	BA3, F
	<i>Sphenomorphus steerei</i>	X, BA3	X, BA3, F	BA3
	<i>Sphenomorphus cumingi</i>			F
	<i>Laticauda colubrina</i>		X, DM	
	<i>Laticauda laticaudata</i>		X, DM	
	<i>Laticauda semifasciata</i>		DM	
	<i>Hydrophis inornatus</i>		DM	
	<i>Hydrophis cyanocinctus</i>		DM	
	<i>Hydrophis fasciatus</i>		DM	
	<i>Hydrophis ornatus</i>		DM	
	<i>Hydrophis belcheri</i>		DM	
	<i>Lapemis curtus</i>		DM	
	<i>Astrofia stokesii</i>		DM	
	<i>Pelamis platurus</i>		DM	
Typhlopidae	<i>Ramphotyphlops cumingii</i>	F		
Acrochordidae	<i>Acrochordus granulatus</i>		X, DM	

Continued in the next page...

Table 2. (Continued....)

List of amphibians and reptiles known from Gigantes and Sicogon Islands.

Family	Species	Gigante Norte	Site Gigante Sur	Sicogon
Boidae Colubridae	<i>Boiga dendrophila</i>	X, F	X, F	F
	<i>Cerberus rynchops</i>		X, DM	
	<i>Chrysopelea paradisi</i>		X, F	F
	<i>Cyclocorus lineatus alcalai</i>		F	
	<i>Dendrelaphis terrificus</i>		F	
	<i>Tropidonophis negrosensis</i>			F
Families = 11	Number of Species = 44	15	30	26

NOTE: (X)-This study; (A)-Alcala (1986); (BA1)-Brown & Alcala (1970); (BA2)-Brown & Alcala (1978); (BA3)-Brown & Alcala (1980); (B)-Brown (1992); (F)-Ferner et al. (2000); (DM)-Dunson & Minton (1978); 24 species recorded in this study.

Table 3.
Counts of *Gekko gigante* in cave habitats of the *Gigantes*.

Site	Counts	Remarks
<i>Gigante Sur</i>		
Danao-danao Cave 1	0	Slightly disturbed; with markings on walls
Danao-danao Cave 2	0	Less disturbed; sloping/vertical entrance
Danao-danao Cave 3	2	Disturbed by collection of guano and treasure hunting activities
Wawa Cave	22	Minimal disturbance; <i>G. gigante</i> found in loose groups
Pawikan Cave	4	Disturbed by collection of guano and treasure hunting activities
Elepante Cave	15	Slightly disturbed
Cabugao Dako (cluster of 3 caves)	7	Disturbed by treasure hunting activities; one cave with soot on walls and roofs
Ipil-ipil plantation (near karst)	15	<i>G. gigante</i> found foraging at night
<i>Gigante Norte</i>		
Bakwitan Cave 1	6	Disturbed by collection of guano and treasure hunting activities
Bakwitan Cave 2	2	Disturbed by collection of guano and treasure hunting activities
Lapus-lapus Cave	1	Disturbed by collection of guano and treasure hunting activities
Langub Cave	6	Walls and ceiling with heavy soot and floor with broken glasses and plastics; frequented by people
Gintaoan Cave	16	No disturbance; <i>G. gigante</i> found in groups of 3-12 individuals
Bulubadiang Islet	2	<i>G. gigante</i> not found in caves but in deep crevices
Harpa Cave	5	Disturbed by collection of guano and treasure hunting activities
Lungon-lungon Cave	4	Disturbed by collection of guano and treasure hunting activities

Table 4.
Checklist of bird species known from the Gigantes and Sicoгон Islands.

English Name	Species	Status*	Gigantes		Sicoгон	
			Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study	Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study
Philippine Megapode	<i>Megapodius cumingi</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Streaked Shearwater	<i>Calonectris leucomelas</i>	M		X, NR		
Yellow Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>	R		X, NR		
Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	R		X, NR		
Rufous Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax caladonicus</i>	R	X	X		
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	R	X	X		X, NR
Pond-heron	<i>Ardeola</i> sp.	M		X, NR		
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	R		X, NR		
Pacific Reef Egret	<i>Egretta sacra</i>	M		X, NR		X
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	M		X, NR		
Great Frigatebird	<i>Fregata minor</i>	R		X, NR		
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	R		X, NR		
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	R	X	X		X, NR
Crested Serpent-Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	R			X	X, NR
Barred Rail	<i>Gallirallus torquatus</i>	R			X	X
White-browed Crane	<i>Porzana cinerea</i>	R		X, NR		
Blue-breasted Quail	<i>Coturnix chinensis</i>	R	X	X, NR		
Barred Buttonquail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>	R	X	X		
Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	M			X	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	M		X, NR		
Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	M		X, NR		
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	M		X, NR		
Sniipe	<i>Gallinago</i> sp.	M		X, NR		
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	M		X, NR		
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	M		X, NR		
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	M		X, NR		X
Grey-tailed Tattler	<i>Heteroscelus brevipes</i>	M		X, NR		

Continued in the next page...

Table 4. (Continued...)

Checklist of bird species known from the Gigantes and Sicoogon Islands.

English Name	Species	Status*	Gigantes		Sicoogon	
			Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study	Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study
Great Crested Tern	<i>Sterna bergii</i>	M		X, NR		
Little Tern	<i>Sterna albigrons</i>	M			X	
Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	M		X, NR		X
Island Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia bitorquata</i>	R	X	X, NR		
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	R		X, NR		X, NR
Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	R		X, NR		X, NR
Zebra Dove	<i>Geopelia striata</i>	R	X	X		X, NR
Pink-necked Green Pigeon	<i>Treron vernans</i>	R	X	X		X
Pied Imperial-Pigeon	<i>Ducula bicolor</i>	R		X, NR		
Hodson's Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx fugax</i>	R		X, NR		
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>	M	X	X	X	
Philippine Coucal	<i>Centropus viridis</i>	PE	X	X		X, NR
Grass Owl	<i>Tyto capensis</i>	R		X, NR		
Philippine Hawk Owl	<i>Ninox philippensis</i>	PE		X, NR		
Philippine Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus manillensis</i>	PE		X, NR		
Glossy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia esculenta</i>	PE	X	X		X, NR
Pygmy Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia troglodytes</i>	PE	X	X		X, NR
Uniform Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia vanikorensis</i>	R	X	X		
Edible-nest Swiftlet	<i>Collocalia fuciphaga</i>	R		X, NR		
Visayan Hornbill	<i>Penelopides panini</i>	PE			X	
Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>	R		X, NR	X	
Ruddy Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon coromanda</i>	M		X, NR		
Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo althiis</i>	M		X, NR		
Philippine Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos maculatus</i>	PE	X			X, NR
Hooded Pitta	<i>Pitta sordida</i>	R				

Continued in the next page...

Table 4. (Continued...)

Checklist of bird species known from the Gigantes and Sicogon Islands.

English Name	Species	Status*	Gigantes		Sicogon	
			Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study	Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study
Golden-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone sulphurea</i>	R		X, NR		X, NR
White-breasted Woodswallow	<i>Artamus leucorhynchus</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	M		X, NR		
Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo tahitica</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Striated Swallow	<i>Hirundo striolata</i>	M		X, NR		
Pied Triller	<i>Lalage nigra</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	M		X, NR		
Black-naped Oriole	<i>Oriolus chinensis</i>	R	X	X		X, NR
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Grey-streaked Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa griseisticta</i>	M				
Pied Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>	R		X, NR	X	X
White-vented Whistler	<i>Pachycephala homeyeri</i>	R	X			
Golden-headed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>	R		X, NR		
Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Philippine Bulbul	<i>Ixos philippinus</i>	PE	X	X	X	X
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Tawny Grassbird	<i>Megalurys timoriensis</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Striated Grassbird	<i>Megalurys palustris</i>	R		X		
Arctic Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	M	X	X		
Oriental Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus orientalis</i>	M		X, NR		
Asian Glossy Starling	<i>Aplonis panayensis</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Coleto	<i>Sarcops catuus</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	R		X		
Blue Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	M	X	X	X	X
Mangrove-blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyanerpes ruficastris</i>	R	X	X, NR		
Pygmy Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum pygmaeum</i>	PE	X	X		

Continued in the next page...

Table 4. (Continued...)

Checklist of bird species known from the Gigantes and Sicoogon Islands.

English Name	Species	Status*	Gigantes		Sicoogon	
			Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study	Kennedy et al. (2000)	This study
Olive-backed Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris jugularis</i>	R	X	X	X	X
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>	R		X, NR	X	X
Black-headed Munia	<i>Lonchura malacca</i>	R	X	X		X
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	M		X, NR		
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	M	X			
Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>	M	X	X		
Total Number of Species = 87			35	72	29	33

NOTE: PE-Philippine Endemic; R-resident; M-migrant; NR-new record; (*) based on Kennedy et al. (2000)

Table 5.

A list of mammals observed in the Gigantes and Sicogon during the survey.

Family	Species	North Gigante	Gigante Sur	Sicogon
<i>Volant mammals</i>				
Eballonuridae Pteropodidae (Fruit Bats)	<i>Saccolaimus saccolaimus</i>		12	
	<i>Pteropus hypomelanus</i>	(1)	1(1)	30
	<i>Pteropus pumilus</i>			15
	<i>Rousettus amplexicaudatus</i>	(38)	(21)	
	<i>Macroglossus minimus</i>	(1)	(1)	
	<i>Ptenochirus jagori</i>		(1)	
Rhinolophidae (Horsehoe and Roundleaf Bats)	<i>Cynopterus brachyotis</i>	(3)	(4)	(3)
	<i>Rhinolophus virgo</i>	1		
	<i>Hipposideros diadema</i>		1	
Vespertilionidae (Vesper and Evening Bats)	<i>Murina cyclotis</i>		3	
	<i>Pipistrellus tenuis</i>		(3)	
<i>Non-volant mammals</i>				
Cercopithecidae (Monkeys) Muridae (Mice and Rats) Soricidae (Shrews)	<i>Macaca fascicularis</i>	2	3	10
	<i>Rattus tanezum</i>	1(3)	3	4
	<i>Suncus murinus</i>	3(2)	2	2
	Number of Species = 14	8	14	5

Assessment of the Forest Remnants of Gigantes and Sicogon Islands, Iloilo province, Philippines

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This paper presents the status of forest vegetation in the Gigantes and Sicogon islands, in Carles, Iloilo province, off northeastern Panay Island, Philippines. Sampling of trees was based on 27 main plots (400m² each) while saplings and undergrowth species were sampled within 27 sub-plots (200m²) and 108 smaller sub-plots (1m² each), respectively. A total of 88 species of forest plants belonging to 67 genera and 30 Families have been identified in the 27 sampling plots. Sicogon Island has about 571.2 ha (50.29% of the total land area) of relatively intact forest while Gigante Sur and Gigante Norte have 283 ha (47.11%) and 92.73 ha (19.25%) of karst forest, respectively. The forest cover in the three islands has been altered due to farming and charcoal production. The impact of such activities may affect the fauna endemic to these small islands. Protection of the remaining forests on these islands is also recommended.

KEYWORDS: forest, vegetation, karst, Gigantes, Sicogon, Iloilo

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, the extent of forest cover (now about 3% of the total land area) is declining at a rate of 1.4% from 1990 to 2000 alone (Langenberger, Martin, & Sauerborn, 2006) mainly as a result of intensive agriculture and other anthropogenic factors (Heaney & Regalado, 1998). The lowland forests are the most threatened (Co et al., 2006).

Elefan and Guanzon (in press) briefly summarized the floristic studies done in Western Visayas with emphasis on selected forest ecosystems of Panay (Fuentes & Andraje, 2008; Bennert, 2006; Madulid, 2000; Elefan, 2002, 2004, 2005; Madulid, 2002) and Negros (Hamann et al., 1999).

Aside from the rapid assessment of Fauna and Flora International in Sicogon, knowledge on the forests in the Gigantes and Sicogon is limited due to the lack of recent forest assessment (see Pedregosa et al., 2006). This study addresses the information gap.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Brief description of the study areas

Description of each island is provided below. All sites have remaining lowland forests, with elevations ranging from sea level to about 100 meters.

Gigante Sur (11.5886°N, 123.3363°E) (Figure 1) is composed primarily of karst forests (Figure 2) on the east with patches of “ipil-ipil” (*Leucaena leucocephala*). The rest of the island is cogonal with a few areas of scrub and agricultural areas planted with fruit trees and coconuts. In the north is an extensive fishpond, a large portion of which used to be an extensive mangrove forest.

Gigante Norte (11.6246°N, 123.3489°E) (Figure 1) is located just 0.9 km north of Gigante Sur. Its remaining forest is fragmented and stunted in karst formations.

Sicogon Island (11.4458°N, 123.2625°E) (Figure 1) is located 9.5 km east of Estancia town. To the northeast is another island (Calagnaan) separated only by a narrow channel. Unlike the Gigante Islands, Sicogon is non-karst with both soil type and vegetation similar to that of the mainland Panay indicating that it may have been once connected to the mainland during the Ice-age (Pleistocene period). In the eastern side is a forest reserve with about 282 hectares (Figure 3)

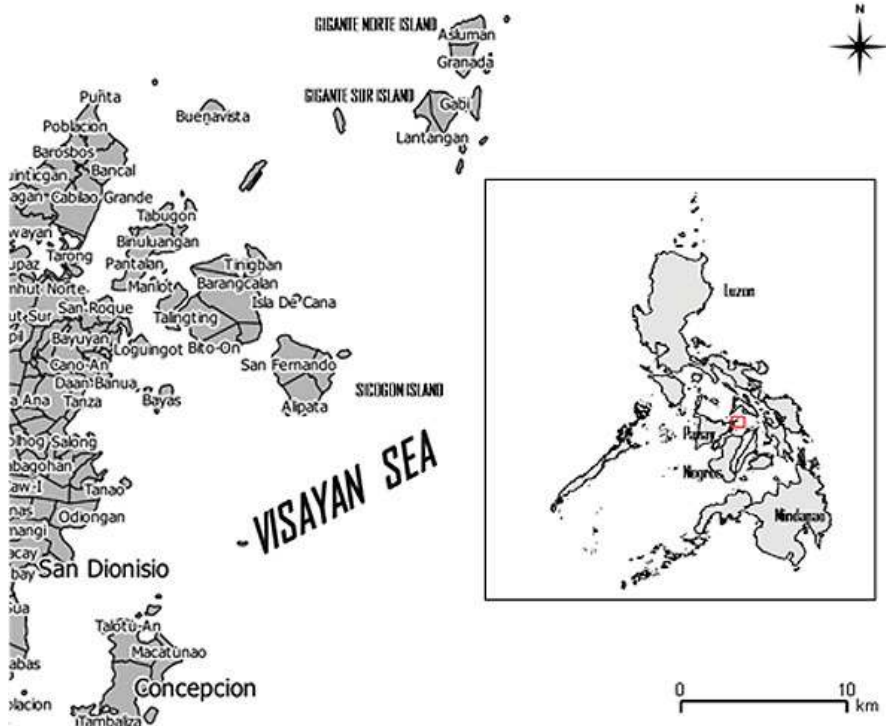


Figure 1. A map showing the location of the three islands covered by the study (Gigante Norte, Gigante Sur, and Sicogon).

under the jurisdiction of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region VI (DENR-VI) through DENR Administrative Order No. 04 issued on April 24, 2008. This forest reserve was formerly managed by Sicogon Development Corporation (SIDECO), a private company, through DAO No. 05, series of 1989. The western side of the island, however, has been deforested and now dominated by cogon as a result of frequent slash-and-burn farming (Figure 4). Such activities, including cutting of trees (Figure 5) for charcoal production and other domestic uses, have recently encroached in the supposed Sicogon Forest/Tree Park.

Data gathering

Forest coverage (in hectares) on each of the three islands (Sicogon, Gigante Sur, and Gigante Norte) was determined using Geographic Information System (GIS) softwares primarily Quantum® GIS



Figure 2. View of a typical karst forest landscape in Gigante Sur.



Figure 3. A view of the Sicogon Forest/Tree Park (viewed from the eastern side).



Figure 4. Deforested side of Sicogon Island (viewed from the southwestern side).



Figure 5. Illegally cut trees in the timberland of Sicogon Island, Carles, Iloilo.

1.8.0-Lisboa (QGIS). Data obtained by actual ground survey using GPS (Global Positioning Systems) units (Garmin®-760) are also incorporated in the analysis of forest coverage. Areas (in hectares) were then computed using Map Tools of QGIS. The survey was conducted from March 15 to 24, 2010.

Sampling plots measuring 20 m x 20 m (main plots), 200-250m apart, were established along each transect in the forested portion of

each island. A total of 27 main plots were surveyed, 15 in Sicogon and 6 each in Gigante Sur and Gigante Norte. Within each of the main plots, a 10 m x 20 m sub-plot was established to determine sapling density. In the corners of the main plot, 1m x 1m sub-plots were established to sample the undergrowth vegetation (herbs and seedlings). In Sicogon, the survey was limited to the 282-ha forest reserve currently under the jurisdiction of the DENR-VI due to security problems related to agrarian reform claims.

For overstorey trees (i.e. trees occupying the upper part of the crown strata) the following measurements were obtained: diameter at breast height (DBH) and the total height of each species. For the saplings and the erect palms, only DBH was measured and total heights of the plants. Basal area for each tree and sapling species was derived from their corresponding DBH following the formula: BA (basal area in m²/ha) = $0.00007854 \times \text{DBH}^2$.

Identification of plant species was done in the field following Fernando et al. (2004), Co, et al. (2006), Galinato, Moody, & Piggin (1999) and Madulid (2000) as references. The local residents were utilized in the identification of local names of plants. Unidentified plants are listed only according to their local names only.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sicogon Island has about 571.2 ha (50.29% of the total land area) of relatively intact forest while Gigante Sur and Gigante Norte have 283 ha (47.11%) and 92.73 ha (19.25%) of karst forest, respectively (Table 1). These figures might be over-estimates because the bare areas due to recent small-scale forest clearings within each forest were not excluded in the analysis. In addition, the areas occupied by steep barren limestone outcrops were not eliminated. Pedregosa et al. (2006) reported about 315.2 ha (29.12%) of forest on Sicogon Island. Nevertheless, this study is the first to describe the forest coverage of the Gigantes Group of Islands.

In this study, a total of 88 species of forest plants belonging to 67 genera and 30 Families (Figure 6, Tables 2-4) have been identified in the 27 sampling plots. These plant species (arranged according to Family) are listed in Tables 2-4. The most common families are Anacardiaceae (10 species), Euphorbiaceae and Moraceae with 7 species each, Palmae or Arecaceae with 6 species, Guttiferae and Myrtaceae with 5 species each. Combretaceae and Lauraceae were represented by 4 species each while the

rest are represented by 1-3 species only. The number of species presented in this paper is lower than the previous report by Pedregosa et al. (2006) by which 318 species of plants has been identified in Sicogon Island. Such difference might be attributed to the following factors: [1] this study was conducted during the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Event (see Yumul et al. 2010) that other plants (e.g. herbaceous species) were not observed; [2] Sampling was concentrated only in the forest reserve; and [3] this study relied on local knowledge in plant identification.

In terms of the total basal area (Tables 2-4), Sicogon has 504.36 m²/ha basal area of trees and 85.97 m²/ha of saplings. Gigante Sur and Norte have lower tree basal area, with 8.01 m²/ha and 16.29 m²/ha, respectively. Basal area for saplings in the latter two islands (660.88 m²/ha in the Gigante Sur and 156.20 m²/ha in the Gigante Norte), however, appear to be higher than in Sicogon.

Table 1.

Land area and forest coverage in the study sites.

Island	Total Land Area* (ha)	Total Forest Cover (ha)	(%)
Sicogon	1,135.70	571.20	50.29
Gigante Norte	481.70	92.73	19.25
Gigante Sur	600.70	283.00	47.11

*excluding the associated islets

Tree density was highest in Sicogon (N=15) with 605±93.7 S.E. ind./ha followed by Gigante Sur (n=6) with 516±29.3 S.E. ind./ha and the Gigante Norte (n=6) with only 254.2±83 S.E. ind./ha (Figure 7). Sapling density was observed highest in the Gigante Sur (1,216.67±66.50 S.E. ind./ha) followed by Sicogon (896.67±123.29 S.E. ind./ha), and Gigante Norte (533.33±197.50 S.E. ind./ha), in that order. Density of undergrowth species (including herbaceous plants and seedlings), measured in 1m² quadrats, was highest in Sicogon (N=60) at 8.72±2.35 S.E. ind./m² while only 1.42±0.8 S.E. ind./m² in the Gigante Sur (N=24) and 0.92±0.36 S.E. ind./m² in Gigante Norte (N=24) [Figure 8].

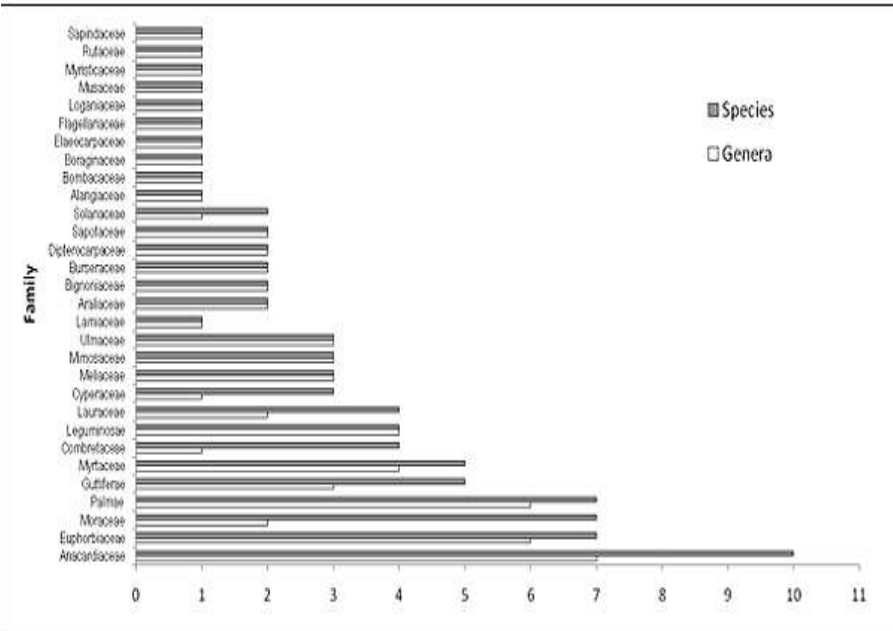


Figure 6. Number of species and genera of the 30 Families of plants identified in the 27 plots (400m2) during the survey (all sites combined).

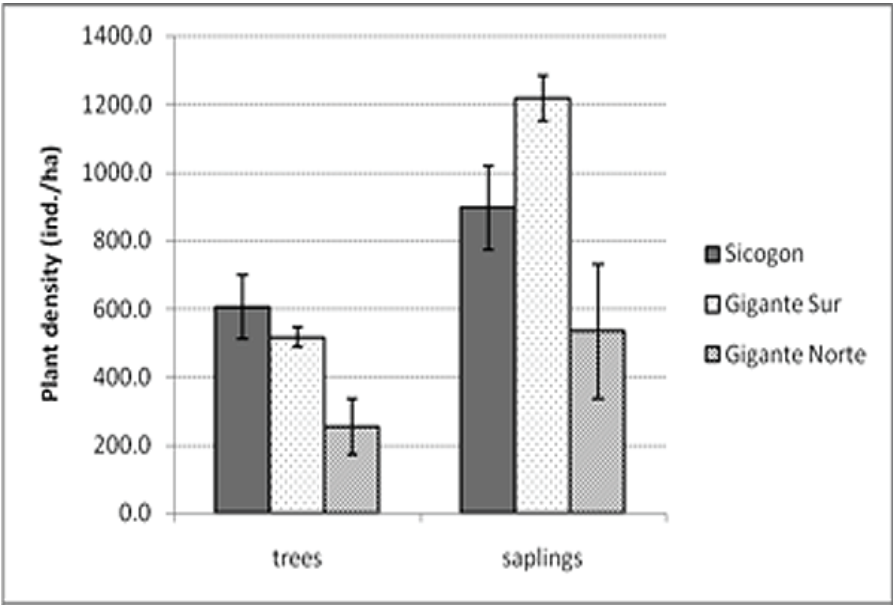


Figure 7. Mean density (ind./ha±S.E.) of forest trees and saplings in the three Islands. (N=15 in Sicogon; 6 in Gigante Sur; 6 in Gigante Norte).

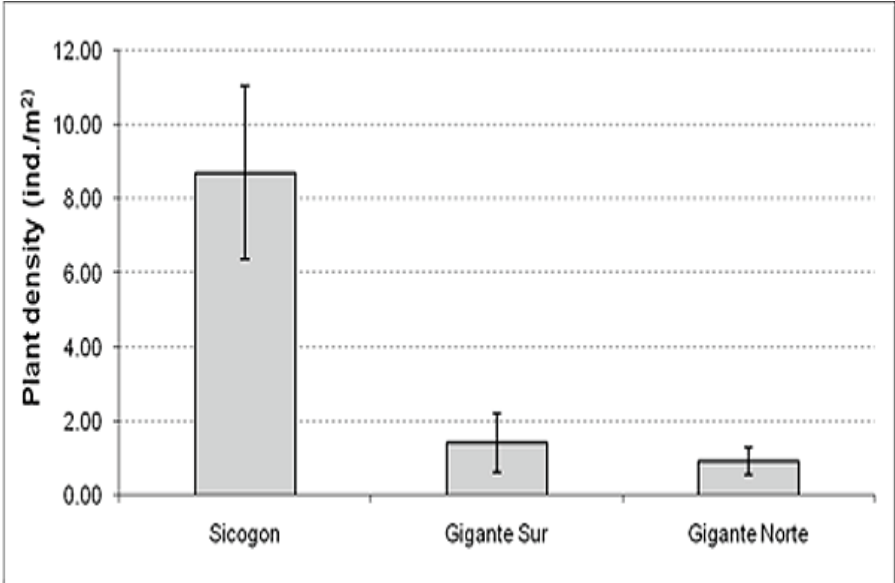


Figure 8. . Mean density (ind./m²±S.E.) of undergrowth plants in the three Islands. (N=60 in Sicogon; 24 in Gigante Sur; 24 in Gigante Norte).

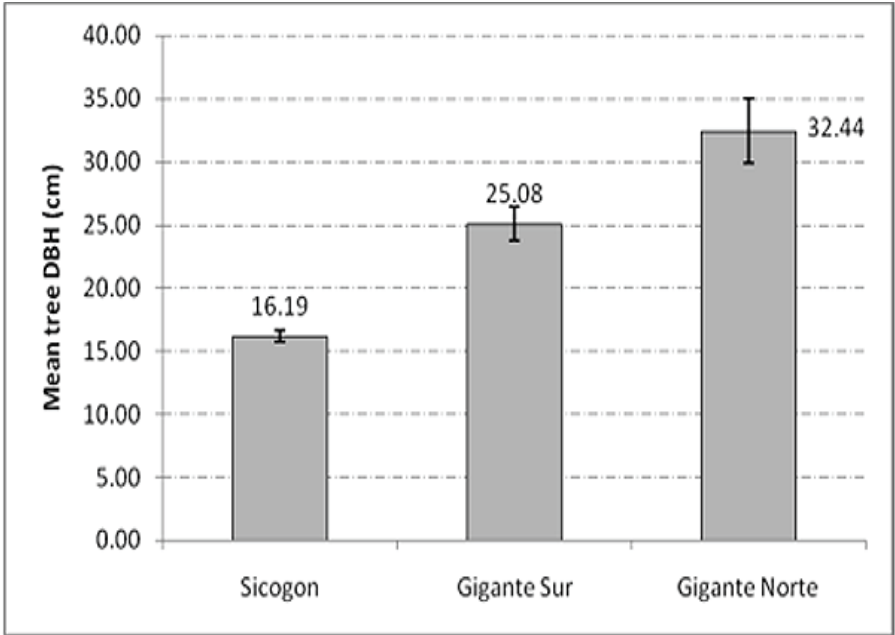


Figure 9. Mean tree diameter at breast-height or DBH (cm ± S.E.) in the three Islands (N=440 in Sicogon; 124 in Gigante Sur; 61 in Gigante Norte).

Table 2.
List of tree species and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
Sicogon	Alangiaceae	<i>Alangium meyeri</i>	Putian	2.279
		<i>Ardisia squamulosa</i>	Tagpo	18.339
	Anacardiaceae	<i>Parishia oblongifolia</i>	Bulabog	19.096
		<i>Polyscias nodosa</i>	Malapapaya	4.052
	Araliaceae	<i>Teijsmanniodendron athernianum</i>	Sasalit	9.924
		<i>Radermachera sibuyanensis</i>	Badlan	21.144
	Bignoniaceae	<i>Canarium asperum</i>	Pagsahingin	13.791
	Burseraceae	<i>Garuga floribunda</i>	Bogo	14.399
		<i>Terminalia foetidissima</i>	Talisai-Gubat	15.143
	Combretaceae	<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	Talisay	1.489
		<i>Shorea contorta</i>	White Lauan	5.146
	Dipterocarpaceae	<i>Shorea negrosensis</i>	Lauan Pula	0.776
		<i>Antidesma impressinerve</i>	Inyam	0.662
	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Bridelia glauca</i>	Balitanhan	8.049
		<i>Glochidion camiginense</i>	Bonot-bonot	0.459
	Leguminosae	<i>Macaranga tanarius</i>	Binunga	3.602
		<i>Pterocarpus indicus</i>	Narra	7.742
	Guttiferae	Unidentified species	Tapgas	2.118
		<i>Cratoxylon blancoi</i>	Panagulingon	0.831
		<i>Cratoxylon celebicum</i>	Panagulingon	10.126
		<i>Garcinia binucao</i>	Batwan	14.826

Continued in the next page...

Table 2. (Continued...)

List of tree species and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
	Lamiaceae	<i>Vitex parviflora</i>	Tugas	49,151
	Lauraceae	<i>Actinodaphne dolichophylla</i>	Pipi	0.459
		<i>Litsea balusanensis</i>	Lauat	2.422
	Loganiaceae	<i>Cynometra luzoniensis</i>	Oringon	0.294
	Meliaceae	<i>Dysoxylum sibuyanense</i>	Bungloi	1.81
	Moraceae	<i>Artocarpus blancoi</i>	Antipolo	2.21
		<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>	Nangka	0.459
	Myristicaceae	<i>Myristica philippinensis</i>	Duguan	6.424
	Sapotaceae	<i>Palaquium obovatum</i>	Lahas	5.357
	Unidentified	Unidentified species	Tabagak	7.696
		Unidentified species	Tulu-tabagak	2.872
		Unidentified species	An-an	14.277
		Unidentified species	Bagobinlod	11.336
		Unidentified species	Bonrang	0.372
		Unidentified species	Panguom/ Manggo-om	74.747
		Unidentified species	Manok-Manok	15.557
		Unidentified species		1.034
		Unidentified species		1.034
		Unidentified species		1.034
		Unidentified species	Danlugan	4.594
		Unidentified species	Hitang-hitang	14.577

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Table 2. (Continued....)

List of tree species and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
Gigante Sur	Anacardiaceae	Unidentified species	Kulukatumbal	16.304
		Unidentified species	Lunok	13.898
		Unidentified species	Paklangan	5.195
		Unidentified species	Paksion	7.774
		Unidentified species	Pasyawan	5.564
		Unidentified species	Samun	47.791
		Unidentified species	Samun-Pula	1.034
		Unidentified species	Samun-Puti	0.556
		Unidentified species	Sapra	0.294
		Unidentified species	Taksi-on	1.81
		Unidentified species	Tambang pula	0.556
		Unidentified species	Tamlang/Tanlang	8.164
		Unidentified species	Tamlang/Tanlang - Pula	0.556
		Unidentified species	Tol-an - tol-an	3.156
		Sub-total = 504.361		
		No. of Species = 57		
Gigante Sur	Bursaceae	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Mangga	0.587
		<i>Mangifera philippinensis</i>	Paho	0.788
		<i>Spondias purpurea</i>	Sineguelas	0.116
		<i>Canarium asperum</i>	Pagsahingin	0.378

Continued in the next page...

Table 2. (Continued...)

List of tree species and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
Gigante Norte	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Bridelia glauca</i>	Balitahan	3.002
	Lamiaceae	<i>Vitex parviflora</i>	Tugas	0.037
		<i>Macaranga tanarius</i>	Binunga	0.02
	Meliaceae	<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Mahogani	1.015
	Mimosaceae	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Ipil-ipil	0.314
		<i>Samanea saman</i>	Akasya	0.094
	Moraceae	<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>	Nangka	0.227
	Myrtaceae	<i>Psidium guajava</i>	Bayabas	0.042
	Unidentified	Unidentified species	Aniho	0.01
	Verbenaceae	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Gmelina	1.376
	No. of Families = 8		No. of Species = 14	
			Sub-total = 8.006	
	Alangiaceae	<i>Alangium meyeri</i>	Putian	0.031
	Combretaceae	<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	Talisay	0.362
Sicogon	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Bridelia glauca</i>	Balitahan	3.711
		<i>Macaranga tanarius</i>	Binunga	0.048
	Lamiaceae	<i>Vitex parviflora</i>	Tugas	0.079
	Leguminosae	<i>Pterocarpus indicus</i>	Narra	6.922
	Lauraceae	<i>Litsea balusanensis</i>	Lauat	0.42
	Meliaceae	<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Mahogani	0.191
	Mimosaceae	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Ipil-ipil	0.942

Continued in the next page...

Table 2. (Continued...)

List of tree species and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
	Moraceae	<i>Artocarpus communis</i>	Kubi	0.023
		<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>	Nangka	0.169
	Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium cumini</i>	Lumboy	0.362
	Palmae	<i>Caryota</i> sp.	Lubi-lubi	0.048
	Sapotaceae	<i>Chrysophyllum caimito</i>	Kaimito	0.987
	Unidentified	Unidentified species	Lunok	1.641
	Verbenaceae	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Gmelina	0.359
No. of Families = 13		No. of Species = 16	Sub-total = 16.295	
			Total	528.662

Table 3.

List of saplings and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
Sicogon	Alangiaceae	<i>Alangium meyeri</i>	Putian	1.473
		<i>Ardisia squamulosa</i>	Tagpo	10.656
	Anacardiaceae	<i>Dracontomelon edule</i>	Lamio	0.561
		<i>Parishia oblongifolia</i>	Bulabog	0.561
		<i>Semecarpus elmeri</i>	Anagas	0.037
		Unidentified species	An-an	3.261
	Araliaceae	<i>Polyscias nodosa</i>	Malapapaya	2.327
		<i>Teijsmanniodendron ahernianum</i>	Sasalit	0.809
	Bignoniaceae	<i>Gnetum gnetum</i>	Bago	0.68
		<i>Radermachera sibuyanensis</i>	Badlan	1.819
	Burseraceae	<i>Canarium asperum</i>	Pagsahingin	6.908
	Combretaceae	<i>Terminalia foetidissima</i>	Talisai-Gubat	5.309
	Cyperaceae	<i>Fimbristylis junciformis</i>	Malasibuyas	0.23
	Dipterocarpaceae	<i>Shorea contorta</i>	White Lauan	1.282
	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Antidesma impressinerve</i>	Inyam	0.331
		<i>Bridelia glauca</i>	Balitahan	0.623
	Leguminosae	<i>Glochidion camiguinense</i>	Bonot-bonot	0.772
		<i>Ormosia calavensis</i>	Bahai	0.094
		<i>Pterocarpus indicus</i>	Narra	0.037
		Unidentified species	Tapgas	10.128

Continued in the next page...

Table 3. (Continued....)

List of saplings and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
Guttiferae		<i>Calophyllum inophyllum</i>	Bitag	0.156
		<i>Cratoxylum celebicum</i>	Panagulingon	3.372
		<i>Cratoxylum blancoi</i>	Kansilai	0.331
		<i>Garcinia binucao</i>	Batwan	0.119
		<i>Litsea balusanensis</i>	Lauat	0.331
Lauraceae		<i>Artocarpus blancoi</i>	Antipolo	1.824
Moraceae		<i>Myristica philippinensis</i>	Duguan	0.655
Myristicaceae		<i>Tristaniaopsis decorticata</i>	Malabayabas	0.501
Myrtaceae		Unidentified species	Lomboy-lomboy	0.083
Palmae		<i>Caryota</i> sp.	Patikan	0.009
Rutaceae		<i>Zanthoxylum rhetsa</i>	Kayetana	0.057
Sapindaceae		<i>Guioa koelreuteria</i>	Salab	0.498
Solanaceae		<i>Solanum verbascifolium</i>	Malatabako	0.561
Ulmaceae		<i>Celtis luzonica</i>	Magabuyo	0.009
Unidentified		Unidentified species	Bangluai	0.147
		Unidentified species		0.177
		Unidentified species	Manok-Manok	0.037
		Unidentified species	Asin-asin	0.147
		Unidentified species	Bagobinlod	0.616
		Unidentified species	Bagobinlod	1.489

Continued in the next page...

Table 3. (Continued...)

List of saplings and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m²/ha)
Gigante Sur	Anacardiaceae	Unidentified species	Basyawan	0.23
		Unidentified species	Bogo-an	0.23
		Unidentified species	Bongloy	2.371
		Unidentified species	Hitang-hitang	4.235
		Unidentified species	Kulinos	0.184
		Unidentified species	Kulukatumbal	4.307
		Unidentified species	Litis	2.086
		Unidentified species	Paklangan	2.316
		Unidentified species	Panguom/ Manggo-om	3.083
		Unidentified species	Samun	3.051
		Unidentified species	Sapra	0.331
		Unidentified species	Tabagak	1.422
		Unidentified species	Tamlang	2.065
		Unidentified species	Tamlang	0.331
		Unidentified species	Tol-an - tol-an	0.625
		Unidentified species		0.083
No. of Families = 20		No. of Species = 56	Sub-total = 85.967	
Gigante Sur	Anacardiaceae	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Mangga	0.354

Continued in the next page...

Table 3. (Continued....)

List of saplings and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
	Boraginaceae	<i>Mangifera philippinensis</i>	Paho	1.545
	Boraginaceae	<i>Carmona retusa</i>	Buntatae	0.354
	Burseraceae	<i>Canarium asperum</i>	Pagsahingin	0.865
	Combretaceae	<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	Talisay	0.255
	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Bridelia glauca</i>	Balitahan	0.992
		<i>Macaranga tanarius</i>	Binunga	0.681
		Unidentified species	Alimotbot	0.581
	Lamiaceae	<i>Vitex parviflora</i>	Tugas	0.128
	Lauraceae	<i>Litsea balusanensis</i>	Lauat	0.354
	Meliaceae	<i>Sandoricum koetjape</i>	Santol	0.227
		<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Mahogani	10.095
	Mimosaceae	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Ipil-ipil	13.738
		<i>Samanea saman</i>	Akasya	0.227
	Moraceae	<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>	Nangka	0.354
		<i>Artocarpus nitidus</i>	Kubi	1.262
		<i>Ficus callophylla</i>	Lunug	2.949
	Musaceae	<i>Musa sapientum</i>	Saging	0.128
		<i>Psidium guajava</i>	Bayabas	0.128
	Palmae	<i>Caryota cumingii</i>	Pugahan	5.288
		<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Lubi	583.784

Continued in the next page...

Table 3. (Continued...)

List of saplings and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
Gigante Norte	Sapotaceae	<i>Corypha elata</i>	Buri	29.802
		<i>Ptychorhapis intermedia</i>	Lubi-lubi	0.156
		<i>Chrysophyllum cainito</i>	Kaimito	1.092
		Unidentified species	Bagobinlod	0.482
	Unidentified	Unidentified species	Lino	0.61
		Unidentified species	Wawa	0.227
	Verbenaceae	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Gmelina	3.488
		<i>Premna odorata</i>	Argao	0.737
		No. of Species = 29	Sub-total = 660.883	
	Anacardiaceae	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Mangga	0.394
		<i>Semecarpus elmeri</i>	Anagas	0.47
		Unidentified species	An-an	0.098
		<i>Carmona retusa</i>	Buntatae	0.098
Silliman	Boraginaceae	<i>Garuga floribunda</i>	Bogo	0.098
	Bursaceae	<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	Talisay	0.448
	Combreteaceae	<i>Macaranga tanarius</i>	Binunga	0.35
	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Vitex parviflora</i>	Tugas	0.098
	Lamiaceae	<i>Actinodaphne dolichophylla</i>	Pipi	0.47
	Lauraceae	<i>Litsea balusamensis</i>	Lauat	0.317

Continued in the next page...

Table 3. (Continued...)
List of saplings and their corresponding basal area in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	Total Basal Area (m ² /ha)
	Meliaceae	<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Mahogani	0.35
	Mimosaceae	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Ipil-ipil	2.19
		<i>Samanea saman</i>	Akasya	0.448
	Moraceae	<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>	Nangka	0.995
		<i>Ficus saxophila</i>	Balitahan	0.175
	Myrtaceae	<i>Psidium guajava</i>	Bayabas	0.273
	Palmae	<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Lubi	138.781
		<i>Corypha elata</i>	Buri	8.914
	Unidentified	Unidentified species	Seda-seda	0.175
	Verbenaceae	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Gmelina	1.017
		<i>Premna odorata</i>	Argao	0.044
No. of Families = 13		No. of Species = 21	Sub-total = 156.203	
				Total = 903.053

Table 4.

List of undergrowth species in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name
Sicogon	Alangiaceae	<i>Alangium meyeri</i>	Putian
	Anacardiaceae	<i>Ardisia squamulosa</i>	Tagpo
		<i>Parishia oblongifolia</i>	Bulabog
		<i>Semecarpus elmeri</i>	Anagas
	Araliaceae	<i>Polyscias nodosa</i>	Malapapaya
		<i>Teijsmanniodendron alhernianum</i>	Sasalit
	Bignoniaceae	<i>Gnetum guenon</i>	Bago
		<i>Radermachera sibuyanensis</i>	Badlan
	Burseraceae	<i>Canarium asperum</i>	Pagsahingin
	Combrretaceae	<i>Terminalia foetidissima</i>	Talisai-gubat
	Cyperaceae	<i>Fimbristylis junciformis</i>	Malasibuyas
	Dipterocarpaceae	<i>Shorea contorta</i>	White Lauan
	Elaeocarpaceae	<i>Elaeocarpus leytenis</i>	Bunsilak
	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Bridelia glauca</i>	Balitahan
	Leguminosae	<i>Ormosia calatensis</i>	Bahai
		<i>Pterocarpus indicus</i>	Narra
		Unidentified species	Taggas
	Fern (unidentified)	Unidentified species	
	Flagellariaceae	<i>Flagellaria indica</i>	Baling-uai
	Guttiferae	<i>Cratoxylon celebicum</i>	Panagulingon

Continued in the next page...

Table 4. (Continued....)
List of undergrowth species in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name
	Lauraceae	<i>Garcinia binucao</i>	Batwan
	Moraceae	<i>Litsea balusanensis</i>	Lauat
		<i>Artocarpus blancoi</i>	Antipolo
		<i>Artocarpus nitidus</i>	Kubi
		<i>Ficus balete</i>	Balete
	Myristicaceae	<i>Myristica philippinensis</i>	Duguan
	Myrtaceae	<i>Syzygium costulatum</i>	Paitan
		<i>Tristaniopsis decorticata</i>	Malabayabas
	Palmae	<i>Caryota</i> sp.	Patikan
		<i>Chrysalidocarpus lutescens</i>	Golden Palm
		<i>Calamus</i> spp.	Uway
	Rutaceae	<i>Zanthoxylum rhetsa</i>	Kayetana
	Sapindaceae	<i>Guioa koelreuteria</i>	Salab
	Sapotaceae	<i>Palaquium obovatum</i>	Lahas
	Solanaceae	<i>Solanum mauritianum</i>	Malatalong
	Unidentified	Unidentified species	Nagrang
		Unidentified species	An-an
		Unidentified species	Asin-asin
		Unidentified species	Bagobinlod
		Unidentified species	Bilog-Mala

Continued in the next page...

Table 4. (Continued...)

List of undergrowth species in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name
		Unidentified species	Bagobinlod
		Unidentified species	Tol-an-tol-an
		Unidentified species	
		Unidentified species	
		Unidentified species	
		Unidentified species	
		Unidentified species	
		Unidentified species	
		Unidentified species	Haras
		Unidentified species	Hitang-hitang
		Unidentified species	Kasyawan
		Unidentified species	Kulukatumbal
		Unidentified species	Lagdong
		Unidentified species	Lagping
		Unidentified species	Ngarstree
		Unidentified species	Paklangan
		Unidentified species	Paksion-Puti
		Unidentified species	Panguom/ Manggo-om
		Unidentified species	Pasyawan
		Unidentified species	Pulu-tamlan

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Table 4. (Continued...)

List of undergrowth species in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name	
Gigante Sur	Euphorbiaceae Mimosaceae Palmae Unidentified	Unidentified species	Samun	
		Unidentified species	Saprut	
		Unidentified species	Sirali-Sirali	
		Unidentified species	Sulusimuyaw	
		Unidentified species	Tabagak	
		Unidentified species	Takinis	
		Unidentified species	Tamlang/Tanlang - Pula	
		Unidentified species	Saging-saging	
		No. of Families = 25		No. of Species = 68
		Gigante Sur	Euphorbiaceae Mimosaceae Palmae Unidentified	Unidentified species
<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Ipil-ipil			
<i>Caryota cumingii</i>	Pugahan			
Unidentified species	Kolo-katumbal			
Unidentified species	Solo-serale			
Unidentified species	Sulosimuyao			
No. of Families = 4		No. of Species = 7	unidentified	

Continued in the next page...

Table 4. (Continued...)

List of undergrowth species in the three islands.

Site	Family	Species	Local name
Gigante Norte	Anacardiaceae	<i>Semecarpus elmeri</i>	Anagas
	Bombacaceae	<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	Kapok
	Burseraceae	<i>Garuga floribunda</i>	Bogo
	Combretaceae	<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	Talisay
	Euphorbiaceae	<i>Macaranga tanarius</i>	Binunga
		Unidentified species	Alimotbot
	Lamiaceae	<i>Vitex parviflora</i>	Tugas
	Meliaceae	<i>Swietenia macrophylla</i>	Mahogani
	Mimosaceae	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i>	Ipil-ipil
	Moraceae	<i>Artocarpus heterophylla</i>	Nangka
		<i>Ficus saxophilla</i>	Balitahan
	Palmae	<i>Caryota</i> sp.	Patikan
		<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Lubi
	Unidentified	Unidentified species	Lunok
		Unidentified species	
		Unidentified species	Kolo-katumbal
		Unidentified species	Solo-serale
		Unidentified species	Sulosimuyao
	Verbenaceae	<i>Gmelina arborea</i>	Gmelina
No. of Families = 11			No. of Species = 19

Mean tree diameter (DBH) was highest in the Gigante Norte (32.44 ± 2.57 cm) [$N=61$], 25.08 ± 1.29 S.E. cm in Gigante Sur ($N=124$), and only 16.19 ± 0.47 S.E. cm in Sicogon ($N=440$). Pedregosa et al. (2006) reported 15 to 45 mean DBH of trees in Sicogon. The low DBH values obtained by this study suggest that large trees may have been removed by poachers (Figure 5). It should be noted that certain wildlife such as the endangered Visayan Hornbill (*Penelopides panini*), which used to inhabit Sicogon, relied on tree-holes for its nest (Kennedy et al., 2000). Extraction of larger trees on this island may have caused the disappearance of this endemic bird on Sicogon. Pedregosa et al. (2006) proposed that this species as well as another species of hornbill the Visayan Writhed Hornbill (*Aceros waldeni*), along with other Visayan endemics (Visayan Spotted Deer (*Rusa alfredi*) and Visayan Warty Pig *Sus cebifrons*) be re-introduced in Sicogon. Given the dwindling forest cover of this small island, it seems detrimental for these endemic vertebrates for such re-introduction program. The Philippine Wildlife Act (RA 9147) (section 12) provides requirements for any re-introduction program such as detailed ecological studies.

The remaining forest patches in the Gigantes are relatively small and fragmented (below 10 ha) and concentrated in karstic portions of the islands. In addition, these remaining forests are predominantly composed of "ipil-ipil" (*L. leucocephala*) in the lower slopes. The accessible areas have been subjected to occasional harvest by the locals for firewood and charcoal production.

Forest protection, especially in Sicogon, remains a great challenge for the concerned government agencies due to emerging socio-political problems. For example, the unresolved agrarian reform problem coupled with the lack of a management body to ensure protection of the timberland in Sicogon may exacerbate the rate of deforestation in the island.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Exploitation and destruction of forest resources in the study area are expected because of the absence of tenurial instruments in most of the timberland areas of Sicogon and Gigantes. Further fragmentation of forests may eventually result in the decrease of water supply in these islands. In addition, certain endemic wildlife found on these islands depends on intact forest with large trees (e.g. birds utilizing tree

holes for nesting) for survival are further endangered due to timber poaching and other human activities.

Because of the observed deterioration of forests in the islands covered in this study, conservation and protection efforts must be pursued thru the initiative of the Local Government of Carles. In addition, the LGU of Carles should implement and enforce existing laws and programs.

The karst areas in Gigantes should be declared as protected areas. These areas are identified home of the two endangered animal species that can only be found in Gigantes Islands—the Island Forest Frog *Platymantis insulatus* and the Gigante Narrow-disked Gecko *Gekko gigante* (Brown & Alcala, 2000; Alcala & Alcala, 2005).

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THEOLOGICAL
FORUM

PART 2



Theology of Struggle Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Everett Mendoza

A THEOLOGY BORNE OF STRUGGLE

The term “theology of struggle” is loosely used to refer to a type of theological reflection that emerged during the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship in the decade between the mid-70s and the mid-80s. Its concepts and methodology were drawn from Latin American Liberation theology via some Roman Catholic priests (e.g., Fr. Edmundo Garcia) who went to South America to learn about Basic Christian Communities. Like the beginnings of Latin American liberation theology, theology of struggle consisted of pastoral articulations in seminar/worships, meetings, conferences, forums and liturgical celebrations by church people who actively worked for justice in behalf of the poor. Some of these articulations saw print in conference proceedings and documentation and, occasionally, in religious magazines and journals. But it has not matured as a particular theological genre as liberation theology had. The term is believed to have been coined by Redemptorist priest, Fr. Luis Hechanova.

Theologians of struggle choose their own thematic emphases and specific methodology, but they observe some common fundamentals. They take commitment to justice and the liberation of the oppressed as a pre-understanding of theology. Theology and struggle belong together. The struggle provides the experience that makes the task of doing theology a matter of personal faith

commitment. Theology's claims cohere and make sense according to the logic of the struggle. It may appear to those who have no sympathy for the struggle that in the theology of struggle the Christian faith has suffered violence as it is being instrumentalized and reduced to religious ideology. In form, theology of struggle may show characteristics of religious ideology, but being rooted in genuine piety and driven by hope in God's final victory over the powers of evil, it is an authentic theology. Any fruit of theological reflection, regardless of the correctness of its methodology, is ideology if it does not issue from faith.

Theologians of struggle also regard rigorous biblical exegesis and scientific social analysis as foundational in the theological process. Frequent references are made to church teachings, the Christian classics and other ecumenical documents. But basically, theological statements are formed from a synthesis of biblical exegesis and social analysis. Theologians of struggle do theology in order to help Christians make theological sense of their involvement, and that to them is their main contribution to the struggle. Doing theology is concomitant to involvement in the struggle.

In terms of content, theology of struggle is *firstly*, based on the fundamental conviction that God is calling the faithful to seek justice and freedom and to struggle to realize it. God's salvation covers every aspect of existence and includes earthly endeavors particularly the vindication of the poor and oppressed. But its realization will be achieved through hard struggle. Since social evils are products of human action, it must be by human action that such evils are to be removed from society. And because salvation is promised by God, victory in the struggle is assured. Faith in God's promise of liberation is the source of hope in the struggle. Theology of struggle is a pastoral task that aims at providing spiritual support and encouragement to Christians who struggle for justice and liberation.

In the *second* place, God's promise of justice and freedom is not only for Christians but also for all who truly seek it. Therefore, Christians will find many others who also seek it and struggle to realize it. In the struggle there is no distinction between Christian believers and non-believers. God certainly knows what motives hide in the hearts of those who join in the struggle but that is not for Christians to worry about. They are fellow travelers on the road to freedom; comrades they all are in the struggle. Theology of struggle keeps a running intellectual dialogue (not flirting!) with ideology, specifically with

Marxism of various shades.

Thirdly, in the course of the struggle there evolved norms of behavior that may go against conventional Christian ethics. For example, it considers the use of coercive force and physical violence as being determined more by the necessities of the struggle than by abstract philosophical arguments about human life and dignity. The evidence in Scriptures and in the tradition of the church that favors non-violence in the pursuit of justice is overwhelming. Arguments that allow Christians to employ violence to achieve justice are at best tenuous. Against the sheer bulk of theological evidence and argument, theology of struggle claims to have found a legitimate place for violence in the concrete struggle for justice and liberation. This is a very real source of tension and discomfort among comrades in the struggle and among theologians of struggle themselves. It is also a vital area for dialogue and deeper discourse. But even as questions of ethical import are being resolved, Christians in the struggle are challenged to survive and transcend the moral ambiguities that they must face daily.

In sum, theology of struggle developed from [1] a wrestling within the faith-community of the meaning of salvation in its specific form as the people's historic struggle for social emancipation and transformation, [2] its dialogue with comrades-in-struggle outside the Christian faith community, and [3] the exigencies of formulating a practical ethic appropriate to the struggle. The process involved opening up to hear the deepest longings of the poor through their stories, songs, prayers and art; engagement in ideological discourse with secular intellectuals; developing new approaches to the study of scriptures and interpretation of Christian traditions; advocacy for reforms in the institutions of the church; and carrying out practical duties and responsibilities in the struggle.

A THEOLOGY SURVIVING THE STRUGGLE

Judging from the recent works of Filipino theologians, one may see that the theology of struggle is nothing more than a brief episode in the continuing quest of Filipino theologians to articulate faith's engagement with contemporary realities. Like a shooting star streaking across the sky, it seems to have disappeared before reaching the horizon—spending itself up before having fully realized the reason for its existence. The urgency of proclaiming the good news

of a radically new reality has apparently given way to diligence in the unchanging and endless tasks of responding to the day-to-day needs of the faithful. Pastors who used to excite, sometimes shock, the flock with fiery prophetic messages find themselves in the more familiar role of leading the sheep to green pastures and still waters. Whereas in a time not too long ago they spent a good part of the week integrating with poor farmers and slum dwellers, now their days are cluttered with the daily chores and routine of parish work. Their minds that used to simmer with passion to create ideas and images to express and justify their commitment to the struggle now burn with just enough heat and brightness to keep the flock warm and secure inside the fold.

We can think of some reasons for this development. For *one*, mainstream churches have been observed to have turned off the flow of pastoral support to mass political activities. Pastoral theology, such as theology of struggle, feeds on the church's pastoral energies. In the heyday of basic Christian communities, the people sought their pastors for support and comfort in their engagement with the powers. In my observation, there is at present a marked thinning of the church's solidarity with the struggling people. Doing pastoral theology can go only so far without ecclesiastical support and encouragement. The virtual dismantling of basic Christian communities and other church-related community organizing projects has effectively shut down the plant that generated an immense amount of pastoral energies that later erupted into a theology of struggle. A theological imagination enlivened and sustained by pastoral work with organized communities of people in the struggle eventually lost vitality. Adapting to a new pastoral situation, Filipino theologians who formed a small circle of theologians of struggle sought elsewhere for sources of pastoral energies for their continued theological work.

Two, the climate of hopefulness that energized the surging movement for change leading to the EDSA uprising and on to the early months of Cory's revolutionary regime has apparently dissipated with the growing disillusionment of the people and their disenchantment with the succession of governments that followed the fall of Marcos. The legal mass struggle that peaked in the run-off to the snap election all but evaporated with the passage from dictatorship to constitutional democracy. For the masses, however, life did not improve but had gotten even worse. Hope and struggle are fraternal twins in the politics of change. The biblical images of a new world—a new heaven and a new earth—warmed the hearts of

people in struggle and served as metaphors for radical social change. But, at the passing of the “apocalyptic” era, revolutionary fervor among theologian-activists lost much of its heat. Consequently, theology of struggle suffered a condition that may be described as theological hypothermia.

Three, the leading figures of theology of struggle have literally grown old. The body—the brain in particular—has lost much of its strength to cope with the demands of concrete social struggles. The spirit may be willing but the flesh is weak. Some sorts of theology may be conceived from above ivory towers by theologians even in their twilight years. But it is in the very nature of the theology of struggle that its theologians are physically located in the people’s struggle. A sunset career in the academe, institutional responsibilities, retirement and illness may have redirected their visions heavenward. The intensity, lucidness, vigor, urgency and compelling power of their articulation may have lost their adolescent luster. A closer study of the differences between “early works” and “later works” against the backdrop of the theologians’ life-journey might be revealing of the inner dynamics binding social praxis and theological conviction. What has become of theologians of struggle may, in the end, prove the validity of the materialist principle that matter, rather than the mind, has the first and last words.

THEOLOGY AND STRUGGLE: THE SECOND TIME AROUND

At a particular juncture in Philippine history, the people’s struggle encountered pastoral theology. On the one hand, there is a liberation struggle spanning four centuries of Western colonization *and* Christianization. On the other hand, here comes a pastoral theology that has undergone a radical conversion experience via the reforms of Vatican II (same as in Latin American liberation theology). A theology of struggle for the suffering Filipino people had long been in waiting. It took a ripening of a people’s struggle for justice into a national revolution in the modern era and a reawakening of the church from medieval stupor that paved the way to a historic encounter of faith and liberating action. The continuing encounter of faith and liberating action is the historical and intellectual basis for a revived theology of struggle into the future. What will it be like? What has it learned from the past and what new elements will it introduce?

1.

While the old term may be kept, in essence the middle preposition *of* needs to be replaced with the conjunction *and*. In its literal interpretation, theology *of* struggle appears to make the former but an ideological appendage to the latter even though this is far from being intended by its theologians. The accusation that theology of struggle is nothing more than the legitimization of a secular cause is actually not entirely without basis. On the other hand, the conjunction, *both*, connects and separates. The two are not the same nor necessarily connected, but related and bound together in a given historical moment. It is in the context of a specific historical syntax that the two, *theology* and *struggle*, define their relationship.

Consequently, the theological agenda of a renewed theology of struggle should include a diligent critique not only of a domesticating theology but also of a liberating struggle. Noble causes undergirded by humanist ideals are all so susceptible to hubris or pride that is blind to its own errors and weaknesses. Softly vigilant against the insidious workings of sin in every human endeavor, they are bound to commit excesses, and justifying these, in pursuit of their goals. The loftiest of human acts and projects remain creaturely and human, therefore, susceptible to corruption and perversion. Theology of struggle has the unique task of judging every social movement according to the supreme yardstick of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The tendency in the struggle to coopt theology for the purpose of legitimizing its acts cannot be overstated or taken for granted. This tendency is nearly unavoidable because in the secular mind, the universe is a self-contained system that lacks categories for theological discourse. When this is not avoided, theology gets reduced to adjunct ideology, consequently losing its prophetic edge, if not its reason for being.

The task of criticizing the struggle on theological grounds involves what is known in psychotherapy as splitting of the ego: one part of the ego participates in a person's organismic (total) experience while another part is observing one's self as though from the outside. Analogically, theologians of struggle are fully immersed in the struggle while being detached from it at the same time. A theological detachment enables theologians to subject the struggle to the critique of the gospel even as they remain its (struggle) dutiful servants. It

would be a test of faith and of political commitment for theologians to remain in the struggle. Moving out of the struggle, however, is not an option. This is their cross and suffering.

On the other hand, the struggle does not owe to theology for its content and conduct. The struggle derives its sources from the historical experience and aspirations of its human motive forces rather than from the church's sacred literature, traditions, and ecclesiastical decrees. For example, it is not up to theology to determine the specific historical relations between labor and capital, or the mode of struggle the peasants must choose in order to gain possession of land under a feudal or semi-feudal system. Today, the Philippine struggle has already come of age and ought to be emancipated from the tutelage of theology.

In that new relationship, there is tension: a struggle within for unity and autonomy. One informs, supports, affirms and encourages the other, but they must also stand on their ground to criticize, contradict, and correct each other. By exercising and defending one's autonomy, the danger of cooptation and instrumentalization may be avoided. In the positive sense, theology and struggle should learn from each other in a relationship of mutual trust and independence.

2.

The theological themes would be the same, but there would be a shift in emphasis, for example, from the call to suffering derived from engagement in the struggle to solidarity with those who suffer in the struggle. The shift to suffering and sacrifice is more reflective of the concrete roles that an involved church plays in the struggle. Historically, the church has placed the focus of its pastoral care on the innocent **victims** and **collateral damages** of conflicts for whom and for whose interests the struggle is being waged—the so-called *masa*. While some pastors and church workers may have assumed political duties not constitutive of their proper vocation, in the main their pastoral labor is directed to those who suffer from the effects of violence concomitant to political and armed conflicts. Rejected and persecuted by officers and agents of the state for supporting the struggle, the people find in the church their last refuge and source of comfort. Christian solidarity is most transparent in the church's pastoral work with them.

Putting solidarity in suffering at the crux of theology of struggle connects it to Luther's idea (also adopted by Bonhoeffer)

of Christian discipleship as *via crucis* and *via dolorosa*. The way of the cross is the way of suffering. A major part of the task of theology of struggle is to enlighten and persuade the church to insert itself in the midst of people who suffer in the struggle. Undoubtedly the church, both mainstream and fringe, have been drawn into the swirl of electoral politics. This kind of engagement with the powers tends to distract the church from following the way of the cross to where people are suffering. Christians are called by Jesus to carry the people's cross, not to rub elbows with the rich and powerful.

Theological articulation and pastoral practice form a unity rather than alienated from each other. Theology of struggle suffers alienation when its speech does not match pastoral work. Perhaps one of the reasons why theology of struggle is currently in a silent mode is the lack of correspondence between word and deed. With the apparent ebb in revolutionary fervor among the middle forces, especially church people, the spiritual enthusiasm that energized theology of struggle has also waned. But the church's pastoral practice of solidarity in suffering has continued on despite the ebb and flow of the struggle. As a matter of fact, this particular form of pastoral solidarity runs through the entire thread of church history. In the context of the struggle for justice, however, pastoral solidarity in suffering with the victims and casualties in the struggle acquires a new theological dimension. It becomes an integral part of the church's participation in the struggle itself.

3.

During the anti-dictatorship struggle, theology was at the forefront of the struggle for the people's heart and minds. But the church could have been complicit in the ensuing mystification surrounding the so-called people power revolution and the rise of a devout Catholic woman to power. Cory's mystical sway seems to have held even to this day, which to a large degree accounted for a popular electoral upsurge that hoisted her son Nonoy to the presidency. His victory has added yet another layer to the myth of change without struggle. The Aquino family's closeness to the dominant Catholic Church is likely to provide a climate favorable to the further mystification of the people's minds.

The last elections which saw the worst of traditional politics rearing its ugly head again indicate the state of mind of the people

who voted for the return of discredited public officials (whose names are too familiar to mention). People with minds that are clouded with illusions and false beliefs cannot begin to liberate themselves. It is the task of theology to reopen this particular front of the struggle. It should begin in the church and has to be waged at all levels—from the pulpit to the formation centers and on to the centers of church governance. But where should it actually begin when the church has turned inward and engrossed with institutional cares, when university-based seminaries worry more about academic excellence and respectability, when church leadership would rather play with politicians than be seen among the poor?

Theology of struggle must start anew where it first started—where people's struggle and pastoral work meet, in places where human wickedness abounds and people have no recourse but to fight back. It is at these points of contradictions—of *krisis* (Karl Barth)—that God's grace abounds even more. Outside the safe fold of church communities, pastors will have only the people to rely on. In these God-forsaken lands, they will have to make do with crude theological tools to bring comfort and deliver the gospel.

This is where the not-so-jaded older theologians of struggle may yet be of use. They will serve as mentors of a new crop of theologians. Like the prophets of old who founded prophetic schools in the caves of the deserts, they will have to form communities of younger theologians in places where the sounds of the struggle are within hearing and where the call to suffering and sacrifice rings pure and clear. In time, they will come out to disturb the peace of kings and priests as in the days of Amos and Jeremiah.

CONCLUSION

Local theologies, the genre to which theology of struggle belongs, come from below, that is, from the concrete practice of pastoral work. They are by definition living theologies. But perhaps only its ashes are left of what used to be a fiery articulation of faith. However, let no one be deceived, for the ashes are not only signs of what used to be a fire but also serve to cover and help preserve live embers underneath. Today, the struggle is again catching fire. There is reason, plenty of reasons, to hope that the heat and brightness of the struggle will draw and fascinate a new generation of theologians as the burning bush

did to Moses—bush and a fire that never comes to consume it. This is an apt metaphor for a revived theology of struggle for the next generation.



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Who Would You Invite to Your Banquet?

Reflections Occasioned by the “Theology of Struggle”

Lester Edwin J. Ruiz

INTRODUCTION

Ibring you greetings from the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, an association of more than 250 evangelical, mainline, and Roman Catholic and Orthodox seminaries, theological schools, and university-affiliated divinity schools that, while different missionally and theologically, are committed to commonly held values about what constitutes good accredited, graduate theological education.

THE HEART OF STRUGGLE—FULLNESS OF LIFE

It would be a methodological, practical, and spiritual mistake, I believe, to think that the theology of struggle is only about “struggle.” In my view, “struggle” is not constitutive; it is regulative. That is to say, it enters theological discourse because “something is not right.” What is constitutive, I believe, is “fullness of life,” plenitude, divine and human excess of grace. Or to put the matter propositionally, at the heart of theologies of struggle is “goodness, truth, and beauty.” That is its spiritual “core”—its generative principle. We engage in struggle because the purpose for all of creation is the fulfillment of God’s excessive grace—God’s

plenitude. Whenever and wherever this plenitude is threatened or compromised, an appropriate response is “struggle” (our Muslim sisters and brothers call it Jihad) by which I mean, we preserve, protect, and defend it from harm.

Allow me then, as my response to Dr. Mendoza, and my greetings of solidarity to all of you gathered at this meeting, to share some thoughts on what I understand God’s plenitude might look like.

BANQUETS ARE CRITICAL PART OF CULTURE AND THE BUILDING OF COMMUNITY

For many, if not most, of the cultures and peoples of the world, eating together—sharing meals—having banquets, are an important part of the creation and nurture of community, of “life-together.” In the Philippine context, I know that there are at least three practices that are a crucial part of “life together”: eating, singing, and talking; and, maybe dancing and praying—that is what Filipino “fiestas” are about. To my mind, this gathering is part of that “fiesta.”

IMAGES OF BANQUETS IN THE BIBLE

In the Bible, there are many images of banquets or shared meals. I would draw your attention to four.

The Banquet of King Xerxes

First, there is the banquet of King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) recorded in the Book of Esther, Chapter 1. The author of the Book of Esther tells us:

1 This is what happened during the time of Xerxes, the Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush... In the third year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. The military leaders of Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles of the provinces were present...

4 [A banquet] lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's palace, for all the people from the least to the greatest...

6 The garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones.

7 Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant in keeping with the king's liberality...

10 On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded... Queen Vashti... to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at.

12 But... Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

13 [So the King consults his experts] about "...what must be done to Queen Vashti?" [since] "She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes..."

16 [The advisers replied] "Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes..."

18 This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord.

19 "Therefore... let [the king] issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she. [So that]

20 all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest" ... [and] every man should be ruler over his own household."

Here, the author of the Book of Esther describes in the greatest of detail what kind of banquet King Xerxes held. While everyone was invited, it is very clear that this banquet was only for the important men of the empire. The King even wanted the Queen to offer herself for the pleasure of these important men. And when she refused, he divorced her.

This story has a very contemporary "ring" to it. How many times have husbands expected their spouses—even scolded them—for not obeying them in public? How many pastors have invoked the Bible to ensure that women remain "obedient" and subservient? How many times have we felt that only the most powerful deserve to sit at the "head table"?

The Banquet of Queen Vashti

Second, there is the banquet held by Queen Vashti. In contrast to the way King Xerxes banquet was described, the author of the Book of Esther has only one line for Queen Vashti's banquet:

"9 Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes."

I have often wondered why the story-teller had only one line for Queen Vashti's banquet. One story I heard is that Queen Vashti invited all the women who were not invited to the party of King Xerxes—all the women who were excluded from the centers of the power and privilege of men.

This story also has a very contemporary "ring" to it. How often has the work of wives and daughters, gotten only a small acknowledgement, if at all, even though, we know that it was because of their work that made an event successful, for example, a church dinner, or a church bazaar, or, even keeping the house clean, the meals cooked, the clothes ironed—in addition to taking care of the children... and taking care of the public square?

The Banquet on the Mountainside

Third, there is the banquet of the "feeding of the five thousand." The author of the Gospel of John tells the story in this way:

4 The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"

7 Philip answered him, "Eight months' wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!"

8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up,

9 "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many...?"

11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

12 When they all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces

that are left over. Let nothing be wasted."

13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

The story is profound in its simplicity. In a world of scarcity, a world of selfishness, one boy, with a simple meal—not at all a banquet—in his willingness to share what he had, through the power of Jesus, was not only able to feed five thousand, but had plenty left over. What is interesting to me is that nowhere in the story are we told that if we share, we will be rewarded with God's blessing. The boy gave, without the expectation of any future reward. He gave because it was in his heart to share. Judging from what he had, he probably was not a wealthy boy, but he opened his heart and his hands, and the world was blessed.

The Eucharistic Meal

Finally, there is the banquet we call the Lord's Supper:

21 And while they were eating, [Jesus] said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."

22 They... began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

23 Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me..."

25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."

28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

Three things catch my attention in this story. First, Jesus knew beforehand that one of his inner circle would betray him. Yet,

that betrayal was not enough to exclude the betrayer from being invited to the table of the Lord.

Second, the Eucharist was a simple meal of remembrance. The disciples gathered for the traditional Jewish Passover meal, which Jesus turned into a time of remembrance, not only of his life, death, and resurrection—his sacrifice—but also, of what God was going to do in the world.

And, third, the celebration of Jesus' sacrifice—the struggle—would continue until God's commonwealth is established at the "end of time."

WHAT KIND OF BANQUET WILL YOU HAVE? WHO WILL YOU INVITE TO YOUR BANQUET?

What these four images tell us is that life is a banquet; that every banquet poses for each of us a question, not only of whom we invite to our banquets, but also, what kind of banquet we must have. In this specific context, if theological reflection and action can be understood as a banquet of sorts, then, the question of whom we invite to our banquets is also a question of whom we invited to "do theology."

Will our banquets (our theological reflection and action), be like the one which King Xerxes held—where everyone is invited, but only the important people are honored, and where others are sacrificed for the pleasure of those who are considered important?

Or will our banquets be like the one that Queen Vashti held, where there is no record of who was invited? But judging from the character of Queen Vashti, one can assume that perhaps, those who were invited were those who were not only excluded from the centers of power and privilege, but also those who were courageous, like Queen Vashti, to stand up to these centers of power and privilege and refuse to submit to the unjust exercise of power and privilege. What does it mean to invite these people into our midst?

Or will our banquets be like the one on the mountainside, made possible by the graciousness of a simple boy, who was willing to freely and unconditionally share what he had, especially without the condition of reward for being generous or obedient? In this context, I believe the theology of struggle is light years ahead of traditional theology. Like the little boy, it has made the

poor, the marginalized, and the excluded part of its banquets. But what about our migrant sisters and brothers? Or those who are “religiously Other”? The stranger and the strange? Are they on the guest list as well?

Or will our banquets be like the Lord’s Supper, where everyone is invited—even those who would betray our Lord? Those who would challenge tradition? Those who would ignore life itself? Can we invite into our banquets those who are not like us, those who have hurt us? Those whom we have hurt? And if we do, how do we ensure that justice and compassion are not compromised? That God’s will is done on earth as in heaven?

Brothers and sisters in Christ, those of you who I know in my heart stand at the frontlines of struggles for justice, for peace, for transformation—those who have mounted crosses, borne crosses, taken others off of crosses—what kind of banquet will you have? Who would you invite to your banquet? In other words, whom would you invite to share in your truth, goodness, and beauty? your blessings, your most cherished values? your most intimate convictions? your deepest vulnerabilities? your secrets? your faith?

My prayer is that God will grant us the wisdom and the courage to invite to our banquets all those whom God has loved and created. And may all our banquets, our theologies of struggle, be about the gathering of people together to share freely, joyfully, hopefully, unconditionally in order to transform our world—tempered by the recognition that we may not get there save through the cost of discipleship that may eventuate in “the cross” even as we look to the resurrection of God and of God’s creation, and of God’s ultimate judgment and excessive grace.

Mabuhay kayo!



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The Gospel According to Lualhati Bautista: Crying-out, Resisting, Asserting , and Celebrating¹

Lizette G. Tapia-Raquel

Most of the time when we talk about a theology of struggle, it is in the context of a community, a nation or a people. We use terms such as collective struggle, peoples' struggle, or revolutionary struggle. Indeed, our struggle as a people has been a clamor for true justice, true equality and true freedom for our country. But in the study of the same history, what is evident is the absence of women's voices and perspectives. More often than not, as has been raised by Kwok Pui-lan, Gale Yee and many other Asian feminists teaching in North America, diversity and equal representation is actually tokenism in disguise. The call for liberation has been from the Filipino male perspective. Inevitably, one would conclude that Philippine history is similar to the narratives of Israel in its philosophy of history and ideology. Both are grounded in patriarchy and androcentricity. Both marginalize women by the omission of their stories and their voices in the narratives. Both have constructed and conditioned women so that they serve the purposes of men. For all our proclamations about struggle, we have forgotten women's struggle.

As a woman, I wish to contribute to the theology of struggle an excerpt from my unpublished Master of Theology thesis entitled, *The Gospel according to Lualhati Bautista: Crying-Out, Resisting, Asserting, and Celebrating*². In the course of this paper, I propose that, first, a spirituality of resistance, and resistance as a response and a movement

is essential towards the reign of God, as opposed to a spirituality of repentance and sacrifice so many women have been taught in churches and families. Second, women's voices and stories are sources of God's revelation. Particularly, I will argue that the women of Lualhati Bautista in her novels, *Dekada '70*³ and *Bata, Bata...Paano Ka Ginawa*⁴, are more empowering and liberating women constructions than Esther⁵ and Ruth⁶ in the Biblical text. Third, I propose a movement, method or construction for women's journeys from victimization to celebration—Crying-out, Resisting, Asserting, and Celebrating.

When I was a child, whenever I would cry, I would be told to stop. As a youth, to answer back and to reason with somebody older and with authority was disrespect. As woman and an adult, I would always check my emotions when I was angry or frustrated. My heart would sometimes feel like it would burst but I said very little about what I truly felt and thought. I have cried very little in my life, but the rare moments that I did cry were comforting, healing and liberating.

In my first year in the seminary, Revelation Velunta⁷ was my professor in New Testament Exegesis. For my final paper I submitted interpretations on Matthew 22:23-33. In the text, Jesus had a theological discussion with the Sadducees on the matter of resurrection and the power of God over the living and the dead. They asked Jesus about a woman who married seven brothers, one after another after each one died without producing an heir. The question of the Sadducees was, "In the resurrection, whose wife will she be?" It was a discussion among men, about the resurrection of men, and about the ownership of the woman. The woman in the text is voiceless and nameless.

I cannot imagine the burden of marrying seven brothers, the torture of reproductive labor to produce an heir and the hopelessness of barrenness. Nevertheless, I wanted to cry out for her. This is what I imagined she would say. She begins with resoluteness but ends with hopelessness.

The Woman with Seven Husbands

"I could not believe my fate. My God has forsaken me.
He has allowed my husband to be killed in battle.
He has left me without a son.
What does the future hold for me?
No husband and no child.
Should I resign at my loss and accept my fate like a mendicant?
No! My husband will not be without a descendant!
His sole hope is in me and I will not be deterred.
His brother will have to marry me"

He pities me but has no affection for me.
 He is with me only because his father compelled him.
 He respects me and cares for my welfare
 But when he lays with me, he does not care if he satisfies me.
 Still, I will not be deterred. My husband's fate rests in me.
 I will endure and I will do my part in God's design.

I did not want this union.
 They threatened me so I would do my duty.
 My husband hardly looks at me
 And when he does he is filled with loathing.
 He does not want to bed me and he humiliates my pain.
 I am alone and I feel more alone with a husband like him.

My God, my God, I did not mean to ask
 that you take him away.
 But I could not help but curse
 This man who had to be my husband.
 He beat me up when he was drunk.
 He spoke no kind word to me.
 He called me 'barren' to my face
 And took me against my will.

I moved among the shadows.
 I wished they would not see me.
 His family said I am a curse.
 They are the curse – on me!

Do they not see that I am barren?
 My God, why did you make me so?
 My womb is empty.
 I have no worth.
 Can you not end my pain?

You gave and took away my seven husbands, God.
 And still no child in me.
 I live in the land of the living,
 But dead I might as well be.

The gospel's authorship is attributed to Matthew and if he had heard this oral re-interpretation he would probably say, "Where did that come from?"

As a feminist narrative critic, I am not interested in the author's intention. I am interested in the text itself. So instead of searching for the truth as intended by the author, I search for the truth that is meaningful for my context and my people. I search for 'truths' that will liberate, transform and empower. George Steiner differentiates

the 'reader' and the 'critic.' The 'reader' is someone who 'honors, reveres and serves' the text. The 'critic' probes, questions, challenges and masters the text. I am not a reader. I am a critic. I am a feminist critic, to be exact.

I no longer believe that the Bible is 'the' source of God's revelations. As Methodists, we believe that these come from four sources: scripture, experience, tradition, and reason. What I believe in relation to the Bible is that "a text reflects the culture that produced it." More importantly, "if culture is a text, thus, it can be re-written." Thus, culture can be reconstructed. In criticizing the text and culture, I hope to create new ways of thinking, relating, and doing.

I find narrative criticism and reader-response criticism as powerful tools in seeking meanings and truths. As a feminist narrative critic, I seek to be a resisting reader. I look at how women's voices are revealed or concealed in the texts; how women constructions validate a culture of patriarchy; and how these can be re-interpreted and re-written to transform culture. For example, reading Esther in the Old Testament, I have asked:

- How were the virgins brought to the palace? Were they taken from their homes forcibly or did they line-up and filled out an application form to become a queen?
- When the virgins were brought to the king one by one, were they clothed or naked? Were they eager to 'perform' or were they drugged?
- What was Mordecai's role in the sex slavery of Esther? Was he really a protector or a manipulator?
- Why is it that even if Esther was a savior who averted the massacre of her people, she remained under the power of all the men in the palace and the empire?

Esther is glorified in Christian tradition. She offers her life for others but fails to lament the victimization and enslavement of women in the text. She fails even to cry-out for herself.

Because she was part of God's plan. Because she was used by God to save her people. Such rhetoric justifies all the sufferings and sacrifice women go through.

In a world constructed by men.

In a world constructed by men, women's worth depends on becoming a wife and mother. That is why Ruth's story ends when she marries Boaz and gives birth to a son, Obed.

In a world constructed by men, women: virgins and widows, offer their bodies and lives to male authority. Jephthah's daughter submits to the killing by her father, Hagar and Sarah offer their lives to Abraham, Mary submits to God's design. After God had already done the deed.

In the book *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, Alice Walker⁸ tells the story of a community and a family that deals with female circumcision. Tashi, the female lead character, remembers how as a child she heard a circle of men discuss women and their bodies.

MAN IS GOD'S COCK...

The tsunga's stitch helps the cock to know his crop...

The Woman is Queen... God has given her to us...

We are thankful to God for all his gifts...

If left to herself the Queen would fly...

But God is merciful... He clips her wings...

She did not see God's axe... God struck the blow that made her Queen... Beautiful enough for him to fuck..

GOD LIKED IT TIGHT

GOD LIKES TO FEEL BIG... WHAT MAN DOES NOT?

In a man's world, women's sexuality must be controlled. In the novel, Tashi kills the Tsunga, the woman who circumcised her. The same woman who killed her sister and many young women like her who were not able to survive the torture of female genital mutilation. As Tashi is brought to her execution, a banner is unfurled by those who loved her to celebrate what she had done in the struggle for women and for her people. It read, "Resistance is the secret of joy."

Tashi was conditioned by religion and culture to submit to female circumcision. It was her identity as a woman of her people. It gave her great pride because female circumcision made her a woman. Until she began to cry for herself, to cry for her sister who died in the process, to cry for her mother who held her daughters down so that they could fulfill their destiny.

Until women become conscious of their victimization and oppression, there can be no resistance.

The most significant act of God's salvation in the Old Testament is the Exodus narrative where God heard the cry of the Hebrew people suffering in slavery. The Cry of Balintawak on August 23, 1896, ushered in the revolution of the Filipino people. Chung Hyun Kyung said, "A cry is the first prophetic utterance." Kwok Pui Lan said, "Feminist theology in Asia will be a cry, a plea, an invocation. It emerges from the wounds that hurt, the scars that hardly disappear,

the stories that have no ending.”

While the Biblical and historical narratives have omitted women's voices, feminisms underline the centrality of women's experiences. In the emergence of women's voices today, they establish some permanence and visibility for women's experience in history.

When a woman cries out, she cracks the world open, says Clarissa Pinkola Estes⁹. Amanda, in Lualhati Bautista's novel, *Dekada 70*, is in “a man's world,” being married to a macho man and having three sons. Julian has said in different ways...

Napakaraming importanteng bagay para sa isang lalaki: ang kaniyang trabaho, ang kanyang ambisyon, ang gutom niya sa lakas sa pangangyarihan. Sa babae, tama na ang kanyang asawa't mga anak.¹⁰

To which Amanda imagines she would say,

Dear Julian,

...hindi talaga sapat sa maraming babae ang maging asawa't ina na lang habambuhay! Turo niyo lang sa'min yon....Sa batas n'yo, basta maligaya kayo, dapat na maligaya na rin kami. Anak ng pating.

Minsan tuloy, tinatanong ko na rin kung bakit pa ko pinanganak kung lahat pala ng buhay ko ay para lang sa iba. Hindi naman ako ikaw—ako ako!—bakit ako para sa'yo samantalang ikaw ay para sa 'yo pa rin? Kung maibabalik ko lang talaga ang panahon, sasabihin ko sa'yo: iyo na pati 'yong iyo.¹¹

In another scene, Julian asserts his masculinity saying....

“At ayusin mo ang timbre ng salita mo, Amanda, pag akong kausap mo! Baka nakalimutan mo: ako ang lalaki sa'tin!”¹²

Amanda in her mind says...

...maigting sa bitaw niya ng salita na porke lalaki siya'y siya ang boss! At porke babae ako'y tauhan lang niya 'ko! May umalsang paghihimagsik sa loob ko. Magaling siya, anong ibig niyang sabihin, boss siya at tauhan niya 'ko?

Pero kahit anong galit ko, iyon ang malungkot na katotohanan sa amin. Tagatimpla lang naman talaga 'ko ng kape ni Julian, a. Tagamasahe pag masakit ang loob niya. Live-in maid...

Sa unang pagkakataon sa loob ng dalawampung taong nagdaan, gusto kong pagsisihan na naging nanay lang ako ng mga anak ni Julian.¹³

Lualhati's women cry out for themselves—they articulate the reality of their oppression and pronounce a need to change their situation. Ruth and Esther, cry out for life for others, but do not cry

out for life for themselves. Their responses to the men were silence and submission. Until women cry out for themselves, they cannot truly journey from victimization to celebration.

The second part of my theological construction is resisting. In the Exodus narrative, when the Pharaoh refused to let the Hebrew people go, God said, "Now, I will kill your firstborn son." These words are attributed to God but I believe it was an instinctive response from people who have suffered so much in slavery. By killing the firstborn of the most powerful man, his bloodline is broken and his ability to perpetuate his power is likewise broken. This is a resistance text. And reading with an attitude of resistance has always been practiced by people struggling for dignity, justice and life. Furthermore, to resist is not just to respond in defense but to analyze and dismantle hierarchies, theologies and ideologies of domination.

Ruth in the Old Testament has been read as a conversion story because she chose the 'right' God. But a resisting reading would reveal the complex oppression of women: as extensions of husbands and sons, as properties to be possessed along with the land, and as women burdened with reproductive labor. It also gives us a picture of the dynamics between the landlord and the landless. Ruth is undoubtedly a construction of men.

Boaz took notice of her but she could have been ignored. Boaz provided Ruth grain for picking but he could also have deprived her. Boaz 'knew' her but could have rejected her to become his wife. Boaz impregnated Ruth and gave him a son but what if she had been barren? What if he had been sterile? What if there was no land to be possessed alongside Ruth? At every turn of the story, it could have gone the other way, as it does for so many women, and she could have become even more abused and persecuted as she struggled for life.

In a resisting reading and oral re-telling, I tried to give voice to Naomi and Ruth as they tried to make sense of their struggle to survive.

Naomi:

Wala nang asawa, wala ring tagapag-mana. Wala nang lupa, wala na ring pag-asa.
Ano nga ba ang paga-asawa?

Pagkapit sa patalim, paghabol sa pag-asa.

Bakit ang tadhana hindi maasahan ng kababaihan?

Kaunting bigas sa lupa, ang kapalit ay katawan
 Boaz na mayaman na ginagalang pa ng bayan
 Naghagis ng uhay, upang ang 'sisiw' ay makamtan.

Ruth:

Pag-ibig nga bang maituturing
 ang kabutihan mo sa akin?
 Pagpapala nga ba ni Yahweh
 ang nagbukas sa iyong damdamin?
 Panghalina at pangaakit kinailangan kong gawin
 Nang kinabukasan na mailap akin nang maangkin.¹⁴

The book of Ruth is a sexual drama. It is about meeting and mating, and yet Ruth expresses no desire or pleasure. For many women, oppression is most evident in their sexual relationships.

Lualhati's character, Lea, in *Bata, Bata...Pa'no Ka Ginawa* is a resistance text which rejects the objectification and sacrifice of women's bodies. She expresses a spirituality of sexuality.

The most poignant scene in the life of the character of Lea happens in the home of her friend Johnny. In the preceding scene, she rushed to the hospital after her two children had a minor accident. Both were being attended to by their own fathers and Lea finds herself, for the first time, in the presence of her two 'husbands.' They take turns blaming her, telling her to give up her work to take care of the children, and it becomes a shouting match where the two men are united in their verbal attack on Lea. In defense, she walks away and the two men threaten to take her children away from her. In the comfort of Johnny's presence, which was very different from the demanding relationships she had with the fathers of her children, Lea says to Johnny:

Gusto kong magpa-ano...

Porke't ba sinasabi ng babae na gusto niyang magpa-ganun, mababang uri ng babae na siya?

Sana sa tuwing nagtatalik ang mga tao, nagtatalik din ang kaluluwa nila...

Sa daang ulit na ginanon ako ni Raffy, at sa daang ulit na ginanon ako ni Ding, kailanman hindi nila naabot ang kaluluwa ko. Dahil kung naabot nila ito, alam nila na kaloob-looban ko—ina ako!

Putang-ina nila, Johnny! Hindi ako masamang babae! Hindi ako masamang ina!¹⁵

Women's bodies and sexuality have been possessed by men. Lualhati's text resists this and articulates women's need for wholeness

and fullness of life in connection with their relationships with men.

One of the criticisms on feminist discourses is their overwhelmingly critical nature, sometimes at the expense of construction. As a feminist narrative critic, I take it upon myself to assert new ways of interpreting the text. By filling in gaps. In the Book of Ruth, I re-interpret Orpah's response and seek to give her a voice, reading it from the perspective of peasant farmers who are dispossessed of their lands.

Narrator 1:

Ang Pagbabalik ni Orpah

Maikli lang ang bahagi ni Orpah sa kuwento. Masakit man sa kanya ang paghiwalay kay Naomi at Ruth, pinahalagahan niya ang kanyang pinanggalingan at pinili niyang umuwi sa kanyang mga kalahi at sa kanyang sariling bayan.

Orpah:

Huwag na ninyong hilinging sundan ko kayo.
Hayaan na ninyo akong lumaya sa inyo.
Saanman kayo pumaroon, hindi ako paroroon.
Kung saan kayo tumira, hindi ako titira doon.
Ang aking bayan ang aking magiging bayan.
Ang aking Diyos ang aking magiging Dios.

Narrator 1:

Maraming humihimok sa atin
na tuluyan nang iwanan
Ang lupa, ang bayan ng ating kapanganakan
Subalit may mga Orpah na handang balikan
Ang lupa at bayan kahit walang katiyakan

Narrator 2:

Para sa akin ang mga karapat-dapat na maging lingkod ng iglesia at ng bayan sa mga panahong ito ay dapat kayang bigkasin at isabuhay ito.

Kanino pa ba kakapit ang mga kasama?
Sino pa ba ang mangangalaga sa lupa?
Ang lupa na sininop ng mga nauna.
Ang lupa na dapat sa mga anak ipamana.
Dugo at pawis ang alay ng magsasaka.
Para pagyamanin ang bigay ng May-likha.
Kahit di tiyak ang lupang babalikan.
Tiyak ang paghangad sa ating karapatan.
Karapatan magpagal para sa yaman ng lupa,
na siyang panggagalingan ng buhay at pag-asa.

Orpah:

Ako ay nagbalik dahil aking natunghayan,

pait at lupit ng buhay sa ibang bayan.
 Matagal kong pinangarap
 ang pagbalik sa iniwanan.
 Pagyakap sa magulang,
 paggiliw sa mga kaibigan.
 Ako ay nagbalik na handa ang kalooban.
 Harapin ang pagsubok, harapin ang karimlan.
 Bukas sa pagsilip ng buwang liwayway,
 makikibaka ako para sa lupa at bayan.¹⁶

Orpah asserts her identity and defends her people and her land. In *Lualhati's* text, Lea, a single mother, asserts her value as parent, in a moment when her son Ojie blames her for the absence of his father. She says to her children...

Di ba nga ako ang tatay at nanay dito? Siguro hindi ninyo naiisip yon, pero tatay at nanay n'yo ako. Ang dapat ngang itawag n'yo sa'kin, natay! Siguro galit kayo ngayon sa akin pero mas dapat niyo nga akong ipagmalaki dahil dalawang papel ang ginagampanan ko sen'yo! Siguro, sa tingin ninyo meron akong ginagawang masama pero mas marami akong ginagawang mabuti! Hindi ako masamang nanay at hindi ako masamang tatay! Putang-inang mga tatay n'yo; buhay kayo kahit wala sila, di ba? Buhay kayo...at andito ako!¹⁷

So many women are extensions of men as wives, daughters, and sisters. In *Lualhati's* text, she asserts the life-giving capacity of women as women. Lea's character refuses to be diminished as a mother just because the father of her children are not present.

Women's lives are a dichotomy between celebration and victimization.

One of the metaphors for women's transformation and liberation is the butterfly. In the book *Hope for the Flowers*¹⁸, a caterpillar asked how one becomes a butterfly. The answer was, "You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar." While women believe that their lives are a sacrifice, submit to all who power, and deny themselves, they will not be able to transform and fly.

In *Dekada 70*, Amanda's eldest son, Jules, is imprisoned by the Marcos regime. Amanda constantly visits her son and Julian criticizes her actions....

Julian: Lagi ka na lang na kay Jules. Napapabayaang mo na ang iba mong mga anak. Parang wala ka nang ibang anak,a.

Amanda: Mas nakakapag-open-up ako kay Jules.

Julian: Bakit ano bang gusto mong i-open. May reklamo ka ba sa kin? May reklamo ka ba sa ibang mga anak? Sabihin mo na lang. Ano ba ang reklamo mo? Ano ba ang gusto mo?

Amanda: Gusto ko nang humiwalay sa'yo.

Julian: My God, Amanda, anon'g nangyayari sa'yo?...

Amanda: Wala... No'n ko pa gustong sabihin sa'yo yan..

Julian: Come on, Amanda, hindi mo ibig sabihin yan! Pag gustong humiwalay ng babae sa asawa niya, hindi niya sinasabi! Umaalis na lang siya!

Amanda: Umaalis lang ang babae pag hindi niya gustong humiwalay sa asawa niya! Dahil gusto niyang magtaka ang asawa niya, sundan siya, habulin, pauwiin! Gusto lang niya magpapansin sa asawa niya!

Julian: ... You did it! You got my attention! You even shocked me... Ano talaga ang gusto mo? ...Malapit na ang birthday mo. Gusto mo ng parti? Gusto mo ng alahas?... Kung may gusto kang sabihin sa'kin, sabihin mo sa'kin nang hindi ka naglolokong parang bata! Putang-ina.

Amanda: Ang hirap sa'yo akala mo lahat nabibili ng pera. Hindi mo nga ako maintindihan kasi buong buhay ko puro nanay lang ako. Hindi naman ako mahusay na ina, a. Alam ko. Nababasa ko sa'yo! O ano ngayon, Julian?Bat di mo isumbat sa akin ng direcho na hindi ko mahal ang mga anak ko ng pantay-pantay katulad ng pagmamahal ko sa panganay kong anak, para masabi ko sa iyo – hindi tutoo yan! Hindi tutoo yan! / Akala ko lang kasi mas kailangan ako ng anak kong panganay... Pero hindi mo pa rin naiintindihan, kasi buong buhay na mag-asawa tayo, iniisip mo kung nasa tama ba o mali ang ginagawa ko. Kung nakakasunod ba ako sa panuntunan mo o hindi! Kung eksakto sa gusto mo ang kinikilos o sinasabi ko!

Julian: Sandali lang...

Amanda: Sandali lang din! Tapos na ako diyan Julian. You can just stop being proud of me! Nagsawa na ako sa ganon. Gusto ko naman ngayon, ako mismo, just for a change, maging proud sa sarili ko."¹⁹

In the narratives of Ruth and Esther, there is no confrontation with Boaz and King Ahasuerus and Mordecai. At the end of the narratives, Ruth's son was Naomi's and the people honor Mordecai, not Esther. There is no change in relationship and while they both cry-out, resist, and assert, their celebration can only be for others, and not for themselves as women

In women's stories in the Bible, the women are so alone. It seems there were no other women present: in the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, the cutting into pieces of the Levite's concubine, the rape of Bathsheba, the rape and incarceration of Dinah. In the book of Esther, two women became queens but did not have the opportunity to become sisters. Vashti was banished, but I imagine she would want to say something to Esther...

I thought I would die after my crown was taken from me. But I have discovered a greater gift.

Life is sacred – Live it!

I lived in fear for many years, seeking to be desired and possessed by a man who can only love himself. Now, I have learned to love myself. Take hold of your life and reclaim your being!

I believed that every woman wanted to become the queen. Each one was an enemy whom I needed to defeat. But I have discovered they are my sisters and mothers. Remember, you will never be alone, because we are here.

I thought I needed power to find meaning and purpose. But in the company of common people, I have found my home and calling.

Women compete against each other. Women are pitted against each other. In many families, churches and communities, many women demand the submission and sacrifice of other women. Some women serve, protect and defend men. In a culture where union is associated with marriage and sex, two women in *Dekada 70* find each other and experience an intercourse that is healing and fulfilling. Amanda reflects on her newfound sisterhood with her daughter-in-law Evelyn.

Sa umpisa'y naasiwa ako sa hawak ng kamay niya. Nadiskubre ko na hindi ako sanay sa dantay ng kamay ng kapwa ko babae. Siguro'y dahil walang babae sa buhay ko. Siguro dahil minamasama nila pag magkahawak ng kamay ang dalawang babae...

Pero napaiyak ako sa suyo ng tinig ni Evelyn, sa concern ni Evelyn, at naawa siyang lalo sa'kin at niyakap niya ko at umiyak ako sa balikat niya. Umiiyak ako't umiiyak siya at hindi na kami nag-uusap pero meron kaming ugnay. Dalawa kaming babae, at parehong ina.²⁰

Ruth and Esther cannot celebrate sexuality. Their survival depends on the pleasure they give men. In *Bata, Bata... Pa'no Ka Ginawa*, Lea meets with her first husband, Raffy...

Raffy: Hindi ka ba nagsisisi, Lei? [*pertaining to her failed relationship with Ding*]...

Lea: ... Hindi naman ako basta nagpaano lang. Nagmahal ako. Ikaw ang halimbawa. Minahal talaga kita, Raffy.... / [M]ula sa iba't ibang lugar ng pagkatao ko'y magmamahal pa rin ako, sa iba't ibang katangian ng pagkatao nila. / Huwag mo akong tingnan ng ganyan. Sinasabi ko lang kung ano ang tutoo sa akin. Ginagawa ko lahat ng tutoo at niyayakap ko lahat ng karugtong nito. Hindi ako laging maligaya pero hindi rin laging malungkot.²¹

Lea: Raf, maligaya ka ba?

Raffy: Minsan.

Lea: Magagawa mo ba'kong mahalin ng isang araw pa? Baka hindi na tayo magkita uli...ipahiram mo sa 'kin ang isang araw mo.

Raffy: Anong gagawin natin?

Lea: Kahit ano! Punta tayo don sa mga dating pinupuntahan natin. Kain tayo ng bisingka, inom tayo ng Coke! Kuwentuhan tayo, biruan tayo! Sabihan tayo ng mga pangarap! Sige na, Raf...magpakaloko naman tayo minsan!²²

In the next scene, Lea and Raffy are in a tight embrace in bed.

Both are crying. Both are celebrating. In an earlier scene, Lea laments that in the most intimate acts of love that she has shared with Raffy and Ding, she remained untouched and unknown by them. In this last scene, I think Lea and Raffy experience 'being' and knowing another, which they had not experienced before. Despite the ironies and impending separation, it is a cause for celebration.

I am tempted to celebrate this scene and present it as a novelty in the life of Lea. But while it is a crucial moment in her journey, it is not "the" moment: while there is an awakening, there have been and will be other revelations; while it exhibits a fullness, it does not complete her. Lea embodies our hopes, fantasies, visions and dreams of more meaningful lives and more life-affirming partnerships.

CRAC is a feminist theological construction as it proposes critical and analytical perspectives and methods to engage, re-read, re-interpret and re-write our texts and interpretations.

CRAC is a journey women can take to move from victimization to celebration. It also provides a standard to determine the stage of a person or a people's liberation.

CRAC is a lens, a mirror or a template to measure if texts and narratives genuinely present the voices of those in the margins, are liberating and transformative, and promote life and dignity.

This is my contribution to the feminist discourse

Western theologians and philosophers have already validated various 'texts': *The Gospel According to Peanuts*, *The Parables According to Peanuts*, *The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss*, *The Gospel According to Star Wars*, *The Simpsons and Philosophy*, *The Matrix and Philosophy* are some of them. *Peanuts* is a cartoon strip, Dr. Seuss is a children's book author, and *Star Wars* and *The Matrix* are science-fiction movies. *The Simpsons* is the most popular cartoon series on television that has been critiqued even by the Vatican. Most people would rather watch and read these than read the Bible.

By validating that Lualhati Bautista's novels, particularly *Dekada 70* and *Bata, Bata...* is gospel, meaning, 'good news,' I provide a concrete example of God's revelations outside the biblical texts and propose a new material for theological discussion. More importantly, I submit new models of women who genuinely reveal women's voices, struggles and lives. In our task of affirming the theology of struggle, we must recognize the plurality of interpretations and histories. In other words, our task is to collectively articulate and pursue not a theology of struggle but theologies of struggles.

ENDNOTES

¹ This paper is based on an oral presentation delivered during a forum on the Theology of Struggle sponsored by Silliman Divinity School, Silliman University, Dumaguete, Philippines. It is excerpted from the unpublished Master of Theology thesis of the author for the Southeast Asia Graduate School of Theology.

² She writes in the vernacular, in a style all her own, pouring out words that women have always wanted to say but do not. She is the most read Filipino novelist. Both novels referred to in this paper have movie versions which are also critically-acclaimed.

³ Bautista, L. (1988). *Dekada '70*. Manila: Cacho Publishing House.

⁴ Bautista, L. (1988). *Bata, bata ... Pa'no ka ginawa*. Manila: Carmelo & Bauermann Printing Corp.

⁵ Esther is the main character in the Book of Esther in the Old Testament.

⁶ Ruth is the Moabite woman who is the central character in the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament.

⁷ Velunta is the first Filipino to present a paper in the Society of Biblical Literature. He has earned degrees from Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines and Princeton and Vanderbilt in the U.S. He is a professor in Biblical Studies at Union Theological Seminary, Philippines.

⁸ Alice Walker is the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Color Purple*. She has written extensively on race and gender issues. Some of her other works are *The Temple of My Familiar* and *Possessing the Secret of Joy*.

⁹ Pinkola-Estes, C. (1992). *Women who run with wolves*. UK: Rider.

¹⁰ "There are so many important things in a man's life: his work, ambition, his hunger for power and influence. For women, it is enough that they have a husband and children."

¹¹ "Women are never content with just being wives and mothers all their lives! You just teach us that...You think that just because you are happy, we should be happy, too. Sometimes I ask myself why I had to be born, when everything that I do is for others, for you!.. When I am not you! I am me! Why do I have to live my life for you, when you live your life for yourself. If I can only turn back the hands of time, I should have said to you—you can have yours for yourself."

¹² *Julian*: Be careful with the tone of your voice when you speak to me, Amanda. I think you are forgetting that I am the man of the house!

¹³ *Amanda*: [Thinking to herself] Such arrogance, just because he's a man...he thinks he's the boss. And just because I am a woman, I am his slave...He actually thinks he's my boss and I am his slave. But no matter how furious I am about this, it is the sad reality. I am just someone who gets him coffee. I give him massages.... I am like a live-in maid. For the first time in twenty years, I wanted to regret that I am just the mother of his children and nothing more.

¹⁴ *Naomi:*

No husband, no heir.
Landless and hopeless.
What is the meaning of marriage for women
Grasping a knife by its blade, gasping for life

Why is fate so cruel to women?
For a handful of grain to be picked, she gives her body in exchange
Boaz was a rich and honorable man
Who scattered grain to lure a bird to his trap

Ruth:

Is your kindness to me an expression of your deep love?
Is it through God's blessing that you open yourself to me?
I offered myself, my body, my soul
So I can touch the hope and life that eludes me.

¹⁵ "I want to have sex... When a woman says she wants to have sex, does that mean she is a loose woman? I wish that when people make love, they touch each other's souls. For all the times that Raffy made love to me, and for all the times Ding had sex with me, not once did they touch my soul. Because if they did, they would have seen that in the deepest part of me—I am a mother! They are sons-of-bitches, Johnny! I am not a bad woman! I am not a bad mother!

¹⁶ *Narrator 1:*

We are invited and enticed to seek greener pastures
To leave our homeland where we were conceived and born
But Orpah is one who hears the call of home
Even in uncertainty, they are her people, her land.

Narrator 2:

Those who are worthy to call themselves servants of God and the people must be able to pronounce and live out this decision.
Who else will embrace the children of our people?
Who else will defend the land of our people?
The land that was cleared by those who came before us.
The land we must pass on to those who will come after us.
Blood and sweat were offered by those who first tilled it.
To honor the giver, the Creator of all.
Despite the uncertainty in the land we call 'home,'
There is a commitment to defend the land for all.
For therein lies the right to continuity and survival,
In land lies the hope and life of a people.

Orpah:

I have returned because I have seen,
bitterness and cruelty in a land not my own.
I have longed to return to all I have left behind
To embrace loved ones and friends, nowhereelse I can find

I have returned to commit to my people
 To face challenges, to face—even despair
 To face our tomorrows—together
 To struggle and defend life and land forever.

¹⁷Am I not the father and mother here? You may no even realize it, but I am the mother and father here...You may feel angry towards me now but you should be proud that I am fulfilling the two roles for you. You may think that what I am doing is wrong but most of what I do for you is right. I am not a bad mother and I am not a bad father! Those bastard fathers of yours, you live even without them, right? You are alive... and I am here for you!

¹⁸Paulus, T. (1972). *Hope for the flowers*. New Jersey: Paulist Press.

¹⁹*Julian*: You are always out visiting Jules. You are forgetting your other children. You act as if you don't have other children.

Amanda: I go to Jules because I am able to open up to him.

Julian: What is it that you need to open up to him? Do you have any complaints about me? Do you have any complaints about your other children? Just say it. What is your problem? What is it that you want?

Amanda: I want to be separated from you.

Julian: My God, Amanda! What has happened to you?

Amanda: Nothing. I've been wanting to tell you this for a long time.

Julian: Come on, Amanda! You don't mean it. When a woman wants to be separated from her husband, she does not tell him! She just leaves!

Amanda: When a woman leaves without telling her husband, she does not really want a separation! She just wants her husband to ask why, go after her, ask her to come home! She just wants her husband's attention!

Julian: You did it!...You got my attention!...You even shocked me!...What do you really want? Your birthday is coming up soon. Do you want to have a party? Do you want jewelry?... If you want to say anything to me, just say it without acting like a petulant child! Son of a bitch!

Amanda: The problem with you is you think you can buy everything with money. But you can't even understand me because all of my life, all I have been is a mother. I'm not even a good mother. I know. I can sense your disappointment. What now, Julian? Why don't you tell me directly that I don't love my children equally, and that I love my eldest son more, so that I can tell you to your face that—that is not true! It is not true! / I just thought my eldest son needed me more. But you don't understand. In our life as husband and wife, you always need to scrutinize whether what I am doing is right or wrong. Whether I am living up to your standards! Whether my actions or words are acceptable to you!

Julian: Wait a second...

Amanda: Wait a second, too! I am done doing that, Julian. You can just stop being proud of me! I am so tired of that. What I want to do, for myself, for a change, is be proud of myself!

²⁰At first, her touch made me feel uncomfortable. I discovered that I am not used to the touch of other women. Perhaps because there are no women in my life. Perhaps because society frowns down on two women holding each other's hands... / I cried over the tenderness of Evelyn's voice, her concern... and she felt my pain, and she embraced me, and I cried on her shoulder. I was crying and she was crying, we were not speaking but we understood each other. We are both women, and we are both mothers.

²¹*Raffy*: Don't you have any regrets, Lea? [Pertaining to her failed relationship with Ding]

Lei: I did not just have sex with him. I loved him. Just like you. I really loved you, Raffy. From the different parts of my being I will love again, with the different faces of their being. Don't look at me that way. I am just being true to myself. I do what is true to me and I embrace everything that comes with it. I am not always happy but I am not always sad either.

²² *Lea:* Raf, are you happy?

Raffy: Sometimes.

Lea: Can you love me for one more day? We may never see each other again...Can I have one more day with you?

Raffy: What will we do?

Lea: Whatever! We can go to the places we used to visit. Let's eat ricecake, drink Coke! Tell each other stories, tell jokes to each other! Share each other's dreams! Come on, Raf...let's be crazy for a moment!



NOTES



Marx's Ideas About Freedom: An Exposition and Commentary

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Long embedded in the history and tradition of democracy, the idea of freedom has played a conspicuous role, particularly, in modern human history. In the case of the rise of liberal democracy in the 20th century, the idea of freedom shaped up nationalist discourse and empowered dissident movements in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It has also penetrated in the consciousness and inspired liberationist movements in non-western Eastern Europe, Soviet Union and China. The student movements that swept the world in the late 1960s were in part also sparked by the quest for freedom. Indeed one could argue with David Harvey that freedom is fundamental and a central value of human civilization.

What is of import and relevant in contemporary public discourse is that the idea of freedom has acquired attention and appropriation from different sectors of the society, may it be cultural, political, economic or even military, as in the case of former US President George W. Bush. Thus, there are fundamental questions that could be asked: What is freedom? Whose freedom? To whose end does freedom serve?

This paper attempts to contribute to this discussion, with the intent to view the subject matter differently. In this project, I intend to offer a Marxian perspective. Although I will largely elucidate and comment on Marx's ideas about freedom, the larger intent of the project is to contribute to the discussion and to offer ways in which to think and enact freedom for contemporary times.

INTRODUCTION

The ideas of Karl Marx have been explored in various ways: ideas such as capital, surplus value, historical and dialectical materialism, class struggle, mode of production, and many others. In this paper, I will examine Marx's idea of freedom. By this

I mean his theory of what it is to be free and his account of the social conditions in which this freedom is developed and realized. What is freedom? What are the conditions of freedom? What constitutes freedom as such? And as a corollary, in what sense is man free?

My approach here is to consider these questions from a specific exposition and understanding of Marx's anthropology and political philosophy. This reflection is, therefore, organic as it endeavors to illustrate the idea of freedom, and at the same time, offers an exposition of the basic categories of Marxian anthropology and political philosophy. The outline of this paper is as follows: [1] it discusses the themes of Marx's ideas, in light of his understanding of man¹; [2] the sphere of existence in which man exists. In this paper, it is my contention that Marx's idea of freedom could be best understood in light of his anthropology (man as such and his relation to nature) and political philosophy (the social conditions of his existence).² The intent here is to provide not categorical answers, but rather, a series of suggestive modes in order to, hopefully, offer new possibilities of theoretical engagement of Marxian ideas in time of global capitalism.

In light of this, the paper revisits a recent political issue in the Philippines, the decision of the Commission of Elections (of the Philippines) to disqualify LADLAD's (a political party composed of mainly gay and lesbians) application for recognition as an official party-list in the May 2010 election. Albeit cursorily, this paper suggests how this study could provoke a thinking that attempts to respond to what Giorgio Agamben calls "a bloody mystification of a new planetary order."³

Species-being: Marx's anthropology

Throughout the corpus of Marx, the understanding of man is often assumed. Marx does not, for whatever reasons, discuss the theme systematically. As one scholar points out: "It would be inaccurate to describe Marx as having a unified or formal scientific theory of human nature; rather he made a series of related theoretical assumptions."⁴ Marx approached the subject of man from a number of different directions.⁵ Three interrelated premises, however, appear to me to be useful repositories in which to group his various assumptions.

1. Man is viewed as part of nature; that is, he is in relation with nature.⁶
2. Man is seen as possessing a network of species characteristics

distinguishing him from the rest of creation. Man is unlike animals because, for example, of his religion.

3. Man is a social being; he interacts with the external nature.

Relation to nature

According to Marx, man could be characterized by his relation to nature. On the one hand, man is part of nature; he lives on nature. In such a condition, Marx describes:

Man lives on nature—means that nature is his body, with which he must remain in continuous intercourse if he is not to die. That man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature.⁷

For Marx, it is in this sense that man is like other creatures. Like plants and animals, he is furnished with “natural powers of life as impulses”⁸; that is, he interacts and needs an object outside of himself in order to survive and satisfy his natural need. As an example, Marx cites hunger in man as a natural need requiring an external object for its satisfaction. This is what makes man part of the system of nature; as he notes: any being that does not have a need for “things external to it is not a natural being and therefore plays no part in the ‘system of nature.’”⁹

For Marx, such relation (of man to nature) is characterized by his interaction of it as an object. Nature is the object of man's impulses of life—the object of his need as a natural and sensuous being. And it is an essential object “indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers.”¹⁰

Man's existence, in other words, necessitates a continuous exchange with nature. Marx referred to this relationship as one that makes nature man's “*inorganic body*—both inasmuch as nature is [1] his direct means of life, and [2] the material, the object, and the instrument of his life-activity.”¹¹ Heyer suggests that this inorganic body is “used as a metaphor to indicate continuity between man's obvious organic body and the earthly world that gives sustenance to it.”¹² This, however, I suggest, can be best seen as a relationship instead of continuum.¹³ That is, nature, as the inorganic body of man, gives sustenance to man's organic body.¹⁴

On the other hand, man is a living natural being. That is to say, man is a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being full of natural vigour. And like all other natural beings, he is also a “suffering,

conditioned and limited creature.”¹⁵ For Marx, this is because man expresses his life in real and sensuous objects. He interacts not in the imaginary world but in the material world. So, man becomes only in relation to the external condition around him; depending then on the environment, he may die, suffer, survive, live or enjoy his life. But because of his capabilities to produce and create in order to survive, although limited as a creature, man can nonetheless change his circumstances.¹⁶ In other words, as a natural living being, man has the physical capacity to create and produce products that would meet his needs in order to survive.

Man's species nature

For Marx, although man is a species-being [*Gattungswesen*], he possesses “various species traits that set him apart from other organisms.”¹⁷ Man is different from animals. He stresses this difference between animal and man in the following way:

In creating an *objective world* by his practical activity, in *working-up* inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species being, i.e., as a being that treats the species as its own essential being, or that treats itself as a species being. Admittedly animals also produce. They build themselves nests, dwellings, like the bees, beavers, ants, etc. But an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces one-sidedly, whilst man produces universally. It produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom. An animal produces only itself, whilst man produces the whole of body, whilst man freely confronts his product. An animal forms things in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object.¹⁸

Man, in other words, has consciousness that allows him to produce and appropriate his products accordingly. Such notion was further developed in *The German Ideology*; here, Marx posits two distinguishable characteristics of man: one is his consciousness (“Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity”¹⁹); and the other is his ability to produce his means of subsistence.

For Marx, the latter, however, is a matter of greater importance; because this does not only distinguish man in relation to the natural world, but also, importantly, it provides a theoretical account on how man becomes a producer.

Like all other species, the life of man involves before everything

else, eating and drinking, a habitation, and clothing; the ability to produce, the “production of the means to satisfy these needs”²⁰ — the first historical act, is uniquely his own. Such is the primary characteristic of man. In the natural world, only men can produce their own subsistence and the means for it. For Marx, as soon as they “begin to *produce* their means of subsistence,”²¹ they begin to distinguish themselves from animals. And it is in this sense that unlike the animals, man has a sense of history and can anticipate the future. He can consciously and willfully create and produce for a manifold of purposes, and especially produce his needs independently.²² Walliman suggests that Marx’s position here disagrees with Adam Smith. For Adam Smith, “human beings by nature, prefer rest (*Ruhe*) to work, while Marx postulates that the individual, by nature, tends also to engage in work.”²³ In Marx, labor and the ability to labor constitute the very nature of man. Indeed one could say that when man ceases to possess his ability to produce his own labor to exist, he also ceases to be a man as such.

In short, while the need for external objects is a common denominator between man and the rest of nature, the manner in which these objects are transformed and appropriated reveals the uniqueness of human species. They have the ability to reflect upon themselves and their relation to the natural world and appropriate the environment for their existence.

For Marx, it is through the process of conscious appropriation of external objects in order to produce his own subsistence and appropriating these products of his own production that man not only becomes distinguishable from other species but also becomes an individual. That is, when he produces his subsistence, he encounters and interacts with other individuals and the natural world. He becomes socially and historically related with other individual beings. Consciousness, therefore, for Marx, is a product of species interaction and configuration of such interaction.

A social being

According to Marx, man is not only a living natural being; he is also a social being. His relation to other men and the world also constitutes the very essence of his being. As Walliman suggests, while Marx accepts the natural essence of man, he clearly recognizes that it is not sufficient to account for and “understand other aspects of human nature.”²⁴ Marx describes the essence of man in the following manner:

the *human* essence of nature exists only for *social* man; for only here does nature exist for him as a *bond* with *man*—as his existence for the other and the other's existence for him—as the life-element of the human world; only here does nature exist as the *foundation* of his own *human existence*. Only here what is to him his *natural* existence become his *human* existence, and nature become man for him.²⁵

From this definition, we can see clearly that for Marx, man is not an isolated being; and he is different from the animals because he does not remain in his natural existence. He becomes an individual in history. Indeed this is what makes him distinct from the other creatures.

In *The Grundrisse*, Marx argues that “human beings become individuals only through the process of history²⁶; that is, the nature of man changes or is organically-coated with social character in a socio-historical relation where he produces his own subsistence and interacts with other men. When man enters into production and exchange, Marx posits that the herd-like existence is dissolved and becomes superfluous.²⁷ Herein man becomes an individual social being.

In Marxian literature, the sociality of man could be described as having two distinctive characteristics: first, communal, and second, socio-historic. That is, insofar as he is a social being, man is part of a community; and his relation to it is determined or shaped up by socio-historical variables.

Markus suggests that this characterization of man as a social being means that the individual and the social group reciprocally presuppose each other. He writes:

It means on the one hand that the individual cannot become a truly human being and cannot live a human life, unless he maintains contacts and has intercourse with other men[; on the other hand], the individual is a human being only through, and due to, the fact that he appropriates, incorporates into his life and activity (to a larger or lesser extent) abilities, wants, forms of behaviour, ideas etc. which were created and objectified by other individuals of earlier generations or those contemporary to him. So the human individual in its concrete personality is even in itself, taken in isolation a product of social intercourse and history.²⁸

In *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx puts the subject matter unequivocally: the essence of man is an “ensemble of the social relations.”²⁹ For Marx, it is through this social relation within an intersubjective interaction that human personality evolves “in a constant dialogue between man and world, between subjective activity and objective social reality.”³⁰

For Marx, this social character of man, that is, the relation of man to his social world and other as he appropriates them, constitutes necessarily the essence of man.

In such a relation, Marx adds, man exists under particular conditions of life. For him, such conditions could be first described as the "the sensuous world," made of the "total living sensuous activity of the individuals composing it,"³¹ under a certain historical epoch. And second, the sensuous world made men what and who they are, but at the same time, men produced this world—"just as society itself produces *man as man*, so is society *produced* by him."³² Thus as a social being, man actively interacts with other beings and appropriates resources with which he is furnished by the historical circumstances and by his society. In short, the sociality of man in this world represents not only a certain form of relations but also a particular trait under certain socio-historical circumstances.

In sum, Marx understands man, generally, as a natural and social being. By natural he means that man is part of nature, that is, his being plays a part in the system of nature. As we have noted above, this can be primarily characterized as man's condition in relation to nature. By social, he means that man interacts with and undertakes his activity in relation to individuals and social institutions. In other words, in Marx, we find that the nature of man has two aspects: the one is socially and historically contingent and the other is the universal or to be more specific, species-wide characteristic; thus, it is neither relative nor historical.³³

Man as an Estranged Species

To elucidate and illustrate this point further, it is important to consider how Marx understands man's existence in a concrete historical situation. As it is then (in his time) and now (our time), this historical situation is the epoch of capitalism. Fundamental in Marx's understanding of man is that, in a capitalist society, man is an estranged being. This is the condition that man finds himself in, as this is also his condition of existence. By this Marx means that man is not a free-conscious producer; his labour is involuntary. Under this historical epoch and socio-economic reality, man is neither living a species-life nor living as a species-being; he is, in other words, estranged.

In *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor*, Isidor Walliman offers a helpful discussion on the

notion of estrangement in Marx's theory.³⁴ He argues that this is fundamental to Marx's thought and thus to the structure of his social theory. According to this view, estrangement is directly derived from the two concepts of human nature, that is, man has a general and particular nature. The general is considered as his biological nature. The particular is considered as his historical nature. So for example, man is said to be "estranged if, contrary to his nature, he is prevented from subjecting his labor power, as well as the product of his labor, to his own will."³⁵ Walliman suggests that such estrangement "results when man is prevented from living according to his human nature, that is, general human nature."³⁶

Moreover, in this framework, the notion of an involuntary division of labor is necessarily central. In a capitalist society, for example, man is under the condition of involuntary division of labor; that is, man is not a free participant in his own creative production: his labor and its products. Walliman explains that in this state, man is "estranged because both his labor power and the product of his labor are subject to an alien will, that is, because man is subject to an involuntary division of labor, a division that he controls neither at his place of work nor in the society at large"³⁷

In other words, under a capitalist state, man does not live according to his nature. For he must sell his labor, and so, his own product of labor ceases to be an object of his own will and consciousness. The product becomes the object of a will that is alien to him. As a result of this process of production, man becomes a worker and is incessantly forced to sell his labor and products in order to survive, so that he becomes estranged. Furthermore, the relationship between the worker and his product becomes one in which "worker is dominated by his very own product. This condition goes against the individual's nature, since human beings have the capability to appropriate their own product as well as subject it to their will. The political economy under capitalism forcibly prevents the worker from doing this. Such a political economy is based on processes, although manmade, that result in man not living according to his human nature."³⁸

For Marx, this condition is "unnatural, for *by nature* the human producer has the faculty to freely and consciously confront the product of his labor and subject it to his will. The capitalist mode of production prevents the producer from subjecting his product of labor to his will as he has by nature the faculty to do."³⁹

Indeed we could posit that in Marx's anthropology, there is an ontological and historical characteristic of the nature of man. Now let

us examine how his theory of society could give us a clue on the way in which freedom is understood and developed.

THE SPHERE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE: MARX'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Before substantially demonstrating what Marx's ideas about freedom are, we must also examine how the sphere in which man exists informs not only the ways in which man is understood but also the very conditions in which freedom is or could be realized.

In this section, I will elucidate how Marx understands the sphere in which man exists; in so doing, I will attempt to illustrate how this is central in giving us a broader and, in fact, a more nuanced and solid account to his anthropology. I hope to show as well that such is an essential aspect not only of his anthropology, but also of his social theory and thus, of his ideas about freedom.

Marx posits that the first premise of all human history is "the existence of living human individuals"; thus, the first fact to be "established is the physical organisation of these individuals."⁴⁰

Thus I will proceed here to discuss what Marx posits as the physical organizations or the sphere in which man interacts and exists. Of importance here is how Marx conceives or characterizes the material base where man actually and physically exists in relation to man himself.

Marx understands contemporary life, following Hegel, as distinguishable into two separate spheres, viz. civil society and the political state. The two spheres, for him, however, are unlike how Hegel understands them to be. "Civil society was not an outgrowth of the state, as in Hegel's view; rather, the state was an outgrowth of civil society."⁴¹

This difference is crucial.⁴² We can identify at least three reasons. First, this explains why for Marx, social transformation lies not primarily in the changing of political forms of governance but rather on the change of mode of production. The political is a by-product of economic change in civil society, not the other way around. Second, this establishes the concrete basis of his social analysis of social relations. Man interacts—as the first historical moment—with other men in the civil society. Man as a political being, in other words, is only a secondary character in history.⁴³ Third, this clarifies why for Marx, the state serves only the interest of those who control the means

of production in the civil society.

For this paper, this difference is important in order to account for and describe civil society vis-à-vis character of man under certain socio-historical conditions in Marxian terms.

First let us briefly describe civil society. For Marx, civil society is the primary sphere of man's being, the "true source and theatre of all history."⁴⁴ This is the material existence of man as he is and is where certain economic and social relations are developed and reproduced,⁴⁵ and thus, here the actual organizations of men are established.⁴⁶

In modern history, civil society⁴⁷ "embraces the whole material intercourse of individuals within a definite state of the development of productive forces."⁴⁸ It is here where real social relations among men exist. Unlike the political state, civil society is the concrete. Marx describes the political state in relation to civil society as "spiritual as is heaven in relation to earth."⁴⁹ In other words, for him, it is only on earth, in the civil society, that the present problem and its solution thus lie—in practical, material life.

Moreover, for Marx, civil society is, importantly, posited in historical terms; that is, it is within human historical process. Civil society has a history; it has its own origin and development.

In *The Grundrisse*, Marx suggests that the origin of civil society could be traced in the eighteenth century when the social relations made men "a mere means towards his private purposes, as external necessity"; it is a historical epoch that produces the isolated individual; the individual became independent from the greater whole, that is, he disappears as a dependent, not belonging, to his family and clan.

Civil society, in other words, originated in this historical period when social arrangements made man individuate himself; that is, when he involves himself in production and exchange, and sees others as a means toward this end.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the rise of the bourgeois man can also be traced from this period; as a corollary, the class of bourgeois men, that is, the "modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour."⁵¹

What this historical period was able to produce, in short, is a kind of society that has a new kind of social relationship, a social relationship that is based on men's economic productive activities; and an existence of classes, which is bound up and produced by the historical phase in the development of production of men, according to their relation to the means of production.⁵²

So then it must be asked: how does Marx characterize man's existence in civil society? As a member of civil society, man regards

himself as a private individual. He “treats other men as means, degrades himself to the role of a mere means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers.”⁵³ For Marx, it is precisely for this reason that he becomes an egoistical man. He becomes what he is not, that is, a non species-being. He is withdrawn into himself and separated from the community. His communal essence is dissolved; the “only bond between men is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and their egoistic persons.”⁵⁴ As a private individual person, he lives a life that is real but selfish, isolated, and full of conflicting interests. He sees other men as a threat to his own security, rights, and property. Thus, he becomes estranged. Here he becomes a “partial being” — or the bourgeois man.⁵⁵

It is in civil society, in short, that man actually and concretely exists. Hence, Marx can say that the being of man is “not his life as a citizen of the state but rather his economic life in civil society.”⁵⁶

Indeed this is relevant and central in understanding Marx’s ideas about freedom. It provides a material account as to the conditions where freedom could or could not be realized, and the ways in which to describe the conditions in which freedom could be materialized in concrete social relations.

MARX’S IDEAS ABOUT FREEDOM

As already indicated earlier, Marx does not directly discuss the concept of freedom. Such can only be discerned by examining closely his theory in anthropology and political philosophy.⁵⁷ Indeed it is my contention that these are the two central aspects in Marx’s theory which could help shed some light into a Marxian concept of freedom. Now that the aforementioned are laid-out and elucidated, we can now shed some light on his notion of freedom.

Is freedom a freedom from estrangement?

There are several fragmentary comments throughout his writings about freedom, but there is no clear discussion as to what this means and its relation to his philosophical work. We are left to surmise.

In his earlier writings, Marx writes, for example, about freedom in different contexts: first as part of his dissertation, and second as an article in defense of press freedom. These are brief and unelaborated discussions; but these, nonetheless, give us a glimpse into how he

thinks about the idea of freedom in general.

In his dissertation, Marx regards Epicurean freedom as a "flight from the world, an attempt by the mind to withdraw to a place of refuge."⁵⁸ In what seems to be indicative of his future ideas about human freedom, he considers this form of freedom as escapism. Thus he disagrees with Epicurus' conception of freedom, "not to the belief in the freedom of the spirit, but to the idea that this freedom can be attained by turning one's back on the world, that it is a matter of independence and not of creativity."⁵⁹

As a journalist, Marx also, although briefly, expresses what he thinks about freedom. We read from his article how he values and defends the freedom of the press. He writes: a free press is an "indispensable condition of a state fulfilling its own nature"⁶⁰; it enables public life as such and allows the government to hear its own voice.

In these earlier writings are indeed accounts that indicate, at the very least, how and why Marx cherishes freedom, what it represents, and its importance in the structure of human life. It is worthy to take note, however, that his later writings do not develop, for whatever reason, this theme explicitly. It is rather mostly presupposed throughout his works. In his *Das Kapital*, for example, one could only read an allusion to freedom in relation to man's condition under capitalist society.

The question then begs us: how can we then give an account to Marx's idea of freedom? In the discussion above, I have emphasized the material and historical existence of man in a capitalist society in the start of eighteenth century, and which Marx characterized as estranged. Could it then be the case that freedom is a freedom from estrangement?

In his study, Walliman indeed carefully argues that Marx used the term "estrangement" to refer to the loss of *human freedom* that results from an involuntary division of labor. From this theoretical perspective, one could indeed see that freedom in Marx's theory of estrangement is the ability of the individual that allows him to exercise his productive powers; that is, he is free, without constraint from an alien will, to realize his individual self, to express his different potentialities as a species-being. Thus when his nature is defined by participation in an involuntary division of labor, man is estranged from his natural nature; he loses his freedom.

In Marx's theory of estrangement, therefore, freedom is not possible in a capitalist society. Does this mean, consequently, that all

men in a capitalist society are not free? According to this view, the answer is yes. Both the worker and the capitalist are under an external condition that negates their potentialities as species-beings.⁶¹

Simply put, there is no freedom in a capitalist society where man is estranged from himself. He has no freedom unless the involuntary division of labor is abolished; or to put it differently, he is free only "if he can live free from the coercion of other men."⁶² Moreover, it can be deduced from this account that the abolition of external structures of domination seems to be not only a necessary but also a sufficient condition to attain the cherished goal: freedom of the human species.

While Walliman's proposal indeed sheds some light into the ways in which freedom could be understood, particularly from Marx's theory of estrangement, I contend here that this is insufficient insofar as this does not describe and account for the character of freedom as such. It is not enough to adequately describe Marx's ideas about freedom, for in this account, freedom only implies absence of external constraint. I suggest here that by taking his more nuanced understanding of anthropology, on the one hand, and his political philosophy, on the other, one could discern clearly and substantively the character of freedom in Marx's theory.

I will clarify this point in the succeeding section.

Freedom constitutes the structure of human life

In Marx's theoretical framework, freedom can be conceived only in light of how man is understood. That is, freedom constitutes the structure of the life of the species-being, and thus, by definition it is universal insofar as this is constitutive of the life of all species-being.

The first procedure that we must follow in order to elucidate this point, however, is to posit the dimensions of human life, that is, the life of the species-being vis-à-vis the historical being. To review, man is both a natural and a historical being. Each being has its own distinctive characteristics. On the one hand, the natural nature of man is constant throughout history, thus, universal. Through the process of production, particularly in the period of, and his entry to, wage labor, the natural becomes the historical man. On the other hand, the historical nature of man changes, depending on his location within social relations and his relation to the means of production in a particular historical epoch.

Marx suggests that, in his natural state, man is free. He is free to enter and be part of a social relation. Through his own action, he

exercises his creative and productive activity. The products he create and produce are his own, for subsistence and flourishing. Nobody owns his labour. As a producer, he is endowed with creative and productive labour. Understood within his conception of history, exercise of such capacity is a "process of self-development of the human species."⁶³ In short, man is free; freedom constitutes who he is.

The historical nature of man, on the other hand, is not free. For Marx, man is a 'free conscious producer' but insofar as he is not able to express himself freely in productive activity in a capitalist society, he is not free. He is estranged from himself (that is, his natural self). He owns neither his labour-power nor the products he produces. His actions become involuntary. *He has to produce not because he wants, but he is required to.* His capacity to produce his own subsistence does not anymore lie in his hands but in the hands of those who give him wages in order for him to live. An external object now determines what he is capable of: what his subsistence is and how he produces it. The voluntary nature of his labour and action becomes involuntary; hence, he is estranged from his natural self. Understood in this manner, he is not free.

In sum, according to this philosophical anthropological view of man, freedom constitutes his very character; and clearly, for Marx, this serves as the primary variable in determining the nature of man in history (i.e., man could be described as historical man as such because of the absence of freedom from his life; he is *estranged* from himself). Indeed while Marx's anthropology shed light on his notion of freedom, it is equally true as well that his freedom could also be used to understand further his anthropology; for it could be used to differentiate the two dimension or characteristics of human nature.

Within this theoretical framework, freedom could be understood as a universal concept posited in Marx's understanding of man as a species-being. As I have discussed above, man as a species-being is the natural being; and as such, his nature and character is universal insofar as this is also shared with the rest of the species.⁶⁴ It is in this sense that freedom is neither a particular nor parochial concept but a universal one.

While this formulation may be described or assumed, accurately as the ontological character of freedom, it is, however, not sufficient to characterize freedom in Marxian terms. It must still be posited in material terms. Thus, it must be asked: *How does such freedom manifest itself in concrete social relations?*

It must be recalled first that for Marx, man is necessarily in a social

relation. We must, therefore, proceed to extrapolate the understanding of freedom in the context of his sociality. Within the structure of human life in the civil society, freedom could be understood in two ways: first, there is positive freedom, and second, negative freedom.⁶⁵

In *On the Jewish Question*, Marx discusses his politico-philosophical understanding of freedom vis-à-vis man. Here he posits man in his existence in civil society, what it means to be free in such relation, and, therefore, what constitutes positive or negative freedom.⁶⁶

For Marx, the bond that forges between and among men or the relation of men in civil society presupposes the egoistic and isolated individual. He is a social being as opposed to a species-being. In such a state, therefore, his liberty as a right of man is “not founded upon the *relations between man and man*, but rather upon the *separation of man from man*. It is the right of such separation. The right of the circumscribed individual, withdrawn into himself.”⁶⁷

Of importance here is the relations of men; it is my contention that we could deduce the character of freedom from such relation. Thus, it must be also asked: *What characterizes such relation?*

In civil society, liberty is “the right to do everything which does not harm others. The limits within which each individual can act without harming others are determined by law, just as the boundary between two fields is marked by a stake. It is a question of the liberty of man regarded as an isolated monad, withdrawn into himself.”⁶⁸ Man, in short, sees himself in this sphere as not in relation to others. Rather, he is primarily and first an individual being. Hence, he is free to dispose his will but only in so far as he is exercising his right to self-interest. So what binds man with others in this state?

For Marx, the “only bond between men is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and their egoistic persons.”⁶⁹ The natural connectedness as universal species-being is dissolved. Here it is replaced with a law (to be more precise, the property law) the only mediating force that binds them. What they now follow are not natural laws, but rather the law of the land.⁷⁰ They become subjects to a social relation that governs them as such. Their actions, exercise of production, and creativity must become in accord with the fundamental demands and requirements of that which binds them—for Marx, the law in a capitalist society is wage labour; and this binds the individuals in such society.⁷¹ What characterizes the civil state, in short, is the historical relation between men; and thus, in a capitalist society, the relation is understood as between wage labourers and the capitalists.

Consequently, because man sees himself as an independent individual, he treats others as limiting his freedom; that is, preventing him from fully realizing his own individuality. Other men are not the realization, but rather the limitation of his liberty. They limit and hinder his self-realization, that is, his ability to dispose his self-interest vested wills.

The only compelling power that restrains him from destroying others in order to promote his own interests (or, self-realization in history) is the law of the society, composed of egoistic men.⁷² In short, a man-made apparatus governs men; their life is laid with 'anthropological nature' that estranged him from 'himself'.

Viewed as such, freedom is understood as freedom from interference of others and doing what one pleases as long as it does not do harm to others. And because what holds this relation is an artifact of the egoistic and isolated man, this could be described as negative freedom; but only because such freedom creates or produces estrangement or alienation.

The positive form of freedom, on the other hand, is a freedom that is viewed from a sociality position, that is, with other people, in human community, and not in isolation. For Marx, such freedom is realized through and with other men, "when as an individual man, in his everyday life, in his work, and in his relationships, he has become a *species-being*."⁷³

Positive freedom, in other words, is experienced and expressed in a relation where man sees in other man the realization of his being in them. Self-realization is the realization of man with others. The basis of positive freedom, therefore, is a societal conception that regards man not as an individual, but that he is in relation with others. It is founded upon the relations between man and man. Thus, man leads to see in other men the *realization*, not limitation, of his own freedom.⁷⁴

Such a conception leads us to another view of freedom; that is, freedom is in the process of realization. Freedom, in this sense, does not neither exist as *a priori* (as an ontological structure of life) nor as an experience in the moment (in the present social condition). Rather, it is realized in the process of restoration of the human world, that is, the human relationship in relation to oneself as a species-being and to the universality of species-life.

In short, the way in which freedom manifests concretely in the society depends on the way species-being arrange themselves accordingly. It is contingent, not *a priori*. And in contrast to liberal democratic tradition, Marxian freedom is not the realization of

individuality (i.e., right and freedom); rather it is the realization of the well-being of the species-being. Indeed freedom is not about an exercise of independence but rather a matter of creative expression of man's potentials as such in relation to others. Moreover, it is not a static notion, but rather a process: its nature and character expand as its material condition changes. And contrary to an externally or even internally-constraint definition of freedom,⁷⁵ freedom, in this sense, is understood as the ability or capacity *to respond* to historical changes; and *the exercise of human creativity* in the material world.⁷⁶

As I have—hopefully—illustrated throughout this study, freedom in Marx's social theory is more nuanced than mostly assumed. In contrast to reductionist claim, [1] it could only be properly and substantially described and characterized by taking into consideration his anthropology, political philosophy, and theory of estrangement; [2] freedom is an ontological dimension of the structure of human life, manifested and realized in relation to the development of man and his relation to others; [3] freedom could only be realized (and understood) in the sphere of human existence; [4] and freedom is always in the process of realization as the material condition changes in history. In short, these characteristics are the fundamental elements in framing and thinking about freedom in Marx's theory.

FREEDOM AND PHILIPPINE DEMOCRACY: A BRIEF REFLECTION

In his politico-philosophical reflections and genealogical studies, Giorgio Agamben demonstrates how an intellectual work could help in the transformation of the nihilistic tendencies and the anthropological machine of modernity that slowly destroys the earth and the lives therein.

Such project is not only admirable, but also, urgent; one that is needed in contemporary times (both in the academia and society). Another thinker whose work intensifies the importance of the ethico-political in intellectual work is that of Jacques Derrida. His work on *deconstruction* has gained notoriety for its endless play of meanings and words, but he has substantially illustrated that such intellectual project is indeed in the name and in the service of, what may be called justice.

Indeed my claim here is that by (re)considering the Marxian notion of freedom, we could glimpse not only his theory but also how

his ideas could in fact provoke us to think of another possibility that could possibly give us a better option at ordering human lives and making them flourish—certainly one that is different from today's. My attempt here is modest and experimental.

Below are few cursory comments, as a way to conclude, as to how such insight from the study could offer hints (of possibilities) that could help promote a more democratic life of the Filipino people. I believe what is at stake here is not just the quality, but also the possibility of life as such. Indeed, the creation and promotion of freedom could guarantee that more life will be made more possible and to flourish—from farmers to women and other sexual minorities in the society. As Marx points out, where positive freedom is actualized, possibilities where human beings could exercise their own creativity and appropriate one's labor abound.

Even on the immediate surface, the issue of freedom is relevant most especially today in the history of Philippine democracy. We only have to recall, for example, the juridical action of the Commission on Election (of the Republic of the Philippines) in the recent national elections. When it dismissed the petition of LadLad Party to be recognized as a legitimate sectoral party, the Commission ignores the fundamental value of human civilization and the democratic principles. In fact, one could argue that its decision violated basic human rights. Instead of upholding these democratic principles and human values, the Commission chose to defend and sustain dubious moral and pseudo religious principles. In this particular juridical decision, the Commission on Election undermines a core democratic impulse, as it curtails human's capacity to creative and meaningful existence and further minimizes human's agency to determine one's labor and existence.

Interestingly, in contrast to such fascist and totalitarian ideology of the Commission, the logic of Marx's notion of freedom seems to oddly support democracy. Although due to the limit of this study, I could only suggest at this important connection between freedom and democracy to Marx; one could clearly intuit here the relevance of the insights of Marx on freedom as constitutive of our humanity and in the very democratic foundation of progress and development of human civilization—a point that Amartya Sen has also demonstrated, although in an oblique way, in his study.⁷⁷

Perhaps this is a possible critical insight for Philippine democracy, which as some political pundits have noted, is still practically at an early state and needs a breath of democratic air. Freedom must be

ensured, promoted, and granted to all stakeholders and citizens of the state if democracy (and life!) is to flourish. To be sure, freedom must be concretely expressed in the civic and political life through the promotion and protection of the fundamental human rights of those who are marginalized and those who belong to the minority if humanity is to revert to what Giorgio Agamben casts a “bloody mystification of the new planetary order.” The issue of freedom in a democratic state is the primary politico-juridical issue that the Commission of Election misses, and that from a juridico-political perspective, must be reconsidered in the name of Philippine democracy. For what is at stake here is not a certain kind of moralism or religious conviction but the flourishing of human life that democracy bequeaths. As Marx points out, only a positive notion of freedom, that is, a freedom-to-be-with, can ensure such reality to come.

Indeed Philippine democracy could learn from the mistakes of Western democracy. The individualism that Western democracy has nurtured in modern times has proven to be destructive and unsustainable. It has created an anthropological machine that slowly devours human life. In modern history, for example, the freedom of Americans has become the nightmare of the Iraqis and the rest of the third world countries. And as recent global events has shown us, democracy could only flourish when human rights and freedom are ontologically understood, epistemologically grounded, and ethically exercised, as always in relation with others—the positive freedom of Marx. To put it culturally and contextually: Philippine democracy could flourish if it draws its life from the spirit of *bayanihan* system, that is, one of communality and mutuality.

It is not implausible, therefore, although in a very interesting way, to claim that a kernel in Marx’s theory contributes to the thinking and enacting a kind of Philippine democracy that is true to its essence—which Jacques Derrida also describes as fellowship of friends.

END NOTES

¹ Throughout this paper, I use the generic “man” rather than a more inclusive alternative. Because this study is devoted to engaging Marx’s ideas, use of the inclusive pronoun would misleadingly create an impression that Marx held more gender-sensitive views about women than he actually did.

² Here I follow the argument made by Ding Xueliang on Marx’s theory on man’s full development. See his *A Survey of Marx’s Theory on Marx’s Full Development*, ed. Institute of

Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1983). In this paper, I utilize his theory in order to suggest that Marx's critique and study of capitalism is due to his primary concern on the estrangement and deprivation of man to fully become and realize his potentials—in short, I am employing a more humanist reading of Marx.

³ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 12. Present-day democracy is, according to Agamben, “at the very moment in which it seemed to have finally triumphed over adversaries and reached its greatest heights, proved itself incapable of saving *zoe*, to whose happiness it had dedicated all its efforts, from unprecedented ruin” (10). Responding thus to what he believes as “bloody mystification of the new planetary order,” he writes, “it became clear that one cannot...accept as a guarantee any of the notions that the social sciences (from jurisprudence to anthropology) thought they had defined or presupposed as evident, and that many of these notions demanded—in the urgency of catastrophe—to be revised without reserve” (12). By examining, and thereafter using Marx's idea of freedom, I hope to illustrate that modern capitalist-democratic notion of freedom actually helps in the ruin of *zoe*.

⁴ Paul Heyer, *Nature, Human Nature, and Society: Marx, Darwin, Biology, and the Human Sciences* (Westport, Connecticut; London, England: Greenwood Press, 1982), 71.

⁵ In general, Marx's understanding of man could be classified both as philosophical and biological; the philosophic and biological nature, however, are finely intertwined and fully interdependent that is almost impossible to argue one over the other. For a more biologically-oriented discussion of man, see, for example, Paul Heyer, *Nature, Human Nature, and Society: Marx, Darwin, Biology, and the Human Sciences* (Westport, Connecticut; London, England: Greenwood Press, 1982). For a philosophical discussion of man, see, for example, Joseph Bien, *History, Revolution and Human Nature: Marx's Philosophical Anthropology* (Amsterdam: B.R. Gruner Publishing Co., 1984).

⁶ Here I agree that generally speaking “Marx takes in his analyses man as a natural-biological being as a datum and he is not concerned with the process of anthropogenesis leading to the formation of homo sapiens as a biological species.” See George Markus, *Marxism and Anthropology: The concept of 'human essence' in the philosophy of Marx*. Trans. E. de Laczay and G. Markus (Netherlands: Van Gorcum Assen, 1978), 3.

⁷ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* in Robert Tucker, ed., *Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 75. The Reader is used throughout; title and page numbers are cited accordingly.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁹ Heyer, 83.

¹⁰ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844*, 115.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹² Heyer, 77.

¹³ In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844*, Marx illustrates more clearly how man is in

relation to nature. For example, "A being which does not have its nature outside itself is not a *natural* being, and plays no part in the system of nature. A being which has no object outside itself is not an objective being. A being which is not itself an object for some third being has no being for its *objects*; i.e., it is not ***objectively related***. Its be-ing is not objective" (116; bold italics mine).

¹⁴ It is not immediately clear, however at this juncture, if, for Marx, man is at once both part and not part of nature as such.

¹⁵ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844*, 115.

¹⁶ See, for example, his *Theses on Feuerbach*. Man has indeed the capacity to change his circumstances; in Marx's theory, there are varying degrees of capacity of/in man in each historical epoch. Under the capitalist system, for example, he does not have the capacity to change his relation to the means of production; but certainly, he has the capacity to survive in such circumstances.

¹⁷ Heyer, 80.

¹⁸ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 76.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

²¹ *The German Ideology*, 150.

²² As Walliman points out, Marx does not claim that his method and conceptuality is new; in fact, Marx acknowledges that as early as Aristotle, such understanding of man (that is in relation to animals) is already recognized. See Isidor Walliman, *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981).

²³ Walliman, 13.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁵ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 85.

²⁶ *The Grundrisse*, 262.

²⁷ For Marx, the chief means of this individuation [*Vereinzelung*] happens where production and exchange (of commodities) takes place. Thus he argues: "[Exchange] makes the herd-like existence superfluous and dissolves it." *Ibid.*, 263.

²⁸ Markus, 16.

²⁹ *Thesis on Feuerbach VI*, 145.

³⁰ Markus, 23.

³¹ *The German Ideology*, 171.

³² *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, 85.

³³ Walliman, for example, argues this same thesis by suggesting that Marx was against the utility of theory by Jeremy Bentham; "Against Jeremy Bentham, Marx argues...that general human nature cannot be defined from the utility theory, since what is useful is historically relative and general human nature is in no way relative" (14).

³⁴ In this paper, I adopt the term estrangement rather alienation. For an insightful treatment on this topic, see Isidor Wallimann, *Estrangement: Marx's Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor*. Foreword by Gunter W. Remmling (Westport, Connecticut; London, England: Greenwood Press, 1983).

³⁵ Walliman, 147. Here he suggests that estrangement is qualitative and not a quantitative phenomenon. Man is either estranged or not. The basis for such a claim should only be based on man's relation to his labor power and the product of his labor. Thus he writes: "the only society Marx advocated was one free from estrangement—free from any domination of man by man" (154).

³⁶ Walliman, 165.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 149-50.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁴¹ Tucker, xxiv. See also Marx's Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. This paper, however, does not proceed to discuss the significance and implication of this difference. What is raised here is only to suggest the place of the civil society in Marx's political philosophy, especially its relation to his understanding of man.

⁴² Thus it is here that the influence of Hegel must be taken into consideration and how Marx transforms Hegelian philosophy into a materialist philosophy is significant.

⁴³ Here we could also invoke the influence of Aristotle. However, it must be clearly delineated that for Marx, man is first a species-being—as opposed to a political being (Aristotle)—who enters and interacts with other species as a producer of his own subsistence.

⁴⁴ *The German Ideology*, 163.

⁴⁵ For further discussion on how Marx elaborates and uses such theoretical framework to criticize other thinkers that uses 'old Hegelian junk' i.e., M. Proudhon, see *Society and Economy in History*.

⁴⁶ In the political state, he is a citizen. Man is distinct from citizen; for Marx, man is a member of the civil society. For more discussion on this distinction, see *On the Jewish Question*, 41-44.

⁴⁷ *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* can also mean “bourgeois society.” See *The German Ideology*. In *The Grundrisse*, Marx defines bourgeois society as “the most developed and the most complex historic organization of production”

⁴⁸ *The German Ideology*, 163.

⁴⁹ *On the Jewish Question*, 34.

⁵⁰ Marx traces this historical development particularly in later works, i.e., *The Grundrisse*, *Das Capital*.

⁵¹ *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, footnote.

⁵² Such claim (the existence of class), Marx claims, is his own; something that which is new that he proves. See his *Class Struggle and Mode of Production*.

⁵³ *On the Jewish Question*, 34.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁵ See *On the Jewish Question*.

⁵⁶ Tucker, xxiv. And as Tucker suggests, the life of man and his condition in the civil society becomes the fundamental basis for his theoretical investigation and construction.

⁵⁷ The structure of his discussion of these themes, I suggest, are implicitly dialectical, e.g. in anthropology: natural vs. social, and in political philosophy: state vs. civil. But it remains to be seen, however, if this is true to his notions of freedom, given the way in which I have structured this discussion. Provisionally, however, I suggest that freedom is also dialectical in character, that is, it could be expressed in, e.g. universal and particular. The former is what Marx is advocating for.

⁵⁸ Kolakowski, 86.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 100.

⁶¹ As Marx writes in *Alienation and Social Classes*: “The **possessing class** and the **proletarian class** represent one and the same human self-alienation. But the former feels satisfied and affirmed in this self-alienation, experiences the alienation as a sign of *its own power*, and possesses in it the *appearance* of a human existence. The latter, however, feels destroyed in this alienation, seeing in its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman existence” (bold emphasis mine) (133).

⁶² Walliman, 112.

⁶³ Tucker, xxiv.

⁶⁴ Here man is understood more in light of the developmental theory of man, that is, in light of the historical and material conditions—thus as opposed to the more utopian idea of man (that is, there is a “lost” nature of man that needs to be recovered). Man’s natural character while it essentially remains, changes and develops as it copes with the changing environment, both historically and physically. As such, his potentials and capacities as a species-being not only adopts and but also expand and develop in order to survive and support its subsistence. See Ding Xueliang’s *A Survey of Marx’s Theory on Marx’s Full Development*.

⁶⁵ This proposition could also be read in Walliman’s *Estrangement: Marx’s Conception of Human Nature and the Division of Labor*. I employ such structure in order to offer a kind of dialectical discussion over the subject matter—which I believe is a properly Marxian strategy.

⁶⁶ The right of private property (its origin and development) is an important and related theme; in this paper, however, I will limit my interpretation to the nature of the relation of man in the civil society. An exploration of Marx’s view of human rights must be reserved for a later study.

⁶⁷ *On the Jewish Question*, 42 (*italics mine*).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷⁰ Such effectively made them exposed and predisposed to the force and violence of law. Thus, for Marx, security is the “supreme social concept of civil society” (*On the Jewish Question*, 43).

⁷¹ By its very nature, wage labour, for Marx, dehumanizes man.

⁷² A judicial force maintains the relation of men. In Marx’s schema, this is a political apparatus meant to protect the order of civil society. Such is why, for him, state is an outgrowth of civil society—contrary to Hegel. The political state is only a by-product of the structure of civil society; thus, it serves to only protect and promote vested interests within the civil structure.

⁷³ *On the Jewish Question*, 46.

⁷⁴ Placed within the trajectory of his theory, this claim clarifies the historic tasks of the proletariats to bring about the dialectical consciousness that liberate humanity from inhuman living conditions. See also his *Alienation and Social Classes*.

⁷⁵ For example, based on Marx’s theory of estrangement or the psychoanalytical and philosophical account.

⁷⁶ It is for this reason that for Marx, workers are still able to organize themselves despite or in spite of the ‘absence’ of freedom under the capitalist society. And they are able to imagine or think about, i.e., a different kind of society (and this is, for Marx, the exercise of human creativity).

This view, however, because of the limitation of this study, must still be further examined and elaborated; there are, at least, two identifiable dimensions in light of this discussion: one, how Marx understands consciousness, and two, what and how the notion of freedom is understood in the communist state (i.e., is it still a creative expression?)

⁷⁷ A point also convincingly pointed out by Nobel-prize economist Amartya Sen: the more we create freedom, the more development is made possible. See Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1999).

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Light on the Mountain*

Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas

W*hy am I here?* Many of us gathered here right now must be asking this question: “Why am I here?”

After the question “Is there a God?” this is probably *the* ultimate question raised at one time or another by every thinking human being. The question was given visual body in Henri Gauguin’s definitive artwork, painted when he found himself in the exotic, evocative shores of Tahiti: a work in oil entitled, “Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we going?”...a painting that depicts a gathering of Tahitian folk; the title of the painting addresses the fundamental existential question of humankind.

I will leave the large philosophic issue for you to figure out for yourselves, as you must; perhaps it does not have a fixed answer.

But by way of responding to the mundane, immediate question of *why we are here* (and not elsewhere) holding the 2010 Silliman University National Writers Workshop, I thought I’d tell a few stories instead.

Over half a century ago, a young man walked barefoot across these mountainous forest trails alone, gathering data about troop movements and the massacres of civilians wrought by the occupying Japanese forces. He went from one village to another, writing down the information that he later carried to the American submarines

* Opening talk for the Silliman University National Writers Workshop, May 2010

waiting off the coast of Bayawan, on the southern tip of the island. He was the historical data officer for the Seventh Military District of the United States Armed Forces of the Far East. Because, by that time in the war, there was no paper left to write his reports on, he'd write his notes on the backs of student term papers left over from before Silliman University closed its doors at the outbreak of the Japanese occupation, and the faculty and students who formed the core of the Resistance evacuated to the hills of the Cuernos de Negros.

The data was brought by submarine to the troops of General MacArthur in Australia, and thence to the War Department in Washington, D.C., where they were later used in, among other functions, the prosecution of war criminals at the end of the war. Some of the things he witnessed and experienced—seeing the dead body of a little girl whose hands were hacked off at the wrist as though she'd been warding off the bayonet before it struck; or the Japanese corporal who was a prisoner of war scheduled for execution, befriending another little child in the camp just minutes before he was led off to die; or lighting a funeral pyre for his own father...

These images made their way into the stories and novels he wrote in the fifty years following the war.

That young writer was my father. While he was on his information-gathering missions for the Army, he had to leave his young wife, often alone, in the hidden evacuation huts. As I was growing up, listening to the accounts of a war that was not long distant, it seemed to me that my mother was always losing baby after baby in stillbirth, because of the rigors of having to flee over rugged terrain, one step ahead of the enemy. And it was true; too many babies miscarried or stillborn and buried in the forest. She kept trying to have a child so she could keep some part of her husband alive, with her, while he was gone, maybe never to return. Indeed, it was long after the war, after she had given up hope of ever bringing a child into the world, that I was born...and not long after that, the Writers' Workshop...which gave her and my father many children of the Word, and made her "Mom" to generations of writers, to this day.

"Where do you want to go to school?" the American missions board office asked him, when, immediately following the end of the war, my father was given a scholarship to study in the United States. The board intended for him to earn his graduate degrees in English at Stanford, and they needed to ascertain Stanford offered a program

that would match his academic goals.

"I would like to go where writers are being trained how to write. I have many stories to tell, and I hope to find the best way to tell these stories. If such a school exists," Dad told him.

"Then there's only one place for you: Iowa."

Dad was puzzled. "Iowa," he said, trying to recall what he'd learned of American geography. "Isn't that where...corn is grown?"

That's what many Americans still think when they hear of Iowa, "...Iowa, that's where the tall corn grows." But today, all across the world, they also link Iowa with the next thing the missions board officer told my father. "There's a man there who can teach you how to write."

That man, Paul Engle, would come to Dumaguete sixteen years later, to visit the creative writing program that my father and mother had founded, a workshop patterned exactly after the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where my Dad and Mom had earned their graduate degrees in the art of writing and of *teaching* writing: learning above all that you can't grow talent; you can only teach writing by example, by providing a sense of community within an essentially lonely vocation, and by lending self-confidence to each writer, showing how one can avoid the wasteful pain of trial-and-error by pointing to where the pitfalls of storytelling lie, and how to construct a poem efficiently. That was the good Iowa seed corn, planted across the world to grow crop after crop of sturdy hybrids.

The summer Paul Engle visited that hybrid plot, my parents brought, for the first time, a Korean poet named Ko Won, to study at the Silliman Summer Workshop. Paul Engle took Ko Won and the Filipino Wilfrido Nollado back to Iowa with them; as they were studying there, they formed the nucleus for what became the International Writing Program. Twenty-three years after Paul Engle's visit to Dumaguete, he became my boss...when I went to Iowa in my turn, and found myself administering the IWP.

A couple of years before my husband and I went to Iowa, we lived in our family's summerhouse, about 15 minutes' (hard) walk uphill from here. Lem and I were both in graduate school at the time. We'd head out to Camp Lookout every Friday afternoon, as soon as the weekend started. From Dumaguete, we'd take the jeepney up to Valencia town, hire a pedicab to carry us—and my faithful Corona typewriter—up to the end of the road...which, as it happens, is right below where we are at this moment. Early on Monday morning, my husband and I would take the shortcut on foot under the coconut

trees downhill from Bongbong to Valencia, to catch the jeepney to campus. The dew was wet on our feet, as we headed toward our study of John Donne and The Venerable Bede and the tenets of Robert Penn Warren's New Criticism.

Our daughter was just six weeks old when we first took her up here. That was probably one of the happiest—and certainly most productive—periods of my life. Here I wrote my doctoral dissertation, and a collection of poetry, *Mountain Sacraments* ... and the book of short stories that eventually got me to Iowa. In the beginning, my husband, who was working as a newscaster at radio station DYSR, and later as technical director of Luce Auditorium, would hike up to our cottage to join me every evening; he taught me one of my few practical survival skills: how to light a Coleman lamp. (There was no electricity in these parts, then.)

At one point, early on in our residence in these hills, I was lighting one of the ancient, rusty Petromax lamps in the University Mission cottage we were then renting. With me was one of the oldest flower vendors in the neighborhood, Nang Simeona and her daughter Laidot. The lamp burst into flames, and would not go out, while Laidot stood by helplessly saying "*Mga Birhen, mga Maria...*" and the old lady yelled at her, "*Paghilum!*" I rushed to wrap the flaming lantern in one of the ratty, mothball-scented woolen blankets that were part of the Mission Cottage's few amenities, and I flung the Petromax into the fern bushes ... right about here.

After a time, Lem began writing a novel himself. "Just to keep you company," as he says. Eventually the plays and stories he wrote here won Palanca awards too ... and got him into the Playwrights' Workshop at the University of Iowa, where he earned his MFA.

As it happens, Iowa was where, among other things, Ida's Mama Dreena was my little daughter's daycare provider, and her papa Doy was a TA in one of Lem's screenwriting classes...at the Film School where Lem now works.

There's an obvious subtext here, a moral to the story, if you will, which I hope you'll take as encouragement for your own endeavors. The writing world comes to Iowa, which is the progenitor of all the world's writing workshops—IYAS, Iligan, Malate ... but for most of us here today, the journey begins in Dumaguete.

I was later told by some friends in Dumaguete that they could see the light from my lamp, shining down, a single light from the mountainside, visible in the town because, back then, it was the only light one could see on a clear night, shining from these hills.

"She's up there, writing," they'd tell themselves. I was embarrassed that an intrinsically solitary and private activity should announce itself, unbeknownst to me, in what seemed to be such a public fashion.

Thanks to the generosity of Enrique Sobrepeña, and the visionary leadership of Silliman's President Ben S. Malayang III, and most of all the heroic work of English Department chair Evelyn Mascuñana and her staff including the Workshop Secretariat Alana Narcisco and Lady Flor Partosa, and all the hands that have made the Writers' Village a reality, this is now a home for all writers ... to know some of the joy I've found here.

I was going to end this talk with the cheesy words to a song... Perhaps "The hills are alive/With the sound of writers."

But I'll leave you instead with this little wish, which may also help you begin to answer the question "Why am I here?": My wish is that each one of you, during these next three weeks, will find your own singular, solitary light in these mountains. And it will shine from your hands, into the darkness—one small bright light.

“I’m Home”*

Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas

The story of the Silliman University National Writers’ Workshop begins a hundred years ago, twelve thousand miles away, with a man named Carl Seashore. Professor Seashore took an idea propounded in a lecture by the philosopher Josiah Royce, which articulated the idea that within the university setting, the creative arts occupied an equal space in scholarly stature with academic and scientific research.

Thereafter, Prof. Seashore suggested, the postgraduate terminal degree should be awarded to creative work—or a body of creative work, such as an exhibition of paintings, a symphonic composition, a collection of poetry—that had been composed during the course of a scholar’s study of his or her given artistic craft. The completed creative work would be regarded with the same consideration as, say, the hydraulic properties derived from the patterns of the meanders of a river, or the gradations of deafness in studies to determine speech pathology. The concept of the writers’ workshop—that the art of creative writing could be actually taught and transmitted—was born.

By 1946, the Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa was the only academic institution in the world teaching creative writing as a transmittable craft, and a young Filipino writer was one of the first

* Closing Talk and Dedication Ceremony for the 49th Silliman University National Writers Workshop at the Writers Village in Camp Lookout, Valencia, Negros Oriental, 21 May 2010

two non-native speakers of English to enroll in the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop.

After completing their postgraduate degrees, those writers—Ed and Edith Tiempo—came back to the Philippines, to found at Silliman University the first creative writing program in Asia. The program was two-pronged: the academic component involved a degree offered for credit, that eventually expanded to include the MFA in Creative Writing and a Ph.D. in English and Literature with a concentration in creative writing; and the Summer Writers' Workshop, that brought fellows not only nationally, but from all of Southeast Asia.

In 1962, their teacher at Iowa, who shaped the Iowa Writers' Workshop, came to Dumaguete to visit this pioneering progeny of the program he had shaped across the seas. While he was here, Paul Engle met at the Silliman Writers Workshop two Asian writers, Ko Won and Wilfrido Nolledo, whom he brought back with him to Iowa. These two writers, from Silliman, went on to form the nucleus at Iowa for the International Writing Program: the good Iowa seed corn re-hybridizing and bringing the world of writing full circle.

Over the years, my father sought and received funding to support the Silliman Writers Workshop from such funding entities as the Ford Foundation and the Agency for Christian Literature Development, based in London; through Silliman University, Dad would invest the funding he'd raised, and the program operated on the interest accrued from the monies from abroad, sources which expanded to include agencies in England, Switzerland, Germany.

During the years that our family lived abroad, when my parents held exchange professorships in the US, the Workshop continued to be administered by Silliman, under the stewardship of David Quemada and Myrna Peña-Reyes.

Administrative changes led the Workshop to seek support from external sources during the 1990s and much of the decade previous to that. The Creative Writing Foundation, composed of Workshop alumni, notably Alfred [Krip] Yuson, raised funds and administered the program during this period, until full support was provided annually by the CAP College and CAP Foundation, under Atty. Enrique Sobrepeña. The support from College Assurance Plan came at a particularly crucial time for the Workshop, and kept the program alive for those years of hiatus from Silliman.

Silliman resumed full support for the program three years ago. The visionary leadership of President Ben S. Malayang III restored the Writers' Workshop to its place within the university.

Ben's goal was to build an arts campus, with the creative writing center as its heart. A couple of years ago, during the Workshop's closing dinner, he spoke of his dream about having a Writers Village. The astounding generosity of the Sobrepeña family made this dream possible. The cornerstone was laid last November, under the stewardship of our much loved and recently departed former president of Silliman, Dr. Quintin S. Doromal. The photos of the groundbreaking were e-mailed to me, and from my gaze across the world, I honestly thought it would be at least a year before any of this plan would materialize.

To my astonishment, the Village and its facilities were completed and ready for use by the 49th session of the Philippine National Writers Workshop. It was like a palace materializing out of the 1001 Arabian Nights...and the genies that made it come into being were the staff of the English Department, headed by Eve Mascunaña, who had to learn about dealing with building contractors and architects, and the tireless efforts of good people like Alana Narciso, Lady Flor Partosa, Moses Atega, who spent the weeks leading up to May 3 fitting the windows for curtains, landscaping the grounds, furnishing the rooms to make the graceful and habitable home that has been yours for the past three weeks.

Truly, as all miracles are, our presence here is a gift of grace, surpassing all we dared imagine.

Miracles begin with love stories, and the Writers' Village has as its cornerstone a couple of love stories, chief of which is the story of Ike Sobrepeña and Rose Lamb.

When you and I were still only twinkles in the eye of God, Mr. Sobrepeña and Miss Lamb were going to school at Silliman; not so very long ago, but during a time whose customs seem somewhat quaint to us today.

At the time that the Sobrepeñas were your age, the university required that courting couples had to be accompanied on all their dates by a faculty chaperone. Ike and Rose especially liked being chaperoned by a young, newly married member of the faculty, Edith Tiempo. Whenever they'd go out to watch a movie, my mother always let Ike and Rose sit side by side.

Her chaperoning was unlike that of another faculty member who was at the time matron of Oriental Hall; this chaperone would insist on sitting between the hapless couple, following the rule to the

strictest application of the law. This lady, understandably, was not too popular, and the smart-alecky young men found a way to slyly get back at her, especially those who were on the staff of *the Weekly Sillimanian*.

A news item in the student newspaper had identified this lady-chaperone as "Miss" when she was actually married. So she wrote an indignant letter to *the Weekly Sillimanian*, demanding a correction and an apology.

Forthwith, in its next issue, the newspaper ran this boxed erratum-item: "We regret that we did not correctly identify Mrs. [let us call her 'Clotilde Lopez']. She is a faulty member."

(The power of one craftily omitted letter: *c*.)

The moral subtext of this story is: *Don't mess with writers. They always have the last word.*

"Politics is local," and by the same token, history is at its core personal. This is the reason we do what we do, as chroniclers of the large and small events to which we are witness. Much has been made of the historicity of the events we are today celebrating.

By way of perhaps attempting to place a personal context on today's events, I'd like to close with (yet another) personal story, one that might help explain why the location of the Writers Village in Camp Lookout means so much to me.

Twenty-six years ago, I learned I was being sent to Iowa in my turn, to attend the International Writing Program. The weekend before we left Dumaguete, my husband and I spent one last afternoon at our cottage, Airy Nest, above here. I remember that I sat on the stone steps my husband Lem had laid onto the grassy slope of the lawn, leading to the house where I'd written my dissertation, two books, and Lem had written the plays and short stories, that got us into the University of Iowa. I said goodbye to Nang Sebia, our caretaker, and I sat down and cried, knowing it would be a long time before I'd walk these hills again.

During the many intervening years, I'd sometimes wake up on a winter night, shaken awake by a dream that I was walking into the blue-and-gold light, on the back steps of what had been the Lower Cottage of the Silliman Mission Houses. In the dream, I'd be looking up through the pine trees at the mountain peaks, and my heart would be shouting, *I'm home!*

There's a reason you are called "Fellows"—whether or not you're male or female.

The reason why you are Fellows is because it derives from the word that is key to our business as a workshop: *fellowship*.

Writing is an essentially solitary craft. As we all know, there's nothing more daunting than facing that empty page, the cursor of your computer blinking like a heartbeat waiting to pump blood into vital organs that are not yet shaped...words waiting to be born.

To use another analogy: we venture into the deep space of the written word entirely alone, on our own.

The writers' workshop exists to lend each of us a sense of community, to make ourselves feel we are not entirely alone on that singular voyage, as we seek to find words to fill the blank page. The workshop also seeks to provide maps to make the voyage a little easier.

When I first spoke with you three weeks ago, I talked about lighting a lamp from this mountainside.

It is my hope today that each of you has found that light, and from it you'll bring glowing embers to rekindle wherever you go ... Davao, Manila, Cebu, maybe Bahrain—wherever life leads you. But most of all, this is my wish for you: that as you re-light your little lamp, you will know that, standing with you to keep it lit, are Gian and Gino, Ida and Gel, Manong Fred and Josephine, the Cafeteria staff and even Nomnom and those mysterious shadows outside your windows... all of them, who have, I think, given you a place where your heart, remembering, can shout in recognition, *I'm home!*

On the Question of Poetry and Rage

J. Neil C. Garcia

Conchitina Cruz's essay in the latest edition of the *High Chair* poetry journal expresses in powerful terms the critical position that takes poetry as a legitimate albeit problematic response to the kind of ethical, political, and epistemological crisis that horrific events like the Maguindanao massacre induce, if not intensify, in and around us. Despite the note of jadedness (borne out of a sense of political futility) on which she commences her piece, soon enough we discover that just like the declared intention of the editor of "the anthology of rage," she does not mean to exonerate the poet from the private and public messiness such a situation possibly creates; she believes, as many of the rage contributors probably do, that poetry proffers a unique and enduring relevance, and constitutes a conceivably exceptional response to this tragedy even if, to her mind most pointedly, this response can only be limited and practically effete, because ultimately complicit.

The chasmal difference, therefore, lies in her Adornian insistence on the paradoxical, complicated, and difficult role that the poetic practice must increasingly come to play, smack dab in the middle of this singular predicament. More specifically, she argues against the platitudinous, simplistic, and "sympathetic gestures" that have come to pass for this mostly convenient and self-congratulatory reaction, as such may be evidenced from many of the impassioned works in the aforementioned online compilation of verse (just now it occurs to me

that “compilation” is really the more appropriate word; other than the removal of titles, no real editing—which is to say, no real selection or anthologizing—apparently took place there).

In any case, a crucial idea in her piece provides me with a possible entry-point for a hopefully productive critique of what is, by now, an already familiar position: the poetic art has proven its relevance, and those who wish to engage (with) it need to catch up. I’m referring, of course, to the trope of chronological movement and “synchronous time” that would seem to be implied by this concluding statement in her piece. Needless to say, this is an important implication, for it begs the question of temporalities and of just how local—which is to say, how culturally specific—they really are (and cannot help but be). One wonders to which “universal temporality” she is referring in this statement—a temporality that the “tic-toc” of Philippine poetic time must now reckon itself against and adjust itself to... Moreover, one wonders, given the rage compilation’s abundant evidence, just how true it is that, in our country’s literary tradition, the poetic art has so exhausted the uses of the representational (I am channeling an alternative nomenclature here, since the affective term “sympathetic” strikes me as a mite imprecise; needless to say, “sympathy” isn’t quite an artistic property, and as such it can easily be said to lie on either side of the aesthetic divide), and has found the mimetic so facile, habitual, and potentially inauthentic, that it must now turn to those nonmimetic and more intensely self-reflexive forms just to defamiliarize the “automatized” reference—which is to say, just to register an ironically distantiated, complex, and difficult understanding of the perilous relationship between reality and sign.

This line of “wondering” really means to ask, in my view, “where” and “when” we are, culturally and historically speaking... My own take on the subject is what post-colonialism, in its various guises, has been abundantly arguing all these years: pretty much like most other countries in the global south, ours is not so much a traditional as a transitional society. What this implies is that rather than manifest the clear and unproblematic prevalence of any one mode or manner of living, Philippine culture in fact demonstrates the opposite. We might say that Filipino contemporary life, being at once neocolonized and postcolonial, is characterized by a kind of “simultaneity,” a cultural condition in which various modes of existence, various indigeneities, temporalities, influences and value systems—needless to say, various technologies—may be seen to perversely and blissfully coexist.

We need only take a trip out of Manila, for the truth of this

“simultaneity” to casually assault us. For example, on a trip to Baguio, one may see the following vehicles of public transport plying the same double-laned national highway: tricycles (foot- or gasoline-powered), buses, cars, SUVs, bicycles, trucks, the occasional horse-drawn *caritela*, and carts being pulled by bulls or water-buffaloes. Unflattering as it may look, for me the metaphor of a country road that hosts and bears daily witness to different kinds of “mobilities”—the social being the most noteworthy—captures the current state of the Philippines very well. To this analogy we may now add the poems of the rage compilation and those wonderful and choice pieces that are included in the latest edition of the *High Chair* journal—all of them written by contemporary Filipinos responding to what is essentially the same piece of nationally urgent news. Indeed, read side by side, these diverse texts evoke basically the same image of a strangely crowded, multi-directional, polyambulant, variably paced, technologically asynchronous and perversely “simultaneous” national highway, in their own interesting way!

On a related note, we need to recognize the fact that many of the antimimetic and “postfoundationalist” positions routinely taken up, over the past century, by ex-centric thinkers and artists in the west were premised upon a kind of stable archive, a centuries-old literacy and discursivity, and their attendant “textual mentality,” that needed to be critiqued and debunked, precisely because they had hypostatized otherwise contingent constructs into various but related fascisms (obviously, this is my shorthand for western civilization’s famous “crisis of representation”). Among the litany of woes that comprise her preamble to her piece, Cruz herself acknowledges the highly provisional, semi-oral, and irrevocably negotiable memory of many Filipinos—as evidenced, woefully once again, in the recently concluded national elections. If this were indeed so—which is to say, if ours were not even, to begin with, a fully literate, “categorical” or chirographic culturality—then wouldn’t it be possible to say that any attempts by Filipinos at “textualization,” no matter how sympathetic, clumsily representational, and inadequately poetic, themselves constitute, if not gesture towards, a form of initiatory and for this reason difficult “reflexivity”? To this we may likewise add the representational complexity that the issue of translation and bilingualism (altogether pertinent in this case) necessarily poses, as well as the interesting but complicated question of multiple “referentialities” (in sum, this question forces us to consider that all texts, especially transcultural and postcolonially hybrid ones, profess

all at once and to varying degrees extra-, inter-, meta-, and intratextual reflexivities, and that it is the critical enterprise of interpretation, not the creative act of composition, that is uniquely capable of making these layers of meaning apparent). Moreover, I'm thinking that if simple personal strife in the very act of writing were the issue, then we can only imagine how so many of these contributors arguably strove—and strove ragingly and valiantly—as they endeavored to piece together their preliminary and visibly effortful verses...

On a personal note (and just because I've a feeling it could prove particularly instructive) I must admit that, despite decades of cultural research, now and again I still suffer immensely every time I realize that the typical self-evidence and "categorical plainness" in what I read (mostly Western books) isn't necessarily what is borne out by what exists around me, and that now and again I will need to "recalibrate" or situate the assumptions of acquired knowledge just so that they can "conform" amicably to the fact. I suppose my work on gay culture has helped me arrive at a kind of happy compromise—a species of "negative capability" that has enabled me to accept the crazily simultaneous, mixed, and perversely hybrid realities of our lives in this corner of the immiserated world. Very early on, my extensive readings in western gay theory kept bumping into the immovable alterity of my circumstances in this country, where very often foreign ideals are not perfectly understood or "appreciated" by Filipinos, after all. In particular, I'm thinking of the American "colonization" of local concepts of sexuality, specifically the normative homo/hetero binary, which was "implanted" (as the French historian Michel Foucault would have put it) into the Philippines during the American period. By virtue of the modernization of psychological and psychiatric disciplines—and riding on such diverse discourses as physical hygiene, mental health, guidance and counseling, juvenile delinquency, even the more recent "liberationist" movements of feminism and gay and lesbian advocacy—Filipinos are becoming more and more sexually self-conscious, identifying themselves as either hetero- or homo- (sometimes, bi-) sexual. And yet, as we know, such labels are understood differently (or "queerly") by the Filipino population at large. As we know, in the Philippines, men who have sex with other men don't necessarily become homosexual, since homosexuality is not commonly understood as a question of sexual orientation, but rather, of gender self-presentation. Which is to say: only the effeminate *bakla* is homosexual, while his masculine partner (the real man, or *tunay na lalaki*) remains heterosexual, despite

or precisely because of such a relationship. For many Filipinos, it's the *bakla*'s effeminacy that marks him as homosexual, and the *lalaki*'s masculinity that marks him as heterosexual.

To my mind, this demonstrates a lack of "fit" between the Western discourse of sexual orientation, which defines people according to the gender of their sexual object-choice, and the various local concepts of gender (which, in my experience growing up as a sissy boy in Manila, may well be four: girl, boy, *bakla*, *tombboy*). Of course, the fact that colonial norms, like those of sexuality, end up becoming localized, adapted, and/or "hybridized" by the local culture to suit more local tastes and needs doesn't mean they end up doing no harm. In this case, the pathologized discourse of homosexuality effectively "dovetails" with the effeminophobic category of the *bakla*, thereby oppressing him twice over. (Yes, the effeminate *bakla* already left much to be desired in the context of a native culture that professed its own brand of "machismo." Indeed, whoever said everything native was good, anyway?)

Suffice it to say that, in our country, one finds many other examples of "incongruence" between ubiquitous and "foundational" Western norms, and the prevailing local concepts they were supposed to have superseded and/or subsumed. In the end, all such discrepancies amount to a performed life that's very different from what it looks like on paper, to a life that cannot always be signified, only, perhaps, lived. (In any case, my feeling is, by and large, Filipino writers have yet to find—or invent—the language with which to express just this life, that seemingly resists textualizing to begin with.)

And so, to conclude: perhaps, the absence of a sophisticated poetic practice isn't so much the problem as the absence of a sophisticated poetic criticism which, first and foremost, needs to be a form of cultural criticism, in our case. Perhaps, what we need most critically at this stage are painstaking and altogether finicky poetic critics who will register a similar metacritical demurral against universalist presumptions, as well as perform the difficult but necessary conceptual "complication"—in other words, the particularization and/or recontextualization—of various critical terms and ideas, whose local and translocal uses and relevancies they will obviously need to explain and explore. In other words, we need to account for things as they presently are, as decreed by the difference that is our situatedness; I'm thinking that this might just conceivably surprise us, because these "things" are possibly as exciting and dynamic as the change to which we all fretfully aspire.

For starters, judging by the seemingly unbridgeable rifts in the discourse surrounding the rage compilation, we could begin to ask just exactly what is “poetry,” as it is produced and consumed by specific groups or communities of Filipino writers and readers? Also: just how possible is it to speak of a Philippine poetic tradition, given the lack of aesthetic uniformity across the Philippines’s various cultural divides? And then: what constitutes relevance, and what counts as poetic form, if form is relationally defined as the condition and the preclusion of content? How feasible are dichotomies of this sort here? In specific, how possible is realistic representation in the poetic medium, especially when it is written in English, and what constitutes didacticism and lyricism in Philippine poetries, and how exactly do you operationalize, across languages and genres, these culturally loaded terms? etc. etc.

Having said all this, however, I should also conclude by simply repeating a previous avowal: given my kind of education, given what I have come to know, and given my current faiths and unfaiths, at this point in my life I find I am—as yet—unable to write a poem about this massacre’s unspeakable and maddeningly complex “text”... since the vital and fundamental work of cultural and aesthetic/poetic elucidation remains obviously unfinished, since I remain bracingly aware of our culture’s inexorable simultaneity, and since it is my wish to stay respectful of the alterities this simultaneity warmly embodies—I suppose right after saying this it is also only necessary humility for me to profess: but see, this is just me.





REVIEW





Coco Martin as a corrupted cop drawn into the nightmarish world of Mendoza's *Kinatay*.

Don't Look Away

Review By Ian Rosales Casocot

Kinatay

Directed by Brillante Mendoza

Written by Armando Lao

With Coco Martin, Maria Isabel Lopez, and Julio Diaz.

Swift Productions and Centerstage Production, Philippines.

2009. 105 minutes.

... [T]he first step to the knowledge of the wonder and mystery of life is the recognition of the monstrous nature of the earthly human realm as well as its glory, the realization that this is just how it is and that it cannot and will not be changed. Those who think they know how the universe could have been had they created it, without pain, without sorrow, without time, without death, are unfit for illumination.

Joseph Campbell
Myths to Live By

God help me, but a month or so has passed since I last saw Brillante Mendoza's *Kinatay* [*The Execution of P*, 2009], and yet the memory of that visceral journey through Manila's dark underbelly has stayed with me with a malevolent power I can't exactly define—it is a prickling under my skin, a kind of labored breathing, a haunted voice that plagues the consciousness. It comes and goes, and when it does descend, it unsettles—as it must.

Once on a recent midnight, I was bored and had nothing to do, and so I wandered the empty city streets in search for something, anything. That was how I found myself in a wayside eatery, a place I usually go to only after a full night's drunken debauchery, and always with friends. This time, I was alone, and I was hungry. The bored-looking waitress lazily considered my presence and barely made an effort to conceal an undefined irritation. She asked, "What do you want?" Or to be more exact, she gave me a look, her silence more than enough to convey that query. I said, "One order of *tocilog*, and a bottle of mineral water."

That instantly brought me back to the last few scenes in Mr. Mendoza's film when the men, straight off their fresh butchery of the prostitute Madonna (played by Maria Isabel Lopez), find themselves back in the streets of Manila and with such unsettling nonchalance, they go back to the ordinary rhythms of life: it is early morning and they enter a *karinderia*, quite similar to the one I ventured in that night in my memory, and they tell the woman who waits on them, "*Isang tocilog...*" In the foreground of that scene, a pork dish is being chopped, while the woman intones brightly: "*Magandang umaga po, may lechon kawali po kami.*" The juxtaposition of butchered pig as delicacy and butchered woman, of course, is intended, and is meant to unsettle. Coco Martin, playing Peping the rookie cop whose descent into hell is the story of this film, excuses himself from the murderous group and goes to the lavatory, where he retches. Only twenty-four hours earlier, he had a blissful start in a marriage to Cecille (Mercedes Cabral), and his participation in this unanticipated excursion was only meant for him to earn some extra cash for his new family. It became instead an introduction to unspeakable horror, and him—and consequently us—an unwilling participant in the carnage.

His night and my night are not necessarily far apart. Of course, the crucial difference comes with the fact that he has participated in a murder and I didn't—but what's to stop with that glaring difference if I had on my own stumbled on the same sort of evil, and like him, did nothing?

Peping's day began as ordinarily as I usually begin mine—or you

with yours.

And this is the story of most evils. *They are completely ordinary*. They come to us not with the warning sound of trumpets or the blaring screech of eerie synthesizers, but in quiet, in insidious entrance. And sometimes when we finally realize we have gone past the invisible portals and evil now requires our participation or our indifference, I bet most of us will become accomplices, willing or not. The Pulitzer-winning film critic Roger Ebert, reviewing Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* [1985], a 9-hour documentary about the Holocaust, tackled that idea of the ordinariness that often cloaks great evil in our midst:

Some of the strangest passages in the film are the interviews with the officials who were actually responsible for running the camps and making the "Final Solution" work smoothly and efficiently. None of them, at least by their testimony, seem to have witnessed the whole picture. They only participated in a small part of it, doing their little jobs in their little corners; if they are to be believed, they didn't personally kill anybody, they just did small portions of larger tasks, and somehow all of the tasks, when added up and completed, resulted in people dying.

And that is how we participate in evil, when we somehow know what's going on, and yet we excuse ourselves by saying, "I was just doing my job," or "I was just being told what to do." Many ordinary people in Nazi Germany knew what was going on—and yet did not do anything about it.

There are two clinical studies that explain the possibilities of evil that reside within every human being. One is the now-famous Stanford Prison Experiment of 1971 where one set of participants (the "prison guards") started exercising their sadistic impulses on another set of participants (the "prisoners") without inhibition the moment they were "permitted" to do so by a "higher authority." The other famous attempt is the Milgram Experiment of 1961, where participants perplexingly allowed themselves to "electrocute" an unseen subject to certain fatality—even when they protest—as long as a "higher authority" orders them to do so.

The men in *Kinatay* perfectly captured that. Acting on the orders of Kap—a captain in the police force who is also (not so ironically) a crime kingpin—they extort from roadside vendors, and they kill. And they do so without protest. It is "just" a job.

I quote Mr. Ebert's appraisal above because it is ironic that he would see a fine film in Lanzmann's effort, and not see the same in Mr. Mendoza's. When *Kinatay* was shown in Cannes in 2009 (where it won Mr. Mendoza the Best Director prize), Mr. Ebert was one of

its most vocal critics, calling it the worst film ever presented in the august festival. He decries its abuse of *idée fixe*, its murky darkness, its incessant noise—and then wisely puts up an armor to deflect the coming criticism:

You mark my words. There will be critics who fancy themselves theoreticians, who will defend this unbearable experience, and lecture those plebians like me who missed the whole Idea. I will remain serene while my ignorance is excoriated. I am a human being with relatively reasonable tastes. And in that role, not in the role of film critic, I declare that there may not be ten people in the world who will buy a ticket to this movie and feel the money was well spent.

I am a great fan of Mr. Ebert—but I found that all-encompassing dismissiveness a little appalling. But I will be one of those critics. The murk? It's the perfect atmosphere for this story about the descent, this long journey, to hell. The incessant noise? That's the ordinary, bone-reaching sounds of the streets of Manila—alien perhaps to Western ears, but perfectly common to ours. (The ambient sounds, compounded with the sheer tension of Teresa Barrozo's music, is the apt soundtrack this kind of story demands.) Was my money well-spent? I am also a human being with relatively reasonable taste—and you bet it was. Yes, it is a discomfiting film about a wretched story, and its aesthetics, as far as I am concerned, is what the story demands—because how else to handle such a story? Certainly not with subtlety, something so prized by Western critics; we are beyond subtlety in this regard; what we need is art that is also a slap to our face. And this is certainly a slap. I don't think I can watch this film a second time, but that is a testament of its power. It is already so heavily imprinted in my brain, anyway, so I don't need to.

You see, Mr. Ebert, I watch the film and I see it as a dark but painfully *true* reflection of my sad country. Ordinary evil like this exists—*persists*—in my midst. The politicians are corrupt. The cops are murderers. The religious men are charlatans. And the common tao knows, and has reached the point of no longer caring.

Recently, ABS-CBN News reported on the story of a six-year old girl in Cebu who was kidnapped—and later her battered body was found in a dirty sack thrown off a cliff. (What kind of people would do that?) Not so recently, a massacre of journalists exploded in a province called Maguindanao, a barbarity apparently sanctioned by its governor.

There are a thousand other similar tales, but I don't want this article to become an encyclopedia of these dark things that happen in the ordinary air that is the Philippines'. The thing to realize is that

these atrocities happen so often in my country, Mr. Ebert, that most of us have learned not to be shocked anymore. We have lost that crucial capacity for real outrage, because evil has become so pervasive, it has become ordinary. And most of us have learned to look away, to ignore that these things do happen. These people who have chosen to ignore these things are people one might even call God-fearing, even decent. But what they do not know is that by sheer indifference, by looking away, they participate in evil as well.

What I do know is that we need movies like *Kinatay*, if only to act as unwanted but needed reminders. When the film was shown in Dumaguete a few months back, the opinions were sharply divided. In the Silliman University Cultural Affairs Committee Facebook page, a certain Cereu Romero commented: "A grues0me,h0rribLE, ridicUL0Us, w0rst m0viE EvER pr0dUcE." (I have retained the original spelling and grammar for a reason.) *And there you go.* Such ignorant sentiment underlies the importance of films such as this. For these people perhaps, films are to be thought of as "for entertainment only." Which is sad, and largely myopic about the role of art in our lives. But not all films, not all great art, are meant simply to entertain. Sometimes they are meant to unsettle, especially when they show a true and hard reflection of what's happening in the society that surrounds us. What we see will most likely repulse many of us, make us retch the way Coco Martin's character did in the end. But retch all you want. That's an important reaction—it marks you as human still capable of shock.

But don't look away.

And do acknowledge that these things really happen. Most of all, however you can, do something about them. Don't just look away.



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PANORAMIC PHOTO OF THE RIZAL BOULEVARD BY HERSLEY-VEN CASERO