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MARCH 1979
(A-55)

Archipelago

THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippine Christian icons

The Butuan paleograph: ethnographic implications of an ancient script

Trends

Notes on craft and art, Philippine setting

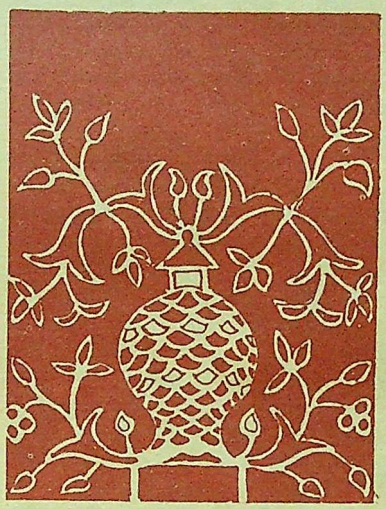
COLORS shift into textures, nuances into full-blown issues, at the Design Center's exploratory exhibition, "Textiles and Fiber Arts." It derives from a single theme, that crafts are a still potent expressive means, inviting a battery of complex questions. We gather from a glance that craft traditions are being revived or reinvented, that everyday utilitarian objects need not have vulgar colors and insipid designs, that crafts need not even produce useful things, and that, certainly, craftsmen and hobbyists can transcend clichés.

Indeed, a ferment in the field seems imminent from the sheer number of exhibited items. The key words, textile and fiber, delimit the scope to a group of related crafts: the resist dyeing processes *(ikat, batik* and *plangi);* weaving techniques including tentative variations on traditional textiles; and allied activities such as collage with fabric and assemblage.

Traditional weaving is represented by a sampling of exquisite ethnic fabrics. There is enough material packed in the Design Center for at least three exhibitions. Obviously, there is a wealth of truly exciting craft activities in this country.

In the United States and Europe, a similar interest in crafts has led to some serious experiments with the fine arts. Many craftsmen are engaging their materials in ways akin to painting and sculpture. Artists have involved crafts processes and materials in serious art-making. The CCP exhibition text explains that this is an international art development of some importance, artists and craftsmen interchanging roles and activities at will.

Some quarters carry the issue even further by suggesting that, ultimately,



crafts will fuse with the fine arts and become the same thing. The Design Center plunges headlong into the discussion by exhibiting sculpture-like needle-weavings and painterly uses of dyes. Where is all this leading?

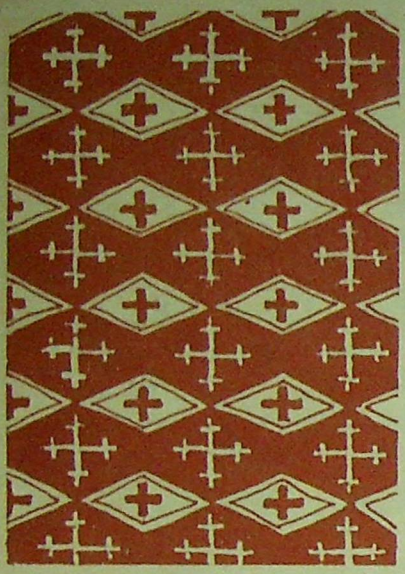
Not everyone agrees that crafts can assume the status of art, many insisting on the classic opposition between the terms. Crafts always connoted the mechanical production of functional objects using prescribed materials. It is therefore thought to be manual, tedious and pragmatic. The craftsman is usually anonymous. According to conventions we are familiar with, art is cerebral as opposed to manual, and deliberate instead of tedious. A work of art must issue from a single individual's vision. It must possess a primarily aesthetic rationale.

Thus in the exhibition we recognize the Ilocos napkins as craft and the Luz collage as art. But classifying the bird woven from various fibers and the work called "Mayon" is a little trickier. Both works attempt more than the usual utilitarian qualities of craft without detracting from the needle-weaving process. And what of the paintings in batik?

We are more casual now with previously sacrosanct concepts. In the general breakdown of rules and definitions, we find the semantic boundaries between craft and art becoming petty and ridiculous. The eminent critic Barbara Rose describes as prejudicial the distinction between the "major" arts of painting, sculpture and architecture and the "minor" arts of photography, printmaking and the various crafts. A dichotomy born out of Renaissance needs, she says, is only an intellectual obstacle now. Nothing is more apparent now than artists pre-empting the craftsman's materials and processes.

The exhibition points this out by including works by Arturo Luz, Ray Albano and Manuel Rodriguez, Jr. These works are not diversions, as both Albano and Luz have devoted one-man exhibitions to this type of explorations; Rodriguez exhibited a similar work in the recent CCP Annual. Abroad, the list of artists who have seriously considered fiber and weaving is significant: Eva Hesse, Robert Rauschenberg, Lucas Samaras, Louise Nevelson. From the crafts side we hear of personalities celebrated for the extraordinary things they do with crafts: Peter Voulkous in ceramics, Josip Grau-Garriga in weaving. Biennials as prestigious as those for the arts are being held for crafts, primarily weaving.

Weaving is especially susceptible to artistic experimentation because of its obvious tactile and multi-dimensional characteristics. Fibers can be molded, dyed, frayed, draped, scattered, coated, assembled, twisted, wrapped. When woven, figurative structures can be made



as well as pure forms, whole systems, objects shaped for touching, inspecting, viewing, walking through and around. The primary quality is softness, so that sculptures can be made that are static but also pliant.

Unlike metal or stone, fibers and weavings can attain hardness and immobility without becoming forbidding. Fibers also open up a vast range of new textures. In the exhibition, surfaces are as widely varied as the materials used. These surfaces are also layered, folded, contoured and patterned. Furthermore, fibers are direct and sensuous; metaphors come easy because they trigger immediate, gut-level reactions. For the Filipino artist especially, fibers possess associations that seduce the mind with poetic possibilities.

The revitalized crafts are supported by its own polemics; the vocabulary is familiar to all activities seeking acceptance as art. The weaver is said to be "battling for recognition," attempting forms "that break through the province of art" by being "liberated from the confines of technique." A political aspect informs his activities in much the same way the early photographers fought for a place in relation to the fine arts. The needleweavings exhibited literally argue for themselves. They seem to flaunt the freedom to hang in space, stand freely, portray nature, be rough, fine, elegant in ways unlike the tendencies of common fabrics.

The same self-consciousness underlies the apparent confusion about larger implications. Because crafts are easy to relate to, it is easy to misconstrue the crafts/arts fusion as a grand leveler, investing status or value on practically anything.

The analogy with photography stops when we isolate the nature of the crafts campaign. Photography mounted a campaign based on the medium's propensity towards a new visual aesthetics and subsequently a new type of knowledge. In the case of crafts, no new territory is discovered. Crafts seek acceptance on the basis of the same prerogatives and tendencies enjoyed by painting and sculpture.

The more militant craftsmen claim that only technical obstacles prevent weavings from assuming a more active relationship with space, from effectively promoting new ways of seeing, therefore from participating in art history. Such obstacles, they say, are surmountable. The exhibition has demonstrated that indeed it is possible to create provocative works with weaving as it is with the fine arts media. But it offers little advice on how to view these works.

We are tempted to fall back on our exceptionally rich weaving traditions in our effort to draw some insights from this issue. The Design Center overtly encourages such musings: a full fourth of its premium space is devoted to the selection of ethnic textiles. And no wonder: the T'boli *t'nalak* is evidence of marvelous powers of abstraction and control; the Maranao *malong* demonstrates an unusual color sense and delightful symmetry; the Kalinga *tapis* is a rhythmic collage of fiber and shell.

Again we are confronted with intimations of poetry. In the Ifugao *ikat* blanket we marvel at how elements from the environment are abstracted, but, more than that, how the formal values embodied in the design reflect very contemporary ideas. But aside from valuable lessons in design, the traditional weavings offer some understanding of the relationships among expression, craft, art and life.

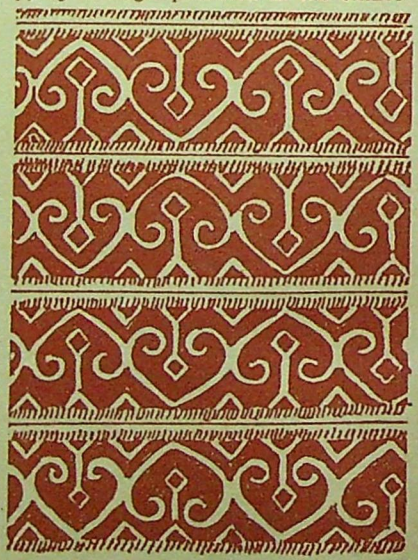
In non-specialized societies, the craftsman is the artist. Objects of social utility are also receptacles of the society's grandest imaginings. Research is only beginning to uncover the complex system of symbols attached to both object-making and the crafts' end-product.

We know that power resides in certain types of embroidery, color, weave, motif, varying from one class, family, community to another. Even without discussing these hierarchies in depth, we recognize the crucial role of the craftsman/artist in objectifying and perpetuating the values of his society. Aesthetics and practical activities both serve to systematize the society's conceptual and spiritual life.

But the point is that we are an irrevocably specialized society, referred to as civilized precisely because we have divided tasks among specific professions. Thus the juxtaposition of traditional and contemporary crafts in the exhibition is merely nostalgic, inspirational at best. It helps us understand that whatever significance we aspire to attach to crafts today cannot be the same significance the Mansaka weaver enjoyed.

Even Japan, where the crafts aesthetic was brought to its loftiest levels, had to invent the term "bijutsu" for the fine arts, if only in the 19th century. The problem is clear: we need to evolve a truly contemporary crafts aesthetics.

Two frames of reference may be useful now that traditional definitions and values are being revised. The exhibition touches on the first one, intentions, by singling out works which were clearly motivated by statement-making. Occupying strategic positions in the exhibi-



tion area are Ellen Schattschneider's experiments with rope and wire, with plaiting and needle-weaving calling attention to form and materials. Carmen Aquino and Eugene Jamerlan made an ambiguous hanging that relates disturbingly with the surrounding space and with viewers. Attempts were made to install these works so that viewers can gain whatever notions the artists wish to communicate.

Critics might fault these works on how successfully the artists resolved problems they set out to tackle, whether these weavings have indeed manipulated space, or clarified form, deviated from mere decoration, or said anything new.

Still, judgments will also be made on how the intentions were worked out, not on the skill of the weaver or her talent for design. When crafts are utilized to objectify ideas in this manner, the work may finally be considered an artistic exercise. It may be safely assumed then that a crafts-object must embody significant insights beyond the common concerns of utility and decoration, for it to be regarded as art.

Ironically, crafts cease to be craftlike in becoming art. Crafts are essentially processes and remain so even when materials and intentions change. This second frame of reference suggests that, in any given man-made object, there is a craft aspect—that is, the making of the object—and sometimes a deeper, more profound idea.

Thus in the works of recent visitor Chisato Watanabe, we observe the gruelling stitch-by-stitch way she covered large fields. By doing that, she can literally tickle viewers, an unheard of ability in painting. Here a process lent its unusual propensity to alter an artistic statement radically. Ms. Watanabe, who describes the arts/crafts mixing as a "mishmash," exemplifies a growing "craftsmanship" orientation obtaining in West Coast American art. Artists are imposing the discipline of chosen processes on themselves. Relating to an increasingly complex world, they find the philosophical associations of crafts more expressive of what they want to say. But always, process is subservient to the motivating thought. Crafts have become a valid methodology for dealing with insights. —MARIAN PASTOR

E. Aguilar Cruz

Letter from Batangas

The pleasures of Pansipit

THE PANSIPIT river separates the twin towns of Taal and Lemery in Batangas. Going over the bridge you can see women on either bank washing clothes under bedsheets put up on bamboo poles. Women of Taal on one side, women of Lemery on the other side.

Upstream, seven kilometers away, are two resorts for local tourists. The place is off the beaten path for foreigners who usually have to take the same boat they came in. If they go to the country at all, they pick Baguio or, at least, Tagaytay. Why we want so much to show them we have places with temperate climates is beyond me. The more tropical, the better they like it, I suspect.

The summer capital and the Taal Vista Lodge are all right as far as they go. If more tourists, local and foreign, go there, okay. But a place like Pansipit is real tourist bait if given a little more boost.

If I were tourism czar, I'd concentrate on just one trip for short-time tourists. The tour won't take more than half a day—less, if you're in a special hurry. It will take more around Taal Lake, through towns with beautiful old churches, one of them reputed to be the biggest in the country. There are orange groves and coconuts by the kilometer, and the vegetation is lush green, the villages well kept, and the town centers not too cluttered with soft-drink signs.

Midway in your circumferential tour is Pansipit. At Taal, coming from Manila on the east side of the lake, you turn right into what appears to be a dead-end street but which turns out to be the foot of a hard-paved road to the very edge of Taal Lake. There is a gas station by the lake and on the right are a tiny market and a drugstore. Between them is open shore from where you can see Tagaytay Ridge, dwarfed by the surrounding mountains. On a clear day, with binoculars, you can make out the roof of the Lodge. If you have ever looked out on the lake towns from the Tagaytay topside and wondered what those villages were like below, you might pretend that you had never been to Tagaytay and try to imagine it from this other side now. Then you'd know how the boatman I talked to felt. He had been 45 years on the lake and had never seen the Ridge except from the bottom.

A short distance from the lakeshore is a resort and next to it, about half a kilometer away, is another just like it.

The resorts are right on the Pansipit River, 30 feet below the road, and are reached by several flights of steps cut out of the rocky ground. You walk up a path to the main building, thatched like the rest, and into a vestibule with a sort of trap at the end. It is a trap, the corral where fish from the main trap in the middle of the river are swept in with nets, one small haul at a time.

A board on one side of the vestibule gives the current prices for *maliputo*, *muslo* and *lumulukso*. If the corral is full you can literally point out your fish in the water and see it laid piping hot on your plate in less time than it takes to smoke a cigarette. During the off season, most Pansipit fish is not consumed on the spot but taken home. The prize is the eel, or *igat*, which at seven kilos or more is quite an investment.

Some people can't stand *igat* and will not even mention it except with a shudder. But *igat* fanciers say it's the last word in soup. For those who just want good fish the Pansipit fisherman will invariably recommend *muslo* or *banak* (mullet). To flippant remarks that you can get the same fish in Quiapo they have a ready answer, "Ah, but not like ours."

Indeed anything out of Pansipit is bound to be better than its Quiapo counterpart, if only because it comes direct from the river to your plate. With all due respect to the revered *lechon*, a *muslo* dripping fat on live coals is supreme and well worth the three-hour drive to Pansipit. □

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Imelda Cajipe-Endaya

The pioneering press of the University of Santo Tomas

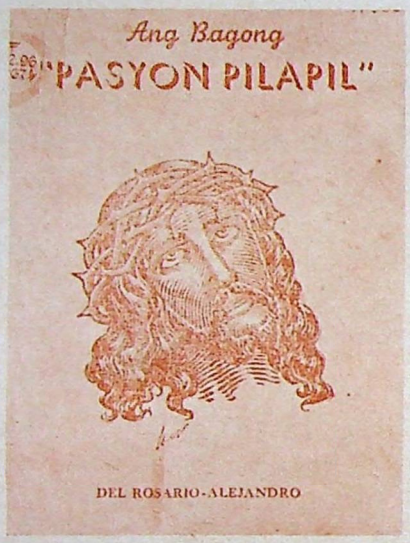
How the Doctrina Cristiana and other early books gave birth to Philippine graphic art

AT THE TURN of the 16th century in San Miguel, in the town of Binundok (later Binondo), a Spanish Dominican friar, Francisco Blancas de San Jose, accumulated a number of prayer-books which he had written, and felt a need to circulate these in mass copies for the propagation of the Faith. But the printing press was still unknown nor was there a practical technical knowledge among the natives.

Now there was a Chinese convert who frequented the church, to hear Mass, and to adorn its environs with buntings and paintings. This was Juan de Vera, a man who was not only deeply religious, but was as artistically inclined as he was enterprising. Knowing Juan's background and knowing that xylography was an ancient Chinese art, Fray de San Jose broached the idea of a printing press to him. With a brief outline of technical notes handed to him by the friar and fired by a vision of saving the souls of the *Indios*, Juan ventured into the very first print workshop.

By 1593, equipped with primitive carving tools and hardworking hand the pioneering Juan de Vera and Fray de San Jose had published three books in the xylographic method. Licensed by Governor-General Perez Dasmariñas, these books were the *Doctrina Cristiana en Lengua Española y Tagala*, the *Doctrina Cristiana China*, and the *Tratado de la Doctrina dela Sta. Iglesia y Ciencias Naturales*. These were the first books published in the Islands.

Carlos Quirino describes how the books were printed without a printing press. Wooden blocks of *batikuling* were first cut and planed to the size of two pages. The surface was then coated with rice paste which gave it a smooth, wieldy finish. Meanwhile, a calligrapher trans-



cribed the text and images on a thin, transparent paper. The blockcutter then placed this sheet on the block while the paste was still wet so that the image in reverse adhered to the surface. Later the paper was rubbed off, leaving a clear imprint on the block. The engraver then carved away the uninked areas, leaving the positive images in moderate relief. The finished block was handed to the printer. Holding a double brush attached at the opposite extremities by a single handle, the printer inked the face of the characters with one brush. Then he impressed a thin paper gently onto the block with the use of the other brush which was dry.

It was said that this method could be done so fast that one printer could finish 2,000 copies a day. Sometimes, the work was divided: inking was done by one, and taking the impression by another. Only one side of the leaf was printed on since the paper used was thin and the ink seeped through. Each printed leaf, consisting of two pages, was then folded, bringing the back sides inward. Folds of every sheet were gathered at the outer edge of the book and stitch-bound.

Between the years 1600 and 1604, the press of movable types was introduced. Retana tells us that the first typographical press was imported either from Mexico where there were sufficient presses at that time, or from Goa where Europeans had been printing books since 1563, or from Japan where the art of smelting types was introduced by the Jesuits in 1590. J.T. Medina asserted that it was most probably ordered from Macao where printing technology was brought from Europe by Fray Alejandro Vilinagno in 1588.

Around 1600-1604, what used to be a humble printmaker's workshop became a true printing press when de Vera and San Jose published another historical landmark, the first book printed typographically: the *Libro de las Quatro Postrimerias del Hombre.* It was authored by Fray de San Jose, who in collaboration with Don Fernando Bagongbanta, his Tagalog teacher, wrote it in Spanish and Tagalog. The scholar Jose Lopez del Castillo y Kabangis bibliographically confirmed that this book was indeed the first known one to be printed in this method, and quoted Fray de San Jose in a passage from the preface of the book: "This little work, my dear fathers, will serve at least to give you notice of how, by the mercy of our Lord God, we already have now a complete and perfect printing in these, our islands. . . ."

After Juan de Vera's death circa 1604, his younger brother Francisco de Vera carried on the operations of the printing press. Printers by the names of Pedro de Vera, Luis Beltran, and Manuel Gomez were also involved with the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press which was later transferred to a new site in Bataan. At this time, Tomas Pinpin, a young native of that town, was being trained as a printer. By 1610 he had taken charge of the press and printed Fray Francisco Blancas de San Jose's *El Arte Tagalog.* In the same year, Tomas proved his skill not only in the engraver's craft but also in language when he wrote *Librong Pag-aaralan nang Manga Tagalog sa Uicang Castila,* which was printed by his assistant Diego Talaghay.

In 1623, shortly after the closure of a competitor press, that of the Augustinians, the press managed by Tomas Pinpin was brought back to Binondo and housed at the Hospital of San Gabriel. In 1626 it was moved to the 15-year old Colegio de Sto. Tomas and henceforth came to be known as the *imprenta* by the same name. The press came under the management of a long line of regents. From then up to the end of the 17th century, we encounter names of engraver-printers who became regents of the press such as Jacinto Magarulao, Raimundo Magisa, Andres de Belen, Buenaventura Lampao and Gaspar de los Reyes. Though little is known of these people's lives, some of their works, in which their names were acknowledged together with the authors, are preserved for posterity. This manifested the craftsmen's pride in their own works and their superior's accordance of recognition.

The regents of the press during the early years of the 18th century were Juan Correa, and later his son Jeronimo Correa de Castro, who came from a principalia family. It was probably under their supervision, if not by their very hands, that the earlier prints were originally made. No record of copper engraving earlier than 1701 has been verified. It was in that year that Juan Correa printed the second edition of the *Las Ordenanzas y Constituciones* of the Hermanidad de la Misericordia. To Correa is attributed the engraving on its title page which depicted the presentation of the Virgin at the Temple. Spanish Filipinologist Lourdes Diaz Trechuelo-Spinola praises Correa for this work which she says was handled with superb ability and agility.

Engravers, printers, and publishers of the preceding three centuries encountered numerous problems and difficulties, which delayed the blossoming of the country's graphic arts. Foremost was the state of curtailed freedom. No book or any matter could be published without previous examination and approval by the authorities—the Bishop and the Royal Audiencia. As Ferdinand Marcos in his *Tadhana* stated, art occupations, which were mostly religious in nature, were professionalized by Church authorities, even requiring license to practice. Moreover, the engravers and printers were merely employees of the religious orders who performed their craft only according to the friars' needs and prescriptions.

The market demand for books and prints was small. In the first place, authors were scarce, so that the readership was small in spite of the fact that various colegios, seminaries and schools were supposed to have advanced the people's education and literacy. Outside of the vocabularios, lenguas, novenas, and devotional books, very little, if any, Philippine literature was in written form. During the early years of religious propaganda, newspapers and magazines were unknown. Thus there was not much challenge for engravers and printers. Brother Tomas Adriano, a native of Sampaloc and regent of the Sto. Tomas press from 1753 to 1766, declared that the printing presses were actually closed most part of the year for lack of work to do. He said: "There is little or nothing to print since in this year (toward the end of October 1755), we have printed only the calendar of the order and some government leaflets."

This situation persisted. For ten years after 1766, there was no record of activity nor any known regent in the Sto. Tomas press. It was in 1776 that Tomas Adriano's name as printer reappeared. In 1783, the regency was occupied by Juan Francisco de los Santos who worked for three years but whom J.T. Medina credits with only two known works. He was succeeded by the son of Tomas, Vicente Adriano, who worked there until 1804.

Earnings from the printing presses were meager. Average yearly income of the Sto. Tomas press was 100 pesos, decreasing to 60 in difficult times, and improving to 100 pesos at most when business was better. Engravers and printers were thus employed intermittently. Worse still, they were paid as laborers. It was probably for this reason that we find some graphic artists and craftsmen working for different presses. For exam-

ple, Tomas Pinpin, while still working for the Dominicans, also printed for the Jesuit press in Manila and the Franciscan press in Pila, Laguna. Note that, in the 17th and 18th centuries, there were at least four printing presses operating in Manila alone.

While the engravers and printers, who were mostly *Indios* or Sangleys, developed virtuosity in their craft, the alien artform naturally posed many technical disadvantages. Typography took a long, tedious process to perfect. Engravers were trained to copy religious images modeled from European types, and done on imported copper plates. Typographic types and facilities and copper plates were used over and over for more than a century until most of these were worn out.

The availability of good, durable paper was also a problem. Most commonly used was the rice paper locally manufactured from the native grain, which was inexpensive. Although this paper had a fine texture that registered beautiful impressions, many prints done on these untreated sheets easily became brittle in humid-torrid climate; many succumbed to insect attacks. (It was the same paper used for cigarettes and tobacco at that time.)

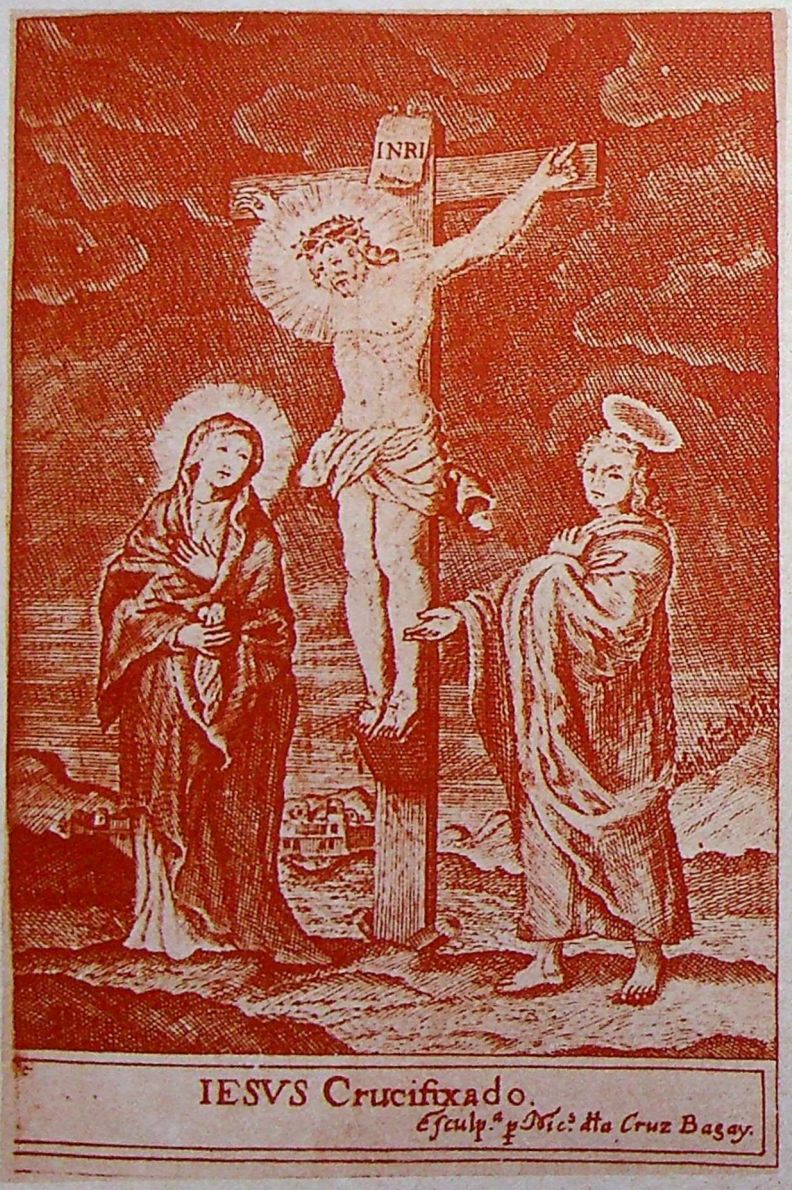
Few prints were done on Chinese paper made from bamboo and cotton, called *kochu* or *kotzu*. A moderately priced import, the kotzu was whiter, smoother, and less susceptible to insect infestation since in manufacture they were mixed with *tawas* or alum. Nevertheless, most kotzu papers could not survive humidity—oxides formed and later colorations of yellow and brown stained the prints. Better materials from silk, made in China and Japan, were also known in the Philippines, but rarely used since they were expensive.

In the 19th century, although choice of subject became more varied, those of religious and ritual importance were still very popular. While the engravers' works progressed technically and artistically in the western tradition, as proven by the existing blocks preserved in the U.S.T. Museum, prints gradually became substandard. Engraving a plate was one thing, printing it was another.

In fact the engravers rarely printed their own blocks. Perhaps due to the antiquity of facilities and the ever increasing size of editions, plates were not properly impressed. Thus, the rich, fine quality of hand-made works which characterized most of the earlier prints was now difficult to find.

The rarity of old Philippine prints is today a sad fact. This unfortunate situation was brought about not only by the technological handicaps which we have already mentioned, but also by several natural and historical factors. The majority of the earliest books which were religious and educational in content, for example, were handled daily in rigorous activity and thus were worn out after a brief period. This is evidenced by the frequent reprintings of the same blocks and types and books until the *kliche* deteriorated. Earthquakes, fires and the destructions of war in our country caused the even greater loss of many of these graphic treasures.

The National Library, which had conserved a magnificent collection of works which belonged to the Compania General de Tabacos, was destroyed during the last war. Only 2,500 volumes of the 400,000 were salvaged. Few of early Philippine imprints are preserved in local private museums, libraries and archives. A number have found their way into various collections abroad and are therefore not easily accessible. □



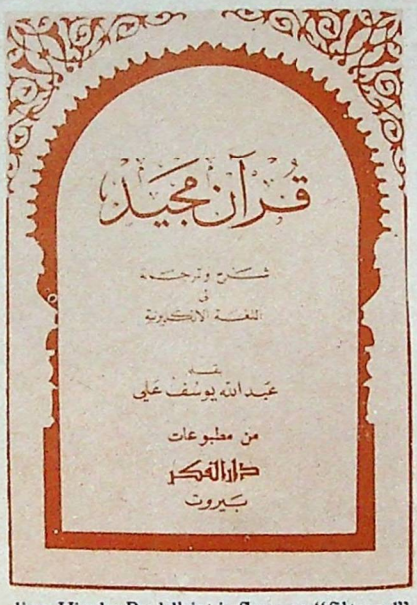
Juan R. Francisco

The religious experience of the Filipino Muslims

ONE of the most important developments in a given society in contact with other societies is the interchange of cultural elements. In this process, some of these elements are adopted in their entirety, replacing indigenous elements which may no longer be valid; some are re-interpreted to suit the value systems of the given society; some are re-moulded within the milieu of this given society to re-enforce values that appear to crumble in the face of new values; and some are integrated into the value systems to preserve certain ideals and simultaneously strengthen its influence within the society itself. Such is the case of the values of the ethnic groups in the Philippines, which have over the centuries been in contact with cultures beyond their cultural boundaries. I would like to present here the case of the Filipino Muslims, who through these long centuries of contact with cultures outside their geographic boundaries have undergone the processes of interchange described above.

Papers published in the *Sulu Studies* give us a very good picture of the pre-contact period of the Sulu Archipelago; and a number of works done on ethnic Mindanao also give us the same clear picture of that pre-contact period.

Two of the most important contacts of Sulu and Mindanao were with Indian and Arab cultures. In general terms, the advent of the Indian Hindu-Buddhist cultural elements are understood in terms of their development in Indonesian and Malaysian sojourns. While in these regions we see the full efflorescence of this cultural overlay to a point where the indigenous seems to have lost its influence on the general social phenomena, it certainly contributed to the enrichment of the total culture of the region. Given the general cultural situation through which the In-



dian Hindu-Buddhist influence "filtered" to Sulu and Mindanao, its advent ushered in a new perspective among those that had the full impact of this cultural "invasion." Some of the remains of this "invasion" are seen in the various archaeological artifacts that have been unearthed over the many years by scholars engaged in uncovering the past of these islands. But the most lasting of these remains are seen in the languages of these groups.

The advent of the Muslim Arab-Indian also underwent the same process as the Indian Hindu-Buddhist. However, there was a difference. The evidences of that advent had a greater impact than the former, for it penetrated into the various aspects of life among these peoples. These elements are much more evident than the Indian in view of their having persisted to the present.

From both of these contacts, the peoples of Mindanao and Sulu adapted the belief systems which in the long run became the most crucial basis for understanding these peoples. So crucial, particularly of the later contact, that it has become a problem complicating other problems of development in the Southern Philippines. However, this is in itself a solution to this problem, for it is in understanding it that they could be resolved for the greater benefit of the peoples of Mindanao and Sulu.

Inevitably, these contacts would bring cultures face to face with each other; and it is certain that conflict would occur in the process. In this context, we have here a very graphic representation of an encounter, i.e., Indigenous versus Hindu-Buddhist versus Muslim. As expected, there could have been violent confrontations between these divergent belief systems. However, in the long run, a kind of syncretic accommodation occurred, and, at this point in time, there are extensive examples of this accommodation. Certainly, in the encounter between the indigenous and the Hindu-Buddhist, there had been a process of indigenization of the alien elements, therefore avoiding the painful process of confrontation. We can only speculate about these accommodations, but, as we come nearer to our time, our illustrations of these become more and more precise.

I would like to use here for my example one of the most important rituals performed among the Maranaws in the lake area as described by Nagasura Madale. This is the *Kashawing*, a ritual performed by the Maranaw farmer before he clears the field for planting rice. After reciting the Islamic *fatiha*, the verses that precede any prayer, the Maranaw farmer prays:

> Praise to Allah! Pray that we will not commit sin in invoking the *tonong* of the lake. He created the *tonong* who are invoked when the farmer clears the field. We wish to invite *apo* Taraka, his children and children's children; *apo* Babowa, *apo* Mipesandalan of Masiu, his descendants from here to Maguin-

danao and Sulu; the *tonong* of the Four Sultanates of Lanao. All the *tonong* of Masiu we wish to invite today, Allah willing.

Come today, Saturday, we will entertain you. The *tonong* of Lembak a Basak, *apo* Mipela-as, *apo* Mimbalantan, *apo* Mipeker, *apo* Mipenga, *apo* Tolodan. *apo* Mikolambo, *apo* Mitorogan, *apo* Kalogologod, *apo* Angangkat, and all of you, come to the festivity today. Come to the ricefields. Your descendants will serve you food and entertain you. Pray to Allah that all farmers will have a bountiful harvest. Safeguard our crops from all calamities. Safeguard all the populace of Balindong from illness and other calamities. May all of us be assured of a good harvest, good health and a prosperous life so that we can invoke you anytime, like today. Give us signs of your sincerity to help us reap a good harvest.

What we are doing is a fulfillment of the agreement made between our *apo* and your *apo* in the past; that is, whenever we clear the field, you are invoked. We are inviting you all to come to the festivities.

We are calling all the *tonong* of the Four Sultanates of Lanao: Bayabao, Masiu, Unayan and Balo-i. All of you must come: your in-laws and children's children; the descendants of the Sultan of Masiu, the Cabugatan of Masiu, as well as the *lokes* of Balindong. All of us are inviting you to come today. Pray to Allah that all farmers will have a good harvest. Safeguard us from sickness and other calamities. There is Datu Ada fetching water and all of you must come. There is a seaweed which will be your boat. Ride on it and come with us. All of you must come with us now.

Pray to Allah that we will not commit sin for invoking the *tonong* and for the things we say here. He created all *tonong* and gave them power. Pray to Allah that our offering will be materialized. Let us call *apo* Babowa, *apo* Mipesandalan of Masiu, *apo* Taraka, who made the river Taraka and who later became a *tonong*, *apo* Mipela-as, *apo* Bawa, *apo* Mimbalantan, *apo* Mipeker, *apo* Mipenga and *apo* Mikolambo. Here is the food prepared for you by your descendants. *Apo* Kalogologod, *apo* Angangkat, *apo* Radia Keter and *apo* Bekong, all of us are inviting you all to partake of the food.

We are calling you, *tonong* of Masiu, and all *tonong* of the Four Sultanates of Lanao, as well as the in-laws of the *tonong* of Masiu. We are inviting you today, Saturday, and offering you the food prepared by your descendants. In return, we ask you to pray to Allah so that all farmers will have a bountiful harvest. May the fishermen have a bountiful catch. Give blessings to all your descendants and the farmers. We ask you to pray to Allah so that our crops will be safe from rats, worms and others.

Researches on the Magindanaw also show similar rituals that bring to the

picture references of Allah, may his name be praised, in the process of reciting indigenous prayers, interspersed with the names of the various spirits and deities. The same phenomenon appears to have occurred at the height of the influence of the Hindu-Buddhist in the region. However, in the more orthodox Islamic practices, particularly as the Filipino Muslim comes more and more in contact with the Lands of Islam, all these indigenous practices that tend to accommodate the alien Islamic practices are pushed aside in favor of these purer practices.

One of the most persistent overlays in culture contact is language, at best the lexical items of a given one. The phenomenon is not a question of a total adoption of the language, its grammar, its vocabulary or its entirety, but it is more a selective process of adopting some of the most fascinating, from the point of view of the "borrowers" of language, elements of the vocabulary. I am of the opinion that before the adoption of these terms, there could have been earlier terms used by the society, but, because of the impact of the culture bringing the new language into this new location, these terms have found their way into the culture of the "borrowers." I am purposely using religious terminologies to illustrate this process of continuity, albeit loosely. I shall use only four of the most important terms that are used in the Hindu-Buddhist religious practices.

In Hindu-Buddhistic practices, Sanskrit *upavasa* is the act of abiding in the state of abstinence, or fasting, while in Maranaw, Maguindanaw and Tausog *puasa* is the practice of abstaining from food between sunrise and sundown, in Islamic terms the period of *ramadan*. The fruit of action or *karma* in Hindu-Buddhist terms is *phala*, basically meaning fruit, fruit of a tree. In Philippine Muslim terms, it is *pahala*, meaning "retribution as a reward for good done, reward." On the other side of the coin, it is also punishment for some bad act done. This is also true in the Hindu-Buddhist concept, *phala*, meaning "fruit of action," which may either be reward or punishment in *svarga*, heaven, or *naraka*, hell.

Sanskrit *svarga*, the abode of light and of the gods, heaven, is in Magindanaw, Maranaw and Tausog *solga*, *sorga*, *sulga*, spiritual heaven, glory. Sanskrit *naraka*, place of torment, hence hell, is Magindanaw, Maranaw and Tausog *naraka*, *neraka*, nefarious, cursed of God, sinner, hell. In the very orthodox Hindu-Buddhistic meanings of these terms, particularly *svarga* and *naraka*, these religious terms mean merely places where one enjoys the fruit of his action *(svarga)* or where one is subjected to the torment of punishment, also a fruit of his action *(naraka)*. And these two places are not the end of human life, rather they are just stations along the way to final spiritual liberation, *moksa/nirvana*. To the Hindu-Buddhist, after enjoying the pleasures of heaven or being punished in hell one is born again to continue along the path ending in *moksa* or *nirvana*. The worst hell in the Hindu-Buddhist concept is rebirth, *samsara;* for birth itself is hell. It is true, there are also the pleasures of being born, for man has the capability to undertake good *karma*, action; still the process is itself a manifestation of hell.

In orthodox Islam, the Koran prescribes fasting during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year, with complete abstinence from food and drink during the hours of daylight. While the sick and those who are on a journey may be exempt at the time of Ramadan, still they must make compensation by fasting on an equal number of days later. This view prevails among the Philippine Muslims in the context of the term *puasa*.

Again, in orthodox Islamic thought heaven is described thus—

> Then the blessed, the godfearing men and women, the humble and charitable, the forgiving, those who have suffered and been persecuted for God's sake, those who have fought in the way of God, shall be summoned to enter the Garden of Paradise, the Abode of peace, the abiding mansion, where they shall dwell forever by flowing rivers, praising God, reclining on silken couches, enjoying heavenly food and drink and the company of dark-eyed maidens and wives of perfect purity, and yet greater bliss which no soul knoweth.

If heaven is described in the most pleasant terms according to the Kor'an, the fate of the

> . . . covetous, the unbelieving, the worshippers of gods other than Allah, shall be cast into the Fire, to abide therein

for ever, with no release from its torments, fed with boiling water and the fruit of the *zaqqum*, resembling the heads of *shaitans* and like molten brass in the belly.

No description can indeed convey the terror of the Koranic portrayal of Hell, backed up as it is by the somber asseveration, "Verily I shall fill Hell with *jinn* and men altogether," or the horror of the day "when We shall say to Hell 'Art thou filled?' and Hell shall answer 'Are there yet more?

Note the very Christian aspects of the description of Heaven and Hell. It is however understood that Muhammad, raised in a community where the teachings of Christ may have filtered, picked these up as he developed his doctrinal teachings. Nevertheless, the Filipino Muslim takes the description of these two terms as purely Islamic in orientation.

The idea of a Hindu-Islamic Continuity might be misleading, for as I described the terms, at best in the context of the Philippine Muslim's perception of meanings of these terms, there certainly is no continuity of the concepts from the Hindu-Buddhistic to the Islamic one. However, the basic ideas embodied in the terms used in the former are recognizable in the meanings of the latter. Let us not forget that these terms have already changed some of the basic meanings as they are adapted in the intervening societies, namely, Indonesian and Malaysian. And the subtleties of these certainly have had some changes in these intervening regions, where they underwent changes in meaning, and reinterpretation, to suit local value perceptions.

Any culture, with some amount of sophistication, moves out of its original locus and implants itself in another cultural milieu, which may not be as sophisticated. When adapted it would certainly undergo changes, owing to the perceptions of those that adapt it being different from the original carriers. The meanings as perceived by the original carriers of that culture, when adapted by the "borrowers," will be glossed over by the internal perception of those that would bring these within the local cultural matrix.

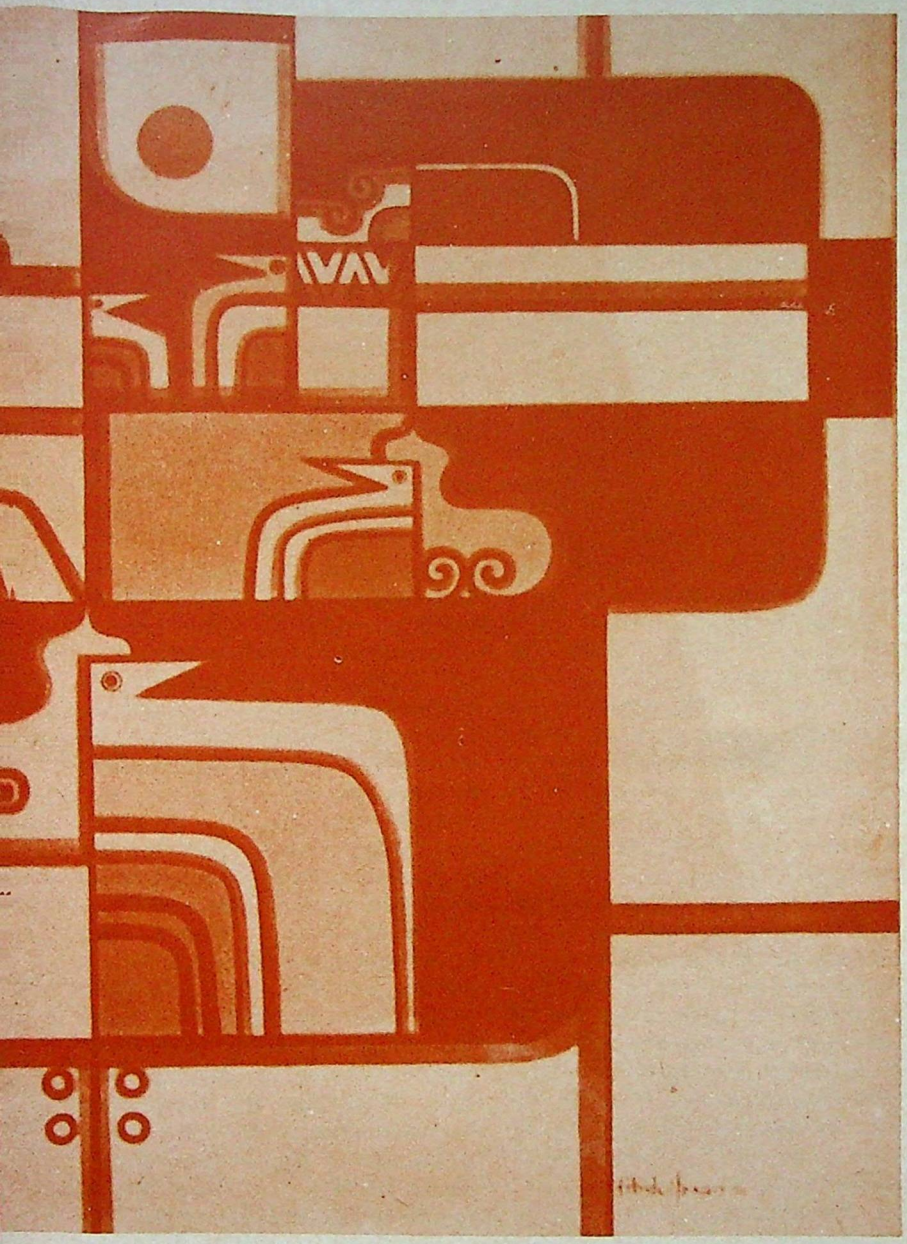
The case of the Magindanaw, Maranaw and Tausog, all having been converted to Islam, though in years before that conversion had had experience in another culture, is a very good example of perceptions based on meanings developed within the given culture. Having become Muslims would necessarily make them adopt the basic teachings of the belief system, but still retaining the terms used before the phenomenon of conversion to identify these concepts. If taken merely as lexical terms, one may be misled to perceive them in the context of their original meanings in the Sanskrit locus.

Another dramatic development in the process of re-interpretation of concepts is the way, for instance, a Tausog would bring the idea of death and the afterlife, a view generally accepted as universal, within the context of Islam as already assimilated in the local concept, using analogy as a tool in the full understanding of the idea. As Thomas Keifer describes it:

> The Tausog approach to death and the afterlife revolves around the concept of religious merit and its acquisition by man through the accumulation of good deeds and regular performance of ritual obligations. Religious merit has both an active and a passive dimension. As a result of man's active striving to acquire merit, it is called *karayawan*, literally "goodness". As a gift of God to man according to the principle, which only He can ultimately understand, it is called *pahala* (the passive dimension). In addition, *karayawan* in this context also implies a state of pleasure and happiness in the afterlife... the idea (is explained) by describing heaven as analogous to a state of perpetual sexual orgasm. But the amount of *karayawan* one receives in heaven is directly proportional to the amount of *pahala* one has been given by God in return for good deeds.

Despite the Islamic color of the above explanation of the terms, still there is the subtile elements seen in the Hindu-Buddhistic concept of heaven, which is just an interim locus where man can enjoy the fruits of his merits according to the quality of his deeds. Or according to the gravity of his misdeeds; in this case his punishment in hell, after which he is reborn into the cycle of life and death, until he finally attains *moksa/nirvana*. I would like to venture the thought that side by side with heaven, hell, the fruit of action in terms of the impact of Hindu-Buddhistic thought in

Sulu and Mindanao would be the concept of spiritual liberation *(moksa/nirvana)*, which could not have been Maranaw and Tausog. With the coming of Islam, which somehow was much easier to understand, the terms were retained but given very Islamic meanings, and perceived in those terms only. For *samsara*, cycle of birth and rebirth, and *moksa/nirvana* were far too abstruse, I would venture to surmise, to be understood by them. Hence, these two basic concepts were dropped from their lexical collec-



tions, because they meant nothing to them. But *puasa, pahala, naraka,* and *sulga* were/are meaningful as lexical identifications of very Islamic meanings, and explanations. I do not, however, mean to advance the view that they have no feeling for abstractions, such as cycle of birth and rebirth or spiritual liberation expressed in *samsara* or *moksa/nirvana;* rather I am inclined to the view that they are more practical. They could see and understand the meaning of *puasa,* because they practise it; *pahala,* because they understand its meaning; *naraka* and *sulga,* because they can see these as results of their actions. Again in the context of Islam which to them was egalitarian compared to the caste type of Hindu-Buddhistic social structuring, these terms were easily meaningful in the context of the identifications attached to them, very practical identifications indeed.

It is not my intention to write a conclusion to this rather very brief paper, for it is just the beginning of more extensive interpretatory essays on the changes that occur in the process of cultural encounter. One of the most dramatic implications that may be drawn from the above brief discussions is that no culture is free from the "influence" of another culture, and that therefore "cultural islands" are never evident in the whole history of mankind. Moreover, in cultural encounter a society is ever immune from being subject to the impact–cross impact to be more precise–of one society upon the other.

Based primarily on the four terms presented earlier, we can see the possibilities of an expanded study of the continuity of cultures as they pass or develop in another location than their original homes. This is a case of a hospitable meeting place, where the host culture has provided the venue for the accommodation of the two cultural orientations to come to a common understanding of their unified existence. The basic Magindanaw, Maranaw and Tausog cultures provided the fertile soil for both Hindu-Buddhistic and Islamic concepts to grow in perfect crossbreeding, each being made one with the other. What we have now in the utilization of Hindu-Buddhistic terms to identify Islamic concepts is indeed a manifestation of the ultimate unity of ideals and ideas. For one who does not have the necessary cultural orientation in both cultures may be misled by mere labels with the necessary descriptions.

As one studies further the implications of this phenomenon, he cannot escape the thought that, despite perhaps the initial conflict between the two diametrically opposed religious concepts, they finally found common ground of acceptance in the Magindanaw, Maranaw and Tausog atmosphere. And that this MMT atmosphere served as the bond that brought the two concepts together.

Finally there is a wide room for this kind of research in the Philippines considering the various culture contacts that the country has had in the past. With this can be shown the capability of the early Filipino, as well as his present breed, to accept new ideas and values without having to undergo the total annihilation of his culture base. □

Christian Roll

The Philippine Christian icons

Filipino painters did them on wood so hard it did not absorb the pigments nor float on water

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS were against the figurative representation of God. Judea, the land where Jesus Christ taught, was during the early Christian years in particular opposed to the religious image which was considered a sign of idolatry. It was the creative deed of Judaism to find a new concept of God in a pure monotheism since, for those who were not of Jewish belief and converted to Christianity, idols meant a reversion to pagan rites.

Christianity, though, soon spread across the Roman Empire where, as in Greece, idols were the very essence of religious life. Even so, the first images of the Christian religion had a purely symbolic or decorative character. It was not until the sixth century that the first icon was contrived, after a legendary painting by the apostle Luke, of Mary, the mother of Christ, and in the same century in Elessa was produced—by miracle rather than by human hand—a painting of Christ which became the standard representation of the founder of the Christian religion.

Yet the leaders of the early Christian Church were sorely divided; some were in favor of religious paintings and images, and others were hostile to their use. For over a hundred years, between A.D. 726 and 843, the Roman Empire witnessed the "Iconoclastic Controversy" during which both monks and laymen who painted pictures of Christ and other religious figures and subjects were persecuted. The attacks were not so much against the paintings and depictions on the walls of the churches as against the transportable wooden panel, the icon (the Greek name for the movable religious paintings). These icons, to which miracles were attributed, represented for some Christians a relapse into superstition because they were used in the healing of sickness, in combat and for the prevention of dangers.

Once the Iconoclastic Controversy had ended, however, icon painting spread very quickly all over Asia Minor and eventually found its home in Byzantium, the capital of the East Roman Empire. Icon painting became an integral part of Byzantine art and was taken to those parts of Europe where the Greek Orthodox Church was dominant. It was adopted in such places as Greece, the Balkans and Russia. Icon painting never became very popular, though, in the Roman Catholic Church where monumental oil paintings and mosaics were used as decoration and innumerable statues of Christ, the Virgin, the apostles and others were made from wood and stone.

In the Greek Orthodox religion icons were not confined only to the churches; they were found in a corner of nearly every home, where they were kept to ensure blessing and to fend off evil. They were venerated and kissed. Their painters, who had to follow strict rules, remained anonymous and because there was little room for individual personality the style of painting them underwent hardly any change.

The interesting and curious historical fact is that icons, religious paintings on wooden panels, became very popular in the Catholic Church of the Philippines. The early missionaries from Spain, the Augustinian and Dominican fathers, brought with them in their prayer books small printed pictures ("Estampitas") of Christ, the Virgin and the saints which became models for these paintings and for the wooden statues of Philippine Christian art.

Unfortunately there has been very little written about the Philippine icons; they have always been somewhat neglected compared to the *santos*, the wooden religious statues, of which greater numbers have been produced and preserved. The icons, none the less, have in their primitiveness and naiveté a particular charm, and they represent perhaps much more the artistic and religious feelings of the Filipinos than the wooden statues, the *santos*, which one finds throughout the Roman Catholic world and which are more or less an imitation of the religious art of Spain.

In the scheme of coloring lies the uniqueness and beauty of the Philippine icons which are on the other hand, compared to the icons of the Eastern (Greek Orthodox) Church, very poorly executed. But Philippine icons are not so monotonous as the Russian icons which nearly always have a golden background symbolizing the glory of heaven.

The figures in the Philippine icons, moreover, seem more lively than those in the icons of the Eastern Church which always show delicately drawn figures with elongated bodies and small ascetic heads but whose haggard faces look nearly all the same. The figures in the icons of the Eastern Church, however, are intended to express hieratic dignity, whereas the Philippine icons are the expression of a simple religious faith.

The Christian art of the Philippines is usually classified into the popular style, the classical style and the ornate style, but these categories are concerned more with the *santos* than the paintings on wooden panels. The statues and the paintings in the classical and ornate styles are more or less an imported art from Spain, and many more statues and paintings have been made in the popular style which is typically Filipino.

In the icon paintings there is also less Chinese influence than in the statues; many of the carvers of *santos*, es-

pecially of those with ivory parts, were ethnic Chinese and bound to include in their depictions some traits of their own arts. The icon painting, as far as is known, was a wholly Filipino *genre*. But exactly why it became such a popular art in the Philippines remains an unanswered question. There was an abundance of wood, and it may be that the Filipinos have always had the talent for painting and a particular feeling for colors that is so strikingly demonstrated in their modern art works.

If the Philippine painters had to adhere to strict rules, particularly in the early years of their conversion to Christianity, they did always have in their favor much more freedom to choose their colors than the monk-painters of the Greek Orthodox Church. They used for their panels mainly the hardwoods *molave* (which is so hard that it does not even float in water) and *narra* (which is only slightly less solid), woods that do not absorb the color pigments. The wooden panels normally range in size from 10 inches by 7-1/2 inches to 21 inches by 16 inches, although sometimes larger ones were specially made for churches. These hardwood panels were first covered with a gesso ground on to which pigments derived from local minerals and plants mixed with coconut oil were painted.

Some icons were first carved with relief-work to which the paints were applied; for these lighter woods were normally used since they made the carving easier. Among the relief-paintings are found some of the finest examples of the Christian art of the Philippines, and it is an interesting fact that for their art the icon painters of the Philippines used the Chinese rather than the Western style brush.

The earliest icons made in the archipelago date back to the seventeenth century, but very few examples of them have been preserved. Occasionally one finds triptychs, depictions spread across three panels, in which the Spanish influence can be seen to be strong.

The icons one finds today are mostly from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries, with the majority of them belonging to the nineteenth century.

A winged icon, 29 cms. x 29 cms.

In contrast to the icons of the Eastern Church as well, the Philippine productions seldom show scenes in the lives of Christ or the saints; only the Calvary and Purgatory scenes are popular and somewhat common subjects in the Philippines' Christian art.

One of the most painted figures of all in the icons is Mary, the mother of Christ, in her various forms (all referred to by their Spanish names in the Philippines) as Immaculada Concepcion (the Immaculate Conception), Nuestra Señora del Rosario (Our Lady of the Rosary), Nuestra Señora de la Consolacion (Our Lady of Consolation) and Nuestra Señora de los Dolores (Our Lady of Sorrows).

Very dear to the Filipinos is the Santo Niño, the Holy Child, under whose special protection the Philippines was placed. The first Filipino baptism, that of the Queen of Cebu, took place in 1521 before the image of the Santo Niño and many miracles are attributed to his statue in the San Agustin Church at Cebu City, as they are to some other statues and icons depicting him. The Holy Child is also the protector of children.

Another often represented subject is the Sagrada Familia (Holy Family), sometimes with the Holy Ghost or the Holy Trinity above, which symbolizes for the Filipinos the solidarity of the family.

The most carved and painted saint is San Vicente Ferrer with his wings, a devout Dominican who spent his life preaching penitence, a religious concept of Christianity deeply rooted in the Philippines.

Where Dominican friars worked in the islands one finds more often Dominican saints such as Sto. Domingo and Sto. Tomas Aquinas, and where the Augustinians were active, more Augustinian saints, such as San Agustin and Sto. Tomas Villanueva. San Francisco de Asis and San Antonio de Padua are popular in particular in regions—Bicol, Bulacan and Laguna, for instance—where the Franciscans did their missionary labours.

Among the saints venerated throughout the Philippine islands the most popular are San Vicente Ferrer, San Roque and San Isidro. San Roque, normally portrayed with his dog and an angel, is the protector against plague and other sicknesses, and San Isidro, often painted with a buffalo and a worker in the fields, is the patron saint of the peasants.

Other important figures in Philippine imagery are Joseph or San Jose, the father of Christ, who is often shown with the Holy Child; the apostles San

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, 57 cms. x 42 cms.

Another winged icon painted on wood, 43 cms. x 22 cms.

Pieta, *painting on wood, 55 cms. x 41 cms.*

Santiago de Galicia, *oil on wood, 11.5 cms. x 30 cms.*

Pedro and San Pablo; San Juan Evangelista; San Juan Bautista; Santa Rosa da Lima; Santa Catalina; Santa Clara; and the archangel San Miguel, crushing Satan.

Once in great vogue in the Philippines were the icon paintings of the Santissima Trinidad (the Holy Trinity, representing the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost) in which three self-same figures with identical faces appeared, but this imagery was prohibited on theological grounds after the meeting of the Council of Trent in the early nineteenth century.

Nearly every Philippine home once had, or even has still, a little home altar where before crucifixes and the *santos* and icons of Virgin Mary and several special saints the family gathered for daily prayers, for occasional *novenas* (sequences of special prayers for religious holidays) and to recite during the Holy Week the *Pasiones*. If a child was born to the family and was baptized with the name Pedro, an icon of San Pedro had to hang on the altar. If there were ten children in the family, then ten icons had to be hung in the home.

The various professions, also, were represented by patron saints. So a carpenter, for instance, would have in his house a statue or an icon of San Jose. For those in mourning an icon of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores gave relief and consolation. Women who wished to become pregnant prayed to an icon of Santa Clara, those in trouble to San Antonio de Padua and those suffering from injustices to San Miguel. Many *barrios* (villages or city quarters), too, had their adopted patron saints whose image was not only kept in the parish church, but in most homes as well.

As collector's items the Philippine icons (as well as the *santos*), which are practically unknown outside the Philippines, have little international market value, although the best are quite sought-after locally. There are some very extensive private collections of fine icons and other Christian art in the Philippines. Well-painted icons with a certain age are not easily found in antique shops of Manila today and their prices, when one does come across them, have gone up in the last few years.

Philippine icons, with their harmonious and warm colors, have a particularly decorative effect. In contrast to the statues and relief-paintings there are very few fakes of paintings on wooden panels. Many icons, however, are in bad condition; the colors are often faded or partly gone. To remedy their sad state it has become a lamentable habit of dealers to retouch them with new oil pigments which, so unfortunately, in a dry climate peel or wear off after a time. □

Federico L. Espino

The eerie universe of Embuscado

RESTITUTO Esquivel Embuscado's preoccupation as an artist is the underworld of Philippine folklore with its sublunar denizens. The *tikbalang*, the *homo equus* of native mythology; the *aswang* or were-dog whose tongue becomes an undulating thread of terror; the *tianak* or stunted child of darkness; the *manananggal* whose torso is disjointed from the lower anatomy in an eerie metamorphosis—all these vibrate with epidermal macabre-ism in the works of the artist.

But where a folklorist like Maximo Ramos or a storyteller like Adelina Gurrea Monasterio would present their vision in terms of the supernatural, Embuscado divorces himself from tradition and comes up with a nether world-view which we can call subreal—neither unreal nor surreal but a presentation of the creatures of lower Philippine mythology as relevant archetypes of the Filipino soul. Thus, his *tikbalang* becomes the mythic incarnation of the psychological syndrome of anger. Embuscado tells us that a Filipino caught in a choleric fit becomes some sort of *tikbalang* on the psychic level. On the other hand, his *aswang* incarnates the emotional colors of hatred in the native psyche while his *manananggal* represents the dark side of the Filipino woman.

Consequently, in spite of his flair for the eerie, Embuscado transcends this world of tropical gothic. And his breakthrough comes to us through the vehicle of dissectional art.

As envisioned by the artist, dissectional art represents a new kind of aesthetics. When Embuscado dissects the materials of his art, imaginary figures give an illusion of perpetual movement. The painter has banished stasis from his art and the frozen moment—a rather, unhappy phrase—gives no indication of immobility. Rather, it is filled with a restless seething born out of an aesthetic tension without which great art is not possible.

Dissectional art is Embuscado's brainstorm and brainchild—the needed breakaway from the derivative visions of the little brown Braques, Mondrians, Wyeths, and Pollocks that have plagued Philippine art because of art critics who are still shackled by an imported *Weltanschauung* that comes with MA and PhD diplomas perpetuated by the American ivy league tradition. The walls of Philippine art galleries, before Embuscado, had always pandered to anachronistic explosions of impressionist, expressionist and cubist forms and colors —and what is this if not a conscious or unconscious manifestation of a colonial mentality in aesthetics?

Electing the native instead of the cosmopolitan, Embuscado has come up with a manner (dissectional art) and matter (lower Philippine mythology) that do not pull away from autochthonous roots. But what is more important is that the manner and the matter are not half-baked—they are profound portrayals of the heart of darkness that lies beyond surface sanity and the everyday world where the painter must, like any human being, live and operate when he is not dissecting pre-conscious terrors.

In a sense, Embuscado reveals an affinity with Carl Gustav Jung, the post-Freudian rebel who propounded the theory of the Collective Unconscious and the archetypes. But Embuscado is no Jungian in the sense that his archetypes transcend the universal dress of the great psychologist's Collective Unconscious—Embuscado's world-view may be better termed the native collective unconsciousness. While it is true that the tikbalang, the tianak or the mananang-

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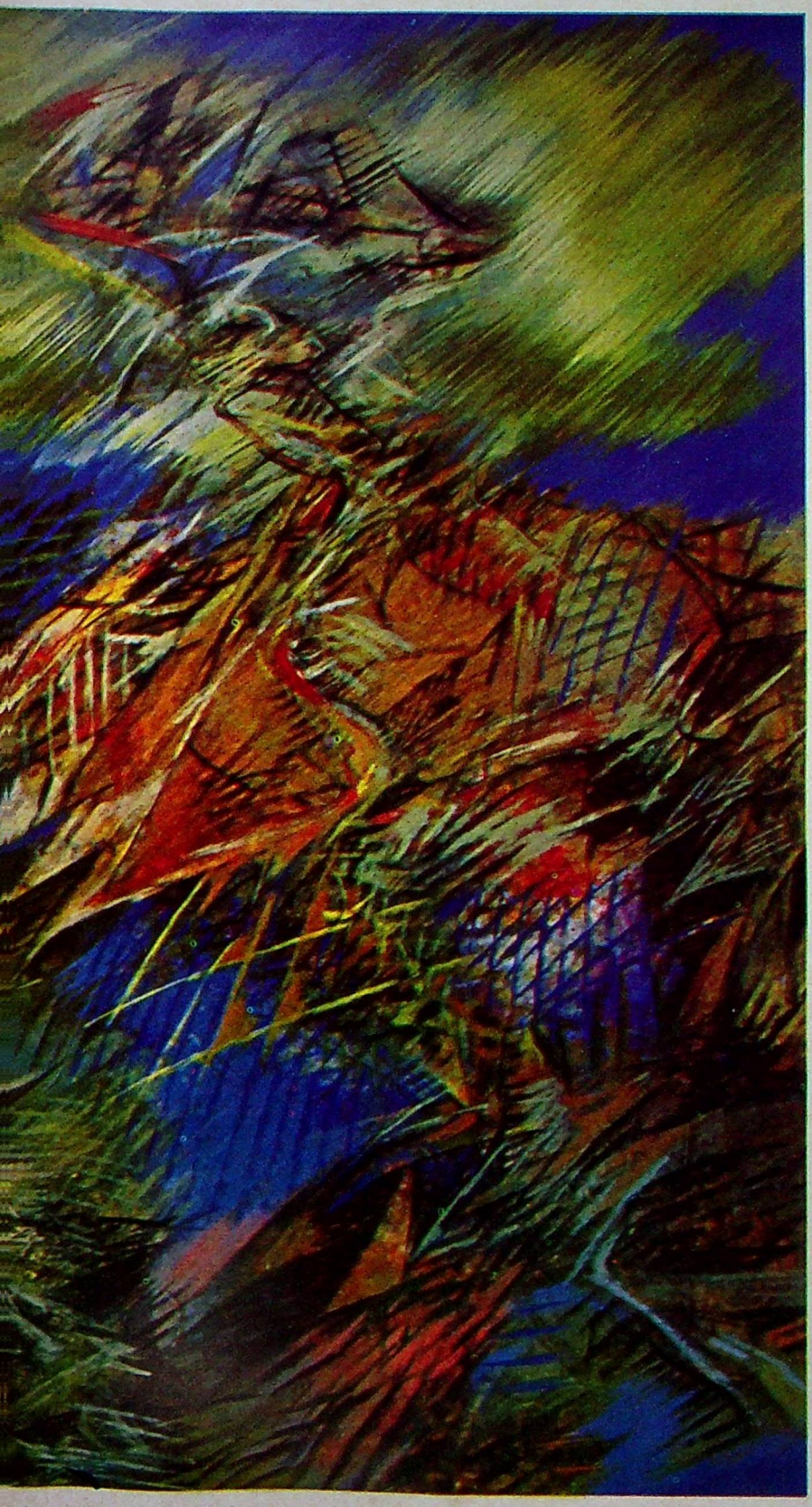
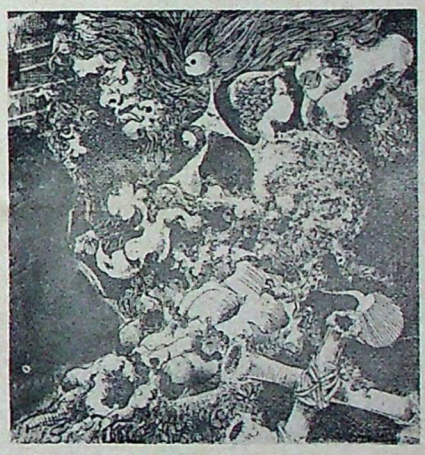


vage, from dissectional painting series



Etchings on mythylogical themes

gal correspond to universal archetypes, Embuscado is more interested in their relevance to the Filipino psychic disposition. Thus, Embuscado is relevant and native without losing his correspondence with the universal. This is a quality which is both ancient and contemporary—something which cannot be said of his colleagues who are anachronistic in the depreciatory sense, latter-day disciples of outdated Western exemplars.

Dissecting pre-conscious terrors is not an easy thing to do—there are psychological hazards which lurk everywhere, and there is the ever-present possibility that the probings may degenerate into mere exercises in macabre cinematics. But Embuscado's commitment to art is such that his craft becomes an amulet which gives him detachment and participation, composure as well as involvement in the chaotic. And, because he uses art as a numinous talisman, he can dare the devil without becoming possessed and, in a world where the diabolic manifestations of the occult are becoming more and more tangible, this is an achievement.

Much of the landscape of the native psyche is still uncharted territory and this is the realm where Embuscado has chosen to operate literally and figuratively. To be sure, he is not the only pioneer but the paths he has blazed in this eerie wilderness are luminous trails—without the verdigrised rendition of a Saprid, without the creole melodrama of a Nick Joaquin, without the childlike sense of wonder of an Adelina Gurrea Monasterio, without the flair for the academic of a Maximo Ramos. Because of his weird individuality, Embuscado cuts through the surface of hidden realities and comes up with renditions that cannot leave the beholder indifferent. □

Carmen Guerrero Nakpil

Playback: a historical review

Names Filipinos bear not gladly

AT THE HEART of the identity crisis which afflicts modern Filipinos is the matter of their surnames. How indeed can anyone who is a native of a South Pacific archipelago midway between Indonesia and Japan feel like a proper Asian when he is called Carlos Valdepeñas or Felicisimo Franco?

Everyone else within turbojet distance is a Wong Hardojo or Furukawa, but not a Filipino (the very term for his nationality irks him). He is liable to be mistaken—on the strength of his name alone—for a Cuban, Mexican or a natural-born Madrileño. If he applies for a placement in a foreign firm or university, he is given a Spanish-language form which he cannot fill because he doesn't have enough Spanish (about 98 per cent of Filipinos know little more than a smattering of schoolbook Spanish). Even worse, he is placed on the overcrowded Latin American quota along with the Chicanos and Puerto Ricans when he belongs to and would have better chances in the Asian list. His foreign friends expect Spanish lovesongs, castanets, and long, brown sideburns, and he goes to great lengths to explain his Indo-Malay, Chinese appearance and culture.

Most Filipinos cite Christianity and the 333-year-long Spanish colonization (from 1565 to 1898) as explanations. Which is not quite correct because Christianized Asians go by recognizable patronymics as in Peter Dee or Tony Suharto. The real and specific culprit is a decree promulgated by Spanish Governor General Narciso de Claveria on Nov. 21, 1849 which obliged Filipinos to choose surnames from a Spanish catalog.

Before that, Christianized natives of the Philippine archipelago used a messy collection of baptismal names, saints' names, nicknames and ancient prehispanic patronymics, most of them different from what appeared in the Spanish lists.

Thus the Tondo nobleman identified as Don Agustin Salonga in the Spanish list was probably known as Raha Mura (for young chief) among the natives. A fisherman named Tomas de Dios by the parish priest was probably Kadiong Dilis among his confrères and impossible to track down if he evaded forced labor at the galleys.

Often two or three brothers had surnames different from each other and from father and grandfathers. First cousins did not have a single surname in common and—to the great scandal of the parish priests—could take out marriage licenses. "Thousands of persons," reads the decree of 1849, "now go by the same names, invoking official confusion, the difficulty of administering courts, collecting tribute and other taxes, exacting personal services from the natives, not to mention 'rank immorality'."

A catalog of more than 60,000 names was put together by the fathers provincial of the religious orders in the Philippines from Spanish family names, terms from flora and fauna, Spanish towns, regions and other geographic words, with a sprinkling of nouns from the native languages.

Some classes were allowed to keep their prehispanic surnames. For instance, the high-born or those who had kept one surname in their family for at least four generations, those who had been rewarded with Spanish grants (the decree mentions the Mojica, Lakandola, Tupas and Raja Matanda families) and those who were too obscure to bother with: most probably the upland and unbaptized peoples, the renegades and fugitives who, in any case, did pretty much what they wanted provided they kept away from the Spanish towns.

The rest of the Spanish-regime Filipinos were obliged (under pain of eight days in jail and a P3 fine which, in those days, was equivalent to three months work) to adopt the name assigned to his family at the municipal hall or the parish house. To facilitate matters, certain letters of the alphabet were assigned to specific provinces and towns, so that, even today, most of the families in one region have names which begin with the same letter of the alphabet.

Common Filipino names have a history of their own. Joses or San Joses were words of the famous orphanage, Santoses and de Dioses had intimate connections with the religious orders, and all those now surnamed Cruz are supposed to be descended from Filipinos who were illiterate in Spanish and could sign whatever documents were required only by making a cross mark.

Most current Filipino surnames like Buencamino, Reyes, Florentino, Aquino, Joya, Apostol, as well as less common ones which have a faintly un-Spanish sound about them, like Ogbinar, Ople, Abat, Malabanan and Forbes, appear in the 19th century Spanish catalog. Needless to say, Chinese-derived named like Syquia, Soliongco and Limcaoco are not listed since they are only hispanized *sangley* (Chinese for merchant) names, Marcos appears as Marco, and Romualdez (the maiden name of the Philippine First Lady and Metro Manila governor) does not appear at all. According to family history, Romualdez was adopted by a Chinese ancestor from the name of a Spanish baptismal sponsor called Romualdo just as Martinez is derived from a godfather called Martin.

"What's in a name?" is definitely not something to ask a Filipino. □

Vilma S. Felipe

Maniya Barredo: an achieving ballerina brings home success

ONCE AGAIN, Maniya Barredo came home. And with her she brought a glowing account of her achievements as a ballerina. The diminutive and spirited Maniya has made a name for herself in the United States and Canada and has on several occasions returned to share with her countrymen her growth and progress as an "artist on her toes."

Under the aegis of the Ballet Federation of the Philippines which, besides unifying and managing the affairs of the ballet community on the local scene, undertakes the presentation of young achieving Filipina ballerinas in local performances, Maniya brought home the delightful ballet *La Fille Mal Gardée* (The Wayward Daughter), which has been re-choreographed specially for her, to show to her countrymen. The choreographer-director of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, Fernand Nault, who did the special job of re-mounting the oldest piece in ballet-literature, came over to supervise the rehearsals for this production and he swears that no one else has ever been able to do Maniya's version.

The work which is in the repertory of both the Joffrey Ballet and the Les Grands Ballets Canadiens has become Maniya's "signature-role." In bringing it to the Philippines, her aim is two-fold: to inspire local ballet dancers who were billed to have a rare performance experience with her; and to share her growing success with our local ballet enthusiasts.

On the many occasions she has done the role of *Lisette* in Canada and all over the United States, Maniya was unanimously commended for the role. Her *Lisette* was "more than naughty . . . she was pouty, bratty and adorable." "Her dancing sparkled," wrote Canadian critic Linda Beck Howe of Maniya's performance of this role for the 20th anniversary season of Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

We attended the premiere performance of this work at the CCP Theater (March 2) and we rejoiced at the infectious sparkle and verve that Maniya and her *danseur noble*, Joseph Carman, shared with everybody on-stage. Then, in Tom Pasik's *Tzigane*, the daringly designed pas de deux based on Nicolai Budashkin's music, Maniya's sleek lines, silvery turns and steady poses kept the spectators on their toes. Her virtuosity and aplomb in the Glazunov *Pas de Dix* combined with Joseph Carman's flair and competence to make of it a ravishingly beautiful piece. The rest of the four pairs exhibited their very best in keeping with the air of excellence.

The local ballet troupers likewise scintillated in their performances with Maniya. All together, they did the numbers (among them *Sa Ugoy ng Duyan* by Tony Fabella; *Czemyiana* by William Morgan; ***Variaciones Concertantes*** by Alfred Rodriguez; *Napoli* by Bournoville; and *Clair de Lune* by Mañosa and Oteyza) collaboratively performed by dancers from various organizations—CCP Dance Company, Dance Arts, Dance Concert Company, Dance Theater Philippines, Hariraya Ballet and Manila Metropolis Ballet—so that Maniya's home-

coming was one occasion for hard work, fulfillment, progress for Manila's ballet people.

Today, Maniya is considered in Canada and the United States—and very recently in Cuba—as "the newest star to join the ballet firmament." Raves over her "flawless technique" and her "phenomenal, sparkling performances" wherein she "moves her featherweight-compact body with high-voltage daring in a barrage of lifts, throws and pirouettes" have been sincere and generous. But the achieving ballerina just takes this in stride, as a pledge of perfection to her chosen art.

It is very heartwarming for a young achiever as Maniya that three established ballerinas have given recognition and direction to her career. Prima ballerina Alicia Alonso of Cuba, after dancing with Maniya at a benefit gala in Montreal, invited her to represent Canada in the Cuban International Dance Festival in 1976. There, Maniya stole the show from many international ballet stars by rating 20 curtain calls!

Ballerina assoluta Dame Margot Fonteyn, after seeing her do *Giselle* in Manila, recommended her to Roland Petit's Ballet du Marseille (which she could not take advantage of due to previous commitments), and the "Stars of the World Ballet" wherein she would be billed with international ballet stars in a five-week tour of the Far East in June 1979.

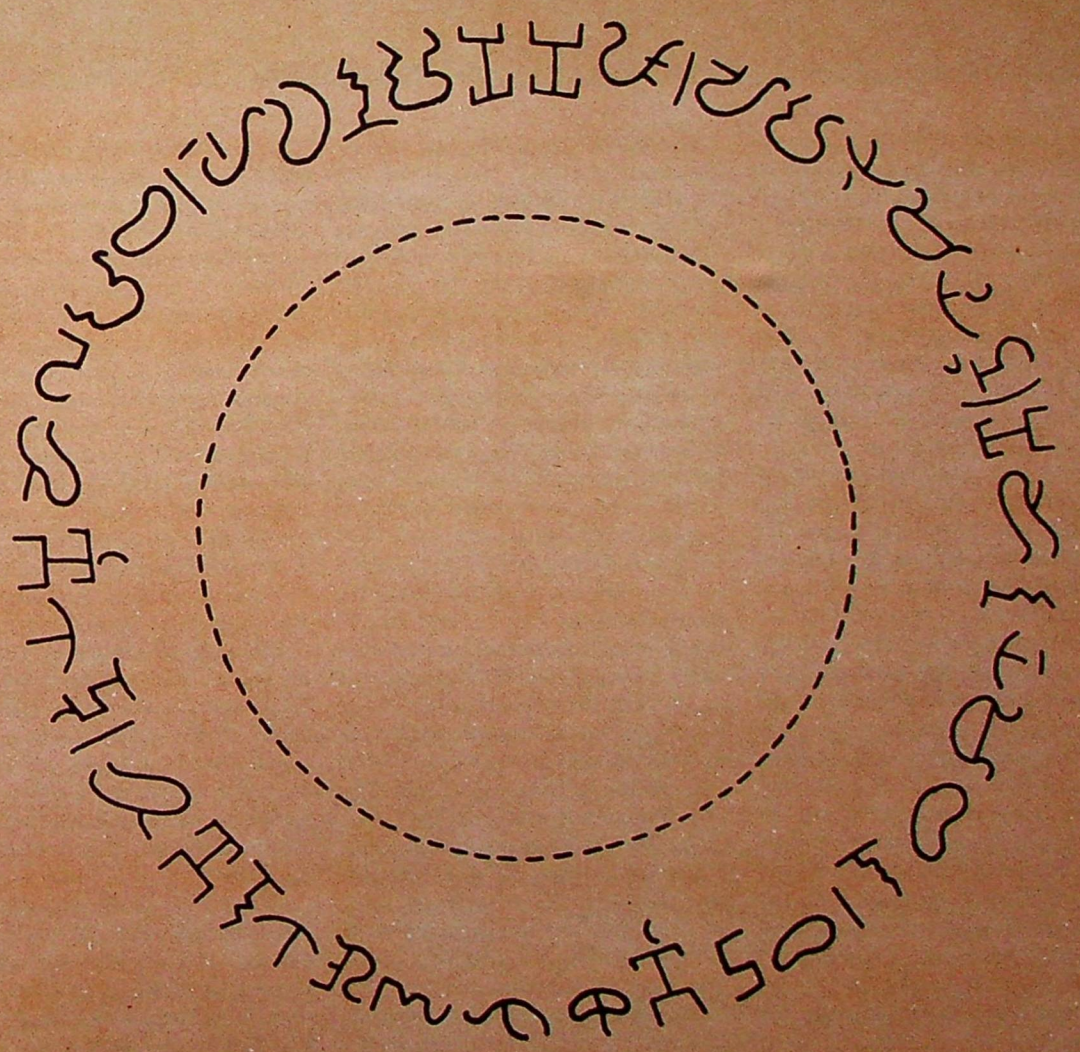
Former prima ballerina Melissa Hayden of the New York City Ballet, who now coaches Maniya whenever she is in New York, recommended her for admission to the American Ballet Theatre. After auditions, founder-director Lucia Chase offered Maniya a contract to join the company.

The stars in the heavens are all lined up for Maniya Barredo to reach and gather: time is all she needs to catch them all. Manilans and all her countryfolk are confident that this energetic and charming achiever will bring more honors to her family, folks and friends every time she comes home. □

Overleaf, Maniya Barredo's pose reveals her well-formed ballerina figure. At right as "Lisette" in La Fille Mal Gardée, *she dances with ease and grace.*

Jesus T. Peralta

The Butuan paleograph: ethnographic implications of an ancient script



EVER since the recovery of the golden statuette, more commonly known as the Agusan Image, on the banks of the Agusan river in northeastern Mindanao, the area has become a virtual treasure trove that has attracted pothunters in recent years, not only for the gold artifacts recovered in illegal excavations, but for the ceramic pieces unearthed among which were pieces heretofore unknown in the Philippines—the so-called Yueh wares.

Along with this, the discovery of the "balanghai," a huge plank boat, later dated by radiocarbon methods to 320 A.D., further advances knowledge of sophisticated shipbuilding technology in the Philippines to a very early period. The sociological implications of this discovery touch on the existence of a developed social order suggesting social stratification and economic classes early in time and wide-ranging trade relations.

Had it not been for the depredations made by pothunters on a 14th-15th century ceramic site in Libertad, Butuan City, the boat would not have been discovered. It was fortunate that the associated information was saved from total destruction, and that enough remained for further interpretation.

Overshadowed by the drama of the balanghai find and more frustrating is the discovery of another artifact the implication to Philippine culture of which is tremendous for it impinges on the problem of the literacy of the early Filipinos.

During the course of the archaeological projects being undertaken by teams from the National Museum of the Philippines, information from the Office of the City Engineer was received about the discovery of what appeared to be some kind of writing inscribed on a strip of metal. The inscriptions were copied on a piece of tracing paper and was sent in for evaluation. Nothing could be made out since the copied inscription did not appear to have the vaguest kinship with any known writing extant or dead.

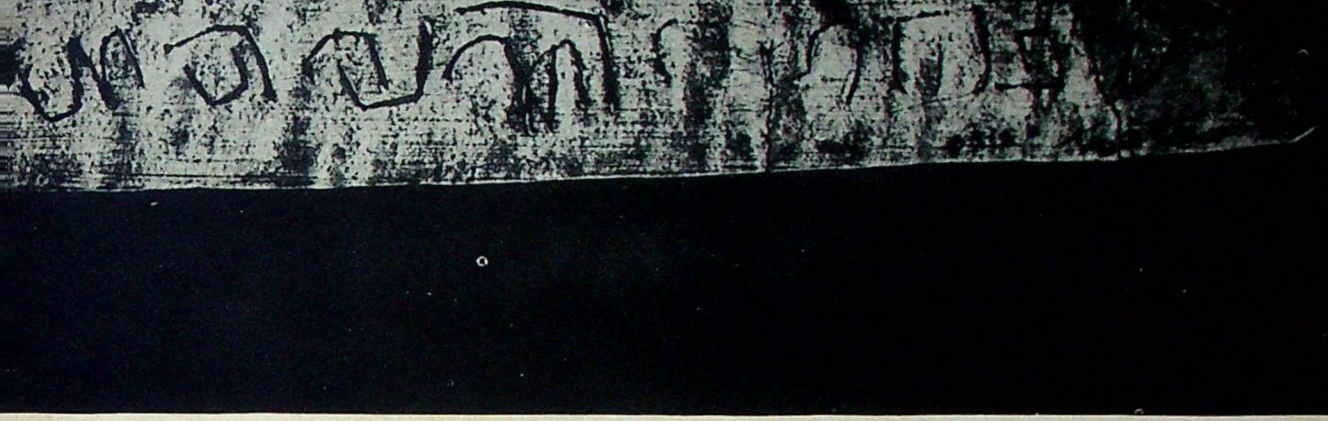
It was fortunate, however, that the piece of metal was already secure in the possession of the City Engineer of Butuan Proceso Gonzales who realized the significance of the find. It seemed that the artifact was discovered inside a wooden coffin unearthed by pothunters in their search for valuable ceramics and gold ornaments that commanded a high price in the antique market. The tenant of the land, who is also a public utility car owner, obtained the piece from the pothunter.

What is fascinating about the wooden coffins found in the vicinity of Butuan City is that not only are these provided with grave furniture consisting of ceramics and ornaments at times, but that the skulls of the human remains found here were artifically deformed, that is, the frontal bone of the skull was usually flattened artificially—a process often begun early in childhood when the bones are still malleable—to enhance the shape of the head.

Strangely enough, reports about the presence of artificially deformed skulls found in wooden coffins have been reported only in the southern Philippines, never in Luzon. Even more interesting is that, before the finds in Butuan City, all these coffins have been associated with above surface burials in rock shelters along sea coasts. For the first time this type of burial association was found in subsurface burials; that is, interment of the coffin under the ground.

Specific, too, in Butuan is the practice of multiple burials in these huge coffins made of hard wood. Very characteristic, however, of these burials whether in the Central Philippines or Mindanao is that the associated ceramic pieces found are dated between the 14th and 15th centuries. The piece of metal with the inscription found in one such coffin would, therefore, date about this period.

The object finally found its way to the National Museum. The strip of metal measures 17.8 centimeters in length and varies about 1.3 cms. in width. On one side of the strip is inscribed what appear to be 22 units of writing oriented from left to right. The characters had been inscribed into the metal by a metal point, probably by a small knife, with



the cutting edge held upwards. The process of inscribing resulted in lines with sharp edges, in parts with slivers of the metal lifted out, then apparently smoothed back to soften the sharp edges.

A preliminary study of the script showed no similarity with any of known Philippine paleographs. It must be remembered that, in approximately the 14th-15th centuries, another Philippine syllabary was in use, and this was unearthed during the now famous Calatagan Excavations in the province of Batangas in the 1960s. The Butuan script does not display any resemblance to the Calatagan script.

Understandably, the script is even more remotely related to the syllabaries of the Spanish period and those in use among the Tagbanwas of Palawan and the Mangyans of Mindoro. It became clear that the key to the script lies in spheres beyond the present political boundaries of the Philippine archipelago.

Comparisons with ancient scripts of Southeast Asia of approximately the same period suggested affinity with a Javanese type of syllabary. This initial evaluation was verified by Dr. Ben Bronson of the Chicago Field Museum who is a Southeast Asian specialist, and who suggested that a reproduction of the script be sent to Mr. Boechari of Indonesia who is the foremost paleographer in this part of the world. The initial reply from Mr. Boechari was transmitted by Dr. Bronson. The script was indeed similar to a Javanese script that had been in use from the 12th to the 15th century. The characters displayed a Hindu-Budhistic influence, probably the earliest in the Philippines.

The initial impression of Dr. Boechari was that the first four characters indicated a date, but this was soon dispelled when given a better reproduction of the artifact where the inscriptions were clearer. The frustration is understandable because the problem involves desciphering a system of symbols in use centuries ago, representing the phonetics of an unknown language, not to speak of the symbolism underlying the system.

The archaeological context of the paleograph, however, has already been destroyed without the benefit of systematic recording. Whatever information that could be gleaned about the script is now purely conjecture and hearsay, except for an additional information. Together with this strip was found another piece of metal with a similar kind of writing. The second paleograph, however, is still in the possession of the tenant who has declined so far all efforts to let the second piece go. Does this second paleograph hold the key to the first?

It is common knowledge that the probability of breaking down a code increases as the number of characters to work on increases for patterns would be easier to distinguish. The holder of the second piece, himself a devoted pothunter, has hinted that the writing might point out to him the location of treasures, without realizing that this is not possible until the script is deciphered. Until that time, the Butuan paleograph will remain an inconclusive factor in Philippine prehistory.

The implication suggested by the discovery of the script is clear when interrelated with the other finds recovered through systematic archaeology in northeastern Mindanao, specifically the sea-going plank boats in the southern Philippines, and the tradeware that could be dated to even as early as the 10th century. A widespread and systematic trade had prevailed then among the peoples of island Southeast Asia, thus connecting, directly or indirectly, the southern part of the Philippines with the major islands of Indonesia at the very least.

The Hindu-Buddhistic influence suggested in the paleograph correlates with the same influence needed in the reinterpretation of the Golden Agusan Image. The question of literacy in this part of the Philippines during the age of contact with the great traditions of Asia remains however a subject made more fascinating by the discovery of a writing that cannot be read, a message that cannot be understood, as yet. □

Interview: Lamberto Avellana

"Subsidy is not the answer to the problems of the Philippine motion picture industry, but the lowering of taxes will do"

Trained in dramatics at the Ateneo de Manila by the famous Father Irwin of that institution, Lamberto Avellana plunged into movie directing straight from college and promptly won all the major prizes with his first film, Sakay, *which he co-scripted with Daisy Hontiveros, who was to become the Helen Hayes of the Philippine stage and his wife. Since then he has continued to reap successes for more than 40 years as a director for both stage and film, and in 1976 was awarded the title of National Artist for his efforts. In this interview conducted by our managing editor, Avellana reminisces over the highlights of his career and airs his views on the problems of the Philippine motion picture industry.*

You went into films directly from college, right?

Right. It was the first time a student had ever put on the year's play, I think. Mr. Carlos P. Romulo was one of the guests. He liked the play so much he said, who directed it? He was brought backstage, met me and said, would you like to do movies? I don't know the first thing about movies, I said. And he said, fine, that's a good start.

In other words, your training for films was practically the stage.

It was a very valuable experience. I got to know what composition meant, what massing meant. I didn't know the technicalities of film. But I knew what I wanted on the screen, what those people moving there would say at what precise point and to whom, and what would be the answer. And I could get help from the technical people, and I did. I must mention Director Billy Icasiano, he's dead now, who helped me write my first film script, *Sakay*, with Daisy.

Would this type of script be the screenplay as we know it today?

The way Hollywood requires scripts. We could not begin a picture unless we had a full-sized script, with a full-sized breakdown, a full-sized division for actors and actresses of what their roles were going to be, their costumes, the locations, the amount of time and film that was going to be used. It was all very orderly, patterned after Hollywood, because the beginners of films here were

Americans who were all products of Hollywood.

After the war, the idea of shooting from scripts was abandoned.

Probably because of the demands of time. You see, during the Japanese occupation, we used very little pre-scripting for our presentations on stage, which at that time was at its highest. I don't think the Philippines ever had it so good. For four years, because there was nothing else to do, we concentrated our artistic and business efforts towards producing plays, so that all the directors, the musicians, the actors, the set designers were in stage presentations together.

Why didn't this discipline spill over into the postwar period?

Because the talkies came back. The GIs came back, the legs came back. Betty Grable, Frank Sinatra, Esther Williams. And we were out. And so we had to go back to films, and eventually to the type of films that people wanted to see.

Wouldn't you say that it was also because of the new producers? You knew the old producers, making films that were basically and classically sound.

We had Doña Sisang of LVN, Dr. Ciriaco Santiago of Premiere, Senator Vera of Sampaguita, and Mr. Anton of Movietech-Lebran. Among the four of them, they dominated Philippine movies. Probably it is a disadvantage now that there are so many producers. At that time there were so few. Almost you might say that each picture was cushioned with definite support. The idea was to make a popular picture that was in every way full of honesty, truth, integrity –

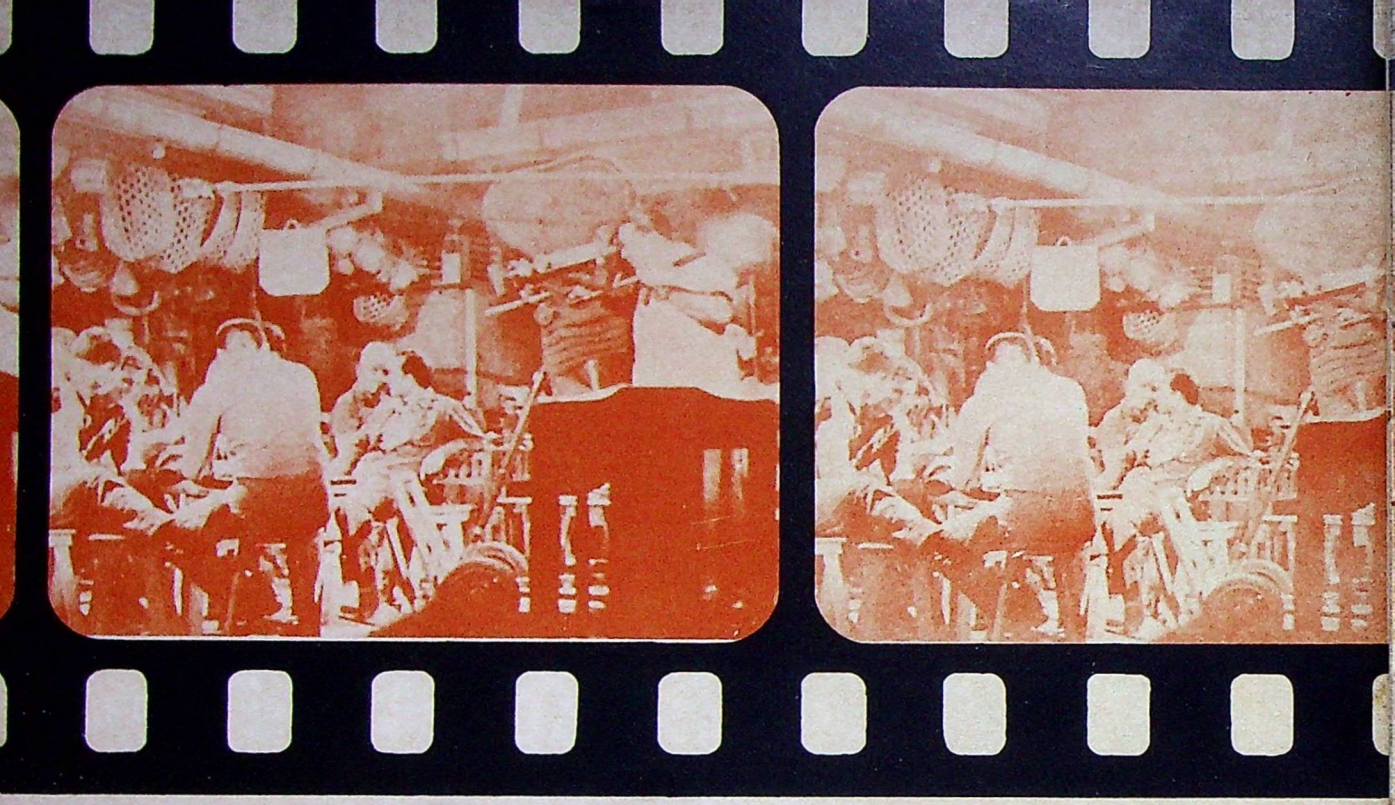
And yet this kind of film was not for the "bakya" type.

Now that's another thing I would like to correct, because I started the word *bakya*. I used it in an open article I wrote in the Philippine Cinema, in which I said, thank you for supporting us, you of the *bakya* crowd. But the term was not pejorative. I meant it to be the old ladies and the young teenaged girls who used to support Philippine movies because they were romantics. Because the Filipino is a romantic, sentimental man, he loves to sing, he loves suffering. And he likes to go for the underdog. That's why Fernando Poe Jr. and Joseph Estrada are always successful: for eight reels they're underdogs, slapped about and so on, but those last two reels when they come back, that's it.

And eventually we had to add sex to the pictures. We used to think it was something that should be left to the bedroom, until the influx of movies from abroad showed us that there were many other things to show besides just ordinary kissing.

Wasn't it the producers themselves who were offering something that the public wanted?

People began to want to see bare bodies, but our producers overdid it in the *bomba*. The Filipino is like that. Let him do something and he overdoes it. When he's pious, he's overpious, when he's a bad boy he's mean. But basically what's wrong with the movies today may be traced to many sources. Number one, the Philippine government is not helping, it's damning the industry with taxes. There are no incentives.



How do you expect the government to lighten the load?

Well, go easy on the import of raw materials, of film. Relax on the strictures on incoming equipment. We are forced to use the same ones we have been using because it is impossible to bring new equipment in. Any piece of equipment we bring in for movies is considered luxury. Luxury! So our sound is like that, because the latest we read about we can't get because of dollars. In Hollywood, film is the most expendable material there is. The actor makes a mistake, and you can retake up to 50, 60, 70 times.

How many takes do you usually do?

Two, three. Take an ordinary, run-of-the-mill Hollywood picture. They'll use up about 500 thousand feet of film – five zero zero thousand! – to produce eight finished reels, done by the best technicians, actors and directors. We use 30 rolls of film to make 12. We only throw away 18.

Wouldn't that be a challenge to the film maker?

Yes, we are able to produce. As Fritz Lang said, you people, apart from being directors here in the Philippines, you're magicians! I could never produce a picture out of 30,000 feet, that's just the beginning, my first scene! I think what we should have here is a body of people in some way connected with the film industry but altruistic enough to see the benefits and the pitfalls of the industry. A body that has a voice and can be heard on the viability of films, and can bring down taxes and the costs of imported materials.

Can't the Censors do this?

No. They're only there to say yes or no to the exhibition of films. They should only look at the films that have been finished and judge from there. The Censors are not empowered to have anything to do with the business aspects of movie making.

Right now you make a movie for less than a million, and you'll have a hard time at the box office. The government takes one third, the moviehouse another third, and you, the poor producer who risked everything, paid for everything, you get the other third. If you want to get your money back, you make three times your investment.

So you cater to the tastes of the man in the streets.

Because you want to play it safe. So you hire Nora Aunor and pay her a tremendous amount of money, because you've got a better chance than if you work with a girl who is not known.

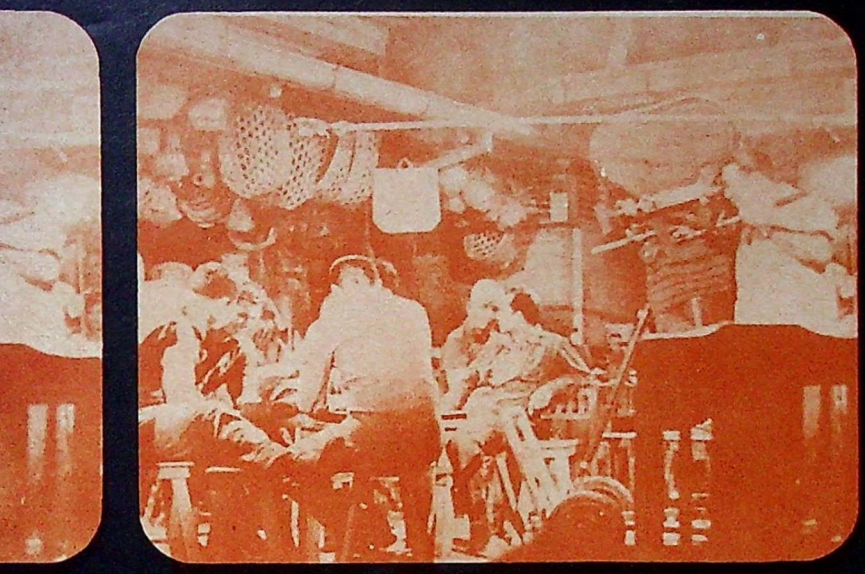
But isn't this superstar syndrome counterproductive, with the superstar getting 25 percent of the production costs?

Sometimes it is 50 percent. That is the reason why you find the stars themselves becoming producers because nobody can afford them anymore, so they afford themselves, write down their own fees, get a director, a leading man, and make a picture.

I once heard you say, cite to me the 30 best films in this country and I'll tell you they're all money-losers.

Mostly, mostly. A few have managed to make money, but hardly the kind of money the producers expected.

So with all the challenges that the



industry has been facing, haven't we developed our own kind of art cinema?

We were almost forming that, just before the outbreak of the war, a distinctively Filipino style of making a movie. Not too fast, not too slow, it tells its story in a very Filipino way, differently from the American. The American would just go chop-chop-chop. The European by the way has many cuts and many dissolves. The Filipino follows it scene by scene, sometimes it is very annoying. You see, the Filipino viewer doesn't want to be rushed. If you give him a movie that is only 80 minutes, he feels cheated. He wants to have a two-hour movie, two hours plus. Two hours fifteen. Our way of life is like that.

But as I've always said, a good Filipino director is better than a good American or European director. For instance, for directing a Filipino story, I'll take a good Filipino director any time. Before 1941 we had film makers like Ramon Estella, Marvin Castro, Carlos Vander Tolosa, Enrique Davila, Octavio Silos, and the budding directors Gerry de Leon, Manuel Conde, myself. When I joined the oldies I was 23, the young Benjamin joining a group of directors who were about 50, 55, like Mang Billy Icasiano whom I took lessons from. They came and went, one left for the States, died, and so on, but they made nothing but good, excellent pictures.

When Estella was making pictures in Europe they thought he was Mexican. He once made a picture, *Huling Habilin,* with Angel Esmeralda and Leopoldo Salcedo. It was beautiful. Now if the same compelling force were present in our directors today, we'd get somewhere.

Wasn't the shift to color also crucial to Philippine films?

It was, because of the expense. Have you seen "Jaws" in color? After that, the Filipino also wanted to see Bernard Bonnin in color. As I was starting to tell you, the law is faulty.

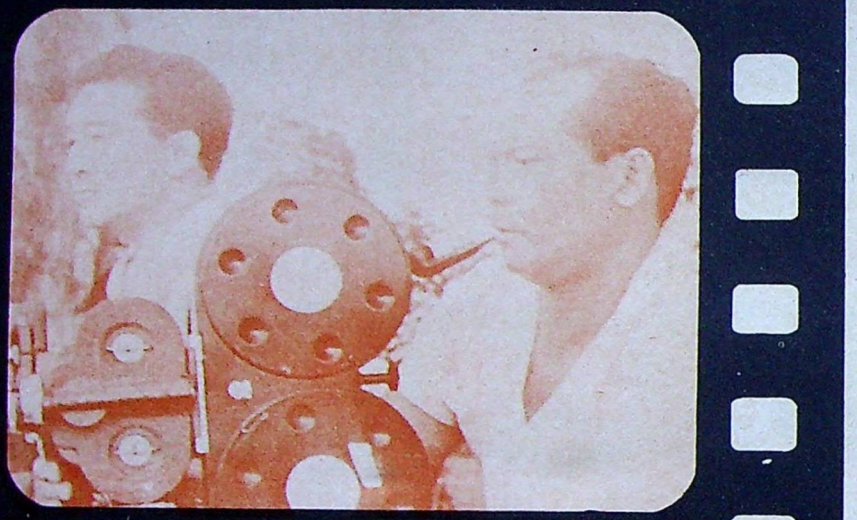
How about the Lumauig bill?

As it is now, it defeats its own purpose. Read Eddie Romero's dissertation on this. It is rather masterful the way he wrote it. The original idea was that of a plateau. We let in this much the first five years, second five years less, the third less, and on the 15th year we stop at that plateau, which is equivalent to the outlet we are having now anyway. Also, if we stop importing movies completely, the actors and the directors would not be prepared to tackle the tremendous obligation of making movies. There's no training, no professionalism. The audience does not know any better because it did not have training in appreciation early enough.

How do you remedy this in practical terms?

We go back. No, not films in grade school. Back to drawing, music, recitation, and programs. Show more programs on the air that are educational and artistic. Bring the children to paintings. Take them to concerts at the Luneta, or to one in the province. I told Mrs. Marcos once, "Ma'am, why don't we have a big cultural complex in each province?"

We have these for basketball but not for the arts. Let's build provincial cultural complexes. Set aside P10,000 for Pangasinan, P10,000 for Palawan, and so on, and look for local talents



who will write plays, drama, poetry, who will play music, and so on. And only when a production is good can it be brought to Manila. Then we will be developing Philippine theater.

The Cultural Center cannot do it. I thought the Metropolitan Theater would be the answer, but it isn't either. From what I see, it's high-class Philippine theater, not the type that the people will want to see. What do they want to see? The extensions of their favorite television shows, the half-hour shows extended to one hour and a half. Give them some musical in the beginning, and then a play of two hours, well-played, well acted, Bembol Roco, their popular stars. Alma Moreno if you can afford it.

So, with the provincial cultural complex, we bring the mountain to Mohammed?

Yes. We show people there a play written by a local talent for which you pay only 50 centavos. Send over Zeneida Amadors to them every month or two. Send them Nestor Torre to help them put on a play among themselves. Only when you find a really good actor will you send him to Manila.

Are you suggesting that movie actors and actresses go into provincial drama on a circuit of sorts?

Correct. Especially when they are not busy. They will be paid by the government. They'll share their art. Television and radio can help, but principally bring art to the people through drama because we have not been able to get them to come to us. And the stage is a tremendous background for anybody going into films. In fact, most Hollywood actors and directors go back to the stage for refreshers.

What kind of producer would you like to work with, ideally?

Somebody who'd say, well, here's the money, try and lose it for me, which I think Manny de Leon did at one time, for *Badjao* and *Anak Dalita*.

So subsidy is not the answer to the problems of the movie industry.

No, just removal of taxes, or lowering of taxes, because we might lose freedom if we were subsidized. We might be told what to make, and that's not right. We should be allowed to make what we want to make, within the freedom of art. □

Rewriting history with a question of heroes

AS A STUDENT I once heard the eminent Jesuit historian Horacio de la Costa remark that there is nothing like a historical novel when it comes to teaching history, probably having in mind works of fiction like *Gone with the Wind, War and Peace,* and others. The next best thing would be to have a fictionist handle history. And this is exactly what Nick Joaquin does and does forcefully in *A Question of Heroes* (Ayala Museum, 1977), in which he challenges and upsets a number of our cherished notions about our national heroes, or anti-heroes as he calls some of them.

Unlike F. Landa Jocano who would go into prehistory to tell us what the "Filipino" truly is, Joaquin fastens upon the living word instead and particularly how it was existentialized in the evolution of the National Consciousness by the following: Jose Burgos, Marcelo del Pilar, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Emilio Aguinaldo, Apolinario Mabini, Antonio Luna, Gregorio del Pilar and Artemio Ricarte, within the time frames of the 1872 Cavite Uprising, the Propaganda Movement, the Philippine Revolution and the "Insurrection" against the Americans.

By critically examining the separate involvements and motives of these Ten Key Figures of Philippine History somewhat in the new tradition of psycho-history, Joaquin weaves his leit-motifs around his reader's head, with particular emphasis on his belief that the Philippine Revolution of the late 1890s was by no means a proletarian uprising but a bourgeois one, in contrast to the "revolt of the masses" thesis of the historian Teodoro Agoncillo.

To support his contention, Joaquin divides this Revolution into two parts. The first was the Katipunan uprising led by Bonifacio, known in our history books as the Great Plebeian, and the second the Katipunan uprising outside Manila led by Aguinaldo. Bonifacio's proletarian uprising was dispersed in five days' time, after the fiasco of the Battle of San Juan. Aguinaldo's *ilustrado* (or at least ilustrado-led) uprising is the Revolution that we know, the one that went on for some years, from the Kawit coup of 1896, through the Pact of Biak-na-Bato in 1897 which marked a temporary truce between the Filipino and Spanish armies, the Battle of Manila in which the Americans showed their true colors, to the Capture in Palanan in 1901 which marked the end of Philippine-American hostilities.

Joaquin's choice of heroes to play up in this book however would not confine the period of the Revolution merely to the years of actual hostilities, but includes the period of its beginnings in the Propaganda Movement and even earlier to the Novales mutiny. It was the entire period of the Birth of a Nation through the Flowering of the Filipino, an idea and ideal by which the Ten Heroes in this book failed to measure up in one way or another as the Revolution was a failure historically.

The martyrdom of Father Burgos, together with his confrères Gomez and Zamora in 1872 is to Nick Joaquin but a continuation of the Creole insurgency against the Spanish Peninsulars. But from that time on the word "Filipino" no longer meant the Creoles exclusively but spread out to embrace all native-born citizens, *los hijos del pais,* "ang mga anak ng bayan."

Just the same the Creole Burgos (1837-1872), according to Joaquin, is a hero by accident, as he actually never had in mind the creation of an independent State but an autonomous one. Also, he appeared to have been framed by his enemies because of his growing image, especially with the emerging class of rich "Indios." A victim of the tragedy of "rising expectations," Burgos is in Joaquin's book a non-hero.

Creole and Indio (read Tagalog) met in the person of M.H. del Pilar (1850-1896), the acknowledged leader of the Propaganda Movement who was in some ways more brilliant than Rizal. Del Pilar's work was supported by the Taga-

log principalia in its early phases, but abandoned in its later stage by the same, indirectly causing the death by hunger and disappointment of this proto-hero (he was for reform rather than revolution) in a garret in Madrid.

The next national figure Lopez-Jaena (1856-1896) is another non-hero and possibly even a traitor in Joaquin's book. The first Filipino hippie and beatnik *(jeproks* in the slang of today's Manila), Lopez-Jaena belonged to that illustrious band of expatriates in Madrid, the equivalent of Hemingway's Lost Generation, which included Rizal, Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, and the painters Luna and Hidalgo.

A brilliant propagandist, Lopez-Jaena however was the archetypal romantic who would have found the Paris of that period more suited to his temperament had he been an artist instead. Scolded by Rizal for his abysmal laziness, Lopez-Jaena returns briefly to Manila, but leaves after four days in utter terror. He goes back to Spain and crowns his act of cowardice by trying to get into Spanish politics, eventually dying of consumption and misery at 40 in Barcelona.

If Lopez-Jaena is a non-hero, if not a turncoat to the cause of nationhood, Rizal is an anti-hero in *A Question of Heroes.* Joaquin cites as proof his turning his back on Aguinaldo's revolution and his volunteering as a doctor in Cuba on the side of Spain. More than any of the heroes in this book, including Mabini, the brains of the Revolution, Rizal had the vision of nationhood burning brightly in his mind, so that he could not claim ignorance to absolve himself of his act.

Joaquin cites the lifelong duel "between Rizal the subversive and Rizal the progressive," that is to say, between the revolutionist and the reformist in him, as dramatized by the *personae* in his novels, Ibarra the reformist in *Noli,* and Simoun the subversive revolutionist in *Fili.* In the end, following Joaquin's argument, when the decision had to be made, the Ibarra in him won over the Simoun and cost him the chance of true greatness.

The famous retraction may be seen in the light of this inner duel. However, there is no doubt that Rizal recognized and eventually accepted what he was dying for, unlike Burgos who to the end kept protesting innocence. The proof is "Mi Ultimo Adios," in which the "dawn" he was referring to was the inevitable independence of his beloved country.

Joaquin believes that the *Noli* was a reading of the Burgos case, which Rizal couched in the allegory of a novel so as not to come in direct confrontation with the Spanish authorities. He also discusses at length two views on Rizal by the ilustrado descendant Leon Maria Guerrero and the Yugoslav exile Ante Radaic, the first looking at Rizal from the point of view of the ilustrado class, and the other from the point of view of a physical deficiency.

Radaic's psycho-analytic theory on Rizal's small stature is the Freudian compensation idea: because of his "inferior build" (shades of Napoleon) Rizal struggled to become ten feet tall. In substance Joaquin's *Question* agrees with the Guerrero theory that Rizal was a Victorian gentleman, "the very embodiment of the intelligentsia and the petite bourgeoisie," but has reservations about the sexual inadequacy that is at the bottom of Radaic's Freudian thesis.

Joaquin begins his chapter on Bonifacio (1863-1897) by citing the various versions of the Cry of Balintawak (including the Kangkong and Pugad-Lawin theories), and comes up with a compromise, the Cry of Caloocan, as this district encompassed the other three places. Joaquin attributes Bonifacio's

fall to "Manileño arrogance versus provincial togetherness," the last exemplified by Aguinaldo and his fellow Caviteños.

Behind it all was Bonifacio's misadventure in San Juan which had the effect of disillusioning his followers and deglamorizing him as the Supremo. In just a few days his "revolt of the masses" fizzled out. In contrast, Aguinaldo's forces, led by ilustrados like himself and armed with more than just bolos, were successful in their first battles.

Bonifacio's attempt therefore to capture *this* Revolution by pitting the Magdiwang faction against the Magdalo in a power ploy not only backfired but cost him his life, a victim of the truism that revolutions eat their own children. The nominal Supremo had to be sacrificed for the unity of command; in the light of the emerging Idea of Nation, he had become completely non-heroic and therefore dispensable.

As we all know, the man who signed Bonifacio's death warrant was Aguinaldo himself. Although he too was small of stature like Rizal, his tragic flaw lay not in his inferior build (apparently he wasn't aware of it psychotically as Rizal was of his, if Radaic is to be believed), but rather in his small Caviteño mind, so Joaquin claims.

As Rizal failed the test of true heroism when he snubbed the Revolution, Aguinaldo failed the same test when he decided *not* to capture Manila after blitzing his way to the very gates of the city before the Americans landed in force, and decided in addition not to ally himself with the Spaniards who had asked him to do so against the common enemy.

The reason for his lack of boldness (not courage) at the right time and in the right place Joaquin traces back to his early dislike for learning. Although a member of the ilustrado class, Aguinaldo was a school drop-out. Because of this background the man failed to transcend his clan, his *cavitismo,* thinking provincial when he should have been thinking national and international, a victim of the "hooey of Dewey" and Taft's not too manifest "Manifest Destiny."

It is this same cavitismo that made him suspicious of "outsiders" like Antonio Luna, whose brilliant plan to shift to a protracted guerrilla war (long before

Vo Nguyen Giap ever thought of it) against the Americans was ignored; the same clannishness that made him listen instead to the supposed Brains of the Revolution, Mabini, instead of making his own decisions as president and dictator.

On top of that, Aguinaldo (1869-1964) survived his Revolution by more than 60 years. As a result his double sin of omission "the small man (read mind) incapable of the large act," as Joaquin put it—became magnified by the distortions of time and memory. But it wasn't exactly his fault as there is such a thing after all as Fate that decides the destinies of men and nations when they become indecisive.

Mabini (1864-1903) was the grey eminence behind Aguinaldo. Joaquin tends to believe that the paralysis of the man's lower extremities was not forced upon him by fate but was something willed if subconsciously to atone for a manly indiscretion; at the same time the gradual ascent of the malady towards the head became the Objective Correlative par excellence of the Revolution.

Mabini was completely in the spirit of the Revolution like Luna in spite of his paralysis, and a prophet for the new nation like Rizal, the dawn of which he too was fated not to see. His tragic flaw was his over-legalistic mind which brought him onto the verge of *hubris*, as we see in his writing of the "True Decalogue."

Luna (1868-1899) possessed that quality that Aguinaldo lacked, the ability to decide quickly and act on the decision. Like Mabini, he had the visionary "unity" of nation before his mind (the Frenchman Henri Turot, writing from firsthand experience, makes him a socialist revolutionary in his book on the Revolution), and could have become the Strongman that was the need of the hour had Aguinaldo allowed him.

Unfortunately he suffered like his painting brother Juan from a violent temper, making enemies unnecessarily thereby, and was in fact nicknamed "Cafre" for his violent disposition and "General Numero Uno" for his quickness to impose Article One or the death penalty on traitors. Joaquin thinks that the "idea of Nation perished with Luna,"

when he was assassinated on orders from the High Command.

The hatchetman for this job would have been Gregorio del Pilar (1875-1899) had others not beaten him to it. A Caviteño like his leader he was the fair-headed boy of the Revolution whom Aguinaldo was apparently grooming as his successor, the "Boy General" of American correspondents, but Joaquin prefers to think of him as the "Lover Boy" of the Revolution who was for making love and war at the same time.

Joaquin implies that had del Pilar paid more attention to his troops, or as much attention as he gave to his Byronic love life, he might not have fought the Americans on Tirad Pass with more than the measly 60 left of his 2,000 men. The heroism of del Pilar astride his white horse is a romantic myth invented by the Americans, according to Joaquin, and indeed a number of his contemporaries did not think there was anything heroic about his behavior.

Joaquin ends his *Question* with Ricarte (1866-1945), the Vibora or Viper of the Revolution who ended up being its Rip van Winkle when he returned from a long exile in Japan in the company of yet another invading army intent on empire, the Imperial Japanese Army.

On the last page of the book Joaquin the novelist recreates the dying moments of Ricarte in the mountains of Kalinga in 1945, of fatigue and old age and failure, most of all failure, as in his mind's eye the Revolution comes back to life in a highly compressed rerun of faces, voices, events, thus providing *A Question of Heroes* with a memorable coda.

Joaquin's grand thesis is that the Philippine Revolution of 1896 began long before that time, and that it continued into the first two decades of the American occupation. After that it disappeared, to all intents and purposes dead, not so much from a lack of heroes as that "it had run out of Filipinos."

This Joaquin attributes to the most massive brainwashing in the 20th century, the brainwashing of an entire generation, to be followed by succeeding generations, by means of the public school system of mass education introduced into the country by the Americans. It is to be noted that, in spite of Joaquin's thesis, new leaders like Quezon and Osmeña continued to pursue the Dream of Nationhood through reform rather than revolution.

Joaquin's view is of course too puritanical in limiting the definition of hero to visionaries seeking to existentialize the vibrant "Form" of Nation only in terms of armed conflict, or the violent overthrow of government. In this limited point of view, all others are anti-heroes, or non-heroes, or proto-heroes, or quasi-heroes if not out and out cads.

Yet the same Revolution that was supposed to have run out of Filipinos re-appeared as the Unfinished Revolution in the 1950s in Joaquin's eyes. But he should not have neglected to point out that the "revolution" of this period was no longer a pure, home-grown one but had taken on internationalist, marxist trappings, and that it too failed as the government ended up pre-empting it first in the person of Magsaysay and then in our times of Ferdinand Marcos.

Still and all, *A Question of Heroes* succeeds remarkably in reminding us that a country's history is not so much several facts put together as a few individuals acting archetypally for all in heroic but flawed performances. By telescoping several decades into one continuity of heroes and "anti-heroes" shining with immediacy, Nick Joaquin gives us several lessons in nationalism which no history book can possibly offer.

—LEONIDAS V. BENESA

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