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

even reminiscences are appropriate here.

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

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

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# SILLIMAN JOURNAL



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## EDITORIAL NOTES



“The key to success is not innovation;  
it is simplicity and diligence  
applied with fierce devotion to our  
highest priorities.”

**Jim Collins**  
*Fast Company*  
(2001)

WELCOME TO THE second issue of *Silliman Journal's* 60th anniversary. This is the last biannual issue as we revert to publishing quarterly in 2015. The journal has come a long way since its founding in 1954. Its 50th anniversary was celebrated with a special science issue, a special humanities issue, an index project, and a volume of Abstracts (1954-2004). In this issue's Notes Section, I write about *SJ's* developments in its first 60 years.

The first article in this issue is a comparative analysis of the language policies and practices of the Philippines and Thailand. Demeterio and Liwanag of De La Salle University in Manila, Philippines set the context of their analysis in countries that are both multicultural and multilingual and who are “gearing for regional

integration/cooperation and globalization.” The ASEAN emphasis is both crucial and imperative. In the next paper, Matthew Oseka looks into Protestant Sacramentology (*i.e.*, baptism and the Lord’s Supper), saying that “the idea of interpreting the phenomenon of religion in philosophical terms propounded by Hegel may contribute to the public theology based not on the category of a supermundane revelation but on human rational endeavour.”

The next two papers look into the teaching-learning process, though certainly in very different fields. Theresa Guino-o and colleagues conduct an evaluation of the learning benefits of using a “high fidelity human patient simulator” among Filipino nursing students. Positive results support the continued use of simulation as a learning strategy. Meanwhile, Lapis and Jamias of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños evaluate an e-learning program for out-of-school youth, termed “eSkwela” and find positive results from enrollees in the program as well as from teachers.

The last two full-length research papers are by sports psychologists—Valbuena and colleagues study the Filipino athlete and Pagaduan and Kritz investigate ratings made of the movement competency screen. In particular, Valbuena et al. found that Filipino athletes were very similar to New Zealand and Canadian athletes in athlete engagement (*i.e.*, in confidence, dedication, vigor, and enthusiasm). Pagaduan and Kritz also studied athletes, stating that “movement competency and subsequent production of muscular power is a fundamental concern for sport and health professionals when considering an athlete’s injury prevention and long-term athlete development.” The study proves valuable prior to exercise prescription.

## NOTES SECTION

Our first essay, “Causeway Communiqués: Contemporary Singaporean-Malaysian Literature” is by the poet, graphic artist, and literary critic Gwee Li Sui. It is an edited form of a lecture he gave at #FAST: The Cooler Lumpur Festival held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 21 June 2014. By way of conclusion, Gwee Li Sui says: “We should be seeing our own failings and challenges in this terrain encircled by the term ‘Singaporean-Malaysian.’ I envision a time when we can approach it not as an academic whim or a diplomatic gesture but as actual knowledge, with qualities and traits that can be marked down critically and with excitement.”

"Cebu as Inspiration to My Writings" was also a talk, given at the Cebu Literary Festival by the writer Cecilia Manguerra Brainard. Next, in "History as Liberator," Jan Credo begins by discussing the "inexactness" of history and then proceeds to promote the teaching of *history that is not only relevant but also emancipatory, liberative, and accurate*. Speaking of history, the final write-up for the Notes Section chronicles the life of this publication, the *Silliman Journal*, as it celebrates its 60th anniversary.

## REVIEW SECTION

There are three reviews in this issue. The first one is Jesulito Kuan's critique of the comics *Trese* by Budjette Tan and Kajo Baldisimo. Then Veronica Vega studies the representation of women in the novels—referred to as "chick lit"—of Tara F. T. Sering, with particular attention to her latest novel, *Amazing Grace* (2009). And finally, Ian Rosales Casocot reviews Nikki Alfar's second collection of short stories, *WonderLust* (2014)—saying it is "a kind of sequel that goes farther than its predecessor, because it grows significantly darker. Structured similarly in geographical terms, *WonderLust* offers stories set either in 'Familiar Ground' or in 'Farther Shores,' mapping out two different sensibilities."

\* \* \*

I am grateful to the Silliman University administration for its continuing support of the *Silliman Journal* and all its initiatives. In particular, in the past year, Silliman University supported my attendance at two gatherings at which journal editors discussed issues and challenges in journal publishing in the Philippines: first, a round table discussion of journal editors in celebration of the 50th anniversary of *Asian Studies*, the journal published by the Asian Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, and where the gathering was held in February this year, and second, in October, the National Academy of Science and Technology held the Philippine Science Editors Consultation in Manila.

At the NAST gathering, *SJ* was cited as one of only 15 Philippine journals listed in Thomson Reuters; only one other journal among the fifteen, *The Philippine Scientist* at the University of San Carlos, is based in the Visayas. In this respect, the increased popularity of the *SJ* has brought in contributions, not just from USC itself, but

from all over the Philippines and abroad. Incidentally, and perhaps consequentially, *SJ* publications by Silliman faculty has decreased. I hope this means they are publishing elsewhere, as long as they are publishing. Indeed, one of the recommendations made from the NAST consultation is to encourage and support the submission of research papers to quality *external* journals.

Speaking to the journal editors, Ateneo de Manila University chemistry professor Fabian Dayrit (NAST academician) also recommended that:

- Higher Education Institutions should maintain research reports as a means of documenting research;
- government support should be provided to strengthen Philippine research journals; and
- local scholarly journals which have already established a track record should be strengthened.

In particular, Dayrit suggests that targets for improvement should include increasing frequency of publication, expansion of online publication, improving peer review process, raising international character, and increasing its impact factor.

In light of many educational reforms going on in the Philippines, we need to ask about the *SJ*'s mission and vision at minimum in the next ten years. From the very beginning the *SJ* has published on topics and concerns relevant not only to the Philippines but the larger Asian context. Our overseas editorial board, however, is represented by experts beyond Asia and the Pacific and we have anticipated ASEAN emphases by many decades. As we acknowledge the expanding reach of publishing beyond the world of a local printing press, it is expected that the look and breadth of the *SJ* will change in many qualitative ways.

In writing about good-to-great corporate transformations, Jim Collins (2001) says there are no miracle moments. "Instead, a down-to-earth, pragmatic, committed-to-excellence process—a framework—kept each company, its leaders, and its people on track for the long haul."

**Margaret Helen F. Udarbe**  
*Editor*







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# THE LANGUAGE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND: INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FOR LANGUAGE PLANNING

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This paper comparatively studies the language policies and practices of the Philippines and Thailand in order to gather insights and lessons for ongoing language planning of both countries, as well as of the other countries of the ASEAN region, and of any other countries that are grappling with the issues and challenges of being multicultural and multilingual or are gearing for regional integration/cooperation and globalization. The aspects of language policies and practices of the said two countries analyzed by this paper are: [1] the profiles of their language policies and practices, [2] their socio-historical and political contexts, [3] their underpinning motivations, [4] their implementations and their structural/organizational mechanisms, [5] their implications on nationalism and multiculturalism, [6] their implications on the development of human and intellectual capitals, and [7] their implications on regional integration and globalization.

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**KEYWORDS:** language policies and practices of the Philippines, Thailand, Philippines, socio-historical and political contexts of language

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planning, motivations behind language planning, language planning and the development of human and intellectual capitals, language planning and nationalism, language planning and multiculturalism, language planning and regional integration, and language planning and globalization

INTRODUCTION

THIS PAPER LOOKS into the strengths and gaps of the language policies and practices of the Philippines and Thailand in order to glean some insights and lessons that could be of value to both countries, to the other ASEAN countries, and to any other countries that are grappling with the issues and challenges of being multicultural and multilingual, as well as those countries that are gearing for regional integration/cooperation and globalization.

THE LANGUAGE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE PHILIPPINES

To have a grip on the complex history of language planning in the Philippines, it is advantageous to start with the following chronological map that visually represents the period from the transition from the Spanish to the American colonial regimes up to the present (adapted from Demeterio, 2012, p. 28):

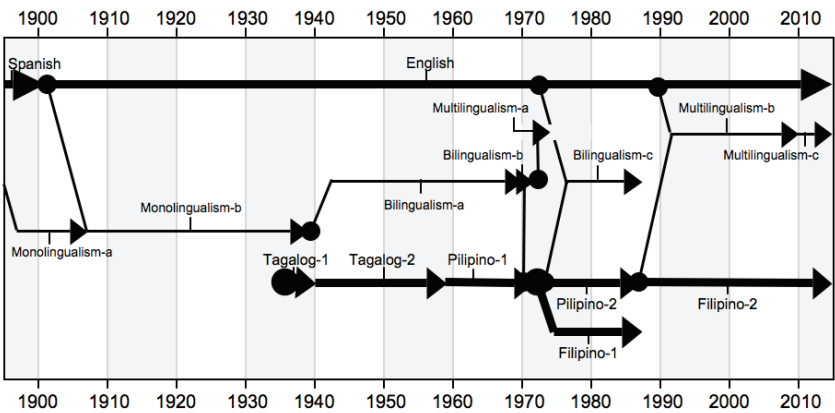


Figure 1. Chronological Map of Philippine Language Planning

## A Profile of the Philippine Language Policies and Practices

**National language.** The present national language of the Philippines is Filipino and Figure 1 shows how its almost 80 years of history is characterized by renamings and discontinuities. Tagalog-1 refers to the Tagalog language, which in 1937 was considered the basis of an intended national language. Eventually, Tagalog-1 was named the National Language of the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1939. Tagalog-2 refers to the same Tagalog language, which in 1940 was made into a mandatory academic subject. Pilipino-1 refers to that stage when the national language was renamed “Pilipino” in 1959 in order to dissociate it from the Tagalog ethnic group and presumably ease the resentment of the other Philippine ethnic groups, particularly the Cebuanos, the Ilocanos and the Hiligaynons. Pilipino-2 refers to that stage when the same language was divested of its national language status in 1973 while maintaining its supposedly temporary official status. Filipino-1 refers to a grandiose project, envisioned in 1973 but did not take off, concerning the building of a new national language from the grammar and vocabularies of the Philippine languages. Filipino-2 refers to that stage when Pilipino was renamed “Filipino” in 1987 and invested again with the status of national language. Thus, the Philippine national language may be said to be around for almost 80 years if the reckoning starts from Tagalog-1; but considering the disruption brought about by Filipino-1, it would be more reasonable to start the reckoning from Filipino-2 and say that it has been around only about 30 years.

**Official languages.** The official languages of the Philippines are English and Filipino. English has been the official language for over a century now; Spanish only ceased to be an official language in 1973; while Filipino (Tagalog-2 in Figure 1) only became an official language in 1941. Thus, Filipino as a co-official language has been around for only about 70 years. But, again, because of the disruption brought about by the temporary status of Pilipino-2 that was supposed to be replaced by Filipino-1, it would be more reasonable to start the reckoning from Filipino-2 and say that Filipino has been a co-official language for only about 30 years. In addition to English and Filipino, the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines recognized the regional languages as

official auxiliary languages in their respective regions.

**International language.** With the transition from Spanish to American colonial regimes, Spanish as an international language also waned in the Philippines with the waxing of English. At present, very few Filipinos understand and use Spanish. This makes English the sole international language in the country.

**Status of the regional languages.** According to *Ethnologue*, the Philippines has 181 living languages (Cf. "Philippines"). Subtracting Filipino, Tagalog, Chinese Mandarin, Chinese Min Nan, Chinese Yue, and Spanish from this total, the country, therefore, has 175 regional languages. Although these languages are heavily used in everyday non-formal communication, they have minimal official standing. Since 1939, they have been intermittently used as auxiliary languages for learning. The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines has a more affirmative stance on them with its recognition of their being official auxiliary languages in their respective regions, its vision of continuously enriching Filipino with elements coming from them, and its mandate for the Congress to establish a national language commission composed of regional representatives and tasked with conducting developmental and conservational researches on the Philippine languages. The Philippines' most dramatic support for the regional languages is the Order 74, Series 2009 of the Department of Education, entitled "Institutionalizing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education," that stipulated the use of such languages in the early years of primary education.

**Status of other foreign languages.** *Ethnologue* includes four foreign languages in its list of 181 living Philippine languages: Chinese Mandarin, Chinese Min Nan, Chinese Yue, and Spanish. Among these four, however, only Spanish is mentioned in the 1935, 1973 and 1987 constitutions. Specifically, the 1935 Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Philippines retained Spanish as a co-official language, while the 1973 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines specified it together with Arabic as one of the languages to which the constitution shall be translated, and the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines provided that Spanish, together with Arabic, shall be promoted on voluntary and optional bases. Chinese Mandarin, although not mentioned

in any of the Philippine constitutions, enjoys the status of being taught and used in Chinese primary and secondary schools.

**Languages in the public sphere.** With the presence of two official languages, 175 official auxiliary languages, and a handful of other foreign languages, determining the dominant language in the Philippine public sphere is a little complicated thing to do. In this paper, therefore, the public sphere was first broken into the following domains: [1] national government, [2] courts, [3] military, [4] religion, [5] education, [6] entertainment, [7] press/literature, [8] local government, [9] businesses and offices, [10] factories, and [11] marketplaces and home-based industries (Adapted from Schmidt-Rohr as cited by Haberland, 2005, pp. 229-230). Then, for each domain it was discerned if Filipino, English, the regional languages, and the other foreign languages have primary, secondary, tertiary or quaternary dominance. Such discernment was based on the authors' familiarity with the linguistic landscape of their home country, as well as on the information culled from the literature on Philippine languages. To be able to come up with averages, numerical values were assigned: 1 for primary, 2 for secondary, 3 for tertiary, and 4 for quaternary dominance, with 5 for non-use. English has primary, the regional languages have secondary, and Filipino has tertiary dominance in the Philippine public sphere and that the other foreign languages are relatively not significantly used (Table 1).

**Language programs.** With the presence of two colonial languages, discontinuities in the histories of national and official languages, and further discontinuities in language planning, a series of discontinuous language programs were put in place mainly in the domain of education. Hence in Figure 1, monolingualism-a refers to the Spanish monolingual education; monolingualism-b, to English monolingual education; bilingualism-a, to a program that started in 1939 that established English as the primary medium of instruction and the regional languages as the auxiliary medium of instruction; bilingualism-b, to a short-lived program in 1969 that mandated the use of Filipino as the primary medium of instruction and the regional languages as the de facto auxiliary medium of instruction; multilingualism-a, to another short-lived program in 1973 that directed the use of the regional languages as the medium of instruction for the early years of primary education

Table 1. Preferred Languages in the Philippine Public Sphere

Domain	Filipino	English	Regional Languages	Other Foreign Languages
National Government	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Not Used (5)	Not Used (5)
Courts	Tertiary (3)	Primary (1)	Secondary (2)	Not Used (5)
Military	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Tertiary (3)	Not Used (5)
Religion	Tertiary (3)	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Quaternary <sup>1</sup> (4)
Education	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Tertiary (3)	Quaternary <sup>2</sup> (4)
Entertainment	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Tertiary (3)	Not Used (5)
Press/Literature	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Tertiary (3)	Not Used (5)
Local Government	Tertiary (3)	Primary (1)	Secondary (2)	Not Used (5)
Businesses and Offices	Tertiary (3)	Primary (1)	Secondary (2)	Quaternary <sup>3</sup> (4)
Factories	Tertiary (3)	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Not Used (5)
Marketplaces /Home-Based Industries	Not Used (5)	Secondary (2)	Primary (1)	Not Used (5)
<b>Average<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Tertiary (2.73)</b>	<b>Primary (1.27)</b>	<b>Secondary (2.36)</b>	<b>Not Used (4.73)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Arabic is used by Filipino Muslims as a religious language.

<sup>2</sup> Mandarin and Arabic are taught in some schools.

<sup>3</sup> Chinese languages are used by Filipino Chinese in business transactions.

<sup>4</sup> 1.00 to 1.80=Primary; 1.81 to 2.60=Secondary; 2.61 to 3.40=Tertiary; 3.41 to 4.20=Quaternary; 4.21 to 5.00=Not Used.

before transitioning to Filipino and English; bilingualism-c, to the more lasting and known version of bilingualism that started in 1974 and the specified use of only Filipino and English as the medium of instruction for primary, secondary, and tertiary education; multilingualism-b, to a modification of bilingualism-c during the Presidency of Corazon Aquino that recognized again the regional languages as auxiliary medium of instruction; and



finally, multilingualism-c, to an innovation in 2009 that is based on the principles of mother language education that begins with the regional languages and systematically transitions into the use of Filipino and English. As already mentioned, this program was the Philippines' most dramatic support for the regional languages.

### **Socio-Historical and Political Contexts**

English as an official language antedated Filipino as national and co-official language by about 40 to 90 years (Figure 1), depending on whether the reckoning starts with Tagalog-1, Tagalog-2 or Filipino-2. This means that English had already been well-entrenched in the Philippines before Filipino became a national and co-official language. Furthermore, Philippine language planning happened when the country was still under the dominion of the United States of America, and therefore was not totally free to determine its own affairs. When America finally gave the country its political independence after the Second World War, the Philippines was too preoccupied with post-war reconstruction to allocate enough attention and resources to language planning.

The archipelagic nature and mountainous terrain of the country that fostered an astonishing diversity of over 150 languages presented another problematic context. The 1935 Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Philippines attempted to grapple with this challenge by suggesting the creation of a national language that is "based on one of the existing native languages." Thus, naming Tagalog (Tagalog-1 in Figure 1) in 1937 as the bases of the Philippine national language appeared to be aligned with the spirit of this Constitution, but declaring Tagalog (Tagalog-2 in Figure 1) as the Philippine national language is a little incongruent to such spirit. Although Tagalog is the language of a sizeable ethnic group of Filipinos, this group happened to occupy the capital of the country and the surrounding provinces, making the declaration of the same language appear like a hegemonic imposition in the eyes of the other ethnic groups. Before the Spaniards came, Malay was the trading lingua franca of the archipelago. Then the Spaniards brought with them Spanish to become the lingua franca of the limited number of elite Filipinos, and made it a point to prevent the emergence of an indigenous lingua franca that could potentially galvanize the various ethnic groups into a threatening mass. When the Americans came, they

replaced Spanish with English. Tagalog, therefore, never had the chance of being an archipelagic lingua franca prior to its selection as national language.

The divisive nature of the problem of the national language in a democratic setting posed as still another problematic context. Regional politicians can champion the cause of the regional languages and reopen old debates, while national politicians are hesitant to take decisive steps for the certainty of some political backlash coming from the disgruntled ethnic groups (Cf. Rappa & Wee, 2006, p. 61). It is to the political advantage, therefore, of national politicians not to meddle with language planning.

The slow growing economy of the country and its fast growing population stood as still another problematic context (Cf. Gonzalez, 2003, p. 5). As the country is forced to depend more and more on labor export, and consequently value the ability of Filipino job seekers to speak English, everyone conveniently forgets that both the 1973 and the 1987 constitutions only grant temporary official status to English with an implicit hope that Filipino (Filipino 1 and Filipino 2 in Figure 1) will one day take over as the sole official language of the country.

## **Underpinning Motivations**

Anthea Fraser Gupta's article "Language Status Planning in the ASEAN Countries" listed eight basic motivations that precede decisions in language planning: [1] the government's recognition of the articulated desire of the people; [2] the cultivation of national identity; [3] the establishment of a medium for inter-ethnic group communication; [4] the maintenance of cultural differences between different ethnic groups; [5] the provision of affirmative support to some disadvantaged groups; [6] the restriction of some minority groups; [7] the infusion of power to the dominant group; and [8] the establishment of a medium for international communication (1985, pp. 3-4). Table 2 shows the different motivations that underpin the different languages in the Philippines.

## **Implementation and Structural/Organizational Mechanisms**

In this paper, implementation is conceptualized using Einar Haugen's idea of language planning as having four dimensions:

Table 2. **Underpinning Motivations of the Languages in the Philippines**

Language	Status	Underpinning Motivation
Filipino	National and co-official language	1 and 2 (in unity)
English	Co-official language	1, 3, and 8
Regional languages	Auxiliary official languages in the regions	1, 2 (in diversity), 4, and 5
Other foreign languages (Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin)	Promoted and tolerated languages	2 (in diversity), 4, and 8

[1] selection, [2] codification, [3] implementation, and [4] elaboration (1987, p. 59). This paper’s idea of implementation means that a given Philippine language, or cluster of languages, had successfully passed through Haugen’s four dimensions of language planning. Hence, Table 3 shows how these languages fared through such dimensions.

Table 3. **The Languages in the Philippines and Haugen’s Phases of Language Planning**

Language	Status	1	2	3	4
Filipino	National and co-official language	■	■		
English	Co-official language	■	■	■	■
Regional languages	Auxiliary official languages in the regions	■			
Other foreign languages (Spanish, Arabic, and Mandarin)	Promoted and tolerated languages	■	■		■

**1 = Selection    2 = Codification    3 = Implementation    4 = Elaboration**

Filipino as national and official language encountered problems in its selection and codification processes. Its pre-war versions (Tagalog-1 and Tagalog-2) had problems with the selection dimension due to the perceived heavy handed imposition of the Tagalog ethnic group, but it went on with a rather successful codification. Its 1973 version (Filipino-1) could have addressed the problem of selection by promising a new ethnically neutral/inclusive national language, but faltered in its codification, and miserably reverted (as Filipino-2) to the evolving codification that started in the pre-war period. These are the main reasons that Filipino as national and official language could not successfully push through the implementation and elaboration dimensions of language planning. English, on the other hand, when it was imposed by the Americans on the Filipinos, was already a successfully codified and elaborated language. Hence, between a language that is still trying to legitimize its selection and codification dimensions while staggering in the dimension of implementation, and another language that has already been elaborated, most Filipinos would give their pragmatic support to the latter.

The regional languages had been successful in the selection dimension, as there are no noticeable oppositions to the government's inclusivist action of making these languages the official auxiliary languages of their respective regions and the medium of instruction in the early years of primary education. But in the actual reality, things may not be as neat as they appear. First, the boundaries among ethno-linguistic groups do not coincide with the political boundaries of the local governments. Second, there are local governments that are saddled with too many regional languages. These problems, although not articulated as urgent matters, had already been felt in the codification process for the purpose of using these languages for instruction. Faced with so many still uncoded regional languages, the government stealthily substituted its mother language education program with a regional lingua franca education program, at least for the time being. Thus, instead of codifying and immediately using all of the over 150 regional languages for instruction, the government started only with twelve languages and later on added seven more. With this problem in codification, it is but logical to assume that the Philippine regional languages are still far from the implementation dimension of language planning. With the status

of the regional languages as official auxiliary languages and as media of instruction for the early years of primary education, even if their codification and implementation will be accomplished someday, there is very little chance for them to be elaborated.

Spanish, Arabic, and Mandarin—like English—are also well codified and elaborated languages. But unlike the case of English, the plans for Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin are not as intensively implemented and widely supported by Filipinos. As has been shown (Table 1), how these other foreign languages are relatively not significantly used in the domains of the Philippine public sphere.

The structural and organization mechanisms that support the Filipino language are the Department of Education, the Commission for Higher Education and the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (Commission on Filipino Language). These departments and commissions are too few, too preoccupied with other concerns, and too weak to goad Filipino against the hegemony of English. These are especially true in a context where the propagation of the national language is not a priority of the government (Cf. Rappa & Wee, 2006, p. 61). English, on the other hand, is structurally and organizationally supported by practically all of the schools, colleges, and universities, as well as by the other domains of the Philippine public sphere (Table 1).

The regional languages are structurally and organizationally supported by the Department of Education and nominally by the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino. The Department of Education is the specific government office that is being flooded with the already mentioned codification of regional languages for the supposedly ongoing mother language education program. The Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino is having difficulties implementing the national language and could not be expected to give significant support to the regional languages. In addition to these two government offices, there are a handful of non-government organizations, mostly groups of regional writers, that support specific regional languages. Examples of these organizations are LUDABI for Cebuano, and GUMIL for Ilocano. Yet these organizations are too few to represent all of the over 150 regional languages. Despite their weak structural/organizational support, these regional languages are adequately used by a number of domains in the Philippine public sphere (Table 1).

Spanish is structurally and organizationally supported by

the Instituto de Cervantes and by the very few universities that continue to offer courses in Spanish for the students who are majoring in history, international studies, foreign relations, and the like. Arabic is structurally and organizationally supported by the Islamic schools that are operating in Mindanao. Mandarin is taught in Chinese primary and secondary schools found in urban centers.

### **Implications on Nationalism and Multiculturalism**

One of the motivations for the establishment of Filipino as national language was the cultivation of unified national identity (Table 2). But since the perceived heavy handed imposition of the Tagalog ethnic group resulted in resentment among those who do not belong to this ethnic group, this language did not do much in the strengthening of Filipino nationalism. Nationalism in the Philippines was first expressed anyway in Spanish, then in the regional languages and then in English. Thus, there is no reason why it cannot be cultivated further using English and the regional languages.

Does the failure of Philippines to cultivate a unified national identity with its national language imply that such language inadvertently supported multiculturalism? It does not follow, because there is a difference between being multicultural and multiculturalism. The first refers to a state of cultural diversity, while the second refers to an attitude of openness to such diversity. There might be linguistic diversity in the Philippines, but it does not follow that its government has that attitude of openness to such diversity. Philippine multiculturalism cannot be deduced from its failed mono-cultural attempt to cultivate a unified national identity through the Filipino national language. It should be deduced instead in its mother language education program. But considering that such program is still being run as a *lingua franca* education program, and that such program is only good for the early years of primary education, we cannot reasonably expect a profound multiculturalism coming from it.

### **Implications on Human and Intellectual Capital**

The Philippines has already achieved the status of being one of the top labor exporting countries, but a closer look (Table 4), showing

how Filipino workers are distributed among foreign occupational groups, reveals that only very few of them land in white collar jobs (adapted from National Statistics Office, 2013).

**Table 4. Distribution of Filipino Overseas Workers to the Occupational Groups as of 2013**

Occupational Groups	Percentage of Workers	Classification	Percentage of Workers
Officials of government and special-interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors, and Supervisors	3.5%	White collar	15.1%
Professionals	11.6%		
Technicians and associate professionals	7.6%		
Clerks	5.2%	Blue collar	84.9%
Service workers, and shop and market sales workers	16.7%		
Farmers, forestry workers and fishermen	0.0%		
Trades and related workers	12.9%		
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	11.7%		
Laborers and unskilled workers	30.8%		

This demonstrates that it is not the intellectual capital of the Filipino worker that attracts foreign employer. Furthermore, the country appears to have failed to maximize its rather impressive educational infrastructure and culture (Table 5) that juxtaposes

Table 5. Educational Infrastructure and Culture, Workplace, and Employment Context, and Global Innovation Index of the ASEAN Countries

ASEAN Country	Education Pillar (from Human Capital Index 2013)			Workforce & Employment Pillar (from Human Capital Index 2013)			Global Innovation Index		
	Score	World Rank	Regional Rank	Score	World Rank	Regional Rank	Score	World Rank	Regional Rank
Brunei Darussalam	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	31.7	88	6
Cambodia	-0.839	99	8	0.104	42	6	28.7	106	8
Indonesia	0.04	61	3	0.262	32	4	31.8	87	5
Laos	-0.320	83	7	-0.097	59	8	No data	No data	No data
Malaysia	0.526	34	2	0.736	18	2	45.6	33	2
Myanmar	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	19.6	140	9
Philippines	0.011	65	4	0.164	38	5	29.9	100	7
Singapore	1.348	3	1	1.345	2	1	59.2	7	1
Thailand	-0.242	79	6	0.482	27	3	39.3	48	3
Vietnam	-0.176	73	5	-0.040	57	7	34.9	71	4



data from the Human Capital Index 2013 and the Global Innovation Index 2014 (Adapted from World Economic Forum, 2013, pp. 12-13; & Dutta, Lanvin & Wunsch-Vincent, 2014).

In terms of educational infrastructure and culture, the Philippines ranks 4th in the ASEAN region. But in terms of translating this standing to the context of the workplace and employment, the country slides to the 5th rank in the same region and in terms of translating its educational standing to innovativeness, the country further slides to the 7th rank in the same region. This incongruence could have been a result of an inefficiency arising from the Philippine government and people's insistence on using English as the primary medium of instruction that necessitates so much time for the learning and mastery of the language without the guarantee that such time expended would indeed result in the functional use of the same language. English in the Philippines has become a bottleneck in the education of young Filipinos. Had the country shifted to using the national language as the primary medium of instruction, the education process would have been a lot more efficient. Although Filipino may not be the mother tongue of many Filipinos, its grammatical structure and a good portion of its vocabulary are analogous and shared by the other Filipino Austronesian languages. The mother language education program that was launched a few years ago may improve Philippine education depending on its successful implementation, which as this paper already mentioned is still a huge struggle, and depending on whether this program would systematically transition to multilingual education that is still predominantly English or to a multilingual education that would be predominantly Filipino.

### **Implications on Regional Integration and Globalization**

Linguistically speaking, the Philippines, with its people's facility for the English language, the official language of the ASEAN and a major lingua franca of international interaction, is more than ready for regional integration and globalization. But globalization is not just about communication; it is more so about human capital and functional economies. If the Philippines strengthened its communication facility at the expense of prioritizing its human capital and economy, then the country should have second thoughts about its readiness for regional integration and

globalization.

## THE LANGUAGE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THAILAND

Again, to have a grip on the history of language planning in Thailand, it is also advantageous to start with the following chronological map that visually represents the period from the establishment of the Chakri Dynasty and the Kingdom of Rattanakosin in 1782 up to the present.

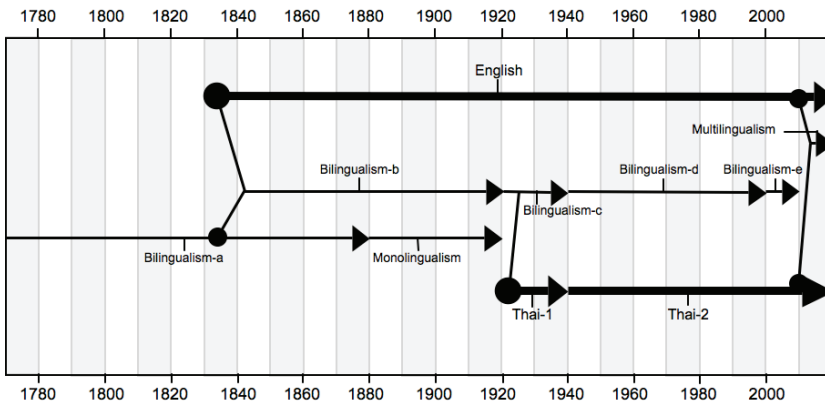


Figure 2. Chronological Map of Thai Language Planning

### A Profile of the Thai Language Policies and Practices

**National language.** The de facto national language of Thailand is Thai; its more than a century history of existence is characterized by developmental continuity (Figure 2). Thai-1 refers to the Central Thai language, which in 1918 was imposed by King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) as a subject and medium of instruction to all private schools, specially the Chinese schools, and which in 1921 was used as the medium of instruction in Thailand's compulsory education program (Cf. Ratanapat, 1990, pp. 107-108; Tungasvadi, 2004, pp. 47-48). Thai-2 refers to the same language, which in 1940, through a state convention, was made into one of the primary symbols of Thai nationalism and an obligatory language to be learned by all inhabitants of Thailand (Cf. Simpson & Thammasathien, 2007, p. 397). If one reckons the existence of the Thai national language

from Vajiravudh's time, then it has been around for almost a century; and if one reckons its existence from the state convention of 1940, then it has been around for more than 70 years. What is clear is that there is no disruption between Thai-1 and Thai-2.

**Official language.** Thai is the only official language of the Kingdom of Thailand. Such status must be reckoned from the reign of Vajiravudh. Therefore, this official language has been around for almost a century.

**International language.** English is the foremost international language of Thailand. Its presence in Thailand can be dated back to the decision of King Nangklao (Rama III), who ruled from 1824 to 1851, to let his court be familiar with this language in order to elude the threat of colonial domination. Nangklao had access to the language through the American Baptist missionaries who arrived in 1833, and the American Presbyterian missionaries who arrived in 1840 (Cf. Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011, pp. 59-60). This policy was supported and expanded by his successors, King Mongkut (Rama IV), King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), and Vajiravudh. The then Prince Chulalongkorn was one of the wards of the British school teacher. The English language, therefore, has almost one and a half centuries presence in Thailand. Although Chinese, Indian, and Japanese are mentioned in the most recent language policy of Thailand, only English has been substantially supported so far by the Thai government.

**Status of regional languages.** According to *Ethnologue*, Thailand has 73 living languages. Subtracting from this the Ban Khor Sign Language, Chiangmai Sign Language, Chinese Mandarin, Thai and Thai Sign Language, the country, therefore, has 68 regional languages. Although these languages are heavily used in everyday non-formal communication, they underwent a rather long history of repression, as a consequence of the propagation of Central Thai as the national and official language. The languages, other than the Central Thai, that belong to the Thai family were considered dialects and variants of the Central Thai. The rest of the languages that do not belong to the Thai family were marginalized as minority languages. Despite the dominance of the Central Thai, there is generally no tangible resentment coming from the other ethnic groups (Cf. Smalley, 1988, p. 246). It was only very recently

that the Kingdom of Thailand became open to the practice of mother language education.

**Status of other foreign languages.** Aside from English, the other foreign languages that are significant in Thailand are Chinese Mandarin, Japanese, Pali, and Arabic. Chinese Mandarin has been part of the curriculum of the Chinese schools since the establishment of the Kingdom of Rattanakosin, and although it experienced periods of repression it is presently the second most popular foreign language in the country (Cf. Luangthongkum, 2007, p. 190). Japanese used to be the second most popular foreign language before it was overshadowed by Chinese Mandarin (Cf. Luangthongkum, 2007, p. 190). Thais who can speak Chinese Mandarin and Japanese possess advantage in the job market. Pali, a dead Indian language, and Arabic are used as religious languages by Buddhists and Muslims, respectively, and are taught in temples and mosques. Aside from these major foreign languages, Thailand also has a number of languages that are shared with its neighboring countries, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia. But for the purposes of this paper, these border languages are treated as either regional or minority languages of Thailand, instead of international languages.

**Languages in the public sphere.** With the presence of an official language, 68 regional languages and a handful of foreign languages, the dominant language in the Thai public sphere may be determined following the scheme that was used in this paper for the Philippines. Since the authors were not as familiar with the linguistic landscape of Thailand as they are with that of the Philippines, their discernment on the primary, secondary, tertiary or quaternary dominance of the languages of Thailand was based on the information culled from the literature on Thai languages as well as on the kind guidance and assistance of a number of Thai acquaintances who corresponded with them through emails: Pat Niyomsilp, professor of law; Sarisa Srisathaporn, education student; Natthawan Saensaeng, French student; Chayapol Prayoonsin, information and communication engineering student; Sirasith Prach Suchartlikitwongse, materials science and engineering student; all from Chulalongkorn University; Liu Phitchakan Chuangchai, teacher of Thai from Walen School Chiang Rai; and Mew Kuenghakit from Harrow International

School.

Table 6. **Preferred Languages in the Thai Public Sphere**

Domain	Thai	English	Regional Languages	Other Foreign Languages
National Gov't	Primary (1)	Secondary (2)	Not used (5)	Not used (5)
Courts	Primary (1)	Not used (5)	Not used (5)	Not used (5)
Military	Primary (1)	Tertiary (3)	Secondary (2)	Not used (5)
Religion	Primary (1)	Quaternary (4)	Tertiary (3)	Secondary <sup>1</sup> (2)
Education	Primary (1)	Tertiary (3)	Secondary (2)	Quaternary <sup>2</sup> (4)
Entertainment	Primary (1)	Secondary (2)	Tertiary (3)	Not used (5)
Press/Literature	Primary (1)	Secondary (2)	Tertiary (3)	Not used (5)
Local Gov't	Primary (1)	Tertiary (3)	Secondary (2)	Not used (5)
Businesses/Offices	Primary (1)	Secondary (2)	Tertiary (3)	Quaternary (4)
Factories	Secondary (2)	Tertiary (3)	Primary (1)	Not used (5)
Marketplaces/ Home-Based Industries	Secondary (2)	Tertiary (3)	Primary (1)	Not used (5)
<b>Average<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Primary (1.18)</b>	<b>Tertiary (2.91)</b>	<b>Tertiary (2.73)</b>	<b>Not used (4.55)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Pali and Arabic are used by Thai Buddhists and Muslims as religious languages.

<sup>2</sup> Pali, Arabic, Mandarin, Japanese, French, German and Korean are taught in some schools.

<sup>3</sup> Mandarin and Japanese are used by some Thais in their job.

<sup>4</sup> 1.00 to 1.80=Primary; 1.81 to 2.60=Secondary; 2.61 to 3.40=Tertiary; 3.41 to 4.20=Quaternary; 4.21 to 5.00=Not Used.

Thai has primary, while the regional languages and English have tertiary dominance in the Thai public sphere (Table 6). The other foreign languages are relatively not significantly used.

**Language programs.** Bilingualism-a (Figure 2) refers to the archaic temple-based education that presumably used either the mother tongues or some lingua francas together with Pali. Bilingualism-b pertains to the elite court-based education that used Thai and English starting from the decision of Nangklao to familiarize the Thai royalty and aristocracy with the language. Monolingualism denotes the secular and modern education implemented by Chulalongkorn starting in 1884 (Cf. Sangnapaboworn, 2007, p. 261). Away from the control of the Buddhist temples, this educational system was presumably monolingual based on either the mother tongues or some lingua francas. Bilingualism-c signifies the innovation made by Vajiravudh starting in 1921 to propagate Thai as the official language of the Kingdom and English as its international language. Bilingualism-d represents the educational system starting in 1940 that propagated Thai as both the official and national language of Thailand, and English as its international language. Bilingualism-e refers to a trend starting in 1999 to use English both as a subject matter and medium of instruction for some courses (Cf. Baker, 2012, p. 2). Multilingualism pertains to the trend established by the Kingdom's new language policy in 2010 that affirmed the value of the regional languages especially in the context of mother language education (Cf. Fry, 2013). Aside from these positive language programs that thrive in the educational context, Thailand also initiated repressive programs both inside and outside such context, such as the banning of the teaching of Mandarin in Chinese schools, the limitation of publication of foreign language newspapers, the banning of the use of scripts other than the official and national script, and even the burning of some non-Thai texts (Cf. Keyes, 2003, p. 192).

## Socio-Historical and Political Contexts

Figure 2 might show that the presence of English as a foreign language antedated the establishment of Thai as official language by almost 90 years and as national language by more than 100 years, but such do not mean that English was able to entrench itself deeper than Thai. English started as an international language for only a very small number of Thai royalty and aristocracy. English and Thai started to be imposed on the wider population simultaneously in 1921, with Thai as both a

curricular subject and medium of instruction as well as medium of official communication, while English was only a curricular subject. Furthermore, it should be remembered that even before English came into Thailand, the Thai language already had some hundreds of years of history as the language of the court. Another important factor that leads to the entrenchment of Thai was the fact that the language planning initiated by Vajiravudh was preceded by more than 130 years of stabilization of the Kingdom of Rattanakosin and some decades of bureaucratic centralization and modernization done by Chulalongkorn. In addition to this well primed stage, Vajiravudh threw his full authority and support for the propagation of Thai as official language.

The mild linguistic diversity of Thailand offered another auspicious context for the entrenchment of Thai. The Thai family of languages was spoken by more than 90% of the population of the Kingdom. By packaging the other Thai languages as dialects and variations of Central Thai, the official and national language became easier to accept by over 90% of the population. Since Thai had the privilege of being the language of court, and therefore the language of prestige and opportunity, and lingua franca as well, the remaining less than 10% of the population speaking about 50 different non-Thai languages could offer very little resistance to the imposition of Thai.

In the context of an absolute monarchical state, the issue of selecting an official language, was not a matter that was to be settled in a political debate. Thus, Vajiravudh selected Thai, because it was his language, it was the language of his capital, it was the courtly language of his kingdom as well as of its predecessor, the Kingdom of Ayutthaya, and it was the lingua franca of his people. There were no local rulers to debate against his imposition of Thai, because decades before, Chulalongkorn clipped their powers and replaced most of them with bureaucrats who took orders from Bangkok. Most importantly, there was no time for political debates, as Vajiravudh was consumed by a sense of urgency in using Thai as a tool for nation building. First, he inherited from Chulalongkorn the idea that the Thai nation had to be built; otherwise, the western powers might parcel out the Kingdom of Rattanakosin along the ethnic boundaries of its admittedly diverse people, leaving the Chakri Dynasty with only the territories occupied by the Thai ethnic groups (Cf. Keyes, 1997, p. 207). Third, Vajiravudh felt threatened by the rise of nationalism



among the Chinese in Thailand, but knew that they can be swayed to the side of the Thai nation if such nation emerges soon (Cf. Simpson & Thammasathien, 2007, p. 395). With this urgency, the establishment of Thai as official and national language happened with less debates and protracted deliberations, but with more action and implementation.

The robust economy of Thailand bolstered the Thais’ racial pride and reinforced their nationalism including their commitment to their official and national language. Their stable population does not push the Thais to seek employment abroad and force them to embrace English more and more.

Underpinning Motivations

Following Gupta’s list of basic motivations that precede decisions in language planning, table 7 shows the different interests that underpin the various languages in Thailand:

Table 7. Underpinning Motivations of the Languages in Thailand

Language	Status	Underpinning Motivation
Thai	National and official language	2 (in unity), 3, 4 (Thais from Burmese, Lao, Cambodians, and Malaysians), and 6 (especially the Thai-Chinese)
English	Promoted international language	8
Regional languages	Mother tongues (national treasures)	1, 2 (in diversity), 4 (within Thailand), and 5
Other foreign languages (Mandarin, Japanese, French, German, Korean, Pali and Arabic)	Other promoted international languages	2 (in diversity), 4 (especially the Thai-Chinese), and 8



Implementation and Structural/Organizational Mechanisms

Following this paper’s definition of implementation as a given language’s successful passage through Haugen’s four dimensions of language planning, Table 8 shows how the different languages of Thailand fared through such dimensions.

Table 8. **The Languages in Thailand and Haugen's Phases of Language Planning**

Language	Status	1	2	3	4
Thai	National and co-official language	■	■	■	■
English	Promoted international language	■	■		■
Regional languages	Mother Tongues (National Treasures)	■			
Other foreign languages (Mandarin, Japanese, French, German, Korean, Pali, and Arabic)	Other promoted international languages	■	■		■

1 = Selection    2 = Codification    3 = Implementation    4 = Elaboration

Thai did not encounter problems in its selection process during the time of Vajiravudh. Its codification process was even done earlier during the time of Chulalongkorn (Cf. Renard, 2006, p. 314). With the full support of Vajiravudh, in the context of a state that was centralized and modernized by Chulalongkorn, in a precarious climate of external and internal threats, the policy of using Thai as official language was powerfully implemented. As already mentioned, such initial status given to Thai was supported and further developed by the succeeding governments. Thai is constantly being elaborated by the Royal Institute of Thailand. Hence, viewed through the dimensions of Haugen, Thai language planning is a story of success. English, on the other hand, although it is a fully codified and elaborated language, was not successfully

implemented in Thailand. Nangkiao's idea was merely to limit its use among some members of the Thai royalty and aristocracy. Vajiravudh's attempt at universalizing the use of English was operationalized by merely offering it as a curricular subject. Since 1999, Thailand has been trying to improve its facility with English by using it more and more as a medium of instruction, at least for some courses.

Although Thailand's regional languages had just recently emerged from almost 100 years of repression, their affirmation since 2010 as mother tongues and national treasures signal a successful selection dimension in this branch of language planning. But with the same history of almost 100 years of repression and a mother language education policy that is still four years old, these regional languages are definitely currently plagued by problems of codification. Thus, their implementation would also be logically problematic, at least for the time being. With their status as media of instruction for the early years of primary education, even if their codification and implementation will be accomplished soon, there is very little chance for them to be elaborated. Mandarin, Japanese, French, German, Korean, Arabic, and Pali—like English—are also well codified, and, except Pali, are well elaborated as well. If English is not successfully implemented in Thailand, these other foreign languages are in an even worse situation. It has already been shown that these other foreign languages are relatively not significantly used in the domains of the Thai public sphere (Table 6).

The structural and organization mechanisms that support Thai are the Royal Institute of Thailand that takes care of the continuous standardization and elaboration of the languages as well as its propagation at the level of the country's top scientists and scholars; the Ministry of Education and its textbook printing office that take care of the propagation at the level of the teachers, professors and the youth; the National Identity Office that takes care of promoting national unity and security based on the principle of "one language and one culture;" the Ministry of the Interior that takes care of the functional Thai proficiency of the local officials; and even the Ministry of Defense that takes care that language issues do not escalate into political issues (Cf. Luangthongkum, 2007, p. 181; Rappa & Wee, 2006, pp. 110-111). English, on the other hand, is structurally and organizationally supported by the Ministry

of Education, as well as by some of the domains of the Thai public sphere (Table 6).

The regional languages are structurally and organizationally supported by the Royal Institute of Thailand and the Ministry of Education. However, it appears that the Royal Institute of Thailand is still not prepared for the codification of these languages. Its current functions related to language are still very much tied to the official and national Thai language “to compile dictionaries, encyclopedias, terminologies in all fields of knowledge, and coin new words” and “to establish criteria of Thai usage in order to preserve and promote the Thai language, a national identity” (The Royal Institute, 2007). The other foreign languages are structurally and organizationally supported also by the Royal Institute of Thailand and the Ministry of Education, the Chinese schools, and by the major mosques and temples.

### **Implications on Nationalism and Multiculturalism**

One of the motivations for the establishment of Thai as national language was the cultivation of a unified national identity (Table 7). Such desire for a unified national identity was not nurtured for the sake of a unified national identity but rather for the sake of saving the Kingdom of Rattanakosin from the external threat of the French and British colonial powers as well as from the internal threat of the Thai-Chinese.

Thailand’s nation building since the time of Chulalongkorn and Vajiravudh had clearly been veering towards monoculturalism and monolingualism. Such a long lasting project had been inauspicious to multiculturalism. What is remarkable about Thailand’s monolingual nation building was that the other Thai ethnic groups generally accepted the national language, and what they asked for from the central government was merely the government’s tolerance and a little space for their regional languages (Cf. Keyes, 2003, p. 192). It is only lately that Thailand began affirming multiculturalism through its opening up to the regional languages in its recent mother language education program. But considering that this program is still four years old, and that these regional languages will only be used in the early years of primary education, we still have to wait and see what kind of multiculturalism it will foster.

### Implications on Human and Intellectual Capital

Thailand appears to have maximized its rather struggling educational infrastructure and culture (Table 5) that juxtaposes data from the Human Capital Index 2013 and the Global Innovation Index 2014. In terms of educational infrastructure and culture, Thailand ranks 6th in the ASEAN region. But in terms of translating this standing to the context of the workplace and employment, the country climbs to the 3rd rank in the same region, and, in terms of translating its educational standing to innovativeness, the country retains the 3rd rank in the same region. This impressive incongruence could have been a result of an efficiency arising from the Thai government's insistence on using Thai as the primary medium of instruction. Although Central Thai may not be the mother tongue of many Thais, the major regional languages of Thailand are related to it as part of one linguistic family.

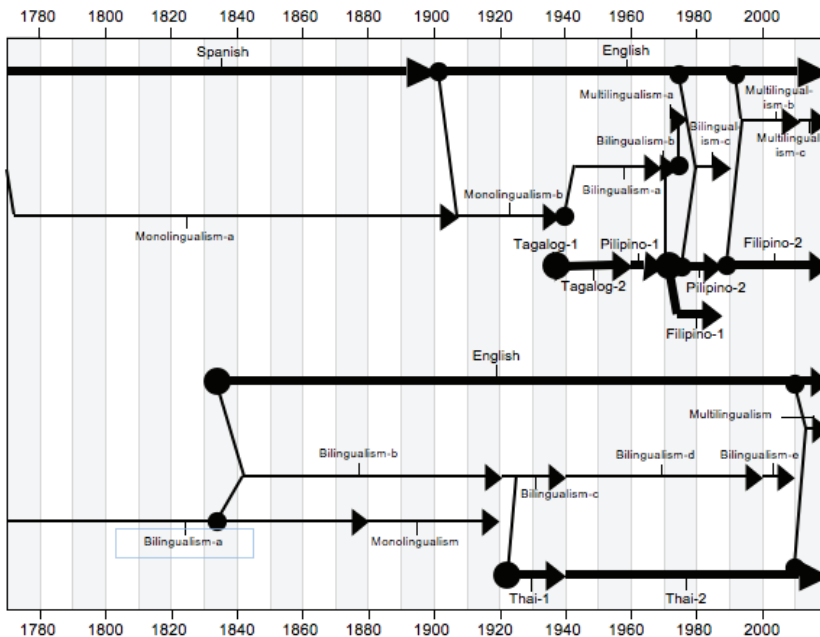


Figure 3. Chronological Maps of Philippine and Thai Language Planning

## **Implications on Regional Integration and Globalization**

Thailand may not be very proficient with English, but it does not mean that it is not ready for regional integration and globalization. It has enough leaders and intellectuals who are proficient with English and therefore can communicate regionally and internationally. Furthermore, some Thais are very proficient with Chinese Mandarin and with the handful of their boundary languages such as Burmese, Lao, Cambodian, and Malay, which are languages of some of the ASEAN countries. As already mentioned, globalization is not just about communication, but more so about human capital and functional economies, thus Thailand's impressive translation of its standing in educational infrastructure and culture into economic and innovative performance (Table 5) gives the country a considerable edge.

## **COMPARISON AND CONTRAST**

### **On the Profiles of the Philippine and Thai Language Policies and Practices**

The Philippines and Thailand's linguistic profiles are similar in the sense that they both: [1] have a national indigenous language, [2] use such national indigenous language as official language, [3] have English as primary international language, [4] have a number of regional languages, [5] are currently shifting to a multilingual affirmation for these regional languages, and [6] have other international languages.

At a closer comparison, however, these similarities would prove to be superficial in the sense that the Philippines and Thailand's linguistic profiles have more dissimilarities in their details. First, Thailand's national language is indeed used as the only official language of the country, in contrast to the Philippines' failure to use its national language and its having English as a co-official language. Second, the Philippines' proficiency in English is much stronger than that of Thailand, because for over a hundred years the Philippines has used English as a medium of instruction and as an official/co-official language, while Thailand only uses English as a subject to be studied and as an international language for a very limited number of people. Third, the Philippines

has a more positive and tolerant attitude towards the regional languages, in contrast to Thailand’s incidence of repressive and aggressive monolingual policies. Fourth, Thailand’s other foreign languages have actual pragmatic functions and enjoy some level of support from the government, while the Philippines’ other foreign languages are merely mentioned in some policies. Fifth, the Philippines and Thailand have different ways of employing their languages in the public sphere (Table 9).

Table 9. Comparison on How the Philippines and Thailand Use their Languages in the Public Sphere Based on Tables 1 and 6

Languages	Philippines	Thailand
National/Official Language	Tertiary	Primary
English	Primary	Tertiary
Regional Languages	Secondary	Tertiary
Other Foreign Languages	Not significantly used	Not significantly used

In the Philippine public sphere, English has primary dominance, the regional languages have secondary dominance, while the national and official language has only tertiary dominance, and the other foreign languages are not significantly used. In the Thai public sphere, on the other hand, it is the national and official language that has primary dominance, while the regional languages, together with English, only have tertiary dominance, although the other foreign languages are also not significantly used. Sixth, the difference between the Philippines and Thailand’s language programs can be graphically seen in Figure 3.

The Philippines left a dizzying trace of rambling, shifting and disruptive language programs in comparison to Thailand’s evolutionary and developmental trajectory. In addition to this, Thailand had a slightly longer history of nationalistic language planning than did the Philippines.

**On the Socio-Historical and Political Contexts of Philippine and Thai Language Planning**

The socio-historical and political contexts of Philippine and Thai language planning are similar in the sense that they both:

[1] have English as an international language that antedates the establishment of their national/official language, [2] have to start from a linguistically heterogeneous situation, and [3] exist under the overarching presence of western powers.

At a closer comparison again, these similarities would prove to be superficial in the sense that the socio-historical and political contexts of Philippine and Thai language planning have more dissimilarities in their details. First, although English antedated Thai as a national/official language, Central Thai was already used hundreds of years earlier as a courtly language and *lingua franca*, in contrast to Tagalog/Filipino that did not have such distinctions prior to its selection as national/official language. Second, Philippines' linguistic heterogeneity is much greater, more than double specifically, compared to that of Thailand, and such Philippine heterogeneity does not have an uncontestable majority language. Third, Thailand was not colonized while the Philippines had been colonized by both Spain and the United States of America. Hence, language planning in the Philippines happened when the country was still a colony, while language planning in Thailand was done after more than a century of political stabilization and centralization. Fourth, language planning in Thailand had the ideological, organizational and logistical support from the absolute monarch, in contrast to the language planning in the Philippines that deteriorated into a wrangling issue that cannot be resolved democratically and had to be relegated to some obscure departments as a non-priority. Fifth, language planning in Thailand had a sense of urgency coming from the need to have a common language for intra-state communication, from the external threat of western colonization, and from the internal threat of the rising nationalism of the Thai-Chinese. Philippine language planning never had such sense of urgency, as the country's intra-state communication was done in English, the Filipinos did not see the Americans as external threats but as benevolent allies, and the country did not feel at that time significant internal threats coming from the Filipino-Chinese or from the Filipino-Muslims. Sixth, Philippine language planning is pressured to prioritize English by its sluggish economy and rapid population growth so that Filipinos can more easily find jobs abroad. Thai economy, on the other hand, is more robust and its population growth had already stabilized.

On the Underpinning Motivations of Philippine and Thai Language Planning

The similarities and differences between the underpinning motivations of Philippine and Thai language planning can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10. Comparison on the Underpinning Motivations of Philippine and Thai Language Planning Based on Tables 2 and 7

Language	Underpinning Motivation	
	Philippines	Thailand
National/Official Language	1 and 2 (in unity)	2 (in unity), 3, 4 (Thais from Burmese, Lao, Cambodians and Malaysians), and 6 (esp. the Thai-Chinese)
English	1, 3, and 8	8
Regional Languages	1, 2 (in diversity), 4, and 5	1, 2 (in diversity), 4 (within Thailand), and 5
Other Foreign Languages	2 (in diversity), 4 and 8	2 (in diversity), 4 (esp. the Thai-Chinese), and 8

The underpinning motivations for promoting the regional languages and other foreign languages in the Philippines and Thailand are almost the same. As for the national/official language, Thailand has more underpinning motivations than the Philippines. This could be one of the reasons why Thai is definitely more robust than Filipino. On the other hand, as for English as a primary international language, the Philippines has more underpinning motivations than Thailand. This could be one of the reasons why Filipinos ended up being more proficient in English than the Thais.

On the Implementation and Structural/Organizational Mechanisms of Philippine and Thai Language Planning

The similarities and differences between the implementations of



Philippine and Thai language planning can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11. **Comparison on the Movements of Philippine and Thai Language Planning through Haugen's Phases**

Language	Philippines				Thailand			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
National/Official Language	■	■			■	■	■	■
English	■	■	■	■	■	■		■
Regional Languages	■				■			
Other Foreign Languages	■	■		■	■	■		■

1 = Selection    2 = Codification    3 = Implementation    4 = Elaboration

The implementation of the planning for regional languages in the Philippines and Thailand are similar in the sense that they are both stuck in the codification phase, owing to the newness of the two countries' shift to mother language education. The implementation of the planning for the other international languages in the Philippines and Thailand are also similar in the sense that they are both having problems in Haugen's implementation stage.

Philippines and Thailand differ in the implementation of their national/official languages, in the sense that the Philippines is stuck in Haugen's implementation phase, while Thailand is currently engaged in further elaborating Thai. Philippines and Thailand also differ in the implementation of English as international language, in the sense that Philippines is taking full advantage of the ongoing elaborations of English that are being done in the other parts of the world, while Thailand is stuck in Haugen's implementation phase.

As to the structural and organizational mechanisms for the implementation of Philippine and Thai language planning, the two countries are similar only for their sparse support given to the regional languages. They are different in terms of the national/official language; whereas Thailand has a number of powerful departments and offices that plan, implement and monitor the propagation and development of its national/

official language, Philippines only relied on its departments of education, that appear more interested in English language, and a commission that is relatively powerless and understaffed. Thai as national/official language is centrally supported by the Thai government as a political matter as the Thais are convinced that Thai is indispensable for the creation of a strong Thai identity and consequently a strong Thai nation-state. On the other hand, Filipino as national/official language is not centrally supported by the Philippine government as the Filipino politicians understand that Filipino is a sensitive and divisive political issue that if unnecessarily touched could create imminent backlash on their political careers. Secondly, Philippines and Thailand are different in the way they support English as this international language is a priority in the Philippine departments of education as well as in majority of the domains in the Philippine public sphere, while in Thailand, although this international language is also desired, the Ministry of Education still prioritizes Thai and majority of the domains in the Thai public sphere only allot tertiary attention to such international language. Thirdly, Philippines and Thailand slightly differ in their support of other foreign languages; the Philippines is hardly concerned about these languages while Thailand is giving them some level of government curricular programming and financial backing.

### **The Implications on Nationalism and Multiculturalism of Philippine and Thai Language Policies and Practices**

Filipino and Thai are different in their impact on the development of their respective nationalism. Tagalog/Filipino deteriorated into a divisive political matter and therefore could not contribute much to the development of Philippine nationalism. Thai, on the other hand, was successfully established as one of the key symbols of Thai nationalism and one of the defining characteristics of Thai-ness.

Although the Philippines and Thailand just recently shifted to mother language education, signifying in the process their official support of multilingualism and consequently of multiculturalism, it would appear that the Philippines has a better environment for multiculturalism compared to Thailand. For a long period of time the Philippines tolerated and recognized its regional languages as auxiliary official languages. Thailand, on the other hand, has

a history of repressing its regional languages. As to the prospects of mother language education, Thailand, however, has an edge over the Philippines as the Philippines is burdened with so many regional languages and is notorious for its insufficiently funded programs and offices. Thailand's Royal Institute has a better chance of successfully codifying its regional languages than the Philippines' Commission on Filipino Language. Similarly, Thailand's Ministry of Education has a better chance of successfully implementing the mother language education than the Philippines' Department of Education. Furthermore, given the Philippines' history of rambling, shifting and disruptive language programs, even the mother language education program is actually in a precarious situation of being superseded by other future language programs. Thailand, on the other hand, has a history of evolutionary and developmental language planning that in some way guarantees the continued existence of its mother language education program.

### **The Implications on Human and Intellectual Capital of Philippine and Thai Language Policies and Practices**

Comparing how the Philippines and Thailand translated their educational infrastructure and culture into advantages in the context of the workplace and employment as well as in the sphere of innovation, it would appear that Thailand is faring much better compared to the Philippines (Table 12).

The inefficiency in the way the Philippines makes use of its comparatively strong educational infrastructure and culture could have been the result of its insistence on using the English language as the primary medium of instruction. The country may produce English-speaking graduates, but only very few of them can actually use such language in higher levels of thinking and discoursing. Other graduates without the adequate English proficiency could not as well use the national and regional languages in higher levels of thinking and discoursing because in the Philippine public sphere, there is very little space and support given to higher level thinking and discoursing outside the English language. Conversely, the efficiency in the way Thailand makes use of its comparatively weaker educational infrastructure and culture could have been the result of its insistence on using Thai as the primary medium of instruction. The country may not

Table 12. Educational Infrastructure and Culture, Workplace and Employment Context, and Global Innovation Index of the Philippines and Thailand

Country	Education Pillar <i>(from Human Capital Index 2013)</i>			Workforce & Employment Pillar <i>(from Human Capital Index 2013)</i>			Global Innovation Index		
	Score	World Rank	Regional Rank	Score	World Rank	Regional Rank	Score	World Rank	Regional Rank
Philippines	0.011	65	4	0.164	38	5	29.9	100	7
Thailand	-0.242	79	6	0.482	27	3	39.3	48	3

produce many English-speaking graduates, but the majority of its Thai-speaking graduates can actually use the Thai language in higher levels of thinking and discoursing. This mass of human capital that is capable of higher level thinking and discoursing is what powers Thailand's comparatively vibrant workplace and employment and its strong drive for innovation.

### **The Implications on Regional Integration and Globalization of Philippine and Thai Language Policies and Practices**

In terms of English as the official language of the ASEAN and the lingua franca of globalization, the Philippines definitely has an edge over Thailand. But Thailand has an edge over the Philippines in terms of Chinese Mandarin, as a major language in the ASEAN region and also a lingua franca of globalization. Furthermore, Thailand has border languages that it shares with its neighboring ASEAN countries. In terms of human capital and functional economies, Thailand also has an edge over the Philippines. Thailand's weakness in English can be easily compensated by its increasing number of leaders and intellectuals who are proficient in such language. But the Philippines' weakness in human capital and economy is something that cannot be compensated by the number of its English-speaking people.

### **CONCLUSION: INSIGHTS AND LESSONS**

#### **What the Philippines Can Learn From Thailand**

Thailand has more success than the Philippines in terms of planning for the national language, the official language, and the other international languages, thus the lessons that the Philippines can glean from Thailand should come from these three areas of language planning. Reflecting on Thailand's planning for national language, the Philippines should realize that in a linguistically heterogeneous context, the selection of a national language would inevitably be a political process that would include irresolvable issues from some aggrieved ethnic groups. The Philippines might have faltered in this process, but it went on with the codification and half-hearted implementation processes. Philippines' national

and local leaders should be able to see that at this stage it would really be both pragmatic and strategic to put a closure to the never-ending debates about the bungled selection process and just move on with full support for the further codification, implementation, and elaboration of Filipino. Instead of not attending to or blocking a more robust implementation of Filipino, the local leaders and intellectuals should focus their energies in lobbying for a more inclusive codification/elaboration of Filipino by proposing the adaptation of more vocabularies from their regional languages and even the recognition of their idiosyncratic grammar as legitimate variants of Filipino. The national leaders, on the other hand, should learn from Thailand that planning for national language should be backed by a strong political will and sufficient financial and organizational support from the central government.

The Philippines should learn from Thailand that one way of propagating the national language is to use it as official language. With the Philippines' two official languages, Filipino and English, the national leaders should make it a point that Filipino should be the more dominant official language, and that gradually English should be divested of its official status as implied by the 1987 Constitution. The Philippines can continue to use English as an international language even without investing it an official status, just like what is being done in Thailand. The Philippines should realize that it needs a language that can be shared by the majority of its people and can be used for higher level communication and discoursing. English was not able to address such need, but Filipino has greater chances of addressing such need. Being an Austronesian language, Filipino is definitely easier to learn, use, and master by the Filipinos who may not belong to the Tagalog ethnic group. The Philippines should look at Thailand to eradicate its deep-seated fear that without English, the Philippine economy would spiral downward. The Philippines should, in fact, realize that its insistence on holding on to English only created a mindset of dependence on external economies for jobs and survival, which at the bottom line only further weakened the Philippine economy. Thailand's practice of delegating international relations and commerce to its fewer number of Thais who are proficient with English can be used as model for Filipinos. After all, what is the use of widespread English proficiency if it is paid for very dearly by the Philippine people's inability to engage themselves in higher levels of communication and discourse?

The Philippines should learn from Thailand that aside from English there are other international languages that can be useful in the ASEAN integration and globalization, and that the study of these languages, therefore, should be given some degree of government support. For example, the Filipino language's affinity with the Malay language, which is a national/official language of three other ASEAN countries, should be maximized as a starting point for Filipinos' study and mastery of this Austronesian language. Just as the background of some Chinese-Filipinos in Chinese Mandarin should be further cultivated and expanded to the other Filipinos.

### **What Thailand Can Learn From the Philippines**

The Philippines has more success than Thailand in terms of planning for English and the regional languages, hence the lessons that Thailand can glean from the Philippines should come from these two areas of language planning. As to the relative success of the propagation of English in the Philippines, Thailand should see its positive and negative sides. On the positive side, Thailand may learn how the Philippines propagated the use of English by making it the primary medium of instruction in education and by allowing English to dominate most aspects of the Philippine public sphere. On the negative side, such method of propagating English may negatively result in an inefficient educational system that fails to produce graduates who are able to translate their educational capital into functional economic power and drive for innovation. Furthermore, such method of propagating English may negatively result to the erosion of Thai-ness that the country is supposed to be jealously guarding. In other words, Thailand should think twice about following the Philippine fascination and obsession with the English language.

Thailand may glean some lessons from the Philippines' openness and tolerance to the regional languages. The existence and cultivation of the regional languages need not be seen as contradictory to the project of nation building. Furthermore, since the Philippines started embracing the system of mother language education a little slightly ahead of Thailand, Thailand could actually monitor the progress of such educational program in order to gather practical lessons for its own implementation of its similar program.



## Insights and Lessons for the ASEAN Countries and Beyond

Concerning the planning for national language, the ASEAN and other countries that are grappling with the issues and challenges of being multicultural and multilingual as well as those that are gearing for regional integration/cooperation may gather the following insights and lessons: that a national language can be used as a tool for nation building; that national language planning in a linguistically heterogeneous context can be a very difficult task that needs a lot of political will, financial support, and organizational backing; that national language planning implies some irresolvable issues coming from aggrieved ethnic groups; and, that the stakeholders should be able to see the necessity and urgency of such planning.

Concerning the planning for official language, the ASEAN countries and the other countries may gather the following insights and lessons: that it would be beneficial for a national language to be truly used also as an official language; that it should be continuously assessed if an inherited colonial language still needs to be invested with an official status; and, that the use of an indigenous official language that is related to the regional languages will tend to have a positive impact on the development of a country's intellectual and human capital.

Concerning the planning for English as an international language, the ASEAN and other countries may gather the following insights and lessons: that there is a need for an international language and going for English is a sound decision; that it is not necessary, however, to use English as the medium of intra-state communication; that it is also not necessary to invest English with the status of official language; that it is not a wise policy to increase proficiency in English to the detriment of the national/official language as well as the regional languages; and that it is more pragmatic to reserve proficiency in English to the segments of society that truly need it, such as the leaders, international businessmen, academics, graduate students, and other individuals gearing for overseas employment.

Concerning the planning for regional languages, the ASEAN and other countries may gather the following insights and lessons: that there should be no contradiction between being open and tolerant of these languages on one hand and pushing for nation



building on the other hand; that these languages can be accorded an auxiliary official status; that the system of mother language education is a good way of affirming these regional languages; that, however, we should not expect so much development and cultivation of these languages from the system of mother language education in the sense that such languages will only be used in the early years of primary education; and, that the development of these languages will largely depend on whether local organizations and intellectuals will use and support such languages in literature and journalism.

Concerning the planning for the other international languages, the ASEAN and other countries may gather the following insights and lessons: that aside from English, there are other international languages that can also be useful for regional integration/cooperation and globalization and that it would be beneficial for governments to encourage and support their study, use, and mastery.

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# BEYOND ANY PARTICULARITY: HEGEL'S UNIVERSALISTIC RETHINKING OF PROTESTANT SACRAMENTOLOGY

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This paper explores Hegel's sacramentology within his system and in view of its determinants among which the Kantian reinterpretation of the sacraments was especially influential. The study demonstrates that the Right Hegelianism as represented by Marheineke tempered the universalistic potential of Hegel's sacramentology in order to accommodate his legacy to the ecclesiastical prerequisite of that time. Divergent hermeneutical presuppositions of the Reformation theology and of the Hegelianism were elucidated and analysed in terms of their impact upon sacramentology.

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**KEYWORDS:** Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Kantianism, sacramentology, Socinianism

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## A SIGNIFICANCE OF HEGELIAN SACRAMENTOLOGY FOR THE FAR EAST

FOR A LONG time Hegel's philosophy of religion had been considered beneficial to the Protestant theology practised solely within the Western philosophical and theological tradition. Nonetheless, it is obvious that a universalistic orientation, which is an indelible part of the Hegelian system, could profit the Protestant theology cultivated in a specific and multi-religious context of the Far East.

In this respect, Christianity might be perceived as a relatively new religion alien to the indigenous traditions. Therefore, a philosophical reinterpretation of the rituals characteristic of the Protestant Christianity (*i.e.*, baptism and the Lord's Supper) could provide an intellectual legitimisation thereof, welding diverse theological tendencies present in the post-denominational edifice of the modern Asian theologies and even transcending the criterion of faith.

The idea of interpreting the phenomenon of religion in philosophical terms propounded by Hegel may contribute to the public theology based not on the category of a supermundane revelation but on human rational endeavour.

### HEGEL'S SACRAMENTOLOGY WITHIN HIS SYSTEM

As in August 1801 Hegel submitted his habilitation theses<sup>1</sup>, which were underlying his future system, no one (perhaps except his friend Schelling<sup>2</sup>) could envisage a whirlwind both of philosophy and of theology that was to come on account of a native of Stuttgart. Actually, Hegel's habilitation paper<sup>3</sup> was written in Latin, treated of astronomy, and passed rather unnoticed. Around 1813 a new system was brought to fruition<sup>4</sup> and new philosophical foundations, which had a long-lasting impact upon the Protestant theology (predominantly of the German-speaking world), were laid down. Over time the Hegelian legacy was instilled into the humanities worldwide.<sup>5</sup>

Hegel rethought and universalised sacramentology, which in the Protestant tradition is construed as the theological reflexion upon two ordinances namely baptism and the Lord's Supper. For him the *sola Scriptura* principle became untenable due to the

Enlightenment criticism of the Bible though he himself did not deem it warranted providing that his own system was built on axiomatic premises which could not be verified either empirically or logically as the Enlightenment methodology requested.<sup>6</sup> Since the Reformation tenets were suspended, Hegel drew an outline of a new sacramentology in line with the laws of dialectics, which he claimed not to invent but rather to discover and to expound as inherent and embedded in the ontological and epistemological root of the universe that is a constant flux of being according to the triple schema.

Definitely, sacramentology was not material to Hegel's philosophy of religion<sup>7</sup> and was set forth once while he discussed how the Spirit realises itself as the religious community (*Gemeinde*).<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the Hegelian concept of baptism and of the Lord's Supper, which was to a degree indebted to the Kantian reinterpretation of these ordinances, paved the way for a new understanding of the sacraments. In the present paper, Marheineke's ecclesiastical accommodation of Hegel's thought is studied too because it unearths doctrinal concerns of his contemporaries officiating within the Protestant State Church of Germany.

Hegel did not refer to sacramentology in the most systematic exposition of his mature philosophy<sup>9</sup> because in his opinion the sacraments were only auxiliary means of edification which might be utilised by the religious community that was defined as those who comprehend the dialectic texture of the universe. This community identified as God's kingdom embraces people irrespective of their religious affiliation.<sup>10</sup> Whether one belongs thereto or not is of no avail for three reasons.

Firstly, for Hegel every human being as the subjective Spirit is doomed to the continual existence, which transcends his or her death. This eschatological existence has nothing to do with the resurrection of flesh or with the last judgment depicted in the Scripture but is the perfect, pure, and timeless self-consciousness culminating in the eternal now.

Secondly, in Hegel's view sin is an inevitable consequence of human nature disposed to know itself and the world around. Prior to the symbolical fall into sin, human was mortal and unconscious like an animal.<sup>11</sup> Thanks to the fall, human became cognisant of good and evil and therefore immortal as the subjective Spirit. In Hegel's system sin corresponds to the alienation of the nature

(to wit the world) from the idea (namely the Absolute) and therefore is necessary as a part of the dialectical process which automatically provides for the cancellation of the said alienation (called the reconciliation).

Thirdly, Hegel expected no after-world to arise because he reduced all aspects of time to the present moment and confined all reality to the unfading splendour of the existing universe.

### KANT'S REINTERPRETATION OF THE SACRAMENTS

It seems that the Kantian reinterpretation of the sacraments<sup>12</sup> originated from the Socinian school of theology,<sup>13</sup> which is considered a prominent forerunner of European rationalism and Enlightenment.<sup>14</sup> Since the Socinianism was outlawed and ruthlessly persecuted throughout Europe, Kant would never admit it.

For Kant baptism incorporates the baptised one into a denomination, but it neither forgives sins nor confers grace. The idea that baptism is capable of blotting out human transgressions and of renewing human existence in God's sight was described by Kant as a delusion (*Wahn*). He did not comment explicitly on the infant baptism but rather mentioned that the said incorporation takes place either by the public confession of faith in case of an adult or by the pledge of witnesses (*i.e.*, godparents) who commit themselves to care for a future religious instruction of the baptised infant. Consequently, the infant baptism propagates a visible church by incorporating the offspring of its members.

Similarly, the Socinianism defined baptism as a rite of initiation but solemnly renounced the infant baptism. Furthermore, baptism was entirely disconnected from the remission of sins and the regeneration. Socinus interpreted baptism as one of the initiation ceremonies typical of major religions. He did not recognise baptism as a permanent and necessary institution but rather as an evanescent and arbitrary religious custom meant to display a confession of faith.<sup>15</sup> Thus, baptism might coincide with joining a church body.

Kant circumscribed the Lord's Supper in merely ethical terms. In his view the Lord's Supper preserves, renews, continues and propagates a sense of moral community among the participants. This happens as the participants celebrate the equality of their

privileges and of their moral benefits, which is embodied in this common commemorative meal. Accordingly, the Lord's Supper contributes to a worldwide expansion of the universal moral community by surmounting self-centeredness and by calling to a selfless love. Kant denied that the Lord's Supper forgives sins or bestows grace (*Gnadenmittel*) as the Socinians did.

## HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF BAPTISM

Hegel did not discuss various concepts of baptism but rather offered his own explanation. In his system, the sacraments by themselves do not appertain to the activity of the Spirit that eternally becomes as it knows itself by the dialectical forms, which it assumes. One of these forms is the religious community to which the sacraments belong. In Hegel's opinion this community is distinguished from other (*i.e.*, non-religious) communities by the knowledge (*Bewusstsein*) that the Spirit (the synthesis) reconciles in itself the thesis (the idea) and the antithesis (the world). As the Spirit the primordial idea (equal to the Absolute) brings itself to completion. This idea, which is composed of the infinity and the finitude, and which simultaneously conceals in itself all reality and is concealed in all reality, is predestined to evolve.

Hegel relinquished the Scripture as a reliable source of religious knowledge and maintained that the existing religion (to wit Christianity) could at best function as a sort of "philosophy for the poor" who are ill-equipped to the impeccable truth unveiled by the pure philosophy. Therefore, in his circumscription of baptism, Hegel intentionally did not refer to any biblical passages. Unlike Kant, Hegel approached baptism only from the perspective of infants as its recipients.

Thus, as a child is born within a visible church, that is to Christian parents, although this child is still unconscious (*bewusstlos*) of the true nature of the universe, he/she is determined (*bestimmt*) to take hold of the unmarred truth. Hegel asserted that the child is potentially the subjective Spirit. Accordingly, the child is considered the Spirit on account of his / her aptitude (*Fähigkeit*) to become the real Spirit in the future. Over time the child accomplishes himself/herself as the Spirit and ultimately attains the fount of being and non-being which are identical in dialectical terms. The determination of the child to the truth is announced



by means of baptism, which initiates its recipient into the church.

Since Hegel contended that all people regardless of their creeds share the same eschatological destiny, he had to demonstrate a specificity of Christianity as compared to other religions. For Hegel, the church is unique as the community of those who comprehend that the Absolute reconciled itself to itself and dispelled evil which he interpreted as a misapprehension of the world's status.<sup>16</sup>

In Hegel's view baptism proves that the baptised child belongs to the church, not to a hostile world (*eine feindliche Welt*). The latter statement sounds strange granted that for Hegel the world is the other face of the Absolute and the status of the world is secured by the laws of dialectics. Consequently, the world is the mirror in which the idea admires itself. The principal message of the Hegelian philosophy of religion is that the Absolute is no more a pure transcendence (*Jenseits*) for it negates itself by becoming its own opposite that is the world. It transpires that for Hegel the universe is the flesh of God, the visible dimension of the original idea. However, in Hegel's system the world may be hostile or even deceitful if its ontological position is misconceived namely if it is taken on its own as isolated from the idea from which the universe springs by virtue of negation.

Speaking of baptism, Hegel alluded to the regeneration but did not attribute it to baptism as such. For him the regeneration is necessary because human spontaneously does not know his/her ontological derivation, does not realise the deepest root of existence and non-existence. Thus, human must learn that he/she is the subjective Spirit, the Spirit's effluence. By this self-knowledge human regenerates himself/herself and the Spirit subjectively begets itself as human. In Hegel's opinion, since baptism symbolises the incorporation into the spiritual community which ought to enshrine the dialectical flow of being, it edifies and prepares the child to capture his/her position in the dialectical chain of perpetual becoming as an afflatus of the Absolute.

## HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

For Hegel, the church demonstrates the connection between God and human by means of the Lord's Supper though it is diversely interpreted by various confessions. In his opinion God's presence

is consciously appropriated in the Lord's Supper which is about the mystic union of the participant with the Absolute, about the inward experience of God. Through the Lord's Supper the participant acquires the knowledge of the cosmic reconciliation in a sensual and immediate way. Thus, the Spirit enters him/her and dwells in him/her.

According to Hegel Christ is a symbol of the most profound unity of the infinity and the finitude, and the Lord's Supper regularly displays His suffering and death. Therefore, it can be regarded as a symbolical enactment of these concepts. Hegel did not identify Jesus' incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection as historical events but rather assigned them to abstract phases of timeless becoming (self-transfiguration) of the idea because the Hegelian Christ ultimately fuses the finitude and the infinity, the tangible and the intangible.

Consequently, Christ's incarnation conforms to the transition of the primordial idea to the world, which takes place by the negation. In Hegel's system, the operation of negation is peculiar because notwithstanding its name (*Aufhebung*), the negation does not abolish a previous element but rather transforms it into a new entity, retaining the old one. Thus, in an odyssey of being nothing is irreversibly lost. While the primordial idea, tantamount to the Absolute, negates itself, it externalises itself so that it might become external to itself and distinct from itself as the world.

Then, the world is negated by which the threefold Spirit emerges and the externalised being internalises itself namely returns to unity with itself. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection appertain to this transition, which is the negation of negation. The primordial idea, which initiates the spurt of the dialectical momentum, and the Spirit, that is the embodiment and fulfilment of all dialectical impetus, are the same, albeit the world bursts forth by virtue of the negation to endure forever.

Hegel termed the Lord's Supper as the eternal sacrifice in the sense that it pictures the eternal identity of all phases of the dialectical process because all elements thereof are different masks of the same oneness. In other words, the Lord's Supper symbolically instructs human that he/she is the subjective Spirit and therefore a form of the Absolute, to be precise, the negation of its negation.

## HEGEL'S PRESENTATION OF DOMINANT VIEWS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

Hegel distinguished three dominant views on the Lord's Supper: Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed. Hegel's presentation of these concepts is his original interpretation of them and does not give an account of official and normative doctrinal definitions. Moreover, he ignored the sacramentological diversity of the Swiss Reformation which cannot just be denominated as "Reformed" because the Zwinglian circumscription of the sacraments and the Calvinistic approach to sacramentology are divergent. Hegel himself did not conceal that he recognised the Lutheran concept of the Lord's Supper as "the best" of various theological propositions but still less complete than his philosophical circumscription of the Lord's Supper.

According to Hegel, the Catholic theology claims that by virtue of the sacerdotal consecration, God becomes a bread so that the Absolute begins to exist empirically as an inanimate thing. Thus, since in the Catholic concept of the Lord's Supper God becomes what is external, the Catholicism as such is focused on an external aspect of religion. Finally, Hegel pointed out that the Catholic principle of externality is concomitant with the Catholic heteronomy, which means that by Catholic standards an individual should not search the truth on his / her own but rather should accept unconsciously what is given by the church authorities (*i.e.*, externally) to be believed.

In fact, a developed Catholic sacramentology is not teaching that there is any empirical alteration owing to the consecration because in Aristotelian terms, the substance is changed but the accidents, which encompass all sensual properties, are left untouched. Therefore, the Catholic theology does not consider the transubstantiation as an empirical process except alleged eucharistic miracles, which purport to corroborate the said doctrine yet are occasionally reported.<sup>17</sup>

For Hegel the Lutheran exposition of the Lord's Supper presumes that the Lord's Supper is not about the external, ordinary elements but rather about God's presence, which is experienced spiritually by faith. Thus, as the sensual elements (*i.e.*, bread and wine) are consumed and devoured, the participants are reminded of God's presence, accessible only to the spiritual cognition (namely to faith) apart from any externality. Actually,

the Wittenberg Reformation never articulated such views on the Lord's Supper. In the 16th century the Lutheran concept of the Lord's Supper was founded on a specific interpretation of the words of institution.<sup>18</sup>

Hegel's presentation of the Reformed doctrine is deficient because it imposes a fictitious homogeneity on the Reformed tradition and it does not comply with Calvin's explanation of the Lord's Supper. In Hegel's opinion, the "Reformed" theology reduced the Lord's Supper to a vivid remembrance of the past events, which is deprived of the spiritual, divine presence. Thus, the "Reformed" understanding of the Lord's Supper is captive of the "bare common sense" (*der blosse Verstand*) and the moralism, which are for him characteristic of the Enlightenment. Historically, a link between the "Reformed" sacramentology and the Enlightenment postulated by Hegel is unwarranted. For Hegel "reason" (*Vernunft*) and "common sense" (*Verstand*) are not synonymous. It transpires that God is mirrored in human reason which is the immersion in and the cognition of the infinite,<sup>19</sup> whereas a common sense only extends to the finitude.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, commenting on the Enlightenment, Hegel preferred to speak of "der blosse Verstand," not of "die blosse Vernunft" as Kant did.<sup>21</sup>

### A UNIVERSALISTIC ASPECT OF HEGELIAN SACRAMENTOLOGY

The Hegelian philosophy of religion is utterly universalistic because it does not rely on any textual revelation, which must *eo ipso* be particular, but rather on human reason in the speculative sense of the term. Admittedly, Hegel referred to the revelation (*Offenbarung*) but he used this notion in the most general way to denote what is unfolded as the primordial idea, which perennially explicates itself. Unlike traditional epistemological theories, he did not posit that human knows himself/herself and the universe primarily for his/her own benefit. Since to exist means to know itself, the Absolute exists and evolves only by knowing itself which happens by means of its dialectical forms. Consequently, to linger on the idea must mediate itself and must be submerged in the dialectical transition. Simply, the Absolute is not given, but it rather creates itself. Thus, as human reason penetrates the reality, the Spirit gets to know itself because both human and the reality

are the emanation of the same Spirit. Pursuant to the Hegelian paradigm the sensual realm is not a shade of the rational one but rather the very embodiment and climax thereof.

Although Hegelianism is an axiomatic system, of which tenets cannot be verified either experimentally or logically (in mathematical terms), its universalistic capacity is evident. Following in Kant's footsteps, Hegel sought such a non-religious interpretation of the sacraments, which could evade any criticism and gain a universal recognition. For that reason, Hegel dissociated himself from the *sola Scriptura* principle which was underlying the Reformation theology till the age of Enlightenment.

### MARHEINEKE'S ECCLESIASTICAL ACCOMMODATION OF HEGEL'S LEGACY

Hegel's thought left an imprint on the Protestant theologians of the German-speaking world. Those who attempted to accommodate his legacy to the ecclesiastical standards of that time (e.g., Baumgarten-Crusius,<sup>22</sup> Gabler,<sup>23</sup> Marheineke<sup>24</sup>) were styled right or old Hegelians, whereas those who decided to experiment and to advance Hegel's paradigm on their own (e.g., Feuerbach<sup>25</sup>) were called left or young Hegelians. In fact, Feuerbach could envisage practising the philosophy of religion transcending a demise of traditional theism, and he proposed to construe theologising as sheer operation upon the symbolic forms distinctive of the phenomenon of religion.<sup>26</sup>

Although Marheineke acclaimed Hegel's philosophy, he did not dare to engraft the authentic Hegelianism in the Protestant theology but rather settled for its accommodation to the ecclesiastical expectations. In contradistinction to Hegel, Marheineke did not suppose that the Enlightenment criticism of the biblical accounts (particularly of the miracles recorded therein) entitles human reason to be the sole source of theological knowledge. Furthermore, Marheineke reclaimed certain biblical and patristic concepts which were inherited by the Reformation but defied by Hegel.

In response to the Enlightenment challenge Marheineke avowed that contemporary theology ought to rely on three convergent sources that is on the Scripture, on the doctrinal settlement of a specific church (*i.e.*, denomination) and on human

reason. Contrary to the Reformation hermeneutics, Marheineke raised the status of a church body, declaring that the ancient church established the biblical canon (*canon ecclesiasticus*). From the Protestant point of view, it was a theological revolution albeit in the 18th century German scholars paid heed to a complex historical origin of the biblical canon.<sup>27</sup> Although in his eschatology Marheineke advocated the concept of apocatastasis (*i.e.*, the restoration of the universe to the original condition thereof) to the detriment of the concept of eternal damnation, in his ecclesiology he sustained the statement “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” (outside the church there is no salvation), assuming that the aforementioned church is visible<sup>28</sup> which is illustrative of his inconsistency.

Due to historical research the Lutheran orthodoxy and the Reformed orthodoxy were aware that in antiquity, no ecumenical council enumerated the canonical books and that the lists of them found in the church fathers and in the documents of the regional councils vary. Moreover, certain fathers did not hesitate to cite or to refer to the New Testament apocrypha.<sup>29</sup> In the imperial church, a consensus about the canon of the New Testament was finally reached, but some oriental churches (such as Armenian Apostolic Church or Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church) retained books, which are nowadays commonly classified as apocryphal. Therefore, the Protestant orthodoxy hammered out the concept of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, it was believed that the Holy Spirit convinces human that the Bible is God's Word as he/she reads it or listens to it. Thus, a biblical book establishes its own canonicity and its divine authority by the testimony which the Holy Spirit bears within the recipient's heart (the self-authentication).

Marheineke ascertained that the Bible is true but only as to its core which is grasped by the ecclesiastical creeds. He argued that since the Scripture and the church confessions were conditioned by various historical, cultural and social factors, it is necessary to reinterpret them in light of the contemporary context, which is being accomplished by human reason. Consequently, the church not only brought forth the Bible in the past but also safeguards its position and decides which books belong to the Scripture. The church also differentiates the divine content of the Bible from fallible human utterances found in the Scripture. Thus, the church discerns the genuine tenets of Christianity. In addition, human

reason liberates such a biblical-ecclesiastical doctrine from its past context so that it might be reinterpreted and reinstated.

In his sacramentology Marheineke appealed to the concept of means of grace and even linked baptism to the regeneration, the illumination and the remission of sins. However, as compared to the Reformation theology Marheineke's sacramentology is influenced by the rationalism both of the Enlightenment and of Hegelianism. His doctrine of the Lord's Supper essentially does not differ from Hegel's. Additionally, a pietistic idea that baptism must be validated by the confirmation surfaces in Marheineke's baptismal theology.

## CONCLUSION

Sacramentology does not function as an isolated branch of theology or of the philosophy of religion but is sanctioned by a particular comprehension of human condition (anthropology) and of the divine justice (soteriology). In the 16th century, Lutheranism and Calvinism conceded that the total hereditary spiritual depravity of human incurs God's wrath and eternal condemnation so that God-man Christ must suffer what humankind ought to suffer on account of its sin. Thus, God hands out the complete and free gift of salvation by the means which the Lord himself established for this purpose. Lutheran theology asserted that these means forgive sins and confer salvation as they are used already here and now, whereas Calvinistic theology maintained that these means promise and ensure the remission of sins and salvation which are to be actualised in the future namely in heaven.

Hegelianism and its predecessors (the Socinian school of theology and Kantianism) did not consent to the above premises. The Socinianism and Kantianism recognised human condition (especially the moral one) as deficient but did not accept the idea of the total hereditary corruption of human will towards God and its eschatological consequences. For Hegel sin was a necessary step which humankind had to take, pursuing the self-consciousness. Furthermore, all that is real is rational and all that is rational is real.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, sin and redemption are determined by the immutable and absolute laws of dialectics. The positive (or less negative) anthropology renders the concept of the substitution (*satisfactio vicaria*) null which results in a new understanding of



the sacraments.

In the humanities, particularly in theology, the hermeneutics is critical to any argumentation. The Lutheran and the Calvinistic theology of the 16th century presupposed the divine and sole authority of the Scripture in connexion with the verbal inspiration thereof. That's why their concept of the sacraments arose from the exegetical discussions about the words of institution. On the contrary, the Socinian tradition, Kantianism and Hegelianism did not adhere to the *sola Scriptura* principle yet for different reasons.

Hegel's rethinking of Protestant sacramentology was original, radical and universalistic albeit he utilised earlier insights of Kant whose reinterpretation of the sacraments appears indebted to Socinianism—the harbinger of the Enlightenment. For that reason, the Protestant custodians of the Hegelian heritage (cf. Marheineke) preferred to soothe his sacramentology at the expense of its intentional universalism. Undoubtedly, on a speculative and rationalistic basis, Hegel endeavoured to find out a universal significance of the sacraments extending beyond any particularity.

## END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Karl Rosenkranz, "Habitationsdisputation am 27. August 1801," in *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's Leben* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1844), 156-159.
- <sup>2</sup> Schelling immediately captured the relevance of Hegel's redefinition of idea (the 6th habilitation thesis) and already in 1802-1803 he restated it in German. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, "Philosophie der Kunst," in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. I/5 (Stuttgart and Augsburg: Cotta, 1859), 455 [§ 53].
- <sup>3</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Dissertatio philosophica de orbitis planetarum* (Jena: Typis Prageri, 1801).
- <sup>4</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Phänomenologie des Geistes," in *Werke*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1832). Idem, "Philosophische Enzyklopädie," in *Werke*, vol. 18 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1840), 146-205. Idem, "Religionslehre," in *Werke*, vol. 18 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1840), 74-76.
- <sup>5</sup> Cf. a partial bibliography: Kurt Steinhauer, ed., *Hegel Bibliography: Background Material on the International Reception of Hegel within the Context of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 1-2/2 (München: Saur, 1980-1998). Frederick C. Beiser, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Montserrat Herrero, ed., *G. W. F. Hegel Contemporary Readings: The Presence of*



*Hegel's Philosophy in the Current Philosophical Debates* (Hildesheim and New York: Olms, 2011). Hans Küng, *Menschwerdung Gottes: Eine Einführung in Hegels theologisches Denken als Prolegomena zu einer künftigen Christologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1970). Robert Stern, ed., *G. W. F. Hegel: Critical Assessments*, vol. 1-4 (London: Routledge, 1993).

- <sup>6</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion," in *Werke*, vol. 11 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1832), 3-44 [Einleitung].
- <sup>7</sup> Martin J. De Nys, *Hegel and Theology* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2009), passim. Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 242-244. James Yerkes, *The Christology of Hegel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 129; 150-151.
- <sup>8</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion," in *Werke*, vol. 12 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1832), 268-275 [III, III, 2].
- <sup>9</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse," in *Werke*, vol. 6-7 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1842-1845).
- <sup>10</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Philosophische Enzyklopädie," in *Werke*, vol. 18 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1840), 204 [§ 207].
- <sup>11</sup> The statement, that human was originally created mortal and morally unconscious, was anticipated by the Socinianism. Faustus Socinus, "Praelectiones theologicae," in *Opera omnia*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: [sine nomine], [post] 1656), 537 [I]. Ibidem, 539-540 [III].
- <sup>12</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft," in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6 (Leipzig: Inselverlag, 1921), 623 [IV, II, Allgemeine Anmerkung]. Ibidem, 630-631 [IV, II, Allgemeine Anmerkung, 3-4].
- <sup>13</sup> Johann Crell, Jonas Schlichting and Martin Ruarus, ed., *Catechesis ecclesiarum Polonicarum* (Amsterdam: Per Eulogetum Philalethem, 1684), 221-243 [V, III-IV]. To evade a legal prosecution, the printer's name (Eulogetus Philalethes) was fictitious. Actually, the book was printed by Christopher Pezold. Thomas Rees, "Historical Introduction," in *The Racovian Catechism*, ed. and trans. Thomas Rees (London: Longman, 1818), lxxxiii.
- <sup>14</sup> Andreas Wissowatius, *Religio rationalis* ([sine loco]: [sine nomine], 1685).
- <sup>15</sup> Faustus Socinus, "De Ecclesia," in *Opera omnia*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: [sine nomine], [post] 1656), 350-351 [De baptismo]. Idem, "Ad superiorem Simonis Ronenbergii epistolam responsio," in *Opera omnia*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: [sine nomine], [post] 1656), 429-431. Thomas Rees, ed. and trans., *The Racovian Catechism* (London: Longman, 1818), 249-252 (n. "d") [V, III].

- <sup>16</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Religionslehre," in *Werke*, vol. 18 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1840), 76 [§ 78].
- <sup>17</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, vol. 7 (Paris: Bloud and Barral, [sine anno]), 62-65 [III, LXXVI, VII-VIII].
- <sup>18</sup> According to the Lutheran interpretation of *verba testamenti*, Christ's body and blood are present in the bread and wine respectively only within the Lord's Supper defined as the proclamation of the words of institution, distribution and reception of the elements. On the one hand, this presence was said to be objective in the sense that it does not depend on the faith of those who participate (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29) but is solely grounded upon God's Word. This claim presupposes that God's Word actualises what it announces namely and creates the reality which it proclaims. On the other hand, the aforementioned presence was believed to be non-empirical and since it could not be detected or verified by human senses, it was termed as spiritual. Certainly, the Wittenberg Reformation did not relate a physical consumption of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper to any process of spiritualisation. In other words, Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper was supposed to be unrelated to the fact that the bread and wine are received and digested.
- <sup>19</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Religionslehre," in *Werke*, vol. 18 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1840), 75 [§ 74].
- <sup>20</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie," in *Werke*, vol. 13 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1833), 96 [Einleitung, B, 2, b].
- <sup>21</sup> Immanuel Kant, "Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft," in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 6 (Leipzig: Inselverlag, 1921).
- <sup>22</sup> Ludwig Friedrich Otto Baumgarten-Crusius, *De philosophiae Hegelianae usu in re theologica* (Jena: Bran, 1826).
- <sup>23</sup> Georg Andreas Gabler, *De verae philosophiae erga religionem Christianam pietate* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1836).
- <sup>24</sup> Philipp Marheineke, *Die Grundlehren der christlichen Dogmatik als Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1827).
- <sup>25</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, *De ratione una universali infinita* (Erlangen: [sine nomine], 1828).
- <sup>26</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, "Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft (1843)," in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Wigand, 1846), 269-346.
- <sup>27</sup> Johann Salomo Semler, *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Kanons*, vol. 1-3 (Halle: Hemmerde, 1771-1773).
- <sup>28</sup> Philipp Marheineke, *Die Grundlehren der christlichen Dogmatik als Wissenschaft*

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(Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1827), 342-343 [§ 536].

<sup>29</sup> For instance Jerome. Hieronymus Stridonensis, "Commentarius in Evangelium Matthaei," in *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina*, vol. 26, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1845), 78 [Matthew 12,13].

<sup>30</sup> "The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)," in *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, vol. 3, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Harper, 1882), 602-603 [I, IV-V].

<sup>31</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts," in *Werke*, vol. 8 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1833), 17 [Vorrede]. Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Vorlesungen über die Metaphysik*, ed. Karl Heinrich Ludwig Pölitz (Erfurt: Keyser, 1821), 34 [1, Vom principio rationis sufficientis]: "Quidquid est, est rationatum."

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# EVALUATION OF SIMULATION DESIGN LEARNING IN SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF NURSING

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This descriptive-correlational study evaluates the degree of implementation and benefits of a learning strategy using a high fidelity human patient simulator. Over one year, the majority of 688 fourth year Filipino nursing students, rated the accomplishment of four simulation design elements (objectives/information, student support, problem solving/complexity, fidelity/realism) as satisfactory and guided reflection/debriefing as excellent. Likewise, the majority rated the elements as very important. Furthermore, the majority expressed satisfaction and high confidence levels after the simulation experience. Spearman's Rho analysis showed significant correlations among all variables. The results give a strong basis for the continued use of simulation as a strategy, which is advantageous to student learning for global health. The researchers recommend that qualitative studies related to the learning strategy be done in order to further understand its impact on and possibilities for enhancing learning in Asian settings.

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**KEYWORDS:** high fidelity human patient simulator, simulation design learning, health education, nursing students, Silliman University

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## INTRODUCTION

SIMULATION IN HEALTH education involves presenting students with activities, resembling real clinical practice experiences to help them prepare for managing the situation when it occurs in the real practice setting (Morton, 1995). Strategies range from simple psychomotor activities to more complex, sophisticated, computer based scenarios which afford a high degree of realism for problem solving and response. Certain acute care situations, such as cardio-pulmonary arrest and trauma, require critical thinking, skill, competency and speed that are too risky to practice using actual patients. High fidelity human patient simulators (HPS), which are presently used to address this concern, provide a wide range of programmable settings to realistically demonstrate a patient's probable physiologic response to illness and management. Simulation experiences provide learners the opportunity for repeated practice, analysis of decision-making, and independent or collaborative nursing skill development, which is safe for both students and patients. This, in turn, contributes to learner satisfaction, increased confidence for future practice, and better patient management.

Students who engage in active learning simulations retain knowledge longer and can be exposed to rare clinical experiences (Johnson, Zerwic, & Theis, 1999). Moreover, they have reported an increase in self-confidence and higher levels of satisfaction, effectiveness and consistency with student learning styles (Sinclair & Ferguson, 2009). Simulation was found useful as an evaluation and learning strategy for anesthesiologists' training, and as a tool to evaluate resuscitation performance in physicians, nurses, and medics (Bearnson & Wiker, 2005).

The need for and use of simulated learning has increased along with evidence-based practice and care competency development. Other factors include increased awareness of patient safety needs, limited number of clinical sites for practice, reduced faculty-student ratios, shorter length of patient stay, and higher patient acuity (Seropian, Brown, Gavilanes, & Driggers, 2004; Medley & Horne, 2005). Medley and Horne (2005) noted that, other than evaluative reports, there was a lack of valid research on whether or not nursing students have improved learning through simulated technology. Comparative methods were not utilized for pretest-posttest data, nor were rigorous designs used to demonstrate

differences between traditional methods and high-fidelity simulation learning. It was suggested that more rigorous outcome and comparative studies need to be conducted, and that research address the critical role of facilitators in simulation technology (Medley & Horne, 2005). Few studies have compared the effects of simulation and lecture strategies on student learning (Sinclair & Ferguson, 2009), and the popularity and supply of simulation materials pose continuing challenges for validation and training across learning institutions and cultures.

Nursing schools in the Philippines are among the top producers of nurses for the international workforce and as such should readily adapt to global changes in health care. Most of the clinical practice by students is done in actual clinical settings, where patient care is generally limited to less complex health situations. Simple simulations such as case studies, role playing, and the use of low-moderate fidelity simulators are the mainstay of related learning experiences. The use of high fidelity patient simulation technology in institutions is scarce primarily due to the cost of the technology and appropriately trained instructors. This ongoing reliance on traditional approaches to learning is challenged by the need for global relevance, dwindling faculty and practice areas, as well as the increasing clamor for patient comfort and safety. The impetus for change will largely be provided by early adopters of simulation who have the implied responsibility to show evidence of the possibilities and advantages of the strategy for the improvement of global health care.

## METHODOLOGY

This descriptive–correlational study utilized the Nursing Education Simulation Framework (Jeffries, 2005) to evaluate simulated learning in a nursing college in the Philippines. The variables examined were objectives/information, student support, problem solving/complexity, fidelity/realism, and guided reflection/debriefing as well as the learning outcomes: learner satisfaction and self confidence. After receipt of ethics clearance, all fourth year nursing students were exposed to two learning scenarios in the simulation laboratory. An orientation to the physical set up of the environment and review of basic concepts and principles necessary for each simulation experience

were provided at the start of every session. The first 20-30 minute simulation exposure with the HPS comprised scenarios revolving around the care of a patient with minor to complex respiratory problems where manipulation of a mechanical ventilator and other respiratory care equipment were necessary. Scenarios for the second 20-30 minutes were related to acute and life-threatening cardiac conditions requiring the respondents to perform basic life support and advanced cardiac life support using the defibrillator and emergency drugs. Both simulations employed branching scenarios such that they had multiple potential endings (Kardong-Edgren, Starkweather & Ward, 2008); however, all were within the realm of the set learning objectives and concepts to be applied in practice. Critical points in the scenarios were modified by the facilitator as necessitated by students' need for cues, safety, and evaluation of nursing judgment. All respondents were debriefed and given the opportunity to qualitatively evaluate their experience after each actual simulation.

Data were gathered through questionnaires, one of which was a modified two part Simulation Design Scale (SDS) developed by the National League of Nurses (NLN) to measure the perceived implementation and importance of the elements of simulation. The scale consisted of 22 five-point Likert items (1-indicating least importance to 5-indicating highest importance) and evaluated the following sub-scales: objectives/information (8 items), fidelity/realism (3 items), problem solving/complexity (4 items), cues (3 items), and feedback/debriefing (4 items). The questionnaire package also included a 6-item Satisfaction with Simulation Scale, and a 6-item Self Confidence from Learning Scale, in a Likert format. These were modifications from the Student Satisfaction and Self Confidence in Learning Scale (SSSCI) designed by NLN. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency values for the combined questionnaires was 0.94 (Table 1). The data were collected from the first simulation (n=412) and a second simulation (n=396); however, only a total of 688 sets of data were analyzed (first simulation=349; second simulation n=339) because questionnaires with missing data were excluded from analyses.

Table 1. Data Showing Reliability Test Results

Questionnaire Type	Chronbach's Alpha Value		
	Pretest n=36	Post-test n=36	Combined Tests n=72
Simulation design elements	0.87	0.89	0.92
Perceived importance of simulation design	0.94	0.92	0.94
Perceived level of satisfaction from simulation	0.75	0.62	0.72
Perceived level of confidence from simulation	0.80	0.83	0.82
All questionnaires combined	0.95	0.93	0.94

Percentages derived from the questionnaire were compared and ranked, unlike the proposed interpretation of summing of scores in the original scales. This was done for the purpose of exploring the perceived degree of occurrence of each sub-item or data group in the scale. Spearman's Rho analysis of factor correlations ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) was used to determine significant correlations between simulation design elements' implementation and importance, learner satisfaction, and confidence from learning. Perceived learner satisfaction with simulation and confidence from learning were likewise analyzed for significant correlations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The majority of the respondents agreed with the statements in the sub-scales: objectives/information (67.59%), fidelity/realism (58.43%), problem solving/complexity (57.84%), and student support/cues (59.98%) (Table 2). The majority (55.81%) also strongly agreed with statements in the subscale reflection/debriefing. This showed that the simulation design approach satisfactorily accomplished its intent to provide students with opportunities for learning from scenarios resembling real life situations. It offered an evaluation of student skills, decision making, and values proportionate to prior learning experiences as concepts were longitudinally and progressively threaded through the program.

The results may likewise imply the adequacy of student support provided by the facilitator through cues to guide and direct learners to respond appropriately and develop their



competencies in the simulation scenario. Furthermore, the simulation learning strategy provides appropriate student support through constructive, timely and reflective feedback sessions. The results support a recent study utilizing the SDS where analysis reflected high ratings on objectives and information, support, problem solving, feedback, and fidelity (realism). This was also matched by ratings of each element as very important. In that study, they were all rated 88-90/100 in the design and 89-90/100 in importance (Kardong-Edgren et al., 2008).

The simulation design elements applied in the learning strategy are appropriate for adult learning and learner preparation for the nursing profession. Caring as a competence in nursing necessitates critical thinking, which can be enhanced by the simulation strategy. Critical thinking is important to ensure patient safety and the best care approach to fit individual and changing health needs of patients. As a process, critical thinking can be developed by mentally analyzing or evaluating nursing knowledge that has been offered as true, reflecting, examining new evidence and reasoning and forming judgments about facts (Marquis & Huston, 2009) that can be encountered in a simulation experience. Furthermore, other components of critical thinking, such as insight, intuition, empathy and willingness to take action, communication, flexibility and creativity, can be accomplished through vicarious learning in simulations.

### **Importance of the Elements of Simulation Design**

The majority (53.34-75.72%) of learners consider the elements of simulation design as very important (Table 3). This may imply that the students greatly value learning strategies that offer information and support for practice skills and decision-making. They put a premium on constructive criticism and non-threatening approaches in the evaluative process of debriefing. Preparedness through prior learning and cues are also valued as important before they are exposed to more complex application situations. Furthermore, the level of situation complexity and problem-solving required were highly appreciated presumably for their congruence with level of learning needs and goals. Although all elements were perceived as very important, the sub-scale fidelity and realism was lowest, being noted in only 48.55% of the responses. This may indicate that realistic scenario manipulations

Table 2. Student's Over All Perception on the Extent of Accomplishment of Simulation Design Elements

Simulation Design Elements	No Accomplishment		Poor Accomplishment		Undecided		Satisfactory Accomplishment		Excellent Accomplishment		Total Responses
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
Objectives and Information	2	0.29	11	1.59	121	17.59	465	67.59	89	12.93	688
Fidelity and Realism	2	0.29	12	1.74	154	22.38	398	57.84	122	17.73	688
Problem Solving Complexity	2	0.29	7	1.02	92	13.37	392	59.98	195	28.34	688
Student Support Cues	2	0.29	21	3.05	90	13.08	402	58.43	173	25.14	688
Guided Reflection/Debriefing	4	0.59	2	0.29	34	4.94	264	38.37	384	55.81	688
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>53</b>		<b>491</b>		<b>1921</b>		<b>963</b>		<b>3440</b>

Table 3. Students' Overall Perception on the Importance of Simulation Design Elements

Simulation Design Elements	Not Important		Somewhat Important		Neutral		Important		Very Important		Total Responses
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
Objectives/ Information	0	0	1	0.14	35	5.08	285	41.42	367	53.34	688
Fidelity/ Realism	0	0	1	0.14	60	8.72	293	42.58	334	48.55	688
Problem Solving/ Complexity	0	0	1	0.14	36	5.23	190	27.62	461	67.00	688
Student Support/ Cues	0	0	4	0.58	32	4.65	183	26.59	469	68.17	688
Guided Reflection/ Debriefing	0	0	1	0.14	18	2.61	148	21.51	521	75.72	688
<b>Total Responses</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>181</b>		<b>1099</b>		<b>2152</b>		<b>3440</b>

are not as valuable as intrapersonal processes in the learner.

In a related study on simulator use among 106 medical residents, the majority (94%, 84%, and 87%) felt that simulators should be used to learn technical skills, refine technical skills and acquire procedural teaching skills, respectively. Moreover, the majority (92%, 92%, 84% and 89%) felt that simulation instruction should include demonstration, learner observation, teaching evidence behind procedural steps and providing feedback, respectively. That study, likewise, identified some barriers to the procedural teaching which include limitations in time, number of instructors and simulators, and the lack of realism of some simulators (Shanks et al., 2010). This information to enhance learning is essential to the nursing profession, which includes a large portion of procedural performance in its practice. The novelty and scarcity of simulators in the Philippines, thereby, challenges educators to enhance training, budget allocation, and investment towards an increased acquisition and utilization of high fidelity simulators to address the limitations which are also observed among educational institutions in the country.

The data (Table 4) show that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the learning strategy (63.66%) while the rest were very satisfied (28.50%), undecided (7.41%), and dissatisfied (0.43%). This perceived moderate expression of satisfaction may be related to non-maximal accomplishment of the elements of simulation design as shown in Table 2. This may imply the need for improvements in the conduct of simulations to complement students' individual needs or reflect reservation to give perfect responses. On average, respondents reflected higher levels of satisfaction to simulation learning during the second simulation. Similarly, in the other previously cited study, satisfaction was noted at 21-24/25 (Kardong-Edgren et al., 2008).

In a related study comparing 174 student ratings, 91% reported ratings of effectiveness and high effectiveness of the lecture-simulation approach versus 68% in the pure lecture approach to teaching. The difference was also seen in satisfaction ratings where 91% reported "satisfied and very satisfied" with lecture-simulations compared to 70% for lectures only. The levels of effectiveness and satisfaction with lecture-simulations were clarified through qualitative data, which highlighted gaining knowledge, experience, peer collaboration, and information recall as part of the students' experiences. The data also included

application of theory to practice, critical analysis of care without pressure and hands-on learning (Sinclair & Ferguson, 2009). A recent study on the predictors of knowledge gains using simulation shows that the human patient simulator is an effective teaching methodology for nursing students regardless of age, learning style or critical thinking ability (Shinnick, Woo, & Evangelista, 2012).

**Table 4. Students' Overall Perception reflecting Satisfaction with Simulation Learning**

Responses Reflecting Satisfaction of Students	First Simulation		Second Simulation		Combined	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Very Dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dissatisfied	3	0.85	0	0	3	0.43
Undecided	46	13.20	5	1.47	51	7.41
Satisfied	237	67.90	201	59.30	438	63.66
Very Satisfied	63	18.05	133	39.23	196	28.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>100</b>

Ranking of perceptions of satisfaction in the two simulation exposures showed positive learning from mistakes as the highest contributor (Table 5). This, however, indicates that errors in decision-making or nursing care are indeed committed by students and therefore practicing on a human patient simulator and the mimicry of reality may have spared clients from actual harm. These results may likewise lend to learners' positive realizations and cautions for future similar care scenarios in actual settings. It is also noteworthy that the simulations were considered as helpful, enjoyable and effective. Although enhancement, motivation, and suitability of the learning design were ranked fourth, they were rated 4, 'satisfied'.

Furthermore, these results support the vast possibilities for improvement to motivate and enhance learning. It was revealed in the concurrent qualitative comments from respondents that they were anxious about being exposed to the simulation laboratory, handling equipment (mechanical ventilator, defibrillator) for the first time and being observed by the instructor through cameras and the one way mirror. The lower rank of perceived suitability

Table 5. **Ranked Statements Reflecting Student Satisfaction with Simulation Learning**

Statements Reflecting Satisfaction	First Simulation		Second Simulation		Combined Responses	
	Average Rating	Rank	Average Rating	Rank	Average Rating	Rank
I have learned from my mistakes in a positive manner.	4.60	1	4.80	1	4.70	1
The simulation provided me with good strategies to assist my learning.	4.40	2	4.70	2	4.55	2
The teaching methods used in simulation were helpful and effective.	4.30	3	4.70	2	4.50	3
I enjoyed how my teachers taught using simulations.	4.30	3	4.70	2	4.50	3
The teaching materials used in the simulation enhanced and motivated my learning.	4.00	4	4.70	2	4.35	4
The way my teachers taught the simulation were suitable to my learning needs.	4.00	4	4.70	2	4.35	4

\*Rating equivalents: 5 = very satisfied, 4 = satisfied, 3= undecided, 2 = dissatisfied, 1 = very dissatisfied

of facilitation for individual learning needs may likewise be attributed to the differences in the conduct of simulation, the lack of teacher sensitivity to students' cues, or a mismatch of student-teacher expectations. Even if the set of trained teachers who facilitated the learning process were the same for the entire period, they varied in relation to specific student groups per session. Achievement of optimal learning requires collaboration and engagement by facilitators and students in a simulation design to meet different learner types as some may tend be

more tactile, kinesthetic, auditory, or visual in their learning (Kardong-Edgren, Starkweather, & Ward, 2008). Feelings of satisfaction, likewise, may be influenced by students' individual predispositions, attached meanings experiences and other confounding variables referred to in the preceding discussion

A very important consideration for satisfaction in learning is choosing a strategy which meets individualized learning needs. Traditional pedagogical approaches are usually ineffective for mature learners such as fourth year college nursing students. Knowles (1970), described androgogical learning environments as being characterized by openness and respect, involvement in evaluation, experiential techniques, tolerance for mistakes, opportunities for application of learning, and assessment of needs (see also Marquis & Huston, 2009). These are all provided for in a simulation strategy for learning.

College learners are social beings and therefore learn through and value social interactions. Social learning theory suggests that behavior is learned by observation and direct experience. These behaviors are retained based on positive or negative rewards. An important component of social learning is vicarious experience through observing others' actions or learning from their feedback. Evaluation of new information by inductive or deductive reasoning as well as anticipation of reinforcement also characterizes the learning process (Bandura, 1986). Simulations done in groups provide opportunities for social learning as was seen in the study.

### **Students' Confidence After Simulation Design Learning**

The majority (66.13%) of respondents had high confidence levels after the simulation experiences (Table 6). The rest reflected indecision about confidence levels, very high confidence, low confidence and very low confidence (26.45%, 6.25%, 1.02%, 0.15%) respectively. These responses may relate to their experience. The average ratings of confidence range from high confidence (4) to undecided (3) as seen in responses for first simulation and overall. Slightly higher ratings of confidence were observed after exposures to the second simulation experience than the first.

The second simulation scenarios revolved around critical illness states requiring cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). This may be due to the fact that care for a patient in scenarios requiring

CPR is largely regulated by universal protocols, which can become very familiar with repetition and practice. Successfully reviving a supposedly lifeless person in the care process leads to a feeling of high confidence. The results are likewise supported by a related study with an acute myocardial infarction scenario, where confidence levels increased in the post test as compared to the pre-test in the two groups (Brannan, White, & Bezanson, 2008). A lecture group was compared to a simulation group, using a 9-item confidence in learning tool, and gains in confidence in the latter group were noted to be higher at post-test, although the increases were not significant. High confidence levels among learners were also noted in the study of Kardong-Edgren et al. (2008) with scores of 35-38/40.

**Table 6. Students' Evaluative Reflection of General Self Confidence From Simulation Learning**

Responses Reflecting Self Confidence of Students with Simulation	First Semester		Second Semester		Combined Semesters	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Very Low Confidence	1	0.29	0	0	1	0.15
Low Confidence	6	1.72	1	0.29	7	1.02
Undecided	119	34.09	63	18.58	182	26.45
High Confidence	209	59.89	246	72.57	455	66.13
Very High Confidence	14	4.01	29	8.55	43	6.25
Total	349	100	339	100	688	100

High confidence (rank 1) was attributed to the development of positive attitudes for the practice of nursing (Table 7). Furthermore, obtaining knowledge for a similar clinical situation, acquiring skills to perform roles, and gaining general confidence as a future professional nurse likewise contributed to high confidence, albeit in rank 2. Perception of preparedness and mastery of content ratings were both noted to be at the average or "undecided" levels of confidence, ranking 3 and 4 respectively. These results are



understood to be quite natural since persons acquire confidence as they develop expertise through experience and additional learning.

Confidence levels in students, whether high or low, are not only influenced by the mastery of skill or procedure but also by the corresponding cognitive evaluations of learning. Respondents of the study all took a written post test for evaluation (not a study variable) prior to answering the study questionnaire. Excellent performance in written exams to evaluate learning may correspondingly lead to high confidence while poorer performance to lower confidence levels. It was suggested by Brannan et al. (2008) that students would naturally declare high confidence levels if they perceived that they met their learning objectives after a class.

The perceptions of confidence may be influenced by students' individual personality predispositions and attached meanings to the experience. In addition, future goals and preparation compatibility, previous experiences, teacher-facilitation, or other general environmental situations are among a few of the diverse influencing factors for confidence development. This is a consideration that facilitators of learning must reckon with in order to promote optimum learning.

The development of self confidence is closely related to Bandura's Theory of Self Efficacy, where an individual's belief of competence is influenced by performance mastery and his /her psychological state (Bandura, 1986). Simulation design learning exposes the learner to self efficacy promoting factors in the form of opportunities for repetition, active decision-making in realistic scenarios, peer to peer interactions and debriefing seminars. Simulations also allow prior knowledge/concepts to be integrated with newly acquired knowledge for more efficient learning.

The results of the study suggest positive implications for professional nursing since confidence and self efficacy are valued attributes for professionalism. A confident and competent person generally reflects the development of initiative and adequate preparation in skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Furthermore, it reflects courage and belief in the capacity to deliver safe and effective patient care. Students who realize their lack of confidence or competence but admit their need for improvement may have brighter possibilities for enhanced and effective learning for future professional practice.

Table 7. **Ranked Statements Reflecting Student Confidence From Simulation Learning**

Statements Reflecting Confidence	First Simulation		Second Simulation		Combined Responses	
	Average Rating	Rank	Average Rating	Rank	Average Rating	Rank
I have developed positive attitudes for the practice of nursing.	4.30	1	4.60	1	4.45	1
I have obtained the knowledge needed for future similar clinical situations.	4.00	3	4.40	2	4.20	2
I have acquired the skills needed to perform my role as a nurse.	4.10	2	4.30	3	4.20	2
I have gained confidence to be a future nurse professional.	4.00	3	4.40	2	4.20	2
I am better prepared for actual clinical practice.	3.80	4	4.10	4	3.95	3
I have mastered the content my teachers present to me in the simulations.	3.80	4	4.00	5	3.90	4

\*Rating equivalents: 5 = veryhigh confidence, 4 = high confidence, 3 = undecided, 2 = low confidence, 1 = very low confidence

**Inter-variable Correlations**

Perceived accomplishment of elements in the simulation design were significantly correlated with perceived importance of each element ( $r=0.484$ ,  $p=0.00$ ), perceived satisfaction with simulation ( $r=0.705$ ,  $p=0.00$ ) and perceived confidence from simulation learning ( $r=0.551$ ,  $p=0.00$ ) (Table 8). Likewise, perceived satisfaction with simulation and perceived confidence from simulation learning were also significantly correlated ( $r=0.679$ ,  $p=0.00$ ).

These results support previous research where simulations in an intervention group led to greater self efficacy, higher levels of satisfaction and greater consistency with students' learning style (Sinclair & Ferguson, 2009). In another related study, results show an observation of positive influence where cognitive skills were significantly higher among students compared to those exposed to traditional lecture teaching (Brannan, White, & Bezanson, 2008). Such improvements are attributed to better student-teacher learning related interactions. It can be noted that quality engagement opportunities are highly possible with simulations since they are done in smaller groups compared to large group lecture sessions.

**Table 8. Results of Spearman's Rho Analysis of Factor Correlations at 0.05 Level of Significance (n=688)**

Factors Measured	Values	Remarks
Elements of Simulation Design VS Perceived Importance of the Elements	r= 0.484 p-value= 0.000	Significant
Elements of Simulation Design VS Perceived Levels of Student Satisfaction	r= 0.705 p-value= 0.000	Significant
Elements of Simulation Design VS Perceived Levels of Student Confidence	r= 0.551 p-value= 0.000	Significant
Perceived Levels of Student Satisfaction VS Perceived Importance of the Elements	r= 0.363 p-value= 0.000	Significant
Perceived Levels of Student Confidence VS Perceived Importance of the Elements	r= 0.289 p-value= 0.000	Significant
Perceived Levels of Student Satisfaction VS Perceived Levels of Student Confidence	r= 0.679 p-value= 0.000	Significant

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study provide a strong basis for the continued use of simulation, as it was found advantageous to student learning and professional preparation. Its use is reinforced as a strategy for Filipino nursing students' learning of skills, knowledge, and attitudes for globally relevant quality patient

care. It can be harnessed as a learning strategy, where exposure to actual environments poses more risks than benefits to both clients and learners. The present quality of implementation of simulation design elements generally ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is congruent to the learners' perceived importance of each.

However, it must be noted that there is room for improvement in the conduct of simulations to maximize its benefits for learners' individualized needs. It is recommended that continuous evaluation be done on the conduct of simulation learning to meet this concern. The researchers further recommend that qualitative studies and experimental designs related to the learning strategy be done in order to further understand its impact on, and possibilities for enhancement of learner and patient outcomes.

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# GETTING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AND ADULTS TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH AN ICT-BASED LEARNING SYSTEM: A THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR ON ESKWELA IN ROCES AVENUE CENTER, QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES

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A case study was conducted in November 2012 among 16 enrollees of the eSkwela Center at Roces Avenue, Quezon City, one of the four pilot e-learning centers established in 2006 in the Philippines. The study aimed to describe the characteristics of the eSkwela program and find out the learners' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in relation to their enrolment and studying at eSkwela. The "theory of planned behavior" by Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein (1985) was used as framework in the data gathering among the enrollees and key informant interviews of facilitators and administrators of the eSkwela program.

The eSkwela elicited a positive attitude among learners. The positive attitude was reinforced by their perception that their significant others believed that eSkwela would help them finish high school and have a better life. Further, they felt confident that they could finish because they had control over facilitating factors such as use of technology, lessons, pacing, cost, time, language, feedback, and teachers. Hence, they have enrolled in the program and many of them said they were willing to study again using the

Alternative Learning System (ALS) mode. Further, they have not only shared the information on eSkwela, but they have also proactively convinced others to enroll in the program. Hence, they themselves have become 'testimonials' to the eSkwela program.

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**KEYWORDS:** e-learning, ICT4E, alternative learning system, e-education, youth and adult learning, interactive e-learning materials, blended and collaborative modes of instruction, performance-based assessment in a problem, eGovernment fund

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## INTRODUCTION

COUNTRIES WITH HIGHER rates of literacy and education are enjoying much progress and privileges in all spheres of life. There is a high correlation between education and economic growth. Hence, education has been given much importance as a key factor in achieving development (Allana, 1988). However, providing basic formal education, especially in developing countries like the Philippines, poses problems such as expensive tuition fees, inaccessible learning materials, and inaccessible schools to the marginalized and economically challenged families.

With the country's fast increasing population, not everyone is able to enter and finish at least primary education. Based on the Philippines in Figures 2010 by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in 2000, the household population consisting of 5 years old and over was approximately 66.6 M. Only 27.9 M graduated from elementary; of these, 18.9 M graduated from high school and only 6.6 M completed college degrees. A total of 3.9 M indicated not completing any grade.

As for the reasons for not attending school, the 2003 Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMs) cited by Tan's (2008) study showed that 30.5% are employed or looking for work; 19.9% found the cost of education too high; 11.8% had to do housekeeping; and others cited that the nearest school was far, there was no school around their area, they had no transport going to the school, or they could not cope with school work.

Given this situation, alternative modes of education such as e-learning are being explored and adapted by various sectors of society. E-learning is a generic term for all technologically

supported learning using an array of teaching and learning tools as defined by the technical committee of reviewers in Open Learning and Distance Education of the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED-OLDE). These learning tools include phone bridging, audio and video tapes, video teleconferencing, satellite broadcasting, and the more recognized forms of web-based training or computer-aided instruction, also commonly referred to as online courses (cited by Librero, 2007).

In response to all the above mentioned problems of high school education, the Bureau of Alternative Learning System of the Department of Education (DepEd-BALS) was mandated by virtue of Executive Order No. 356 (September 14, 2004) to include an “alternative learning system for out-of-school youth and adult learners” (Section 2 of PA 9155, The Governance of Basic Education Act of 2011). This alternative system provides learners a venue to acquire a high school diploma through the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) Program (UNESCO, 2009).

UNESCO (2009) comprehensively describes the alternative learning system—eSkwela—that was implemented in 2006. eSkwela was proposed as the flagship project of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) in collaboration with DepEd-BALS. The project had an initial grant from the APEC Education Foundation (AEF), but it now runs with continuing support from the eGovernment Fund of the Philippines.

With the use of relevant interactive e-learning materials, blended and collaborative modes of instruction, and performance-based assessment in a problem- or project-based learning environment, eSkwela seeks to bridge the ever-increasing digital gap and social chasms between those who are educated and those who are not (eSkwela Terminal Report, 2011). It aims to broaden access to ICT-enabled learning opportunities through a non-formal community-based e-Learning program for Out-of-school Youths and Adults (OSYA) and other members of the marginalized sectors. In other words, it makes use of ICT in providing educational opportunities for OSYA who were not able to finish their basic education.

Using appropriate and relevant ICT for Education (ICT4E) resources, the DepEd hopes to broaden access to quality education while making learning interactive, more engaging, and more fun for the learners. Through eSkwela, it aims to bridge the widening



gap between those who are educated and those who are not. Further, DepEd aims for a 100 percent increase in the number of A&E test passers among the learners in the implementation areas for eSkwela.

CICT acknowledges that ICT is effective in educating OSYA and is considered as one of the most powerful uses of technology for national development. As explained by Corazon C. Rubio, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent and ALS in-charge, Quezon City, "eSkwela helps the OSYA learn how to use computers and the Internet as tools of survival in the 21st Century.... [It] uses technology and multi-sensory approaches, which allows the learners to use their high order thinking skills in studying."

The Medium-Term Development Plan of the Philippines (MTPDP) 2004-2010, the National Framework Plan for ICTs in Basic Education (2005-2010), and the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) advocate the use of ICT as "a powerful enabler of capacity development ... targeted towards specific development goals like ensuring basic education for all and lifelong learning, among others." Furthermore, the MTPDP "provides for the wider use of computers to support teaching-learning processes, the promotion of e-learning and information literacy, and the establishment of e-learning competency centers" (UNESCO, 2009).

eSkwela's instructional model is a blended type of learner-centered instruction, consisting of three elements: [1] computer-aided learning via interactive e-learning modules and use of a customized Learning Management System; [2] teacher-facilitated instruction as aligned with the pace and need of each learner; and [3] collaborative group activities and projects. Hence, the learners undergo a self-paced and diverse approach to learning. They are guided by trained learning facilitators who use the learner-centered ICT-supported module guides such as localized and interactive e-learning modules, project based-activities, and different online educational tools and resources. This makes learning fun and enjoyable, but at the same time, relevant and valuable to the learners. If the learners decide to take the A&E Test and they passed, they would receive Certificates equivalent to elementary or high school diplomas.

The initial four pilot sites were located in the cities of major islands of the Philippines, namely in Quezon City (where this study was done); and in San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan, both in Luzon; in Cebu City in the Visayas; and in Cagayan de Oro

City in Mindanao. In each of the pilot sites, the infrastructure deployed included 21 computers, server, LCD projector, 3-in-1 printer, two A/C units, digital camera, tables and chairs, and relevant peripherals. There were also funds for site renovation, relevant educator's training, e-learning modules, a customized Learning Management System (LMS), project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities, and free Internet connection for one year (wireless) (UNESCO, 2009).

From a pilot run of four sites in 2006-2007, a total of 95-CICT eSkwela Centers were operational by the end of June 2011, or the end of the project's life. It has served an estimated 6,309 diverse learners since 2007, indicating its viability as a learning system. Several models are now being used such as ALS Office-based, school-based, barangay-based, city hall-based, mobile (laptop, container van), and Internet café-based depending on the 'host' community (HCDG-CICT, 2011).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The eSkwela program is designed with an approach in learning that is self-paced, project-based, and learner-centered and devises the life skills approach. It uses an ICT-enabled, inquiry-based, interdisciplinary, and thematic approach to teaching and learning. It is also multi-stakeholder in approach wherein the communities, local governments, DepEd divisions, non-government, and civic groups are expected to provide support and participate in the implementation, maintenance, and sustenance of the program.

The eSkwela centers range from community e-centers, publicly-owned Internet cafes, centers on top of public markets, and even inside container vans. Learners can enroll anytime of the year provided that they meet the qualifications and requirements of the program. The program is designed specifically for each individual, hence both the teacher and the learner discuss what to include in the program. Once the learner is initially admitted, he or she will take the Functional Literacy Test (FLT) which provides a tool for the teacher to assess the learners' strengths and weaknesses. After the FLT, the learner then fills up the Individual Learning Agreement form, which states the learners' competencies, chosen modules, and time period of the program. Once the modules are in place, learners study their module on their own assigned

computer at the center at their own comfortable pacing. Learners must finish the modules within 10 months.

E-learning has been used by other countries for two decades now, but it has only been pursued in earnest in the Philippines since the early 2000s. Hence, most studies have been done in countries abroad and mostly for higher education. Studies from different countries (UNICEF, 2009; UNESCO, 2009) have shown that e-learning is an effective form of education especially for out-of-school youth and adults (OSYA).

A few studies have also been conducted on e-learning as an open learning system, particularly in basic education for the OSYA in the Philippines. Cuyno (2011) found that learners had a positive attitude towards e-learning in terms of ease of use and usefulness. This could have been influenced by their sufficient personal computer exposure prior to eSkwela. Ramos, et al. (2007) documented a study entitled "ICT-Enabled Distance Education in Community Development in the Philippines," done from 2004 to 2006 by the non-profit organization Molave Development Foundation, Inc. to find out "the effectiveness of using digital and electronic media for effecting changes in the knowledge, attitude, and practices of Filipino communities in relation to hygiene and sanitation." Aside from knowledge improvement, the community members who were part of the study found that the learning process through the ICT-enabled modules was enjoyable and involving. Javier (2009) also showed the positive perception of the Generation Youth (GenYo) e-Learning Management Program on teacher-learner communication in the First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities.

Other studies focused on alternative learning using ICT-mediated modalities but for farmers such as the Farmers' Mobile Internet Bus (MIB) (Manlangit, 2010) and the Farmers' Information and Technology Services Information System (FITS) (Garcia, 2012). De Castro (2006) also found the advantages as well as challenges of the use of e-forum as a learning tool among stakeholders in community-based natural resources management in some Southeast Asia countries.

However, a local study has yet to comprehensively evaluate the eSkwela model for OSYA in the Philippines after seven years of implementation and just over a year after the project was eventually turned over to the DepEd-BALS as a regular program. Hence, this study aimed to fill in these gaps by determining the

perception and attitude of the learners towards the eSkwela using the theory of planned behavior as context.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study aimed to analyze the learners' overall perception of the eSkwela program as an alternative open learning system of choice.

Specifically, it aimed to:

1. determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the current eSkwela learners in Quezon City, a pilot eSkwela center;
2. discuss the learners' attitudes towards education and e-learning;
3. discuss the learners' perceived subjective norms regarding studying in eSkwela;
4. discuss the learners' perceived behavioral control in studying at eSkwela; and
5. analyze the learners' intention and actual behavior in studying at eSkwela.

### **THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS OF THE STUDY**

The theory of planned behavior proposed by Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein in 1985 evolved from their theory of reasoned action proposed in 1975. This original theory of reasoned action was, in turn, grounded on various theories of attitude such as learning theories, expectancy-value theories, consistency theories, and attribution theory. According to the theory of reasoned action, if people evaluate the suggested behavior as positive (attitude), and if they think their significant others (*e.g.*, loved ones, relatives) want them to perform the behavior (subjective norm), this results in a higher intention (motivation), and they are more likely to do so.

Ajzen introduced the Theory of Planned Behavior by adding a new component, that is, "perceived behavioral control." This is because some studies in the past have shown that behavioral

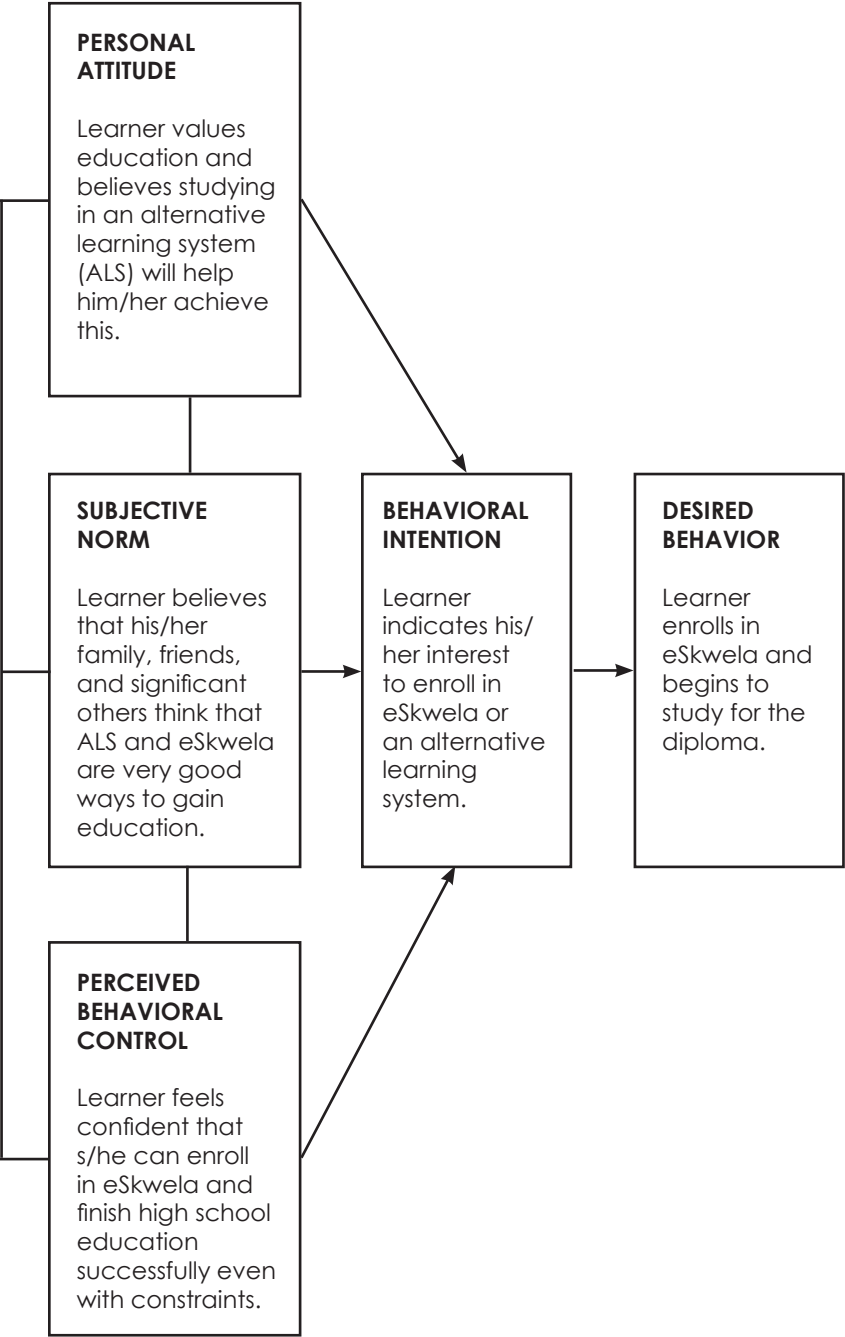


Figure 1. **Theoretical framework of the study**

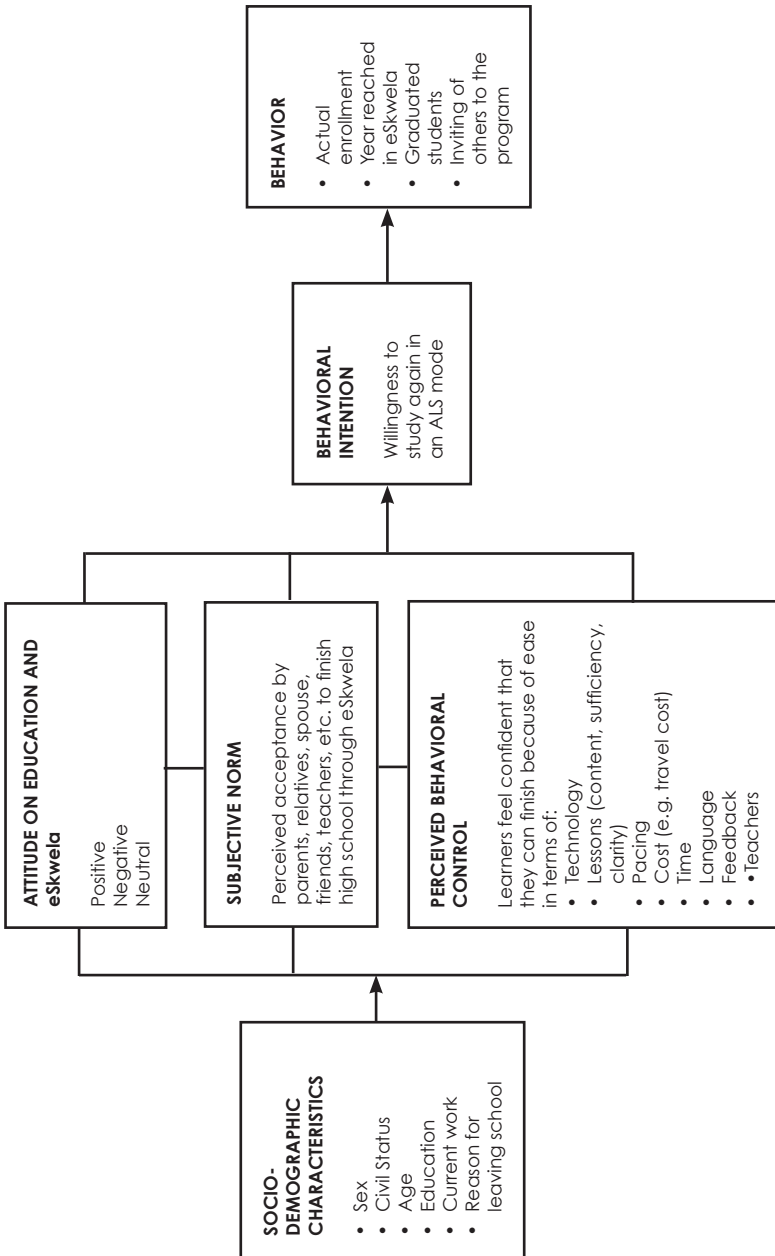


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

intention does not always lead to actual behavior because of circumstantial limitations. Behavioral intention cannot be the exclusive determinant of behavior where an individual's control over the behavior is incomplete. Hence, by adding behavioral control, Ajzen (1991) extended the theory of reasoned action to cover non-volitional behaviors for predicting behavioral intention and actual behavior. A high correlation of attitudes and subjective norms to behavioral intention, and subsequently to behavior, has been confirmed in many studies (Ajzen, 1991).

This study adopts the premises of the Theory of Planned Behavior. It acknowledges the joint influence of attitudes, norms, and perceived control in affecting behavioral intention as a motivating force in the behavioral process (Figure 1). The researcher posits that learners who have positive attitudes towards performing a particular behavior (learning in eSkwela), and who believe that "significant others" are in favor of or support the desired action, will more likely attempt a particular behavior (enroll and study in eSkwela).

The conceptual framework (Figure 2) provides the specific variables for each component of the theoretical framework. Considered independent variables were attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, while the dependent variables were behavioral intention and desired behavior.

Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of the particular behavior. This included the learners' evaluation of various aspects related to the eSkwela such as education in general, distance education or alternative learning, use of ICT in education, concept of eSkwela, life after eSkwela (job, future etc.), and benefits from eSkwela (productivity, self-esteem etc.). Subjective norm refers to an individual's perception about the particular behavior, which is influenced by the judgment of significant others. It was the perceived acceptance by parents, relatives, spouse, friends, teachers, and others that presumably encourage the learners to finish high school by enrolling in eSkwela. On the other hand, perceived behavioral control refers to the learner's perceived ease or difficulty of performing the particular behavior. The learners would feel confident that they could finish high school in the eSkwela because of the technology, lessons (content, sufficiency, and clarity), pacing, cost, time, language, feedback, and teachers in eSkwela. The socio-demographic profile of the learners were added as these influence to some extent the learners' attitude,

perceived subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control.

Behavioral intention refers to an individual's readiness to perform a given behavior or the willingness to study again in an alternative learning system mode. Finally, behavior refers to an individual's observable response in a given situation with respect to a given target. This included actual enrolment in the eSkwela, year reached in eSkwela, and the learners' actual invitation to others to enroll in the program.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Design of the Study**

The research was a case study of 16 selected eSkwela enrollees in Quezon City. A case study is "an analysis of an individual unit... It is often an in-depth examination of a single event or case over a period of time and provides systematic way of regarding events and gathering data, analyzing the information, and providing the results" (Yin, 1994).

### **Locale and Time of Study**

The research was conducted in the eSkwela branch in Roces Avenue, Quezon City in November 2012. Aside from being one of the pilot centers and the pioneering center of eSkwela in Quezon City, the Roces branch also has one of the highest number of enrollees in its eSkwela project since it started, according to Melissa Albino, Education Program Specialist at the Bureau of Alternative Learning System (BALS).

### **Respondents and Sampling Scheme**

The BALS was not able to provide a concrete number of nationwide eSkwela enrollees since they were still in the process of consolidating their data. Hence, the respondents were purposively taken from the present and official list of enrollees in the eSkwela Quezon City branch as provided by the center. For this study, 16 out of the 19 current enrollees in eSkwela Roces Center took part in the study.

The criteria for choosing the respondents were as follows:



1. Must be enrolled in the eSkwela program of BALS during the duration of the study (between October to November 2012).
2. Must have been enrolled in eSkwela for at least three months.
3. Must be 15 years old or above, the age required to be admitted in the program.
4. More or less must represent spectrum of learners (e.g., male, female, married, single, mother, working, not working).

One-on-one interviews were also done with the key informants from relevant departments, administrators, and some of the tutors or guides of said program. These included the Director of DepEd BALS, Education Program, Specialist at BALS, eSkwela Laboratory managers at the Roces Avenue, Quezon City center; and learning facilitators at the eSkwela Center.

### **Research Instrument and Data Collection**

The study used a guide questionnaire for the learners, which was devised by the researchers to answer/measure the variables in the conceptual framework. The questionnaire included multiple choice items, open-ended questions, and the use of a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was first pretested on two representative learners and revised accordingly. A major revision was its translation into the native language of Filipino so that the respondents would be able to better understand the questions. Key informant interviews of administrators and teachers were done to have an in-depth understanding and evaluation of the eSkwela program. A voice recorder was used for all interviews, and the recordings were later transcribed and analyzed. Secondary data were gathered from the official brochures and brief packages on eSkwela from DepEd-BALS.

### **Data Analysis**

The results of the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. To measure attitudes, a 5-point Likert scale was used. Interviews with the key informants,

on the other hand, were transcribed and analyzed. Statistical test was not performed because of the purposive nature of sampling and the almost complete enumeration of learners.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Socio-demographic Profile of eSkwela Learners**

Out of the 16 learners, majority were female (56%), single (100%), and with an average age of 20 years. More than half (63%) of the respondents did not have any work, a quarter were house helpers, while the rest (12%) had their own business. Hence, the alternative schooling offered by eSkwela was appropriate for their schedule, budget, and needs. Their reasons for leaving the traditional school were because of financial constraints (50%) or family problems (13%).

### **Learners' Attitudes Towards Studying in eSkwela**

Most of the learners had a very high positive attitude towards studying in the eSkwela program and with e-learning in general. Majority of them agreed on most of the statements regarding education and eSkwela. These features were flexibility of schedule, self-paced study, supportive facilitators, and student-centered approach.

The eSkwela allowed the learners to be more flexible in finishing high school. Although originally there was no strict schedule to follow and learners were allowed to study at the center whenever they wanted to, the Roces Center adapted a weekly schedule to ensure a more efficient study habit. Each student must spend eight hours a week at the center. Most working students chose the Wednesday schedule so that they would only go to the center once a week, which makes it easier for them to ask for a leave from their employers.

The calendar year is determined by the A&E Test date, usually held in October or November every year. The A&E Test is the culminating activity of eSkwela, and to pass it is the learners' ultimate goal. The eSkwela Center issues a certificate to the learner, which proves that s/he is enrolled in the program. Once s/he passes the A&E Test, s/he may get the high school diploma, which the DepEd issues.

Almost all of them (98%) 'agreed' and 'highly agreed' that education is important, and it is a means for them to have a better life. As UNICEF (2009) pointed out: "a lack of education is a part of the definition of poverty, and thus, education is a means to reduce it." They believed that education, in whatever form or however one achieves it, is truly significant in one's life.

Majority (94%) also 'agreed' and 'highly agreed' that eSkwela is a very effective alternative for them to finish their high school education. This was not only because eSkwela is not as expensive as formal education but also because of the nature of teaching. The method of teaching is not as strict as formal education; the schedule is flexible for the learners; and it is more accessible without sacrificing the quality of the lessons.

Aside from this, Grandstaff (1974) explained that non-formal education, such as that of eSkwela, shows a strong potential for involving those who are most likely not included in the formal schools such as the poor, the isolated, the rural, the illiterate, the unemployed and the under employed whether because of limited resources such as time and cost.

Most of them (87%) likewise 'agreed' and 'highly agreed' that they would gain more self-confidence and trust in their abilities because they become independent learners, they are able to use ICT in their study, and they are able to study despite financial difficulties. Their highly positive attitude towards finishing their education through eSkwela indicates that the program can be effective and important in answering the country's problem of providing education for all.

Majority of the respondents (76%) 'agreed' and 'highly agreed' that through eSkwela, their lives and future will improve and become better. This may also stem from the testimonials of past learners based on their positive experiences during their enrollment in eSkwela as well as on their positive experience afterwards in finding a job, thus giving them an opportunity to grow and improve their current status.

Majority (75%) 'agreed' and 'highly agreed' that the use of computers for learning is highly desirable. Majority of the curriculum in eSkwela use online modules via the computer. The Roces branch has about 20 working computers. It has two laboratory managers permanently stationed at the center and three teaching facilitators who rotate their schedules with the other nearby centers.

Because of this alternative mode of education, majority (75%) believed that they would be able to get a good job afterwards, and that they will be able to improve their lives (75%). Nevertheless, some learners only wanted to learn a few skills such as computing equations, which they could use for their jobs, and not really to take the A&E test.

Majority of the respondents (69%) 'agreed' and 'highly agreed' that through eSkwela, they would be able to help the country. Apparently, the learners' first priority was to secure a good job and provide for their families after schooling.

### **Respondents' Subjective Norms Regarding Studying in eSkwela**

Strong family ties and the improvement of the quality of life for the family were strong motivations to pursue learning through eSkwela. For instance, all (100%) of the respondents perceived that it was important to their loved ones that they finish their education. Their significant others desired for them to enroll, study, and finish their education, hence they were more likely to actually accomplish the behavior. Of all the respondents, 100% perceived that their loved ones believed that education is important because it would give them a better future.

Based on the interviews, five of the respondents explained that they also wanted to finish their education to help their family. Family ties are very strong in the Filipino culture, and they see education as a way out of their current (marginalized) situation. Members of the family helping out the parents or the family as a whole is a part of the Filipino culture and plays a big part in motivating the learners to enroll and study in eSkwela. One respondent pointed out that "education is the best inheritance parents can give to their child". Another learner said that being educated is the only wealth one can be proud of.

As for their loved ones' opinions on eSkwela, half (50%) agreed that eSkwela is the best alternative to obtain an education, while six (38%) agreed that eSkwela is a good way to finish schooling. They perceived eSkwela to be an effective way of getting an education not otherwise possible through formal schooling. However, one respondent believed that his loved ones thought that the education gained in eSkwela was not enough. This may be because some parents still think that formal education is the

best method of education.

Overall, strong family ties and the improvement of the quality of life for the family were strong motivations to pursue learning through eSkwela. The more their significant others believed that education as well as eSkwela could help them achieve a better life for their families, the more convinced and influenced the learners were in actually enrolling and studying through the program. This indicates that their significant others' opinions and beliefs mattered to the respondents' decision-making and actions; hence, they should be included in any communication strategies to promote eSkwela.

### **Respondents' Perceived Behavioral Control in Studying at eSkwela**

Four variables were perceived to be facilitating factors that all the respondents (100%) had control over. These were the use of technology, the lessons, feedback from the teacher/tutor, and monitoring of the teacher/ tutor.

Most of the respondents indicated that the use of technology, specifically the use of computers and of the Internet, was very helpful in their quest for knowledge. Technology made everything easier, efficient and more convenient for students. One respondent explained that having computers at hand and at his fingertips enabled him to study his modules, hence making learning a very fulfilling experience for him.

All of the respondents believed that they had control over the lessons or modules. They found the lessons easy to understand and the texts easily readable. Aside from the general topics discussed in the modules, certain skills, methods, and approaches needed and which were highly practical and applicable in life were also taught.

All the respondents also said that constant feedback from the teachers and tutors that came from their being monitored closely facilitated their learning. The study site had two learning facilitators. The facilitators (who hold degrees in education) said that there is no grading system in the eSkwela process. They simply monitored the learners' development and improvement via the discussions and the portfolio, which the learners submitted at the end of the program. These portfolios included the quizzes that the learners answered at the end of each module. Both of the

facilitators also gave out mock exams, which included essays for those who would like to take the A&E Test.

Almost all (94%) of the respondents felt they had control over the content of the lessons or modules. This could be because in consultation with their teachers, the learners could choose which modules they will study depending on their needs or to address their academic 'inadequacies.' Hence, they had relative independence over what learning strands they were going to pursue. Related to this was their perceived control over the quantity of the lessons or modules used (88%), the clarity of the modules (81%), the language of the materials (88%), as well as the pacing (75%) of the lessons.

eSkwela is self-paced education, and each learner is given the freedom to study his/her modules at his/her own pace as long as she/he finishes all of the given modules in less than 10 months. The modules are in English and Filipino, two languages which they could choose from, thus making the lessons easier to understand. The modular structure of the lessons in a simple format also contributed to making the lessons easier to digest.

Majority (87%) of the respondents perceived that they had control over the clarity of the teacher's lessons. Most of them found the teacher's instructions to be clear, hence greatly aiding them in their studies.

Most importantly, majority (75%) also perceived the cost to be within their control or capacity as they said that the center is subsidized by the local government and other concerned sectors.

Based on these findings, majority of the respondents perceived that they had control over many of the variables that could facilitate in finishing their high school studies or their goal. With pervading poverty in the country, anything that would entail fewer resources in exchange for something of quality is of great value. A respondent summed it all up when he stated, "Working while studying is not that easy. I prefer eSkwela because it requires less effort, time and budget. eSkwela offers all of these without sacrificing the quality of our education."

### **Respondents' Intentional and Actual Behavior in Enrolling or Studying at eSkwela**

**Behavioral intention.** Seven respondents (44%) each chose 'yes' and 'no' as an answer on whether or not they would enroll in

another non-formal institution like eSkwela. Two respondents mentioned the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) as their choice of non-formal institution. They said that they would enroll there in order to increase their knowledge especially in making a living or in becoming part of livelihood programs.

Those who answered 'no' (44%) stated that they wanted to enroll in a formal school next, given the chance. This may be an indication that eSkwela may be their stepping stone to get that high school diploma in order to get to a formal college later. It may also be because they would still like to be able to finish college in a formal setting.

**Actual behavior.** More than half (69%) of the respondents first enrolled in 2012, three respondents (19%) enrolled in 2011, while two (12%) enrolled in 2010. They have been studying from three months to more than a year.

Over a quarter (31%) of the respondents each visited the eSkwela center once every Wednesday and twice every Tuesday and Thursday, while the rest (38%) visited twice every Monday and Friday. Most of the respondents (57%) spent three to four hours each day in the learning center. Being working students, that schedule was convenient for them because it was easier for them to have one day off from work.

Many respondents (32%) mentioned that they shared their eSkwela experience to their parents, while 20% shared it to their friends or neighbors. Over a quarter (38%) of the respondents endorsed and persuaded their friend/ neighbor to also enroll in eSkwela. A few (6%) were able to persuade their parents and their spouse/ partner to enroll.

However, half of the respondents were not able to persuade anyone to enroll in eSkwela. It could be because they still haven't finished the program during the time of the study, and they were just waiting for the results of the exam for them to be more enthusiastic in sharing about their experiences.

When asked whether they would still enroll in a college institution after their eSkwela program, 11 respondents (69%) answered yes, while a quarter answered no (15%). One respondent explained that he wanted to finish college so that he would gain more self-confidence and prove that he can get an education. Another mentioned that it is his duty to his family to finish college.

The results showed that their desire to go to college firmed



up their decision to enroll in eSkwela. They wanted to be able to continue and eventually finish tertiary schooling, whether in another non-formal school or in the formal education set-up.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In essence, for many of the enrollees, the eSkwela is an affordable way of gaining an education. It fits the need of financially challenged and less privileged people who have less access to formal education. It also takes advantage of ICT to facilitate the delivery of education services that could democratize the provision of education for all. Hence, having an alternative method of education such as eSkwela is seen as a very good option and effective approach for the learners. It provides an alternative opportunity for the less privileged to meet the requirements of formal education.

The learners were highly influenced by their significant others' opinions. The more they perceived their significant others wanted them to enroll and study in eSkwela, the more likely they would actually study in the program.

While the study did not use a statistical correlation to establish causality of the variables in the conceptual framework, results indicated that the eSkwela elicited a positive attitude among learners. The positive attitude was reinforced by their perception that their significant others believed that eSkwela would help them finish high school and have a better life.

Further, they felt confident that they could finish because they had control over facilitating factors such as the use of technology, lessons, pacing, cost, time, language, feedback, and teachers. Hence, they have enrolled in the program and many of them said they were willing to study again using the ALS mode. Further, they have not only shared the information on eSkwela, but they have also proactively convinced others to enroll in the program. Hence, they themselves have become 'testimonials' for the eSkwela program to other learners.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings and on the feedback of the respondents themselves, these recommendations are forwarded to improve

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the eSkwela program:

**On the modules.** At present, the e-learning modules appear to be mainly digitized versions (or pdf) of the former BALS printed modules. Hence, many students could actually just borrow the printed modules, and read them, and they would still learn very much the same as when they use the e-learning modules in the computers. The interactive videos are those accessed during class sessions with the teachers or facilitators.

Some of the learners suggested including videos on the re-enactments of lessons, adding more modules, tackling deeper and more complex topics so that the learners would be more advanced somehow, giving shorter quizzes or seat work, providing more opportunities and activities not involving computers such as class interactions, having discussions with other learners, and allowing the students to take home assignments where they needed to bring 'books' to their house.

**Promotion using multimedia.** The learners suggested advertising the eSkwela in the Internet (e.g., social media) or in commercials so that it would reach a wider audience, especially potential learners. Other platforms could also include providing IEC materials or collaterals such as more tarpaulins, fliers, and brochures. Eventually, when budget permits, even temporary billboards, quarterly awareness campaigns, and annual radio and televisions plugs could be looked into. Communication strategies should be improved to reach 'investors' in the community.

**Readiness of LGUs and public support.** It is important to reconize the government's support, whether financial or not, so that more centers and schools would be established in order to help more people in need.

Since eSkwela banks on the stakeholder approach as one of the reasons for its success and effectivity, it is vital that LGUs and the general public are ready to support the program, not only during the start or during the preparations but also all throughout the implementation process in order to secure the program's sustainability. With their much-needed support, the project can be assured of use not just for a few months but for years.

In line with this, training programs and seminars can be strengthened for the LGUs and public regarding their role and their importance in such an endeavor. Through this, they would be able to fully grasp what is expected of them and understand how vital they are in the whole alternative education program.

Budget from the generated revenue could be set aside as counterpart fund for the eSkwela program with the Department of Education to ensure sustainability in the communities.

To sum up, eSkwela provides a good and effective alternative for education. Therefore, interested stakeholders from all over the country should be encouraged to establish more centers in order to bring education to the marginalized and less privileged communities. The eSwela is cost effective and entails less time, money, and effort for both the learner and the center.

It is also recommended that [1] eSkwela centers around the nation be studied in order to get more conclusive findings and information since the current study was done at only one center, albeit a pilot site, hence it has a limited number of enrollees; [2] more KIs, such as those from CICT, may be interviewed in order to get a more holistic view of the eSkwela process. CICT informants would be able to share their experiences during the conceptualization stage of the project, during the implementation stage, and even up until the monitoring stage; [3] a tracer study may be conducted to find out where the past enrollees or graduates of eSkwela are and their current situations (e.g., life after eSkwela); and finally [4] the e-learning readiness of LGUs in terms of staff, facilities, technical skills, and possibly even governance may be looked into.

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# ATHLETE ENGAGEMENT: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE FILIPINO ATHLETE

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Aimed at exploring the concept of athlete engagement, qualitative interviews on athlete engagement were conducted among 10 Filipino athletes who were competing at the international level. Data indicated that similar to New Zealand (Lonsdale, Hodge & Raedeke, 2007) and Canadian athletes (Lonsdale, Hodge & Jackson, 2007), Filipino athletes experienced confidence, dedication, vigour and enthusiasm as dimensions of their engagement. Filipino athletes experienced spirituality as an added dimension to their experience of engagement. Sporting experiences like relationship with coach, social support and assurance of fair play have been found to be antecedents of engagement. Love of the game and discipline were shown to be aspects of enthusiasm and dedication respectively. Flow was experienced by these athletes as a consequence of athlete engagement.

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**KEYWORDS:** athlete engagement, Filipino, spirituality, sport

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## INTRODUCTION

ATHLETE ENGAGEMENT (AE) has been defined as a “persistent, positive, cognitive-affective experience in sport, characterized by confidence, dedication, and vigour” (Lonsdale, Hodge & Raedeke, 2007, p. 451). AE was initially derived from the work/employee engagement construct. Work/employee engagement is a fulfilling, affective-motivational state of work-related well-being believed to be the opposite of job burnout (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008). Employees who are engaged are found to possess high levels of energy, experience enthusiasm in their work and are frequently immersed in their job (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). “An engaged individual is one who is fully committed and enthusiastic about investing one’s best effort at work, which means that one is physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused, and spiritually aligned with a purpose over and above one’s immediate personal interest” (The Human Performance Institute, 2010, p. 1). Hakanen, Schaufeli, and Ahola (2008) identified vigour, dedication, and absorption as characteristics of work engagement. They defined vigour as high levels of energy and mental resilience when working, the willingness to invest effort in one’s work and persistence amidst difficulties. They defined dedication as a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge, and absorption as being fully concentrated and happily engrossed when working. They added that absorption is having the feeling that time passes quickly and experiencing difficulty in detaching oneself from work.

Other researchers in organizational psychology have reported variations of these constructs as characteristics of work engagement. Some have redefined them; others have added new constructs. For example, Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) identified efficacy along with vigour, dedication, and absorption as employee engagement dimensions. Loehr and Schwartz (2001), in examining training and development of employees in business, addressed competencies such as endurance, strength, flexibility, self-control, and focus. They termed this *full engagement*. In simple terms, *full engagement* is about being able to manage energy well. A fully engaged employee is physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually energized (2001). These constructs and the concept of engagement have been extended to sport.

Similar to employee engagement, research on how AE may prevent burnout among athletes has been undertaken (Lonsdale, Hodge, & Jackson, 2007). Their data illustrated that AE and burnout are potential bipolar opposites. When engagement in an athlete occurs, burnout is prevented. Additionally, results of an exploratory investigation of the antecedents and consequences of AE in elite sports indicated that AE partially mediated the relationship between needs satisfaction, an antecedent, and flow, a consequence (Hodge, Lonsdale, & Jackson, 2009).

Elite athletes learn to balance multiple dimensions of themselves—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual—and improve performance by allowing recovery (Groppel & Wiegand, 2013), as one of the important parts in energy management. Loehr (2013) found “that tennis players can improve their performance when they learn to perform in intervals—that is to disengage from stress (produced by the effort of playing a point) and return to a calm state of mind within 16 seconds before the next serve” (p. 2). These top level tennis players developed recovery rituals during the 15 to 20 seconds interval between points during a game. Hence, the ability to recover is one very important attribute of a fully engaged athlete.

Because *athlete engagement* is a fairly new construct within sport psychology, the authors saw a need to replicate Lonsdale et al.’s research with New Zealand elite athletes, and since validated it with Canadian elite athletes. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the efficacy of current approaches within a different group of athletes coming from a different country. Filipino athletes were interviewed to determine the applicability of the current athlete engagement concept to an Asian perspective.

## **Athlete Engagement (AE)**

Lonsdale, Hodge, and Raedeke (2007a) interviewed 15 elite athletes from New Zealand in their initial exploratory study. The common themes that emerged from the descriptors included confidence, dedication, and vigour. A second study was then implemented to develop and validate a quantitative measure for AE, Athletic Engagement Questionnaire (AEQ), using the dimensions reported from the first study. This second study also investigated preoccupation and enjoyment as additional AE dimensions, and sought to provide evidence for them as valid dimensions of AE

(Lonsdale, Hodge & Jackson, 2007b). Lonsdale, et al. (2007b) reported on three studies on elite athletes from New Zealand and Canada. Study 1 showed that enjoyment was strongly related to AE. It must be noted that enjoyment was not included in the vigour dimension as was the case in the first reported research. Rather, enjoyment and excitement were taken as separate factors and called enthusiasm. Studies 2 and 3 supported the factorial validity of the AEQ scores, and study 3 particularly supported the nomological validity of the constructs. Therefore, the AEQ measured four dimensions: confidence, dedication, vigour, and enthusiasm.

Evidence of the construct validity of the AEQ was provided in a later study where AE was examined in relation to basic psychological needs (antecedents) and dispositional flow (consequence) (Hodge, Lonsdale, & Jackson, 2009). This research looked at AE as a possible mediator between basic needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness, and flow. Feelings of autonomy were “perceptions of volition, choice, and self-directedness” (p. 188). Competence was one’s feeling of ability and having the opportunity to be effective. Relatedness was “a sense of mutual caring and connectedness with others” (p.188). Flow was “an intrinsically rewarding, state-like experience characterized by total involvement or immersion in an activity” (p. 187). When an athlete is in a flow state, the experience of challenge in the achievement of a goal in either training or competition is on a par with the level of competence the athlete has. This is necessary to overcome that challenge. The athlete possesses a sense of control over the current situation and that allows for the achievement of a goal. Results among Canadian elite athletes showed that satisfaction of basic needs predicted AE that further predicted dispositional flow. Further, AE partially mediated basic needs and flow (2009). Therefore AE influenced frequent occurrence of flow experiences.

These definitions are very similar to how Loehr and Schwartz defined athlete engagement as the skillful management of energy. Athletes are able to perform at their peak when they feel confident, relaxed, and calm, energized with positive emotion, challenged, focused and alert, automatic and instinctive, and ready for fun and enjoyment. These feelings are also similar to Lonsdale et al.’s (2007) AE dimensions of confidence, dedication, vigour, and enthusiasm. Loehr further emphasized that toughness is needed



for an athlete to develop to acquire optimum performance. He added that “true toughness in sport requires balance” (p. 35) and to become tough, the athlete has to be engaged. Full engagement is the energy state that best employs performance (Loehr & Schwartz, 2005). This is true in the workplace, in sports, and in other areas in one’s life.

Although sport psychology research has few literature on athlete engagement as a concept, sport practitioners have long adapted the notion of engagement. Loehr and Schwartz (2005) discussed training manuals for Greek athletes on “work-rest” ratios to maximize performance. Russian sports scientists re-used this concept for the improvement of their Olympic successes. Loehr and Schwartz adopted this idea and worked with elite athletes on imbalance between energy expenditure and recovery that almost always lead to burnout. They coined the term *full engagement* to refer to a balance between work and rest, or energy expenditure and recovery. Athletes who were experiencing an imbalance due to overtraining or undertraining in physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual dimensions of engagement “had performance consequences that included persistent injuries and sickness, anxiety, negativity and anger, difficulty concentrating, and loss of passion” (p. 29), which are symptoms of burnout. Loehr and Schwartz reported that with *full engagement*, they were successful in helping athletes manage their energy more skillfully and systematically increase their capacities to compensate an insufficient dimension and build in regular recovery.

A range of intervention techniques to improve sport performance such as goal-setting, arousal control, and cognitive-restructuring has been used for performance enhancement (Anshel, 2013; DeRenne & Morgan, 2013; Diaz-Ocejo, Kuitunnen, & Mora-Merida, 2013; and Wright & O’Halloran, 2013). They are believed to improve physical preparedness, technical skills, and psychological readiness for optimum performance. However, other dimensions, such as the contribution of spiritual and emotional experiences, associated with preparedness and psychological readiness, have been overlooked and therefore not addressed. *Full engagement* addresses these dimensions (Loehr & Schwartz, 2009). In the concept of The Human Performance Pyramid (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001), physical capacity is at the bottom of the pyramid followed by emotional and mental capacities at the next two levels respectively, and spiritual capacity at the peak. Loehr



and Schwartz emphasized that sustained engagement includes development of all of these capacities. When these four capacities are present in the athlete, an improved performance in all facets of life occurs even in those outside of the sport. When athletes are engaged, they manage both their sporting and non-sporting lives well (Loehr & Schwartz, 2005). This results in sustainable optimum performance, eventually affecting efficient management of their lives in total.

To address the issue of the robustness of the AE construct, AE in the context of Filipino athletes was investigated. The study replicated that by Lonsdale, Hodge, and Raedeke (2007), with the aim of determining if athletes from the Philippines experience the same AE dimensions as New Zealand and Canadian elite athletes.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

The research employed a qualitative research methodology using an interview process called the Scanlan Collaborative Interview Method (SCIM).

### **Participants**

Recruitment was through snowball sampling. Two athletes were initially identified for interviews. A qualified interviewee must be currently competing at the international level. At the end of their interviews, these athletes were asked if they knew other athletes who would be interested in participating and if they knew their contact details. They gave their names and contact information such as email, Facebook account, and mobile numbers. They were then contacted. Their qualification to be an interviewee was confirmed at the beginning of the interview when they were asked about their level of competition.

### **Procedure**

The procedure followed Lonsdale et. al's (2007a) use of the SCIM. Figure 1 illustrates the detailed procedure of the interview among Filipino athletes. The same open-ended questions used in the

New Zealand study (see Appendix A) were asked in face-to-face interviews.

SCIM is both an inductive and deductive type of interview. There are four sections that comprised the interview proper. The first section was an introduction to the interview process, which consisted of the explanation of the procedure and questions about the demographic profile of the athletes. An introduction to the engagement concept (1A) was also provided.

The AE definition was presented to the interviewees in an index card. This served as the direction for the topic of discussion. The interviewees were allowed to ask questions regarding the definition to make sure that they understood the general concept of engagement (2B). The researchers were careful not to present any of the engagement dimensions thus far. The interviewees were asked to think back over their career and remember a time they felt particularly engaged in their sport. Other questions (see Appendix A) served as a guide for the interview. After all the questions were satisfactorily answered, emergent dimension themes were organized (2C).

In the deductive section of the interview, confidence, dedication, vigour and enthusiasm and their definitions were presented to the interviewees on index cards as possible engagement dimensions (3D). It was explained that they were dimensions that had emerged among New Zealand and Canadian athletes. The interviewees were asked if these dimensions were the same as or different from the themes that had emerged in the inductive interview. They then confirmed that the dimension was already in the inductive picture, added the dimension to their engagement picture, or rejected the dimension as inclusive of their own engagement picture (3E). Before the entire interview concluded, the interviewees' engagement picture from the inductive to the deductive interviews was reviewed, allowing the interviewees to confirm or make necessary adjustments or revisions to their engagement picture (4F).

The final stage, content analysis, compared the interviewees' final engagement picture against the verbatim statements to make sure that it was indeed the final athlete's engagement picture (5G). No "member check" was used (Lonsdale et al., 2007a, p. 456) because of the time constraints of the athlete. All of the interviewees' engagement pictures were examined and common engagement themes were named across all of the 10 athletes

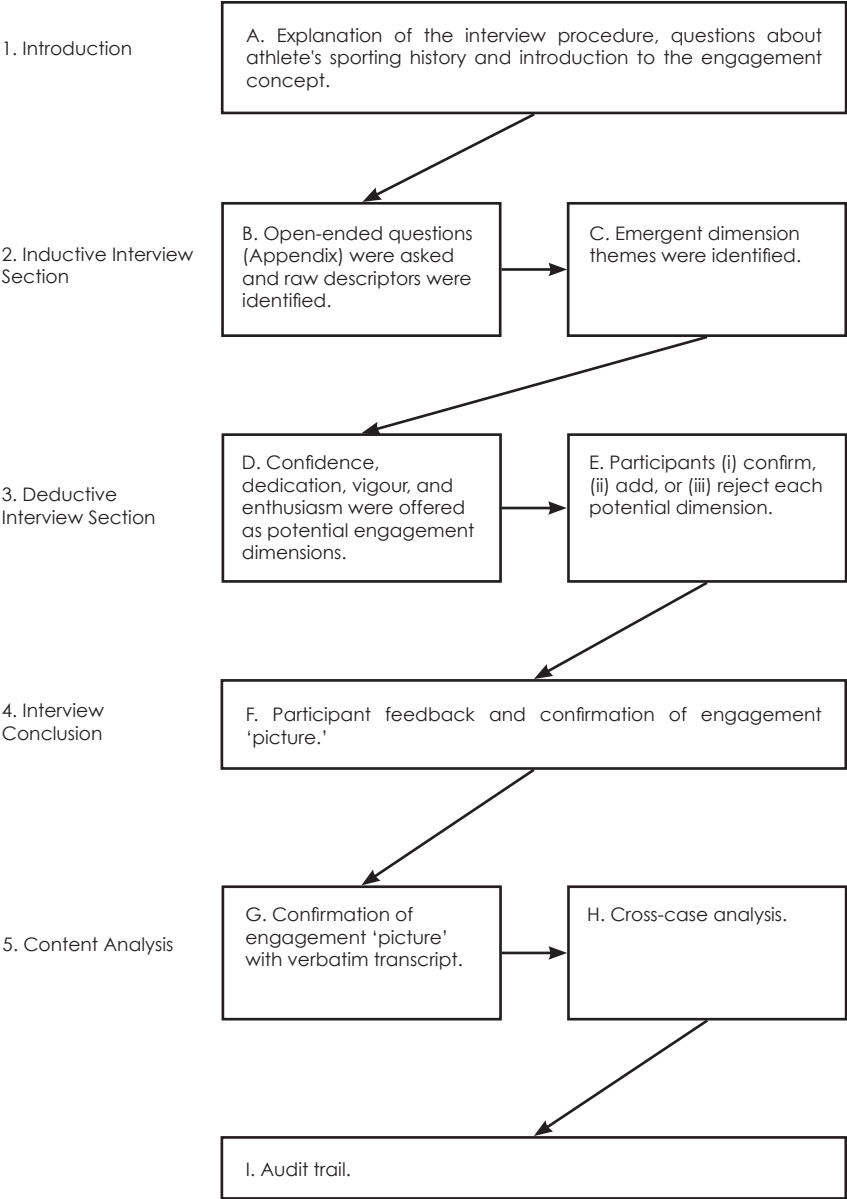


Figure 1. **The Scanlan Collaborative Interview Method Was Adopted from Lonsdale et al. (2007a) Study.**

(5H). In the audit process, an expert of the field was asked to look at the raw descriptors and the engagement themes that were used to describe them (5I). He confirmed the same dimensions and suggested re-classification of others as antecedents or consequences of AE.

## RESULTS

The interviewees consisted of archers, golfers, marathoners, and mountain bikers. While all of them had been competing primarily at the Asian regional level such as the SEA (Southeast Asia) Games and in international matches like the GrandPrix games in their respective sport, three of them were Olympians. While these three were elite athletes, another one was the first Filipino Skyrunner who had received several gold medals in international marathons, and was therefore considered as the fourth elite athlete among all of the interviewees. The others were in the sub-elite level based on the awards they won and the level of games they competed in. Their mean age was 27.8 years old. They ranged in age from 18 to 46 years old. Five were males and 5 were females. Seven finished college through athletic scholarships. Two of the 7 took a long time to finish because it took them longer to finish their primary and secondary schools due to their low socioeconomic status. One finished two years of high school and another one finished one year of college. Both of them could not balance their training and studies because they had to work hard in training for financial reasons, so they decided to just stop their studies and concentrate on their sport. The youngest, who was 18 years old, finished high school and was currently on her way to college in the USA. Among the six who indicated they were breadwinners in their families, four were the primary earners in their families who put food on the table and helped their siblings through school. Two built houses for their families and one even bought a car for the family.

The average interview time ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. The athletes described the experiences they believed to be an engagement experience with a number of examples and descriptors. Most of what they related as engagement experiences were fairly recent, with the majority being within one to two years to the time of the interview, and were most unforgettable ones in

both training and competitions.

Similar to New Zealand and Canadian athletes, Filipino athletes indicated that they experienced *confidence*, *dedication*, *vigour*, and *enthusiasm* as engagement dimensions. Table 1 shows the interviewees' raw descriptors of their emergent engagement dimensions. All of them described their *confidence* as feeling good about themselves as athletes, and possessing abilities and skills. Commitment and having a purpose as an athlete were the most common descriptors of *dedication*. Being energized physically—possessing strength—and mentally having focus, and feeling interested and positive about their sport were the most frequent descriptors of *vigour*. Feelings of happiness, excitement, enjoyment and passion were their descriptors of *enthusiasm*.

They added a description of a “feeling of an adrenaline rush” as a descriptor of enthusiasm because when they were excited, enjoying, and happy, they felt some kind of elation they attributed to the adrenaline in their body. They added a few others namely *love of the game*, *relationship with coach*, *social support*, *discipline*, *assurance of fair play*, and *spirituality*, which were reclassified as either antecedents or dimensions of AE.

## Confidence

The interviewees looked at confidence as a characteristic that varied with level of competition, wins and losses, and frequency and quality of training. Most of them said that as they regularly competed at one level, their confidence became stronger because they were comfortable in that level of competition. When one moved to a higher level of competition, confidence dwindled and efforts were made to meet a certain level of confidence in order for one to have a sufficient amount of comfort competing at that level. This was so because one's competitors were better and more skillful than those at a previous lower level. The competition was tighter. Winning was more challenging to achieve. One interviewee related that as he mastered winning at a particular level of competition, confidence increased until it levelled off. He explained:

After competing at one level and winning each time, you feel very confident of yourself. And then when that experience continues at a period of time, you lose the

Table 1. Themes From the Cross-Case Analysis Given the Interviewees' Raw Descriptors of Engagement, N=10.

Confidence	Dedication	Vigor	Enthusiasm	Spirituality	Antecedents of AE
Felt good about oneself as an athlete (n=10)	Devoted (n=7)	Felt energized (n=10)	Felt happy in the sport (n=10)	Deep sense of values (n=7)	Relationship with coach (n=4)
One had ability (n=10)	Committed (n=10)	Emotional maturity (n=5)	Felt excited (n=10)	Faith in God (n=10)	Social support (support from family, friends, Filipino people, Philippine Sports Commission) (n=10)
Skillful (n=10)	Had direction/purpose as an athlete (n=10)	Focused and interested in the sport (n=10)	Enjoyed playing one's sport (n=10)		Assurance of fair play (n=1)
	Faithful to one's sport (n=5)	Had willingness to do anything and everything for the sport (n=9)	Passionate (n=9)		
	Sacrificed other aspects in life for one's sport (n=5)	Had physical strength (n=10)	Felt an adrenaline rush (n=10)		
	Discipline (n=1) <i>*originally reported as dimension</i>	Possessed positivity (n=10)	Love of the game (n=4) <i>*originally reported as dimension</i>		

feeling of challenge and so confidence loses its value. Because it wouldn't matter anyway. You keep winning anyway. (Archer, 29 years old)

When he moved to a higher level of competition, for example from one level of international competition to the Olympics, confidence started to fluctuate. Because one is competing with equally or better skilled athletes at the Olympics, one's confidence may not be as high as in the lower level of competition where greater confidence was felt. The interviewee reiterated that confidence was definitely a primary dimension of his engagement experiences even when its degree was dependent on the level of competition and how long one had been competing and winning at that particular level.

In the context of winning, an interviewee experienced a sudden decrease of confidence after losing the first round at a prestigious international Grand Prix competition. He learned not to be too confident, especially that he was unaware of the capacities of his opponents. He needed to focus instead on how to do his best to win and outperform his opponents. The other athlete experienced losing a game she knew she could have won if she had not felt overconfident at the pre-competition stage. She initially believed that her opponents were not as good as she was. She did not put all of her efforts into the game when it started. She was feeling relaxed. When she started losing in her rounds, she found out she could no longer change the situation.

While all of them illustrated that understanding the development of their confidence was based on their past experiences, one said that if she had had proper nutrition in the many years of her early marathon career, she would have been more confident of her athletic skills and abilities. Despite running barefoot across villages when she was a teen, and competing barefoot because she could not afford to buy a pair of running shoes, she still won gold medals. She expressed

*Wala akong pera, mahirap na mahirap kami. Pero hindi naging hadlang yun sa pagkamit kong ambisyon ko. Na kahit mahirap kami, nagawa ko pa ring manalo ng golds. Kasi, alam ko na kaya ko. [I did not have money; we were very poor. But that did not become a hindrance to the fulfillment of my ambition. Despite our hardship, I was still able to win gold medals.*

Because I know I could make it.] (Marathoner, 37 years old)

She believed that if she had the necessary resources for good training, including a good pair of running shoes and nutrition, she would have been number one in the Philippines at an earlier time in her life. She explained that she would have felt more confident as an athlete if she had the resources she needed. Similarly, two other athletes mentioned that the lack of proper equipment and a complete training program especially in preparation for and during a competition, affected their level of confidence. These two athletes competed in mountain biking (downhill and cross country); hence, an appropriate set of tires were necessary. They were either not given a new set of tires until their competition dates, despite requesting them at the earliest time they could from the Philippine Sports Commission, or they received them after the competition started. There were times too, they claimed, that they received hand-me-down equipment, or that their equipment was not the appropriate size. One athlete received a full set of clothing that was too big. He laughingly said that his helmet would revolve around his head, his sleeves were longer than his arms and his cycling shorts were as good as boxer shorts. He felt he was taken for granted, became angry and disappointed at the kind of treatment he received from his government. Nevertheless, he learned to overcome these factors so that they will not affect his will to win. He said,

*Wala na akong magagawa kung ganun sila. Wala na yun sa control ko. Sinabi ko sa sarili ko na I only have myself to depend on. [I can't do anything about them. They are not under my control. I told myself that I only have myself to depend on.] (Mountain Biker, 22 years old)*

He maintained a mindset that he would no longer depend on what his government could or could not do for him. He would depend on himself to train and compete for himself, his family, and the Filipinos who looked up to him as their hero in sports. He said that if Filipino athletes could win gold medals despite the lack of training resources from their country, then they would win more medals if full provisions were given. He added that with appropriate government support, more athletes would have



more opportunities to become excellent performers, consequently winning at international competitions bringing glory to their country.

Confidence levels were influenced primarily by how athletes are able to fulfil their goals and secondarily by the resources available to the athletes—from training programs to sporting equipment.

## **Dedication**

Among these athletes, dedication was consistently described as experience at high levels. They emphasized that they placed the greatest amount of time and effort into their sport in order to achieve optimum performance. This was further affirmed by all of them who claimed that they trained many hours a day, in most if not all days in a week. Their education was disrupted so that they could spend more time training. There were those who decided to stop school because they had a hard time balancing training and education. They prioritized sport over education to achieve their dreams of becoming professional athletes. There were those who took a long time finishing school because it was constantly disrupted by their training. They failed in their classes either from too many absences or from failure to submit requirements. However, this was not always the case. The youngest athlete interviewed provided an example of someone who was able to maintain a balance between fulfilling her academic responsibilities and putting time and effort into her sport in both training and competition. The tremendous support of her family and school helped her maintain this balance. What she said she sacrificed instead were her social activities, such as parties and hanging out with friends. She often used those times driving balls at the golf range. She said “in that way, I did not grow up normally like any teenager my age. Although at some point I felt inadequate in that manner, in the end, I appreciated what I compromised because I became better as an athlete” (Golfer, 18 years old). Shortly after the interview, she left for Tennessee, USA as an athletic scholar and started training for a USA team.

One athlete’s love for the game turned her into a highly dedicated runner. She said that her poverty could not afford her proper running shoes, and that she was only able to buy Robertsons shoes (a type of sneakers that was very popular in

the Philippines) later on. She used them until they wore off. She further stated that she could only afford three meals a day and nothing in between. Despite that, she continued to put time and effort into her sport. She said she was determined to achieve her dream of becoming a champion regardless of the obstacles. She developed a mindset that nothing could stop her from becoming what she wanted.

While most of the athletes showed how a high dedication to their sport was consistently present throughout their career, two athletes described times when it decreased. One said that for more than 20 years of having been extremely dedicated to her sport that produced several medals internationally, things slowly changed when she decided to adopt a child. Being a single mother, this required a lot of her time away from the archery range. She said that although excelling in her sport might have been her purpose for most of her life, that direction has dramatically changed with the presence of her son. Parenting became her priority over her sport. She explained, "When you have a child, everything else in your life changes. I feel that he was meant to be mine, so I was going to work hard at being a really good mother" (Archer, 46 years old). Another athlete related how she was intensely dedicated to her sport until her relationship with her coach soured. She did not want to attend training sessions anymore. She lost her drive towards becoming an excellent athlete. Her time and effort spent for training diminished and this became worse when she looked for other activities to become involved in. Her interest in those other activities pulled her away from her sport. Except for these two instances, dedication was consistently and concretely demonstrated by the athletes. They clearly asserted that dedication had to be present in order for them to be optimal performers in their sport.

## Vigour

The athletes described their physical, mental and emotional energies in different contexts and demonstrated that these influenced their sporting lives in different ways. For the athletes in archery, they emphasized that mental energy was an important requirement to perform well. Archery is primarily a mental game. If an archer lacks the necessary mental energy, he or she will not be able to do well shooting arrows. One archer said that although

mental energy is needed first and foremost in archery, he realized, later in his career, that his physical energy was also equally important. Another archer indicated that she associated mental energy with mental focus. She added that when one is not focused, shooting arrows automatically becomes distorted. She also said that her vigour was distorted when she had her menstrual period. She could not feel at ease thinking she might get stains on her pants while she was competing. Her mental focus was disrupted by the discomfort and embarrassment she felt. She also said that she felt physically tired and her emotional energy seemed to fluctuate from high to low, perhaps due to her hormones, she thought. In contrast, a mountain biker in the sample sustained high levels of vigour from training to competition. He assessed his mental energy as being higher and stronger than his physical and emotional energies. Another mountain biker indicated that his emotional energy decreased when he had to compete with an inappropriate tire. His feelings of disappointment over his sport organization, who failed to provide him with the proper tire for his bike, decreased his emotional energy, consequently decreasing his mental energy and resulting in a poor outcome.

Two athletes experienced a change in vigour depending on the outcome of a game. One athlete indicated that when he performed well, his vigour increased. Otherwise, it decreased. Another athlete specifically mentioned emotional energy as changing depending on the outcome of a competition. Her mental energy changed depending on her physical energy expenditure. When she became physically tired from training, her mental energy decreased considerably.

One athlete had a very different experience with vigour. She said that her experience of vigour was high at the start of training periods, but when the training routine became the same every day, she started feeling bored and tired. She reiterated that she needed her coach to keep her engaged in her sport; otherwise, she looked for other things to do to sustain her over-all drive. Vigour, in her engagement experiences, was not one-dimensional. It had to revolve around other facets in her life, even those outside of sport, in order for her to be able to sustain it in her sport. She expressed:

It might be different for other athletes or other people who really give their all in their sport. I'm different. I need a

coach who understands me and who knows how to get me interested all the time. Otherwise, my training and competition performances are poor. (Archer, 22 years old)

Interestingly, one athlete looked at vigour in the context of how it wholly developed his athletic career. His vigour did not depreciate with age because according to him, as one type of energy weakened through the years, the other types of energies strengthened. He specifically told about how his physical energy was no longer as aggressive as it was when he was younger because of the physiological principle of “wear and tear”; nevertheless, his emotional energy strengthened due to the maturity he gained from his experiences. He had learned how to balance his energies—how to manage his different types of emotional energies—already knowing what was good for him or not. Also, his mental energy sharpened through the years. Similarly, another athlete experienced vigour nearly in the same context. She learned to balance her emotional and mental energies because they dictated her physical energy and hence, performance in a game. She learned to overcome certain emotions like fear because she did not want them to disadvantage her. She added that she had to have the right amount of mental energy. She ensured that she did not think too much nor too little in order to perform well. She said that thinking too much drained her physical energy. Hence, the right amount of mental energy resulted in the right amount of physical energy necessary for optimum performance. She gave the following illustration:

I can't really say how much mental energy is necessary. You just know because you can feel it. I experienced very high levels of mental energy and it didn't serve me well. I seemed to have overly focused, overestimating my strategies at my game and it consumed a lot of me. (Track and Field, 30 years old)

Most interesting among all the athletes' experiences of vigour was one athlete's experience of poverty as reinforcing the maintenance of a certain level of vigour. The difficulties in juggling single parenthood and finishing school encouraged her to be more vigorous in her athletic career. She had to condition and keep herself in shape, maintain a positive emotional and

mental energy so that she could keep going. Her vigour was not centered solely on her sport, but also, on how she lived her life as a whole. In fact, her sport defined her entire life. Vigour was her survival tool. She reiterated:

*Kelangan kong magiging positive at masaya para maka-survive ako sa buhay. Dahil kapos ako, iginuhit ko sa puso at isipan ko na dapat akong maging lively at puno ng buhay para magiging worthwhile pa rin yung mundo, especially na nagkaroon ako ng anak at ibinubuhay ko syang mag-isa. Naniniwala ako na kung magtanim ka ng positibo sasarili mo, maraming mabuting bagay ang mangyayari. [I need to be positive and happy in order to survive in life. Because I'm poor, I cultivated in my heart and mind that I need to be lively and full of life so that I can see worth in this world, especially that I now have a child to raise on my own. I believe that if you plant optimism in yourself, there are many good things that will happen] (Marathoner, 37 years old)*

The levels of physical, mental and emotional energies experienced by the athletes influenced each other. Although vigour impacted upon the athletes in different ways, vigour seemed to hold a primary role in the way they succeeded in their athletic careers.

## Enthusiasm

Athletes experienced a level of enthusiasm dependent on the outcome of a game. When one athlete achieved his/her performance goal, enthusiasm increased right after a game. One athlete experienced enthusiasm before and after competitions but never during competitions. He said that he felt very enthusiastic just before the start of a competition. It shut off when the game started, and he mentally focused on the game. Enthusiasm returned when he finished. He mused:

*Yung pag-cross mo sa finish line and andun yung mga tao nagchi-cheer sa yo, walang bagay ang makapagpalit ng experience na yan. [When you cross the finish line and you see all of these people cheering you on, nothing can match that kind of experience] (Mountain Biker, 25 years old)*

In contrast, another athlete felt that her enthusiasm was at its highest during a tournament, which she believed might be caused by the adrenaline rush she felt. She felt relaxed 2 to 3 days after a competition, but she did not equate this with losing enthusiasm. She said it might have decreased because she was in the relaxed state, but it did not mean enthusiasm had disappeared. It started soaring high again when she went back to training. More interesting is one athlete's story about archery as all he could think of every day. Oftentimes in the classroom, his mind just spaced out to archery and he could not wait to be back to the range shooting arrows. He would dream about his sport. He slept and woke up to archery. He breathed archery.

Another athlete had a slightly different experience of enthusiasm. She became enthusiastic at training when she was preparing for a competition. As the competition neared, her enthusiasm increased, experiencing very high levels right before her competition started. She said, "I get very excited approaching a game that I can just smile all day" (Archer, 22 years old). Her enthusiasm decreased when the competition ended. She would start thinking that she would be back to training again. She would start feeling bored and tired. In contrast, one athlete sustained high levels of enthusiasm during training, at competition and towards another training, because of her passion for running. Despite the difficulties faced in her life, her love for running and competition was what kept her moving. She became more enthusiastic when she competed with other athletes from different countries. The thought that she was among the best athletes in the world made her feel excited.

An archer mentioned that her enthusiasm was closely related to her level of confidence. She explained that her confidence determined her experience of enthusiasm. When she was feeling very confident, she became more excited at the thought of competing with those she knew were of the same calibre as she was. She was excited at the chance to prove that she could be better than them. She also enjoyed the competitions when she performed according to how she envisioned she would. When her level of confidence was high, her level of enthusiasm was also high.

Athletes experienced enthusiasm in varying levels and in various contexts. While some experienced it before a competition,

others only experienced it after a competition. While most felt enthusiastic at training, one felt bored and tired. Excitement and enjoyment seemed to happen at sporadic periods in training and competition. They did not necessarily exist for sustained periods of time.

## Other Themes

There were other experiences that the athletes described as dimensions of athlete engagement. They were *love of the game*, *relationship with coach*, *social support*, *discipline*, *assurance of fair play*, and *spirituality*. Four of the athletes added *love of the game* as an engagement dimension. One athlete related that despite the odds that he had faced especially in the way his coach treated him at a particular time at training and how the Philippine government had been deficient in its support for him, he had stayed in the sport and continued playing because he passionately loved it. He trained himself to believe that he need not depend on anyone. He had to work on his own to become an elite athlete. He had that dream and he said that against all odds, he would achieve that goal. Another described the same experience. He said that despite all the hardships in his personal and sporting life, he adopted an attitude of "I don't care what is happening. I am here to achieve my goal" (Archer 24 years old). The two other athletes related similar experiences.

Of the four that identified *relationship with coach* as an engagement dimension, one said that it was important for him to have his coach because he realized he was better when he had a coach who taught him excellent technical skills. However, when his coach started meddling into his personal affairs, he began to distance himself from his coach, which unfortunately changed his performance. The three others had very similar experiences. They said that they needed to have a coach who could continually teach them skills, tell them what went wrong or right, and motivate them to do better. They said that their relationship with their coaches generated different kinds of emotions. Those emotions could make or break a game, hence defining an event or competition.

Although all of them consistently referred to the lack of government support and the importance of family and friends in their sporting careers, only two considered *social support* as an engagement dimension. One athlete said that the



insufficient support from the Philippine government made him feel “heartbroken” and this contributed to his career path deviating from being a full-time archer to taking on a job outside of sports. He gave up his dream of becoming a professional athlete. Nevertheless, the support he received from his family and loved ones motivated him to still train in archery on a part time basis and compete whenever he had a chance. Another athlete explained that the support from her loved ones was very important in sustaining her athletic career. She might have felt happiness many times with her achievements of gold medals in international competition, but at the end of the day, if she did not have anyone to share those victories with, the awards would lose their meaning. She emphasized that the happiness she obtained outside of being an athlete is what sustained her sporting life.

Only one athlete identified *discipline* as a dimension for athlete engagement. She said that in half of her life as an athlete, dedication was not enough. She explained that an athlete might be dedicated to one’s sport, investing time and effort into training and putting up a good fight at competition, but might not be disciplined enough to do what was necessary to become an excellent athlete.

Another athlete identified *assurance of fair play* as an engagement dimension. She could not categorize this as social support because this was specifically different. She described this in the context of the pledge by the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) that whoever was qualified to compete internationally should be those who would finally go. She explained that when she was told that she would represent her country, she practiced intensely; however, her endorsement was recalled at the last minute. She said that, oftentimes, PSC would suddenly change their list of national athletes favoring those who were politically advantageous to the current administration. When she was again listed as one of the archers who would join an international team, she no longer put a great amount of effort into training because she did not want to feel disappointed again in case of a change in the roster of national athletes.

*Spirituality* was identified by one athlete as a fifth dimension along with confidence, dedication, vigour and enthusiasm in her experience of athlete engagement. She said she would not have gone through and survived life’s difficulties, and would probably have given up her sporting career if not for her strong faith in her Creator. She also said that values were very important in being able



to hold up one's credibility and maintain one's integrity in sports. There had been a lot of athletes who would make competition a money-making activity. Many times, cohorts in marathons were formed. These cohorts are composed of runners whose aim was to pin other runners so that these other runners slow down, decreasing their chance to win and giving an opportunity for a runner in the cohort to win. When a cohort runner wins, they divide the prize money amongst themselves. This behavior, to her, is very rude and disrespectful. In the world of sports, she said one might get tempted to be sucked into the sea of filthy politics and greed. The strength of one's values is the ground on which one's integrity can stand firmly. She said that these strong values would not have been possible without her strong faith. She referred to this as her spirituality.

## DISCUSSION

What emerged from the interviewees' stories was the influential roles of the engagement dimensions to each other. Confidence was reinforced by the degree of dedication they gave to their sport. The more they trained, the more confident they felt and the more vigorous they became. Consequently, when they trained hard, they were able to achieve their goals, and when they were vigorous, they became more enthusiastic. These dimensions appear salient in shaping athletes to experience high levels of engagement.

Filipino athletes primarily experienced the same broad engagement dimensions as New Zealand and Canadian athletes, but the nature of their experiences were different in terms of the cultural traits/values that Filipinos chose to narrate. Their traits/values were relationship-orientedness, religiosity, and resilience. These qualities are related to the different forms of personal challenges they have endured.

All of the interviewees emphasized the importance of their families and friends in their sporting lives. Family members, especially parents, helped the athletes through their difficulties. Whenever they felt hurt by the lack of support from their government, they had families who helped them look for funds to finance their trips, boosted them when they were emotionally down, and supported them even when their schooling was

disrupted because they were focused on their training and competition. This kind of support from parents is not common among Filipino families because most parents prioritize education over other involvements such as sports, especially since a sporting career in the Philippines does not lead to financial stability. Additionally, one athlete reflected that when she did not have anyone to celebrate her gold medals with at the end of the day, such as family and friends, all her successes were worthless.

Religiosity is recognized to be strong among Filipinos. Cherry (2013) emphasized that Filipinos are religiously active and primarily Catholic. "Catholicism has been one of, if not the, most culturally pervasive influence in the Philippines over the last four hundred years" (p. 41). Social Weather Survey (2002) indicated that 86% of Filipinos were Catholic with more than half of them reporting that they attended church at least once a week (2013). However, it must be noted that religiosity is not religion-specific. It is equally exhibited by other religious affiliations as well. It might have been Catholicism that the Spaniards introduced in the Philippines influencing more Filipinos to be Catholic, but it is the Christianity component of Catholicism that has gained root in Philippine culture. Even when many Filipinos have moved away from Catholicism and into Protestantism, Christianity remains very strong, facilitating in them strong religiosity. From observation, Christianity is expressed through going to Church, praying regularly, and participating in Church-related activities (Valbuena, 2008). This expression is religiosity-engagement in the beliefs and practices of a particular religion (Abe-Kim, Gong & Takeuchi, 2004). Religiosity to Filipinos, like praying daily and asking for God's guidance and blessings, would bring them solutions to their problems and help them overcome their struggles. In situations where events are no longer under human control, Filipinos find solace in their God to help them stay hopeful. Their religiosity has become a very powerful coping mechanism, and this has been illustrated by the athletes who had to overcome difficulties in their sporting careers, most of them outside of their control. Therefore, their strong religiosity shaped their spirituality.

Loehr and Schwartz (2001) reported that the spiritual dimension was a very important part in optimal performance. For example, they said, in the corporate arena, management theorists only looked as far as rich material rewards, the right culture and

management by objectives as answers to the question why some workers perform well under pressure and others do not. Loehr and Schwartz mentioned that the problem with most approaches was that they understood that good performance was in terms of a cognitive function. They added that most executive managers were cautious at addressing the spiritual level of the performance pyramid because it seemed to create conflicting emotions and did not appear to be relevant to high performance. Yet literature has demonstrated a shift in focus towards the relationship between emotional intelligence and high performance (2001) which further lead to giving attention to spirituality. Spiritual capacity has been explored as an influence on performance. By “spiritual capacity, we simply mean the energy that is unleashed by tapping into one’s deepest values and defining a strong sense of purpose” (p. 127). Loehr and Schwartz found that spiritual capacity sustained a person in the face of adversity and was powerful in making one motivated, focused, determined and resilient.

One athlete’s experience of spirituality perfectly matched Loehr and Schwartz’s concept of spiritual capacity in successfully understanding sustained high performance. The High Performance Pyramid explains that levels—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual capacities—profoundly influence each other. When any one level is unsatisfied, it compromises performance. This was illustrated when the athlete said that if she had proper nutrition, she believed she could do better than how she was already performing. It can be further understood that if she had better lower level capacities, she would also have better higher level capacities, such as a stronger spiritual capacity, henceforth a better sporting performance than what she had. Further, her description of deep values that were important for her or any athlete to sustain an engagement experience with a sport was consistent with what the pyramid illustrates. Spiritual capacity “serves as sustenance in the face of adversity and as a powerful source of motivation, focus, determination and resilience” (Loehr & Schwartz, 2001, p. 127).

While only one athlete presented spirituality as a fifth dimension, all of the other athletes actually experienced it, even when not naming it, in the way they described their various engagement dimensions. All of them related to similar struggles of being a Filipino athlete. It would be expected that an athlete who goes through many athletic difficulties would quickly give up or

fail to deliver results. On the contrary, not only did these athletes survive those difficulties, they even thrived as they achieved a high level of performance that qualified them internationally and consequently rewarded them. They reiterated that if they had received appropriate support from the PSC especially putting them in programs that fully developed their physical, emotional and mental capacities, they could even have achieved much more than they did. Despite their struggles, they were motivated, focused, highly determined to achieve their goals, and developed resilience that made them bounce back from bad moments. Furthermore, all of the interviewees mentioned that their faith in God was the source of their strong values and purpose in life, and this helped them through the challenging path of becoming good athletes. Spirituality was experienced as having a connection to a greater significance that aided in the meaning and purpose of life, and helped make sense of life's struggles (Hardt, Schultz, Xander, Becker & Dragan, 2011). Spiritual individuals have been found to have a greater purpose in life, better life satisfaction and greater wellbeing (Abe-Kim, Gong & Takeuchi, 2011). Filipino interviewees demonstrated these characteristics.

Filipino athletes' resilience appeared to be associated with their high levels of religiosity and spirituality. Religiosity is one of the indicators of a person's ability to withstand harm (Verma, Sta. Maria & Morojele, 2011), or to become resilient. Resiliency is characterized as "the personal qualities that enable one to thrive in the face of adversity" (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013, p. 13) and/or "the capacity of individuals to cope successfully with significant change, adversity or risk" (p. 13). Filipino athletes managed to perform at an optimal level in the midst of struggles. It seems that their spirituality predisposed them to optimism in the face of the adversities they met in their athletic careers. Adapting a positive perspective despite adversities is one of the defining characteristics of a resilient person (2013). Termed positive adaptation, it emerged as central to the athletes' stories even when they spoke about their hurts, frustrations, and disappointments.

Other athletes from other countries may also exhibit *spirituality*, but the kinds of hardships that Filipinos endure provide depth, vastness, and intensity to their spiritual lives, which may not be seen in other cultures. Filipino athletes experienced *confidence, dedication, vigour, and enthusiasm* as athlete engagement dimensions similar to New Zealand and Canadian

elite athletes. However, unique to them is their experience of *spirituality* as deeply meaningful and important in facing various forms of adversity.

*Love of the game* was believed to be subsumed in *enthusiasm*, and *discipline* subsumed in *dedication*. *Love of the game* was evidenced in excitement when training and competing. Because competition gave them enthusiasm, they expressed their love for it and so, continued their sport regardless of the difficulties they faced. *Discipline*, on the other hand, meant investing time and effort into one's sport. If one is highly dedicated, then one invests a great amount of time and effort into training and competition. Time and effort includes the constancy and consistency of an athlete's training schedule, making use of rest and proper nutrition for one's health, and choosing a healthy lifestyle as in avoiding alcohol and smoking.

Other factors that surfaced in the interviews included *relationship with coach*, *social support*, and *assurance of fair play*. These factors did not fall into the category of an athlete engagement dimension. In the stories they told, these factors were antecedents of athlete engagement. A research study by Hodge, Lonsdale, and Jackson (2009), found basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as antecedents to athlete engagement. All three factors of relationship with coach, social support and assurance of fair play, fall into the category of *relatedness*. An athlete's relationship with one's coach is unquestionably a concrete example of relatedness. A coach is a significant other in an athlete's career. S/he becomes the parent of the athlete in both training and competition; therefore a coach plays a nurturing role in athlete development. Consequentially, athlete development may pave the way for athlete engagement to happen.

*Social support* included emotional support from family and friends, and technical support from the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC). Athletes mainly talked about their sense of relatedness with their family and friends who contributed to their motivation to work hard in their sport. Also, these feelings of relatedness with their family and friends were important in putting value to their accomplishments because it was important for them to be able to share their achievements with their loved ones.

Technical support from the PSC included provisions for

appropriate sport equipment, comprehensive training programs, professional training and coaching staff, and sufficient living allowances. All of the athletes interviewed expressed frustration over the disproportionate and insufficient provisions for these items. They complained about being given inappropriate sized uniforms; lack of equipment like tires for their bikes, arrows for their bows, and running shoes. They were likewise disappointed with the lack of nutritional support, such as regular supply of vitamins and adequate allowance for food. One athlete indicated that when she was depressed because of a poor performance at an international competition, she had to purchase her own medicines. When she lost in that competition, she felt PSC did not support her because she did not win a medal. She worked so hard for her country, was pleased at giving her country a name, but when she was down, PSC was not there for her to lean on. She was at her lowest moment in her athletic career and she did not know where to turn to. It was only her family and friends who supported her. Her emotional experience with her country was very similar to the other athletes' experiences. They also felt that PSC was not giving them the same value they have given their country. There was no feeling of mutual care, which is an essential element of relatedness. One athlete who felt "heartbroken" said that he had to process his own papers for permanent residency in the Philippines, so he could compete at the international level. He said he did it all by himself because PSC was taking too long to do it for him. He paid for all of the fees. Later on, he learned when he was already at SEA Games, that it only took PSC three weeks to process the residency of the Philippines' imported players in rugby. He said that most of the athletes in that rugby team did not even grow up in the Philippines while he spent half his life growing up in the Philippines. Consequently, he did not feel cared for and valued.

All of the athletes interviewed shared similar experiences about spending their own money on processing travel documents for international competitions, having to book their own flights and hotel rooms and advancing the expenses because PSC only promised them reimbursements. The reimbursements either came more than a year after the competition or not at all. There were a few who were told to request their equipment at specific amounts but the equipment that they received did not even cost half of the amount indicated. They felt like some officials in PSC



pocketed the money. They always had to live with inferior quality or second-hand equipment.

Assurance of fair play was subsumed into the aspect of technical support. One athlete described how she felt betrayed when, at the last minute, she was replaced by someone else to represent the country in a very important international competition. Her frustration intensified as she realized that her replacement did not actually practice and train as much as she had.

Although *flow* was not a variable under study in the interviews among Filipino athletes, it emerged in the athletes' engagement experiences. Although "a feeling of adrenaline rush" was described as a component of *enthusiasm*, this was believed to be more like the experience of flow. Lonsdale, *et al.* (2007) observed in the interviews on New Zealand athletes that they illustrated a flow experience from their descriptions of having the ability to focus. Flow seemed to have occurred among the Filipino athletes because of having experienced engagement. Given the results found with Filipino athletes, it is important that flow is studied to determine its potential role for athletes, especially to those who wish to train themselves into becoming elite sport performers.

## CONCLUSION

The universal core dimensions of athlete engagement for Filipino athletes were *confidence*, *dedication*, *vigour*, and *enthusiasm*. *Spirituality* emerged as a unique Filipino athlete engagement dimension. It is recommended that similar researches will be done among athletes from other countries in order to validate and expand the existing conceptual definition of athlete engagement beyond the New Zealand, Canadian, and Filipino athletes so that sport practitioners will know what needs to be developed in an athlete in order to have optimum performance.

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## APPENDIX A

### Open-ended Questions:

1. Having heard the definition of engagement (displayed on index card in front of the participant), can you think back over your career and remember a time you felt particularly engaged in your sport?
2. Tell me about that experience, what was it like?
3. Can you recall any of the feelings associated with that experience?
4. Can you recall any emotions surrounding that experience?
5. Can you recall any consistent thoughts you had during that experience?

6. How did you feel about training?
7. How did you feel about competition?
8. How did you feel about your involvement in your sport over-all?
9. How did you feel mentally?
10. How did you feel physically?
11. Were there any other thoughts, feelings or emotions that you had during this experience?
12. How long did this experience last?

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# INTERRATER AND INTRARATER RELIABILITY OF MOVEMENT COMPETENCY

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This study establishes the interrater and intrarater reliability of Movement Competency Screen (MCS). Nine male and six female MCS video data from the national dragonboat team were utilized in the study. Prior to the video recording, the athletes performed a standardized warm-up followed by a 2-minute active rest. Two raters scored data for two occasions after 6 and 7 days respectively. Intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), 95% confidence interval (95% CI), typical error (TE), typical error as a %CV, and smallest worthwhile change (SWC) were used to identify absolute and relative interrater and intrarater reliability. For Day 1, interrater relative reliability was 0.43 (ICC) with 95% CI (-0.08, 0.76). TE was 0.77 with 1.80 %CV and 0.63 SWC. In Day 2, interrater relative reliability was 0.56 ICC with 95% CI (0.09, 0.83). TE = 0.69, %CV was 1.50 and SWC was 0.53. Intrarater ICC for rater 1 was 0.98 with 95% CI ranging from 0.93 to 0.99. TE was 0.17, %CV was 0.05 and SWC was 0.18. Rater 2 posted .76 ICC with 95% CI range from 0.42 to 0.91. Also, TE was 0.52, %CV was 0.60 and SWC was 0.23. Interrater absolute reliability was marginal for both days. Interrater relative reliability was considered poor for Day 1 and moderate in Day 2. Absolute intrarater reliability was good for rater 1 and marginal for rater 2. Intrarater relative reliability was high for both raters.

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**KEYWORDS:** movement competency, screening tool, interrater reliability, intrarater reliability

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## INTRODUCTION

MOVEMENT COMPETENCY AND subsequent production of muscular power is a fundamental concern for sport and health professionals when considering an athlete's injury prevention and long-term athlete development. Sport and health professionals endeavor not only to develop and enhance an athlete's physical prowess but also to minimize their training and competing time lost due to soft tissue injuries. This is evident in research devoted to investigating mechanisms of soft tissue injuries (Myer, Ford, & Hewett, 2010; Paterno et al., 2010; Alethorn-Geli et al., 2009a; Alethorn-Geli et al., 2009b; Myer, Chu, Brent, & Hewett, 2008; Myer, Ford, & Hewett, 2004). More recent efforts have been made to investigate the effectiveness of screening complex movements to assist with the understanding of how movement strategies, involving the kinetic chain, influence athletic performance and contribute chronically and/or acutely to the mechanisms of soft tissue injuries (Butler et al., 2010; Minick et al., 2010; Kiesel, Plisky, & Butler, 2009; Kiesel, Plisky, & Voight, 2007). It has been reported that traditional isolated muscle and joint assessments, common to many athlete pre-participation examinations and muscle balance assessments, fail to link how the kinetic chain responds to muscle weakness and joint instability during fundamental movement patterns (Quatman et al., 2009).

The Functional Movement Screen (FMS) is a screening tool that has gained popularity among practitioners (Cook, Burton, & Hogenboom, 2006a; Cook, Burton, & Hogenboom, 2006b). FMS seeks to identify potential deficiencies contributing to injury or weakness using seven whole body movements and specialized equipment. Given the propensity of its utilization in the field, there has been no reported validity study of FMS (Kritz, 2012). To address this shortcoming, Matt Kritz (2012) developed a valid, cost-effective, and time-efficient prognostic tool which is the Movement Competency Screen (MCS). MCS uses general and complex movement tasks observed in activities of daily living, strength, and sport training. The MCS movement tasks recommend a bodyweight load to assess an individual's squat, forward lunge, trunk rotation, upper body push, trunk flexion, upper body pull, and single leg movement competency. MCS is based on the subjective assessment of the aforementioned movement tasks using a standard 2D recording device. Earlier research showed 12

Intrarater and 58 interrater reliability from videos of three athletes pointing to kappa = .93 and  $r = .79$  respectively (Kritz, 2012). Trunk MCS score has been identified as a predictor of injury for male and female national athletes. Also, lower body MCS score served as a modest predictor of lower body injury in female athletes.

Interrater and intrarater test reliability plays a critical role in test promotion and utility. Researchers suggest that reliability can be established in absolute and relative ways (Bruton, Conway, & Holgate, 2000). Absolute reliability is the variation of repeated measurements for individuals. On the other hand, relative reliability refers to manner where individuals maintain their position in a sample over repeated measurements. With the infancy of MCS, there seems to be a lack in the existing literature concerning tester reliability in MCS. Thus, the purpose of this study was to identify the interrater and intrarater absolute and relative reliability of MCS.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

MCS data were acquired from 9 males and 6 females from a national dragonboat team who volunteered to participate in the study. Informed consent was obtained from the participants. The methodology and procedures in this study conformed to the Declaration of Helsinki for human experimentation.

### Procedures

MCS data recording was administered at a strength and conditioning facility between 1000-1200 hours. Upon arrival at the facility, the participants performed a standardized warm-up (lunge and reach, reverse lunge and twist, leg swing to toe touch, knee hug to quad stretch) for 2 sets at 5 repetitions per limb by a 2-minute rest. After the rest was completed, the athlete performed the MCS. Two frontal view repetitions and two sagittal view repetitions were administered for each MCS movement task. For lunge and twist and single-leg squat, the screener ensured the lead leg was closest to the video recorder. Squat, lunge and twist, push-up, bend and pull, and single-leg squat were performed in

order.

Two raters were involved in the study. The first rater is considered an expert in the field of strength and conditioning and human movement. He is a certified strength and conditioning specialist who holds a doctoral degree and has over 20 years of professional experience in elite sport as a strength and conditioning specialist. The second rater is a certified strength and conditioning specialist with a master's degree in applied sport and exercise science. Movement tasks were based on guidelines presented in Table 1. Each task consists of primary and secondary areas. A rater notes any violation in these areas and assigns a corresponding load level ranging from 1 to 3 using the MCS scoring rubric (Figure 1). For single leg squat and lunge and twist, scoring was assigned on the basis of the weaker limb. Summation of movement tasks makes up the MCS score. Rater 1 rescored the videos a second time after 6 days and rater 2 re-scored after 7 days.

### **Statistical Analyses**

A reliability tool developed by Hopkins (2012) was used to compute intra class correlation coefficient, 95% confidence limit (95% CI) and typical error (TE). Log transformed data was used to derive typical error as percentage of coefficient of variation (%CV). Smallest worthwhile change (SWC) was computed at  $0.25 \times$  between-participant standard deviation (Hopkins, Hawley, & Burke, 1999).

## **RESULTS**

MCS scores of rater 1 and rater 2 are displayed in Table 1. During Day 1 interrater ICC was 0.43, 95% CI (-0.08, 0.76). TE was .77, %CV = 1.80, and SWC was 0.63. ICC was 0.56, 95% CI ranged from 0.09 - 0.83, TE = 0.69, %CV = 1.50, and SWC = 0.53 for Day 2. For rater 1, ICC = 0.98, 95% CI (0.93, 0.99), TE = 0.17, %CV = 0.50, and SWC = 0.18. For rater 2 ICC = .76, 95%CI (0.42, 0.91), TE = 0.52, %CV = 0.60, SWC = 0.23.

MCS SCREENING CRITERIA – This is what you should see...if you don't mark the region on the screening sheet.

PATTERN	HEAD	SHOULDERS / T-SPINE	LUMBAR	HIPS	KNEES	ANKLES	FEET	BALANCE	DEPTH
POSTURE	CENTERED	Held back and down with slight flexion	Slight extension	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	NA	NA
SQUAT	CENTERED	Down away from the ears / slightly extended. Elbows held behind the ears during the squat	NEUTRAL	Movement starts here, aligned and extension is obvious	Stable, aligned with the hips and feet	Aligned with the knees and hips	In contact with the ground and stable	NA	Thighs parallel with the ground
LUNGE & TWIST	CENTERED	Shoulders held down and away from ears Rotation occurs here	NEUTRAL, resisting rotation	Horizontally aligned, resisting rotation	Aligned with the hips and feet	Aligned with the knee	Heel of lead leg in contact with the floor, trail foot flexed and balanced on forefoot	Maintained for each leg	Lead thigh parallel with the ground
PUSH UP	CENTERED	Held down away from the ears, scapulae moving in a balanced and rhythmic motion	NEUTRAL	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned	NA	Chest touches the floor
BEND & PULL	CENTERED	Held down away from the ears, scapulae moving in a balanced and rhythmic motion during pull	NEUTRAL no bending	Bend occurs here	Aligned and slightly bent	Aligned	Aligned	NA	Trunk parallel with the ground
SINGLE LEG SQUAT	CENTERED	Down away from the ears / slightly extended	NEUTRAL	Movement starts here, aligned and extension is obvious	Stable, aligned with the hips and feet	Aligned with the knee and hip	In contact with the ground and stable	Maintained for each leg	Thigh parallel with the ground

Table 1. MCS Scoring Criteria

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the interrater and intrarater absolute and relative reliabilities of MCS. For absolute reliability, the researchers utilize %CV and SWC. A CV of less than 10% presents a good reliability (Cormack, Newton, McGuigan, & Doyle, 2008; Atkinson & Neville, 1998). With this in mind, interrater and intrarater absolute reliability for MCS demonstrated good reliability. However, to determine the test practicality in performance settings, SWC was suggested (Pyne, 2003). If the typical error of a test is less than the SWC, then the test is rated as “good.” If a typical error is greater than SWC, this would mean “marginal” test practicality. When SWC was used, MCS presented an interrater marginal usefulness for both days. Rater 1 demonstrated a good MCS test variability. On the other hand, rater 2 posted marginal usefulness. For relative reliability, ICC was used as a criterion. Researchers suggest a clinical significance of ICC below .50 as poor, moderate for .50-.75, and good for .75 and above (Portney & Watkins, 2009). Interrater ICC was poor for Day 1 but improved to moderate value in Day 2. Intrarater relative reliability for both raters was high.

Technological and biological errors contribute to issues in test reliability (Gore, 2000). MCS scoring disagreement in this study





was mostly related to depth judgments within the MCS tasks. Furthermore, origin of twist and knee motion in the lunge and twist pattern were also noted. A recognized limitation of the current study is that only 2 individual raters were used to score 15 MCS videos. Such number does not reflect the population of MCS practitioners. A more diverse cohort of raters will apparently improve the applicability of MCS. Another suggestion is the monitoring MCS scoring completion time, which may provide more useful information in scoring fatigue. Lastly, a formal test scoring session may help reduce scoring discrepancies.

Movement competency screening may be used to provide insight into why athletes succeed and may also offer a mechanical rationale as to why certain athletes report increased rates of injury (Bartlett, Wheat, & Robins, 2007; Hewett, Lindenfeld, Riccobene, & Noyes, 1999). Important information may be gained simply by observing an athletes' kinesthetic awareness during the performance of the MCS movement tasks. The MCS may provide sport and health professionals with a method for better understanding an athlete's movement ability and their awareness of what constitutes good movement competency. This information may prove valuable prior to exercise prescription for the purpose of assisting how well a sport training program accommodates an athlete's movement ability and that their training adaptation contributes more to performance than the mechanisms of injury. In conclusion, the findings of the study showed a good interrater absolute reliability for both rating days. Interrater relative reliability was poor for Day 1 but was good in Day 2. For intrarater reliability, rater 1 showed good absolute and relative reliability. Rater 2 demonstrated good absolute reliability and high relative reliability.

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## APPENDICES



NOTES





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# CAUSEWAY COMMUNIQUÉS: CONTEMPORARY SINGAPOREAN-MALAYSIAN LITERATURE

Gwee Li Sui  
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## INTRODUCTION

HELP ME TO swim here. Allow me to frame my lecture with some urgent conditions.

I need to stress firstly that I will be focusing on Singaporean-Malaysian literature *in English*. I have highlighted this to Umapagan Ampikaipakan, the [Cooler Lumpur Festival] festival director\*, and made my contrite confession to him that I feel ill-equipped to address literature in any other language, except perhaps German. It does not matter if the terrain is Singaporean or Malaysian literature: I cannot speak with knowledge outside of writing in the medium of English.

Secondly, I must say that I do not know enough of the most recent works from Malaysia, and, by “the most recent,” I need a

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\* This is the essay form of a lecture read at #FAST: The Cooler Lumpur Festival on 21 June 2014.

forgiveness gap of five to six years. This gap is considerable—I will admit it—and I hope that you will point me in new, exciting directions during this festival and beyond.

Yet, to be fair, it is not a simple failure on my part as a Singaporean critic not to keep abreast of trends in Malaysian English-language literature. This unfortunate outcome is tied in many ways to how our separate book cultures and industries have been developing over the years. They have been developing, not necessarily in a conscious or an explicit way, to become apart. To be distinct does not have to involve being apart, and yet here we are. This is also what I like to address here, and I shall get to it in time.

Thankfully, I do know the most recent Singaporean literature and, in fact, know it much better than many people in Singapore. It is a happy boast: after I left the academic world in 2009, a lot more books and drafts of books by Singaporeans land on my table, strangely enough. This is both to my pleasure and the pleasure of the respective writers and publishers.

So I have basically knocked down about three quarters of your expectations for this afternoon's lecture. The pool of our time together should now be shallow enough for me to look like an Olympic swimmer. But what then am I going to engage if I will not deal with just the recent—one meaning of the word "contemporary"—and I will not deal with Malaysia *per se*, in a lecture title with "Malaysian" in it?

### **"SINGAPOREAN-MALAYSIAN"**

If you do not mind, I like to deal with the term "Singaporean-Malaysian." This is a quality and a category that does not seem to exist much as a point of social or literary discussion these days. We do not teach it in our schools and universities in both Singapore and Malaysia. We do not involve it as part of, or constructive to, the future of our separate literatures. Yet—and this is telling—when we in Singapore hear of Tash Aw or Tan Twan Eng win a prestigious international prize, we respond with outright envy but also quick, quiet pride. This response surely betrays a nuanced form of being absent to or straining against the other.

I want to unpack "Singaporean-Malaysian" by declaring that I have been involved myself in a number of projects with this



concept in big and small ways. Arguably, the major project for me has been a two-volume title called *Sharing Borders: Studies in Contemporary Singaporean-Malaysian Literature*, published in 2009. This was an academic work, which Mohammad A. Quayum, Wong Phui Nam, and I edited; and there was really no critical collection of essays done in this way before it, nor has there been since.

When these books first came out, a scholar in my old university had asked me about the title and the word "Singaporean-Malaysian." He queried: "Don't you mean to say 'Singaporean and Malaysian literature'? 'Singaporean-Malaysian' sounds revisionist to me." "Revisionist"? I would have understood him better had he said "dated" because "revisionist" was an odd choice of word. What then is the historical truth of our two countries in cultural terms? From our dawn of sorts, can we talk about national literatures or, worse, *nationalist* literatures? What about *world* literature or literature as known through global capital, through what sells? Yet, these are the perspectives that have started to establish themselves.

Let us be sure: the idea of something Singaporean-Malaysian does not use an abstract frame. It describes a historical and cultural marker, a condition of people, a point from which Singaporeans and Malaysians can know how we have travelled, what we have become, are still becoming. Historically, the times when we have shared parts of ourselves with each other are longer than the times when we do not share with each other. We are a culturally compatible people split by fifty years of politics now and carried away on different waves of large, international interests.

As such, to use the term "Singaporean-Malaysian" is firstly to admit a political reality, of two distinct centres of power and even identity-making that has defined it. But the hyphen in the term also makes another admission, of the aspects that continue to bind us by default, by the conditions of time and geography. It highlights what we can only try to ignore but can never erase. The hyphen is ever-present, but it is highly elastic too. In this light, how we persist to pull and twist will always say a lot about ourselves, our fantasies of self in social consolidation.

## SHARING BORDERS

Coming back to the two-volume *Sharing Borders*, these books trace English-language literature from the point it took root in colonial Malaya back in the 1940s. Volume One starts at where it all began and looks at the impetus and matters of urgency in this literary emergence as well as the themes that a newly self-conscious people had found attractive.

Yet, as the project is organised chronologically, by Volume Two, the part I edited, we see not just Singaporean and Malaysian literature concerned each with its own immediate state of being. Singaporean English-language literature was also surpassing its Malaysian counterpart in the sheer quantity of writing produced as well as in experimental exploration. This was felt early in the 1980s and became exponentially true from the mid-1990s onwards, when publishing in English literally exploded in Singapore with the rise of independent publishers.

Washima Che Dan and Noritah Omar have contributed an essay titled "Writing Malaysia in English: A Critical Perspective" to my volume. In it, they describe how the Malaysian situation became what it is largely because of the designation of Malay as the national language, with its socio-political use that followed. By means of this designation, the Malay language has become, in post-war Malaysia, the foremost symbol and aggregator of national identity. Its status had repercussions on the role English and other ethnic languages could play in the life and psyche of the country.

This point may be extended by us to say the reverse about Singapore's case, Malay being also the designated national language of the island. Yet, in real life, Malay plays only a symbolic role in day-to-day reality while English as the *lingua franca* in Singapore's multiculturalism, its bridge language among ethnic communities, takes centre stage. Thus, interestingly enough, in the absence of colonial strictures, the colonial language in Singapore survives as the quintessential empty signifier and, in this capacity, a culturally, if not politically, neutral language.

However, this prominence of English comes with its own price. It exacts a cost from any sense of identity an ethnic language can be said to strengthen and stabilise. As such, through English, Singapore is turned to a far-reaching international discourse and can catch the winds of global change quickly. But the island's

roots in place, in its history and even common culture, become flimsy.

## IN THE BEGINNING

Here we have again that curious manifestation of the hyphen in a Singaporean-Malaysian condition, where the hyphen highlights a twist and, through it, a connection nonetheless. One part inverts the other while the other, like a spectre, gazes back.

The historical form of this relationship between the two is more direct. If we look into Singapore's and Malaysia's shared past, we can perhaps acknowledge a start in the Chinese Straits writing that linked both at the turn of twentieth century. We can also remember the so-called Singapore Writers' Movement '50, or ASAS '50, that played such a formative part in the establishment of modern Malay literature in the two countries.

But, as far as multicultural, English-language literature goes, the idea of "Singaporean-Malaysian" legendarily began in the ferment of creative restlessness in the then University of Malaya based in Singapore. The pioneer Singaporean poet Edwin Thumboo has recounted as much in *Sharing Borders* Volume One, saying: "The two literatures had a common beginning... The formative mood was distinct, clear, and pervasive."<sup>1</sup>

In print form, we can trace this beginning no further back than to *The New Cauldron*, which was the official organ of The Raffles Society of the University of Malaya. Its first issue appeared in the Hilary Term of 1949-1950. This amateurish and experimental journal emboldened its writers, and, in time, they issued their first literary anthology *Litmus One: Selected University Verse: 1949-1957*. The slim book carried poems by names who are now iconic in the English-language literature of Singapore and Malaysia: Edwin Thumboo, Ee Tiang Hong, Lloyd Fernando, Wong Phui Nam, and so on. This anthology was followed by another, simply titled *Thirty Poems* and published in 1959.

Although the editors of these works were not named, in view of how their introductions aimed to position the contributions, we may guess that they were among the contributors themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Edwin Thumboo, Preface, *Sharing Borders: Studies in Contemporary Singaporean-Malaysian Literature I*, edited by Mohammad A. Quayum and Wong Phui Nam (Singapore: National Library Board and National Arts Council of Singapore, 2009), 6-10, 7.

These writers had a clear stance: they sought to establish a properly English style of expression as opposed to the “Engmalchin” writers, that is to say, writers who pursued free, indigenised experimentation.

The “Engmalchin” movement was a loose historical group whose varied styles were ultimately encapsulated in the word “Engmalchin” itself. “Engmalchin” was a portmanteau word, a mishmash of known words—in this case, English, Malay, and Chinese—to create a new word. The idea of “Engmalchin” was to explore the possibilities of creating a distinct poetics for the region by cutting and joining different languages to enable a so-called Malayan idiom, very much like how Frankenstein makes his scary monster.

So this stylistic response from some poets to the “Engmalchin” writers was actually Singapore and Malaysia’s first literary debate. Here then is yet again another shared aspect, another affirmation of the hyphen: the two cultures had the same first literary controversy!

## THE SLASH AND THE HYPHEN

The tumultuous 1960s—when Singapore and Malaysia joined and then split again—temporarily hampered further coordination. The first poetic collaboration after this was Edwin Thumboo’s *The Flowering Tree: Selected Writings from Singapore/Malaysia* of 1970. It was published by the Ministry of Education in Singapore for circulation among pre-university youths. The collection featured names such as Goh Sin Tub, Wang Gangwu, Mohamad Haji Salleh, Lee Tzu Pheng, Cecil Rajendra, Arthur Yap, and Chandran Nair.

However, what I want to highlight here is the title and specifically its oddest part, the word or rather non-word “Singapore/Malaysia.” What it technically signals is an interim phase, even in 1970, a time still between being culturally Malayan and being distinctly Singaporean and Malaysian. The slash is, in other words, a type of the hyphen, effectively its precursor. It seems to be teasing a sense that Singapore might as well be in Malaysia or that Malaysia was also in Singapore. This slash is like the line in a mirror dividing between a thing and its reflection or, in this case perhaps, between two reflections.

*The Flowering Tree* was more than a project that brought together writers from the two sides of the Causeway. It had a clear, pragmatic goal, one of forming a body of English verse from a base that was quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate in both. The book was, in this sense, also a record of the non-arrival of distinct national and cultural identities. It testified to a state of being as yet unable to name what had come into being in the separate terrains.

In the psychology of Jacques Lacan, we talk about a coming into consciousness of difference demanded by the future and, as such, a point between “two deaths.” In the “first death,” the end has already arrived, but the self does not know it yet or does not know how to understand it. It is a trauma waiting for the Real of the rupture to manifest, to firm up; that is, it is waiting for a “second death.” The slash in “Singapore/Malaysia” precisely represents a porous membrane, one that still allows things or meanings to be transferred, things or meanings to remain ambiguous even as the future of a distinction, of impermeability, is already visible.

To make this point clearer, let me point to how, just three years later, in 1973, Thumboo issued another seminal but undoubtedly more competent anthology called *Seven Poets: Singapore and Malaysia*. This was published by the Singapore University Press, the precursor of today’s NUS Press. The seven poets in the volume were Ee Tiang Hong, Thumboo himself, Wong Phui Nam, Goh Poh Seng, Wong May, Mohamad Haji Salleh, and Lee Tzu Pheng. Another three years on, Thumboo issued *The Second Tongue: An Anthology of Poetry from Malaysia and Singapore*, which was published by Heinemann Asia.

The titles of both these anthologies already clearly register the separate political entities of the countries: the “second death” seems to have descended, the rupture recognised. However, if one wants to see a little of the trauma still present, lingering behind the words, one can still note how the name orders are flipped as if there were still a wish for singularity. Thus, it is *Singapore and Malaysia* in one and *Malaysia and Singapore* in the other. The interchangeability or unconscious confusion invites us to keep feeling a connection twisting to be different.

In prose, another curious instance of such ambiguity can be observed. The first significant post-independence collection of stories was, of course, *Twenty-Two Malaysian Stories: An Anthology of Writing in English*, edited by the late Lloyd Fernando and

published by Heinemann Asia in 1968. It included Malaysians such as Kassim Ahmad, Awang Keadua, and Shirley Lim, but it also had Singaporeans: Stella Kon, Goh Poh Seng, and Lee Kok Liang. Is that not curious?

One can explain away this mix of Malaysian and Singaporean writers by highlighting that 1968 was still rather close to the stormy events of political emancipation. Yet, Fernando's sequel *Malaysian Short Stories*, published in 1981, a full thirteen years later, seemed to undermine the point. This second collection now introduced K. S. Maniam, but it also continued to feature Stella Kon, specifically through three stories which, in Fernando's words, "capture, precisely, the spirit of modern Singapore."<sup>2</sup> To be sure, the word "Malaysian" in the title has shifted subtly, from an identity marker of the writers to their mere thematic interest, therefore, permitting Kon to remain. The new stories are, according to the book's back cover, "vignettes of Malaysian life": "Punjabi-Malaysian, Chinese-Malaysian, Tamil-Malaysian, Eurasian-Malaysian."

### SUBTLE CROSSOVERS

Such tweaking preserves a Singaporean-Malaysian quality even as a distinction is maintained outwardly, and it has always existed since. If this had not been engaged much in academic inquiry and institutional thought, the reason is less its lack than how it must render individual categories and their frames unstable. As such, where an instance emerges, the tendency is to treat it as incidental.

But consider the following cases:

1. The writer we regard as the father of modern Singaporean autobiography, Tan Kok Seng, wrote a famous trilogy of books. The first was called *Son of Singapore* (1972), but the second was titled *Man of Malaysia* (1974). The two books dealt with how he turned from a coolie in Singapore to a driver for a British diplomat in Malaysia. Tan's third book was called *Eye on the World* (1975).
2. Some of the stories of Catherine Lim, that doyen of Singaporean fiction, involve a vaguely non-descript

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<sup>2</sup> Lloyd Fernando, Introduction, *Malaysian Short Stories* (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Asia, 1981), vii-xiv, vii.

Malayan background as a means to evoke feelings of tradition and location. Malaysia is not just a creative backdrop but also a recuperative one for some Singaporean writers. For example, Alfian Sa'at's recent *Malay Sketches* (2012) was written and put together when he was living or rather "hiding away" in Malaysia.

3. Lloyd Fernando's important novel *Scorpion Orchid*, published by Heinemann Asia in Kuala Lumpur in 1976, was about four friends during Singapore's racial riots in the 1950s. His other novel *Green is the Colour* involved a cross-cultural love affair set against the aftermath of the 13 May 1969 racial riots in Kuala Lumpur. However, he had to publish first with Landmark Books in Singapore in 1993.
4. There are other writers originally from Malaysia, fiction writers Dave Chua and Shamini Flint, graphic novelist Sonny Liew, and poet Leong Liew Geok, who made their names in or through Singapore, that is, through wider opportunities that became available to them in Singapore.
5. On that note, inversely, we may point to now-recognised Singapore-born writers Wena Poon and O Thiam Chin, who could at first only secure the interest of a commercial publisher in Malaysia. Both Poon and O became known through their early books published with MPH. MPH itself began as an institution in Singapore from the late-nineteenth century through much of the twentieth century.
6. Approached by an international publisher for a book idea with global readership, Dipika Mukherjee, Kirpal Singh, and Mohammad A. Quayum made revealing decisions. They edited for Penguin Books a collection called *The Merlion and the Hibiscus: Contemporary Short Stories from Singapore and Malaysia* in 2003. The contributing writers included Catherine Lim, Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, K. S. Maniam, M. Shanmughalingam, Alfian Sa'at, Wena Poon, and Karim Raslan. Notably, there were more Singaporean writers than Malaysian ones, but the chosen Singaporeans further have some working Singaporean-Malaysian connections.



7. Closer home, what about the collections of short stories that expressly ignore national labels and prerequisites to present culturally identifiable, “warm” writings? Silverfish Books has given generous space in volumes of *Silverfish New Writing* to not just established but also new writers from Singapore, some such as Yeo Wei Wei making their debut through it.
8. Inversely, there is *Lontar: The Journal of Southeast Asian Speculative Fiction*, first published by Singapore’s Math Paper Press and now by Epigram Books. Malaysian science fiction writer Zen Cho has contributed to *Lontar* before, and I understand that her new book *Spirits Abroad* is now published by Fixi Novo and will be launched at this festival.
9. Academically, *Asiatic: IIUM Journal of English Language and Literature*, edited by Mohammad A. Quayum and hosted by the International Islamic University Malaya, has consistently paid good and steady attention to both literatures. There is no equivalent for this kind of work in Singaporean universities despite their much lauded international ranking. The cutting edge of research strengthening—though not yet uniting—Singaporean and Malaysian literature remains in Malaysia.
10. Likewise, Malaysian newspapers such as *The Star* and *The New Straits Times* have often featured Singaporean writing. The same may not be said about the Singaporean press and its attentiveness to what goes on in Malaysia. It is a lamentable state of affairs that fails to exploit the logic and practicality of linking both reading cultures. But, to be sure, Singaporean books themselves struggle to get a major share of reviews at home. This, therefore, appears to be more a quirk in how domestic readership is imagined or constructed by Singaporean newspapers.



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OFFICIAL ANTHOLOGIES

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In these instances, we find the sporadic, disorganised crossover moments that make it difficult to talk about self-relation, relation to one's own interest or image, as a pure thing. We have relied, have always been relying, on the other to help occasionally to maintain our being in our own worlds. These organic and intuitive or subconscious crossovers are what make inter-state diplomatic projects properly political because they are perhaps unknowingly inclined to make politically created differences visible.

The work becomes ironic. The state-sanctioned anthologies highlight the hyphen that joins both countries as signifying not so much a porous membrane, a lingering slash, as a relation between two more concrete things, two more "authentic" words. We are, in other words, only gazing at each other, across a good wall or rather a good bridge.

I sense this, being myself involved in small parts in two of such recent projects. These goodwill projects were initiated by the Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books and the National Arts Council of Singapore. The first was *Dari Jendela Zaman Ini* or *From the Window of This Epoch* (2009), which collected a hundred poems, fifty from each country and each presented in both English and Malay. However, while Singapore chose poems across the language mediums of English, Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil, Malaysia made interesting and revealing choices. It had poems from great Malay poets such as Zaen Kasturi, Rahimidin Zahari, and S. M. Zakir as well as Raja Rajeswari Seetha Raman, Chu E Liang, Poul Nanggang, Raymond Majumah, and Jair Sulai, all of whom wrote in Malay. The separate selections described—and brilliantly presented to itself and to the other—political realities.

The same may be observed in the second and more recent anthology *Melangkau Jambatan Kedua: Cerpen Terpilih Dari Malaysia dan Singapura* or *Beyond the Second Link: Selected Short Fiction from Malaysia and Singapore* (2012). Now, in a stronger, more orchestrated perception of an "imaginary pure relation," both Singapore and Malaysia were represented only by stories in the Malay language, which were then translated into English. The ethnic other uniformly disappeared in both self-images!

## CONCLUSION

What must now come to us as clear and fascinating is this distinction and polarity between how the notion of a relation is maintained at a national or political level and at an organic social or cultural level. We should not feel compelled to prefer sides but may, in fact, see this whole range as indicative of all the possibilities between these tent-poles to construe a Singaporean-Malaysian terrain. There is the official layer, and there is the contingent non-political layer.

These should offer us excitingly at this time a range of messy connections, connections underscoring or undermining connections, that must challenge the way we think about Singaporean or Malaysian literature separately. We must see the whole tacit realm where we have been participating in each other's literary culture—with a festival or not—and where we have affected the life of those in the other who aspire to write in English. We must learn not to be shy about this Great Uncertain, this seeming No-Man's Land, and we must learn to speak such a space into common legitimacy, into its gaining of a rightful place in our popular consciousness.

I wish that we can go on to confront our common attempts, on the one hand, to attach literature to socio-political life at large and, on the other hand, to detach literature from the realist-historical and truly be free to explore genres. I wish that we can work on our cross-distribution of books and get our readers to talk to one another and not just to the other's writers. I wish that we can, through literature, elucidate the gaps in each other's cultural memory by presenting new perspectives and questions so that we can see in each other our larger self. I wish that we both solve once and for all the issue of translation by not just reading my English in Malay and your Malay in English but also celebrating on a national level your own English and my own literature in other languages.

We should be seeing our own failings and challenges in this terrain encircled by the term "Singaporean-Malaysian." I envision a time when we can approach it not as an academic whim or a diplomatic gesture but as actual knowledge, with qualities and traits that can be marked down critically and with excitement.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Gwee Li Sui is a poet, a graphic artist, and a literary critic. His works of verse include *Who Wants to Buy a Book of Poems?* (1998) and *One Thousand and One Nights* (2014). He also wrote Singapore's first full-length graphic novel in English, *Myth of the Stone* (1993), which appeared in a special twentieth-anniversary edition last year. A familiar name in Singapore's literary scene, Gwee has written on a range of cultural subjects too. He edited *Sharing Borders: Studies in Contemporary Singaporean-Malaysian Literature II* (2009), *Telltale: Eleven Stories* (2010), and *Man/Born/Free: Writings on the Human Spirit from Singapore* (2011), and wrote *FEAR NO POETRY!: An Essential Guide to Close Reading* (2014).

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## CEBU AS INSPIRATION TO MY WRITINGS

Cecilia Manguerra Brainard  
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I WOULD LIKE to start by talking about my Cebuano background, because understanding this will allow you to see where some of my writings came from.

My mother and her political family, the Cuencos, are Cebuanos who have lived in Cebu for generations. I was born in Cebu City after World War II, the youngest of four children. I grew up in my parents' home in Andres Abellana. I attended grade school in St. Theresa's College, where the nuns at the time wore layered white clothing with batman headdresses.

Cebu life in the 1950s and 1960s was different as compared to now. Cebu City seemed small and less hectic. There were fewer people then and the traffic wasn't bad. We went to school, returned home for lunch, went back to school; and in the afternoons, we had time to visit my mother's relatives or friends for merienda, or they would visit us. We would go on rides or paseo, to the

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This is the essay form of a talk read at the Cebu Literary Festival on 27 June 2014.

pier for fresh air, and during these rides, we usually made three stops: first was at the kiosk near the Santo Nino, where my father would buy us Coca Cola and packs of M&Ms. Then we drove to the pier to stop by a bar-nightclub called Slapsy Maxie's. It was a seedy honky tonk establishment with colorful girls hanging on to their temporary sailor boyfriends. We children stayed in my father's red jeep, while my parents would go down to talk to the owner of the place. I mention this because later on I would use this experience in my first novel, *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept*.

From Slapsie Maxie's we drove to a bakery to buy Pan Monay and Pan Frances. By the time we arrived home, the gardener was usually gathering dried leaves and branches to burn—*daob*—for the dual purpose of getting rid of debris and driving away mosquitos.

In my early years, we did not have television, and for entertainment my father read magazines and books. We children played and also read books and comics. My mother was always busy supervising the maids over household matters. After our afternoon rides, we did our homework; my father used to help each one of us; he had been an engineering professor at the UP, and so he carried this love for teaching over to us.

After my homework, I used to visit the servants who stayed in a separate structure, the "dirty kitchen," with an old fashioned cooking hearth. It was fun there. The servants would grate coconuts on an old-fashioned *cud-curan*, which you had to straddle; I used to help. They would kill chickens, which was very dramatic. After the heads of the chickens were cut off, the poor headless chickens ran about, with blood spurting out of their necks, causing commotion in the kitchen.

The servants also listened to their transistor radio, specifically to soap operas that were also very dramatic—love stories, love triangles, out-of wedlock pregnancies and children, and so on. Seated on a wooden bench while all the cooking and activities were going on, I would listen to the radio soaps and also to the advertisement jingles urging us to buy Palmolive or Klim or Tanduay or Shioktong.

Sometimes I would catch a coconut beetle, and imitating the other children, tie a string around the beetle's neck to swing it around—it sounds very cruel now, but that's what we did for amusement. The children would also play with ants so the little creatures would fight each other to the death—all very cruel, but

as I said, this was pre-internet, pre-TV even.

By the time I went to high school in Manila, there was television, and the lifestyle in Manila was different from Cebu. Manila was a bigger city and more hectic than Cebu. That Manila experience during high school and college was different from the time I lived in Cebu. I should clarify that like many other Cebuano kids who went to school in Manila, I used to return to Cebu during vacations by airplane, DC-3, and sometimes the stewardess would announce mid-air that we had to change seats to balance the airplane.

Even when I attended school in Manila, Cebu remained magical during those holidays, where we kids went swimming and had parties, and car rides, and there were many stories about which girls were “fast” or “loose” and which boys were cute, and so on. By the time I was in college the Vietnam War was going on, and the Americans had an air base in Mactan. Cebu used to be inundated with American soldiers from that base, and there were also American Peace Corps volunteers because they had headquarters in Cebu. I married one of these volunteers.

I mention how it was then, because these experiences, this world, found their way into my stories.

The fictive world I created was not exactly Cebu. In fact, when I started writing and used “Cebu” as my setting, I would freeze because I felt obliged to “tell the truth,” a difficult task when one is telling a story. One day a long time ago, while I was just doodling, I reversed the letters of “Cebu,” coining the word “Ubec.” It felt really good; it gave me the freedom to use aspects of Cebu and the characters I knew into my fiction without being bound to tell the truth. I could lie, twist things around, use people I knew as models for my fictive characters. I could even change the geography in Ubec.

There was another thing: I was interested (and continue to be) in history. I wanted to know the history of Ubec. I wanted to see the people, see the streets and houses of Ubec in my imagination as well as in my writings. Some of my short stories and my two novels are set in Ubec during historically significant times. My first novel, for instance, *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept* or *Song of Yvonne*, is set during World War II in Ubec and Mindanao. I was born after the war, but my protagonist, who in my imagination is a bit like me when I was a child, had to experience the war with her parents, who are patterned after my own parents. Many

stories that my parents had told me, or that I overheard because I must have been a nosy kid after all, made their way into that novel—how they knew a *doctora* who was hacked up by the Japanese for instance, how they had to hide radios or else be killed if caught, how they had to flee to Mindanao, so Nando could join the guerrilla movement.

My second novel, *Magdalena*, is a story about three generations of women whose lives were affected by historical events—the Philippine American War, World War II, and the Vietnam War. Ubec features in this novel as well.

My short stories include what I call historical fiction, a group of inter-related stories set during the turn of the century. The first one I wrote was “Woman With Horns,” a story about a grieving American doctor, Dr. Gerald McAllister, who is in Ubec and who meets Agustina, a flirtatious widow. Agustina, a woman who reportedly has horns (inspired by a Cebuana who was rumored to have horns), helps him in his healing; she teaches him how to live again.

I have a story entitled “The Blue Green Chiffon Dress,” which is about a teenage girl who meets an American soldier during one of those Ubecan summer holiday parties, and who is kissed for the first time. A local personality inspired the story entitled “Alba,” only I placed Alba in Malate in 1763, after the brief British occupation of Manila. There is the story of the nine-year-old Remedios whose father died, just as my own father died when I was nine. A popular story of mine is “Flip Gothic,” which is about a teenage FilAm girl who is dispatched by her parents to her grandmother in Ubec where the girl learns more about her identity.

I have many other stories inspired by Ubec and Ubecans.

I also wrote essays about Cebu, my own experiences, as well as articles about my mother and her Cuenco family, have been favorite topics.

My current novel in progress is set, yes, in Ubec once again.

Cebu, you see, is a very interesting place. I have lived in Manila and in California, and I have visited many places all over the world, but Cebu shines in my heart and in my imagination.

Let me tell you about the young man I saw the other day, here in Cebu. He was with some other women, but his shoes caught my eye. They were animal shoes—one shoe looked like a cheetah, the other a tiger, and he walked along with the other ladies as

if it were perfectly normal to have animal shoes. He apparently stitched the shoes himself.

With his permission, I took and posted his pictures in my blog. He reminded me of why I find Cebu fascinating—young men wearing animal shoes, women said to have horns, some other woman reputed to be a witch, love affairs, out of wedlock children—it's like those soap operas I was fascinated with when I was a child.

Cebu's uniqueness, richness, funkiness, humanity, and most of all, its people have inspired many of my writings, and I am grateful for this.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cecilia Manguerra Brainard was born and raised in Cebu City. She is the author and editor of nineteen books, including the internationally-acclaimed novel, *When the Rainbow Goddess Wept*. The multi-awarded author has been widely anthologized and her work has been translated into Finnish and Turkish. She has a website at [www.ceciliabrainard.com](http://www.ceciliabrainard.com), and a blog at [cbrainard.blogspot.com](http://cbrainard.blogspot.com).



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# HISTORY AS LIBERATOR

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THE STUDY OF history, while by and large a science, is not as exact as the disciplines in the natural sciences. The inexactness of history is attributed to the fact that as a discipline, its principal subjects are people and specifically what they have said and done in the past. The principal subjects of historical inquiry, unlike in the field of Physics, Molecular Biology, and Chemistry, cannot be placed under the strictest laboratory conditions to be observed. Its variables, unlike variables in the physical sciences, cannot be controlled or manipulated. It is for these reasons that history can never be exact as a discipline.

But apart from the reasons stated in the preceding, there is another reason which contributes to the inexactness of history. It is the openness of historical events, documents, correspondences, and historical figures' actions to the interpretation of historians using various perspectives and frameworks that makes it imprecise. Hermeneutic thinking subscribes to this idea of

Nietzsche (Elwood, 1996, p.104 cited in Churchill, 1997, p. 8) by accentuating that "there are no historical facts, but only historical interpretations." For example, the Filipino hero Andres Bonifacio, revered by many as the symbol of the Philippine Revolution and struggle for liberty and independence against colonial Spain, has been reduced to a mere creation of historians and a memoirist. May (1997, p.1-50), in his highly controversial work *Inventing a Hero: The Posthumous Recreation of Andres Bonifacio*, fearlessly attacks the historical significance of Bonifacio by alleging that the hero is a posthumous recreation whose myth was fashioned in order to serve an important ideological and political purpose. He also alleges that ideas of whom Bonifacio is given credit were never Bonifacio's ideas nor were they written by him. If May got all his facts right, then everything that we know about Bonifacio, his childhood, his ideas, the books that he read, the poems and essays that he wrote, his courage and charisma, are nothing but a sensationalized fable and a collection of fabricated stories anchored on forged documents and lies.

May's point is simple: Andres Bonifacio was a revolutionary whose contributions to the shaping of the events leading to the Philippine Revolution are too insignificant to even notice. But because at a certain point in the Philippines' history, people needed a rallying point whereby scattered and discordant anti-colonial energies can be consolidated and solidified against a common enemy, his myth had to be created to serve an ideological and political function.

May's work, while compelling and moves every historian to revisit any work on Bonifacio, is an attempt to discredit any anti-colonial movement in the past, in the present, and in the future, which draws impetus from Andres Bonifacio as claimed by Schumacher (cited in May, 1997). It is an attempt to disrepute the history written by the conquered and imposes upon them the history from the perspective of the conqueror. May's attack did not go unnoticed and unanswered. Bernardita Reyes Churchill of the Philippine National Historical Society (PNHS) in 1997 compiled and edited papers written by various Filipino historians as a point-by-point answer to May's formulations. In a nutshell, it was a shot to counter the "misleading and upsetting" assault of May on the heritage of the Filipino on the basis of carefully analyzed and logical historical data and not on faulty historical interpretation.

A similar adulteration of epic proportion is also seen in the way Filipinos understand the national hero Jose Rizal. For most Filipinos, Rizal was an easy choice for a national hero because his life and works moved a nation to be “united, involved, and decisively active in the fight for freedom” (quoted in Constantino, 1969, p. 1). The significance of Rizal in Philippine history is so immense that he has overshadowed other heroes whose exploits may not be as resounding and dramatic as Rizal’s but is, by no means, equally significant (p.6). But it needs to also be understood that if it is only on the basis of Rizal’s martyrdom immortalized by his dramatic execution at Bagumbayan that he is given such distinction not enjoyed by other heroes, then it should be said that scores of other heroes also made the ultimate sacrifice like Rizal. But how come their exploits are not given much honor and prestige as Rizal’s? The answer to this compelling query can be gleaned from the heart of the political agenda Rizal himself advanced. Rizal (quoted in Constantino, p.4), in a manifesto he wrote to the Filipino people in December 15, 1896, had this to say of the revolution:

From the beginning, when I first had notice of what was being planned, I opposed it, fought it, and demonstrated its absolute impossibility....

I did even more. When later, against my advice, the movement materialized, of my own accord I offered not alone my good offices, but my very life, and even my name, to be used in whatever way might seem best, toward stifling the rebellion; for convinced of the ills which it could bring, I considered myself fortunate if, at any sacrifice, I could prevent such useless misfortunes...I have written also (and I repeat my words) that reforms, to be beneficial, must come from above, and those which come from below are irregularly gained and uncertain.

Holding these ideas, I cannot do less than condemn, and I do condemn this uprising—as absurd, savage, and plotted behind my back—which dishonors us Filipinos and discredits those that could plead our cause. I abhor its criminal methods and disclaim all part in it. Pitying from the bottom of my heart the unwary that have been deceived into taking part in it.

Constantino's appraisal of the letter of Rizal clearly suggests that he was not into a revolutionary mode. Rizal, by his very words, disowned it, refused to be part of it, and even condemned the fight for liberty. This movement was, as it appears, contrary to his political agenda and his idea of how the times of refreshing for the Filipinos could be had. It is worth noting that originally, Rizal never advocated for independence. Rather, what he simply demanded together with the La Liga Filipina was simply the recognition of the Philippines as a province of Spain, fair treatment of Filipinos by the Spaniards, and representation for the Filipinos in the Spanish government. Never was it Rizal's intent to sever relations with imperial Spain. It is for this very reason that he reasoned against the revolution and dismissed it as a disgrace and a dishonor to the Filipinos.

This passive mood of Rizal against a colonial master, glazed with his idea of education as the ultimate liberator was what the Americans who partly sponsored Rizal's posthumous elevation into the status of National Hero were looking for. They wanted a national hero figure whose image would not run counter to the "grain of American colonial policy." To the Americans, Aguinaldo was just too confrontational, Mabini was just wanting of fervor, and Bonifacio was just too fundamental. The three were all potential rallying points and spring boards for a renewed campaign for independence from a new colonial master. In short, the image of Rizal simply fitted the political and economic agenda of the Americans in its new colony. His advocacy supported the long term colonial intention of the United States. It was for this reason that Governor W.H. Taft in 1901 advanced the idea that the Filipinos be given a national hero. In the *Free Press* issue of December 1946, an account of Taft's position was quoted (p.6-9):

And now, gentlemen, you must have a **national hero**. In these fateful words addressed by then Civil Governor W.H. Taft to the Filipino members of the Civil Commission, Pardo de Tavera, Legarda, and Luzuriaga, lay the genesis of Rizal day...

In this subsequent discussion in which rival merits of the revolutionary heroes were considered, the final choice—now universally acclaimed as a wise one—was Rizal. And so was history made.

It is when efforts similar to May's have a point, especially when they succeed, that history loses its meaning and power to change lives. It is when critical analysis of historical fact like the one made by Constantino on Rizal is dismissed as rubbish leftist sentiment that history loses its "emancipatory and liberative function" (David, 2001, p.82).

Ambeth Ocampo (2001), in his deconstruction of the word *history*, notes that German (*geisichte*), Spanish (*historia*), French (*histoire*), and Greek (*historie*) interpretations of the term find a commonality in meaning in that they all mean: *story*. In the case of the Filipino term equivalent, history is *kasaysayan* which traces its roots from two words: *salaysay*, which means a narrative, and *saysay* which when translated means meaning. History, therefore, is that narrative which has meaning. And it is when narratives or stories retain their meaning to a people that they have the power to change lives and move a nation.

But much of the history taught inside the classrooms of many public and private schools in the Philippines does not carry the emancipatory and liberative quality of history. What is even more alarming is that a significant portion of the history taught in class is not even accurate. For example, it is a fact that there are still some textbooks in circulation and in use in both public and private elementary and high schools in the country that teach about the "Code of Kalantiaw." Contained in the *Las antiguas Leyendas de la isla de Negros* by Father Jose Maria Pavon which was considered as the only source of the famous code, the Kalantiaw Code was believed to have been the legal system in place in the province of Aklan since 1433 and was implemented by its author Rajah Kalantiaw, as he was called by Songcuya, Datu Bendahara Kalantiaw, the title and name given by Sol H. Gwekoh in 1966, and Lakan Tiaw by Gregorio Zaide in 1970 (Scott, 2000, p.132). So significant was the discovery of the code supposedly in the hands of a ruler in Panay in the year 1614 and especially when it was delivered and presented to the Philippine Library by a certain Jose E. Marco of Pontevedra, Negros Occidental, that Director James A. Robertson noted in his yearly report in December 1914 to the Philippine Library Board that the *Leyendas* "contains the only ancient criminal code of the Filipinos which has yet come to light" (quoted in Scott, 1992, p. 160). But in 1968, the fascination of the Code of Kalantiaw was demolished when W.H. Scott, on the

basis of carefully analyzed historical facts and information on the Kalantiaw Code, made this startling conclusion in his dissertation defended before a distinguished panel of Filipino historians led by Teodoro Agoncillo, Marcelino Foronda, Horacio dela Costa, Nicolas Zafra, Mercedes Grau Santamaria, and Gregorio Zaide (quoted in Scott, 2000, p. 134):

The Jose E. Marco contributions to Philippine historiography examined in this study—viz, the Povedano 1572 map, and the Povedano 1572, 1577, 1578, and 1579, Morquecho 1830, and Pavon 1838-1839 manuscripts—**appear to be deliberate fabrications with no historic validity. There is therefore no present evidence that any Filipino ruler by the name of Kalantiaw ever existed** or that the Kalantiaw penal code is any older than 1914. (emphasis added)

In light of the preceding discussion, the ultimate challenge, therefore, is how do we promote the teaching of history that is not only relevant but is also emancipatory and liberative, and accurate? For it is only when these characteristics of historical teaching are present in history classes conducted in Filipino classrooms that the past truly becomes for a people a compass for the future. In the words of Nietzsche (quoted in David, 2001 p.81) he said:

The history of his city becomes for him the history of himself; he reads its walls, its towered gates, its rules and regulations, its holidays like an illuminated diary of his youth and in all this he finds again himself, his force, his industry, his joy, his judgment, his folly, and vices. Here we lived, he says to himself, for here we are living; and here we shall live, for we are tough and not to be ruined overnight.

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## 60 YEARS OF PUBLISHING FROM THE CAMPUS BY THE SEA

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THOMAS À KEMPIS (1380-1471), a German canon regular and the most probable author of *The Imitation of Christ*, has been quoted as saying “If thou may not continually gather thyself together, do it sometime at least once a day, morning or evening.”

At 60 years old, *Silliman Journal* has allowed itself a step back to view history every time a new editor takes the position, and on occasion, when an anniversary is celebrated. Thus, when *SJ* turned 50 in 2004, the Editorial Board undertook an abstracting project; biologist Laurie Raymundo wrote abstracts for the papers in the “hard” sciences and I wrote the abstracts for the social sciences and humanities. “What we failed to realize when we began this task,” Laurie relates, “is that abstracts were not actually required of authors submitting to *Silliman Journal* until the mid-1990s. Therefore, we spent months reading the original papers, gleaning the gist of what the authors were saying, and attempting to construct abstracts that represented what we thought the authors



would have written, had they been requested to write an abstract” (SJ 2007, p. 8).

## THE EARLY YEARS

In *Clouds by Day and Fire by Night* (2006), Lauby, Udarbe, and Lauby describe the *SJ*’s beginnings as an offshoot of James and Ethel Chapman’s retirement from Silliman University. James W. Chapman, who served Silliman University as science faculty since 1916, was at one time (1941) the university’s executive vice president. When the Chapmans retired in 1950, friends and former students established the James W. Chapman Research Foundation to encourage “research in the fields of knowledge of value to society, industry, and government.” In 1953, a grant from the Foundation allowed the University to begin publishing the *Silliman Journal*.

The editor for Volume 1, Number 1 (1954) was the late Pedro D. Dimaya with Edith L. Tiempo as managing editor and Lino Q. Arquiza as business manager. The editorial board was composed of Dioscoro S. Rabor for the biological sciences, Gerardo A. Imperial for physical sciences, J. Elliot Fisher for the social sciences, and Edilberto K. Tiempo for the humanities. The very first *SJ* sold for one peso and fifty centavos. The first papers distributed in four issues came from faculty members in a variety of disciplines, filling the *SJ*’s inaugural volume from January to December in 1954:

The Use of English in Philippine Creative Writing *by Edith L. Tiempo*

T. S. Eliot and the Wrestle with Words *by Ricaredo Demetillo*  
Major Influences on the Poetry of R. Zulueta da Costa *by David V. Quemada*

What Senior High School Students Think about Communism *by Agaton P. Pal*

Notes on the Nesting of Some Philippine Swifts on Negros and Mindanao *by Dioscoro Rabor*

The Activation of Coconut Shell Charcoal *by Trinidad Domingo and Gerardo Imperial*

The Role of Corn in the Agricultural Economy of Negros Oriental *by Frederic Wernstedt*

- An Introduction to the Culture of the Magahats of the Upper Tayabanan River Valley, Tolong, Negros Oriental *by Timoteo S. Oracion*
- Preliminary Notes on the Rural Philippine Fiesta Complex (Negros Oriental Province) *by Donn Hart*
- The Authority and Function of the Bible *by Omar Buchwalter*
- A Study of Cost Production of Corn *by Marcelo Arnaldo*
- The Use of Local Materials in Backyard Poultry Housing *by Emmanuel Gervacio*
- New Bird Record on Negros Island *by Dioscoro Rabor*
- A Philippine Kingfisher Uses a Tool *by A.L. Rand*
- The Preparation of Glazes with Special Reference to the Use of Local Raw Materials *by Gerardo Imperial*
- Salesman of the United Nations *by Cecilia V. Gomez*
- Jose Garcia Villa versus Salvador P. Lopez *by Ricaredo Demetillo*
- An Evaluation of Buenaventura Rodriguez, Leading Cebuano Dramatist *by Rosario Binaoro*
- Major Influences on Seven Leading Philippine Poets in English: Jose Garcia Villa, R. Zulueta da Costa, Trinidad Subido, Angela Gloria, Bienvenido Santos, Homero Veloso, and Edith Tiempo *by David Quemada*
- A Comparison between the Cebuano Balitaw and the English Ballad *by Bernabe Kapili*
- The Problem of the Universal in Philippine Short Stories in English *by Beatriz Tilan*
- Implications in the Aristotelian Concept of Aesthetic Truth *by Maria Luisa Centena*
- A Comparison of the Vocational Choices of the Seniors in the Public High Schools and in the Private High Schools in the Province of Negros Oriental *by Walfrido Ponce de Leon*
- The Development of Home Economics Instruction in the Philippine Public Schools *by Christina Decenteceo*
- A Study of the Inter-Relation among Honor Points, General Intelligence, and Study Hours in the First Year High School with the View to Improve the Mathematics Instruction *by Leonila K. Tiempo*
- A Study of Students' Basic Difficulties in Grammar, Punctuation, and Capitalization upon Entering First Year High School in Dumaguete City *by Epifania Ebarle*

Ten years later, the first two issues in 1964 were the proceedings of the 7th Annual Baguio Religious Acculturation Conference, demonstrating [1] the expanding horizons of *SJ* authorship beyond Silliman Campus, [2] an obvious and inevitable openness to ecumenism, and [3] the publishing of conference proceedings which many journals consider a go-to option and for which the *SJ* eventually and often received funds from external sources in order to keep it going. In the last quarter of 1964, the entire issue was devoted to "Theories of the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia" by Cesar Adib Majul of the University of the Philippines.

## FUNDING AND STAFF

In its second year of publication, the *SJ* started receiving funds from the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia in addition to the Chapman Foundation. The United Board published "Christian Higher Education in East Asia: A Restatement of Faith in the Potentialities of the Christian College" in *SJ* (April, 1955) and has provided support to *SJ* over the years.

Several changes occurred in the staffing of the *SJ* throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Antonio Gabila became the editor in the third quarter of 1957 when Merton Munn made "general education" a byword. (The entire fourth quarter issue was devoted to discussion of the General Education [GE] Curriculum from multidisciplinary perspectives, *i.e.*, in the social sciences, in the business administration curriculum, in teacher preparation, and the matter of religious and ethical values in GE.) Gabila wrote interesting titled editorials such as "The Lesson of Southeast Asia," "What is a University for?" "The Unrewarding Profession" (referring to teaching), "Men, Cities, and the Economy," "Theses gather dust on the shelves," "The Business of Higher Education," "The Philippines: Great Expectations," "The Right to be Ruled", "The Walls we Build", and "The Golden Age of Science." Ironically, there were no science papers in the latter issue. Gabila was succeeded by Peter Gowing in the second quarter of 1963.

In mid-1965, a special issue was devoted to the theme "Christianity in the Philippines" and for the first time since its

founding, *SJ* appointed a guest editor, Gerald Anderson, who was then a professor at Union Theological Seminary in Cavite, Philippines. The next several issues were edited by David Quemada until Priscilla Lasmarias (now Kelso) became editor in the third quarter of 1966, succeeded a year later by former Divinity School Dean T. Valentino Sito. Atty. Teodoro Cortes was acting editor briefly in 1968 until former Journalism head Crispin Maslog became editor in 1969. The writing of abstracts began with Maslog although it was he (and not the article's author) who wrote these and they were more a brief description of the article than a full-length abstract. It was also during this year when Elena Maquiso first essayed the Manobo epic, "Ulahingan." By now, the *Journal* was selling at three pesos a copy. Raymond Llorca served briefly as editor in 1973.

In 1974, with Jesus B. Chanco as Editor and the *SJ* was five pesos a copy, the editorial board was composed of Teodoro V. Cortes as chair and Crispin C. Maslog, Rodolfo B. Gonzales, T. Valentino Sito, Pedro V. Flores, and Gorgonio D. Siega as members. While much of the content of *SJ* was still dominated by discussion on education, religion, social issues, and the arts, the natural sciences finally printed an all-science issue in the second quarter of 1974.

The *SJ*, however, continued to be edited by non-scientists: Mariano C. Apilado and Bucalen C. Saboy were issue editors for the third quarter in 1978, Luz U. Ausejo for the fourth quarter, Ausejo and Luis Lacar for the first quarter of 1979, and then Rodolfo Gonzales (this time a biologist) and Dale Law for the second and third quarters (1979) with a special marine biology issue.

Dale Law was editor from 1980 to 1983 with Joy Perez in the interim in mid-1982. The entire volume of all-science papers in 1984 was dedicated to the late and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the historian Luz U. Ausejo.

The librarian Eliseo Bañas was editor in 1984 when the entire volume was on research on Upland Agroforestry System in Negros Oriental, Philippines—Social Subsystems. The *SJ* was by now, three decades later, fifty pesos per issue. Dale Law returned to edit a special issue on biology in 1987 and Joy Perez a special issue on Upland Development in 1988.

## DYNAMISM AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

In the 1990s, many special (themed) issues were published including one on the Tubbataha Reefs National Marine Park (1993) and another on Philosophy and Religion (also in 1993). By 1994, the *SJ* was 300 pesos (or \$25) a copy. After having served variously on the *SJ* staff, Ceres Pioquinto became editor-in-chief in 1997 and held that position for ten years.

As *SJ* Editor and Chair of the *SJ* Editorial Board, Ceres brought about many significant changes in the *Journal*. She expanded the membership of the board and added an overseas counterpart. In addition to the business manager, a technical editor was brought in (currently the *SJ* production editor serves the same functions). Eventually, Ceres also recommended the inclusion of associate editors to assist her in various tasks. Editorial policies were developed and a peer review system was instituted. The *SJ* also began organizing lectures by its authors and contributors. The special projects to commemorate the *Journal's* 50th anniversary in 2004 were all on Ceres' initiative.

Submission to the *SJ*, however, waxed and waned, so that by 1997, the *SJ* became a biannual publication after having published quarterly since its founding in 1954. Under Ceres' leadership, *SJ* also began a new section called The Readers Forum whereby readers are invited to react (in writing) to a submitted article whose author then responds (also in writing), giving the author the so-called "last say." Ceres also gave the *SJ* a new look—publishing art work by local artists on its covers—and ensured that there would be regular contributions to the Notes and Review sections in addition to the full-length articles.

With needed support from the Pulido administration, the quality of *SJ* publishing was much improved so that the Commission on Higher Education granted *SJ* Class A accreditation in 2009. By then, I had become editor starting with the 2007 issues, but the current state of *SJ* is fully attributed to Ceres' many efforts at raising its quality and standards.

## THE PRESIDENTIAL

The health of a publication, I believe, is much dependent on institutional and administrative support. One way by which this

may be expressed is by written contributions that the university president makes to the *SJ*. Of course, long before he became president of Silliman University, the biologist and national scientist Angel C. Alcala had already been writing in *SJ*—on amphibians, sea urchins, reptiles, crabs, starfish, giant clams, coral reefs, and birds, to name a few. No other president can top Alcala's research writing in his discipline and contributions to *Silliman Journal*.

The first Filipino president of Silliman, Dr. Leopoldo T. Ruiz, contributed "The Essence of True Liberty" back in 1959. Dr. Cicero D. Calderon's valedictory address "Silliman University and its Mission" was written in 1962, followed by "Our Stake in Higher Education" later that same year and "An Asian looks at the United States" in 1967 and "Should Bill of Rights include Economic and Social Rights" (1969). It appears that Calderon's interests led him to the International Labor Organization from which he later contributed another paper in *SJ* entitled "The Settlement of Labor Disputes: Problems and Approaches" (1980).

Incidentally meantime, other presidents also contributed to *SJ*: then president of the University of the Philippines Salvador P. Lopez wrote "The Filipino University and the Challenge of Nation Building" (1971) and former president of the Philippines Carlos P. Garcia contributed "On the Powers of the President" (1972). Former president of Silliman University Arthur L. Carson also contributed "Progress and the Common People" in 1974. Carson had left Silliman by the time the *SJ* started publishing, having been president from 1939 to 1953.

In the seventies, Quintin S. Doromal wrote "The University and Social Change" (1975), "Silliman Education for the Service of Others" (1975), "Personnel Management in the Philippines" (1977)—Doromal's area of expertise—and, "Silliman Education is a Challenge" (1978). Mervyn J. Misajon wrote "Silliman Educational Mandate" in 1994. But, as I said in my editorial notes for the Abstracts (2007), gone are the days of publishing speeches in *SJ*.

The current president, Ben S. Malayang III had already written for *SJ* in the early days of his being on the philosophy faculty at Silliman, but his paper entitled "When Our Tree Becomes Only Your Tree: What Happens to it, What Happens to us?" (2007), a contribution to the *SJ* Readers Forum, was an early sign of the president's mission and advocacy.

## ON BEING 60 YEARS OLD

Sixty means retirement in many institutions. It is a much more significant number in publication and I would prefer to look back over the years with a sense of integrity and accomplishment rather than despair (to use the words of the psychohistorian Erik Erikson). This is because the *Silliman Journal* was born healthy, was very active and dynamic through childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, and despite floundering somewhat in midlife, has recovered quite nicely and is aging beautifully.

I served as associate editor of *Ceres Pioquinto* before I became editor in 2007 and so one will find that the pages of *SJ* are replete with *Ceres'* influence. But everything around us is moving at a faster pace. Educational reforms are born seemingly every day. Technology and the World Wide Web have connected us to people we have not met and institutions we've never been to. Our contributions are coming from surprising places not just within the Philippines but abroad. And increasingly, and more importantly, many are seeing the value of publishing.

And so, not just because it is *SJ's* 60th anniversary, or perhaps because it is, the editorial staff revisited and improved the *SJ* editorial policies. Significantly, the *SJ* has finally caught up on its backlog and has become current and timely. Finally, *SJ* production will go back to being a quarterly publication in 2015. Certainly, the *SJ* is not retiring; in fact, *far from it*.

We can look forward to the next sixty years believing that research and publication will continue to be a dynamic component in the academe. The topics keep changing, but the vision does not. The contributors are younger, sometimes first-time writers, but the more senior experts continue to nurture and collaborate with young academics, providing each other needed perspective. The *SJ* has been able to hold its own in the publishing world, but internally, it needs a visibility—its own prominence—so that it can be consistent, relevant, and valuable to its contributors and readers.

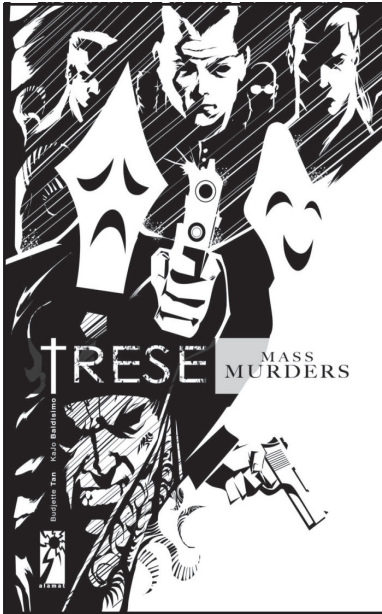




## REVIEWS







THE TRESE SERIES  
Budjette Tan and  
Kajo Baldesimo

Manila: Alamat Comics, 2005-2012



THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE AS  
FORM IN BUDJETTE TAN AND KAJO BALDISIMO'S  
*TRESE*

*Review by* Jesulito M. Kuan

DESPITE MY BEING an avid comic book fan, I was never aware of *Trese*'s existence until in the summer of 2014. It was a recommendation from one of the fellows in a writers workshop held in the University of the Philippines, Cebu. She advised me to read *Trese* that I may draw some sense of locality from Budjette Tan's stories, which she said I lacked in my writing. So I looked it up, and found that *Trese* is a comic book series well-known for its use of Philippine mythology in a contemporary backdrop.

Although I found it interesting to get to know the comics, I wasn't able to read it immediately until just recently, since at that time I was fascinated by *The Sandman* by Vertigo comics and I was also reading up a bunch of short stories by Micheal Moorecock.

I finally had the chance to review *Trese*, all the five graphic novels that relate to the main arc in this critique. I wasn't as impressed during my first time reading the comics as I was with *Sandman* or *Hellblazer* since there seems to be nothing other than the noir feeling of the books. *Trese* did little to draw me in or enchant me with their characters. But in retrospect, the team work of Budjette Tan and Kajo Baldisimo, nonetheless, was a statement that our local comic book artist can compete with the West. Critics are already praising the duo for their work for bringing back local myths into pop culture. In 2010, *Trese: Mass Murders* won Best Graphic Literature in the 29th National Book Award and again in the same category in the 31st National Book Award in 2012.

I'm not going to base my critique on what most people already said. Instead, I will draw away from my own biases and focus on the work itself with no external influence of judgment other than Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* for an overview of the medium. The attention on this study is on Kajo Baldisimo's art and Budjette Tan's writing, for I find that there is something in black and white that seems fitting in *Trese*.

Comics are nothing new to Philippine culture, even Jose Rizal made a comic strip entitled, "The Monkey and the Tortoise" published in 1885. They were unlike the comics most people know of, just sequenced pictures with captions (Tano, 2011). It wasn't until the 1920s did the medium boom. *Komiks*, a Tagalized version for the comics, became a household name with the release of *Mga Kabalbalan ni Kenkoy*, illustrated by Tony Velasquez and written by Romualdo Ramos in 1929 (Villacrusis, n.d.).

Despite being heavily influenced by Western ideas and design, the Philippine *Komiks* nevertheless retains the collective consciousness of its people. Most of its themes during early twentieth century were grounded on epics, legends and the supernatural. There are also themes revolving around regular lives that center on romance and comedy, which are popular with the masses (Villacrusis, n.d.).

What *Komiks* provided was entertainment during a time when television and movies were hardly available to everyone. It helped promulgate an accessible means of escape for the lower

and middle class through local newspapers and also provide them cheap literature to consume (Villacrusis, n.d.).

The most notable characters born Philippine shores were *D.I. Trece*, *Lapu-lapu*, *Darna*, , *Dyesebel*, and *Captain Barbell*, which have been remade into films and even television shows. Since their creation, they have had a great impact on Filipino culture (Tano, 2011).

*Komiks* is a new form of Philippine art that still exists today (Villacrusis, n.d.). *Komiks* has evolved since the days of Kenkoy and Darna and, with the advent of new technologies, spread across the Internet. After the new millennium, Trese entered the comic book scene in black and white.

*Trese* is a series of komiks created by writer Budjette Tan and artist Kajo Baldisimo. The komiks centers around the story of Alexandra Trese, a detective regularly called upon to solve supernatural cases occurring throughout fictional Metro Manila. This particular komiks is known for its use of characters from Philippine mythology in a modern setting.

There are twenty-one cases in all for my readings. My research focused on *Trese: Murder at Balete Drive*, *Trese: Unreported Murders*, *Trese: Mass Murders*, *Trese: Last Seen After Midnight*, and *Trese: Midnight Tribunal* because they are the main arc of Budjette Tan and Kajo Baldisimo's works. A close reading of these texts was needed to view them more objectively. By text, I mean a broader definition of it that also includes non-written materials such as images and colors (Murfin & Ray, 2009). This is especially crucial for comics, for the medium relies on both pictures and words to convey their ideas. I limit myself to certain aspects in Trese on finding a central motif that resonates both visual and literary using formalism as a framework and *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud as a guide. I will also comment on how Baldisimo's art harmonizes with Tan's writing in creating a visual form for the literary.

For a brief background, Formalism emphasizes on the form of the text rather than its contents. The method provides a more objective approach to literature by focusing more on the work, finding the 'literariness' of the work, and differentiating it from other spoken or written discourse (Murfin & Ray, 2009). Unlike the other schools of literary criticism, formalism disregards the subjectivity often held in the narrative and finds a more general theory of aesthetics discovered in form, the use of technique, and

its evolution. Through this method, formalists tend to discuss any universal truth that might be found in a literary work. The Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky's concept of defamiliarization provided one of the major contributions to the movement, wherein as the normal perception becomes more habitual, it becomes more spontaneous and unconscious. 'Defamiliarization' is often there where form is established in art, for it is the purpose of art not to be recognized as a designated meaning but a specific viewpoint inherent in art; the experience of 'artfulness' rather than the overall work (Habib, 2005).

The only problem with formalism in application to a comic book is that the medium is not entirely a written text but a combination of drawn images and words, although art formalism does exist in modern art but mostly applied to paintings.

Formalist art criticism was first introduced by English critic John Ruskin in 1843 and innovated by Clive Bell in 1914 and had close similarities to its literary counterpart focusing more lines, colors, texture and composition to produce an aesthetically pleasing work (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.).

In comics, literary and art coexist. They are a form of sequential art that are "images in a deliberate sequence intended to convey information" with added words (McCloud, 1993, p. 9). For Scott McCloud (1993), "word and pictures and other icons are the vocabulary of the language called comics." He defines that pictures as instantaneous received information and writing as perceived information that takes time to decode its abstract language when reading. Only when pictures become more abstracted from reality and require more perception can they become more like words. Likewise, when words are more direct and require less levels of perception they become more like pictures (McCloud, 1993, pp. 47-48). This argument attests that both word and pictures can be at the same aspects on a certain level of perceptions unified in the language of comics.

My need to combine both art and literary is to find the relevance of color and art to its literary form in my search on what is being echoed in the visuals, tone, characters and even narrative that reflect a central motif.

For *Trese*, the choice colors of black and white of the artist doesn't only play a major role on the visual but also compliments the writer's literary aesthetics. Quite obviously, it sets the mood like the black, white, and grey colors of a noir film. In *Trese*, there

are only two colors, which go from very bright to pitch black and still manage to convey an array of emotions.

Colors have a central role in comics. They can express a dominant mood or tone that adds depth to enhance the reading experience. Through black and white, the ideas from the artist are more directly communicated than flat color forms (McCloud, 1993). For Baldisimo, the strangeness is objectified with the use of dark colors and added realism. The sense of weirdness is amplified and more focused in bizarre depictions of the creatures of the Underworld.

Lines are sometimes broken that suggest what David Hontiveros (2008) noted in his introduction to *Trese: Unreported Murders*: "The impending threat of intrusion by the supernatural." Even the black gutters cannot contain the invasion. There are times when characters cover two or more panels to show how abrupt the actions are, since space is the equivalent to time in comics as it is in film (McCloud, 1993). Moreover, it adds to the sense of overlapping between two worlds

Sometimes it is color that dictates the frame just like in "Embrace of the Unwanted," where the *tianaks* were drawn with hardly any line, all but mere ink blots that take shape only, enhancing their sense of eeriness. Likewise, Baldisimo makes good use of contrast all throughout the series using white outlines on a black background to display fear, shock, even horror.

The scenery in *Trese* is as grim and shadowy as the creatures Baldisimo tries to reflect. Realism is emphasized in his scenery, but only enough to set up the location. He tends to move from realism to abstraction in a way that little by little, the scenery behind the characters are slowly becoming simplified until all that's left are just traces of lines and a white or black background, depending on the mood the artist wishes to convey. This type clear-line style only gives more importance on the character's actions or dialogue than on the scenery, so readers will be able to focus on what's happening. The transition to background from realism to abstraction gives a close up point of view of the character's psyche, like for instance using black when a character is shocked or frightened or white when focusing on facial expression or physique.

In terms of art, *Trese* has a certain quality of paradox: the colors are black and white, broken and closed lines often create a whole character, and the background goes from realism to abstraction

after a few panels. In the literary, there is another pattern going on.

There is a sense of irony and paradox in Budjette Tan's writing that Baldisimo rightfully conveys in black and white. Alexandra Trese, the main protagonist, is a character full of paradoxes. In the first graphic novel, *Murder at Balete Drive*, we can even see in the cover that she sprouts a 'devil's hair cut.' By first impression, one might mistake her as a demon with that horn like partings of her hair, more so that she is together with monsters bearing their fangs in the background. The use of dark and light colors makes her look brooding, one eye more shadowed than the other. At the bottom contrasted by the white background, we can see she is holding a jagged knife.

As the readers turn the pages to her first case, they find a man in a car crash shocked to see a dead woman. Two policemen come to investigate. Before they could take away the body, they wait for someone. On the next page, we learn the name of the mustached policeman, Captain Guerrero. Alexandra Trese is introduced and makes a comment: 'It's not every day a white lady is found dead.' Alexandra Trese scans to find a salty trace as clues. Captain Guerrero gives her the information needed for this investigation; he admits that she is the only one who has a clue on solving their current mystery. Alexandra Trese doesn't know, but intends to find out.

In search for the killers, she asks a *nuno* for information. After knowing that she is the daughter of Anton Trese, the *nuno* tells her the killer used mermaid bones. It leads to a further search in different locations close to the sea until she arrives at a pier managed by *aswangs*. In questioning, she has to kill some of them with the help of her Kambals; then, she maims their leader for answers. Afterwards, the *aswang* leader confesses. A woman has traded her baby for mermaid bones. After getting the details, she tells Captain Guerrero, she knows the face of the real killer.

They soon find the address of the real killer. It turns out to be a woman named Missus Del Rosa whose motivation was to avenge her late boyfriend. She admits to the deeds. Captain Guerrero could not arrest her because they could not arrest anyone who killed someone who is already dead. The chief tries to make an excuse to arrest her for selling her baby. Alexandra warns them that the Underworld will seek its own justice. At midnight, Del Rosa's house goes ablaze due to a live wire. There is nothing left



when Alexandra returns with the police. Justice has been served, and at the corner of her eye she sees the ghost of Missus Del Rosa (Tan & Baldismo, 2008a).

We can draw a lot of contrasts from this short summary of "At the Intersection of Balete and 13th Street." For instance, the dead white lady is a paradox. Captain Guerrero calls Alexandra Trese for this supernatural concern, but she doesn't really work for the police. In fact, when she confronted the *aswang* in the warehouse, she barely had any regard for damaged property during the shootout or for the wellbeing of the *aswang* leader when she took his eye out. She is working with the law, but the same law would arrest her for the massacre and attempted murder. This raises the conflict with Trese and the law: she operates outside the law when it comes to the supernatural even though those creatures are under the same protection. When she reported her new information, there was hardly any question how she got it. Captain Guerrero, on the other hand, tried to make excuses for Missus del Rosa for giving away her child to seek for justice by murdering a ghost. Nonetheless, del Rosa was killed in a fire. The great irony is revealed in the last few panels: she became what she killed.

In the first case, Alexandra Trese is established as a lead authority when it concerns the supernatural. She consolidates with the creatures from the Underworld and her father is well known by them. She operates covertly outside the eyes of the law. Other than that, there is little information given about her in the first case. However, more can be said about Alexandra Trese on the succeeding cases and after we trace her origins in *Trese: Mass Murders*.

Foretold by the seven psychics who have the same visions, the sixth child of Anton Trese will be a paradox of possibilities: "She will bring about the great age for the Underworld," they all said, "or will seal it banishing all creatures the gates of the Underworld, banishing all creatures from the Earth, preventing any and all magic from touching the lives of people" (Tan & Baldismo, 2009).

One of those seven psychics is Alexandra's mother, Mirada. Despite being fortuneteller, she didn't expect to be Anton's wife. Paradox and irony runs in the family: "Trese's (Anton) first born will become a hunter of the dark..."; "His second... a teacher of history and antiquities"; "His third child will become a man of God..."; "His fourth child will become a thief...." (Tan & Baldismo,

2009).

The fifth child was Alexandra's twin but died shortly after she was born. The fifth child's soul was made into a weapon, which Alexandra uses. The pattern shown here is that each child of Anton has opposition to the one before them. The first child becomes a warrior, the other a teacher; one became a priest while the other one a thief; the fifth child dies, Alexandra lives.

What separates Alexandra from her sibling is that she has two destinies set before her. Either one would tip the balance of the universe. Yet she chooses to do neither what the seven foretold. Unlike her brothers who had their own definite paths, she instead chooses the middle ground; like the color black that combines with white to form grey, she is within a grey area of her destiny.

There are little details on what happened during her trials in the Balete tree other than her father's death. However, the narrator on the last panel of "The Baptism of Alexandra Trese" affirms that Alexandra's true purpose is to become 'the city's warrior and the city's healer,' another contrast since a warrior maims while the other mends (Tan & Baldismo, 2009). In a sense, Alexandra becomes a figurative weapon if she is to be the city's warrior. Conversely, The Fifth Child contained in her dagger becomes a literal weapon. Thus I must point out how ironic it is to have a savior with a 'devil's hair cut.'

The Kambals also have certain contrast in them as well. Their names are Basilio and Crispin. They are the sons of deity Talagbusao, the Datu of War and a human mother. The boys have a power of flight and could regenerate easily. Also, they have a hunger for blood just like their father. Even as kids, the Kambals were capable warriors, which they demonstrated when they killed Puti and his pack, once the guardians of Anton. Anton and Alexandra save them from their father's plans to consume their hearts so that he could retain his physical form.

Given the dangers, Anton raises them to be Alexandra's bodyguards. Anton gives them masks, which once belonged to a group of aswangs whom his father liberated from 'the Theatre of Doom.' With the help of their masks, they are able to control hunger and be bound to Alexandra Trese even after Anton's demise. Half-humans, half-gods, they are natural born fighters who are redeemed as protectors in control of their killer instinct. The patterns of contrast are apparent.

The two have different demeanors just like the different

faces of their masks: Basilio wears the mask with a smiley face and Crispin wears the one with a frown. The mask is also drawn simpler than the face beneath, a break from the usual realism in much of Baldismo's work. By abstracting an image through cartooning, the artist is able to focus on specific details by stripping down to essentials — the personality in this case (McCloud, 1993). Basilio tends to crack joke and is more playful than the older, more serious Crispin. Their masks not only provide a means of controlling their blood lust; at the same time, they are also icons that represent their identity. Furthermore, the method of realism and cartooning and serious versus playful is another batch to add to the list of contrasts found within *Trese*.

When it comes to the entirety of the plot, *Trese* has episodic structure made up of twenty one cases. They are nonlinear; in fact, "At the Intersection of Balete and 13th Street" started off in medias res with little background on the characters, letting the reader piece together who Alexandra Trese is. On a side note, there is little narration or given history on what is an aswang or a nuno. Much of the narrative is concentrated on dialogue and action that results to the quick resolution of the plot.

Majority of the cases can stand on their own. Some of them have recurring characters. The episodes in *Trese: Murder at Balete Drive*, *Trese: Unreported Murders*, *Trese: Last Seen After Midnight* are character-driven, having the central characters Trese, the Kambals, and sometimes Captain Guerrero ("Episodic Structure," n.d.).

*Trese: Mass Murders* and *Trese: Midnight Tribunal* are plot driven, having a central event as driving force to set the story going ("Episodic Structure, n.d.). The third volume, *Mass Murders*, explores the origins of Trese and the Kambals while in *Midnight Tribunal*, the fifth volume, Trese has to stop a group of lawyers who started executing people for corruption.

Fragmented as the stories may be, they do have a controlling theme: the old coexisting with the new. The Underworld Creatures — the *kapres*, *higantes*, *tikbalangs*, *aswangs*, and *duwendes* — are creatures from Filipino folklore and they lurk in the dark corners of *Trese's* setting like regular people. Some get involved in organized crime while others corresponds to society just to survive. For example, the nuno in "At the Intersection of Balete and 13th Street" made a home in the sewers rather than on his usual mound because it had become too polluted outside. The list goes on where the supernatural overlaps with human activities.

In "The Rules of the Race," a *tikbalang* participates in drag races. In "The Tragic Case of Dr. Burgos," an enchantress owns a spa while a super human brings justice in his own hands in "Our Secret Constellation." In "A Little Known Murder in Studio 4," a *duwende* helps two girls to become celebrities, whereas in "The Outpost in Kalayaan Street," the dead attacks a police outpost because someone used a 'buhay na bato,' a summoning stone to raise them. In "Embrace of the Unwanted," *tianaks* start a murder spree in a mall, and in "The Association Dues of Livewell Village," one of the seven typhoon lords is the owner an electric company. As for *Trese: Mass Murders*, cases nine to thirteen, there is Darago and Darranga, *datus* of war who own an arcade.

Moving on to *Trese: Last Seen After Midnight*, there was a *diwata* looking for her beloved gardener in "Cadena De Amor" while in "A Private Collection," a man is hunting down the creatures of the Underworld, which causes a war between the *mananangal* and *aswang* tribes. "Wanted: Bedspacer" had a *bangungot* poison a water tank causing the paranormal epidemic depression. In "Fight of the Year," a demon tries to makes a deal with a man who wants to be a famous boxer. Then there is *Trese: Midnight Tribunal*, where a character named Madame has her own connection with a *tikbalang* tribe.

In *Trese*, the creatures from folklore are urbanized. They use their magic to take the shape of humans to hide in plain sight and to coexist as beggars, butchers, and even spa owners. They behave in accordance to the norms of society to adapt to their urban environments. Only a few people know they even exist, and Alexandra does her best that these creatures would not intervene with human affairs such is the nature of her family's pact with the great stallion Armanaz and Bagyon Lektro—which even extends to the *Kambals*. Even the police take an effort on the cover up in the peculiar happenings around the city; such is the reason for Captain Guerrero to make up that excuse in "At the Intersection of Balete and 13th Street."

Alexandra, though, doesn't necessary hide the facts when confronted with the need for an explanation. Some characters, like the doctors in "Embrace of the Unwanted" and "Wanted: Bedspacer" dismiss them as mere 'children's stories' and myth. In "Embrace the Unwanted," Alexandra tries to warn Doctor Gallaga that she may be the cause of the appearance of the *tianaks* at the mall (Tan & Baldismo, 2008b). In "Wanted: Bedspacer,"

Alexandra tries to explain to Doctor Tauson that the sudden death was a paranormal occurrence than a medical one.

Alexandra Trese enforces the divide between the world of magic and the majority of the populace. She becomes the mediator of the two worlds but doesn't usually interfere with the creatures as long as they don't get involved in murder cases.

Almost all of her cases do involve murder except for "Fight of the Year." Most of these motivations involve family like in the stories "At the Intersection of Balete and 13th Street," "Our Secret Constellation," and "The Outpost in Kalayaan Street" while others involve the death of a friend like in "Cadena De Amor" and the entirety of *Trese: Midnight Tribunal*.

In *Trese*, a source of love often becomes the source of hate and motivation for murder. For instance, in the first case, Miss Del Rosa's love for her boyfriend was the reason she traded her baby for mermaid bones. In another instance, "Our Secret Constellation" was about how Daniel Vargas stole her sister's magical stone to annihilate all his sister's enemies and exact vengeance on her sister's rapist. Hate from love is another set of contrast in *Trese* together with modern and myth that coincides with the komiks' contrasting form.

On reading *Trese*, one finds an occult detective comic in black and white. However, upon close examination, one could see that these contrasts aren't only represented in the visuals but run through the narrative, the characters, ideas, and the motivation of the plot. Kajo Baldismo's art not only gives an atmospheric horror for *Trese*, but also gives us a visual clue on what to expect from Budjette Tan's writing because they are paralleled.

As I have noted, irony fills stories of *Trese*—love turns to hate; characters are proven wrong due to their assumptions that certain mythical creatures do not exist while karma can easily get involved with lots of reversal of situations to create the desired bitter sweet end.

In the same way the broken lines of Baldismo create the illusion of shape; the paradoxes of ideas also create character. Also, the transition from realism to abstraction is a notion that something concrete, such as the street of Manila, can easily change into intangible as emotions or something mythical. The transition fits how day to day life in *Trese* can easily 'turn for the weird.'

Contrast is the central motif of *Trese*—the irony in the stories, paradoxes in character, and juxtaposition of opposing ideas in

the setting all working together like writer and artist making a comic book. The use of old Filipino mythology in a contemporary setting is the spice that makes *Trese* different from the medium it stems from. The colors are added flavors, the art a means of representing the ideas. Thus, both art and literary words rely on each other to convey a form and tell a story in a dance of light and shadows. Black and white colors the form of *Trese*.

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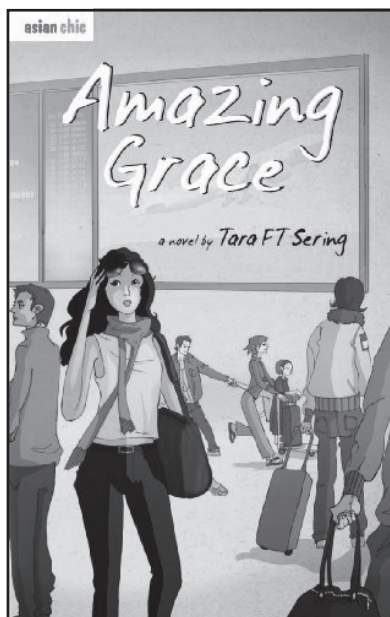
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## AMAZING GRACE Tara FT Sering

Manila: Anvil Publishing, 2010, 133 pages



### BEYOND THE CORSET: ON TARA FT SERING'S AMAZING GRACE AND PHILIPPINE CHICK LIT

*Review by* Veronica Alejado Vega

THE TERM 'CHICK LIT' brings a lot of images to mind from long-legged heroines sporting heels, to the career woman going through mishaps in the name of life and love. All of these images are wrapped in a package that presents itself with a brightly-colored cover to catch readers. The works of Tara F.T. Sering are easily marked as 'chick lit' thanks to the covers of her novels such as *Getting Better* (2002), *Almost Married* (2003), and *Amazing Grace* (2009). Of course, it is not just outside appearances that demarcate her works as chick lit but the contents as well.

Within the first, two mentioned titles, readers follow along



Karen, a woman who works for an ad agency, as she struggles between the fallout of a relationship, single life, and then finding love once more. The third-mentioned novel *Amazing Grace* talks about the main character Grace and how she tries to pursue a relationship to end in marriage. As one can notice, there is an essential theme of a woman who is defined by modern times: she is a worker, and she is not shy to pursue men and act on her sexuality. This theme is a core part of chick lit. Yet in regards to the case of a woman, in her representation to the world and her role in culture and society, one must consider feminism.

Ever since, the representation of women, as well as their thoughts and opinions, has always been kept under wraps due to misogynist stereotypes. Seen as only figures of ownership without much else to offer, the works and lives of women in the past were set aside. However, thanks to the Feminist Movement in the 1960s, the rights of women and gender equality were set. From this, the once obscured roles and images of women came under light for study. In feminism, critics analyze texts in order to observe the following: [1] the portrayal of women and their experiences, and [2] the tradition of women writing considered “lost” throughout history.

Considering the goals of feminism we go back to Tara F.T. Sering’s works. How does the chick lit genre hold up in light of feminism? In this paper I hope to explore and find an answer to this question by analyzing three of Sering’s chick lit novels.

Upon the first utterance of the term “chick lit,” the reactions to this particular genre vary. From avid readers there is a spark in their eyes—recognition—and then enthusiasm mixed with excited chatter. Immediately they fire off heroine names, bring up key events that other readers can easily relate or react to, and then gush and swoon from the romantic union of a character A to character B. For the closet-romantics, there is a shift of eyes and nervous fidgeting before an uneasy confession slips out of their mouth. “Yes,” they mutter, “I’ve read *Bridget Jones*...” Yet for the majority of the literary world, the mention of “chick lit” is met with derision if not flat-out nonchalance. Even I myself do not easily warm up to the shelves decked out with vibrant if not pastel-toned book covers with images that utilize “fragmentation of womanhood” (Rende, 2008, p. 21). Yet why is this?

Just like most literary critics, I have written off the genre as nothing but a “quick read,” just stories to entertain without providing much thought and/or substance. Commercial reads in

pretty packaging. Yet with the consideration of Feminism, chick lit offers a variety of thoughts and opinions in regards to the roles of women, their views and place in society, and their consciousness in the world now.

Before we run off in stiletto heels, let's backtrack and talk of history, or rather, the start of the genre. Chick lit initially started off as a jab in the literary world. In her senior thesis Rende recounts the genre's genesis as

marked with both satire and sarcasm. Semantically, the name for the genre itself remains questionable in that it joins two terms with negative connotations: chick (the slang reference for a woman) and lit (the shortening of "literature" to "lit" typically denotes frivolity or insignificance). (2008, p. 3)

The term first appeared when American novelists Cris Mazza and Jeffrey DeShell used it back in 1995 to entitle a collection of postfeminist fiction with mixed themes that were presented in "courageous, wry, honest, intelligent, libidinous, and unapologetic (3)" writings: *Chick Lit: Post-Feminist Fiction*. In the following year, the term reappeared in James Wolcott's article "Hear Me Purr" in *The New Yorker* and was used with disdain to describe the "girlish" writing styles of female newspaper columnists during that period. Yet the real birth of chick lit as a literary genre came in the form of Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996). Soon after, the term "chick lit" shrugged off its dark coat of irony/sarcasm and contempt to strut on the catwalk to women who continue to cheer it on if not walk along with it. In *Chick Lit as the New Woman's Fiction*, Ragaišienė (2008) included a quote from Mazza who described the change as so: "somehow chick lit had morphed into books and lime covers featuring cartoon figures of long legged women wearing stiletto heels" (p. 67). This can be seen from other titles that would soon follow after *Bridget Jones's Diary* such as Marian Keyes' *Watermelon* (1995), Jane Green's *Jemima J.* (1999), Sophie Kinsella's *Confessions of a Shopaholic* (2001), and the sequel to *Bridget Jones's Diary* entitled *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2004), to name a few.

Historically, romance literature is traced back to works such as Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela* (1740) to Jane Austen novels such as *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). Through time the romance genre thrived through publications thanks to the British publishing

company Mills and Boon in the 1930s. Later on new romantic novels would reach North American shores thanks to Harlequin Romance books publishing and distributing British romance titles in the early 1960s. With a shared characteristic of focusing on love stories, it is no surprise that chick lit is an extension of the romance genre:

The Romance Writers of America (2006) define romantic novels as books ‘where the love story is the main focus of the novel’ and which have ‘an emotionally satisfying happy ending’. Within this definition there are many different types of romance . . . and newer sub genres such as the sci-fi romance, erotic fiction for women, and ‘chick lit’. (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006, para. 9)

In romance stories, the narrative mostly revolves around the development of a relationship between the heroine and her “hero” or male counterpart. Most of the conflict or action in these stories consists of “obstacles that must be overcome in order for the hero and the heroine to fall in love” (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006, para. 10). Of course some factors to the conflict consist of differences in class, race, nationalities, or just emotions (e.g. mutual animosity or denial, etc.), but in general the main focus of these stories are the development of a love relationship between two characters and how it sustains through a variety of hardships. In the case of chick lit, the heroines or main characters do try to look for romance but the romance is not the overall focus to readers. It is in this sense that chick lit departs from romance and is considered as post-feminist due to other elements, specifically how it relates “a woman’s experiences such as gender, love, and dating” (“Chick Lit,” 2014).

The “eyes” of the readers are no longer fixated on the idea of a “love couple” alone, or the revealing of mutual feelings. Like a camera, the lens of readers pan back to consider the whole picture regarding the heroine in chick lit; it takes in the heroine trying to identify herself through her sexuality, and her place and role in society/the world, and the work place.

In Rende’s (2008) article she lists other attributes that help identify chick lit to readers:

In order to classify a specific novel as chick lit, the following criteria must be included: [1] A ‘young’ female protagonist (typically post-graduate, mid-20s through early 30s); [2] A

posh urban setting, most frequently Manhattan, New York City or London—a Los Angeles or Philadelphia thrown in here and there; [3] An occupation based primarily in the communications industry i.e. publishing, advertising, public relations, journalism, fashion; [4] Problems in the workplace, which typically occupy a significant portion of the text, ranging from insufferable coworkers (usually other women), an infatuation with either the boss or a male coworker, or being stuck in a ‘dead end’ job (usually a given); [5] Frequent romantic entanglements, but remains single throughout much of the text (and woefully laments such a status) until the ending; [6] Excessive compulsive behaviors i.e. obsessively spending money, strict dieting, and; [7] Eccentric mothers who represent foils to their ‘independent’ daughters. (pp. 4-5)

So what is the overall charm of chick lit and why does it have so many followers? As stated earlier, with its shared characteristics to romantic prose, the pursuit of a lasting, loving relationship is part of the appeal to chick lit. However, it is not the only factor that marks its popularity to contemporary readers. What chick lit offers to its readers is the sense of female readership; it reaches out to modern women through its use of popular culture(s) such as fashion and shopping for the latest brands, and it gives a different voice to represent women in general (Gruslytė, Taujanskaitė, & Žemaitytė, 2013, p. 125). Ragaišienė (2008) also commented on the popularity of chick lit:

Anna Kiernan relates such a shift in “thematic dominance” to the social context of readership when she holds that originally conventional romances and Harlequin romances in particular were aimed at unemployed women being supported by men or women with low incomes. Chick lit, meanwhile, “is marketed more broadly, to both the typical ‘Harlequin lady’ and the urban single woman with a disposable income” (Kiernan, 2008, 208). (p. 73)

Chick lit’s broad range of audience is shown through the comparisons of heroines in the typical romance novel to heroines such as Bridget Jones and Jemima. Heroines within the romance novels were considered to be “effortlessly beautiful” (Gill

&Herdieckerhoff, 2006, para. 35). Heroines in chick lit fell under two categories: either they are the 'ugly ducklings' that transformed themselves into 'swans,' or they are women who do not offer much physical attractiveness, or they are consistently resisting the 'demands' of being beautiful. Another attribute that separates the two different heroines from their respective genres is that the heroine in the romance novel stands alone—she is an individual that needs financial support or care [through the man who she will end up with] whereas the chick lit heroine is a career woman who has income and a place of her own, but searches for better things (e.g. a different career or a better relationship):

In traditional romantic novels, heroines are not normally seen as particularly career driven, despite their spirited nature and intelligence. Rather, they seek advancement and power through a romantic alliance with a man. In this respect, the female characters in chick lit novels seem markedly different, as they are invariably portrayed as employed and committed to the idea of a career (Gill & Herdieckerhoff, 2006, para. 35-36).

Regardless of its ongoing success to readers and its ever-present display on shelves in bookstores, chick lit is still scorned within the literary world. Most literary critics would argue that the substance and content of chick lit is simply lacking—it only appeals to the sense of consumerism and pop culture.

A literary researcher Irena Ragaišienė claims that chick lit is often dismissed in literary criticism despite its appeal to contemporary female readership. It is obvious that chick lit has definitely won the status of a feminist bestseller as literature "for the 'new woman', the contemporary reader of our post-feminist [sic] culture, and a 'new woman's fiction', a form of popular literature mostly written by women for a female audience" (Ragaišienė, 2008, p. 68). However, this contemporary literary phenomenon has not emerged without the literary, cultural and social background; it refers to both romance novels and feminist strivings, having the purpose in common, i.e. qualified as women's consciousness-raising fiction. (Gruslytė, Taujanskaitė, & Žemaitytė, 2013, p. 125)

The last line from this quote may be the root of the chick lit's uncertain stand within the world of literature. As a sub-genre of romance literature, chick lit is easily scoffed at as yet another type of escapist fiction for women. If anything, chick lit is scoffed at because it is a fiction formed by and for women, a dark thought when one casts his/her mind back to the uneasy rise of women literature and the social and cultural movements that helped it to grow—the Feminist movement.

Since time immemorial, the view and opinions of womankind was relegated as such: forms of property and individuals without voice, opinion, and/or a life of their own, and so on. The woman had to conform herself to the times, donning the corset and losing voice once the laces were tied. The same is considered in regards to women's writing. The lives of women presented in writing were viewed with distortion; the concerns of women swept aside and dubbed peripheral what with the domestic or housekeeping novels that circulated. These roles of womankind were ingrained throughout society that it was not questioned until World War occurred. As men went off to fight in the war women took over the workplace and they participated in labor in factories and other such jobs. Once the war was over and life was to return to normal, women fought to keep their jobs—they enjoyed the new roles that this different workplace offered to them.

Feminism is a politics. It is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between women and men in society. These power relations structure all areas of life, the family, education and welfare, the worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure. They determine who does what and for whom, what we are and what we might become. (Weedon, 1987 as cited in Green & LeBihan, 1996, p. 229)

Soon there were publications that advocated for women's rights by "attacking patriarchal attitudes, cultural misogyny and the ingrained belittlement of women" (Carr, 1996, p. 120). Such publications consisted of *The Female Eunuch* by Germaine Greer and *Patriarchal Attitudes* by Eva Fige in 1970, and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* in the following year. However, the focus on women's writing continued to escape scrutiny, and literary canon was still dominantly male. Only a few authors managed to achieve



canon such as Jane Austen and George Eliot, but for the most part, women's writing was still judged as something insubstantial or mediocre:

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* was judged to be a classic, though her sisters, Charlotte and Anne, had their writing dismissed as melodramatic, sentimental and lacking in form. Virginia Woolf was thought overly genteel, far too ladylike to be taken seriously, part of effete Bloomsbury, and even those who praised her, like David Daiches, agreed her art was 'limited' (Daiches, 1971: 561). Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, now it seems on virtually every university's first-year English course, was simply not regarded as literature. In Leavis' famous divide between 'mass civilisation' and 'minority culture,' *Frankenstein* was undoubtedly, like so much women's writing, on the wrong side. (Carr, 1996, p. 120)

With the exclusion of women's writings noted in canon, especially within the world of academia, the second wave of Feminism exploded into being thanks to other political movements such as the Civil Rights Movement in North America and the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain. While such movements were perpetuated in America thanks to sex politics, Britain's movement was perpetuated by the resistance of white supremacy and "nationalistic, anti-imperialistic struggles" (Carr, p. 122). Carr (1996) mentioned that "the sixties was a decade in which traditional hierarchies were being challenged on a wide front: attitudes to class, race, social authority and colonial dominance were all subject to critique and re-examination" (p. 122).

Within the 1960s there has been a rise of women writers who offered new additions to both literature and thought. In their works they began to explore and question the roles of women as well as the relationship between men and women. Examples of these writings include Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), and Jean Rhys' book *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) which served as a prequel to the *Jane Eyre* novel. Soon after, women's literature from both the past and present came under scrutiny, more so—as Carr (1996) puts it—when "feminists were finding a new value and significance in women's work, as well as using it to understand their own dilemmas in the contemporary

world" (p. 125). Through the critical thought of Feminism, literature was critiqued in order [A] to expose misogynist stereotypes in male literature, particularly how female characters are portrayed, and [B] to recover the "lost" tradition of female writing. Titles such as Patricia Meyers Spacks' *The Female Imagination* (1975), Ellen Moer's *Literary Women* (1976), and Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) appeared to recount the history of women's writing and to breathe in new life and appreciation for them. The journey back to recover other texts by women was also used to fight against prior critique of women's writing as "inferior" or "scarce," and considered different examples of women's writing for analysis. Such texts included diaries, journals, letters, oral histories, etc. (Green & LeBihan, 1996, p. 232). Through literature, the image of the woman is redefined by various factors: her representation in the work, her desires, and how it translates the culture of its time to readers. Feminist literature also began to appear thanks to writers such as Margaret Atwood, Erica Jong, and Marilyn French, and the Virago publishing house was founded in London (Carr, 1996, p. 124).

With the feminist movement tied with cultural and/or political movements, one can expect the face of feminism to undergo a variety of makeovers. In their introductory part regarding Feminism, Green and LeBihan (1996) already gave a heads up to the term being multifaceted: different historical periods, different sexual orientations, different cultural identities, different social classes, all suggest a particular focus for the work of feminist critiques (p. 228). For instance, in the 1980s, the scope of feminism became murky. With other factors to draw in—such as lesbian and gay theory—the feminist stance became uncertain. Does the feminist movement truly apply to all women? Does it fully represent every woman in the world and her experiences? It was noted that during the second wave of feminism that it was "predominantly white and middle class" (Carr, 2006, p. 122).

French feminism came into play as the concept of "gender" came under fire and was considered as a construction of culture. Terms such as essential feminists and constructional feminists came to be and created a divide in feminism. The essential feminist focuses on physical attributes given since birth as opposed to the constructional feminist that had its identity molded by patriarchal culture. Just as the movement branched out or changed, so did women's literature. The writing style of women in the 70s departed



from realism and became more modern and experimental.

Given the different forms of feminism, it should not come as a surprise to acknowledge post-feminism. So what is the new face of feminism? Do the same questions or concerns still stand for women? Have the voices of women past and present been heard? Is the role of the woman rectified? Most literary critics would say that yes, the feminist movement was deemed successful. However it presents itself with another problem: With the success of feminism in the literary world, what are the new issues or questions in hand?

Green and LeBihan (1996) mentioned that feminism “has produced a change in the questions and difficulties faced by feminist critics in recent years” (p. 253). In regards to post-feminism, readers and critics are to consider the following: [1] if feminism went beyond its place as a movement and has landed in another stage of discourse, and/or [2] if feminism can be discussed along other ‘post’ discourses such as post-structuralism, postmodernism, etc. (Green & LeBihan, 1996, p. 254) These new ‘post’ discourses undermine prior knowledge or understanding that individuals have of themselves and the world. Overall, the tone of post-feminism leaves a bitter aftertaste, for yes—feminism has indeed changed how women and their roles are expressed throughout the world. However it has come to a point when the intention of feminism—the resistance against patriarchal oppression—is done; gender equality has been achieved (for the most part). What, then, is there to “fuss” about?

Continuing with Green and LeBihan’s (1996) feminism section, they mention Naomi Wolf’s *Fire With Fire* (1993). In her work, Wolf explains the aftermath of feminism; it gave too much power and voice to women to the point that there is ‘victim feminism.’ Through ‘victim feminism,’ the image of women continues to hold up the appearance of weakness, frailty, and the lack of defense without help from a man (p. 256). In general, with the extensive scope of feminism, it has lost its initial focus on the plight of women and has inevitably placed attention on the other gender once more, if not with more emphasis. Tania Modleski’s essay collection *Feminism Without Women* (1991) evoked this notion when she commented on feminist critic Elaine Showalter. There was a transition of focus, from gynocritics (criticism revolving around women’s experiences) to a type of ‘gender’ studies in which feminism became a medium to study masculinity rather than having this scrutiny of men as a way to progress feminism (Green & LeBihan, 1996, p. 258).

In her article, Isbister (2009) brought up the many facets of post-feminism with mentions of a variety of critics, most saying that post-feminism as “a historical shift” full of “ideas of professional success and personal happiness, and ultimately an ideal of ‘having it all’ while other critics continued the argument of that post-feminism expressed further misery for women (para. 5).

So with the mention of post-feminism and its somewhat ambiguous image of women and her place in the world, how does it tie in with chick lit? Gill and Herdieckerhoff (2006) argued that chick lit does indeed rewrite the romance, “but not in ways that allow for complex analyses of power, subjectivity and desire” (para. 43). That is, there has been no further development in regards to achieving feminism. Yet others critics would applaud chick lit in the way they separate themselves from the typical romance heroines since the heroines are not “naïve virgins,” but are career women with their own source of income, and that they do have some sexual prowess. While earlier literature would have the worldly woman punished (either through death or some other means, e.g. The character Lucy in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*). In this sense, chick lit does proclaim the rights and powers that women may exercise; a woman can hold her own in the workplace and she may be single.

However, from these examples there is a see-saw effect at work. Regardless of the chick lit heroine being her own woman, she still falls for the social and cultural norms in regards to having herself settled down in marriage—a concept that most feminists would argue as being ingrained from patriarchal customs. Regarding this, the relationship between feminism and chick lit is in a constant state of fluctuation. In one instant we consider attributes that perpetuate feminism in this genre—the heroine is now a sexually active, single, working lady, and yet at the same time—here, the see-saw tips the other way—she still needs to fall for a man for stabilization, ultimately leading to marriage. The spheres of feminism and chick lit do rotate around one another. Yet one cannot fully tear the two apart from the other, nor can a person claim that one sphere overshadows the other. The two spheres of feminism and chick lit do touch but their contact is light and fleeting. In order to explore and further explain this analogy, I shall peruse some of Tara FT Sering’s works.

Tara F.T. Sering is an author of five book titles. Four of the five book titles fall under the chick lit genre: *Getting Better* (2002), *Almost Married* (2003), *Between Dinner and the Morning After* (2005),

and *Amazing Grace* (2009). Her other book, *Reconnaissance* (2003) is a collection of short fiction. Not much information about Sering is easily gleaned from the Internet, and if a reader were to read the "About The Author" page from *Amazing Grace*, the reader would only know of the following: Ms. Sering has five books published in the Philippines; she was an editor for the art magazine *Contemporary Art Philippines*, Manila; and she is working on a new book. Her blogger profile doesn't offer much as well except musical preferences (she likes bossa nova and a group called The Housemartins) and a few, favorite movie titles (*The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *Something's Gotta Give*).

Of her five books, I've chosen three titles for this paper: *Getting Better*, *Almost Married*, and *Amazing Grace*. In *Getting Better*, readers follow the heroine Karen as she undergoes the painful process of heartbreak and revival; in the first part of the story she finds out that her boyfriend/fiancé cheated on her with an officemate, and afterwards it's just a downhill road. She becomes an emotional, despondent mess until she tries to better herself. At the end of the story (after her failed attempts at betterment), Karen does find new love in Bert, a schoolmate from her past. *Almost Married* is the sequel to *Getting Better* in which readers follow the continued romance between Karen and Bert, and her struggle to believe in the love between them. Karen goes through issues of doubt and trust, more so with the idea of marriage on the line, but in the end she reaffirms their relationship (and gets an implied happily-ever-after ending). In *Amazing Grace*, the story revolves around Grace in pursuit of her fiancé who travels to Singapore. They are to be married, but upon their reunion, and her discovery about him and his "friend" Kaela afterward, she breaks off the engagement and is content in being single.

Referring back to the chick-lit formula given by Rend (2008, pp. 4-5), Sering's writings follow the mold: [1] the heroines are in the right age bracket (Grace from *Amazing Grace* is 27 years old, while Karen from *Getting Better* and *Almost Married* is 28); [2] the posh setting(s) in the stories include Manila, with mention of other locations (e.g. Tagaytay, Boracay, or international places like Singapore or Hong Kong); [3] Grace has an occupation in taking care of preschoolers whereas Karen works in a commercial ads agency — some jobs that deal with communications; [4] both heroines have an unsatisfactory life in the workplace; [5] romantic entanglements abound though with their own, respective differences regarding to

their sustained, single status; [6] both heroines are ever fretful of wedding pressures from family and pursuing relationships, and finally [7] both heroines are exposed to “eccentric mothers.”

However, Sering offers her own flavor to the genre by giving it that Filipino spice what with the naming of characters, the Philippine settings of the stories, etc. Earlier I’ve claimed Sering’s writing as “simple, straight-forward, and refreshing” and I base it off in this sense: she follows the chick lit formula, yet she adjusts it to the Filipino culture. The fit is light and almost perfect as opposed to it being tailored to just a “white, heteronormative, (roughly) middle-class existence and point of view” (Rende, 2008, p. 4). How easy it was to see with the inner eye both Karen and Grace as working, single ladies going through similar, emotional rides and romantic mishaps like Bridget Jones!

Though readers who are not Filipinos may stumble with some terminology (e.g. the use Filipino language or expressions in *Getting Better* and *Almost Married*), overall the language use is not that jarring from reading Western chick lit. The heroines are still fleshed out the same in the sense that this womanly struggle for acceptance, love, and beauty could be easily translated to all. Sering’s titles have the capability of reaching out to a broader audience. Of course there are some reservations—the writing still has a cut-off point since, regardless of nationality, the women portrayed in such titles are still middle-class. The romance and struggles of a woman who has a lower, social rank greatly differ to career women.

Both the characters Karen and Grace strive to take control of their lives in order to be a “successful and contemporary woman” (Isbister, 2009). The sense of taking control and going for what makes one/a woman happy expresses woman empowerment as readers observe both characters acting on their desires—Karen trying to improve herself through working out and dating more to get over her break-up, Grace following Mike throughout his travels. However, in both cases, this form of success does not simply translate to being a successful working woman, but rather as a woman with a job and a husband/family. Whereas the woman empowerment is part of feminist ideas—the achievement of gender equality and power between sexes—the fact that both heroines are still expected to marry goes against feminism. This contradiction can be seen in the first part of *Getting Better*:

First, pretend that it doesn’t bother you. Watch movies

about how great it is being unmarried but boyfriend-ed. Single, dating exclusively and enjoying all the perks—you've got a kiss-and-cuddle buddy without the children and commitment, so you should be ecstatic right? (Sering, 2003, p. 30)

Within the first few lines, readers understand that Karen is a “free woman” who is not tied down in a full-blown relationship: marriage. She is out enjoying her life with a partner with “all the perks,” and yet the question in the last line makes pause for doubt. Why does Karen have to convince herself of being happy with her relationship with her boyfriend and not married? Within the sequel *Almost Married*, Karen's regard to marriage and relationships had changed:

First, drop the old habit of pretending that it doesn't bother you and admit to yourself, finally, that you're a sap for love. That even if you like making cynical remarks about how Pinoy men have a hard time spelling the word “faithful” and that, generally, they think fidelity is an inhuman requirement—much like submitting stool samples on demand—you still find yourself being moved to tears when you hear about how some guy proposed to the girl he knew he would end up marrying the first time he laid eyes on her. (Sering, 2003, p. 10)

The admittance of being a “sap for love” practically proclaims that Karen wants to be in a relationship with a man as opposed to living a life alone. So with the eyes of feminism, readers would view this line as a sort of proper conduct for ladies; regardless if you're working or not, women are expected to want heteronormative love. It seems that the whole woman experience within the pages of chick lit revolves around women finding a sense of stability and happiness with a male partner as opposed to just finding happiness by being on their own. In view of this, the roles of women are still tied to the concept of marriage and having a “male guide” in their lives like previous romance novels.

However, the achievement of a love union leaves an opening for argument. Prior to ending with Bert, the character Karen went through a variety of blind dates that ended in failure. After that fiasco, she turned her attention to herself and her needs. With the

fallout of a relationship and a focus to the self, couldn't Karen still have feminists cheering? Though it wasn't blatantly expressed, some may read this at a subconscious level for instruction—what a woman should do other than focus on the pursuit of love/a relationship.

In the case of the heroine in *Amazing Grace*, rather than working towards an end with love and marriage, Grace returns to a state of being single. Throughout the novel Grace struggled with her role of being a girlfriend and fiancée as expressed through her interactions with other characters. One example that comes to mind is the dinner scene in which Grace finally meets Mike's parents. A child relative was playing and fell down, crying until Mike's mother picks the boy up:

"Oh Paolo, don't cry," she coos. She hands him to you, says, "Here, hold him. Mike will love it when he sees you." Ask yourself, with more than a little tinge of shock: Is this a...ploy? This time, you are unable to say anything at all. When, you wonder all the way home, did it become your job to get your boyfriend to propose marriage? You certainly don't see anyone lighting a match under Mike's ass to get him to buy a ring... (Sering, 2009, p. 38)

From this example readers experience Grace's criticism regarding the situation; why must it be her job to inspire her boyfriend to propose to her? This sort of exchange backs up feminist ideas in that it questions the role of the woman—Grace—and her actions for marriage, and at the same time, it scoffs at the general pressure for marriage set by people or culture.

Another shining moment in *Amazing Grace* was found in the scene when Grace was left to her own devices in Hong Kong. As she sits through an auction, she goes over her reasons as to why she changed herself for Mike. Then the epiphany came:

Again: and for what did you pack your favorite pair of Birkenstocks whose leather had grown so soft with much use, just the way you liked it? So that you wouldn't sabotage your chances of getting engaged?....And why didn't you want to sabotage your chances of getting engaged to Mike? So that you could get married and spend the rest of your life packing little bits and pieces of yourself and sending



them off in a donation box for charity?! (Sering, 2009, p. 160)

The scene continues to explain how it was due to fear that Grace kept her role as a girlfriend then fiancée to Mike: fear of losing Mike, fear of disappointing everyone around, fear of one day turning 52, alone, and regretting that she did not seal the marriage deal when she had a chance, more than 20 years before (Sering, 2009, p. 160). Also, in her final moments with Mike before their official break up, she conceded that Mike was a “convenient boyfriend” in order to appease her family’s expectations for her.

Even though there is an implied love interest for Grace, the end of *Amazing Grace* didn’t glorify the joining of two people in love. Instead, Sering had her character from being in a relationship to being alone. With *Amazing Grace*, I believe that Sering took a more feminist approach in that she explored the pressures of marriage forced upon people in society, critiquing it through the reactions of Grace towards friends, family, and Mike, for though she does end up in the “for marriage” bandwagon, she questioned her ride all the way through the novel.

In regards to her writing style, Sering offers her own brand of chick lit that I would like to dub as “simple, straight-forward, and refreshing.” Unlike most articles I’ve read regarding chick lit, Sering utilizes the second person’s voice in her works as opposed to the widely-used first person (a go-to voice in chick lit) or the third person voice that is more convincing to readers in the literary world as mentioned by Gruslytė, Taujanskaitė, and Žemaitytė (2013):

Chick-list is told in a more confiding, personal tone frequently using first person narration, like having a best friend tell you about their life . . .

. . . a third-person narration used in *Pride and Prejudice* shows that Austen followed the conventions of the nineteenth-century impartial narrative which in itself sounded authoritative and convincing. (p. 127)

By using the second voice, Sering does not make readers passive listeners to the woes of the characters, nor does she try to exercise authority on them to believe in her writing. Rather, by using the second voice, she quickly places readers into the shoes of the heroines in her story, creating a connection between the text and reader that is more real and tangible.

There are messages to discern in Sering's works through the lives of her heroines. While it was earlier stated that the main focus of chick lit, especially as a sub-genre to romance, is still set on the development of a relationship, Sering does not fully constrain herself to this goal. In the case of the character Karen, Sering offers the message for women to take better care of themselves:

At eight in the morning, you wake up from a weird dream. In it, you were making out with Miko on the couch of your apartment and your mom suddenly breezed by holding a large black tire *salbabida*. Under her breath she said, "'Yan ba ang being nice to yourself?" (Sering, 2002, p. 68)

In this part of the narrative, Karen had a moment of weakness and had slept with her cheating boyfriend Miko. She already found out that, as a man, he was anything but, and that she deserved a better love, yet she still slept with him that night.

The scene is more powerful when, earlier in the chapter, Karen's mom dropped by for a surprise visit. With Karen's attempts at self-betterment (Karen trying to work out, quit smoking, and fixing up her apartment with new furniture), her mom says to her, "*Buti na lang* you're thinking of yourself now" (p. 66). It drives home the irony of the situation as well as message for ladies to think for themselves and to think for their own happiness. More examples of being happy with one's self can be taken through the showcase of other couples in the narrative: the newly married Tonette and Jake are not as happy as they ought to be with their constant squabbles; and the "nymphomaniac" best friend Janice, though not sexually lacking, is still hung up on the man she cheated on. Through these examples the message is clear: the culmination of a relationship does not always ensure happiness, and if anything it is overrated.

The idea of being happy with one self also echoes in the other title *Amazing Grace*. Already Sering sets up Grace as a heroine with her own ideals of happiness by providing readers to peek at Grace's life checklist. Items included in the list had Grace travelling to other countries on her own, pursuing goals of achievement such as being an illustrator for a children's book, going on a European tour, having her own artwork sold in auctions, and exploring a foreign city alone (Sering, 2009, p. 13). The mention of exploring a foreign city alone shows a heroine who does not immediately seek coupled status but is more focused on her own self interests. And



yet Grace becomes pressured to join the dating scene in order to achieve the glorified goal of marriage:

Sometimes you can't believe the preoccupation of getting to the finish line called "Marriage and Babies." You are stupefied as you realize, it just doesn't go away, this obsession. It's ridiculous. It's outdated. It's Jane Austen-esque. And evidently, it is very much back in fashion. (Sering, 2009, p. 16)

Later on in the story, Grace is engaged to Mike, but they are separated due to Mike's work relocating him to Singapore. Eventually, Grace follows after Mike when she becomes aware of his constant contact of a leggy blonde Kaela. It should be noted that Grace was influenced by her friend and coworker, Alice, to pursue Mike when she, on the other hand, did not have an intense need to do so. Granted her not wanting to go stemmed from fear, but all throughout the novel Grace had always battled with the concept of relationships, marriage, and how she felt about the whole ordeal. From Singapore to Bangkok, and then to Hong Kong, Grace goes through a goose chase scenario with her older sister Lena, Lena's husband Drew, and Lena's husband Han in tow.

It wasn't until Grace freed herself from her entourage that things came together. In her moment of solitude (and with memories of her favorite Birkenstock shoes) Grace realized the folly of her actions:

This moment, you slowly realize, encapsulates how you have behaved in the latter part of your relationship—quietly and voluntarily ceding aspects of yourself to your partner, who, come to think of it, never asked you to do such things! (Sering, 2009, p. 158)

After this epiphany, she finally meets up with Mike at a café only to formally break the engagement off. The ending of the story is triumphant for Grace who feels a new calm while her ex-fiancé frets over his task of disappointing his parents.

With Grace regaining her sense of self and identity, feminists should be able to rejoice from this turn of events. Rather than the joining of a working lady who finds a sense of whole being with another person/male, Sering presents Grace who went from being a supposedly-soon-to-be-happy, married woman to just singly,

happy Grace. It is in this sense that Miko from *Getting Better* is an example of the use of 'male studies' in order to progress feminism as suggested by Modelski (Green & LeBihan, 1996, p. 258). The messages of marriage and self-happiness that Sering presents may not be blatantly stated in the story, but readers are able to pick up on them on a subconscious level. Everything comes together in the end of Sering's works by the way she allows her characters to achieve happiness that is not necessarily brought on by being with a man, but in the way the heroine finally decides to define what she wants for herself in life.

The study of chick lit provides interesting theories that can go along or against feminism. However, due to their ever-fluctuating relationship, one cannot easily establish a direct tie to the other—it is all touch and go. Yet with Sering's works, chick lit is capable of progressing feminism by manipulating the roles of men and women. In the case of feminism, it continues to culturally and socially shape the context of chick lit. Both aspects are able to highlight the other in their own ways and are capable of releasing women and women writing from the corset they've worn throughout history.

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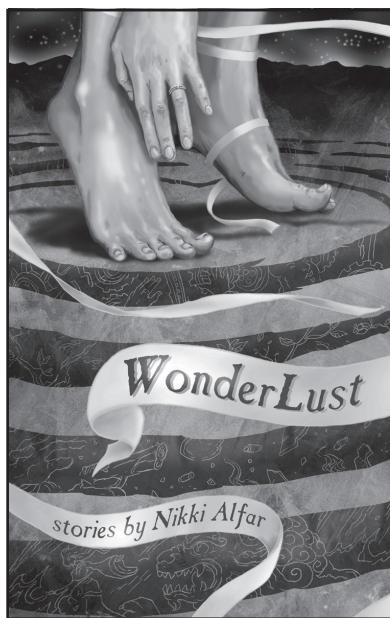
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## ABOUT THE REVIEWER

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## WONDERLUST

Nikki Alfar

Manila: Anvil Publishing, 2014, 148 pages



## IN NIKKI ALFAR'S NEW BOOK OF FANTASY, THE WAR OF THE SEXES RAGES ON

*Review by* Ian Rosales Casocot

IN INTRODUCING NIKKI Alfar's stunning first collection of short stories, *Now, Then, and Elsewhen* (University of Santo Tomas Press, 2013), which recently won the National Book Award for its category, the fictionist Sarge Lacuesta began by dissecting the triad of fictional places the stories are set in, which defined the structure of the book, and found Ms. Alfar's fierce and detail-hungry imagination as the pilot light that animates what would otherwise have been "the mechanical task of world-building" in lesser writers' hands. Mr. Lacuesta also noted with some finality: "[She] writes from a very real place built out of memory and experience; [she is a writer] who

asks real questions about [these worlds] and who wields a genuine talent that many Filipino writers can only fantasize of summoning.”

Memory and conscientious world-building indeed are the twin heartbeats in Ms. Alfar’s stories, but that last remark is more than true in the consideration of her fictional output. While she has been writing for quite a while—churning out Palanca-winning stories and plays, publishing her works of fantasy in assorted international publications, and helping edit the annual *Philippine Speculative Fiction* series of anthologies—Ms. Alfar has only very recently took to putting out many of her tales in collected form. Together, these stories seem specifically bundled to effect a common magisterial spell. In the process, perhaps like Ursula K. Le Guin before her, she has helped demonstrate that genre can be quite literary, and can be effortlessly engaging. If husband Dean Francis Alfar is considered as the godfather of Philippine speculative fiction, she can be more than its godmother. She is its spritely spirit.

Her recent collection, *WonderLust* (Anvil Publishing, 2014), may well be considered as a continuation of her first book—a kind of sequel that goes farther than its predecessor, because it grows significantly darker. Structured similarly in geographical terms, *WonderLust* offers stories set either in “Familiar Ground” or in “Farther Shores,” mapping out two different sensibilities.

In the latter section, we fly towards the outworldly. The clouds we encounter in many of the stories in this section are the nebulous whimsies of the fantastical, but often anchored in the language of the fairy tale. In “The Dog, the Devil, and the King of Heaven,” we encounter the titular characters and their destinies: the canine is a faithful creature that journeys to dangerous lands to save a foolhardy, even if heavenly, monarch from a disastrous marriage with the devil. In “Doe Eyes,” easily the most delightful story in this section, we follow a princess born with the eyes of a doe, and how she uses this aberration to see people in their truest light. In “Rampion,” we get the Rapunzel story—and witness it throb to a different urging: the sexual awakening of a fairy tale character and its consequences.

The other stories in this section are less outwardly, but are no less fantastical. In “Divine Light,” a secret agent becomes the bodyguard—or perhaps babysitter—for a god. In “Milonguena,” the tango becomes a deadly negotiation between two spies. And in “The Mechanism of Moving Forward,” the book’s most ambitious story, and which is based on historical characters, we get the tale

of a Japanese noble woman fighting to save the life of her samurai father from an assassin by helping create a robot—and in the process, finds true love.

But it is the first section of the collection that easily becomes the source of awe. If only because, in articulating a familiar world with astonishing and wholly unexpected slivers of the fantastical, we get a kind of magic realism that is unlike we have encountered in a Gabriel Garcia Marquez or a Haruki Murakami. It is one suffused with humor, and one where the magical—or the horrific—is rendered to be so completely ordinary, the effect on the reader is jarring. This is demonstrated most effectively with the story that begins the collection, “The Zombie on Cuenca Street.” Here, an about-to-be-divorced desperate housewife witnesses the beginnings of the Zombie Apocalypse—one just got trapped in the deep ditch that surrounds her posh suburban house—but other things get in the way of her deep considerations: last season’s Nike shoes, her nosy neighbors, her Porthault bed sheets, her estranged husband who is possibly gay, alimony, and the fluctuations in the real estate market. It is gleefully a horror version of a Brett Easton Ellis narrative, but none of the dreadful nothingness. And in “Appliances,” a man goes through a succession of girlfriends—which he buys, after a series of defects and disappointments, from a store. When the perfect girlfriend is finally purchased, things start to change for our protagonist—readily a metaphor for the men in today’s dating realities.

Two things soon become apparent as the main shapers in Ms. Alfar’s narrative. The first is a slaking embrace of the sexual that provides the linchpin in the destinies of the characters, something we’ve seen in the Rapunzel and the robot girlfriends stories, but which is even more graphically demonstrated in “Bound,” a story that is very much a play of sounds and senses where an alien being in female form indulges in a soliloquy of dark sexuality with a man—and soon rapidly shifts to make us question who is prey and who is predator; and in “Revelation,” where a 39-year-old man encounters an uncomfortable epiphany in the middle of oral ministrations.

These sexy stories, however, underline Ms. Alfar’s bigger theme, which is the mine-filled negotiations in the war of the sexes, and often how this slow decay has repercussions for the entire family. In “Tom Yum,” the ingredients of the titular dish become a parable for keeping a family together, even with the problem of distance. In

"An Unexpected Stop," a couple on a road trip to Baguio decides to make a quick overnight stay at a roadside motel—and finds more than they bargained for in the battle for their marriage. It's very much in the territory of Lorrie Moore's incandescent domestic fiction, but one that is filled with so much vague horror. In the book's best story, "The Puppy Years," we encounter a plotless narrative where the youngest of five siblings recalls, in several vignettes, a childhood of teases and pranks—which all lead to an unforeseen turn in the end that renders the reader mournful for the vagaries our lives take on.

This is a sad, beautiful book, and gives definite proof of what a magician of words, and of meticulously articulated loss and unloving, we have in Nikki Alfaro. It is a reconfirmation of a major talent.

### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

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