SINCE 1922

ISSN: 0041-7149
ISSN: 2619-7987

VOL. 91 • NO. 2 • NOVEMBER 2018

UNITAS

SEMI-ANNUAL PEER-REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL ONLINE JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH IN LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY

Double Nora: A Japanese Intercultural Performance
MITSUYA MORI

Re-considering Brecht and Sartre On Theatre
ALEX TAEK-GWANG LEE

Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the "Unhappy Consciousness"
E. SAN JUAN, JR.

E. San Juan's Creative Oppositional Criticism
FRANCIS SOLLANO

"Total Midnight All Over the Land Escaping Minute by Minute into the Small Hours": Historiography and Baroque Poetics in Nick Joaquin's *A Question of Heroes*
VINCENZ SERRANO

Nature and Cultural History in Nick Joaquin's "Doña Jeronima"
LILY ROSE TOPE

Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*: Historical Transformations Bereft of Social Transformation
GABRIEL GONZALEZ

Indexed in the International Bibliography of the
Modern Language Association of America

PONTIFICAL AND ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, MANILA
1611

UNITAS is an international online peer-reviewed open-access journal of advanced research in literature, culture, and society published bi-annually (May and November).

UNITAS is published by the University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines, the oldest university in Asia. It is hosted by the Department of Literature, with its editorial address at the Office of the Scholar-in-Residence under the auspices of the Faculty of Arts and Letters. Hard copies are printed on demand or in a limited edition.

Copyright @ University of Santo Tomas

Copyright

The authors keep the copyright of their work in the interest of advancing knowledge but if it is reprinted, they are expected to acknowledge its initial publication in UNITAS. Although downloading and printing of the articles are allowed, users are urged to contact UNITAS if reproduction is intended for non-individual and non-commercial purposes. Reproduction of copies for fair use, i.e., for instruction in schools, colleges and universities, is allowed as long as only the exact number of copies needed for class use is reproduced.

History and Coverage

Established in July 1922, UNITAS is one of the oldest extant academic journals published by a university in the Philippines as well as in Asia. Still, UNITAS is perhaps the oldest extant academic journal of its kind in the Philippines and Asia in terms of expansive disciplinary coverage and diverse linguistic representation through the decades. While always cognizant of disciplinary specialization, it has been "multi-disciplinary" in publishing scholarship that is intra-disciplinary within the humanities and the arts, and interdisciplinary across the other disciplines. As it was in the beginning, it has aimed for "unitas" by conjoining disciplinary difference through its pages.

Moreover, it has been multi-linguistic on the whole, allowing itself to evolve from a journal published purely in Spanish, and then in English, becoming bilingual eventually in the various issues in which articles are written in Spanish and English, or

as has been the case in the last several decades, in English and Filipino. And, of late, UNITAS has also published articles in other languages.

Apart from its disciplinary inclusiveness and crossovers, in almost 100 years of its existence, UNITAS has expanded the conceptual terrain of academic and topical coverage. It has published on cutting-edge and time-honored themes in which both established and emerging voices in research and scholarship are heard in articles that range across traditions, modernities, movements, philosophies, themes, politics, geographies, histories, musical types, architectural styles, gender relations, sexualities, government and non-government institutions, educational philosophies, media, forms, genres, canons, pedagogies, literary and cultural relations, and comparative studies, among others, in book review essays, critical commentaries, scholarly papers, and monographs. Such an expansiveness has allowed for establishing new lines of inquiry or exploring new lines of thinking about old ones.

Editorial Policy

UNITAS invites work of outstanding quality by scholars and researchers from a variety of disciplinary, intra-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary principles, protocols and perspectives for its readership consisting primarily of academics, researchers, and graduate students, as well as of a diverse public consisting of scholars and leaders who are at the forefront of their fields and advocacies, undertaking research on multidisciplinary aspects of national and global issues within and beyond academia broadly from the perspective of but not limited to the human sciences.

In general, UNITAS aims to publish leading-edge and challenging articles and monographs in regular and special issues in relation to the critical currents and themes of the nation, the Asian region and the world which try to meet the various problems and opportunities of today's globalization.

Although single-authorship of articles remains typical, UNITAS encourages the submission of papers that are co-written by authors working across multi-cultural and multi-linguistic settings, which have resulted from an inter-cultural, inter-regional or inter-national collaboration of researchers in an effort to internationalize knowledge production, circulation and reception.

In particular, under the rubric of literary and cultural studies in Asia, UNITAS aims to be a platform for ethically engaged studies that represent intersections of national and international literatures, arts and cultures, crisscrossing critical and creative categories, authors and readers, "East" and "West," "North" and" South," text and

context, close readings and fieldwork, original works and translations, and theoretical and practical methodologies.

UNITAS welcomes submissions from all locations of the globe which are published in English, Philippine national and regional languages, and other foreign languages. Non-English language articles are required to submit an extended abstract in English containing the full argument rather than just a digest of the main idea.

Submissions to UNITAS are to follow the 8th edition of the MLA Style Manual. During the evaluation process, unless otherwise recommended by the double-blind peer reviewers to use a different documentation format, articles must be published following the MLA guidelines.

Ethical Policy

Every submission is assumed to have not been previously published and is not under consideration elsewhere for possible publication, unless it is a major submission meant as a reprint, and later approved for publication as such.

Plagiarism is the copying of large blocks of texts of someone's work and representing them as one's own. If plagiarism is ascertained after publication, the article may be withdrawn or retracted. Self-plagiarism or or duplication of passages without proper citation will be evaluated on a case-to-case basis.

After the protocols of peer review and editing, UNITAS may or may not ask the authors to review the article prior to publication due to constraints.

Securing the publishing rights of all photos, images, or charts accompanying the article is the responsibility of the author.

Articles have to be submitted via e-mail to unitasust@gmail.com

Address all communications to:
University of Santo Tomas Office of the Scholar-in-Residence/UNITAS Office,
Faculty of Arts and Letters
G/F, St. Raymund de Peñafort Building, España St., 1008, Manila, Philippines
Telephone No: 406-1611 loc. 8830

Photo of the procession of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, La Naval de Manila, is reprinted by permission of Nathan de Guzman.

Layout by Paolo Miguel G. Tiausas UNITAS Logo by Francisco T. Reyes

International Editorial Board

Patricio Abinales
University of Hawaii at Manoa, US

Syed Farid Alatas
National University of Singapore

Jonathan Beller
Pratt Institute, US

Melani Budianta
University of Indonesia

Richard Chu
University of Massachusetts, US

Joel David
Inha University, South Korea

International Editorial Board

Fabian Antonio M. Dayrit
Ateneo de Manila University

Eduardo Deves-Valdes
Universidad Santiago de Chile

Leonard Harris
Purdue University, US

Caroline Sy Hau
Kyoto University, Japan

Loren Kruger
University of Chicago, US

Bienvenido Lumbera
University of the Philippines

International Editorial Board

Pawit Mahasarinand
Director, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC)

Victor Merriman
Edge Hill University, UK

Patrick A. Messerlin
Sciences Po, France

Resil Mojares
University of San Carlos
Cebu City, **Philippines**

Mitsuya Mori
Seijo University, Japan

Tran Van Phuoc
Hue University, Vietnam

International Editorial Board

E. San Juan, Jr.
University of the Philippines

Stephen Shapiro
University of Warwick, UK

Inseop Shin
Konkuk University, South Korea

Brian Singleton
Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Nicanor G. Tiongson
University of the Philippines

Megan Thomas
University of California
at Santa Cruz, US

International Editorial Board

Lily Rose Tope
University of the Philippines

Ruanni Tupas
National Institute of Education, Singapore

Christa Wirth
Universität Zürich, Switzerland

Paul Young
University of Exeter, UK

Nie Zhenzhao
Zhejiang University, China

Editorial Staff

Maria Luisa Torres Reyes
maria.luisa.reyes@ust.edu.ph
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Joyce L. Arriola
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Maria Eloisa S. Perez

Nicole R. Tablizo
Maria Eloisa S. Perez
MANAGING EDITORS

Jan Raen Carlo M. Ledesma
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Contents

1 In This Issue

3 Double Nora
A Japanese Intercultural Performance
MITSUYA MORI

17 Re-considering Brecht and Sartre On Theatre
ALEX TAEK-GWANG LEE

40 Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse
Women and the Tragi-comedy of the "Unhappy Consciousness"
E. SAN JUAN, JR.

82 E. San Juan's Creative Oppositional Criticism
FRANCIS SOLLANO

102 "Total Midnight All Over the Land Escaping Minute by Minute into the Small Hours"
Historiography and Baroque Poetics in Nick Joaquin's *A Question of Heroes*
VINCENZ SERRANO

132 Nature and Cultural History in Nick Joaquin's "Doña Jeronima"
LILY ROSE TOPE

Contents

148 Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*
Historical Transformations Bereft of Social Transformation
GABRIEL GONZALEZ

169 About the Authors

In This Issue

The first part of this issue consists of two essays that deal with theater theory and practice.

Mitsuya Mori's "Double Nora: A Japanese Intercultural Performance" reflects upon his experience in directing Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* in which a 19th century Norwegian play transforms into "a modern *noh* play" in Japan. With Mori's conceptual and practical innovation, a canonical European drama literally and figuratively moves hand in hand with traditional Japanese theater. In his production, titled *Double Nora*, two performers play a role: a *noh* actor and a modern actress. Indeed, together on stage, they act simultaneously and the audience sees this double act. Mori explains that "when one is performing, the other is behind and watching the scene." In this unique adaptation that re-imagines Ibsen's famous play, spaces for a richer, more layered, and dynamic theatrical and interpretive possibilities are opened up across many levels –from the aesthetic to the intercultural.

Alex Taek-Gwang Lee's "Re-considering Brecht and Sartre" examines the debates between two major figures in modern European intellectual history: Bertolt Brecht, the theater practitioner and theoretician, and Jean-Paul Sartre, the philosopher and writer. Notably, both of them have had a significant impact on many theatrical and theoretical movements of the 20th century beyond Europe. Cutting across a number of aesthetic and philosophical issues, Lee discusses the Brechtian conceptualization of epic theatre which focusses on method, assuming a distinction between actors and audience. Sartre, on the other hand, "presupposes the transcendental unity of actors and audience in which everybody shares an equal capacity to think and communicate with each other," assuming no distinction between actors and audience. Lee views Sartre's criticism of Brecht as raising several important issues about theatre, even as the debates underscore the close relationship between theatre and philosophy.

The second part consists of five essays in memory of one of the Philippines' major authors, Nick Joaquin/Quijano de Manila.

On 24 February 2018, lectures were delivered by invited esteemed professors from several universities in a forum on the theme, "Questions of Ethics: Social Transformation in the Works of Nick Joaquin." Jointly hosted by the Research Center for Culture, Arts and Humanities (RCCAH), the office of the Scholar-in-Residence, Department of Literature, and the Faculty of Arts and Letters, the said forum was the second installment of the Nick Joaquin Centennial Forum held during The Research Fortnight 2018. The first installment had taken place in 2017.

The forum was meant to highlight "the critical edge" that underpins the continuing relevance of Joaquin's works in an attempt to delve anew into their significance. Joaquin, who had been declared a National Artist in 1976 and recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Literature, Journalism, and Creative Communication in 1996, has been called "the greatest Filipino writer next to José Rizal" by National Artist, F. Sionil Jose.

There are ties that bind Joaquin and UST from which he received an Associate in Arts degree. He entered the St. Albert College in Hong Kong and became a Dominican seminarian before deciding to pursue a writing career. After his death, as part of his will, his personal library and books were donated to the UST Library.

Like Rizal, the "critical edge" of Nick Joaquin/Quijano de Manila owes to his role as a "keeper of our national memory," to quote F. Sionil Jose again—that which lies in the imagination of the readers of his creative writing and journalism.

This collection of essays in this volume may be said to be an attempt at gathering anew such memories—not just as recollection but as ethical vision toward social transformation.

In "Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the 'Unhappy Consciousness'" by E. San Juan, Jr., reconciling polarized memories is symbolic of the "predicament" of the *Ilustrados* in "a project of extracting universality from particularized dilemmas." In Joaquin's art, the "Unhappy Consciousness" functions as "the testimony of mere utopian longing or the allegory of a compulsively repeated tragicomedy rescued from an embalmed past."

"E. San Juan's Creative Oppositional Criticism" by Francis C. Sollano links San Juan's keynote lecture, "Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-Comedy of the 'Unhappy Consciousness,'" to two previous works, namely, *Dialectics of Transcendence* (1984, written in 1967) and *Subversions of Desire* (1988). Sollano affirms that Hegelian difference and opposition are fundamentally productive" as illustrated by San Juan's Joaquinian scholarship in which dialectics is visibly at work.

In Vincenz Serrano's "Total Midnight All Over the Land Escaping Minute by Minute into the Small Hours": Historiography and Baroque Poetics in Nick Joaquin's *A Question of Heroes*," it is argued that the long sentence with which Nick Joaquin concludes *A Question of Heroes* is "an index of his temporal capaciousness, which from a baroque perspective, signals on the one hand recuperation and resistance, and artifice and deformation on the other."

"Nature and Cultural History in Nick Joaquin's 'Doña Jeronima'" by Lily Rose Tope provides a new take on a Joaquin story drawn from his use of natural elements through "a range of natural imagery" which are viewed as "expressions of ideological and philosophical engagements in his narrative as well as carriers of the thematic grip in his fiction. "

"Joaquin's The Woman Who Had Two Navels: Historical Transformations Bereft of Social Transformation" by Gabriel Jose Gonzalez, S.J. argues that "Connie Vidal's claim to having two navels is indeed a manifestation against colonization and a cry for an authentic social revolution." As such, the "unresolved moral dilemma that the Monzon brothers face at the conclusion of the novel" suggests "that authentic transformations that lead to real lived freedoms require changes even in the personal and social moral structure."

Double Nora

A Japanese Intercultural Performance

Mitsuya Mori
Seijo University

ABSTRACT

The intercultural theatre performance was quite popular in Europe in the 1970s and 80s. Although the concept of interculturalism has become controversial since and seems threadbare today, it is still commonly practiced, especially in non-Western countries. My production, *Double Nora,* a modern *noh* play based on Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, may appear intercultural, but the intercultural style was not the end for me. It was only a means to express my own view on *A Doll's House*, for which the traditional Japanese theater, *noh*, seemed to me to be most suitable for collaboration with the modern theater. In this production Nora was played by two actors, noh actor and a modern actress. Hence it was titled *Double Nora*. Both are always together on stage; when one is performing, the other is behind and watching the scene. *Double Nora* was first performed at Umewaka Noh Playhouse in Tokyo in 2005, and invited to the Ibsen Festival in Oslo the following year.

KEYWORDS

A Doll's House, Nora, *noh*, Intercultural, Norway, acting, tradition

After I published a one-volume translation of Ibsen's eleven modern plays in 1997, a Japanese theatre producer, Mr. Toshiyuki Natori, proposed that I should direct all of them in series, one play a year, with a professional theater company under his production. I immediately accepted his proposal and started directing Ibsen's modern plays in September 1999. In the middle of the series, Mr. Natori was invited to bring his Ibsen production to Norway, so he and I decided to make an intercultural Ibsen production, which was a collaboration between modern theater and the traditional *noh* theater in Japan. I chose *A Doll's House* for this production, for I thought that the central meaning of *A Doll's House*, namely the double identity of the heroine Nora, could be more vividly demonstrated in the intercultural style than in a usual modern theater style. Therefore, I employed two actors, a *noh* actor and a modern female actor, to play Nora together and titled the play *Double Nora*. Since a *noh* play is mostly an all-male production, the main character, called *shite*, wears a female mask when playing a female role. Thus, the *noh* actor playing Nora, though quite elderly, wears a young female mask. Both actors of Nora are always together, and they alternate between a prominent position in the center and a position at the back. Helmer, Nora's husband, is also played by a *noh* actor, while Doctor Rank and the bank employee, Krogstad, are played by the same modern male actor. *Noh* actors perform in the *noh* style and modern actors in the modern style. Thus, the performing form of *Double Nora* should be called intra-cultural, comprising modern and *noh* theater, as well as intercultural, comprising *noh* and Ibsen.

As is well-known, intercultural theatre performance has been seen throughout the history of theatre, but its particularly notable style emerged in Europe in the 1970s and 80s, and became popular in the following period. At the same time, directors of intercultural performances in the West, such as Peter Brook or Ariane Mnouchkine, were severely criticized by non-Western scholars because of their apparent tendency toward Eurocentrism. Thus, the concept of interculturalism has become controversial and seems threadbare today.

This does not mean, however, that intercultural theatre performance is disappearing from the world stage. On the contrary, it is quite commonly

practiced, especially in non-Western countries, and research on interculturalism has come under the broad discipline of cultural studies in general. As Ric Knowles maps in his introductory book, *Theatre & Interculturalism* (2010), new disciplines such as gender studies, racial studies, and diasporic studies are regarded as closely related to interculturalism. Thus, intercultural performances of Shakespeare or Greek tragedies by Japanese directors, such as Yukio Ninagawa or Tadashi Suzuki, illustrate not only a mix of modern and traditional styles of acting, scenery, and costume but also aspects of modern and old society in Japan.

It was not my intention, however, to follow their paths in *Double Nora*. The intercultural style was not the end for me. It was only a means to express my own view on *A Doll's House*, for which the traditional theater, *noh*, seemed to me to be most suitable for collaboration.

Nora is a conventional woman and at the same time quite modern and progressive. The conventional woman is bound to the past, and the modern woman to the future. The main character in Ibsen's modern plays is in a conflict between the past and the future. He or she wishes to reject the past, but the present is bound to the past as well as the future. Therefore, he or she almost always fails in completing his or her ideal. *A Doll's House* might be the sole exception; Ibsen seems to be rather optimistic about Nora's future. Norway at the time was striving to be a modern nation-state, following the advanced countries in Europe. However, the future is based on the past, both for Nora and Norway. This situation is quite similar to the relationship between traditional theater and modern theater in Japan. The latter was created under the influence of modern Western theater, and the old tradition of *noh* theater was totally ignored in the development of modern Japanese theater. However, this is regrettable as *noh* theater could have significantly contributed to modern theater.

Noh theatre was established as an artistic theatre form in the 14th century by Kan'ami and Ze'ami, father and son, and has been regularly performed until today in a highly distinctive style. *Noh* actors and musicians usually confine themselves only to *noh* performances, which are shown in several

noh playhouses in Tokyo or Kyoto practically every day. *Double Nora* is a rare case in which *noh* actors and musicians appear on stage with modern actors.

In fact, I have no practical experience of *noh*, although I have seen *noh* performances quite often since my student days. Therefore, I first asked my colleague, Professor Kuniyoshi Ueda, for help in writing the script of *Double Nora.* Professor Ueda is a Shakespearean scholar and an amateur or almost semi-professional, *noh* actor. He has written and directed the so-called Shakespeare *noh*, that is, the performance of Shakespeare in the *noh* style. He was willing to help me and finished the first version of the script in a month. His script, however, followed the conventional plot form of traditional *noh* play: a female ghost appears to a travelling priest and tells him about her agony in the present state caused by what she did in the world, and then the priest soothes her from the agony. Thus, Ueda's script had the following plot: the dead Nora appears in this world to see a Japanese priest, who is travelling in Norway, and tells him about her life with her husband, Torvald Helmer, which ended up in an unhappy separation. Subsequently, the priest helps Nora to reconcile with Helmer, wishing him a happy life hereafter.

My original idea was, as stated above, not to make a new *noh* play but to show a new interpretation of *A Doll's House*, which could be demonstrated only with the collaboration of *noh* and modern theater. Therefore, I asked Ueda to make the plot as faithful as possible to Ibsen's original, though of course it had to be shortened to a certain degree. Ueda revised his script, but it was still not satisfactory to me. Therefore, I rewrote Ueda's script according to my idea, primarily basing it on the original plot and dialogues. To make a performing version of it, I asked Mr. Reijiro Tsumura, who would play the *noh* Nora, to check whether the dialogues are suitable for the *noh* chanting style. For example, my version starts with Helmer calling out Nora's name, "Nora, Nora, you bought so many Christmas presents?" However, Tsumura said that it would be difficult for a *noh* actor to call out her name this way in the very first line of the play. Therefore, the line was revised and the call "Nora, Nora" was removed. The characters were limited to four: namely, Nora, Helmer, Krogstad, and Rank. The children and the Nurse were omitted, and Mrs. Linde was excluded as well. Thus, some Ibsen

enthusiasts complained about the omission of Mrs. Linde when they saw the performance, insisting the importance of Mrs. Linde as a foil to Nora and suggesting that she was the motivation for her final action. I understood their complaints, but I wanted to intensify the double identity of Nora as simply as possible, which is in accord with the dramaturgy of *noh* theater. I wished that while *Double Nora* would be performed side by side in both modern and *noh* theatre style, without modifying either of them in principle, the framework of the entire performance would be in *noh* style.

Double Nora was first performed at a *noh* playhouse, Umewaka Noh Playhouse, in Tokyo in 2005. The *noh* playhouse was outdoors in pre-modern times, though the stage was covered by a roof as shown in the image below. From the mid-19th century onward, both the stage and the auditorium, that is, the whole playhouse, has been inside a building.

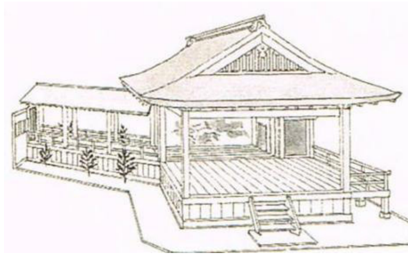

Fig. 1 An image of an ordinary *noh* stage in the old days.

Therefore, the *noh* stage is now indoors, but there is still a roof as a vestige of the time when all *noh* stages were outdoors. The main stage is six-by-six meters with a pillar in each corner supporting a roof. Extending diagonally from the back left corner is the *hashigakari* (bridge), a corridor with handrails. Such a stage, especially the main stage, is required for any *noh* performance. When a *noh* play is performed abroad, a stage of the same size is built on the ordinary stage.

A *noh* play always starts with the musicians coming onto the stage from the bridge to the right and the chorus from the rear door to the left, which

was the case for *Double Nora* as well. There are three musicians: a flutist, a small hand-drum player, and a large hand-drum player. In some cases, another drum player joins, but not in this production. The chorus usually comprises eight actors, but in *Double Nora*, there were only four for financial reasons.

A flute tune marks the start of the performance. The curtain at the end of the bridge is lifted and Nora appears. The *noh* Nora comes onto the stage first, followed by the modern Nora, because the conventional aspect dominates in Nora in the beginning of the play. When they reach the main stage, the modern Nora retreats to the back of the stage and watches the *noh* Nora's performance in the first scene of the play; Nora conversing with Helmer, her husband, played by a *noh* actor as well.

After the first scene between Nora and Helmer, the modern Nora replaces the *noh* actor; the modern Nora takes off the cover coat of the *noh*

Fig. 2 Modern Nora (Yu Mizuno) and Krogstad (Hiroshi Murakami), with *noh* Nora (Reijiro Tsumura) behind.

actor and puts it on herself. The *noh* Nora withdraws to the back and watches the scene of modern theatre between the modern Nora and Krogstad. Dr. Rank is played by the same actor who plays Krogstad in a different costume. The modern female actor dances the tarantella.

In the final scene that involves a discussion between Helmer and Nora, the *noh* Nora and the modern Nora are standing close to each other and exchange words with Helmer alternately. In the end, both go together again through the bridge and disappear. However, this time the modern Nora walks in front and the *noh* Nora follows her. Helmer says his last line and disappears. Subsequently, the musicians and the chorus go off the stage. There is no curtain call.

Fig. 3 Modern Nora and noh Nora in the final scene

One of the unique aspects of *noh* theatre is the chorus, which is called *jiutai* in Japanese. *Jiutai* literally means "the chanting of the earth." Therefore, the chorus is essentially the ground on which the whole drama is based. It

explains and supports the background, psychology, or movements of the main character, *shite*. Sometimes, the chorus chants the main character's lines on behalf of him. In my production, the chorus' chanting was often employed in order to repeat important lines. For example, when Krogstad accuses Nora of forgery and Nora makes an excuse for her act, he says, "The law takes no account of motives." Nora replies, "Then they must be very bad laws" (*The Oxford Ibsen* 229), and the chorus continues to repeat these lines again and again in a low voice. I interpreted these lines as suggesting the central theme of the play, that is, the opposite values of men's law and women's law, which Ibsen distinguished in his preliminary note for *A Doll's House*, "A Note on the Modern Tragedy." It is the chorus' patterned chanting in a low tone that conveys the inner meaning more effectively than the modern actors' psychologically realistic acting.

Fig. 4 Modern Nora (Yu Mizuno) dances with noh music in front of Helmer (Noboru Yasuda).

Nevertheless, Ibsen's *A Doll's House* cannot possibly be presented on the stage entirely as a traditional *noh* play. Modern acting is necessary in some parts. The tarantella dance, for example, cannot be done in the *noh* style as meaningfully and effectively as in the modern style.

Moreover, it would be very difficult for a *noh* actor to show the sudden inner transformation of Nora in the final scene. Nora suddenly changes from a gay and talkative woman to a serious and reticent woman.

In the final scene, the modern Nora shows her definite decision by taking a prominent position on the stage. She walks in front, followed by the *noh* Nora, when they disappear at the end, reversing the order in which they entered the stage at the beginning of the play. However, you may wonder why both Noras disappear together. Some critics consider this ending as a sort of expectation of reconciliation or simply a compromise. In truth, this way of disappearing together is the only possible ending, if we want to keep the *noh* convention as the framework of the performance. At the end of a traditional *noh* performance, the main actor, *shite*, must disappear through the bridge, while the supporting actor, *waki*, remains on stage. However, following the *noh* convention, I realized that this ending would in fact reveal a possible hidden meaning in the last scene of *A Doll's House*.

Traditions are inherited from the past and embellished a great deal. Progressives look to the future, which is totally unknown. The *noh* Nora, therefore, is gorgeously dressed, and the modern Nora is costumed totally in black. In the final scene, the modern Nora takes off both the *noh* Nora's outer costume and her own shawl. However, the truth is that there would be no future without the past, and no past without the future. The past and the future intersect at the present. Therefore, in *Double Nora* both the past and the future, the *noh* Nora and the modern Nora, the white and the black, walk off stage together through the bridge in the end. The modern Nora leads the *noh* Nora, the future directs the past.

Many *noh* performers, both actors and musicians, are trained for a long time to acquire the ability to present fixed forms and patterns of acting in exact ways before they are permitted to perform as professionals. Therefore, the *noh* actors and musicians in my production did not need a long rehearsal

time. They got together only a few times to decide which forms and patterns they would employ for certain lines or actions. Of course, the actors had to memorize their lines since the script was newly created, but it was amazing how easily they memorized it. The music for *Double Nora* is also comprised of various patterns of notes taken from classical *noh* plays, which all professional *noh* performers, both actors and musicians, are quite familiar with. Therefore, the musicians came together only once before the opening night and were able to play with actors in perfect ensemble on stage.

The modern actors, on the other hand, needed a month for rehearsals, even though their scenes were not long. They had to find the right method for their actions on the *noh* stage of a particular form. No shoes are allowed on the *noh* stage, for example, and everyone must wear cotton socks in order not to spoil the polished floor of Japanese cypress. Modern actors are used to analyze the background and psychology of the characters they play, but their acting method does not seem effective when they are with *noh* actors, who appear much stable and confident in themselves on stage. *Noh* actors always walk in *suriashi*, a special pattern of moving feet. They express characters simply and precisely, or abstractly, in contrast to the realistic expression of modern actors. The conventional moving forms and patterns of *noh* actors, if well-trained, give stronger impressions than the psychologically representational movements of modern actors. It has been long considered that Ibsen's realistic plays require us to analyze deeply the character's mind and feelings, and find the underlying relationship between the characters. The experience of collaboration with *noh* theatre, however, suggested a different way of acting for modern actors in terms of Ibsen's plays that could be called an abstract way for a modern play.

For example, the modern female actor of Nora found it difficult to just stand on stage and do nothing. In a modern play, even while just standing, a character is watching something or thinking something. Therefore, when I asked the modern Nora to just stand beside the *noh* Nora, watching nothing or thinking nothing but just being there, she did not know what to do. She argued that even simply standing would mean something on stage. She was right in the case of an ordinary modern performance, but not so in *noh*. The

noh actor can be just standing, seeing nothing, which creates simplicity and intensity. I told the modern Nora to follow the *noh* actor in this respect. Another difficulty the modern Nora faced was to find the right way to speak to the *noh* actor. The *noh* actor was making speeches in a distinct rhythm and tempo; otherwise their performance would not be *noh*. The modern Nora had to make her rhythm and tempo suitable when speaking with the *noh* actor. Of course, she could not speak in the *noh* style since she was not trained in it, and it certainly would sound funny if she imitated the *noh* actor's rhythm in an amateurish way. Thus, she and I had to find the right way to make her realistic speech compatible with the *noh* speech. Fortunately, the modern Nora did not have to converse with the *noh* Nora since both were the same person. It was Helmer, Nora's husband, who the modern Nora had a dialogue with, and Mr. Noboru Yasuda, who played Helmer, was a *noh* actor belonging to the *waki noh* school. A *waki* is confined to play a supporting role (*waki* means "side") in any *noh* play, in contrast to the *shite,* who always plays the main role or the chorus. Mr. Reijiro Tsumura, who played the *noh* Nora is a *shite noh* actor. The *shite* and the *waki* speak in their own ways, which are slightly different in tone and rhythm, and the *waki*'s way of speaking is a bit more natural and dialogue-like than the *shite*'s. This helped the modern Nora to converse with Helmer.

Therefore, this intra/intercultural performance of *Double Nora*, a *noh* play based on *A Doll's House*, showed not only a new interpretation of Ibsen's play but also a possible new method of performing a modern play. It was this aspect that foreign theater scholars and critics were interested in when *Double Nora* was performed on tour in Norway and several other countries in Europe. In Japan, however, it was not received as enthusiastically as it was abroad. I assume that Japanese audiences who were familiar with the traditional *noh* performance felt a sense of incongruity due to the mixed methods of *Double Nora*. Foreign theater scholars, however, were indeed most interested in its mixed methods. Erika Fischer-Lichte in her study "Interweaving Theatre Cultures in Ibsen Productions" (2008), for instance, described *Double Nora* as an example of her theory of interweaving cultural performance.

However, after the production of *Double Nora,* I felt that the collaboration between modern and *noh* acting styles should include dialogues between a modern actor and a *shite noh* actor. Almost half of a *shite*'s lines in an ordinary *noh* play are chanted in a distinctly melodious tone, which is totally different from the tone of a natural conversation. Without any dialogue between a modern and a *shite noh* actor, it cannot be called a genuine collaboration of modern and *noh* theater. I dealt with this in my next intra/intercultural performance of modern and *noh* theater, *The Resurrection Day*, based on Ibsen's last play, *When We Dead Awaken,* in 2007. It would, however, require another paper to analyze my experience of the production of *The Resurrection Day*.

NOTE

1. I presented a paper, titled “Two Intercultural Performances: *Double Nora* and *Resurrection Day”,* at the International Ibsen Conference held in Tromso, Norway, in June 2012. The paper was printed in the journal, *NORDLIT,* No, 34, 2015: Ibsen and World Drama(s), ed. Lisbeth P. Waerp, Uit-Norges arktiske universitet. The present paper partly overlaps this paper in *N*ORDLIT.

WORKS CITED

Double Nora: A Translation of Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House. By Mitsuya Mori, directed by Kuniyoshi Ueda and Mitsuya Mori, 9-10 August 2005, Umewaka Noh Playhouse, Tokyo, Japan. Performance.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. "Interweaving Theatre Cultures in Ibsen Productions." *Ibsen Studies*, vol.8, no. 2, 2008, pp. 93-111.

Knowles, Richard. *Theatre & Interculturalism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

The Oxford Ibsen: Pillars of Society, A Doll's House, Ghosts. Edited by James Walter McFarlane, vol. 5, Oxford UP, 1961.

Re-considering Brecht and Sartre On Theatre

Alex Taek-Gwang Lee
Kyung Hee University, Yongin, Korea

ABSTRACT

This essay examines the debates between Brecht and Sartre and discusses the relationship between theatre and philosophy. The Brechtian conceptualization of epic theatre suggests that revolutionary art can be achieved by rejecting old literary and theatrical apparatuses. For Brecht, a specific form is nothing less than a part of the "Great Method"—a method that is consistent with an agent's ways of living. The Brechtian category of method always already includes an ethical and a political as well as an epistemological dimension: this was the precise goal, which Brecht aimed to achieve throughout his aesthetic practice. The Brechtian concept of technique invents a mode of perception, revealing the way in which one can produce a particular effect in the process of cultural practice. However, Sartre's formulation of theatre presupposes the transcendental unity of actors and audience in which everybody shares an equal capacity to think and to communicate with each other; thus, there is no distinction between actors and audience. In Sartre's sense, actors can be the audience and vice versa whereby the two bodies of agents can achieve a communicative correlation through the analogical image of the other. Sartre's criticism of Brecht raises several important issues about theatre. The essay explores the

ways in which Brecht and Sartre constitute the relationship between theatre and philosophy. My argument lies in that Brecht and Sartre mark a crucial shift from representation to engagement in the aesthetics of theatre.

KEYWORDS
Brecht, Sartre, Lukács, Adorno, Benjamin, theatre, philosophy, Marxism, aesthetics

INTRODUCTION

It is not easy to find a comparative approach to Bertolt Brecht in relation to Jean-Paul Sartre, even though Sartre frequently mentions Brecht's theatrical works in his essays and interviews. In 1968, Judith Kay Zivanovic published a monograph on humanism in Brecht and Sartre, but since then not many works try to read Brecht through Sartre, or vice versa. However, there is no doubt that the whole contour of the Marxist debates revolving around theatre cannot be delineated without Brecht; he is the thinker who not only expounds on an idea, but also explicates the method by which to flesh it out. Epic theatre is the method that embodies the Brechtian concept of art.

The Brechtian conceptualization of epic theatre suggests that revolutionary art can be achieved by rejecting old literary and theatrical apparatuses. For Brecht, a specific form is nothing less than a part of the "Great Method," a method that is consistent with an agent's ways of living (*Method* 109). In this way, the Brechtian method includes, by definition, ethical, political, and epistemological dimensions. Such was the precise goal which Brecht aimed to accomplish throughout his aesthetic practice. Therefore, in the process, the Brechtian concept of technique reveals the way in which one can invent a mode of perception and produce a particular effect.

Woven in with Brechtian aesthetics are various practical dimensions, in particular, the pedagogy of theatre. Brecht stresses the pedagogical function of an artwork, which can be carried out by the effect of estrangement. Sartre, however, repudiates Brechtian pedagogy, saying that Brechtian epic theatre mainly provides a judgment, as opposed to a communicative correlation between actors and audience. Sartre is concerned not with the question of the pedagogical function of theatre, but rather with the ways in which the audience's intellection can be re-educated by images in theatre. In Sartre's formulation, the most important function of theatre is to expose the contradictory aspect of subjectivity through action.

Sartre's philosophy of theatre presupposes the transcendental unity of actors and audience. Making no distinction between actors and audience, everybody shares an equal capacity to think and to communicate with each other. In Sartre's sense, actors can be the audience and vice versa; the two

bodies of agents can achieve a communicative correlation through the analogical image of the other.

I. THEATRICAL REALISM

Brecht's theory of theatre cannot be considered separately from the aesthetic debates among Marxist theorists of his generation who were concerned with the issue of representation. Brecht's argument counters the formulation of realism by Georg Lukács which is based on the traditional notion of representation. An essential aspect of Brecht's anti-representational aesthetic resides in how his conceptualization of realism rightly reveals the problem of Lukácsean genre criticism.

What Brecht calls "the formalistic nature of the theory of realism" alludes to Lukács's argument of realism, a theory that regards "a few bourgeois novels" as the standard form of realism (Adorno 70). For Brecht, Lukács's theory of realism is too ideal, and cannot be actually applied to revolutionary aesthetic production. Brecht criticises Lukács's conceptualization of realism for merely providing an inert criterion for academic literary critics. In addition, Lukács's theory of realism is held to ignore the possibility of formalistic experiments, and to fail to serve any application except the novel.

What Brecht points out in his criticism of Lukács seems a valid argument insofar as Lukácsean realism can be limited to genre criticism. In this respect, for Brecht, Lukács's theory of realism limits the field of practice of realism to a specific literary genre, namely the novel. However, Lukács also presupposes a practical dimension in his theory of realism as it focusses on the author's political tendencies as well as his or her attitudes toward reality. As Eugene Lunn stresses, there is in fact a similarity between Brecht and Lukács insofar as "their dispute remained, with all its freedom from Stalinist crudities, within the parameters of Communist cultural discussion and political militancy" (77). That said, on one hand, Brecht's idea of realism might be seen as a supplementary formulation to Lukácsean realism, expanding on the theory of realism to include other genres such as lyric poetry and theatrical drama. On the other hand, Brecht may be viewed as presenting an alternative to Lukács all together.

From this perspective, Brecht's rejection of Lukács can be regarded as an aesthetic attempt to establish a new method beyond bourgeois literary conventions. Brecht sees traditional literary technique as a bourgeois cultural legacy which revolutionary artists must disrupt. For Brecht, the individual dimension of aesthetics is nothing less than ideology. As Adorno says, Brecht seeks "to translate the true hideousness of society into theatrical appearance, by dragging it straight out of its camouflage" (183). In Brechtian realism, the form of theatre is a vessel in which the vortex of real contradictions is revealed as such without any representational apparatus.

What is relevant to Brecht's idea of realism is that the alternative aesthetic, the revolutionary principle of cultural production, must be a critique of the traditional system of representation. As in the case of Benjamin, Brecht's position seems quite simple: realism must be linked not to the good old days but to the bad new ones. Brecht's aesthetic experiments aim at abolishing the aesthetic conventions of the old descendant class, which is the bourgeois cultural legacy, and his theory of realism purports to defend the emerging aesthetic of the working class. In this way, Brecht's idea of realism may be deemed to be fundamentally different from Lukács's formulation of realism, which stresses the revolutionary mediation between bourgeois and proletarian cultures. What Brecht is warning Lukács about is the strategic error that artists make who regard the classical forms of art as the aesthetic standard for their contemporary aesthetic production. This tendency is not useful for the production of non-classical aesthetic practice in a new historical situation. In other words, form is not a universal, transcendental entity independent from its own historical situation. Form must be changed in line with newly constructed aesthetic demands.

As Fredric Jameson claims, the important point of Brechtian realism resides in the category of "usefulness" (1). For Brecht, it is related to learning from aesthetic practice, a learning that not only belongs to philosophical speculation, but also to "amusement." Brecht argues that, "if there were not such amusement to be had from learning the theatre's whole structure would be unfit it for teaching" (*Theatre* 73). This is where Brecht formulates his theory of the epic theatre—a theory that realistic theatre must provide

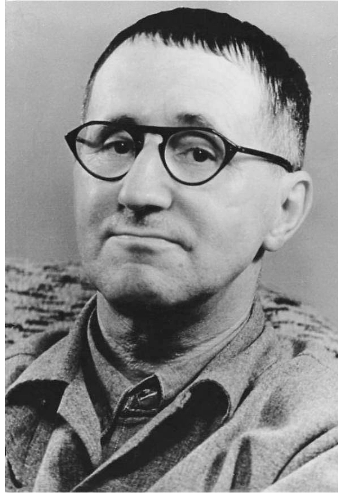

Fig. 1. Bertolt Brecht in 1954. This photo is attributed to Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-W0409-300 / Kolbe, Jörg / CC BY-SA 3.0 DE

a distance between the spectator and the artistic apparatus. Brechtian epic theatre does not aim at producing a harmonious form for resolving any social contradiction, but rather at showing the contradictions that exist.

The essential point of epic theatre is that the pre-given artistic apparatus is an obstacle for realizing the real—an ideological illusion whereby a spectator cannot come to grasp things. *Verfremdungseffekt,* defamiliarization, or better still, the effect of estrangement, is nothing less than a moment of *Erlebnis.* Brecht applies this theory to his dramas; he designs the role of a narrator or an announcer who interrupts the events and disrupts the audience's empathy with the actor's performance, thereby giving rise to the effect of estrangement.

Brecht appropriates tactics in which actors speak directly to the audience, with examples in *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Mother*. In *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht sets up Peachum's opening speech to the audience in line with a large sign lowered from a grid. This technique allows the character to have a conversation with the audience, and at the same time, lets the audience

know that this is nothing less than a dramatic performance. In this sense, it is difficult to characterize the speech as simply a monologue, which is common in any traditional theatre. Brecht sets apart the character speaking to the audience from other actors by endowing the character with independence, thereby explaining the procedure of dramatic events and synthesizing the narrative.

This effect reminds the audience to recognize the theatrical apparatus in advance and serves to absolve the production from attempting to solve any social contradiction in the dramatic performance. In this way the Brechtian estrangement-effect is based on the assumption that "a contradiction is not an opinion or an ideology in that sense; an estrangement is not exactly a philosophical concept, let alone a system; change may make you act, and even think, but perhaps it is not itself something you can teach" (*Method* 90). Brechtian pedagogy is nothing less than learning without teaching. In this respect, Brecht argues that the epic theatre appeals "less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason" (23).

Brecht does not follow the traditional criterion—a criterion that an audience's empathy with theatrical characters is necessary for the performance—but rather suggests that emotional compliance with apparatuses must be renounced in order to create a new category of reality. To quote Brecht:

> The modesty of the avant-garde's demands has economic ground of whose existence they themselves are only partly aware. Great apparati like the opera, the stage, the press, etc., impose their views as it were incognito. For a long time now they have taken the handiwork (music, writing, criticism, etc.) of intellectuals who share in their profits—that is, of men who are economically committed to the prevailing system but are socially near-proletarian—and processed it to make fodder for their public entertainment machine, judging it by their own standards and guiding it into their own channels … Their output then becomes a matter of delivering the goods. Values evolve which are based on the fodder principle. And this leads to a general habit of judging the apparatus by its suitability for the apparatus without ever judging the apparatus by its suitability for the work. (34)

This is the presupposition on which Brechtian realism is based: the critique of established aesthetic judgment. Brecht believes that so-called great art hides its interests in the guise of transcendental form, asserting, "great art serves great interests" and "epochs without great interests do not have great art" (*Theatre* 33). For Brecht, those interests belong to intellectuals who desire to seize cultural power, and the category of reality in a specific era is a mode of ideology crystallized by a particular group or class. Brecht does not approve of the presupposition that there is a universal foundation of aesthetic production entirely free from material interests. From this standpoint, Brecht criticizes Lukácsean realism as an inert aesthetic useful only for academic critics.

However, it is to be noted that Brecht's understanding of the relationship between intellectuals and aesthetic production seems to be less elaborate than the way in which Antonio Gramsci draws a distinction between "traditional" intellectuals and "organic" intellectuals. In a Gramscian sense, the concept of traditional intellectuals means a category of professional intellectuals that Brecht assumes to universalize the interests of a particular class across the whole of society (Gramsci 9).

Brecht criticises the idea of mediation as an ideology in his conceptualization of "great art." However, paradoxically, Brecht's consideration of aesthetic production as a pedagogical procedure seems to assume a mediated relationship between artists and spectators. As Adorno points out, the process of Brechtian aesthetic reduction of political truth involves innumerable mediations, which Brecht's own formulation rejects (Adorno 183**).**

2. BRECHT AND MARXIST THEATRE

The logic of Brechtian realism is clearly revealed in his argument about the relationship between popularity and reality. Brecht claims that "the workers judged everything by the amount of truth contained in it; they welcomed any innovation which helped the representation of truth, of the real mechanism of society; they rejected whatever seemed like playing, like machinery working for its own sake, i.e. no longer, or not yet, fulfilling a purpose" (*Theatre* 110). The way in which Brecht stresses the role of the working class

in aesthetic judgment precisely constitutes his idea of realistic artwork: the work of art in which the real situation of social contradictions is completely represented.

Today, Brecht's presupposition about realism, whereby he postulates the category of the working class as a good criterion of aesthetic judgment, might be regarded as the naivete of orthodox workerism. However, I would like to suggest that the way in which he sets up the category of the working class as a guideline of realism implies a more philosophical meaning, akin to Lukács's conceptualization of class-consciousness. But while the Lukácsean concept of class-consciousness denotes an absolute category of collective cognition in a capitalist society, Brecht stresses the actual experience of the working class, focusing on detailed experiences of everyday life under capitalism. Brecht does not endorse Lukács's early workerism, but rather develops his own way of understanding Marxist realism: the working class is the very agent of change upon the category of reality, akin to Benjamin's consideration of the relationship between the habitual perception of reality and the epistemological category of reality.

Like Benjamin's dialectical image—the standstill moment of shock—Brechtian realism aims at breaking the habitual perception whereby the masses reproduce the dominant category of reality. On the other hand, unlike Benjamin, Brecht endorses workerism in his formulation of realism. It is difficult to assert, however, that Brecht's workerism is the by-product of utopianism, as in the case of early Lukács. Instead, for Brecht, the working class stands for a new need. In Brecht's sense, historical progress derives from a new need, while regress only gratifies old needs with new stimuli (*Politics* 102). That is to say, the most important point of progress is to create a new object of mimetic desire, a new objectivity. Brecht focuses on the dialectical way in which a new object creates a new need and vice versa. In this sense, the working class, an innovative bearer of new needs, should be located at the heart of cultural production and squarely regarded as the new criterion of art. This is the Brechtian idea of cultural revolution: positive about form but negative about content.

Brecht argues that literature should give the working class truthful representations. The meaning of truthful representation in Brecht's formulation is nothing less than an aesthetic practice showing raw social contradictions by distancing the audience from literary or artistic apparatuses. For Brecht, realism functions as a shock of dialectical thinking. As suggested earlier, in Brecht's terms, truthful representation to the working masses means "usefulness." Such representation should be intelligible and acceptable to the people (*Theatre* 107). This may lead us to conjure up a simple idea that the realistic is popular, but Brecht suggests a more complex layer of popularity. By explaining the linguistic context of *Volkstümlich*, he establishes an ideological struggle revolving around the term of popularity.

Brecht attempts to demystify the traditional usage of the word "popularity" in the German cultural context. Distinguishing amateur actors from professional ones in his formulation of pedagogy, Brecht argues that "professional actors, together with the existing theatre apparatus, should be used in order to weaken bourgeois ideological positions in the bourgeois theatre itself, and the audience should be activated" (*Politics* 88). As Jameson claims, this Brechtian pedagogical tactic gives rise to the way in which "the spectacle as a whole should try to demonstrate to the audience that we are all actors, and that acting is an inescapable dimension of social and everyday life" (*Method* 25). Undoubtedly, this is the primary principle of Brechtian realism, the principle that intellectuals function as educational instruments to educate people to be statesmen and philosophers. For Brecht, true philosophy is true politics: "politicians have to be philosophers, and philosophers have to be politicians" (*Politics* 89). Thus this kernel of Brecht's theatrical realism, which Benjamin insightfully observes in his study of epic theatre, is the aesthetic effort to fill in the orchestra pit, "the abyss which separates the actors from the audience like the dead from the living" (*Brecht* 1). For Benjamin, Brecht's epic theatre is an attempt to change "the functional relationship between stage and public, text and performance, producer and actors" (2).

This presupposition leads Benjamin to analyze a fundamental task of epic theatre, namely, the rational utilization of gesture. To quote Benjamin:

> The gesture has two advantages over the highly deceptive statements and assertions normally made by people and their many-layered and opaque actions. First, the gesture is falsifiable only up to a point; in fact, the more inconspicuous and habitual it is, the more difficult it is to falsify. Second, unlike people's actions and endeavours, it has a definable beginning and a definable end. Indeed, this strict, frame-like, enclosed nature of each moment of an attitude which, after all, is as a whole in a state of living flux, is one of the basic dialectical characteristics of the gesture. This leads to an important conclusion: the more frequently we interrupt someone engaged in an action, the more gestures we obtain. Hence, the interrupting of action is one of the principal concerns of epic theatre. (3)

In this way, Brecht claims that "plays and production style should turn the spectator into a statesman; that's why one should appeal not to the emotion in the spectator which would permit him to abreact aesthetically, but to his rationality" (*Politics* 88). This is where, unlike Lukács, Brecht does not criticize modernism as the illness of representation; Brecht probably understands the positive side of rationalization as a reification of modernism. In addition, Brecht is interested in re-adopting modernist experiments, in the technical effects of its apparatus.

Brecht's modernism sets forth the positive attitude toward technology which influenced Benjamin's famous essays on technology. Benjamin's understanding of the relationship between technology and realism is indebted to Brecht; moreover, Brecht was influential in shaping the Marxist Benjamin, who is notably distinguished from the early mystical Benjamin. Benjamin's emphasis on non-sensuous experience through the dialectical image is couched in the Brechtian idea of realism as a method.

The Brechtian idea of the relationship between artwork and technology bears no relation to the positivistic view of technological progress that Benjamin criticises in his theses on history (*Writings* 394). Brecht's conceptualization of progress seems to be influenced by his understanding of dialectics: "dialectic is a method of thinking, or, rather, an interconnected sequence of intellectual methods, which permit one to dissolve certain fixed ideas and reassert praxis against ruling ideologies" (104). It is clear that Brecht rejects

official dialectical materialism by claiming that nature does not work dialectically. For Brecht, dialectical methods are better applied to societal conditions than natural ones, in the sense that the nature of society is dialectical. Thus, if Brecht is another guide for Benjamin's Marxism, then the Brechtian concept of the dialectic influences Benjamin's idea of historical materialism, "which has annihilated within itself the idea of progress" (*Arcades* 460).

On the other hand, the way in which Benjamin understands Brecht provides an insight that is useful in approaching the precise Brechtian idea of realism—namely, realism as the thinking of shock. Brechtian realism aims at provoking shock experience by an interaction between theatre and audience (and it always already presupposes the theory of pedagogy). What Brecht expects from pedagogical realism is the production of new knowledge—a new category of reality—by changing the way in which the masses think about the world. A significant factor in Brecht's pedagogical idea of Marxist realism resides in his conceptualization of a theatre in which there is no distinction between actors and spectators. In this conceptualization, actors are simultaneously students. Interestingly, this is the point where Brecht meets Sartre with the notion of "commitment."

SARTRE'S CRITIQUE OF BRECHT

There is a similarity between Brecht and Sartre in their conceptualizations of commitment. For both Brecht and Sartre, commitment arises from a shared conviction that artwork is definitely related to history. However, there is an undeniable difference between the ideas of commitment of Brecht and Sartre. In contrast to Brecht, who definitely presupposes militancy in participating in the historical process, Sartre's formulation of commitment is based on the phenomenological conceptualization of the subject. Important to Sartre is that the self is not completed with the Cartesian *cogito*, but rather through an ongoing project of engaging in the world.

In comparison to Brecht, Sartre is a philosopher who is more concerned with the reification of language, elaborating a distinction between poetry and prose. For Sartre, poetry is beyond the utility of language, while prose is within it. Sartre argues that "the empire of signs is prose; poetry is on the

side of painting, sculpture, and music" (*Literature* 4). For Sartre, a poet is "certain of the total defeat of the human enterprise and arranges to fail in his own life in order to bear witness, by his individual defeat, to human defeat in general" (25). In Sartre's sense, the poet partakes in the world by way of the loser winning, whereas the writer of prose partakes in the world through a greater success.

In *The Psychology of the Imagination*, Sartre argues that the work to be accomplished by art is "to make an object 'appear'" (20). By this argument, Sartre describes how, "while perception is observation of a real thing (three faces of cube) and while conception gives us at once the knowledge of the object (the cube has six faces), imagination gives us only a profile, an *Abschattung*, which cannot be investigated further" (Suhl 19). This presumption constitutes the very kernel of Sartrean philosophy, which rejects the Cartesian correspondence between subject and object in such a way as to separate the self from consciousness.

As formulated in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, which constitutes the preliminary ideas of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre claims that "the ego is not directly the unity of reflected consciousness" (60). For Sartre, a state is an intermediary category between the body and *Erlebnis*, while an action is nothing other than a transcendent object (69). In this sense, a method can be regarded as an action—that is, a transcendent object of reflective consciousness. What is implicit in Sartre's defense of the self is that the category of the subject is necessary for the mode of representation. Based on the idea that the subject is essential in cognition, Sartre postulates the concept of *analogon*, the mode of analogous representatives. The concept of *analogon* is constituted by Sartre's phenomenology of an imaginative consciousness and a reflective consciousness. In his words, "an imaginative consciousness is a consciousness of an object *as an image* and not consciousness of *an image*" and a reflective consciousness is "a second consciousness" whereby the belief in the existence of the image appears (*Psychology* 99). Therefore, consciousness cannot directly touch an object without the mediation of an image.

Sartre retains this idea of analogous representation in his formulation of writing. In a Sartrean sense, literature is "the work of a total freedom

addressing plenary freedoms and thus in its own way manifests the totality of the human condition as a free product of a creative activity" (*Literature* 206). Sartre argues that the most important task for writers today is not to destroy words, but to construct words. In this way, Sartre seems to remind us of the Brechtian idea of realism, particularly when he claims that "the function of a writer is to call a spade a spade" (210). In Sartre's sense, however, what is called a spade is not an actually existing spade. For Sartre, the designated spade is nothing less than a justified object as an analogue. Sartre applies this idea only for prose, not for theatre, acknowledging that theatre is a different mode of aesthetic production which uses action rather than language.

Fig. 2. Jean Paul-Sartre in 1965. This photo is attributed to Dutch National Archives, The Hague, Fotocollectie Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau (ANEFO), 1945-1989.

In a dramatic representation, an action is just an image, whereas in the literary representation, a word is an analogue. This distinction applies to the way in which Sartre distinguishes dramatic performance from literary writing. For Sartre, only poetic language functions as images. In poetry,

language is nothing less than a mirror of the world, a thing alienated from both the poet and the world. Sartre regards an image as the physical aspect of the word.

Sartre argues that "the way in which we hear ourselves speak is not exactly the same as the way in which we speak" (7). For Sartre, what cannot be reached by our recognition is not an object, but an image. The image is not a by-product of reflection because the image does not have an object. The image is a non-reflected picture because it is out of reach; the image is not an objective judgment, but rather the consequence of self-justification and self-judgment. In "On Dramatic Style," Sartre argues that an action is related to a moral life in such a way that "every act comprehends its own purposes and unified system; anyone performing an act is convinced that he has a right to perform it; consequently, we are not on the ground of fact but of right" (*Sartre* 13). This means that an individual who decides to act must justify his own action by reason, thereby believing "he is right to undertake it" (14). Thus an action is always carried by moral judgment and needs to be reflected by reason to discover its own moral implication.

Sartre's formulation of the image repudiates a traditional view of the relationship between image and a thing in itself, a view that gives an image the status of a thing (a thing that is a lesser version of an original thing). According to Peter Caws, Sartre redefines the conventional preconception of the image as follows: "the thing perceived is in-itself but not for-me; perceived it is in-itself and for-me; in the image it is for-me but not in-itself" (Caws 32). In Caws' statement, Sartre reveals the essence of an image; it always already comes along with subjective alienation. In this respect, Sartre argues that "for consciousness, to exist is to be conscious of its existence. It appears as a pure spontaneity, confronting a world of things which is sheer inertness" (*Imagination* 2). Here, it may be inferred that Sartre endorses the Hegelian category of being-in-itself and being-for-itself in explaining the interaction between consciousness and object. The correspondence between subject and object is impossible since there is the reification of the image in the process of representation, which is produced by the reflection of consciousness. Therefore, in Sartre's sense, art is nothing less than compen-

sation for the impossible representation of individuals. Indeed, individual men are not real objects to each other, but rather images. This is what Sartre presupposes when he refers to the impossibility of representation: "arts exist because you never wholly manage to see a man face to face; so you have images; and you have images, you have special relations to them, relations of participation" (*Sartre* 90).

For Sartre, an image is a particular relationship between individuals and produced by a certain form, an action, a movement intended to show something else, as in any performance of theatre. As has been discussed, this is an ironic situation by which fiction conveys the truth through its image. In this way, Sartre's aesthetic is nothing other than another aspect of his philosophical project which goes beyond the conventional binary of realism and idealism—or which assumes that "otherness" is objectivity. We are permanently objectified by other people; our relationships with other people are always already reified by our own perceptive processes. In this way, Sartre considers an image not as a mental picture, but as the consequence of an intentional object, the activity-based visual perception. This image is produced by man's commitment.

This image does not contain any prejudicial meaning because it is a thing that sends back to the poet his own image, like a mirror. This is quite a different position from the position Brecht takes in his formulation of epic theatre, insofar as Brecht clearly stresses the important role of rational explanation which causes the estrangement-effect throughout a dramatic performance. For Brecht, an image is a by-product of empathy that must be disenchanted by shock experience.

Sartre criticizes Brechtian epic theatre, precisely because Brecht compels the spectator to judge rather than to participate (78). Sartre regards such a Brechtian tactic as an obstacle to commitment. For Sartre, judgment is "an adherence of my will and a free commitment of my being", and in consequence, judgment rules out "neutral and floating ideas which are neither true nor false" (*Literary* 171). To put it another way, Sartre argues that Brechtian theatre does not allow the spectators to join in the way of free engagement because Brechtian theatre provides a judgmental criterion at the expense

of objectivity. Impartial ideas allow for communication between men and the reciprocal correlation between actors and spectators. Sartre applies this idea to his own political drama, *Les Mains Sales* which is similar in structure to Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, but the effect of the prologue is designed in quite a different way.

Sartre rejects the way in which Brecht draws a distinction between epic theatre and dramatic theatre. For Sartre, insofar as we rule out bourgeois individualism and pessimism, we must bring out "the dual aspect of all individual acts, that is to say that each individual is only an expression of what Brecht called the social *gestus*, the totality, the social totality, of the contradictions within which the person concerned lives" (*Sartre* 114). As is the case with dramatic theatre, epic theatre also expresses the social *gestus* although Brecht is not concerned with subjectivity in his formulation of epic theatre. Sartre argues that Brecht was never able to find room for subjectivity (160).

Furthermore, for Sartre, there is a more important problem—namely, the conditions assumed by Brecht in his idea of epic theatre have changed. Sartre implies that circumstances surrounding theatre today are more complicated than circumstances in which Brecht produced his theory of theatre. In contrast to Brecht, Sartre's idea of theatre presupposes conditions in which bourgeois cultural power dominates all aesthetic production. Sartre describes circumstances where the totalizing system of the culture industry does not allow any possibility of revolutionary cultural production, at least controlling people's idea of culture. As Sartre claims, this is the milieu within which "the bourgeois dictatorship over the theatre has created a bourgeois theatre" (79). Sartre does not identify dramatic theatre as such with bourgeois theatre, but rather regards the bourgeois theatre as the reification of dramatic theatre. For Sartre, Brecht's epic theatre is an attempt to solve the reification of bourgeois theatre in which there is nothing but the image of madness, the reification of participation; as such, Brecht himself does not understand what is really problematic in bourgeois theatre. Sartre argues that "the bourgeois audience is mad, not because it participates, but because it participates in an image that is an image of lunatics" (97). In other words, if the image in which the audience participates is crucial, then the problem

for Sartre is how to change the image because participation is a general and necessary activity in any theatrical performance. However, Brecht is concerned not with changing the image, but with producing a distance between audience and theatre by interrupting empathic participation. To resolve the reification of participation in bourgeois theatre, Sartre turns his attention to the possibility of communication between actors and spectators, repudiating Cartesian realism, or the idea of correspondence between consciousness and reality. Here, Sartre still endorses his early formulation of perception, i.e. what is perceived is produced by our observation of a particular object with senses by focusing on the communicative aspect of aesthetic realism.

In this vein, Sartre's philosophy always already implies the notion of a subject that should carry on the participation of being; any realistic perception of the object cannot be immediate, and it must be mediated by action. It should be noted that Sartre tacitly abolishes the Brechtian pedagogy of theatre with this presupposition. While Sartre conceptualizes "gesture" as an individual image, Brecht regards it as something collective. As Jameson points out, what is lacking in Sartre's formulation is the category of history, even though Sartre shares the idea of "*Erlebnis*" with Brecht and Benjamin (*Origins* 208). For Brecht, the pedagogy of *gestus* is "more than a mere theme or motif, and [we] begin to appreciate the structural originality of its relationship to form as such" (*Method* 93). Brecht's conceptualization of *gestus* clearly presupposes the way in which the collective audience recognizes social contradictions through a theatrical performance. Therefore, the Brechtian concept of gesture always implicates the pedagogical methodology in such a way that "the dramatic representation is the showing of showing, the showing of how you show and demonstrate" (91). Sartre, however, regards gesture as just a movement, or the acts that actors intend to denote. From this standpoint, Sartre maintains that "since gestures signify acts in the theatre, and since theatre is image, gestures are the image of action" (*Sartre* 91).

Unlike Sartre, Brecht does not consider gesture as a neutral image, but rather as a method whereby actors transmit a new way of thinking. In

other words, the Brechtian conceptualization of gesture plainly supposes the objective image—the dialectical image at a standstill—but it is not related to Sartre's idea of image. Sartre's idea is that image shows truth through its fiction, whereby individuals can be in communication with each other. This is where Adorno's criticism of Brecht and Sartre can be seen as valid: if Brecht's gesture is not an image in the sense that actors show social contradictions through their actions, Brecht has to accept Adorno's criticism that Brecht simply reduces aesthetic truth to political truth without any consideration of mediation. Sartre seems to know this problem, claiming, "intellection is not the mechanical result of a pedagogic procedure, but rather that its origin lies solely in my deliberate willing, my application, my refusal to be distracted or hurried, in the undivided attention to my mind—to the radical exclusion of all external forces" (*Literary* 170). However, Sartre also cannot be free from Adorno's criticism that the Sartrean principle of commitment "slides towards the proclivities of the author …which for all its materialist undertones, still echoes German speculative idealism" (Adorno 181). This constitutes the problem of Sartrean philosophy, in that it has nothing to do with reality outside subjectivity.

As an action arises from contradictions, so it is necessarily contradictory. That is to say, as Sartre maintains, several actions occur at the same time, assembled and inseparable because a number of elements are pressing forward simultaneously (ibid). For this reason, the most significant aim of his philosophy is not pedagogy, but communication between men, in the sense that thinking is not so much a by-product of education as of a creative act, which can be seen as the assemblage of man's contradictory driving forces.

As for Brecht, the problem may be understood in a worldly sense: Brecht does not endorse the Cartesian ideal assumption of monadic subjectivity, or more specifically, of the man whose thinking can be free from any material condition. For Brecht, there is no neutral thinking independent of the material relations of interests. Brecht says, "even if I couldn't think I might still exist," still, "I couldn't verify that myself" (*Theatre* 93). Interestingly, Brecht's materialization of *cogito* negates what Slavoj Žižek calls "the obsessional compulsion to think" in Cartesian philosophy, the kernel of which is, if I stop

thinking, I will cease to exist (Žižek 2). Brecht hardly aims at revealing the psychoanalytic dimension of modern subjectivity; rather, Brecht's materialistic interpretation of the Cartesian *cogito* is an attempt to provide a holistic approach to the relationship between individuals and social conditions. For Brecht, the way in which man verifies himself is the self-legitimisation of his material life.

Sartre's criticism of Brechtian epic theatre discloses another aspect of Brechtian realism. Indeed, Brecht is not interested in the reciprocal aspect of realism, but rather the dialectical image in which social contradictions are revealed. Brecht also regards the theatre as representative rather than as representation. For Brecht, more important than representation are social contradictions, which are revealed by representation. Brecht implicitly regards representation as the aesthetic representative of reality like Sartre. From this perspective, Brecht's idea of epic theatre is simply based on the belief that theatrical representation can present society as an object to the audience (*Sartre* 120). For Brecht, such representation is a methodological vessel that enables spectators to obtain "new" intellection. As to this pedagogical aspect of Brecht, Jameson points out that "the emergence of new social possibilities is suggested by the excitement in sheer intellection itself" (*Method* 92). The newness of change produces vitalizing excitement in Brechtian realism. From this perspective, Brecht presupposes that "objective transformations are never secure until they are accompanied by a whole collective re-education, which develops new habits and practices, and constructs a new consciousness capable of matching the revolutionary situation" (92). In a sense, what must be stressed here is not the change of objectivity, but a new subjectivity which would be produced by collective education. For Brecht, theatre is the very revolutionary instrument to produce a new consciousness.

Meanwhile, Sartre's idea of aesthetic production is constituted in the more reified condition of late capitalism. Sartre has recognized that change is not always new, but rather at times regressive, as is the case with actually existing socialism. For this reason, Sartre emphasizes creativity in the production of new intellection. Seeing that official dialectical materialism

is another iteration of metaphysics, he attempts to offer a third synthetic category between materialism and idealism. To the extent that materialism simply reduces mind to matter, Sartre concludes "in all good faith that it is a metaphysical doctrine and that materialists are metaphysicians" (*Literary* 187).

For Sartre, both individualism and pessimism are symptoms of a society dominated by the bourgeois class. That is, the bourgeois class imposes its own specific cultural taste on other classes, and universalizes its particular value system in modern society. Sartre's statement highlights a situation in which Western intellectuals have become increasingly disillusioned with actually existing socialism, and strive to find an alternative way to end capitalism.

Sartre's defense of dramatic theatre can be understood to mean that finding a solution to the reification of the image is a more urgent task than abolishing the image as such. Here, Sartre's conceptualization of the duplicated aspect of the image does not seem far from the way in which Benjamin formulates the principle of dialectics. Therein, the image is a dream image at a standstill; the commodity provides the image as a fetish. Sartre still acknowledges the apparatus of traditional theatre and the realistic effects of empathy, which Brecht attacks as old cultural residues. More importantly, in Sartre's philosophy, including in his conceptualization of commitment, the subjective intervention is the more significant element in the process of artistic production. Brecht, on the other hand, stresses the objective condition from which such engagements derive. In changed cultural circumstances, Sartre's notions of monadic man and the contradictory unity of subjectivity have been since denounced by structuralism and onward. Sartre, however, is not a "dead dog" of old philosophy, but alongside Brecht one of the essential precursors of Marxist theatre who formulates a shift from representation to engagement.

NOTE

1. This article is based on my PhD dissertation, “An Aesthetic between Utopia and Reality: The Idea of Realism in Western Marxism”.

WORKS CITED

Adorno, Theodor, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Bloch, et.al. *Aesthetics and Politics.* Translated by Rodney Livingstone, et.al. Verso, 1980.

Benjamin, Walter. *Understanding Brecht.* Translated by Anna Bostock. Verso, 1998.

---. *The Arcades Project.* Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Belknap, 1999.

---. *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940.* Translated by Edmund Jephcott, et.al. Belknap, 2003.

Brecht, Bertolt. *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic.* Edited and translated by John Willett. Methuen, 1964.

---. *Brecht on Art and Politics.* Edited by Tom Kuhn and Steve Giles. Translated by Laura Bradley, Steve Giles and Tom Kuhn. Methuen, 2003.

Caws, Peter. *Sartre.* Routledge, 1979.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. International Publishers, 1971.

Jameson, Fredric. *Sartre: The Origins of a Style.* Columbia University Press, 1984.

---. *Brecht and Method.* Verso, 1998.

Lunn, Eugene. *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno.* University of California Press, 1982.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Literary and Philosophical Essays.* Translated by Annette Michelson. Rider and Company, 1955.

---. *Sartre on Theatre.* Edited by Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka. Translated by Frank Jellinek. Quartet Books, 1976.

---. *What is Literature?* Translated by Bernard Frechtman. Routledge, 1993

---. *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness.* Translated by Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick. Hill and Wang, 2000.

---. *The Psychology of the Imagination.* Translated by Bernard Frechtman. Routledge, 2001.

Suhl, Benjamin. *Jean-Paul Sartre: The Philosopher as a Literary Critic.* Columbia UP, 1970.

Žižek, Slavoj, editor. *Cogito and the Unconscious.* Duke UP, 1998.

Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse

Women and the Tragi-comedy of the "Unhappy Consciousness"

E. San Juan, Jr.
University of the Philippines, Diliman

ABSTRACT

Beginning with the notion of experience exchanged via story-telling, this paper focuses on the evolving drama of consciousness variously rendered in Joaquin's narratives. This drama has been rehearsed conceptually in Hegel's critique of the "Unhappy Consciousness" in *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Torn between the patriarchal regime of the family and the necessity of survival in a bourgeois-capitalist milieu, Joaquin's bifurcated subject (represented by characters in crisis) dissolves into the mirage of unifying myths or becomes reconciled to the alienating system by artistic fiat. Joaquin's motive of attempting to reconcile polarized memories and fantasies, a project of extracting universality from particularized dilemmas, symbolizes the predicament of the *ilustrado* class. Joaquin articulates the conscience of this embattled group whose legitimacy has been challenged by the sheer force of repressed natural drives. These energies were hitherto sublimated in subaltern negativity embodied in collective labor and resistance. Truthful to the *ilustrado* syndrome, Joaquin's art is thus unable to resolve the dialectic of the "Unhappy Consciousness" within a materialist

historical frame, thus functioning as the testimony of mere utopian longing or the allegory of a compulsively repeated tragicomedy rescued from an embalmed past.

KEYWORDS
bifurcated subject, *ilustrado* syndrome, Nick Joaquin, phenomenology, "Unhappy Consciousness"

> When we say of things that they are finite, we mean thereby . . . that Not-being constitutes their nature and their Being . . . Finite things . . . are related to themselves as something negative, and in this self-relation send themselves on beyond themselves and their Being . . . . The finite does not only change . . . it perishes; and its perishing is not merely contingent . . . . It is rather the very being of finite things that they contain the seeds of perishing as their own Being-in-self, and the hour of their birth is the hour of their death.
>
> —G.W.F. Hegel*, Science of Logic (1929), 142*

The elevation of Nick Joaquin's reputation to a Penguin Classic in 2017 signaled not only an apotheosis of sorts but also an exoticizing marginalization. Under the rubric of the "postcolonial," the endorsers relegated the Filipino author to a fraught academic trend in rapid obsolescence. But his acclamation as our Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the exemplar of postcolonial "doubleness," albeit overlain by "a tribal civilization," ascribed an "aura" fit for our feckless addiction to commodity fetishism. No, we are not alluding to Duterte's total war against suspected drug-lords and terrorists. I am referring to that inescapable "aura" that Walter Benjamin anatomized in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." It is the aura of Joaquin's *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* as the quintessential Filipino theater. It is the aura of a sanctified writer whose mastery of English has allowed him to define, for the whole nation (whose existence is still contentious since the popular/the *masa* remains outside the neocolonized polity), its historical genealogy, political predicament, and destiny.

Benjamin is also the source of Vicente Rafael's view of Joaquin's craft as a sign of a reprieve from U.S. colonial subjugation. Together with his contemporary Anglophone writers, Joaquin "epitomized the modernizing promise of colonial rule" (xx). Using English as the "very idiom of modernity itself," Joaquin allegedly succeeded in "regaining the capacity of remembering itself in order to constitute the remembering self" (xxi). This is premised on the "attenuation of experience" which led to the "demise of the craft of storytelling" (xv). This, I submit, is a flawed construal of Benjamin's demystifica-

tion of romanticized story-telling. Actually, Benjamin linked narrative art to the web of determinate social relations, specifically the mode of production and conflicted classes (peasantry, guild artisan, merchant trader, capitalist industrialist), which produced the substance and circumscribed the narratability of diverse experiences. Story-telling is tied to the rhythms of work and the oral context of a long-vanished communal audience. With the onset of capitalism, that context dissolved; the "short-lived reminiscences of the storyteller" gave way to the "perpetuating remembrance of the novelist" in a commodified milieu.

Memory, a conjured homeland, the narration of collective experience, shared fate—this is what is at stake in estimating Joaquin's relevance today. It is the novel as "the form of transcendental homelessness" (a concept borrowed from Georg Lukacs) to which Benjamin attributes the function of revitalizing epic memory. And so it is the novel, such as Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* and *Cave and Shadows*, that evokes "the genuinely epic experience of time: hope and memory...." (Lukacs 99). Whether such a mode of experience salvaged from the "ruins of modernity" can be conveyed by the tales and legends that comprise the bulk of the Penguin collection, is what needs to be clarified. We cannot echo what Gorky once said of Gogol's "The Overcoat," that Filipino writing all disingenuously came out of Joaquin's two navels.

REBIRTH OF THE AUTHOR?

Poststructuralist critics have long pronounced the death of the author in its conventional sense as a sacred demiurge, a sovereign genius. Earlier Marx, Darwin, Saussure, Freud, and Nietzsche all concurred in the demise of that individual-centered cosmos. But Barthes and Foucault have resuscitated the author as a function, a site of discursive contestation, rather than an originating presence with the mystical halo given by the Penguin Classic editors and blurbs. One American reviewer ventured peremptorily to dismantle that halo by ascribing to Joaquin a melancholy anger, relentlessly composing "a fierce elegy for a past that never was." She summed up Joaquin's central preoccupation thus: "the older generation is bitterly impotent against the sea

changes of the present, and the younger generations desperate to understand the world, but adrift between potential and petrification" (Valentine).

The thematic problem that Joaquin engages with concerns the question of the Subject of a singular Filipino national experience. It is a complex hypothesis, a speculative proposition, that we have explored before (San Juan, *Subversions*). This involves accounting for the subject-positions offered by the texts. It is not the mismatch or incompatibility between generational attitudes, but rather how this Subject, confined to the petty bourgeois urban sector, asserts itself, its negativity, in the process of evolving to a dynamic self-conscious historically concrete position. Essentially, this Subject is an evolving identity-in-difference (Marcuse). Situated in the transition from the feudal/colonial mode of production to a bureaucratic-comprador mode, this Subject undergoes diremption. Defined by Otherness, it proceeds to recognize its difference/alienation and struggles to sublate the antagonisms converging in its life-world in order to construct its new subject-position, a relatively autonomous, free, rational self-consciousness in command of its lived experience. In brief, it is the ordeal of a particular community discovering its concrete universality in the process of attempting to reconcile historically determinate contradictions, yielding tragi-comic spectacles and language-games.

The Subject as an identity-in-difference, for Joaquin the hispanicized Filipino creole (Rizal, Luna, among others) bifurcated by Spanish and Anglo-Saxon subjugation, refuses to accept the domination of alienated labor (capitalist exploitation) and struggles to maintain the honor-centered norm of theocratic Manila. Proof of this is Joaquin's 1943 essay, "La Naval de Manila," a celebration of the Spanish victory over the Dutch in 1646, which won him a scholarship to St. Albert Monastery in Hong Kong in 1947 (De Vera). From the Commonwealth period up to the installation of the "puppet republic" of Roxas, Quirino, and Magsaysay, Joaquin's endeavor to construct this Subject—the metamorphosis of the *ilustrado* sensibility into a civic-minded citizen of the Republic—founders. Only the sisters of Antigone—Candida and Paula of *A Portrait*—remain as testimony to this heroic attempt to shape a national allegory of bourgeois compromise. This would be nothing else but a self-determining reflexive story of private lives and individual destinies

encapsulating the "embattled situation" of the third-world public culture/ society (Jameson 320).

MARGINALIZING THE METROPOLIS

Whether Joaquin succeeds or not in re-inventing the national allegory of the Filipino Subject, the rational self-conscious intelligence of the Filipino middle-stratum beyond sensuous certainty, selfish interests, and animal passions is the topic adumbrated in this essay. Counter-intuitvely, Joaquin's allegory is an imaginary resolution of the lived contradictions (see Balibar and Macherey) between traditional beliefs and instrumental reason represented by fictional characters. It seems to me simplistic to reduce the complex theme to the conflict between the priests and satyrs, between the pagan, totem-and-taboo tribalism—the brute world of the "bitch-goddess" worship in the *Tadtarin* cult—and the sadistic chastity of Christian ascetics. Or, in *A Portrait,* the opposition between materialistic, individualistic, consumer society and the numinous realm of family affections. Even though Joaquin may be fascinated with the primitive ideal of cyclic regeneration, this is easily incorporated into a Christian paradigm of death-and-resurrection personified by the "Unhappy Consciousness" (discussed below), this syncretism being a false dialectic of subsumption and rechristening—the well-tried colonial ideology of cooptation and assimilation.

At the outset, I would argue that Joaquin's focus on the *agon,* the ordeal, of the urbanized *Indios* of Metro Manila fails to resolve their predicament. On the contrary, it refracts the syndrome. It reproduces the contradictions of the past by negating the challenges and opportunities of the present. The chief symptom of this inability to dialectically transcend the past is its exclusion of the peasantry and the whole proletarian world of serfs, women, tribal or indigenous communities (Muslim, Igorot) marginalized by Spanish and U.S. colonial domination. However, the mediations offered in "The Order of Melkizedek," *The Woman Who Had Two Navels,* and *A Portrait*—resigning to the contingency and accidents of life, asserting impetuous will, or welcoming the priestly intervention of the alienated citizens of a competitive egocentric society—are flawed, temporary stop-gaps, compromise mediations.

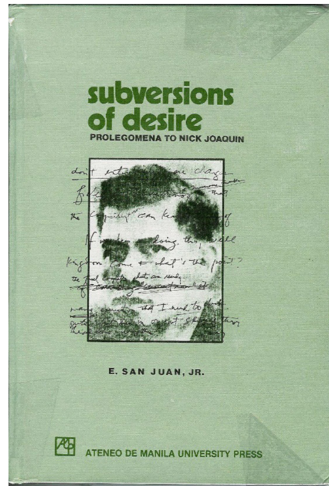

Fig. 1 *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin* is the only book-length study on Nick Joaquin. Published by Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988.

Nonetheless, they may constitute Joaquin's most instructive contribution to the current dialogue on national-democratic reconstruction.

At the end of the day, the "Unhappy Consciousness" (as described by Hegel in *Phenomenology of Spirit)* of Joaquin's Subject yields up the fruits of labor and enjoyment for the absolving act of the intermediary consciousness (such as the father's in "Three Generations" or the epiphany of Candido, Sid Estiva, Bitoy Camacho, and Pepe Monson). But they occlude the fate of Others: of the sisters Paula and Candida, of the children such as Guia and the Monson brothers, and neighbors of the decaying house in Intramuros. In *Tales*, such as in "The Summer Solstice" and "Candido's Apocalypse," moral decision and understanding are sacrificed for a stance of stoic fatalism, or abject sinfulness. This is not useless if one grasps this stage of the experience as one aware of its particularity, the limits of mechanistic self-satisfaction, abstract solipsism, and alienated privacy. One can convert the experience of the "Unhappy Consciousness" as a prelude to attaining the stage of the universal, the rational self-conscious stance of the Subject, the self-deter-

mining agent of historical praxis. But that is a hypothetical possibility for Joaquin.

CRUCIBLE OF EXPERIENCE

The key concept of experience is central to our inquiry. Benjamin asserted that the old sense of communal experience embodied in Leskov's stories has been destroyed, replaced by information. Information consists of incidents, positive facts or factoids, mixed with explanation. In industrial capitalist society, the business media communicates information, with instant verifiability, eradicating the amplitude of traditional storytelling based on the interactive collaboration of the audience. The modern audience consists of atomized psyches devoid of memory, victimized by the reifying impact of universal commodification. Memory, death, and time disappears; experience degenerates to information in an anomic society (epitomized by the rhetorical shifts in "A Pilgrim Yankee's Progress" and "The Mass of St. Sylvestre").

What Benjamin has condensed in the term "information" is the reduction of life as the passive undergoing of the phenomenal world. Empiricism and sensationalism informed the scientific exploration of the world by merchants and industrialists. Immanuel Kant rejected this by positing the active thinking of the empirical subject, leaving the thing-in-itself untouched. It was Marx who revised contemplative materialism by affirming practical action to change the material world. Marx qualifies Hegel's philosophy of experience by accentuating the role of the collective subject (social classes). By investigating the necessary properties and the laws of motion of the phenomenal world, and the rational methods of activity to transform it, humans have given the concept of experience a new meaning. Experience thus denotes the dialectical interaction of the social subject with the external world, merging with the "sum total of society's practical activity" (Rosenthal and Yudin 154; see also Adorno 83-86).

Experience is thus a complex notion of imbrication of various layers of phenomena, both subjective and objective. It was Hegel who defined experience as a transactive interface of subject and object working its way in a dialectical process in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. From a phenomenological

frame, Hegel conceived of experience as that which later views of reality have of the earlier ones; that is, what a more mature and self-conscious grasp of reality reveals is the "experience" of what was inscribed in earlier, naïve notions. In effect, it is the experience of the passage of consciousness, "the dialogue between natural consciousness and absolute knowledge," toward the concrete Universal (Heidegger 146; see also Findlay 87).

Now, exactly what is that still unmediated complex of experience bedeviling Joaquin's conscience? Everyone knows that the passage of our country into modernity was interrupted twice: first, by the defeat of Aguinaldo's revolutionary forces by the U.S. invasion and bloody pacification from 1899 to 1913; and, second, by the U.S. failure to prevent the Japanese occupation and destruction of Manila, followed by more than two decades of neocolonial subservience to U.S. diktat. The harmony of Spanish monastic supremacy subtending the feudal/patriarchal order was broken not by the 1896 Katipunan uprising but by U.S. imperial conquest. While accepting the compromise of the Commonwealth, where the *ilustrado* fathers (Recto/ Don Perico in *A Portrait)* found token recognition, Joaquin could not accept the collaboration (and U.S. resignation to the oligarchy's acquiescence) with the Japanese. This was due to the horrendous devastation of Intramuros, the prime symbol of a form-giving Catholic ethos and *ancien regime* manners. It is the event of a WW2 disaster, the "orgy of atrocities" matched only by the 1937 Nanking massacre (Karnow 321), that traumatized Joaquin's psyche crawling out of the rubble of Intramuros. The Filipino *ilustrado* soul entered the phase of "transcendental homelessness," the theme of the classic European novel and of Joaquin's fictional attempts to assuage and cure the trauma.

Except for the tales and folkloric adaptations—"The Legend of the Dying Wanton," Doña Jeronima," "The Mass of St Sylvester"—the major stories in the Penguin anthology strove to confront the two crises by resolving, in an imaginary sphere we call "ideology," the contradiction between the project of reconstructing the tradition by sublation—negating the archaic residues, preserving elements of Christian humanism (free will; reason governed by grace), and lifting them to a richer, multifaceted universality—and accepting

the fate of imperial domination. Whether the experience of his protagonists demonstrates a genuine immanent critique and resolution of the schisms in their world remains to be analyzed.

MAPPING THE ORAL SPACE OF TIME

Let us examine how this adventure of the "Unhappy Consciousness" unfolds toward a sublimation of its immanent contradictions. Joaquin's two novels originate from the matrix of tale-telling. The core problem we need to engage with is the nature and consequentiality of those experiences rendered by Joaquin's moralizing plots. We need to understand what shapes of memory and hope may be glimpsed and delineated so as to give counsel, warning, or ultimatum to its modern audience. Who this audience is and where, remain also as problematic as the specific contingencies underlying both Joaquin's life and the still taken-for-granted sociohistorical situation that is the condition of possibility of his art.

To approach the intricacies of this question, let us take as specimen the widely-anthologized "The Summer Solstice." The time-period (1850) is still colonial, materialized in the suburb of Paco (also replicated in Obando, Bulacan) outside of the Walled City, still pervaded with pagan practices. The *Tadtarin*, a three-day fertility festival overlaid/legitimized by the Christian feast of St. John the Baptist, enacts the death, flourishing, and birth of the sun/life-force. The *Tadtarin* is represented by an old woman who ritually dies, carrying a wand-fetish and a sheaf of seedlings; she is resurrected, the crowd of women-worshippers dancing around her, with St. John the Baptist figuring as the somewhat tabooed, engulfed phallic icon. The orgy is supposed to synchronize human biological time and the rhythm of the universe, here intimated by the triple-time dance steps evoking the sound of a circumcision ceremony (Roces). It is less a Dionysian debauchery than a celebration of desire, passion, lust, attuned to the organic cycle of animal/natural life. Patriarchy temporarily submits to the maternal, generative principle.

But history, not myth, preoccupies Joaquin in celebrating June. In the zodiac-designed *Almanac for Manileños*, Joaquin assigns the solstice month to

Juno, the patroness of marriage and fertility, following prehistoric Roman tradition. But more significant is June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo's proclamation of the independent Malolos Republic. June 24 is the feast of St John the Baptist canonized by Christ himself; "all the rest of humanity were born in sin," adds Joaquin, except for St. John, Christ, and the Virgin Mary (Almanac 170). But what for Joaquin is more significant is the founding of Manila by Legaspi on June 24, 1571, because with city records and chronology of deeds, Spanish conquest gave history to the country and began to eradicate pagan myths and animist/obscurantist practices like astrology and occult fortune-telling. This palimpsest translates Joaquin's formula (*La Naval* 30) of reconciling the form, temper, and physiognomy that Spain bequeathed to us and the national destiny we are trying to create.

Communal time, however, is cyclical and cannot be reduced to the spatial linearity of the merchant's calendar. What Joaquin does is to use this social/cultural arena to dramatize the phase of consciousness which Hegel described as the conflict of slave and lord, the bondsman and master. In it the slave wins recognition (self-consciousness) via his labor and creation, whereas the lord remains in-himself, sunk in empirical solitude, treating the slave as a thing/object. In the relation between Doña Lupeng and the husband Rafael Moreta, the archetypal gender-war centers on the woman's introjection of the collective, universal for-itself of the community. She is no longer just wife or mother, for she now embodies the in-itself/for-itself Subject that mediates between the patriarchal law of property-owning society (wives and children are the slaves in the Roman *familia* and the divine sphere). The melodramatic episode of the husband crawling to kiss the wife's foot has externalized the "Unhappy Consciousness" into a fight between two humans reduced to animal/physical sensations, with mastery as the object/goal, in the realm of the empirical/natural life. No genuine mutual recognition of each other's identities transpires. We are remote from any hope of reaching the self-conscious Universal that sublimates the organic/natural impulse into the ordered ethical sphere of the family and ultimately in the self-reflecting Spirit of civilization.

Joaquin's resort to the strategy of Christian evangelism/evangelicalism assimilating/adapting pagan rituals can also be observed in the other tales: "Doña Jeronima," "May Day Eve," "Guardia de Honor," and "The Order of Melkizedek." In the latter, the sacrifice of Guia betokens the return of the Manichean casuistry personified by the guilt-ridden Fr. Lao.

But at the same time, with Fr. Melchor standing for a recurrent urge to repeat the inaugural sacrament of the Feast of Circumcision, and the founding of a new millenary movement to renew society, Joaquin revives the roots of the "Unhappy Consciousness" by focalization on a utopian biblical image: his toothbrush and the "burning bush" of a plane-ticket illuminating the void of the niche in Salem House. The once displaced native has vowed to stay in the homeland and solve the mystery of the unfulfilled promise of national redemption.

The would-be dialectical mediators of opposing forces, the tutored Candido and the moralizing Sid Estiva, seem unable to grasp the negativity of the empirical surface. They remain trapped in sensuous certainty, the antinomy of desire and sinfulness, unable to leap to a further stage to capture the Other's inwardness, remaining torn by heterogenous immediacy. In this busy detective story, the "Sign of the Milky Seed" –a pun on seminal fluid—historicized as the Order of Melkizedek, opens the occasion for introducing the character of Father Melchor, accompanied by the avenger Fr. Lao. The latter, a double or the obverse face of the former, seems to parody the vocation of those "justified and sanctified by God's grace" and who offer their lives "in sacrifice to God's incomprehensible dominion (Rahner and Vorgrimler 376). Sid Estiva is just a catalyst in the return of the priestly order so that the political millenarism of the youth (Guia and her circle) is sublimated into the erotic affairs of the adult guardians (for a diagnosis of this shift in Western philosophy, see Taylor).

A millenary impulse of prefiguring the return of the Messiah underlies this project of Joaquin to resolve the sordid dilemma of the "Unhappy Consciousness." It evokes the delusionary phantasies of victims of overwhelming catastrophes in the Middle Ages, replete with demon scapegoats, messianic leaders, millennial mirages, together with the army of Saints (for

example, the Albigensians alluded to by Joaquin as the "terror of the troubadors" (*La Naval* 33) suppressed by St. Dominic and the Papacy) ready to purify the earth so as to establish "the new Jerusalem, the shining Kingdom of the Saints" (Cohn 73). The Pauline image of the crucified Christ, performed by Father Melchor, invokes the millenary tradition of revivalist sects inspired by St. John's apocalypse (Smith 172-79), a repetition-compulsion lacking catharsis.

What needs underscoring is St. Augustine's insistence that the millennial kingdom wished-for by millenarian movements actually began with the birth of Christ. One historian notes that in the anti-Papacy movements (for example, the Anabaptists) from the thirteenth to the sixteenth, "the earlier millenarianism bloomed again in full vigor. It became part of the baggage of the Reformation and has continued to the present day, a seemingly necessary consequence of verbal inspiration of the Scriptures" (Mead 492). Joaquin's revival of this chiliastic, millenarian tendency testifies to a proto-revolutionary impulse in his work that connects with the genealogy of our rich tradition from Tamblot to the Colorums and Mt. Banahaw sects, the Rizalistas, up to the revolt of the Lapiang Malaya of Valentin de los Santos on May 21, 1967 (Agoncillo and Guerrero 508). This may also explain his praise of the Crusades and slaughter of the infidel Turks at the Battle of Lepanto (1571), defeat of the Calvinist Dutch fleet (1646), and the Moros of Luzon annihilated by Legaspi, Martin de Goiti, and Juan de Salcedo (1570-76; Zaide 149-57).

TRIANGULATING COUNTER-MODERNISM

Counter-modernist reformation evokes not a return to a utopian past but a futuristic projection of an authentic fulfillment. This is a transitional subject-position occupied by the "Unhappy Consciousness" whose itinerary we are tracing here. It might be worthwhile to note first, as a heuristic guide, the time-span covering Joaquin's production of his stories and novels, between 1946 and 1966, except for "Three Generations," published in 1940. We are plunged into the postwar milieu of General MacArthur's "Liberation," the onset of the Cold War, the founding of Communist China, the Korean War, the upsurge and crushing of the Huk rebellion, and the Vietnam War.

Fig. 2 Photos of Nick Joaquin. The photo on the left was taken from goodreads.com while the photo on the right was taken from the Philippine Daily Inquirer online version.

Fig. 3 The aftermath of the Liberation of Manila in 1945 part of the Pacific Theater of WWII. Next to Warsaw, Manila is the most devastated city.

Fig. 4 A portrait of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel painted by Jakob Schlesinger (1831).

For Joaquin, as his polemics against U.S. neocolonialism in the articles for example on WW2, Bataan, and Corregidor, indicate (Joaquin, *Discourses*), the single traumatic event is the destruction of Intramuros in 1945. That holocaust also spelled the confusion, anomie, and decadence of a feudal/comprador formation, evinced in "The Order of Melkizedek," "Candido's Apocalypse," and *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, and the two novels.

So anchored is Joaquin to this sequence of episodes that one might categorize Joaquin's art under the rubric of trauma-psychodrama. It allegorizes the vicissitudes of the "Unhappy Consciousness" described by Hegel. But if one seeks a pedagogical or ethico-political motivation behind this obsession, it might be heuristic to sketch here a metacommentary on the singular way that Joaquin selects events, personages, and locales, in order to resolve recurrent aporias and conflicts that block normal everyday life. What we need is a symptomatic deciphering of this fixation, the repetition-compulsion if you will, in order to ascertain Joaquin's position in the unfinished struggle for our country's genuine independence and popular sovereignty.

It is easy to demonstrate how Joaquin exorcises the haunting specter of WW2 catastrophe by imposing a break, an ineluctable cut between past and present. This is clear in "The Mass of St. Sylvestre." The GI soldier's colloquial flat idiom to convey his witnessing is both truthful and parodic. Anglo-Saxon technology/photography cannot capture the aura of a ritual, the sacramentalizing cathexis of joining past and future through collective repetition. What supersedes the soldier's momentary vision is the recording of the sight of ruins, immense blocks of ruins—the heritage left by MacArthur's "Liberation." The present sensibility can never fully capture the substance of Manila's history, the implied narrator hints, so therefore let us just resign ourselves to that stark separation, that gap or rupture in time which seems impossible to cover up.

In stories like "Three Generations," "May Day Eve," and "Guardia de Honor" where the problem of continuity is also center-staged, the moment of epiphany connecting generations is Joaquin's easy fix. The father in "Three Generations" compulsively repeats the past which the son refuses to accept. In "May Day Eve," the weeping Badoy struggles to discover coherence in the discordances of the past afforded by the urban rituals of Intramuros. Meanwhile, in "Guardia de Honor," the contingency of everyday life furnishes the space for humans to exercise free-will by following sensuous inclination and intuition (chiefly Natalia Ferrero's) which bridge the gulf between parental authority and the children's right to decide their destinies. In all three stories, we find a formula to reconfigure the repetition-compulsion as a wound healed by the same passage of time that allows the subject—here designating the spiritually tormented protagonists of three decades of US occupation—to accept historical necessity without the benefit of Christian transcendence. Surrender to providential fatality resolves the antinomies of life. In *A Portrait*, the role of Bitoy Camacho, the narrator-participant, easily fulfills the role of mediator, tying past and present, suturing the wounds of self-denials, hypocrisies, compromises, and fatalism distributed among family members, relatives, and strangers.

CONFOUNDED TEMPORALITY

Modernity via imperial mediation ushered in fierce individualist competition among clans, family dynasties, and ethnic assemblages. I think it is imperative to remind ourselves that our colonization aborted our entrance to modernity defined by the instrumental rationality of bourgeois society. U.S. rule strategically preserved the feudal landlord system supervised by a comprador-bureaucratic apparatus managed by American administrators. Except for a semblance of urbanization (railroad, highways), selective meritocracy and a paternalistic electoral system, the old order of exploitation of workers and peasantry, together with the repression of the indigenous/ethnic folk (Moros, Igorots, Lumads), prevailed. Proofs of this are the numerous peasant revolts, uprising of millenary sects, and the Sakdal/Huk rebellion of the thirties, forties, and fifties. The center failed to hold, everything seemed to have fallen apart. The surrender of Bataan and Corregidor was a prelude to the rapacious epoch of the next thirty years after MacArthur's bombing of Manila which coincided with Joaquin's most productive period as fictionist, poet, playwright, and journalist.

In brief, we failed to make the transition, suspended in the dying world of Don Lorenzo Marasigan and a new world (ambiguously represented by Candido and the Monson brothers) struggling to be born. In between these poles, we witness morbid, bizarre symptoms of the passage of lives. We see how the reality of uneven/combined development preserved an ethos of authoritarian conduct, patriarchal despotism, and superstitious beliefs anchored to a backward economy that clashed with imperial financial interventions which undermined its drive for efficient industrialization. How to reconcile the polar opposites of communal solidarity and individualist-familial selfishness is one way of formulating the problem.

Whatever our stance on the Hispanic heritage—no one denies such a legacy, especially given the globalized transnationalist network of historicist scholarship today—Joaquin's framework of Spanish "physiognomy" is unnecessarily constricting. Its insistence only fosters authoritarian violence and irrationality. There is no returning back to a golden age of theocratic diplomacy and honor-centered decorum. Joaquin's praise of "custom and

ceremony" and its twin children, beauty and innocence, seems an ironic resignation to the implacable onslaught of social Darwinism in the twenties and thirties, a period of repression dominated by the predatory business compromises of family dynasties during the postwar regimes of Roxas, Quirino, Magsaysay, Garcia, Macapagal, Marcos, Aquino, up to the present conjuncture.

COUNTERFEITING THE TALE-TELLER

In the rural/pastoral world of the three centuries before the outbreak of the Katipunan rebellion, the oral narrative provided not only entertainment but knowledge. From Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, the tale served to distill folk-wisdom in the guise of fantastic occurrences (as in folklore dealing with supernatural characters), or the prowess of heroic pioneers (Paul Bunyan). In the Philippines, aside from the *pasyon* and saints' lives, the medieval romances of chivalric protagonists elaborated in *Ibong Adarna* or *Bernardo Carpio* postponed death by the Scheherezadesque trick of endless multiplication of episodes. Medieval vision literature as well as the *exempla* in the *Gesta Romanorum*, or the prodigious inventions in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel,* or in Voltaire's *Candide*, offer models for adaptation. The duration of storytelling afforded a home for raconteur and listeners, as well as practical advice that can be extrapolated from the ending of the adventures.

This is the tradition of the short-story form followed by Joaquin. It is basically the orally-disseminated tale that counters his own prejudice against it in favor of the visually-oriented narrative (Joaquin *Discourses* 67-72). Ironically, Joaquin's gothic retelling of legends invokes the power of the aural or auditory imagination so carefully documented by Walter Ong. But, as T.S. Eliot once said, tradition cannot be inherited. Joaquin labored hard to contrive versions of the tall tale, or traveler's yarn, in "The Legend of the Dying Wanton" and "Doña Jeronima." They are aesthetic stories fabricated out of stylistic devices and motifs taken from gothic romances which utilized the "gradual heightening of psychological tension of the sensation story and

the concealment of meaning associated with the detective story, along with 'fine writing,' to make an overt bid for high prestige" (Ferguson 189).

The crisis confronted in them inheres in the sharp division between the sacred and profane, the worldly and the spiritual. Incorporating vice and piety, Currito Lopez's soul is saved by the intervention of the Virgin. However, this event cannot be made intelligible to a secular crowd without the mediation of Doña Ana de Vera. The contradictions between the debased world of sixteenth-century Spain/Manila and its exaltation of saintly virtues are resolved by the domestic routine of a devout Doña Ana. There is no hint of suspicion that the miraculous and the ordinary can co-exist in the person of Doña Ana, the exemplary mother of an official in the early years of Spanish pacification of the islands.

Unless amnesia has overtaken the colonial state in 1613, the memory of the 1574 Lakandola-Soliman revolt as well as the 1587 Magat Salamat and Agustin de Legaspi conspiracy in the Manila area has probably not been wiped out. In 1589 and 1695, several uprisings in Ilocos and Cagayan against *reduccion* and tributes might have disturbed conscientious administrators of the provinces. And before the decade passed, the Bankaw uprising (1621) was followed by the Tamblot rebellion (1622) which exploded in Bohol with thousands of natives rallying to the native shaman, attacking churches and defying the fifty Spaniards and one thousand native troops recruited from Pampanga and Cebu (Constantino 85; Veneracion 57; Zafra 72). No doubt Currito and Doña Ana seemed oblivious of rebellions happening around them, turning the rest of 17th-century Philippines into a cauldron of indigenous fury against Church and State.

With the flourishing of the galleon trade and its eventual demise, the schism between the worldly and the spiritual intensified. The reliance on tribute, *polo y servicios*, ravaging of the natural resources (gold and silver), and exploitation of native labor can no longer be maintained in the face of British naval superiority in the 17th century. The capture of Manila by the British in 1752 kindled numerous uprisings against Spanish tyranny throughout the islands. One can no longer expect the Catholic Church and its hegemony to continue without serious erosion and eventual collapse. Joaquin wrestled

with this threat in "Doña Jeronima": she becomes the symbolic return of the repressed, only to be tamed, recuperated, ultimately subdued. But the dialectical process of subsumption of the wild or dangerous appears spurious or fraudulent: a myth-making compromise yokes the penitent Archbishop/ lover with the wasted Jeronima. She becomes the local deity of the place, the new *diwata* celebrated by varying generations. But both lovers transcend their original historical matrix and exert mystifying reverberations, thus forfeiting the possibility of realizing the identity-in-difference born of self-consciousness and the labor of negative determination.

SHADOWING THE ADVENT OF REDEMPTION

It is relevant to ask at this juncture: Is the narrative scheme of unifying opposites a mystification? Native Catholicism is a syncretic product of the blending of medieval doctrines and folk mythology. This approximates the lesson of "Doña Jeronima." However, the process of reconciliation elides a final closure because the Archbishop's ring cannot be recovered from the river, emblem of the flux of nature and worldly exigencies. The Jesuit scholar Quentin Lauer describes the route of this "Unhappy Consciousness" as the practice of late-medieval pietism: while enjoying the image of the "immutable" as a gift from the "almighty power," this persona persists in its division and evolves into the postures of devotion and thankfulness (122-24). Despite the sacrifices, the universal and singular cannot be reconciled by the mediator, Doña Jeronima.

We confront Joaquin's typical narrative paradigm. We are suspended in the sphere of what Hegel calls "the Unhappy Consciousness," the transitional passage of Spirit (*Geist,* Hegel's term, translates into the Aristotelian *enargi*a or cosmic life-force) from Stoicism, a thoroughgoing negation of the world sunk in fear and servitude, to Skepticism which dissolves all rules, perceptions, certainties. But this freedom of the Skeptic "reinstates the dogmatism that it both requires and negates" (Findlay *Hegel: A Re-Examination* 100) In short, it embodies a truly paradoxical situation suffused with inner contradictions which were one-sidedly resolved by the proud self-righteous Stoic

and by the ironic dialectic of the slave's mastery over the lord in an earlier stage of the process.

Hegel's notion of the "Unhappy Consciousness" (which follows the route of the Stoic and Skeptic) alludes to the dual experience of medieval Christendom, a tension between the Changeable and Unchangeable (the immutable). It epitomizes the negativity of human existence. Hegel explains that this contradictory, inwardly disrupted consciousness typical of Judaism and medieval Christianity "is the gazing of one self-consciousness into another, and itself is both, and the unity of both is also its essential nature. But it is not yet explicitly aware that this is its essential nature, or that it is the unity of both" (126). We follow the pious man's struggle "to synthesize his double consciousness, in which each of the opposed terms finds itself again and again in the other, but in a merely implicit union with its other, which again and again dissolves and sharpens the agony of severance" (Mure 79). As Findlay paraphrases it, "Each approach to the Godhead must, therefore, be succeeded by the painful reaffirmation of its own nothingness, each positive achievement or enjoyment by an act of humble thanksgiving for Divine Grace" (98).

Hegel's description of the "Unhappy Consciousness" as a stage in the "perpetual negation of every particular modality of being" (Hyppolite 24) can be applied to the experience of the Archbishop in "Doña Jeronima." It can illuminate aspects of the Dying Wanton's life and the predicament of the major protagonists in "Candido's Apocalypse," "The Order of Melkizedek," and *The Woman Who Had Two Navels.* Note the syncopated turns of consciousness and reciprocal effects of each on the other:

> In thought I raise myself to the absolute, transcending all that is finite. I am therefore an infinite consciousness, and at the same time I am a finite consciousness of myself in my whole empirical make-up. The two terms approach each other and fly from each other. I am the feeling, the intuition, the imagining of this unity, of this conflict; and I am the connection of the conflicting terms. I am this combat. I am not one of the combatants engaged but both of them and the combat itself. I am the fire and the water which make contact. I am the contact and the unity of the utterly self-repelling (qtd.in Mure 49-50).

The circumscribed mercantilist milieu of the galleon trade traverses the entire seventeenth-century punctuated by the Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and St. John's "dark night of the soul." Mexican silver was then exchanged for Chinese goods via the port of Manila on the way to Acapulco and eventually to Spain. The tragicomedy of the Archbishop's rescue from shipwreck, and withdrawal from the city to inhabit the riverside hermitage to confront his past, renders by analogy one way by which the colony survived in the face of rapid socioeconomic changes—for one, the subordination of Spain to British commerce (Constantino 110). One can perceive the shiftings, permutations, and reiterations of Subjective Spirit registering those historical transformations in this passage where Joaquin animates the trajectory of the "Unhappy Consciousness" caught between the encapsulated city and the navigable river, the *aporia* of the changeless and the mutable, where the meaning of the quest is at stake:

> Riding forth from the city at twilight, the Archbishop shivered with senseless excitement and wondered if revelation was at hand. On the desert isle and the retreat on the riverbank, he had pressed with might and main for an answer . . . . Children accepted the earth with frank pleasure; and lost innocence only in the grief of knowing themselves exiles from elsewhere. Was the quest, then, a relearning of this frank pleasure—and of reverence for the despised flesh, astonishment for the scorned world? Was it this quest which, extending beyond this life, made flesh and its fevers, even if they be forever and ever, not hell but at worse a purgatory, a school for lovers? (Joaquin *The Woman* 163)

While there is combat between the priestly lover and the pagan woman, there is no internalization of the Other, no mutual recognition. What reconciles them is their shared belief, transforming both into legendary patron-spirits of the place. The negative totality of each does not evolve into self-conscious "negation of the negation." Instead, a fetishized halo shrouds both, elevating them into a timeless, supernatural realm. Similar but different from "The Summer Solstice," where the Dionysian revelry of a phalanx of women mediates Doña Lupeng's sensuous self into a demand for recognition which does not succeed, here the vision of the eternal river—the

cycle of natural existence, the mirage of immediacy—abruptly terminates the singular protagonist's quest.

ENGENDERING LABOR OF THE NEGATIVE

We have tried to sketch here a cognitive mapping of the terrain encompassed by Joaquin's effort to thwart the onslaught of alienated labor. Its symptoms in a still ascendant but eroded patriarchal institution and its ideological legitimacy survives in the family as a domain that "contradicts the universal principle of exchange" (Adorno 145). The traditional family sustains the servitude of women, wives and mothers, all confined to domestic work and the care of children. Masculine domination of the public sphere is guaranteed by the relegation of women to the sexual/animal domain (as in "The Summer Solstice"), or treated as sacrificial offerings (Guia, Concha). It would need the intervention of Connie Escobar and the two sisters, Paula and Candida, to untangle the misery and greed of the petty bourgeois family, the tyranny of the fathers and their surrogates, in order to actualize the concept of the Subject construed as an identity-in-difference.

In the archive of critical commentary on this story (extended into a novel), the themes of doubleness, hybridity, and ambivalent identity predominate. For example, Bienvenido Lumbera is impressed by Joaquin's "dramatic rendering of an obsessive problem of the Westernized Filipino intellectual caught between the pressures of his people's history and of two colonial cultures—that of national identity" (Lumbera and Lumbera 244). More recurrent is the theme of the "divided Filipino psyche" insisted on by the Singaporean critic Shirley Lim. She locates the problem of Filipino identity not in its dualism but in "the denial of that fracture" (73). Most commentaries subscribe to the consensus that the two-navelled woman emblematizes the syndrome of the disrupted or differentiated psyche of Filipinos. The split "Unhappy Consciousness" serves as the subsuming archetype. This is surely a reductive formulation that collapses the complex manifold antagonisms into a formulaic proposition (for a deviant take, see San Juan, *Toward a People's Literature; Subversions).*

Opposed to this individualistic, empiricist reading, I propose focusing our analytic skills on the institution of the family and its embeddedness in a society of exchange and its reifying ramifications. This includes the mediation of labor (specifically, reproductive) and the metabolism between society and nature (Lukacs 109-2). The trope of duality is only an offshoot of the logic of determination construed as negation, then as negation of the negation, a contour registered in the vacillations of the "Unhappy Consciousness." But what is crucial is to ascertain the historically variable content of this trope and other ambiguous figures which define the meaning of substantive ethical transactions enacted in the intertextual fabric of fiction.

In Joaquin's *ilustrado* family, we discern not the unifying force of love, but "the barbarism of private property against family life" (Marx *Critique* 99). The labor of the negative in history escapes the narrative armature of these tales. They subsist in the sphere of natural needs, egocentric appetites, with brute force imposed on workers and peasants. Would *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* and *A Portrait* be able to clearly demonstrate a contrary process of resolving the contradictions of a disintegrated society and its ethos of inward spirituality and hypocritical sociability? We have noticed that in spite of forced denouements, all the knots are not tied by the convergence of events and the compromise negotiated by the characters. The texts reveal their fissured, twisted fabric, "disparate and diffuse from being the outcome of the conflicting contradictory effect of superimposing real processes which cannot be abolished in it except in an imaginary way" (Balibar and Macherey 284).

One indication of this ideological subterfuge may be observed in the situation of Paco Texeira. Haunted by the totemic mother (represented here by Concha Vidal), the story's viewpoint maneuvers from the pole of narcissism to object-eroticism by shifting the libidinal object to Connie Escobar. His journey and sojourn in Manila is an attempt to heal the wounds/disruption of his own family and thus achieve self-integration. But even after the combat with Connie, Paco emerges victorious, only to be hounded by the Furies in the shape of the Philippine landscape that his father told him about. He thought he had escaped Connie/Concha:

> But looking up and seeing the mountains, his heart stopped, his eyes started out of his head, his throat screamed soundlessly. He had not escaped, he had not fled at all—for there she still was, stretched out under the sky, the sly look in her eyes and the bloody smile on her lips, and her breasts and shoulders naked. (Joaquin *The Woman* 103)

On this function of equating mother/homeland, Geza Roheim remarks:

> Neurosis separates the individual from his fellows and connects him with his own infantile images. Culture (sublimation) leads the libido into ego-syntonic channels by the creation of substitute objects. The most important of these substitutes is a human being, the wife who replaces the mother. (qtd. in La Barre 167)

Fathers and mothers (the past as present) need to find reconciliation in their offspring (the future as present). And so it is Paco Texeira, the hybrid child, outsider/insider to the Hong Kong exiles, who fulfills what the Monson family failed to do: return to the father's homeland, affirming his patriarchal origin. Paco's memory reinstates the position of his vagrant father, bringing him to life, acknowledging him as a source of vital wholeness:

> He had clutched at the railing as he gazed at the mountains in astonished delight, thinking of himself as a boy, seated on the bed, staring at his father's photograph, and trying to stir up some feeling over his father's death . . . . The astonishment had renewed itself all the time he was in Manila, every time he looked up and suddenly saw the sleeping woman outlined against the sky—and it changed the indifference with which he had come into his father's country into a stirring of clan-emotion—a glow, almost, of homecoming. (Joaquin *The Woman* 89)

But the homeland offered only the camaraderie of the band of musicians, semantically charged with the Oedipal threat of incest and the killing of the totemic father.

FROM FAMILY TO POLIS: THE ANTIGONE EFFECT

From Hegel's perspective, the family serves as the natural basis of political life, making humans ethical beings. It is the "obscure right of the natural

element within spiritual relationship." It stands for individual versus communal right. Hegel perceives that in Greek society, "the old Gods are assigned the right of family situations in so far as these rest on nature and therefore are opposed to the public law and right of the community" (qtd. in Rose 133).

In Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone,* the conflict is between family right, the right to bury the dead, and communal right, the law of society. Both ethical powers clash. Antigone is compelled not by her character, but by pathos, "an inherently justified power over the heart, an essential content of rationality and freedom of the will" (Rosen 133). Collision of two equally necessary and substantial rights results in tragedy—those of Connie/Concha and of Candida/Paula—modulated into comic resolution with the reinstatement of the extended neofeudal family. The reason for this outcome is that in modern capitalism, only freedom in thought (Kant's Categorical Imperative), not actual freedom, exists; while in truth, the power of commodity-fetishism, reification, imposes the fatal necessity that constitutes the normal routine of everyday life.

Fig. 5 Antigone and the body of Polynices. Image taken from the Project Gutenberg.

Meanwhile, Joaquin shifts the stage of the conflict from mother/daughter to father/sons. It is the cultural milieu of the Monson family that becomes the mode of sublimating anxieties, a network of defense mechanisms consisting of Pepe Monson, Father Tony, Rita Lopez, and the domestic hearth of Mary Texeira, the wife. It is the wife who substitutes for the mother, stabilizing the gap between narcissistic fixation and object-eroticism. The wife functions as the matrix of the family which in turn serves multiple functions (economic provision, exchange of sexual services, socialization). But more important than all the tasks performed by the family, Eric Wolf reminds us, "it remains also, even where ties of kinship are highly diffuse, the bearer of virtue, and of its public reflection, reputation. Because the family involves the 'whole' man, public evaluations of a man are ultimately led back to considerations of his family" (8). For Joaquin, national identity/destiny depends on the healing of dissensions in the family as in the "Unhappy Consciousness."

THE MATRIX PARADIGM

Women protagonists therefore uphold the familial niche containing the emblem of virtue in Joaquin's fantasized *polis.* But this presumes the recognition of the unity-in-difference of women in the family. In Connie Escobar's situation, Joaquin allegorized the fantasy of division and the spirit's diremption. This is possible because she is not afflicted with the schizoid temperament of the "Unhappy Consciousness." It is Paco Texeira, the musician, half-Filipino half-Portuguese, who undergoes the shifts, displacements, and confrontations of the Negative Totality that is Manila/Philippines after Liberation. Fleeing the clutches of the mother Concha Vidal, he pursues the daughter Connie. After offering a sacrificial doll to a Chinese god in Manila's Chinatown—the flagrant Others demonized by the Spaniards by consigning them to the Parian ghetto outside Intramuros—Connie wrestles with Paco, a struggle that emblematizes the *agon* of master-slave relations long superseded by the ordeal of the "Unhappy Consciousness." Illusion and the pleasure-principle confront the reality-principle immanent in Paco's identification as member of the band. In any case, his temporary return to his family reaffirms the husband-wife relation as, in Hegel's terms, the one

"in which one consciousness immediately recognizes itself in another, and in which there is knowledge of this mutual recognition" (Hegel, *Phenomenology* 273). Unfortunately, this illusory denouement only serves to obfuscate the continuing neocolonial subjugation of the majority.

The two-navelled woman may be said to represent in part a return of mother-right in the guise of Persephone replacing Demeter, or the Virgin's immaculate privilege overshadowing the son/father link. Joaquin's fable, in its diegetic aspect, returns to the predicament of the patriarch Monson disenchanted by the reign of anarchic individualism evinced by the aggressive Escobar and his mirror-image Paco. The older Monson is oblivious of positive changes in neocolonial society, still believing that he cannot utter "*Nunc dimmitis servum tuum, Domine*" (according to his children) because he still believes he is needed by his compatriots. This bubble of fixation is threatened and eventually destroyed by the intrusion of Concha Vidal and the daughter Connie. It is as if the Divine Law controlling natural existence represented the reality of neocolonial Philippines and its violent repression of peasants and workers in the Huk rebellion and the Cold War fascist curtailment of civil rights and other democratic liberties. The intrusion of the wicked characters seems required for the status-quo Identity-in-itself to be exposed as concealing or repressing its negativity.

We can surmise that the two-navelled Connie and the flamboyant Concha Vidal are the twin faces of a society from which the Hong Kong exiles have kept a precarious distance. Their refuge is menaced by a world of "dust and crabs . . . ." Innocence has devolved into bitter disenchantment, not wisdom. This quasi-Gothic romance turned mystery thriller also unfolds the education of the Monson children and friends, as well as their initiation into the sphere of antagonisms and incongruities, violating traditional conventions and negating pious decorum:

> The mirror's cracked world was safe no longer; was perilous with broken glass, teeming with ghosts; was now the world where Paco waited for the strangle-hold and dear good Mary told lies and the cautious Rita was dazzled by dragons and Tony hid in a monastery and fathers took drugs and

> mothers had lost their dictionaries and young women had two navels . . . . (Joaquin, *The Woman* 111)

This concludes the short story, which was expanded later into a novel at the end of which Connie and Paco together set out on a new journey, presumably suggesting the dynamics of "free will" and a future unchained from contingency and undecidability. Are the old (past) and new (future) sensibilities/mentalities fusing together in a prophesied synthesis? We await the messianic event, the sublime impulse refusing conceptualization: for Joaquin, the return of the globalizing missionaries, the armed evangelists. It is the birth of another mirage: the Kantian noumenal world of abstract universality without content, a floating signifier vulnerable to forces that can limit and eviscerate it. The enigma in Doña Jeronima returns like the proverbial vampire hunting for fresh victims.

ASSAYING COMMODITY FETISHISM

In Joaquin's expanded novel, the tension between private and public worlds is dissolved with the compromises of both Connie and the patriarch Monson. Both *The Woman* and *A Portrait* are Joaquin's attempts to heal the rupture between the Spanish decrepit heritage and the barbarism of Anglo-Saxon utilitarian norms. This rupture, however, was constituted by heterogenous elements: the betrayal of the revolution by the *ilustrado* intelligentsia, the suppression of peasant and workers' insurrections by the U.S.-patronized oligarchy, and the destruction of Manila and the whole country for the sake of maintaining U.S. imperial hegemony. In *The Woman*, the thematized problem is how to rescue the patriarchal regime from disruption by the natural powers (embodied by the mother-daughter's wild pursuit of Paco, the wandering half-breed occupying both worlds) unleashed by the savagery of survivors and returning masters. In *A Portrait*, the crisis is shifted to the eve of World War II, just as Manila is preparing to become "the Open City" to the Japanese invaders, an eventuality muted by the La Naval procession that punctuates the concluding scene. And this time, the burden of discharging the blockage of sentiment, hopes, and aspirations—a profound trauma unre-

lieved by mourning and melancholia—is placed on two sisters, Candida and Paula.

Let us return to the perilous zone of communal ethics. Having deployed the Hegelian notion of the "Unhappy Consciousness" to characterize the situation of typical protagonists such as the Archbishop in "Doña Jeronima," the father in "Three Generations," Sid Estiva in "The Order," and the adolescent in "Candido's Apocalypse," it might be useful again to invoke Hegel on the role of the beleaguered family, in particular the sisters, in diagnosing the ethical problem. Here, of course, it is the artist Don Lorenzo, afflicted with a spiritual lethargy similar to the elder Monson, whose painting, read as a metaphor of his social/moral predicament, has become an albatross on the lives of the sisters. But why assign the therapeutic agency to the sisters?

The traditional family is in crisis here. But the free individualities of the children prevail—they have no desire for one another. Hegel contends that "the feminine in the form of the sister has the highest intuitive awareness of what is ethical." She does not attain to consciousness of it or to the objective existence of it because "the law of the Family is an implicit inner essence, which is not exposed to the daylight of consciousness, but remains an inner feeling and the divine element that is exempt from an existence in the real world." The ethical life of the sister is distinctive because, Hegel asserts, "in her vocation as an individual and in her pleasure, her interest is centered on the universal and remains alien to the particularity of desire." In the sisters Paula and Candida, we behold the affirmation of the individual's right to recognize and be recognized, not ruined by desire. They fulfill the governance of the household and "the guardian of the divine law" from which the community derives its power and authentication" (*Phenomenology* 276).

It is not impertinent to ask here: are Candida and Paula finally liberated from the spell of their father's painting (signifier of the old dispensation) and the obligations accrued by his gift? This insight into the vocation of the woman as mediating the natural/divine sphere and empirical legality occurs within the framework of the family. Within the communalist perspective sketched by Hegel, the family holds a universality based on intuition, separate from the all-embracing concept of the deontological law of obligation.

Each family member sees herself in the others and acknowledges the difference; the particular-in-itself becomes the universal for-itself. But being a form of natural cohesion—notice how need and material desires command the behavior of the elder siblings and Tony Javier—it cannot serve as the model of a coherent sociopolitical system. That is why the play dramatizes the disintegration of that old order anchored to needs, appetites, and various libidinal investments constituting the vicissitudes of the "Unhappy Consciousness."

REMINISCENCE AS TRAGICOMIC CODA

We come finally to the apocalypse of the hispanicized Filipino intellectual. Assuming that *A Portrait* is an attempt to depict the Filipino as an artist endowed with a sensibility attuned to the sensuous, libidinally-charged environment, why is Don Lorenzo's masterpiece such a burden to the sisters and a point of bitter conflict in the family? And does the drama really convey the emancipation of the sisters and Don Lorenzo from bondage to a nostalgically-invoked utopia?

As part of this metacommentary, let us consider the opinion of Leonard Casper, reputed to be a knowledgeable expert on Filipino writing. Casper extols the proselytizing message that we need to ponder on:

> For the public, the play is an elegy for lost virtues—childhood innocence; it is a reminder of the First Fall; its appeal therefore is to every man . . . . Victory for the spirit here (one cannot quite say the soul) is so nearly complete that, finally, there is no sense of loss. The past is carried into the future on the shoulders of the present, as in Marasigan's painting of Aeneas bearing from Troy on his shoulders an Anchises whose face is his own. (141)

The pyrrhic victory lauded here rejects the orthodox notion of the "fortunate fall." If the past is simply transported to the present without any change, given the incestuous doubling of the artist's face in both father and child, then we are confronted with the triumph of necessity, contingency, and the force of a fatalism antithetical to the "innocence and beauty" born from custom and ceremony. Instead of a tragic collision of two morally valid positions, as in

Sophocles' *Antigone* (Wimsatt and Brooks), we have a comic ending devoid of catharsis. In the final reckoning, the sisters demonstrate their fidelity/kinship with the father's sense of honor indivisible with Catholic dogma (signified by his heading the La Naval procession), absorbing the father's artifice and testimony into the vortex of their endangered lives.

We can ask whether the concept of *Geist,* Hegel's term for "social totality" (Adorno *Negative* 314), can help us comprehend national identity as a historical process. We can posit Joaquin's totality here as the *ilustrado esprit de corps,* Spain's legacy of temper, form, physiognomy (*La Naval*). The question is whether or not the force of private property has proved victorious in Joaquin's allegory of the Filipino creative spirit. If spirit is equivalent to the autonomous person, the free-thinking individual of modern industrialized society, Gillian Rose reminds us that persons were first defined in Roman law as "bearers of legal property rights…The possessor [of property] is recognized in law as a person, not an autonomous self-conscious individual. 'Personality' is an abstraction of the law, and the claim to possess is the basis of the right to be recognized by law" (66-67). From this proceeds the institutions of exchange and contract based on the division of labor and the control of surplus. "Exchange and contract depend on the recognition of formal equalities which presuppose lack of identity or inequality" (Rose 67). In the Philippines during U.S. colonial rule, the institutions of exchange and contract prevailed over the old traditional social customs premised on honor, gift-giving, noblesse oblige, and near incestuous arrangements. Meanwhile, we continue to muddle through this legacy of alienation and pervasive reification of everyday life (Jameson *Hegel).*

BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

The question faced by the sisters revolves around the disposition of the father's painting. Do they have the right? Since it was the father's gift to them, does that act entail obligations that prevent its sale or transfer to another? At one point, Senator Perico and his contemporaries suggested that the painting should be donated to the government since, somehow, it is a national treasure that belongs to all the citizens. However, the need

Fig. 6 *The Last La Naval de Manila in Intramuros 1941* is a watercolor painting by Rafael del Casal in 1991. The last scene of *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* is depicted in the upper right corner of the painting. Published in Flickr, 2007.

of the sisters to survive physically forces them to consider its sale, which they hesitate to do, since they still operate in the realm of intuition, sentiments, and blood-ties. They struggle between the realm of intuition/feeling and the realm of conceptual thought and legality, between their respect for tradition and the commonsensical advice of their siblings and friends. Paula's resistance to Tony Javier, the failed attempts of Candida to secure a paying job, and the refusal of Manolo and Pepang to subsidize the household, all conspire to shape the final decision to destroy the painting as an act of the sisters to free themselves from necessity, from the anarchistic war of persons competing for profit, possessions, domination over others defined as non-persons. Instead of the gift (the art-work, the father's honor, the "conscience" of the clan) becoming a commodity, it becomes a sacrifice, a sacramental offering to propitiate the gods of the household and the clan.

At the end, Paula and Candida affirm that they "stand" with their father, upholding all the values the Marasigan house incarnate. And their beatific vision of the father heading the Virgin's procession seems to confirm their disjunction from the debasing power of a contract, with the devaluing exchange of property thwarted by the demands of sheer physical survival.

What seems hidden by the aura of Don Lorenzo's painting is the reality of what's going on around that decaying zone. The atmosphere of defeat and desperate panic to escape from a devastated city keeps us distracted from the fierce antagonisms of individuals surrounding the family. In the colonial order administered by bourgeois bureaucrats, every individual has the right to own property. But this presupposes people without property, considered as "things," and therefore subordinated or enslaved. It is the family governed by intuition or feeling that restores genuine totality of multiple connections, an identity of needs, sexual difference, and relations of parents to children outside of formal contractual relations of ownership. Ownership of the art-work becomes a crux for dispute, hence the sisters refuse ownership and destroy the problematic art-work, even to the point of disavowing its status as the father's gift.

One thing seems established: despite the varying interpretations of the meaning and significance of the painting, the drama's focus has always been on the artist/creator, not the circumstances or context of its genesis. Thus, even with its disappearance, we never grasp the principle of unity (e.g., property relations) binding the characters squabbling over the sacralized object. The universal spirit of the community cannot spring from particularistic appetites and animal needs (Hegel *Phenomenology* 267-787). We may infer their distinctive motives and interests, but we never see the process of recognition in which each person internalizes the other as a possible element or stage of her development. A glimmer of self-consciousness only arrives with Bitoy Camacho's retrospective summation, a choric voice that substitutes for the missing universality of a rational civic spirit (here fulfilled by the ritual of La Naval Procession) that synthesizes the old and new, lifting them onto a higher level of historical evolution. Consciousness of the protagonists do not return to themselves to become self-reflexive. Except for the self-distanced,

encompassing view of Bitoy Camacho, the identity-in-difference sought never materializes even in the superimposed procession of the Virgin and the exaltation of the charismatic *pater familia,* Don Lorenzo.

We behold finally Bitoy Camacho's rhetorical praise of the two sisters and his claim that though the father, the sisters, and the house were destroyed by the global war, "they were never conquered. They were still fighting—right to the very end—fighting against the jungle." Joaquin concludes with a tragic-comic flourish in Bitoy's vow to remember and preserve the memory of the Marasigan household and the "city of our affections," amid the encroachment of the jungle and the falling of bombs. But his promise to continue and preserve what, is not clearly enunciated. What exactly will he celebrate when he sings about the fall of the house of the Marasigans? What standard

Fig. 7 The image of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, La Naval de Manila. This photo is reprinted with permission of Nathan de Guzman.

or norms immanent in his vocation can legitimize his appeal to be listened to and be taken seriously by present and future generations?

INTERROGATION AND INQUEST

And so, in the ultimate reckoning, the civilizing Spirit (*Geis*t) that Joaquin celebrates (personified by the *ilustrado* families of Intramuros) remains the feudal order. It is one leavened with Anglo-Saxon elaborations and represented by the journalists, the musicians, and unruly petty bourgeois intruders. Gifts instead of commodities confer prestige, status, honor. In this context, I endorse Lucien Goldmann's view that the novel form—here applicable to Joaquin's entire body of work—transposes into literary form the everyday life of people in market society. Consequently, the author represents the collective consciousness of a segment of the society he addresses, with which he identifies, and whose destiny he is trying to articulate (1-17). In effect, Joaquin's idea of the Filipino nation acquires determinate shape as a particularist enclave, a fragment of a historical totality.

In identifying this collective agency, I began this essay with the notion of experience exchanged via story-telling and then charted the evolving drama of consciousness variously rendered in Joaquin's narratives. The dramatic crisis of the "Unhappy Consciousness" rehearses the problem of articulating a bifurcated Filipino subject. Torn between the feudal regime of the clan and the necessity of survival in a bourgeois-capitalist milieu, Joaquin's split subject dissolves into the mirage of unifying myths. Or else, it becomes reconciled to the alienating order by artistic fiat. The chief contradiction between the agonized psyche of the victims of colonial violence and the artist's transcendent vision is displaced into the plight of women protagonists—doubling tropes of sisters, mother-daughter parody of incest—personified by characters such as Guia or Doña Jeronima who are compelled to resolve the social crisis by imaginary compromises.

The public consensus seems widespread that Joaquin is the artist of that illustrious group of hispanicized Filipino intellectuals, the intelligentsia of the 1896 revolution surviving into the first half of the 20th century. It is comprised of Rizal, Juan Luna, Marcelo del Pilar, Cecilio Apostol, Claro

Recto, Joaquin's father Col. Leocadio Joaquin, Jose Garcia Villa's father Dr. Simeon Villa, the Guerrero clan, and many more whose world swiftly disintegrated with the success of U.S. colonial subjugation. Col. Joaquin was "a prominent lawyer in the American era; and the businessman who turned Herran street (now Pedro Gil) into the commercial hub of Paco" (Yuson and Arcellana; Lanot). Of more significance for the artist was the death of his father when he was 13 years old; the family status declined when they transferred from Paco to another district farther from the ancestral home. The trauma of uprooting and decline of status are registered as spiritual dislocation and deracination in fiction and drama.

It was Joaquin's mission to not just elegize the urbane world of his father, but to resurrect it and universalize it. His vocation was reconstructive: faced with the chaos of post-Liberation Philippines, he sought to make intelligible the fragments of a decaying public sphere. For the heirs of the revolutionary 1896 period, he sought to organize a coherent, viable understanding of their predicament that can salvage if not reconstitute in a future stage the valued mores and sacred institutions of the past amid the profane, secular imperatives of predatory business society. In short, Joaquin's motive of attempting to reconcile polarized memories and fantasies, a project of extracting universality from particularized ordeals, is a symptom of the crisis of conscience of the *ilustrado* fraction of the middle stratum. Joaquin articulates the *Zeitgeist,* and the ethos of this embattled group whose authority has been challenged by the sheer force of repressed ambitions and natural drives, libidinal energies that were hitherto sublimated in subaltern negativity or in collective resistance.

TOWARD A PROVISIONAL VERDICT

In retrospect, one can argue that Joaquin strove to recuperate the apocalyptic syndrome of the defeated, the martyrs, and conquered survivors, envisaging the end of times. For Joaquin, "Apocalyptic—a madness of hope born of despair—was the true, the original, climate of Christianity, and in this climate, too, evidently, revolutions are bred" (*Culture* 263). Whether this endeavor succeeded or not, as Joaquin speculates in his self-interpretation,

"Apologia Pro Tribu Sua," is the question posed at the outset, and answered here in the course of analyzing the ordeal of the symbolic figure of Hegel's "Unhappy Consciousness."

A virtuoso in performing imaginary reconciliations, Joaquin's art is, however, unable to resolve the dialectic of the "Unhappy Consciousness" within a materialist historical frame, thus functioning as the allegory of an exorbitant utopian longing, with a compulsively repeated tragicomic ending. However, it is no mean feat to have toiled attempting an awesome and formidable task, a demonstration of how far we have journeyed in this odyssey of decolonization and national emancipation (for my assessment of the contemporary crisis, see San Juan, *Between Empire*).

Meanwhile, around and underlying the world of the *ilustrado* fraction (the Marasigan clan; the Monsons), the governing property-relation of inequality unfolds its logical aftermath in World War II. In the worsening crisis of neocolonial society today in the regime of Duterte's gangster terrorism amid deteriorating U.S. hegemony worldwide, what is needed is not remembrance as such (as Bitoy Camacho implores us to do) but prophecy to appreciate the apocalyptic dynamism of Joaquin's works. Suspicion hermeneuts abound everywhere. But what is needed is what the feminist scholar Elisabeth Fiorenza calls "a hermeneutics of actualization" in which the potencies of Spirit—of self-conscious, critical minds—can interact with objective reality and release the repressed energies of the popular imagination.

Actuality, for Hegel, is the realizing of essential potencies in existing entities catalyzed by historic conditions or worldly circumstances (Marcuse 149-54). Such a transition from potential to actual needs also the dialectical method of analysis pursued here in which the tragicomedy of the "Unhappy Consciousness" is properly judged as a stage in the revolutionary transformation of our everyday life. Of course, the labor of the negative operates mysteriously, even if we have not read Hegel, inscribing its own effects in the multilayered "narrative time" of history (Ricoeur). We are all caught in this narrative of our place, whether we reject metanarratives or not, as participants, observers, and readers all manifesting symptoms of this melan-

choly enigmatic phase of the Absolute Spirit. Authors and readers are equally collaborators/accomplices in making sense of our embattled situation. We can speculate that Joaquin, were he following this appraisal today, might address to us the urgent lesson of our critical inquiry: *De te fabula narratur.*

WORKS CITED

Adorno, Theodor W. *An Introduction to Dialectics*. Polity Press, 2017.

---. Negative Dialectics. Continuum, 1973.

Agoncillo, Teodoro, and Milagros Guerrero. *History of the Filipino People*. R.P. Garcia, 1970.

Balibar, Etienne, and Pierre Macherey. “On Literature as an Ideological Form.” *Marxist Literary Theory*. Edited by Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne, Blackwell, 1996.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Edited by Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books, 1969.

Casper, Leonard. *New Writing from the Philippines.* Syracuse UP, 1966.

Cohn, Norman. *The Pursuit of the Millennium.* Harper Torchbooks, 1961.

Constantino, Renato. *The Philippines: A Past Revisited.* Tala Publishing Services, 1975.

De Vera, Ruel S. “The Nick Joaquin He Knew.” *Philippine Daily Inquirer,* 20 Aug. 2011, lifestyle.inquirer.net/10429/the-nick-joaquin-he-knew/.

Ferguson, Suzanne. “The Rise of the Short Story in the Hierarchy of Genres.” *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*. Edited by Suzanne Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey, Louisiana State UP, 1989.

Findlay, J. N. *Hegel: A Re-Examination.* Routledge, 2013.

---. *The Philosophy of Hegel.* Collier Books, 1966.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schussler. *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation.* Beacon Press, 1984.

Goldmann, Lucien. *Towards a Sociology of the Novel.* Tavistock Publications, 1975.

Guthke, Karl S. *Modern Tragicomedy*. Random House, 1966.

Heidegger, Martin. *Hegel’s Concept of Experience.* Harper and Row, 1989.

Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit.* Translated by A.V. Miller, Oxford UP, 1977.

Hyppolite, Jean. *Studies on Marx and Hegel.* Basic Books, 1969.

Jameson, Fredric. *The Jameson Reader*. Blackwell, 2000.

---. *The Hegel Variations*. Verso, 2017.

Joaquin, Nick. *Almanac for Manileños.* Mr and Ms Publications, 1979.

---. *Cave and Shadows*.

---. *Culture and History*. Anvil, 2003.

---. *Discourses of the Devil’s Advocate and Other Controversies*. Cacho Hermanos, 1983.

---. La Naval de Manila. Alberto Florentino, 1964.

---. Prose and Poems. Alberto Florentino, 1963.

---. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels.*

---. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*. Penguin, 2017.

Karnow, Stanley. *In Our Image*. Random House, Inc., 1989.

La Barre, Weston. "Family and Symbol." *Psychoanalysis and Culture*. Edited by George Wilbur and Warner Muensterberger, John Wiley and Sons, 1951.
Lanot, Marra. *The Trouble with Nick and Other Profiles.* U of the Philippines P, 1999.
Lauer, Quentin. *A Reading of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit.* Fordham UP, 1982.
Lim, Shirley Geok-lin. *Nationalism and Literature: English Writing from the Philippines and Singapore.* New Day Publishers, 1993.
Lukacs, George. *Hegel's False and His Genuine Ontology.* Merlin Press, 1978.
Lumbera, Bienvenido, & Cynthia Nograles Lumbera. *Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology.* National Bookstore, 1982.
Marcuse, Herbert. *Reason and Revolution.* Beacon Press, 1950.
Marx, Karl. *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.* Cambridge UP, 1967.
Mead, Sidney. "Millenarianism." *An Encyclopedia of Religion.* Edited by Vergilius Ferm, Littlefield Adams & Co., 1964.
Mure, G.R.G. *The Philosophy of Hegel.* Oxford UP, 1965.
Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy.* Methuen, 1982.
Rafael, Vicente. Introduction. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic,* by Nick Joaquin, Penguin, 2017, pp. xv-xxxviii.
Rahner, Karl, and Herbert Vorgrimler. *Theological Dictionary.* The Sebury Press, 1973.
Ricoeur, Paul. "Narrative Time." *On Narrative.* Edited by W.J.T. Mitchell, U of Chicago P, 1981.
Roces, Alejandro R. "Roses and Thorns." *Philstar.com*, 29 Jan. 2002, www.philstar.com/opinion/148730/nickjoaquin-tadtarin.
Rose, Gillian. *Hegel Contra Sociology.* Athlone, 1981.
Rosenthal, M., and P. Yudin, editors. *A Dictionary of Philosophy.* Progress Publishers, 1967.
San Juan, E. *Toward a People's Literature: Essays in the Dialectics of Praxis and Contradiction in Philippine Writing.* Quezon City: U of the Philippines P, 1984.
---. *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin.* Ateneo UP, 1988.
---. *Between Empire and Insurgency: The Philippines in the New Millennium.* U of the Philippines P, 2015.
Smith, Homer. *Man and His Gods.* Grosset & Dunlap, 1952.
Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self.* Harvard UP, 1989.
Valentine, Genevieve. "A Potent, Uneasy Blend Of Passion And Fatalism In *The Woman Who had Two Navels." National Public Radio, Inc. [US],* 20 Apr. 2017, www.npr.org/2017/04/19/523586256/a-potent-uneasy-blend-of-passion-and-fatalism-in-the-woman-who-had-two-navels.
Veneracion, Jaime. *Agos ng Dugong Kayumanggi.* Education Forum, 1987.
Wimsatt, William, and Cleanth Brooks. *Literary Criticism: A Short History.* Vintage Books, 1967.

Wolf, Eric R. "Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies." *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*. Edited by Michael Banton, Tavistock Publications, 1966.

Yuson, Alfred, and Juaniyo Arcellana. "Nick Joaquin, 86: Passing of an era." *Philippine Star,* 30 April 2004, www.philstar.com/headlines/2004/04/30/248175/nick-joaquin-86-passing-era.

Zafra, Nicolas. *Philippine History Through Selected Sources.* Alemar Phoenix Publishing House, 1967.

Zaide, Gregorio F. *Philippine Political and Cultural History*. Vol. 1, Philippine Education Company, 1957.

E. San Juan's Creative Oppositional Criticism

Francis Sollano
Ateneo de Manila University

ABSTRACT

This paper traces San Juan's keynote lecture, "Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the 'Unhappy Consciousness,'" from his two earlier works: "Dialectics of Transcendence" (1984, written in 1967) and *Subversions of Desire* (1988). In doing so, the paper highlights San Juan's reading of Joaquin that follows a dialectic of the critic's own theoretical and intellectual development. It also explains Hegel's historical dialectics and notion of the "Unhappy Consciousness" and how these are applied in San Juan's re/interpretation of Joaquin. This paper highlights what criticism has learned from Hegel: difference and opposition are fundamentally productive. Indeed, in San Juan, in Joaquinian scholarship, and in Philippine literary criticism at large, dialectics is truly at work.

KEYWORDS

E. San Juan, Hegelian dialectics, Nick Joaquin, metacriticism, Philippine literary criticism

Epifanio San Juan, Jr. ends his essay, "Dialectics of Transcendence: An Interpretation of Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*," with a postscript that admits a limitation and issues a promise. He notes that, being written in 1967, the essay uses "the well-known problematics of formal criticism, with all its assets and liabilities" (165). San Juan, a literary critic whose initial training in the United States university system focused on New Criticism, is self-reflexively aware of the debates on this theoretical movement, especially regarding the concerns on its myopic consideration of the text to the exclusion of almost everything else. The other half of the postscript is a proclamation that should get the attention of the readers, especially of Joaquin scholars of that time: the possibility and timeliness of subjecting "the entire Joaquin canon to a more rigorous critique [given the developments of poststructuralism as evidenced in the works of Eagleton and Jameson]" (165).[1] The fulfillment of this promise is San Juan's 1988 book *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin.*[2]

This paper, a reaction to San Juan's keynote lecture, "Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the 'Unhappy Consciousness,'" has two main objectives. First, the paper traces the current lecture from the two earlier works mentioned above—one published three decades ago and another originally written more than five decades ago. In doing so, the paper highlights San Juan's reading of Joaquin that follows a dialectic of the critic's own theoretical and intellectual development. Second, it explains Hegel's historical dialectics and notion of the Unhappy Consciousness and how these are applied in San Juan's re/interpretation of Joaquin. Indeed, it is fitting to use Hegel, the philosopher from whom we owe—as Marx owes—the idea of historical dialectics, the continuous convergence of thesis and antithesis into a synthesis that keeps World Consciousness always changing and fluid. This paper highlights what criticism has learned from Hegel: difference and opposition are fundamentally productive. Indeed, in San Juan, in Joaquinian scholarship, and in Philippine literary criticism at large, dialectics is truly at work.

TRACING SAN JUAN'S CRITICISM OF JOAQUIN

I begin *in medias res.* In 1988, as the Philippines is struggling to recover its democratic institutions and practices from the ashes of the Marcos dictatorship and to start over with a new Constitution, San Juan published the only book-length collection of essays by an individual critic about Nick Joaquin's literary works[3] with three major theoretical approaches:

> [first is] a scientific one based on the principles of historical materialism refracted through Lukács, Gramsci, and poststructuralist semiotics which tries to historicize the problematic of the artist's signifying practice, [second is] a feminist one which insists on an apocalyptic responsibility of negating patriarchal tyranny in feudal and bourgeois cultures, and [third is] a prophetic and eschatological one which affirms Desire and calls for the restoration of difference and contradictions and their ultimate resolution in revolutionary transformation of social practices. (Preface xxix)

We cannot say that the use of these approaches is whimsical or accidental. In the larger context of literary criticism, it is part of an "entire apparatus of contemporary global theorizing" that has questioned human essentialism of the previous centuries and, in the seventies, is just "beginning to be Filipinized" (Preface xxix). As part of San Juan's academic advocacy, the use of these approaches is also what he has been developing when "his energies [are] being consumed by anti-Marcos organizing and the subsequent critique of the institutions of racism in the United States" (Veric 299). San Juan will eventually be known for this critical stance, whether he is writing about Joaquin or Bulosan or any other Filipino/a writer.[4] The scope of San Juan's theoretical purview is as broad and exciting as Joaquinian scholarship as evidenced by another Forum Kritika on San Juan (*Kritika Kultura* vol. 26). In his introduction to this Forum Kritika, Charlie S. Veric remarks on the significance and extent of San Juan's contribution in the field of American empire critique from a planetary perspective, something that may even be compared to a Rizal which was produced by an earlier colonial era or to a Cabral or to a Fanon of a different colonial experience.[5]

The early iteration of these frameworks (historical materialist, feminist, and prophetic/eschatological), is shown in "Dialectics of Transcendence" (originally written in 1967), an essay about Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961), a novel which, according to San Juan's assessment, "[should not be] about Paco and Connie but about the disintegration and collapse of the petty bourgeois world of the Vidals and Monsons" (165). One point that is worth noting, however, is that the dialectics employed here is neither Marxist nor only Hegelian, but goes back to the Manichean influence on Augustine, the eternal struggle between good and evil, and how Joaquin is "caught in the logic of this method" (152). San Juan gives attention to how the novel "unfolds with the relentless logic of an Augustinian vision casting its ambiguous light of what [the writer Joaquin] conceives as the classic Filipino experience" (146). This already shows the breadth of San Juan's notion of dialectics. The use of Augustinian philosophy/theology in reading Joaquin, even if surprising to those who are only acquainted with the historical materialist San Juan, is not improper given Joaquin's classical (theological) training under the Dominican Order.[6] Other critics have focused on the "theological dimension" of Joaquin's fiction. Even Marxist critic and National Artist Bienvenido Lumbera calls Joaquin as the Philippine's "most stimulating lay theologian" in 1968, a year after "Dialectics" is written (qtd. in Galdon 457). Jesuit critic Joseph Galdon argues that even if Joaquin's theology is "folk ... rather than dogma, and reflective rather than prescriptive," its influence in his stories, especially in the obviously theological themes of "Doña Jeronima," "The Legend of the Dying Woman," and "The Mass of St. Sylvestre," cannot be denied. Joaquin's stories "reflect the theology of the culture [i.e., both pagan and Catholic]" (457-458). Galdon also mentions Leonard Casper's section on Joaquin in the book, *The Wayward Horizon*, whose title, "Lord! Lord! And the Religious Writer," is a play of "Not everyone who cries Lord! Lord! will enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 7:21) where Casper has implied his discontent regarding Joaquin's mixture of the pagan and the Christian (458).[7] Indeed, before Hegel, Marx, and other thinkers contended with the world's modern contradictions, Augustine had

to explain the problem of evil in a world that is created by a benevolent God, a central contradiction in medieval ontology.[8]

However, San Juan does not stop interpreting Joaquin through this dichotomy of evil/fall and good/grace, but goes on to demand a connection between Joaquin's themes and Filipino/a reality. The readers of "Dialectics" would eventually realize that San Juan employs Augustine in the essay as a scaffold to introduce Joaquin's "fallacy" which is "thinking that the downfall of [the Filipino petty bourgeois class] signifies the collapse of the whole society" (147) and "malaise of the artisan-minded novelist detached from the practical activity of the masses, the peasants and workers who represent the progressive force and the future of the whole society" (149-150). In other words, in the matter of dialectics, San Juan is just beginning where other critics of Joaquin, such as Galdon and Casper, have already finished. Given Joaquin's mastery of the form, San Juan still laments how "Joaquin fails to tell us anything actually happening before or after the war—the renewed insurgency of the masses, the awakening of the masses resisted by the neo-colonial collaborators of American imperialism, the fascism of the landlords and comprador bureaucrats" (149).[9] For San Juan, Joaquin should have loosened the binaries based on Augustinian ontology of the work to render the contemporary milieu of his setting more real. Another work that foreshadows *Subversions* provides the similar argument that Joaquin should have further pushed the boundaries. In "For Whom Are We Writing," San Juan points out how Joaquin's project "can be described as an attempt to recover the integrity of the modern psyche, a putative self, extrapolated from a sense of Christian beliefs involving free will, passion and death" (39). However, Joaquin "[only] wrestles with, and criticizes, the symptoms and effects . . . not the systemic or structural source"; therefore, the works limit themselves within the "world-view of obsolete classes" (39, 48).

A similar call is also expressed in the sixth chapter of *Subversion*s—the chapter that also deals with *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*—with a slight difference in frame:

> Unless we have completely dissolved the question of the subject as fixed by hierarchical forces or permanently dispersed in the social process, constructed in the fabrication and decoding of signs . . . we cannot really leap into the realm of transcendental and forego history, the ultimate ground of any discourse . . . that we can possibly engage in. (173)

Because even modern discourses still have not completely dissolved the question of the subject, interpretation must inevitably return to history. Note that the framing of the point in this chapter is slightly different from its earlier iteration. If "Dialectics" (as well as "For Whom Are We Writing") presents implicit commentaries on New Criticism (with the questions of point-of-view, theme, and conflict), *Subversions* frames the lack through structuralism and poststructuralism (with the question of the subject). Even these have failed to answer completely the basic questions about the subject, so history remains "the ultimate ground of any discourse" (173). These main insights in the earlier works are echoed in the current keynote lecture: "The chief symptom of Joaquin's inability to dialectically transcend the past is its exclusion of the peasantry and the whole proletarian world of serfs, women, tribal or indigenous communities (Muslim, Igorot) marginalized by Spanish and U.S. colonial domination" ("Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse").

After studying "Dialectics" and *Subversions*, readers are more grounded on San Juan's diagnosis of the need to save Joaquin's works from the limitations of a middle-class audience and a bourgeois interpretation. As the Preface of *Subversions of Desire* shows, this is precisely the book's project. San Juan writes:

> What I would like to emphasize . . . is the perspective and method of constructing both critic and author as the subjects-in-process, subjects-in-trial. From a dialectical standpoint, all of Joaquin's texts may be seen as overdetermined by multiple sociohistoric contradictions which affect all of us, without exception. And so it is the task of *a creative oppositional criticism* to interpellate these texts in order to let them speak an emancipatory message, and to articulate such message in a way diametrically opposed to the hegemonic ethicopolitical commentaries that have exploited Joaquin to maintain and legitimize class rule. "Joaquin" then may be conceived as a sign

of multiple contractions outside/inside the texts. Let Joaquin speak to the masses. (xvii; emphasis added)

Here, San Juan posits that both the critic and the writer (and consequently the relationship between these two) should not be treated as monolithic fixtures in criticism but are fluid, non-categorical figures. These subjects are contingent on multiple contradictions of their position and milieu. In "The Critic as Parasite/Host," San Juan's response when *Subversions* was launched in 1988, he debunks once more the mistaken and simplistic understanding of the critic and writer's relationship. Following J. Hillis Miller, he says that the roles of writer as host and the critic as parasite are interchangeable and therefore undecidable (30). Whether as writer or as critic, one should be reflexive of where one is coming from and be conscious that such a ground is only temporary. It is through this awareness that criticism may be safeguarded from hegemonic readings that have exploited "Joaquin" to maintain and legitimize class rule.

Another noteworthy point is that San Juan puts Joaquin inside quotation marks to refer not to the individual author but to the author-function. San Juan also anchors the last chapter of *Subversions* to Joaquin's "modernizing sensibility" that presents "the subliminal drive of the discourse to effect an imaginary unity of self" (233).[10] Joaquin, therefore, is not only the multi-awarded writer and journalist, but is also a product of a discourse. In fact, for San Juan, because "[the] writer himself . . . [ultimately] becomes [just] a pretext for opening up the space for more crucial engagements, the terrain for a critique of ideologies," *Subversions* does not answer whether Joaquin is progressive or reactionary and that this very question is "a somewhat misleading formulation" ("The Critic" 30). From this logic, it can be said that San Juan's assessment of lack is not really against Joaquin the writer but against the entire discourse of how Joaquin is deployed to the readers. In other words, Joaquin is not the host from which the critics are getting their sustenance (i.e., critics as parasite), rather it is the critics who have created the "Joaquin"—in quotation marks—from which an entire scholarship, with all "the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations,"

is sustained (i.e., critics as host) (Foucault qtd. in San Juan *Subversions* 230). The pronouncement of making Joaquin speak to the masses is a message addressed more to the readers and critics of Joaquin than to Joaquin as a writer.

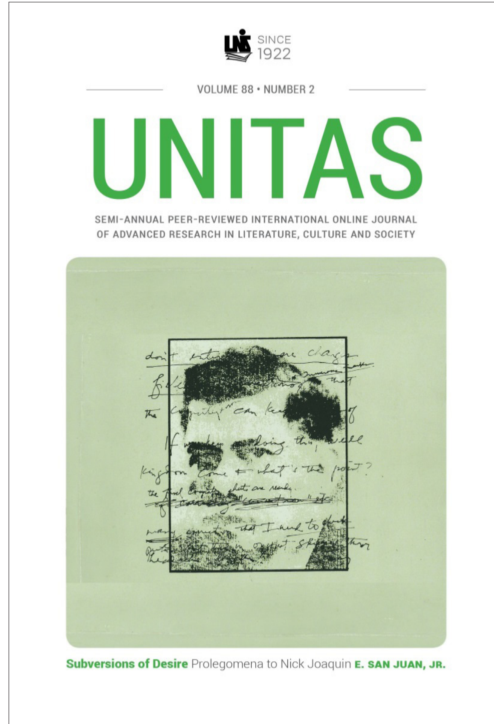

Fig. 1 E. San Juan, Jr.'s *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin* is the only book-length study on Nick Joaquin to this day. It was republished as an UNITAS monograph.

The "Joaquin" author-function should be more evident in the canonization of Joaquin as a Penguin classic author last year, which signals an aura (or halo) of recognition but also commodification (San Juan "Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse"). What needs to be examined therefore is whether the Filipino's collective experience of memory and homeland, history and identity, among

others, can be “salvaged” (i.e., saved or resurrected) from the “ruins of modernity”. Especially situated in the shift of the modes of production from feudal to bureaucratic-comprador that continues until today, the Filipino/a subject continues to experience fragmentation. To add to this, to my mind, the commodification that Joaquin’s works faces is also the commodification (and weaponization) of information in general: What “truth” do these works present in a world of post-truth, in a world where disinformation can be manufactured, packaged, and sold? If the Filipino/a subject is an identity-in-difference, whose development has been negated by history, what guarantees the change that has been promised many times over?

What is to be done? The answer to this question, which San Juan mentioned in the Preface of *Subversions* but fully develops in the keynote lecture, “Nick Joaquin’s Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the ‘Unhappy Consciousness,’” is the function of a creative oppositional criticism. Here, San Juan uses Hegel to elaborate this point.

CREATIVE OPPOSITIONAL CRITICISM THROUGH HEGEL

Although *Phenomenology of the Spirit* is not a work of literary criticism, Hegel wove various literary works and elements, such as allusions to *Don Quixote*, themes from *Antigone*, and a verse from *Faust*, in the book’s palimpsest of philosophical discussions. Allen Speight, in fact, sees a “literary turn”—a sudden and sustained “eruption” of the use of literary texts—at a crucial juncture of *Phenomenology*, to such extent that “the book must eventually . . . turn its attention explicitly to the role that literature is playing within it” (18-19, 22). Hegel, therefore, although not a literary critic in a strict sense, understands how literature can illustrate philosophical ideas which are mostly abstract and speculative. Because *Phenomenology* is a work on experience, Hegel needs to yoke concepts such as consciousness, self-consciousness, and reason to the real; and literature is a crucial lever for this connection. Hegel scholar John N. Findlay notes that Hegel views Art in general as “the immediate form of absolute spirit”:

> Works of Art, although they are not thoughts and notions, but a development of the Notion out of itself, an alienation towards the sensuous, none the less have the power of thinking Spirit in them, a power not merely of apprehending itself in its peculiar guise of thought, but just as much of recognizing itself in its externalization to sense and sensuous, of grasping itself in its other, inasmuch as it transforms the alienated to thought, and so leads it back itself . . . . In this way the Work of Art also, in which thought has externalized itself, belongs to the realm of understanding, thought and Spirit, in so far as it subjects it to scientific treatment [i.e., in aesthetic criticism or theory] merely satisfies the need of its inmost nature. (Hegel qtd. in Findlay 336)

Therefore, art embodies the World Spirit and brings it to the level of perception. Robert Wicks explains that Hegel wrote about Art with religious overtones: perception of beauty in Art offers a revelation of the divine. Art is "the expression of metaphysical knowledge" (349). Hicks furthermore explains the hierarchy of art forms, a progression of "sensation to conception." Poetry is at the top of this hierarchy because the arbitrary relationship between its medium (language) and subject matter (thought) brings it closer to thought compared to any other art form. Literature, almost in the same way as Philosophy and Religion, transports us directly deep into the World Spirit (355-359). The important insight here is that although art is not the primary object of Hegel's project, his philosophy dictates that we should be attentive to creative production because it presents the World Spirit. This may be understood in a merely descriptive way; but, when framed through historicism, Hegel's notion of the relationship between art and World Spirit takes an inevitably prescriptive turn.

History is the cornerstone of Hegel's philosophy. For Hegel, World Spirit, whether presented in Philosophy or Art, is only possible if it is grounded in the unfolding of history—i.e., its origins, development, and possibilities. In this sense, other thinkers, such as Montesquieu, Ferguson, Herder, Schelling, and Spinoza, have preceded and might have even influenced Hegel (Beiser 271-272). What is distinct about Hegel's historicism is its self-reflexivity and self-consciousness. Frederick Beiser explains that this is a weapon wielded against the pretenses and illusions of Philosophy, espe-

cially after Descartes and the modern philosophers. Because philosophers have failed to recognize that its own truths is a product of a specific context, Hegel had to historicize philosophy itself (272).[11] Beiser explains Hegel's thought process:

> Thought is not a fixed state of being, he maintains, but a restless activity, a process of development from the indeterminate to the determinate, from the vague to the clear, from the abstract to the concrete. The fundamental premise behind his historical conception of thought is that it is not possible to separate the object of thought from the activity of thinking about it, for it is only through our thinking about an idea that it becomes clear, determinate, and concrete. Like all activity, though, the activity of thought takes place not in an instant but through time. Hence thought itself must be historical (275-276).

The primary mistake that Descartes committed, that of the a-historical, disembodied *cogito* that eventually becomes the basis of one's entire worldview, has been repeated in the history of literature. The works of San Juan traced earlier in this paper diagnose this very mistake and danger. From New Criticism to Poststructuralism, San Juan brings back assumptions that are neglected to be natural, eternal, and presuppositionless. These are assumptions about the Text, the Subject, and even Joaquin's genius. All of these are products of history, according to Hegel; and San Juan foregrounds history through discussions of social context, genre traditions, education and influence, and all-too-human institutions. Criticism does not allow literature to settle in *a priori* forms nor hide in universal categories. Criticism is not just a literature's optional afterthought. Criticism is literature's self-reflexivity in action.

Criticism also reminds readers that a literary work is a product of experience,[12] which, in turn, is an interface of contradictions. Hegel defines the Unhappy Consciousness as "the consciousness of self as a dual-natured, merely contradictory being." He elaborates thus:

> This *unhappy, inwardly disrupted consciousness,* since its essentially contradictory nature is for it a *single* consciousness, must for ever have present in the

> one consciousness the other also; and thus it is driven out of each in turn in the very moment when it imagines it has successfully attained to a peaceful unity with the other. (*Phenomenology* 126)

The Absolute Spirit, though referred to singularly, should not be mistaken as monolithic and static. Hegel's historicism proclaims the Absolute Spirit's endless creation through opposition and dialectic. If thought is by its very nature historical, it cannot be exempt from disruption and contradiction. However, the crucial Hegelian insight here is the effect of contradiction, which is counter-intuitive to Newtonian physics: opposite forces do not even out each other. Opposition is generative; negation is creative. Peaceful unity only leads to indifference.[13] Hegel's dialectic presents "contradiction comprehended in its generation and sublation" (Baum 279). The unhappy consciousness, therefore, functions as a prelude to attaining the telos of the World Spirit. One way I understand this is through the etymological connection of the words "meaning" and "moaning". Both words come from the Old English word *moenan,* which means "complaint" or "lament". The Unhappy Consciousness is the same complaint that drives meaning-making and moaning. Creatures moan because of a raw feeling—whether pleasure or pain—that cannot be or can no longer be suppressed. In the same way, meaning is a complaint that a work or a discourse issues forth. To ask what literature means, therefore, is to ask what it is moaning for.

According to San Juan, the Unhappy Consciousness is the rational self-conscious stance of the Subject (which is really a becoming-Subject), the self-determining agent of historical praxis. Because thought is a product of history, particularly its contradictions, but only for the unchanging/unwavering attainment of World Spirit, San Juan is right to ask what experience bedevils Joaquin's consciousness. The specter that haunts Joaquin, to use Benedict Anderson's formulation, is not really spectral in the way Ibarra has imagined Europe while looking at a familiar scene. Ibarra's demon is comparative and speculative. Joaquin's specter, for San Juan, is real and historical: the interruptions in the Philippine experience of modernity, especially the U.S. invasion and bloody pacification at the turn of the twentieth

century and the Second World War that was followed by the destruction of Intramuros. In his keynote lecture, San Juan strikingly notes the Unhappy Consciousness that emanates from a specific Philippine historical and social process:

> The dramatic crisis of the "Unhappy Consciousness" rehearses the problem of articulating a split Filipino subject. Torn between the feudal regime of the clan and the necessity of survival in a bourgeois-capitalist milieu, Joaquin's bifurcated subject dissolves into the mirage of unifying myths, or becomes reconciled to the alienating order by artistic fiat. ("Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse")

Writers, like Joaquin, express meaning and moaning through their literary works. But the fragmentation of the Unhappy Consciousness is also what drives critics like San Juan to continue writing. In tracing San Juan's critical works on Joaquin that spans half a century, and elaborating the role of history to thought via Hegel, the open-ended conclusion-question of this paper is this: What is San Juan's own Unhappy Consciousness? Because San Juan, of course, like Joaquin, is a product of discourse (Foucault's author-function) and a product of history (Hegel's historicism), the question extends to Philippine Literary Criticism. What remains to be done? What remains suspended in opposition that drives our critics to create?

POSTSCRIPT

In a philosophy forum on Truth and Democracy[14] held a week before this paper was presented, one of the speakers said that Filipinos need to be vigilant in spite of, and all the more because of, the crises that plague Philippine society today: the almost impossibility of meaningful public discourse, curtailment of press freedom, the hijacking of charter change, the State-sponsored killings, the compromise of checks-and-balances in the government, and many others. He said that perhaps everything is part of a process that may seem invisible from our position. Everything will unfold and lead to a Hegelian synthesis. If that is the case, I thought, let us all hope that Hegel is correct.

ENDNOTES

1. This essay is chapter six of *Toward a People's Literature: Essays in the Dialectics of Praxis and Contradiction in Philippine Writing*, U of the Philippines P, 1984, pp. 144-165.
2. *Subversions of Desire*, first published by University of Hawaii Press and Ateneo de Manila University Press in 1988, was republished by *UNITAS* (vol. 88, no. 2) in 2018. Pagination in this paper reflects the recent republication.
3. Because of San Juan's progressive views and anti-Marcos activities in the US, he had been blacklisted by the Marcos regime. In his author's response at the book launch of *Subversions*, he decried that even a work of such importance to the development of national culture would have been impossible before 1986 if it threatened the dictatorship and the political status quo. San Juan lamented that even at the time of *Subversions*' publication (1988), two years after the dictator's downfall, cultural production was still not on the agenda of the state. Aside from this historical context, the book also scaffolds from the development of interdisciplinary cultural studies and poststructuralism ("The Critic" 29). In other words, the timeliness of *Subversions*' publication is an intersection of the local political context (i.e., the restoration of democracy in the Philippines) and a global theoretical development (i.e., the use of theoretical frameworks, although originating from the West, to interpret World literatures).
4. Perhaps, in San Juan's oeuvre on Filipino writers, *Subversions of Desire* is only eclipsed by his works on Carlos Bulosan, most notably *Carlos Bulosan and the Imagination of the Class Struggle* (1972). For a revaluation of this book in the twenty-first century, see Pante and Nery's "Migration, Imagination, and Transformation" which connects the book to the wider scholarly fields of transnationalism and peasant literature. They point out, rightly, how most of Bulosan scholarship since then has largely been collaborating in this book's main arguments (346-347).
5. Veric notes: "An intellectual of prodigious production and vatic insight, San Juan has authored extensive works as a literary critic, poet, fictionist, and public intellectual whose value in grasping the collective pasts and futures of the Filipino people in the homeland and the diaspora. [. . .] Together, his writings represent some of the most sustained reflections on subaltern cultural politics, emphasizing the long tradition of Filipino revolts across the centuries and revealing their relevance to contemporary attempts to make sense of history in the context of decolonization and its critique of capitalist modernity in American image" (294, 301). See also E. San Juan, Jr.'s "Curriculum Vitae." *Kritika Kultura*, no. 26, 2016, pp. 482-522.

6. In republishing *Subversions of Desire*, *UNITAS* highlights Joaquin's connection to the University of Santo Tomas and the Dominican Order: "Nick Joaquin entered the St. Albert College in Hong Kong as a Dominican seminarian [and under a scholarship for his 1943 essay on Our Lady of the Rosary, "La Naval de Manila"] after receiving an Associate in Arts degree from UST in the late 1940s. His personal library was donated by the author's family to the UST Library in 2008 in compliance with his last will. It is now in the open shelves of a special section called "Esquinita de Quijano de Manila," set up in his memory, which holds about 3,000 books" (x-xi).
7. San Juan has partly employed Augustine's philosophy and theology also in certain chapters of *Subversions of Desire*; for example, Augustine's notion of temporal change in the prophetic/deterministic vision of Fr. Melchor on "The Order of Melkizedek" (116-117) and Augustine's theodicy to introduce the convergences in *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (172-173).
8. Theology and ontology are intertwined in the medieval mind. Augustine, one of the Fathers of the Church and among the most influential medieval thinkers, explains the existence of God using contradictions. In Book 1 of Augustine's *Confessions*, he answers, "What, then, is the God I worship?" through a series of contradictions:

   You, my God, are supreme, utmost in goodness, mightiest and all-powerful, most merciful and most just. You are the most hidden from us and yet the most present amongst us, the most beautiful and yet the most strong, ever enduring and yet we cannot comprehend you. You are unchangeable and yet you change all things. You are never new, never old, and yet all things have a new life from you. You are the unseen power that brings decline upon the proud. You are ever active, yet always at rest. You gather all things to yourself, though you suffer no need. You support, you fill, and you protect all things. You create them, nourish them, and bring them to perfection. You seek to make them your own, though you lack for nothing. You love your creatures, but with the gentle love. You treasure them, but without apprehension. You grieve for wrong, but suffer no pain. You can be angry and yet serene. Your works are varied, but your purpose is one and the same. You welcome all who come to you, though you never lost them. You are never in need yet are glad to gain, never covetous yet you exact a return for your gifts. (23)

   He ends this chapter with a surrender—both in the Christian and the secular sense—to the futility of the task: "Can any man say enough when he speaks of you? Yet woe betide those who are silent about you! For even those who are most gifted with speech cannot find words to describe you" (23). Explaining God's existence this way shows much of the medieval world-order, in epistemology, ethics, and politics.

9. San Juan views Nick Joaquin as among the traditional intellectuals. This group, though not among the loyal servants of the Marcoses and their comprador cronies, is also quite different from the organic intellectuals of the working classes ("What Shall We Do" 4).
10. Michel Foucault explains that the author is not an individual but a discursive function of the text that comes from the modern impulse to limit indefinite significations. In this sense, it is the author that is the product of the text, not the other way around. Foucault says that "[the author] is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses" (118).

    According to San Juan, Joaquin shows this modernizing sensibility in Joaquin's sprawling bionote for himself, written for the *Philippines Free Press*:

    I was born in Paco, where I spent an extremely happy childhood . . . I have no hobbies, no degrees, belong to no party, club or association; and I like long walks; any kind of *guinataan*; Dickens and Booth Tarkington; the old Garbo pictures; anything with Fred Astaire . . . the *Opus Dei* according to the Dominican rite . . . Jimmy Durante and Cole Porter tunes . . . Marx brothers; *The Brothers Karamazov*; Carmen Miranda; Paul's *Epistles* and Mark's *Gospel*; Piedmont cigarettes . . . my mother's cooking . . . playing *tres-siete*, praying the Rosary and the *Officium Parvum* . . . I don't like fish, sports, and having to dress up . . . . (qtd. in San Juan *Subversions* 232-233)
11. Beiser enumerates the forms of a-historicity in philosophy, all of which have been the subject of Hegelian criticism in one way or another. These are the following:

    (a) The belief that certain laws, beliefs, or values are universal, eternal, natural when they are in fact the product of, and only appropriate to, a certain culture. (b) The doctrine that certain ideas or principles are innate, the inherent elements of a pure *a priori* reason, although they are learned from experience, the product of cultural tradition. (c) The claim that certain institutions and forms of activity have a supernatural origin . . . when they in fact originate from all-too-human sources. (d) The reification of certain activities and values, as if they were entities existing independent of human consciousness, when they are in fact the product of its subconscious activity. (e) The belief that certain institutions and feelings are the product of innate genius, although they are the result of education. (f) The attempt to create a presuppositionless philosophy by abstracting from all past philosophy and by relying upon individual reason alone (273).
12. *Phenomenology of the Spirit* has undergone changes in title, organizational structure, and relation to Hegel's entire philosophical system. The book's original title is *The Science of the Experience of Consciousness* (Speight 11-12).
13. Hegel explains in *Phenomenology* that the Unhappy Consciousness always tends (i.e., cannot be indifferent) toward the Absolute Spirit: "The attitude [the

Unhappy Consciousness] assigns to both [the Changeable and the Unchangeable] cannot therefore be one of mutual indifference, i.e., it cannot itself be indifferent towards the Unchangeable; rather, it is itself directly both of them . . . it is merely the contradictory movement in which one opposite does not come to rest in *its* opposite, but in it only produces itself afresh as an opposite" (127).

14. "Truth and Politics: Citizenship in a Post-Truth Era," *The 2018 Ramon C. Reyes Memorial Lectures*, with Randolf S. David and Antonio Gabriel M. La Vina, on 7 Feb. 2018, Ateneo de Manila University.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

An earlier version of this paper was presented as a reaction to Epifanio San Juan, Jr.'s lecture titled "Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-comedy of the 'Unhappy Consciousness'" at the Nick Joaquin Centennial Forum (Part 2) held on 24 February 2018 at the University of Santo Tomas.

I want to express my gratitude to Fr. Jesus M. Miranda, Jr., OP, Secretary General of UST; Dr. Michael Anthony Vasco, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters; Dr. Joyce L. Arriola, director of the Research Center for Culture, Arts, and Humanities (RCCAH); Dr. Maria Luisa Torres-Reyes, Scholar-in-Residence and Editor-in-Chief of *UNITAS*; Dr. E. San Juan, Jr.; and Dr. Delia Aguilar.

WORKS CITED

Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated with an introduction by R. S. Pine-Coffin, Penguin, 1961.

Baum, Manfred. "Dialectic." Translated by J. Edwards. *The Bloomsbury Companion to Hegel*. Edited by Allegra de Laurentiis and Jeffrey Edwards, Bloomsbury, 2013, pp. 279-287.

Beiser, Frederick C. "Hegel's Historicism." *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. Edited by Frederick C. Beiser, Cambridge UP, 1993, pp. 270-300.

David, Randolf S. and Antonio Gabriel M. La Viña, lecturers. "Truth and Politics: Citizenship in a Post-Truth Era." *The 2018 Ramon C. Reyes Memorial Lectures*, 7 Feb. 2018, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City.

Diaz, Josen Masangkay. "'We Were War Surplus, Too': Nick Joaquin and the Impossibilities of Filipino Historical Becoming." *Kritika Kultura*, vol. 24, 2015, pp. 4-34.

Findlay, John N. *Hegel: A Re-examination*. Humanities Press, 1958.

Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" 1969. *The Foucault Reader*. Edited by Paul Rabinow, New York UP, pp. 118-119.

Galdon, Joseph A. "Tropical Gothic: Nick Joaquin Revisited." *Philippine Studies*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1976, pp. 455-463.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. 1807. Translated by A.V. Miller. Analysis of the Text and Foreword by J.N. Findlay, Oxford UP, 1977.

---. *Reading Hegel: The Introductions*. Edited and introduced by Aakash Singh and Rimina Mohapatra, re.press, 2008.

Hicks, Robert. "Hegel's Aesthetics: An Overview." *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*. Edited by Frederick C. Beiser, Cambridge UP, 1993, pp. 348-377.

Joaquin, Nick. "Culture and History." *Culture and History*. Anvil, 2004, pp. 391-411.

---. "Culture as History." *Culture and History*. Anvil, 2004, pp. 3-53.

---. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*. Penguin, 2017.

Lumbera, Bienvenido. "Bleak Comedy." *Graphic*, 14 Aug. 1968, p. 60.

Nealon, Jeffrey T. *Foucault beyond Foucault: Power and its Intensifications since 1984*. Stanford UP, 2008.

Pante, Michael D., and Leo Angelo Nery. "Migration, Imagination, and Transformation: Revisiting E. San Juan, Jr.'s *Carlos Bulosan and the Imagination of the Class Struggle*." *Kritika Kultura*, vol. 26, 2016, pp. 344-362.

Roces, Mina. "Filipino Identity in Fiction, 1945-1972." *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1994, pp. 279-315.

San Juan, Jr. E. "The Critic as Parasite/Host." *Midweek*, 24 Aug. 1988, pp. 29-30.

---. "Curriculum Vitae." *Kritika Kultura*, no. 26, 2016, pp. 482-522.

---. "Dialectics of Transcendence: An Interpretation of Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*." *Toward a People's Literature: Essays in the Dialectics of Praxis and Contradiction in Philippine Writing*. U of the Philippines P, 1984, 144-165.

---. "For Whom Are We Writing: The Forces of US Imperialism or the National Democratic Revolution?" *Two Perspectives in Philippine Literature and Society*. Edited by Belinda A. Aquino, Philippine Studies Program, University of Hawaii, 1981, pp. 27-54.

---. "Nick Joaquin's Apocalypse: Women and the Tragi-Comedy of the 'Unhappy Consciousness'." Nick Joaquin Centennial Forum (Part 2), University of Santo Tomas, 24 Feb. 2018, UST Thomas Aquinas Research Center, Manila. Keynote Lecture.

---. *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin.* 1988. *UNITAS*, vol. 88, no. 2, 2018.

---. "What Shall We Do with All of Marcos' Hacks?" *Philippine News*, 22-28 Oct. 1986, pp. 4.

Speight, Allen. *Hegel, Literature and the Problem of Agency*. Cambridge UP, 2001.

Veric, Charlie Samuya. "Prologue: Pasts and Futures of E. San Juan, Jr." *Kritika Kultura*, no. 26, 2016, pp. 293-302.

“Total Midnight All Over the Land Escaping Minute by Minute into the Small Hours”

Historiography and Baroque Poetics in Nick Joaquin’s *A Question of Heroes*

Vincenz Serrano
Ateneo de Manila University

ABSTRACT

Nick Joaquin’s *A Question of Heroes* (1977; 2005) concludes with a long sentence that renders, in a manner that unfolds, his view of the 150-year period he covers in his book. The sentence, whose structure follows the natural progression of the day, is emblematic of Joaquin’s baroque historiography. By engaging with scholarship on Joaquin’s historical writing as well as with research on baroque aesthetics, I argue that Joaquin’s long sentence is an index of his temporal capaciousness, which from a baroque perspective, signals on the one hand recuperation and resistance, and artifice and deformation on the other.

KEYWORDS

Philippine history; narrative; defamiliarization; National Artist for Literature; emplotment; trope

In his introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic* (2017), historian Vicente L. Rafael calls attention to Nick Joaquin's preoccupation for the long sentence, particularly as a vehicle to convey historical possibility. For Rafael, Joaquin's long sentence does not denote real events "so much as the possibilities of their taking place" (xxxiii). In attempting to "convey the experience of remembering not what happened but what could have happened," Rafael proposes that Joaquin's long sentence "delivers a series of shock effects to awaken the present to the past." Put differently, Rafael considers Joaquin's stylistic signature as endowed with two capacities: the capacity, by way of accretion of details and actions, to startle readers into awakening, and the capacity to evoke, in the face of the closure of historical reality, the openness of possibility. Similarly, novelist Gina Apostol's foreword points out that despite its shifts in direction, Joaquin's long sentence is an aesthetic feat: "Some of his sentences are like labyrinths that if you pulled a string through, you get this architectonic surety, a marvel" (ix). Apostol suggests that Joaquin's craftsmanship is evident in the serpentine complexity of his sentence: there's a solidity and surefootedness in Joaquin's craft that enables the sentence to bear the pressure of shock, possibility, and historical density—an astonishing construction.

Rafael cites as an example the opening sentence of the story "Doña Jeronima," where the "Archbishop's life is condensed into a series of moments, each pregnant with other stories, other times and other possibilities" (xxxii): Joaquin describes the career of the Archbishop who traveled by galleon from Manila to Mexico, was accosted by pirates, then subsequently shipwrecked, and was marooned on an island for one year before being rescued and returned to Manila as a holy man, his reputation as survivor having preceded him (*Two Navels* 131-132). Although the sentence accounts for approximately two years of the Archbishop's life—dense with incidents—Rafael calls attention to a sense of compression and incipience. Rafael points out not just what Joaquin renders in condensed form, but what he suggests beyond what is rendered: that the career of Joaquin's Archbishop was a fraud, that to be holy was to be hollow (*Two Navels* 132).

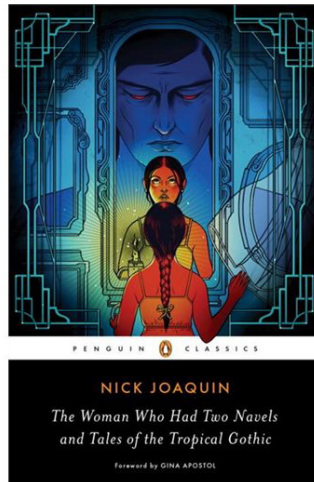

Fig. 1 The book cover of the Penguin Classics edition of Nick Joaquin. Published by Penguin Random House, 2017.

Apart from the example mentioned by Rafael, there are a number of instances in Joaquin's oeuvre where the long sentence appears. In Joaquin's bildungsroman, "Cándido's Apocalypse," one long sentence—which also serves as the high point of the story—traces Bobby Heredia's ambulation one evening in suburban Manila to look for his nemesis, Pompoy Morel. "Cándido's Apocalypse" depicts the coming of age of Bobby, the son of Totong and Ineng Heredia, and brother to Sophie and Junior. Set in middle class Manila in the 1960s—with young people sporting the Beatles bob and dancing the boogie, the twist, and the mau-mau, exchanging slang terms like *diahe*, *tepok*, *'lis d'yan*, *get lost* and *dig that* (*Two Navels* 251)—the story depicts Bobby in crisis, situated in a society that is itself in transition. Bobby, 17 years old, is critical of "overacting," a trait he sees in his family, classmates, and friends; the epitome of overacting is Pompoy Morel. Bobby's insight into human behavior makes itself manifest literally with a kind of x-ray vision: Bobby can see beneath the clothes of his teachers and classmates, sometimes even seeing beneath the skin and right into the bones of people.

The sentence follows Bobby's movements from one place to another as he searches for Pompoy—from the Elvis Billiard Hall with his friends, the Village Theatre, Village Gasoline Station, Crossing (where a *miting de avance* was happening), then to his house (where his sister Sophie was holding a party), then out to the garden and bamboo grove (where he confronts Pompoy against a wall, and Pompoy engages him in a fistfight) (282-284). The sentence shows movement: Bobby rushes from one point to another seeking his enemy; despite rendering Bobby's restlessness, marked by successive changes in location, Joaquin nevertheless maintains clarity: transitions are clearly marked, Bobby's movements are precisely described, and the ambiance of the places substantively rendered.

Another example is the opening sentence of "May Day Eve," which describes festivities at a party in Intramuros to celebrate the return of *ilustrados* who had recently completed their studies in Europe. The sentence shows young men and women enjoying themselves until midnight, after which the women are told by their governess to retire for the night, while the men continue their merriment until early morning—they swim in the Pasig, catch fireflies, and walk around Intramuros under a moonlit and cloudy sky. Similar to the example from "Cándido's Apocalypse," the sentence from "May Day Eve" renders the numerous activities related to the festivities: servants running to fetch carriages of departing guests, young men and women bidding each other good night, women going to their bedrooms and men, not yet inclined to sleep, walking in their hats, capes, canes, and "handsome apparel" around Intramuros and its environs. Within the same sentence Joaquin expresses the mood that pervades the evening—the Intramuros houses' "tiled roofs looming like sinister chessboards against a wild sky murky with clouds"—as well as a mood of the past intermingling with the present: a "murderous wind whirled, whistling and whining, smelling now of the sea and now of the summer orchards, and wafting unbearable childhood fragrances of ripe guavas" (*Two Navels* 53-54).

In these sentences from "Doña Jeronima," "Cándido's Apocalypse," and "May Day Eve," Joaquin demonstrates capaciousness: in a sentence, he can evoke distinct characters, atmospheres, actions, and ideas. The ability to

accommodate considerable detail and still maintain grammatical sense is a step beyond competence. For the scholar Joseph Williams, in his book-length analysis and instruction manual on prose style, the ability to write "clear, crisp, sentences that never go beyond twenty words is [already] a considerable achievement" (135). Be that as it may, Williams considers the ability to manage a long sentence to be a marker linguistic skill and intellectual panache: an author who uses only a limited range is comparable to "a pianist who uses only the middle octave: [s/he] can carry the tune, but without much variety" (135). These observations, when extended to Joaquin, suggest that the breadth of his materials gives a glimpse of a mind at work: digressions, qualifiers, subclauses, descriptions, and flourishes are an indication, in Williams's phrasing, of "hearing someone simultaneously thinking thoughts, refining, and recording them" (146).

Another instance, the concluding sentence (Appendix) from *A Question of Heroes*—Joaquin's book which revalues, in 14 essays, 10 major Philippine heroes—bears further examination, this time from the two mutually constitutive perspectives of historiography and baroque poetics. *A Question of Heroes* (henceforth *Question*) concludes with an extended sentence that renders, in a manner that unfolds, Joaquin's view of the period he has just analyzed in his book. The sentence refers to the national heroes he has examined, among them Juan Luna (1857-1899), Graciano Lopez Jaena (1856-1896), Marcelo del Pilar (1850-1896), Andres Bonifacio (1863-1897), Emilio Aguinaldo (1869-1964), and concluding with Gregorio del Pilar (1875-1899) and Artemio Ricarte (1866-1945). What is striking about this sentence is the way in which Joaquin accommodates his major preoccupations—*ilustrado* history, the continuing revolution, contrarian interpretations of nationalist hagiographies—in a single syntactic unit, as well as Joaquin's capacity to render a dynamic temporal structure: the sentence proceeds from dawn, to early morning, to midmorning, to noon, to afternoon, to evening, to midnight, and concludes with the following day's false dawn. In a review of *Question*, critic Leonides V. Benesa assumes—however debatably—that the book's final sentence takes Artemio Ricarte's point of view; for Benesa, Joaquin imagines "[Ricarte's] dying moments . . . in the mountains of Kalinga in 1945,"

and shows Ricarte's consciousness evoking a "highly compressed rerun of faces, voices, events, thus providing [the book] with a memorable coda" (41). Benesa thus highlights, using the analogy of the coda, how Joaquin is able to provide recapitulation and closure to *Question*'s thematic preoccupations.

Demonstrating the formal implications of Joaquin's long sentence—characterized variously as having the capacity to awaken the reader by means of shock effects (Rafael); a well-made labyrinth (Apostol); and a device capable of compressing time and summarizing key themes (Benesa)—constitutes the starting point of this essay. This aesthetic consideration is set within the framework of the baroque, a category "deeply out of fashion for many years but is now current again in the languages other than English" (Greene) and remains valuable in analysis regarding Joaquin. Joaquin's baroque style will then be examined in relation to his historiography, particularly with respect to how Joaquin's historical work has been viewed by Caroline S. Hau, Resil Mojares, Ivan Emil Labayne, Soledad Reyes, E. San Juan, Jr., and John D. Blanco, among others. Joaquin reveals a Baroque poetics and historiography, as will be discussed in the section of my paper where I engage with key studies on the baroque, particularly by Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze, Alejo Carpentier, Gonzalo Celorio, and Severo Sarduy. This demonstration of baroque poetics, I conclude, is at the same time a sign of a Joaquinesque ethics anchored on defamiliarization. My research is indebted to, and yet differs from, established and emerging research on Joaquin insofar as I consider another area touched on but not yet fully examined by critics: Joaquin's baroque historiography, as seen on the level of the extended sentence. In what follows, I: (1) account for the scholarship made on Joaquin's career as a historian, as well as his baroque writing style; (2) engage with the notion of the baroque; (3) examine *Question* in the light of Joaquin's baroque historiography; and (4) taking my cue from Hayden White, show the historiographic value of Joaquin's project. I argue that Joaquin's long sentence is an index of his temporal capaciousness, which from a baroque perspective, signals both recuperation and resistance; Joaquin's style in writing history—a quality inseparable from Joaquin the novelist, and evocative of commodious-

ness and recovery—distinguishes Joaquin from historians whose writings are oriented to linear and progressive modes.

"BAROQUE AS AN AESTHETIC OF CATASTROPHE": JOAQUIN'S INTERVENTIONS IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Scholars have critiqued Joaquin's work as an author using baroque prose as well as his efforts at writing history. Criticism on Joaquin acknowledges his deployment of baroque form—particularly the emphasis in his play, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* (henceforth *Portrait*), on portraying catastrophe and, in *Almanac for Manileños,* on using repetition—to render a culture of calcified yet exaggerated pageantry conditioned by adverse and asymmetrical social and political relations in the Philippines. For scholar John D. Blanco, Joaquin's ability to portray Manila's destruction by way of baroque aesthetics offers new ways of considering the genealogy of modernity in the Philippines. By examining the scenography of *Portrait,* Blanco proposes that Joaquin's baroque mentality and poetics offer a way through the impasse of historical representations during the 1960s and 1970s. As Blanco argues, Joaquin's approach lays bare the "insufficienc[ies] of both postcolonial and anti-colonial critique"; moreover, Joaquin opens up ways to "rethink our very notion of modernity" (14). Blanco situates Joaquin's work—"baroque as an aesthetic of catastrophe" (14)—in terms of the emerging disputes at the time in the field of history: on the one hand, historical work done by nationalists aimed to "analyse the foundations of Filipino modernity in the 1896 revolution for national liberation"; on the other hand, in the zeal to recover what was distinctly Filipino, nationalist historiography failed to see that the "critical enterprise [of identifying the cornerstones of Filipino modernity] belongs to a history that the Philippines shared with the Western world" (13). Put differently, Joaquin's adoption of the baroque—as style and substance—signals a propensity to inflect the national with the foreign: Joaquin recognizes that the endeavor to recover distinct signifiers of Filipino identity throughout the years of Spanish and American colonialism is shot through with elements of the foreign.

Scholar E. San Juan, Jr. highlights the tendency for repetition as the manifestation of Joaquin's baroque sensibility. For San Juan—who has written thus far the only book-length analysis of Joaquin—"[the baroque in Joaquin] denotes simply a chronicle of recurrent events, a relentless turning of fortune's wheel, where people are motivated chiefly by perverse discontent and other humours" (201). Moreover, San Juan's version of the baroque is typified by petrified progression and funereal pomp: "mere succession without development, an architectonic frieze," "a baroque funeral pageant adorned with all the mesmerizing finery of a Renaissance triumphal procession" (201). Moreover, San Juan considers Joaquin's mannerisms of displacement and occlusion to be a "function of the baroque sensibility sensitised to a decaying social structure brought about by the capitalist division of labour, alienated work, and insidious commodification of everything including the psyche" (201). Put differently, by situating Joaquin's baroque aesthetics within the framework of Marxist political economy, San Juan is able to examine how Joaquin's work is conditioned by Philippine-style late capitalism, with its destitute political structures, moribund social dynamics, and oppressive labor relations.

Blanco and San Juan identify Joaquin's handling of baroque poetics as crucial to his critique of historical representations and Philippine political economy. With regard to Joaquin's history writing, although his historical work is generally acknowledged to reinforce his cultural analysis, critics have also been exploring other areas: instances of Joaquin's dialectical thought, as seen in his social engagements by way of writing; his examination of cultural technology and political economy; and his propensity for hybridity and interdisciplinarity.

Anthropologist Fernando Nakpil Zialcita proposes that Joaquin's "chief contribution to Philippine scholarship" and the "key insight in [his] historical process" is to point out the "need for an evolutionary framework" (21) that can make legible the country's historical and cultural development. For Zialcita, the evolutionary framework entails awareness of metamorphoses; for him, Joaquin's notion of historical unfolding requires cognition of "a sequence of perspectives expanding and deepening through time," and that a

respect for the past "requires not a literal imitation of dead forms but a reinterpretation of their spirit in today's context" (21). In other words, Zialcita points out Joaquin's capacity to understand historical events and processes—as well as the literary forms with which to render these events—and yet is not beholden to them: Joaquin does not imitate, but rather reinterprets the spirit (however defined) of historical events in the light of the current context.

Columnist Conrado de Quiros takes Joaquin to task for his shortcomings in historical analysis. Taking dead aim at Joaquin's essays in *Culture and History*—particularly the titular essay which calls for the study of tools, techniques, and media, as well as their capacity to alter the historical epoch—de Quiros faults Joaquin for "abstract[ing] tools from production, depriving them of their natural function, and investing them with an independent and primary existence." Put differently, despite his innovative use of media and cultural theory—via media theorist Marshall McLuhan—Joaquin, for de Quiros, is inattentive to the material basis of his analysis of tools. In de Quiros' estimation, while Joaquin "invests tools with formal qualities" (and which results in an analysis fraught with "mechanical determinism"), he nevertheless fails to recognize that "technology in general cannot be conceived apart from the economic system it represents, and the science that accompanies it" (41).

Scholar Ivan Emil Labayne examines *Discourses of the Devil's Advocate* by Joaquin (writing as Quijano de Manila) and identifies instances of "dialectical thought" that inform Joaquin's historical writing. These dialectical movements—as seen in Joaquin's essays that cover various topics such as the "arrivals of Magellan and Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in the country, the Fall of Bataan, the 'Liberation' from the Japanese, and press censorship" (420)—are analyzed and situated by Labayne within "the larger sociality [of Joaquin] where textual discourses takes place" (418).

For scholar Soledad Reyes, Joaquin's *Culture and History* "refutes current views of history, ranging from the obviously nostalgic and romantic [the return to the precolonial past] to the more deterministic and materialist notions espoused by some historians" (123) such as Teodoro Agoncillo and Renato Constantino, whose essays and textbooks had become increasingly

popular. Reyes identifies Joaquin's position as, rightly or wrongly, defending the *ilustrado* to the "detriment of the masses whom he views with indifference if not contempt" (121). Be that as it may, Reyes points out that Joaquin's history essays, despite their seeming impressionism, "combine the creativity of a fictionist/poet and the resourcefulness of a social scientist" (121).

This combination of literary creativity and scholarly resourcefulness merits for Joaquin a place in the *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences.* In two entries—"History as Culture" and "Culture as History"—historian Ma. Eloisa G. Parco-de Castro outlines the main tenets in Joaquin's historical work. Parco-de Castro attributes to Joaquin the notion that history is "not merely a chronological reconstruction of the past nor . . . an analytical interpretation of past events." By contrast, history refers to the "process . . . [which informs the] molding, construction, [and] formation of [national] culture" (126). In keeping, albeit a little too literally, with the metaphor of construction, Parco-de Castro describes the relationship between history and culture as analogous to stones and cement: "the events of history provide the stones for the building of a nation while cultural traditions become the cementing force to the edifice" (127). Historian Bonifacio S. Salamanca also includes Joaquin in his survey of historiographical literature in the Philippines from 1956 to 1993. Salamanca mentions Joaquin's *Culture and History* in the entry on intellectual and cultural history (84). *Question* and *The Aquinos of Tarlac: An Essay on History as Three Generations* are also mentioned—along with other biographies such as, say, Jose V. Abueva's *Ramon Magsaysay: A Political Biography*, Vivencio Jose's *The Rise and Fall of Antonio Luna*, and Maria Kalaw Katigbak's *Pura Villanueva Kalaw: Her Times, Life, and Works, 1886-1954*—as biographies that are "less adored but not necessarily less great or eminent" (90).

In "Literature and History," a chapter from *Necessary Fictions* which argues for continuities between the literary projects of Nick Joaquin and the scholarly projects of Reynaldo Ileto, scholar Caroline S. Hau considers the historical undergirding of *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino.* By examining the disputing interpretations of the painting made by the play's characters, Hau contends that "the reconciliation of history and art" suggested by the

painting is "haunted by the content of its historical allusions. . . . by the interpretive demands of history" (107). Put differently, even as the play attempts to work through concepts of indigeneity and Filipinoness, the question of the foreign—Aeneas and Anchises as the painting's key allusion, references to Spanish authors—permeates the text.

Scholar Resil Mojares views Joaquin as a "popular historian writing for a general readership (sans footnotes)" (6), whose articles in *Philippines Free Press* "interrogat[ed] ideas dominant or fashionable" (7). For instance, Joaquin critiqued essentialist indigenous practices and proposed a "conception of culture as hybrid and ever mutating" (9). He also critiqued purist and nativist cultural practices and put forward the idea that Philippine national identity "is the dynamic product of the various cultural influences" throughout history (9). For Mojares, *Question* is Joaquin's "most sustained, strongly researched historical work." Mojares argues that Joaquin shows "great narrative gifts for delineating character, incident, time, and place," and showed Philippine national heroes as conditioned by circumstances and character traits. Thus, as opposed to "didactic and prescriptive" orthodox nationalist histories, Joaquin "introduced into history . . . the play of contradictions—paradox and irony, the contingent and accidental" (13). For Mojares, despite Joaquin's shortcomings—"at times overdrawn and simplifying"; "too dismissive of precolonial culture and overstressed the transformative force of technology"—he wrote "works that are a major intervention in historiography," a point which "has not been fully acknowledged" (14). Put differently, Mojares acknowledges that Joaquin's literary disposition—the figures deployed in his novels, stories, and plays: characterization, contradiction, irony, paradox, among others—invigorates his historical writings, which engage with problems of culture and national identity.

As outlined by these studies, various scholars have assessed both sympathetically and unsympathetically Nick Joaquin's oeuvre—particularly his fiction and historical writing—from interrelated perspectives of historiography, cultural history, political economy, postcolonialism, anthropology, and literary and cultural studies. Critics widely recognize Joaquin as an author who wrote in a number of forms (novel, drama, history, cultural

analysis, journalism, children's story, biography, among others), for which he received national and international recognition (e.g., the National Artist Award for Literature in 1976 and the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Journalism, Literature, and Creative Communication Arts in 1996). These writings bear the mark of history; moreover, they engage, however controversially, with the pressing issues of the time. Be that as it may, apart from these references, there have been few studies on Joaquin's historiography, especially the ways in which his baroque aesthetics and his historical sensibility are mutually constitutive.

Scholar Neferti Xina M. Tadiar, in *Fantasy-Production*, underscores the importance of historiography when she examines relations between "the struggle to write one's own history" vis-à-vis "the struggle to make one's own history" (156). She frames these two categories of agency and historical writing within the context of nation formation, particularly of decolonizing countries; for Tadiar, "the struggle for sovereign historiography and the struggle for sovereign nationhood . . . have always been closely intertwined" (156). Even though Tadiar does not examine Joaquin—she considers historical and cultural examples such as *The Revolt of the Masses* (by Teodoro Agoncillo) and *Himala* (directed by Ishmael Bernal and starring Nora Aunor) within the context of globalization, the prostitution economy, and changes in the urban built environment—her argument regarding historiography illumines Joaquin's project. For Tadiar, in contrast to contributing to the "writing of unitary nationalist history" (156) in the Philippines, historians at a "later moment" of the postcolonial period "tur[n] to the recuperation of those social elements, cultural ways, deeds and life fragments that were expressed, ignored or eschewed in the hegemonic historical narratives of the nation" (156). Citing Reynaldo Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* and Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism* as works which exemplify these recuperative approaches (akin to the work of subaltern studies scholars in South Asia), Tadiar argues for the value of these texts—and the often nonlinear, literary methods they espouse—with regard to recovery work. Historiography which identifies and reconsiders ignored "social elements" and "cultural ways" advance the recovery of "lost and overlooked historical agencies" that

work toward illuminating "the underside of nationalist history." These texts attempt to not just clarify the gains made with regard to attaining sovereignty, but to also account for "the historic failure of the nation to come to its own" (157). Joaquin's historical work participates in what Tadiar calls the recuperation of elements occluded by hegemonic acts of Philippine social and cultural formation. But what Joaquin recuperates in *Question* is not just content; he brings to the foreground the style of the baroque as well as the implications with which it is associated.

BAROQUE: RECOVERING HISTORY, DEFORMING AESTHETICS

Rafael's and Apostol's observations regarding Joaquin's sentence as a well-wrought labyrinth that functions as a conduit for historical possibility gain further traction when seen within the framework of the baroque. On the one hand, while theorists Walter Benjamin and Gilles Deleuze link the baroque to theoretical debates in the 20th century, their interventions have mostly been limited to European art, literature, and philosophy. Recent scholarship, on the other hand, focuses on Latin American and Asian manifestations of the baroque and account for its formal, critical, recuperative, and transcultural capacities.

For theorist Walter Benjamin, who looked at the dynamics of 16th and 17th century German tragic drama, baroque aesthetics is mutually animated by allegory, melancholy, and ruin—categories that bring forward the play's "truth content." For Benjamin, the "allegorical construction" of the play becomes a locus for ruin, with ruin manifesting the "transformation of material content into truth content." In Benjamin's view, the baroque structure of the German mourning play is an index of the "function of artistic form," which is "to make historical content . . . into a philosophical truth" (182). Put differently, Benjamin's analysis of German mourning plays reveals the potential of baroque structure—which, for him, takes the appearance of ruins—to refunction history into truth using the dynamics of melancholy and decay.

Theorist Gilles Deleuze's explanations regarding the fold can help illuminate the force as well as the expressive limitations of Joaquin's baroque

sentence. For Deleuze, a fold—which he takes as the principal figure for Baroque poetics—is a "flexible or an elastic body" that may be creased "into infinity in smaller and smaller folds" and yet these pleats nevertheless "retain a certain cohesion" (6). In other words, for Deleuze, despite the distinct creases, which appear to segment the flexible body—and Deleuze's book considers various artistic manifestations of the fold, including music, sculpture, fabric, mathematics—parts of the body do not sever from each other. Deleuze uses the image of a sheet of paper as an illustration: the sheet may be "divided into infinite folds or separated into bending movements" but the paper itself does not disintegrate (6). Put differently, using another analogy from nature: "A fold is always folded within a fold, like a cavern in a cavern" (6).

In their introduction to *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, scholars Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup make distinctions between three key terms: Baroque, New World Baroque, and Neobaroque. Zamora and Kaup trace the origins of the baroque to 17th century Europe; they consider the baroque as "a Catholic response to the Protestant insurgency," endowed with a "recognisable style and content in art, architecture, and literature" which was decidedly "Counter-Reformation [in its] aesthetic and ideology" (3). Even as baroque forms were brought to "areas colonized by Catholic Europe," these were throughout the 17th and 18th century reworked in terms of "the cultural perspectives and iconographies of the indigenous and African labourers and artisans who built and decorated Catholic structures" (3). Moreover, traffic between Europe and its colonies was two-way: for example, artifacts from various parts of Asia were sent via the Manila galleon; these items transited through Mexico en route to Europe, and thus "join[ed] the diverse cultural streams that over time came to constitute the New World Baroque" (4). While a strand of contemporary criticism considers the processes entailed in New World Baroque as integral to "cultural self-definition," another strand, Neobaroque, focuses its attention to "the uses of seventeenth-century Baroque rhetorical devices in contemporary literature" (20).

In his essay "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real," scholar Alejo Carpentier proposes that the baroque sensibility is one that recognizes, yet surpasses, a limit. The desire to overcome limits is accompanied by a sense of proliferation and excess: a "horror of the vacuum" that brings forth "decorative elements that completely fill the space of the construction" (93), a disposition that prefers to occupy the emptiness and fill it with detail. For Carpentier, the baroque disposition is centrifugal: as opposed to a movement that proceeds to the center, Carpentier's baroque "moves outward and away from the centre": an outward movement that dismantles boundaries as much as it fills the space within those boundaries.

For scholar Severo Sarduy, the baroque is typified as "the apotheosis of artifice" and the "irony and mockery of nature"; put differently, the key capacity of the baroque is its ability to "artificialis[e]," a process wherein language "raises to the second power an already elaborated level of language, that of poetic metaphors," which, on its own, is already an "elaboration" of denotative language. These interventions in language, for Sarduy, are "ever-multipliable"—a "successive envelopment of one writing by another." The trajectory of baroque proliferation is "radial"—"proliferation, foreseen route, orbit of abbreviated resemblances"—and the aim of this trajectory is "to make conjectural that which it obliterates" (272).

Similarly, scholar Gonzalo Celorio recognizes that the baroque is concerned with artificialization. Aside from the propensity of baroque authors for experimentation, proliferation, and the exercise of "freedom and personal whimsy," the "defining feature of the Baroque . . . is prefabricat[ion]" (503). Parody is the key aesthetic device that animates prefabrication and artifice: the enactment of "a double discourse, a double textuality," a move which entails the apprehension of a "prior, known and recognizable referential discourse," which is then "deformed, altered, mocked, and taken to an extreme by the discourse of the Baroque" (504). The implication is that the baroque enacts a double move of recovery and deformation. In other words, Sarduy and Celorio emphasize the ways in which the seemingly endless generative capacities of the baroque are manifestations of parody, mockery, artifice, and deformation.

The scholar Jeremy Tambling and photographer and scholar Louis Lo, who collaborated on a study on Macao architecture and the baroque, explore distinctions between European and Macao expressions of the baroque. For them, European baroque is: "(a) a culture of control through its images; (b) the art of a culture in crisis where things burst out of control; (c) a heterogeneous and feminine culture whose excess attacks masculine control." By constrast, Baroque in Macao—as evidenced by its architecture—is: "(a) a culture for control; (b) an art whose anxieties retreat from dehiscence (splitting), and attempt to impose a unifying order, which is both Chinese and European; (c) an art of heterogeneity and of the feminine, but whose resources are always impoverished, always reduced" (79). Be that as it may, for Tambling and Lo, the baroque—rerouted through Portuguese colonial intervention in Macao and now inflected with postmodern tendencies such as pastiche—signifies a contrapuntal yet complicit relation to globalization: "In Macao, the colonial power added something strange to the territory, and something beautiful emerged, perhaps against the odds, and certainly in dialogue with Chinese culture. The folds of the baroque, and its awareness of the power of feeling, remain as a challenge to the universalising power of globalisation" (227).

Taken together, these scholars consider historical, cultural, and aesthetic inflections of the baroque, as well as recently emerging terms such as New World Baroque and Neobaroque. Even as the baroque may be seen as a tendency embedded in, and developing from, Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries—with allegory, melancholy, and pleating as a number of expressions of early modernity—this phenomenon traveled throughout diverse colonial spaces in Asia and Latin America and became crucial to the cultural dynamics of these spaces. Be that as it may, more recent theorizing on the baroque—often inflected with poststructuralism—highlights its qualities of historicity, centrifugality, doubleness, and decoration: a textuality of artifice whose recovery of the past is rendered in the aesthetics of deformation.

"IN A WORLD WHERE NOTHING IS KNOWN FOR CERTAIN, EVERYTHING MUST BE PRESERVED": FOLDS OF HISTORY IN *A Question of Heroes*

A Question of Heroes is a collection of 14 essays on 10 key figures in Philippine history. The chapters in *Question* were originally articles that appeared in *Philippines Free Press* in the 1960s. These articles were then published in 1977 by Filipinas Foundation. In 2005, Anvil republished *Question*; the title has now—as of 2017—undergone its seventh printing. *Question* offers counter-readings of the main participants in Philippine revolutionary history; to echo Reyes and Mojares, apart from offering descriptions and narratives about heroes, Joaquin disputes widely-accepted views about them. Against the commonplace interpretation of Apolinario Mabini as the sublime paralytic, Joaquin proposes a portrait of Mabini as "our first modern man," showing "little faith in congress and lean[ing] toward the era of the strongman" (158). He revises the impression that the Propaganda Movement was embodied solely by Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. Del Pilar, and Graciano Lopez Jaena, and proposes a place of honor for Gregorio Sanciangco, who published *El Progreso de Filipinas* (1881). *Progreso* called for educational and tax reforms as well as increased development of infrastructure, not for the upliftment of his own class, but in order for the common person to be "rescued from his exploiters"—all this to recognize that Sanciangco was "*the* epiphany that starts the Propaganda" (39; emphasis Joaquin's). To combat by clarifying: this is Joaquin's manner of disputing with historians and scholars. Throughout *Question*, Joaquin shows a capacity to argue in terms of proposing fine gradations with regard to interpreting historical events. For example, he insists that in 1896, instead of just one revolution, there were two uprisings that "were distinct from each other": "the failed Bonifacio attempt in Manila on August 29," and the "successful Aguinaldo coup in Kawit on August 31" (120). Joaquin reasons that "the practice is to slur over the distinction, to ignore the gap between them," and to combine "the two uprisings as a single event"—a generality that seems "valid in oratory but not for the historian." Joaquin asserts the importance of not just establishing factual and chronological accuracy, but also the equally significant work of ascertaining the

value of facts and events, a process which entails identifying differences and making distinctions: "unless [the historian] discriminates, picks out distinctions, he is writing allegory" (120).

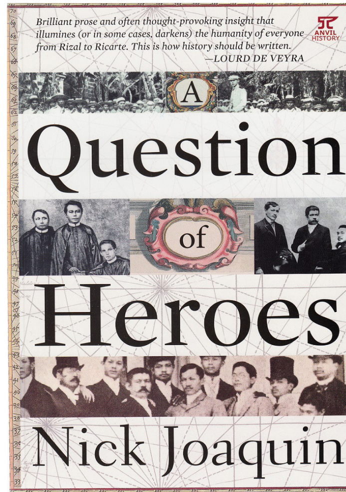

Fig. 2 New edition of Nick Joaquin's *A Question of Heroes*. Published by Anvil Publishing Inc., 2017.

The articles make plain Joaquin's intellectual engagements: in one instance, he is arguing against a "theory currently in vogue . . . that the Philippine Revolution was a proletarian movement that was, when already successful, captured by the middle class" (104). Instead, Joaquin distinguishes between a "Katipunan [that] was plebian and it failed at once as an uprising" and a "Revolution [that] was bourgeois from the start and it succeeded up to a point" (104). But Joaquin goes beyond hairsplitting when he makes distinctions. To argue against fashionable theories and popular opinions signals a concern for precision, even within the increasingly fuzzy area of historical representation and interpretation. The historian for Joaquin is akin to a "bumbling detective" driven by a desire to "comprehend the course of a

movement," the complexities of a historical character, and the contradictions of a vexing situation. Joaquin's faith in the figure of historian-as-detective resides in the promise of discovery. Although historical sleuthing presents difficulties—to follow a historical movement means to identify "its ups and downs, its floods and pauses, its recoils and deviations"—the materials which show the directions and contours these movements make are "traceable" and "identifiable," and that the historian has the agency and method to trace these back to a "more or less definite source" (25).

The inaugural publications in *Philippines Free Press* of these essays indicate that Joaquin was addressing an educated general audience, able to comprehend allusions and familiar with the disputes—historical, cultural, and political—of the day. Joaquin's essays show mastery of figurative devices and literary characters from the Western and Philippine traditions. He characterizes the martyrdom of Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora in terms of repetition and irony: "the martyr as hero by accident is a recurring irony in our history" (1). To describe the transformation of Rizal's principal character, Joaquin alludes to Dumas: "in the accurst woods where his Spanish ancestor hanged himself, the embittered Ibarra ceases to be a naïve Edmond Dantes and becomes a malevolent Montecristo" (73). Modern day Creoles are portrayed as "tentative Hamletish figures that baffle us with their scruples, their militancies, their enigmatic 'honour'" (76). Returning to the Philippines in 1942—with the Japanese assuming that he would eventually be President—Ricarte finds little support among the locals: he was "a name that stirred no memories among his people and rallied no patriots—a ponderous Anchises whom no Aeneas cared to carry forward" (235). These formal and discursive devices—and his ability to make distinctions and parallelisms, the capacity for allusion, irony, and analogy—show Joaquin's disposition: truths gleaned from his historical analysis become expressed in literary constructs.

As indicated earlier, *Question* concludes with a long sentence that synthesizes the materials covered in the book. The sentence—which immediately follows a narrative and analysis of the career of Artemio Ricarte—refers to the national heroes he has examined, among them Juan Luna, Graciano

Lopez Jaena, Marcelo del Pilar, Jose Rizal, Bonifacio, Aguinaldo, concluding with Gregorio del Pilar and Ricarte.

There are three arguments that are occasioned by this sentence. Firstly, the sentence enacts a diurnal cycle: the sentence renders a period of history—the period bookended by Luis Rodriguez Varela and Artemio Ricarte—in the form of a passage from dawn, to the movement from morning to noon to sunset to night, then to midnight and the following day's false dawn. In *Question*, Joaquin's marker for the diurnal manifestation of Philippine history is Artemio Ricarte's death: "With his death the day of the Revolution completed its cycle" (235). Joaquin uses the natural limit of the day to circumscribe a period in Philippine history that encompasses the Propaganda Movement (and its precursor), the various phases of the Katipunan revolution, the Philippine-American War, and the American colonial period.

In the early morning, Luis Rodriguez Varela announces himself as the Conde Filipino; dawn breaks "with a cry, a crash, [and] a clamor" (235) that signals the uprising in Cavite and the deaths of Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora; in the morning, Rizal is in Ghent working on his manuscript and Juan Luna is in Paris working on his paintings; noontime is the time for the Katipunan revolution at Balintawak and Kawit; the afternoon finds Aguinaldo marching down the Camino Real while at late afternoon, the Malolos Congress is formed, two signs of victory, though thwarted by the Americans: "a bravura splendid as the sunset, though upon it falls . . . the shadow of [Americans]" (236). By twilight, Antonio Luna is "fight[ing] his way north along the railroad." By dusk until midnight, Aguinaldo is retreating to Palanan and, with the defeat of Gregorio del Pilar at Pasong Tirad, is captured at midnight: "total midnight all over the land escaping minute by minute into the small hours" (236). Past midnight is a darkness filled with barely distinguishable faces—Sakay, Noriel, Montalan—and by "a flicker of lightning or of false dawn" (236), Ricarte stumbles to die in an unknown grave. Joaquin is using the figure of the day—the passage from early dawn to the following day's dawn—to propose his own version of a Philippine historical period: the key events of the long 19th century,

as it were, compressed to fit in one day, and projected as if it were a film in time-lapse.

The historical period expressed in the sentence, to be sure, lasts approximately 150 years, from the opening reference to Varela styling himself in the 1790s as Conde Filipino to Ricarte's death in 1945. The sentence expands centripetally in time and place, accommodating the Cavite Mutiny in 1872, the deaths of Gomez, Burgos, and Zamora that same year. Rizal is arranging for the publication of *El Filibusterismo* at Ghent in 1891, while Juan Luna is working on his paintings in Paris in the 1880s. The revolts in Balintawak and Cavite are in 1896, while Aguinaldo's military reversals in Camino Real are in 1899, with his subsequent retreat to and capture in Palanan in 1901. The insurrections against the Americans carried out by Sakay and the others carry on until Sakay's death in 1907. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Ricarte threatens to revolt against the Americans (remaining practically the last diehard revolutionary), returning to the Philippines in 1942 and discovering that the situation was no longer conducive for a Katipunan-type revolt, and eventually dying in 1945. The sentence reveals Joaquin's rhetorical capacity for condensation: vertiginous evocations of place, time, and action—paintings, revolts, novels being written, flamboyant assertions of national identity, deaths by garrote, military advances and defeats—appear, to echo Deleuze and Apostol, folded within a fold, like caverns within caverns: the grievance of a nation is folded in a novel, the transformation of a culture is folded within a name, the revolt of a colony is folded into a painting.

Secondly, Joaquin's compression of seemingly distinct time frames and disparate activities is nevertheless expressed in one coherent unit—the extended sentence. Even as, following Carpentier, the baroque manifests outward proliferating movement which fills up all possible available space, the baroque is also at the same time, following Deleuze, a method of cohesion: various points of the fold are "not separated into parts but are rather divided into infinity in smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion" (6). In the concluding sentence of *Question*, Joaquin's varying personages perform discrete acts, which although seemingly unrelated to one another are nevertheless coherent. Despite the abundance of personages

in this passage, as well as the extended historical time period covered—which give the impression of innumerable elements accommodated by distended syntax—Joaquin's sentence is as much about proliferation and expansion as it is about continuity and coherence. Put differently, although Joaquin may be describing an abundance of distinct actions, they nevertheless belong to the same movement, the way Deleuze would consider folds as discrete but nevertheless belonging to the same piece of paper.

Moreover, in other parts of *Question*, Joaquin takes note of various other continuities in Philippine history: "It may be that when we speak of the 'Unfinished Revolution' it's not to the 19th-century Revolution we should be referring to but to this continuing Revolution of the 1900s that the Americans correctly saw as an undertaking of the masses. . . . The mainstream is the continuing Revolution, the Revolution downgraded as a movement of 'the more ignorant people of the laboring masses.' This is the thing that was cut off, that remains unfinished" (225-226). In other words, even as he points out that Philippine history is filled with personalities who more often than not contest each other, Joaquin also identifies resonances between historical moments: the "Unfinished Revolution" of the 1970s—a struggle with the laboring classes in the forefront—carries on from the Revolution taken up by Sakay in the 1900s (despite the surrender of Aguinaldo). Joaquin also points out continuities between the Cavite Mutiny of 1872, Filipinos going to Spain in the 1880s, and the Revolution in 1896 (36-37). Seen in this manner, Joaquin's extended sentence emblematizes coherence of historical movement: for Joaquin, decades may separate discrete actions, but these actions are, to use Deleuze's language, "cohering parts" of a "flexible or an elastic body" (6). Historical time, as figured by Joaquin's style, is an elastic, malleable phenomenon, reformable and deformable, comprising conflicts unfolding into continuities.

Thirdly, as Hayden White proposes, the meaning of the historical narrative is not just in the content, but may also be enacted by the trope chosen by the historian to render that content. According to White, "as a symbolic structure, the historical narrative does not reproduce the events it describes; it tells us in what direction to think about the events and charges

our thought about the events with different emotional valences" (91). White describes a process of "decodation and recodation," or the way in which a historical narrative gains interpretive force: "the destructuration of a set of events (real or imagined) originally encoded in one tropological mode and the progressive restructuration of the set in another tropological mode." Seen in this manner, Joaquin performs a double move of appropriation and reconstruction: Joaquin's materials—if he opts to cite them—come from sources as varied as memoirs and diary entries (i.e., from Emilio Aguinaldo, Gregorio del Pilar, Apolinario Mabini), previous scholarship on national heroes (i.e., by Ante Radaic, Leon Ma. Guerrero, among others), and eyewitness accounts (i.e., from James Blount on the first years of American occupation of the Philippines). These sources, to be sure, deserve to be examined on their own terms—with regard to historical representation and literary figuration—following, say, Resil Mojares's example in "Time, Memory, and the Birth of the Nation." In this essay, Mojares critiques the prospects and limits of narrative strategies (i.e., structure, point of view, tone) deployed in representations of the nation as seen in key texts about, and emerging from, the Philippine revolution. He traces shifts in historiography from folk narratives (*pasyon*), chronicles (Isabelo de los Reyes's *La Religion del "Katipunan"* [1899]), autobiographies (Teodoro M. Kalaw's *Aide-de-Camp to Freedom* [1965]) to synoptic histories of the nation (Rafael Palma's *Historia de Filipinas* [1935]): while folk narratives render the "notion of the *katipunan*" as a "politically inchoate but distinctly moral conception of *bayan*" (272), synoptic histories are typified by the "conventionalization, circulation, and reproduction of a dominant national narrative" (287). As White says, "for the 'chronicle' of events, out of which the historian fashions his story of 'what really happened' already comes preencoded" (90); put differently, the sources Joaquin uses are themselves charged with specific "emotional valences" and "preencoded" with specific personal and ideological purposes.

Joaquin's key trope which enacts this refunctioning of historical material into feature articles is the baroque: his writing demonstrates a number of tendencies associated with the figure—accretion of material, enfolding structure, tragic disposition, and aesthetics of artifice. As suggested above, White

proposes that a historical narrative does not reproduce events as such, but rather orients its reader to particular ways of thinking and feeling about those events. For him, emplotment—the "encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures"—plays a key role in refashioning primary materials in ways readers can grasp conceptually and emotionally. By using baroque structures, Joaquin suffuses the narrative with qualities associated with the trope: the *horror vacui* and resulting hyperextension of material as seen in the catalogue; the evocation of enfolding and continuity as suggested by the diurnal structure; the tragedy, waste, and false hope which complete the historical cycle and inaugurate perhaps a new one.

Baroque language, for Carlos Fuentes, in his analysis of William Faulkner's novels, is endowed with the capability to keep intact "defeat, misery, insecurity, and historical excess." Baroque language, with its commodiousness and elasticity, is imbued with this commemorative quality: it is a "language that preserves immediate evidence, an instrument capable of including everything, because in a world where nothing is known for certain, everything must be preserved" (543). The indeterminacy of history, a situation where, in Joaquin's concluding sentence in *Question of Heroes,* even despite the blazing start of the day can lead to the total midnight of defeat, occasions in Joaquin the need to preserve, a disposition consistent with, say, Bitoy Camacho's promise to remember, through poetry and song, the fallen Marasigan family and a Manila destroyed by World War II (*Two Navels* 431-432). And yet this preservation is associated with artifice: the seeming gravity of historical discourse—the attempts at nation building and sovereignty—is expressed in terms of a labyrinthine construct. The proliferation of details results in an impression that historical time can be bent, made circular and recursive, but the second iteration of morning brings false hope and emptiness. In addition, the baroque propensity to preserve is seen in terms of keeping things in abeyance. In the absence of heroes, without anyone to "hail another crack of doom at dawn," the "dawn [is kept] forever in suspense" (237); in the baroque sentence, time does not move, but everything is kept within its folds. Yet apart from preserving historical details in an

ambiance of sunlight, lightning, then shadow and gloom, Joaquin's sentence ends with a condition of possible empowerment: the situation of stasis and despair may stay as is, "unless" the force of a new dawn (however false and filled with artifice) "break, again" (237). In Hau's analysis of *Question*'s last sentence—part of her chapter "Portraits of the Elites as Filipinos," which outlines the roles and limitations of Filipino elites—"time takes its toll, but time also offers . . . a chance to act and live and change" (121); in Hau's estimation, the key word "unless" becomes a signifier of future possibility in the midst of historical stasis and waste.

Thus, Joaquin demonstrates that aesthetics is inseparable from ethics, insofar as in his historical essays, he is concerned not just with playing the role of devil's advocate—correcting nativist and romantic views of the nation, or offering new interpretations of figures from the national pantheon. More importantly, Joaquin's baroque style has a defamiliarizing effect, and it is precisely in estrangement that Joaquin becomes ethical. To evoke Viktor Shklovsky: "The purpose of art, then, is to lead us to a knowledge of a thing through the organ of sight instead of recognition. By 'estranging' objects and complicating form, the device of art makes perception long and 'laborious'" (7). Shklovsky's notion of "defamiliarisation" sheds light on Joaquin's "long and laborious" and temporally and syntactically complex style. "A long complicated sentence," for Gertrude Stein, "should force itself upon you, make you know yourself knowing it" (qtd. in Williams 134); in a similar manner, Joaquin's long complicated sentence is an enactment of baroque style in his historical writing: using a strategy from literature, Joaquin makes palpable the force of history, makes his readers know not just the facts of history but its moods, contours, and directions. Such a difficult baroque style offers new perceptions of past events: in keeping with Shklovsky's dictum that art can "make a stone feel stony" (7), Joaquin's baroque historiography can make time feel timely, can "hail another crack of doom at dawn" (237).

APPENDIX

The concluding sentence from A Question of Heroes (2005)

[235] With [Artemio Ricarte's] death the day of the Revolution completed its cycle.

It had been a long day, beginning deep in the small hours, in a silence secret with strange noises (of the Palmeros conspiring? of Novales arming?) and a darkness where the figures move in shadow, the face of Luis Rodriguez Varela barely distinguishable as he rises to proclaim himself the Conde Filipino to the first birds stirring, the first cocks crowing, while in the dusk glimmering into half-light the faces slowly become clearer, here a Mariano Gomez riding off to meet with the Cavite outlaws, there a Pedro Pelaez hurrying to early mass at the Cathedral, and at the University are students gathered in angry protest when the dawn breaks, breaks with a cry, a crash, a clamor, abruptly wakened people rushing about in panic to see the coil of smoke over the fort in Cavite, to see smoke in the mist through which the sun cleaves, the first long shaft of sunlight falling on stoic Padre Gomez, a crazed Padre Zamora, a raging Padre Burgos being led to the scaffold, the mist shredding about them in [236] the sunshine till no haze blurs the air and it's morning, morning in Paris for Juan Luna in his busy studio, morning in Ghent for Rizal bent over his manuscripts, morning in Manila for the concealed Marcelo del Pilar directing the marchers in the Great Manifestation, and late morning in Madrid for Lopez Jaena, at a sidewalk café, having the first cup of his bohemian day, waiting, as the sun climbs, for less hardy expatriates to stagger up from bed and hangover, but waiting in vain, for the heat of the day has drawn them back to its orient, their fires have lit a red noon, and the blaze of noon is Katipunan red, is Bonifacio at Balintawak, the Magdiwang in Noveleta, Aguinaldo in Kawit, Rizal whirling around in Bagumbayan, and the stunned expatriates packing dungeon and torture chamber as the red heat flames into afternoon, the golden afternoon of a proud Aguinaldo marching up the Camino Real to Manila, the banners of the Republic before him and Mabini looming behind, but no gates, alas, opening to his armies, nor no road save the lost road of retreat, through sunlight slanting level now with the flags, towards the spill of sunset color in Malolos, where sits the Congress, a bravura splendid as the sunset, though upon it falls a shadow, the shadow of the Gringo standing tall on the bridge in San Juan, the rim of sun fast diminishing behind him and the shadow spreading, gray dusk brimming to the first hum of frog and bug and a sudden startling crackle of gunfire, twilight tiding higher as Antonio Luna fights his way north along the railroad, evening and a cold rain setting in as the Republic falls in Tarlac and Aguinaldo sloshes northward through the mud, up to the highlands, up to the clouds on Paso de Tirad, where stands Gregorio del Pilar, the fading light on his face and night closing in behind, the stormy night deepening

on the mountain trails, and Aguinaldo fleeing, Aguinaldo groping under a wild curve of sky, outraced by the moon that races in reverse and speedily sets in cloud, leaving the heights lonelier as the fugitive stumbles down a slope and reaches dead end, as he comes at last to ultimate ocean, pitiless midnight, the midnight that is Palanan, and in the midnight gloom he lies captive, betrayed, under guard, while the Yanquis ransack the house for papers and loot, the total midnight all over the land escaping minute by minute into the small hours, becoming a silence secret with strange noises (of the neo-insurgents conspiring? of the new Katipunans rearming?) and a darkness where the faces are barely distinguishable, Sakay in Rizal, Noriel in Cavite, Ola in Albay, Montalan and Felizardo advancing together, and all the other figures lost in that murk so stark only a flicker of lightning or of false dawn yields us the face of a Ricarte younger, returning, ever the fire next time, and of Ricarte older, tottering towards an unknown grave in the highlands, stopped there at last as the dark glimmers into half-light [237] and a hush announces the time when it's always three o'clock in an east without hope, for, now, with none to hail another crack of doom at dawn and, now, with the dawn forever in suspense unless it break, again, with a cry, a crash, a clamor (and a coil of smoke from a battlement), the nameless faces now sinking into darkness but seem a waste of history, the toll of time (235-237).

WORKS CITED

Abueva, Jose V. *Ramon Magsaysay: A Political Biography*. Solidaridad, 1971.

Agoncillo, Teodoro. *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan.* U of the Philippines P, 1956.

Apostol, Gina. Foreword. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*, by Nick Joaquin, Penguin, 2017, pp. ix-xiv.

Benesa, Leonidas V. "Rewriting History with a Question of Heroes." *Archipelago*, no. 6. A-55, 1979, pp. 39-41.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama.* 1963. Introduced by George Steiner, translated by John Osborne, Verso, 2009.

Blanco, John D. "Baroque Modernity and the Colonial World: Aesthetics and Catastrophe in Nick Joaquin's *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino.*" *Kritika Kultura*, no. 4, 2004, pp. 5-35.

Carpentier, Alejo. "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real." Translated by Tanya Huntington and Lois Parkinson Zamora, *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, Duke UP, 1995, pp. 89-108.

Celorio, Gonzalo. "From the Baroque to the Neobaroque." Translated by Maarten van Delden, *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, Duke UP, 2010, pp. 487-507.

de Quiros, Conrado. "The Gospel of History According to Nick Joaquin: An Appraisal." *The Manila Review*, no. 14, 1978, pp. 38-67.

Deleuze, Gilles. *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque.* Translated by Tom Conley, U of Minnesota P, 1993.

Fuentes, Carlos. "The Novel as Tragedy: William Faulkner." Translated by John Ochoa, *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, Duke UP, 2010, pp. 531-553.

Greene, Roland. *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes.* E-book ed., U of Chicago P, 2013.

Hau, Caroline S. "Literature and History." *Necessary Fictions: Philippine Literature and the Nation, 1946-1980*, Ateneo de Manila UP, 2000, pp. 94-132.

—. "Portraits of the Elites as Filipinos." *Elites and Ilustrados in Philippine Culture*, Ateneo de Manila UP, 2017, pp. 49-81.

Himala. 1982. Directed by Ishmael Bernal, performances by Nora Aunor, Laura Centeno, Gigi Duenas, Star, 2007.

Joaquin, Nick. *Almanac for Manileños.* Mr. and Ms., 1979.

—. *The Aquinos of Tarlac.* Cacho Hermanos, 1983.

—. "Cándido's Apocalypse." *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*, Penguin, 2017, pp. 232-290.
—. *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino.* Penguin, 2017, pp. 291-432.
—. *A Question of Heroes*. 1977. Anvil, 2005.
—. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*. Penguin, 2017.
Jose, Vivencio. *The Rise and Fall of Antonio Luna*. U of the Philippines P, 1972.
Katigbak, Maria Kalaw. *Pura Villanueva Kalaw: Her Times, Life, and Works, 1886-1954*. Filipinas Foundation, 1983.
Labayne, Ivan Emil. "Bedeviling Quijano de Manila's *Discourses of the Devil's Advocate* and the Openness of Historical Interpretation." *Kritika Kultura*, no. 30/31, 2018, pp. 418-437.
Mojares, Resil B. "Discourses of the Devil's Advocate: Nick Joaquin as Historian." *Interrogations in Philippine Cultural History*, Ateneo de Manila UP, 2017, pp. 3-18.
—. "Time, Memory, and the Birth of the Nation." *Waiting for Mariang Makiling: Essays in Philippine Cultural History*, Ateneo de Manila UP, 2002, pp. 270-296.
Parco-de Castro, Ma. Eloisa. "History as Culture." *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Philippine Social Science Council, vol. 2, 1993, pp. 126-127.
—. "Culture as History." *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Philippine Social Science Council, vol. 2, 1993, pp. 127-129.
Rafael, Vicente L. "Telling Times: Nick Joaquin, Storyteller." Introduction. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*, by Nick Joaquin, Penguin, 2017, pp. xv-xxxviii.
Reyes, Soledad S. Review of *Culture and History: Occasional Notes on the Process of Philippine Becoming*, by Nick Joaquin. *Philippine Studies*, no. 38, 1990, pp. 121-124.
Salamanca, Bonifacio S. "Historiographical Literature: 1956-1993." *Philippine Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Philippine Social Science Council, vol. 1, 1993, pp. 74-105.
San Juan, E., Jr. *Subversions of Desire: Prolegomena to Nick Joaquin*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 1988.
Sarduy, Severo. "The Baroque and the Neobaroque." Translated by Christopher Winks, *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, Duke UP, 2010, pp. 270-290.
Shklovsky, Viktor. *Theory of Prose*. Translated by Benjamin Sher, introduced by Gerald L. Bruns, Dalkey, 1990.
Tadiar, Neferti Xina M. *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and Other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 2004.
Tambling, Jeremy, and Louis Lo. *Walking Macao, Reading the Baroque*. Hong Kong UP, 2009.

White, Hayden. "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact." *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Johns Hopkins UP, 1978, pp. 81-100.

Williams, Joseph. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace.* U of Chicago P, 1990.

Zamora, Lois Parkinson, and Monika Kaup. "Baroque, New World Baroque, Neobaroque: Categories and Concepts." *Baroque New Worlds: Representation, Transculturation, Counterconquest*, edited by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Monika Kaup, Duke UP, 2010, pp. 1-35.

Zialcita, Fernando Nakpil. "History as Process in Quijano de Manila." *The Manila Review*, no. 9, 1976, pp. 20-35.

Nature and Cultural History in Nick Joaquin's "Doña Jeronima"

Lily Rose Tope
University of the Philippines

ABSTRACT
The native natural world in colonial discourse has been regarded as a representation of the barbaric unknown—confusing, suspected, loathed yet desired by the colonizer. It has been also the object of increasing colonial acquisition as it struggled to remain a free space for a local culture and an old world to flourish. The native natural world is expressed in different tropes—as cultural originary, spiritual refuge, a sinister unknown, a haven for a pursued people, among others. But it is also a site of conquest and cultural imposition. In Nick Joaquin's "Doña Jeronima", a deserted isle, a river, a cave become methods of articulation of the intrusion of Spain into local Filipino culture thereby giving the Filipino natural world a chance to tell a differently worded history. It becomes a site of cultural misapprehension and contestation between the intruder and dweller. In this ecocritical and postcolonial examination of the novella, the mix of natural images makes the natural world an actor in history, its occupation and martyrdom a node in a nation's unwritten history.

KEYWORDS
ecocritical, postcolonial history, cultural resistance, nature and resistance

National Artist Nick Joaquin is one of the most anthologized and studied writers in the Philippines. He has been read from the critical eye of Formalism, Marxism, Poststructuralism, Postcolonialism and of different disciplines such as Linguistics, Language Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, and Cultural Studies. His works have the complexity to accommodate multimodal, multidisciplinary readings and challenge tried and tested literary approaches. As new ways of reading emerge, so are new perspectives on Joaquin offered.

One of the most recent methods of understanding historical phenomena comes from the field of science. Recent natural events that have affected lives worldwide such as climate change seem to have reignited interest in the role of nature, not only as a method of explaining the empirical but also as an articulator of the historical and the cultural. Not exactly new, this approach to literary texts has taken on refurbishment, combining with other disciplines to promote a more inclusive representation, not limiting discourse to a human one but including non-human elements as well.

I would like to offer a new reading of a Joaquin story based on his use of natural elements. This is based on an observation that Joaquin has used a range of natural imagery as expressions of ideological and philosophical engagements in his narrative as well as carriers of the thematic grip in his fiction.

The most famous would be the dramatic multi-pronged death of Connie Escobar through water, fire, and air in *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961). The presence and use of nature in Joaquin's fiction makes for a privileging position in the sense that he attributes to the natural a separate though not necessarily opposite way of psychological and historical articulation. Connie Escobar who is suffering from a neurosis brought about by two periods of colonialism is killed and resurrected, erased but invented into a new self by natural immolation. Nature plays a significant role in rehumanizing this character, healing her colonial trauma through natural elements.

But Connie Escobar's narrative has usually been read against the postcolonial impetus of her psyche. I take note of a perspective that could have expressed culture and history in another way.

I focus my lens on Joaquin's depiction of the physical environment and his use of natural objects and formations as articulators of discourse. Using the ecocritical paradigm, I would like to examine Joaquin's fictional play with the Filipino natural world and how the representations that emerge from it bring new insights into Philippine culture and history.

At this point, a simple definition of ecocriticism is in order:

> Ecocriticism examines the representation and relationship between the biophysical environment and texts through ecological theory. Environment and text are both inclusive categories: environment comprises flora and fauna, soil and water, climate and weather, industry and commerce; texts comprise artifacts as diverse as literature, film, the Internet, journalism, policy papers, rocks, spoor and trees. (Mason et al. 1)

There are countless theories and philosophies that ecocriticism draws from and just as many types of texts studied. Expectedly, one of the knowledge sources would be the natural sciences but ecocritical impulse looks at the natural phenomena not only from a scientific point of view but also through a host of paradigms that could provide phenomena with wide ranging explanations and perceptions. Ecology is considered as not exactly science. In fact, it is seen as "a countermodel against 'normal' analytic science" (Haise 509) in that it has advocated a more holistic, more balanced view of environment. It pursues "stability, harmony and regeneration. A fully mature ecosystem, the climax community of classical ecology, consists a set of animals and plants ideally adapted to their environment" (Haise 510). Using the science of ecology, ecocriticism promotes an equal privileging of man and environment. It provides us a second pair of eyes that puts humans on the same level as the environment. Ecocritic Lawrence Buell calls ecocriticism as a "spirit of commitment to environmental praxis. One can treat literary texts not as detractions from but as contributions to our interaction with the natural world" (qtd. in Phillips 584).

The privileging of the natural world however has brought about great debate regarding whose welfare is more important, human or non-human. When conservation and preservation prevent alleviation of hunger, promote

disease or human displacement, how does one make a fair decision? I think it will not be good to think in terms of binaries and that an inclusive solution is possible. Suffice it to say here that the framework is not without its contentious aspects, but nonetheless, it still provides a dynamic lens by which literature and the environment can be examined and appreciated.

Ecocriticism's broad concerns are held together by what Ursula Haise calls "the triple allegiance to the 1) scientific study of nature; 2) the scholarly analysis of cultural representations, and 3) the political struggle for more sustainable ways of inhabiting the world" (506). She also mentions issues often asked in ecocriticism such as: "In what ways do highly evolved and self-aware beings relate to Nature? What roles do language, literature, and art play in this relation? How have modernization and globalization processes transformed it? Is it possible to return to more ecologically attuned ways of inhabiting nature and what would be the cultural prerequisites for such a change?" (504).

Human life and nature are closely intertwined in many Asian systems of belief. Taoism and Shintoism, for instance, practice great reverence for nature. Hinduism and Buddhism include nature in the hierarchy of beings and do not privilege human life over non-human.

Ecocriticism however includes issues of modernity, how the natural world is exploited for profit and progress:

> This domination strips nature of any value other than as a material resource and commodity and leads to a gradual destruction that may in the end deprive humanity of its basis for subsistence. Such domination empties human life of the significance it derived from living in and with nature, and alienates individuals and communities from their rootedness in place. (Haise 507)

Nature tends to be dismissed as simple and easy to conquer. But as Dana Phillips asserts, "nature is complex; nature is thoroughly implicated in culture and culture is thoroughly implicated in nature" (577-78).

As a critical lens, ecocriticism contains several tropes. I would like to cite examples that will be useful to my discussion later. One would be the

land trope or land narratives. This pertains to the assumption of humanity's primordial attachment to land and how human incursion, technology, and industry have wrenched man's connection to it. bell hooks, an African American writer, claims that "black people 'were first and foremost a people of the land' with a strong love for nature before their lives were fundamentally altered by industrial capitalism in Northern cities" (qtd. in Gerhardt; hooks 53). In our own literature, there is NVM Gonzalez' *A Season of Grace* (1954) where Doro and Sabel undergo the hardships of slash and burn farming or *kaingin* agriculture. They encounter crop failure due to natural threats such as pests. They withstand the isolation and danger of illness in uninhabited forests. To us humans, the couple is an example of the Filipino's indomitable spirit against hunger and dispossession. From an ecocritical point of view, the land is resisting human intrusion. Forests are burnt because of *kaingin*. Consequently, animals lose their habitat and trees that have existed hundreds of years are cut down for houses and commerce. The peasants do not even consider reforestation or giving back what they took. Land is something to be conquered and used. The land loses its peace and balance. It has to fight back, even if it is a losing battle.

Another trope significant to my study is animal narratives. Ecocriticism recognizes that non-humans such as animals are also part of the natural world and should not be deprived of opportunities to be lead actors instead of just supporting ones. Like land, animals have a primordial relationship with humans, helping humans survive even if some see them as part of the food chain. As humans have domesticated land, they have also domesticated animals. The process of domestication contains the animals, depriving them of freedom of movement and abilities to be wild, often making them dependent on humans for food and shelter.

Christine Gerhardt examines Alice Walker's essay "Am I Blue?" which deals with a horse in captivity named Blue. "I was shocked that I had forgotten that human animals and non-human animals can communicate quite well," writes Walker (5). Walker links Blue's predicament to that of the African American slaves. She looks into the horse's eyes and says, "It was a look so piercing, so full of grief, a look so human, I almost laughed (I felt too sad

to cry) to think there are people who do not know that animals suffer" (7). When Blue's mate was taken away, the author once more looks into Blue's eyes and sees his grief: "If I had been born into slavery and my partner has been sold or killed, my eyes would have looked like that" (7).

My Philippine example is more idyllic but no less poignant. Manuel Arguilla's short story "Midsummer" is a courtship story set in rural Ilocos. Arguilla devotes pages depicting the closeness between a young man and his carabao. The young man feeds, bathes, and pets his animal. But once a young woman becomes a powerful presence in the story, the animal is somewhat marginalized. The ending is subtle and liminal. The young woman invites the young man to her house and the three of them walk single file—the woman, the carabao, and the man.

There have been many classroom debates about this sequence. The woman takes the lead and Arguilla gets approval from feminist readers. But the animal walks before the man or even between the man and the woman. Is this saying that the friendship between animal and man is more important than the romantic connection between the man and the woman? Has man surrendered his place to a special being that ensures his survival? Is nature recognized and given its rightful place? Animal narratives have always emphasized the intimacy between a human and his/her animal. The story opens itself to various ecocritical readings that explore this intimacy.

Just like any theory, ecocriticism has turned in the direction of many ideological corners and its multidisciplinary nature has generated myriad engagements. I would like to pursue one corner where it has turned. Ecocriticism's concern for the right to live naturally has led it to the alley of postcolonial theory. This is almost inevitable because postcolonial theory is, among other things, a critique on power (Vadde 565) and the resulting iniquities in its use. Ecocriticism examines the ecological effects of such iniquities on both human and non-human communities while postcolonialism centers its interrogation on human ones. Postcolonial ecocriticism conflates the critical intentions of the two:

> Post colonial ecocriticism, one of the fastest growing subfields within post colonial studies, maintain the salutary features of the post colonial

> by directing our attention to the specifically environmental dimensions of literary work. For example, post colonial ecocritics have focused on the often overlooked non human elements within canonical literature and brought attention to contemporary literature that responds to histories of settlement and conservation, ecological disaster, and the inequitable distribution of resources and waste. Engaging diverse practices of representation in classic and emergent literature, these critics place renewed pressure on the nature/culture and human/animal binaries that facilitate imperial privilege and colonial dispossession. (Vadde 565)

Gerhardt points out several convergence between ecocriticism and postcolonialism. One, both "situate their analyses in the historical contexts from which specific mechanisms of exploitation have evolved and both are inextricably linked to social and political activism." Two, both "entail a large scale critique of Western power structure". Three, "ecocriticism and postcolonialism are concerned with the complex relationship between the social and political center and its margins". As Dominic Head puts it, "ecocriticism de-privileges the human subject while postcolonialism decenters colonizers and their discourse" (qtd. in Gerhardt par. 6). Both attempt to "recenter the silenced other" (Gerhardt par. 6).

Using postcolonial ecocriticism, this article will examine Nick Joaquin's story, "Doña Jeronima," to uncover or produce meanings previously neglected or unexplored. "Doña Jeronima" is one of the short stories in Joaquin's collection titled *Tropical Gothic* (1972). The main character, a Manila archbishop, finds himself in the beginning of the story shipwrecked and marooned on an isle. He stays on that isle for a year. The land narrative begins with the description of the isle as "a desert isle, a dry isle that was but a tip of a reef in the sea" where the archbishop lives "on fish and prayer, on rain and water ("Doña Jeronima [DJ]" 57). It is obviously uninhabited, barren, and indifferent to human needs. It is also too small to be noticed by ships, isolated by water, bereft of civilization and comfort. Despite the human presence, the isle remains unperturbed, oblivious to its guest and his human necessities.

Fig. 1 The short story "Doña Jeronima" also appears in the collection *May Day Eve and Other Stories* by Nick Joaquin. The book cover that appears here is from the 2017 edition of the book published by Anvil Publishing.

The guest is no ordinary mortal. He is the Archbishop of Manila, a man with vast religious and political power. As a young man, he realizes early that the "Church was the quickest avenue to high places in the world" and he puts on the robes, "craving not piety but power" (DJ 58). He is no ordinary Archbishop either. He contends with other representations of power—"the grandees of the land," the merchants, other religious, and most especially the Viceroys. He topples governor generals and leads warriors in battle against the Moros, the Chinese, the English, and the Dutch. He enjoys a fullness of power that fuses the spiritual and the temporal" (DJ 59). He is on his way

to Mexico on a galleon ship to claim recognition for that power when he is shipwrecked.

The isle blocks his further ascent to power. Instead, it divests him of position, of human comfort and company, of glory and fame, of ambition and recognition. On the desert isle, he is "stripped of more than his purple, the Archbishop has reigned over a few feet of barren rock" (DJ 59). He leaves Manila to a "tumult of bells, banners, fireworks and music, a fine blaze of a man, handsome and vigorous" (DJ 57). One year later, he is accidentally found—now "a bowed, mute, shrivelled old man squatting motionless and cross-legged there, stark naked and half blind and burned black as coal, all his hair turned white and his white beard trailing down his navel, and hardly able to stand or move or speak or grasp...terrible altered, terrible aged, merely skin and bones and wild eye..." (DJ 57).

In its isolation and unperturbed condition, the isle divests the Archbishop of the accoutrements of power, greed and ambition, reducing him to the level of what Georgio Agamben calls "bare life." Used in animal criticism, "bare life is a conceptual threshold between the human and the animal, and also between life and death. The abyss of incomprehensibility that separates human and the animal is likened to human incomprehensibility of death, and both notions are ways of expressing the bare life" (Bensterien and Callicott 44). Instead of an animal, the isle can be used here as the site of the animal-like existence of the Archbishop. The isle has reduced his life to a barrenness similar to that of the isle, a death-like existence that demotes him to sheer biological functions and erases the import of his previous ambitions and achievements. The isle does not recognize his purple robes. His nakedness, the shrinkage of his flesh and vigor are its way of reconstructing him from human to animal.

The postcolonial implications of the isle can be derived from its nature. The isle, small and undiscovered, becomes a prison to the most powerful man in colonial Philippines. This man, ruling an entire Roman Catholic archipelago with the heart of a conquistador, is halted, contained, stripped, reduced, and transformed by an uninhabited island. The power of nature overcomes colonial, political, and religious power simply by being itself. Land

subverts, quietly but totally. When the Archbishop is found and returned, he is no longer the same man. He is no longer moved by the visions of accolade or the possibility of regaining power. What the countless local rebellions could not achieve, the isle is able to. It has tamed or impaired colonial power.

When the Archbishop is returned to Manila, he realizes that the lesson the isle has been teaching him is not complete and the search for answers continues. He sets up a retreat by the banks of the Pasig, a small *nipa* hut where he ruminates on his life on the isle, returning to his office only to answer the call of duty. Here, another object of nature becomes central to the Archbishop's transformation—the river. A river is a waterway or a large natural stream of water flowing into other bodies of water such as a lake, a sea, or another river. The role of rivers in history cannot be denied. They usually function as seats of civilizations and are linked to the development of human communities. They provide food and mobility to their inhabitants, and later, commercial and political access to the hinterlands. They are channels of change.

In the story, the river referred to is the Pasig. The Pasig River links Laguna de Bay, the biggest fresh water lake in the Philippines, and Manila Bay, the entrance to the country by sea. It provides an invitation to resources as well as acts as the gate to it. Its twenty-five kilometer length bisects the city of Manila into north and south, and it has created tributaries that flow into nearby cities and towns.

For the Archbishop, the river serves as an objective correlative of his life and emotions. Upon his rescue from the isle, he knows his epiphany has been interrupted and he goes to the river to find the stillness he covets. His relief is short-lived because the river begins to rage, foretelling the crisis the advent of Doña Jeronima will create. Just like the two big bodies of water that the Pasig connects, Doña Jeronima and the Archbishop are also connected by the river. The Pasig has been the joy of their childhood and the site of and witness to their young love. The Pasig performs its originary function as a place of beginnings and idealistic emotions.

It is interesting that the Pasig River is a tidal estuary. The flow of water depends on the tide ("Lake Hydrology"). During the summer season, the

water level in Laguna de Bay is low and so the Pasig flows toward it. During the rainy season, the water level there is high and so the Pasig flows toward Manila Bay. The ebb and flow mirror the connection between the two lovers. While the river brings them together, it also separates them when the time and circumstance demand it. Doña Jeronima waits for the return of her lover, for the river to flow back, but her young man has been swallowed by the sea of pleasure and power.

Both characters return to the river to find spiritual solace. The Archbishop finds it only at the end. First, the river becomes a raging tormentor, denying him peace and violently articulating the chaos within:

> The river that he could no longer bear to see, that had roared through his delirium, now rushed through his mind, through his despair, never still, never stopping, until it seemed the hemorrhage of the unstaunched wound of his life. The river that was childhood's friend and youth's matchmaker had become the old man's fiend. (DJ 73)

His peaceful life by the river is destroyed by a white veiled woman who presents to him her case of injustice, of being loved by someone who promised to return. The man never returns, instead he marries another woman, and forgets his pledge while she waits for years. The woman is Doña Jeronima, the man the Archbishop, and the other woman the Church. Remorseful of his debt of love, the Archbishop is nonetheless forced by Doña Jeronima to honor his promise. But at the last moment, she backs down, confesses the selfishness of her desires, and instead vows to live the life of an ascetic and a penitent. The Archbishop suggests a nunnery but Doña Jeronima scoffs at this and chooses the cave across the river where the bats live.

Describing the river as "apocalyptic" (DJ 79), the Archbishop confronts his guilt, here toward Doña Jeronima, but also toward his soul. As a man, he has done an injustice against a woman. As a man of God, he is instrumental in a conquest of bodies and souls. The isle would have divested him of power and desire but the river does not easily forgive or give absolution. As water cleanses, so does suffering. The Archbishop knows he has to pass his wild river (DJ 72).

Doña Jeronima's Pasig seems to be pristine, pre-colonial. It is the site of youthful love accompanied by nurturing natural elements. In her agony, she retreats to it, embracing its freedom and isolation, becoming one with it, finding spiritual ecstasy in it. While the Pasig is most likely instrumental in the spread of colonialism, the Pasig Doña Jeronima represents has a virginal quality that is devoid of external influence. The river here represents an older past, an older order that governs the relationship between humans and nature.

It is not just to the river that Doña Jeronima retreats but to a cave that is part of the river system. For Doña Jeronima, the cave is not a product of a shipwreck; neither is she marooned. She has once occupied the cave as a young girl and has had trysts there with her young lover who is now the Archbishop. The dark unlighted cave may have been an object of fear, especially since it is the abode of bats. To the young Jeronima, it is the place of youthful love and passion. Its darkness allows her to love undisturbed but it is also the site of her waiting and despair. When her lover does not return, the cave becomes deathly quiet. It is also to it that she returns to repent for her sins of desire. It is there where she experiences the bare life. Now dressed in "foul rags, her face shrouded in sacking," she turns her back on beauty and romantic passion, choosing solitude and the overcoming of the flesh. She becomes a "wild" object, not human but a creature of nature no different from the cave or its bats who are witness to her agony and sorrows as can be witnessed in this scene:

> Hardly had master and servant positioned themselves when the air flapped with the huge wings and the moonlight darkened to a swarm of bats wheeling over the cave. As though they were bell or clock sounding, the woman emerged from the dark cave, in her rags and shroud of sacking. Prostrating herself on a slab of stone, she began to pray; and such a keening rent the stillness, it seemed that here wailed the whole world's conscience in contrition. The moon rose high, and still higher, and the night chill sharpened, but still the prostrate woman prayed, moaning and groaning, lifting imploring hands to heaven like some mythic victim of the gods chained to a rock. But at last silence seized her, and more than silence; and the watchers on the rock above saw her as though dragged up to her feet, her arms opened

> wide and her veiled face wrenched toward heaven by a bliss that shook the air. The tremor lasted but a moment and she fell, as though dropped on her knees, where she stayed a while, swaying and shivering, her face in her hands. Then she rose and disappeared into the darkness of the cave. (DJ 80)

In ritual and ecstasy, in Christianity and pagan worship, Doña Jeronima is not only anchorite and penitent, but also priestess and nymph. Most importantly, she is the creature of the cave.

Caves are hollow spaces on the ground formed by natural elements; it takes millions of years to form a cave. Caves have served as shelter not only to early humans but also to a variety of animals, and have acquired a reputation for nurture and threat. Because caves have nurtured early civilization, they have acquired a connotation of refuge and protection; because they are usually hidden, they have also acquired a connotation of secrecy. In contrast, because caves are dark and unexplored, they also represent the threatening unknown. In the story, Doña Jeronima uses the cave not only as a place of nurture but also as a repository of her love and agony. The darkness protects her in her acts of pleasure and suffering. The cave's interiority and connection to the bowels of the earth provide the psychic depth to the nature of her love and penance, her renunciation and eventually her transformation.

Because they provided shelter for early humans and recorded early human culture in their walls, caves like rivers are also regarded as representations of the originary. Doña Jeronima's retreat to the cave divests her of self-centered aspirations in the same way that the isle divests the Archbishop. But unlike the isle, the cave is Doña Jeronima's natural originary; it is her habitat, and the divestment seems more like a willing return to one's beginnings rather than a shearing of possessions. Unlike the Archbishop who becomes the isle's unwelcome guest, Doña Jeronima becomes the cave's creature, blending with other organisms in the cave's ecosystem.

Her persona in the cave becomes most palpable in her relationship with the bats. Both the cave and the bats are objects of fear for the villagers who try to lynch Doña Jeronima. Both traditional lore and Christianity have rendered both as suspect. Bats are the second largest group of mammals. Mostly nocturnal, they live in caves and feed on fruits and smaller animals.

But because of one species—the vampire bats which feed on blood—bats have been seen as creatures of darkness, death, illness, and malevolence. Their anatomy—wide-webbed wings and rat-like body, rodent-face and human-like fingers—contributes to the alleged bizarre appearance and fearsome reputation. These bats look like birds but they are not, making them susceptible to misconstruction and discrimination. They live in dark caves so they seem sinister. However, scientists look beyond their ugliness and marvel at their amazing design, especially their web-like wings that end in fingers. Unlike most Westerners, the Chinese believe they bring luck.

Unlike the villagers, Doña Jeronima is not threatened by the bats. In her youth, their departure means it is time for her lover to come. Their return means her lover must go. As she becomes a creature of the cave, she is transformed into being just one of the cave's inhabitants. She co-exists with the bats; no human language is exchanged. In the darkness, the bats can hardly see her because bats cannot see well. They cannot see her rags or the sack that covers her face. Instead, they can hear her. Having good echo locators and a high degree of hearing, they perceive not her appearance but her emotions. They hear the animal keening she makes at the mouth of the cave. They witness and participate in her bare life. The Archbishop himself acknowledges that as guardians of darkness, the bats are wise "to shun daylight and choose darkness, when the world drops its mask and lies unguarded in the innocence of sleep...only the bats saw the world naked" (DJ 71). As the intimacy between the woman and the bats deepen, she, too, becomes the object of misconstruction and discrimination:

> In one's memory existed a time when bats haunted this region, but now a swarm of them flocked around the cave of the woman on the riverbank; they came at her call; she had been spied talking to them and fondling the black beasts and the villagers whispered that the woman had herself turned into a bat at night and roamed the countryside, seeking the blood of sleepers. Therefore was her cave shunned by the villagers and stoned by children; and she dared to set no foot outside her grove on the riverbank. (DJ 76-77)

Human eyes cannot comprehend the spectacle of bare life between the woman and the bats. The woman is rendered non-human in her relationship with the fearsome creatures; she cannot but be a *manananggal,* half-human, half-bat. As she casts her lot with the bats and retreats into the cave, she dies a kind of death that cuts her ties with the outside world and makes her return to the inner earth. In her preference for darkness and the natural world, Doña Jeronima is rendered strange, monstrous even, othered. She eventually dies but her story becomes a myth and in that myth, she becomes a young woman again visited by her lover.

In the story, the other woman is the Church, seductive and encouraging in its pursuit of power. Mistress of the body and soul of the colonized, the Church is a daunting rival. The religious caverns in the Cathedral where the Archbishop received supplicants is a far cry from the cave across the river. Here, proofs of colonial conquest of souls can be readily observed. Doña Jeronima dares to enter the caverns, seeking justice but defeated by a power stronger than a woman's love. This powerlessness is caused by the historical inevitability of colonialism. In the Archbishop's cavern, she becomes a disempowered supplicant, unable to escape the shackles of religious and colonial power. Her retreat to the cave allows her to escape material desires but also allows her to liberate herself from religious and colonial containment. Returning to the originary earth, "the river that had been niggard now gave fish in abundance, rain fell in its season and fell prodigally; field and orchard flowed with fruit; cattle fattened and multiplied; barren women suddenly quickened" (DJ 76). Her presence in the cave returned nature's fecundity, returning to her a different kind of empowerment that does not destroy but instead sustains. As she descends into the bare life, she also ascends into myth, a form of resistance that fuses love and nature.

These natural images and narratives in "Doña Jeronima" provide one lens by which Nick Joaquin can be appreciated. The mix of natural images makes the natural world an actor in history and culture and makes nature a node in a nation's still unwritten history.

WORKS CITED

Arguilla, Manuel. "Midsummer." *Philippine Short Stories 1925-1940*. 1975. Edited by Leopoldo Yabes, University of the Philippines Press, 1997, pp. 199-205.

Beusterien, John, and J. Baird Callicott. "Humor and Politics Through the Animal in Cervantes and Leopold." *Sustaining Ecocriticism: Comparative Perspectives*, special issue of *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2013, pp. 43-63.

Gerhardt, Christine. "The Greening of African-American Landscapes: Where Ecocriticism Meets Post-colonial Theory." *The Mississippi Quarterly,* vol. 55, no. 4, January 2002, pp. 515-534. *ProQuest,*https://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.upd.edu.ph/central/docview/213521762/fulltext/3C50CFCD32BF4AEDPQ/1?accountid=47253.

Gonzalez, NVM. *A Season of Grace*. Bookmark, 1956.

hooks, bell. "Touching the Earth." *At Home on the Earth: Becoming Native to Our Place. A Multicultural Anthology.* Edited by David Landis Barnhill, U of California P, 1999, p. 53.

Heise, Ursula. "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism." *PMLA*, vol. 121, no.2, March 2006, pp. 503-516.

Joaquin, Nick. "Doña Jeronima." *Tropical Gothic.* U of Queensland P, 1972, pp. 57-83.

---. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*. Bookmark, 1961.

"Lake Hydrology." *Laguna Lake Development Authority*. http://llda.gov.ph/laguna-de-bay/. Accessed 2 September 2009

Mason, Travis, et al. "Introduction to Ecocriticism Among Settler Colonial Nations." *Ariel*, vol. 44, issue 4, 2013, pp. 1-11.

Phillips, Dana. "Ecocriticism, Literary Theory and the Truth of Ecology." *Ecocriticism,* special issue of *New Literary History*, vol. 30, no.3, Summer 1999, pp. 577-602.

Vadde, Aarthi. "Cross Polination: Ecocriticism, Zoocriticism, Postcolonialism." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2011, pp. 565-573.

Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*

Historical Transformations Bereft of Social Transformation

Gabriel Jose Gonzalez, S.J.
Ateneo de Naga University

ABSTRACT

Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* is a multi-voiced novel revealing a counter-voice that is contrapuntal to the widely perceived bourgeois voice of Joaquin's stories and novels. Through a trope that conflates the personal and the social (or national) in the novel, the counter-voice cries out for real economic and personal freedoms but is muted by promises of freedoms repeated throughout the country's historical transformations that continue to remain unfulfilled. Highlighting the contrapuntal voice puts to question the prevalent interpretation of the novel as a text about personal and national identity. Without denying the author's own disavowal of the interpretation that the two navels represent the double colonization of the Philippines by Spain and the United States, this study nonetheless argues that Connie Vidal's claim to having two navels is indeed a manifestation against colonization and a cry for an authentic social revolution. Furthermore, as the novel ends and Connie Vidal finds in Paco Texeira a soulmate of her deepest desires for freedom, they leave their respective spouses to start a life together. Their elopement upends the bourgeois moral principles of the Monzon brothers who, while knowing how the rest of society would judge the couple, find themselves unable to condemn Connie and Paco. The unresolved moral dilemma that the Monzon brothers face at the conclusion of the novel gestures to an assertion that

authentic transformations that lead to real lived freedoms require changes even in the personal and social moral structure.

KEYWORDS

Post-colonial literature, Philippine literature, Nick Joaquin, *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*, contrapuntal reading and analysis, social and moral transformation

Like the Old Monzon's dream of an independent Philippines, the currency of Nick Joaquin's corpus refuses to fade. Sixty years after he started writing *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*, a collection of his short stories was published by Penguin Books in 2017. The publication by Penguin opens new possibilities of a wider world audience for his works while galvanizing a renewed interest among Filipino readers. Perhaps the interest in Joaquin remains because even Filipinos born in a century after he wrote still resonate with the critique of the historical and national experience contained in his writings. This, unfortunately, does not indicate a happy circumstance, for it means that despite the passing of so many political regimes and eras after national independence, Philippine society still finds itself quite unchanged.

This essay focuses on the novel *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* employing a critical strategy that borrows from Edward Said's contrapuntal reading. Contrapuntal reading was introduced by Said in C*ulture and Imperialism* (1993) which addresses the problematic of finding the periphery in the metropolitan text. He draws the idea of such a mode of reading from Western classical music which he describes as having "various themes [that] play off one another, with only a provisional privilege being given to any particular one; yet in the resulting polyphony there is concert and order, an organized interplay that derives from the themes, not from a rigorous melodic or formal principle outside the work" (51). Said asserts that canonical novels contain such a polyphony of histories informing metropolitan narratives. Just as other themes in a piece of music support, sustain, and privilege the main melody and become essential yet unprivileged parts of the whole, other histories support, sustain, and highlight the main narrative of canonical texts becoming essential though obscured histories informing the metropolitan narrative. Said especially focuses on how canonical texts conceal the histories of imperialism and the resistance to it, despite the fact that these histories to a great extent constitute what Said calls the "structure of attitude and reference" (62) which provides the ground of possibility as well as sets ideological trajectories in the production of the main narrative.

Said proposes a *contrapuntal* reading which means the re-reading of canonical texts with "a simultaneous awareness of the metropolitan history

that is narrated and those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts" (51). This entails a mode of reading that accounts for both the histories of imperialism and of the resistance to it (66). This, moreover, means extending our reading to, as Said puts it, "what was once forcibly excluded" (67). By re-reading canonical texts with a heightened sensitivity to subjected and/or obscured histories, "alternative and new narratives emerge" (51); that is, drastically new or highly nuanced meaning is obtained from the text.

Said explains that "[e]ach cultural work is a vision of the moment . . . ." (67). By "moment," Said refers to the historical moment of the production of the cultural work; and by "vision," he refers to the composite of attitudes and references from multifarious, sometimes contradictory, sometimes disconnected, and always unequal cultural, historical, and political forces, that make possible the production of the cultural artefact. The vision which is never coherent and self-consistent, manifests its incoherence, fragmentation, and self-contradiction in cultural artefacts. Cultural productions are, therefore, hybrid, mixed and impure. Said writes: "[w]orks of Literature, particularly those whose manifest subject is empire, have an inherently untidy, even unwieldy aspect in so fraught, so densely charged a political setting" (68).

Said anticipated the utilization of contrapuntal reading on texts from varying historical contexts when he gave the caveat that "one must connect the structures of a narrative to the ideas, concepts, and experiences from which it draws support" (67). However, the extent to which contrapuntal reading has been used since the publication of *Culture and Imperialism* must have gone beyond expectation. It has been deployed beyond the genre of the novel for texts coming from historical conditions utterly different from his original object of study, and even for non-literary subject matter. In the paper, "Contrapuntal Reading of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*: Theorizing the Raj through Narritivity," Jamil Asghar and Muhammad Iqbal Butt read the workings of the law of the jungle as a metaphor of functioning of the British colonial Raj in India, thereby supplying a corrective to a prevalent apolitical reading of the text. In "Justice and Biblical Interpretation Beyond Subjectivity and Self-Determination: A Contrapuntal Reading on

the Theme of Suffering in the Book of Job," Alissa Jones Nelson proffers a corrective to what she calls a "ghettoization of biblical interpretation" by proposing contrapuntal reading as a mode that can bridge the two general ghetto categories: the academic or idea-primary approach which drastically diminished the role of subjectivity and contextual concerns in the act of interpretation and the vernacular or experience-primary approach, which sees interpretation as a critical reflection of praxis. Nelson performs a contrapuntal reading on the Book of Job as an illustration of her point. Further in "Deconstructing Privilege: A Contrapuntal Approach," Jennifer Logue performs a contrapuntal reading of "privilege" in the American classroom to establish the necessity of going beyond the "recognition approach," which merely entails an acknowledgment of the granting of privilege of dominant subjects towards a "re-evaluation approach" that uncovers the dehumanization not only of the dominated subjects but that of the dominant subjects themselves.

This study employs Said's contrapuntal reading on Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels,"* adding to a growing scholarship that endeavors to appropriate Joaquin's oeuvre to speak relevantly to 21st century readers. In the midst of all this scholarship, this study is a modest project to swell the ground of textual evidence for the appropriative readings that are being done on Joaquin's works and to draw out from the text of *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* its critique of freedom in post-independence Philippines, which bears out the absence of promised social transformations despite political transformations since the formal independence of the Philippines. The methodology of a contrapuntal reading especially allows for these objectives to be obtained.

The contrapuntal reading performed in this study seriously takes Said's advice of vigilance in reading. Such vigilance is warranted and necessitated by the hybrid, impure, and complex character of the text (68). He calls for a reading that will "draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented" (66). It is because of the marginality of the presence or representation of contrapuntal voices that a vigilant reading is required.

In an essay titled simply as "Contrapuntal Reading or Analysis," Lindsay Ferriter expounds on the vigilance of reading, saying that, "[s]ince what isn't said may be as important as what is said, it is important to read with an understanding of small plot lines, or even phrases" (par.12). Ferriter further echoes the caveat given by Said when she writes that, "[i]f one does not read with the right background, **one may miss the weight behind the presence** of Antigua in *Mansfield Park,* Australia in *Great Expectations,* or India in *Vanity Fair"* (par.12; emphasis added). It is with this vigilance for details, particularly the marginal present counter voice, as well as the recognition of the weight of what is only marginal present that this study investigates Joaquin's novel.

In *The Woman Who Had Two Navels,* there is to be found in brief digressions from the main plot a contrapuntal voice manifesting itself in few and far between moments yet remarkably consistent. Because it is an intermittent voice, it is easily overlooked and hardly taken into account in most previous critical attempts. Without recognition of this contrapuntal voice, the dominant narrative of nascent nation-building, national development, and national identity following a US-inspired nationalism and model of development has remained the prevalent and acknowledged thematic of the novel. The most popular interpretation of the novel, therefore, and that which is most utilized in Philippine classrooms is to regard Connie Vidal, the woman who claims to have two navels, as a metaphor of the Philippine nation struggling with questions of identity arising from its double colonization by Spain and the US.

Before proceeding to a contrapuntal reading of the novel, it is helpful here—both for illustrating how the prevalent interpretation of the novel is naturalized and for the sake of highlighting a contrast to a contrapuntal reading—to recall the main narrative of the novel.

The story opens in Hong Kong with Connie Vidal declaring to Dr. Monzon that she has two navels. Connie is the daughter of Concha Vidal and Manolo Vidal. Concha, the mother, is the daughter of a revolutionary against Spain and has married a young revolutionary poet. With the American takeover of the country and the ensuing shift to English as the language of the

educated and political elite, the career of Concha's husband flails and he then dies. Widowed and dirt poor, Concha turns to Manolo Vidal, a co-revolutionary of both her father and her husband, but one who has managed to remain in the halls of political power despite the change of colonial regimes by adapting himself as a willing ward to the American project of benevolent assimilation. Manolo agrees to give assistance to Concha but not quite in the manner she first expects: Manolo offers her marriage. After some hesitation, Concha accepts and her marriage to Manolo Vidal catapults her to the ranks of the Philippine elite. Connie Vidal therefore grows up in the comfort known only to the same social elite.

At a rather young age, Connie is married off to Macho Escobar, a scion of the sugar elite of Negros. A year after their marriage, she discovers letters that reveal that her husband had actually been the recent lover of her mother. The world Connie knew and loved crumbles, putting into question all that she has believed about herself. This discovery sends her flying to Hong Kong with her absurd claim that she has two navels. In Hong Kong, she gets a group of Filipino and half-Filipino expatriates entangled in her domestic crisis. Two of them, the Monzon brothers, are sons of yet another revolutionary against Spain, the old Monzon who has chosen voluntary exile over collaboration with the American colonial government. Thus, the Monzon brothers are born and raised in exile. Belonging to the same group of expatriates is Paco Texeira, a son of a travelling Filipino musician and who is himself a musician. Unlike the Monzon brothers who are raised by their father with great dreams of an independent, free Philippines, Paco grows up never hearing anything about the Philippines from his father. However, as an adult, he goes to Manila to play in clubs and while doing so, gets romantically involved with both Concha Vidal and her daughter Connie. It slowly becomes evident that Connie has gone to Hong Kong for Paco, but Paco keeps himself scarce for he is after all married and has a family.

On the eve of the Chinese New Year, Connie goes to the house of the Monzons. It happens that the brothers are out and she comes upon the old Monzon, the self-exiled revolutionary himself who, on her previous visits, had remained confined to his room. In that brief encounter, Connie experi-

ences a reconciliation within herself as their two generations meet in person. This meeting with the old Monzon somehow gives Connie a different sense of who she is. She then decides to set up an apparent death to put an end quite literally to her previous identity by driving her car over a cliff and into the sea. The next morning, the car is recovered by the police and its occupant presumed and announced dead. Meanwhile, unknown to the public but known to that small group of Filipino expatriates, Connie finally manages to get to Paco. Connie and Paco make a decision to leave their spouses and to run off together to start a new life, free from both their pasts.

With such a story line, Joaquin's novel quite perfectly fits into the generalization made about Philippine novels that were written in the 50's and 60's. The *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures* offers an explanation:

> Critics such as Leonard Casper and Joseph Galdon commented on the novels' preoccupation with protagonists forever searching for their identity in the midst of a fragmented world. Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* (1961) focuses on the frantic quest by Connie, the protagonist, for some measure of stability and certainty in the world outside. Her inability to cope with the world is graphically represented in the image of her two navels. Connie is the product of the interweaving of legacies from the Spanish and American pasts. To be redeemed from her neurosis, she must undergo the pain of baptism by water, fire, earth, and air. (Reyes 1143)

This reading of the novel as a kind of allegory of a Filipino nation is the most popular interpretation used by English teachers in many Philippine schools. The interpretation undeniably has a strong drawing power for at least two reasons: First, it is indeed an interesting thought to have two navels as a representation of the consecutive colonizations of the Philippines. Second, it is quite likely that these teachers have not read the novel itself but a summary of it, a summary which in itself (like the one presented above) would have already been pre-disposed to this particular interpretation of the text.

A more vigilant reading of the novel can, however, allow a non-dominant voice emerge, a voice that is easily drowned out or overlooked in a cursory reading of the novel. It is a voice critical of the colonial project of the United States to civilize the Filipinos and take the Filipino people under

its tutelage for democratic self-governance. This non-dominant voice may not be easily heard. It is drowned out because it speaks intermittently in the novel; but it is noteworthy because it speaks on occasions that do not bring the main conflict of the novel—that is, the predicament of the main character, Connie Vidal, the woman who claims to have two navels—forward to a resolution. When it speaks, it is actually quite distinct and quite unequivocal. To establish the presence of this voice, it is necessary to get as close to the text as possible, hence a few rather extensive quotations follow.

A text passage that prompts a reader to "overhear" this voice is in Chapter Four titled "The Chinese Moon" where Connie Vidal describes the residence she grew up in:

> But there was only the rose garden and the driveway and the tall iron gates, where a khaki-clad guard stood with arms akimbo, pistol sticking out from the hip. Round this big house that was once in the country still clustered the orchards and gardens of an older day, with a high wall now to isolate them from the city. *Beyond the wall were tenements, with crosses splashed upon their doors, for this was in the hungry 1930s, when terror walked the streets at night in the form of three hags*. (213-214; emphasis added)

In the chapter's context, the third sentence in the quotation ought to be deemed non-essential in the sense of seeming like a mere visual embellishment of the element of setting rather than a substantial fleshing out of the structure of the main narration of the chapter. However, this apparently casual reference to the tenements beyond the wall turns on a switch that lights up textual links, connecting itself with other passages, both earlier and later in the novel. Upon closer scrutiny, we find in these passages that slowly and subtly link with each other a cogent critique being formed.

In this text passage, set in the economic and political center of the country, Manila, the development of the city is collocated with underdevelopment: development is remarked upon at the very moment that it takes note of the proliferation of tenements, conjuring up images that evoke a heightened sense of fear and menace among both the tenement and mansion dwellers. In this way, the narration seems to step back to distance itself from the narrative itself, provoking a critical stance toward the subject of narra-

tion; in doing so, it problematizes the kind of development that American tutelage had promised to bring into being with the violence of colonization.

Taking notice of the obscured, critical voice, a close reader of the novel realizes that the voice has, in fact, been "speaking" all along in passages scattered throughout the novel. One such passage is in Chapter 2, titled "Macho" after the name of Connie Vidal's husband. This chapter describes Macho as typifying the men of the Southern (in particular, the Negros) elite:

> After boarding-school Macho returned to his father's hacienda for a year's vacation, during which he was to decide what he wanted to do. Father and son became fast friends; they hunted, drank, and whored together, and lived alone with a flock of servants in the huge, ugly, rickety house that had been built in the 1860's . . . (110-111)

And while the chapter is supposed to focus mainly on Macho, it almost unnoticeably digresses to a description of the larger society of the South:

> After his father's death Macho returned no more to the city, abandoned his studies altogether. He took up where his father had left off; and in the grass-shack villages the peasants felt again as generations before them had felt: that the old master had not died: that their masters indeed never died they merely grew old and then grew young again, but were always inescapably there—khaki-shirted and red-booted; whip in hand, pistol in belt; hunting, drinking, and whoring; and living forever in the big house that had been falling forever in an eternity of rot and rocking chairs. (114)

Yet again, the series of images drawn from the everyday lives of the peasants and their masters may not seem all that relevant to the subject of the chapter. But it is through these images that the novel manages to expose the unchanging history of Negros. In particular, it is in the montage of images as the rhetorical strategy from which the voice emerges in this passage that the sense of social stagnation throughout history is captured so artfully and subtly that it does not even seem purposeful. And yet, through such a casual description, the novel summarizes more than a century of history and makes the reader feel the social stagnation in the midst of major historical changes

from Spanish colonization, to the 1898 revolution, to American colonization, and to the US-granted independence of 1945.

Another passage speaking in the same contrapuntal voice is found even earlier on in Chapter 1. The chapter is entitled "Paco" after the Hong Kong-born half-Filipino with whom Connie will elope at the end of the novel. The same critical voice quietly inserts itself in the description of the real lives of the Manileños. In this passage, the non-dominant voice emanates from the general description in which the mimicry of "The American Dream" is presented as a refraction not a reflection, an embodiment of a nightmare of "garish imitation" and the "unreal." The passage describes Paco's observations of Manila, which he perceives as being composed of two contradictory worlds between which Manileños crossed over, to and fro, without any sense of contradiction:

> Paco sensed an unreality in both worlds: the people who occupied them did not seem to be living there at all. They denied the locale – but their denial was not the asceticism of the mystic nor the vision of the reformer, but merely the aversion of the opium eater. They stepped over reality as they stepped across their gutters—with the transient frown of the tourist, the neutral disgust of the foreigner. Their drugged eyes denied the garish imitation mansions no less than the patched-up tenements where four or five families lived huddled together in each room and did their cooking, eating, and washing in the foul passages; where there were no lavatories and people used the unspeakable roofless public outhouses – or any corner of the sidewalk. They denied the heat and the dust and the rats as well as the not quite authentic glitter of the downtown smart shops and the swanky clubs—for in the world of their mind, they moved with cool expertness, rich and poor, among marbled halls and ivory baths and luxurious wardrobes; through streets that were all Park Avenues, where the men were all Pierpont Morgans, and all the women unaging, unfading movie queens. One might have to eat cold rice and squat on a pail in the outhouse and sleep on a bug-ridden floor: one sighed and pressed a scented handkerchief to one's nose and invoked the vicarious magic of one's wrist-watch (just what all the Wall Street tycoons are wearing now) or of one's evening dress (just what all the New York hostesses are wearing now) against the cold rice, the rank pail, the buggy floor . . . . One smiled and floated away, insulated from all the drab horror of inadequate reality by the ultra-perfect colossal, stupendous, technicolored magnificence of the Great American Dream. (47-48)

Through these descriptions, the voice exposes the sheer mimicry of the Great American Dream by the Manileños. It exposes the failure of the American project to educate the Filipino toward a U.S. model of development that was supposed to bring about economic and political freedoms. The superficial imitation of American culture and even of American government institutions gestures to the fact that despite historical, i.e., political transformations, there has actually been no social transformation. No political or economic freedoms have actually been obtained. Thus, to rephrase Joaquin's words describing the social stagnation in Negros, we might say: *The peasants and the urban poor still feel as the generations of them have felt, that their masters never died; they merely have begun to speak English rather than Spanish and to mimic the American democratic structure of government, but they are inescapably still where they have been all along.*

The contrapuntal voice in *The Woman Who Had Two Navels,* while dispersed and obscured as mere embellishments of setting, asserts itself consistently enough as to create a cumulative and distinct critique of the material relations and relations of power created by the long-standing and enduring tutelage of US-prescribed national developmental model. The contrapuntal is the voice of the subaltern who have remained where they are since the Spanish colonization through the American colonization past the formal independence of 1946 and into the various political eras of post-independence Philippines.

Being so recognized despite its quiet, marginal presence, this contrapuntal voice demands to be accounted for in understanding the novel's focal character, Connie Vidal. Within the frame of the contrapuntal voice, the figure of Connie Vidal represents more than just a search for identity and a desire for stability and certainty (as the *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures* tries to summarize her character's significance). Rather, Connie Vidal becomes a figure of resistance who may indeed consequently require a redefinition of identity; she is a figure who is willing to forego stability and certainty as a cost of the resistance.

Within the frame of the contrapuntal voice, a revaluation of the character of Connie Vidal is in order. The first point to be made is that what is very commonly discussed as a mystery about her is not a mystery at all. It is not quite the mystery of the novel whether Connie really has two navels or not. She does not. It is not true she has two navels in the same way and with equal certainty that she has not just gotten married that morning of the day she walks into the office of Dr. Monzon and tells him these two untruths. The mystery, rather, is why she makes these claims. It is this mystery that, in fact, unfolds as the novel progresses.

To understand these rather hysterical claims, we take a cue from Juliana Chang's analysis of the female characters in *Dogeaters* by Jessica Hagedorn. In her article, "Masquerade, Hysteria, and Neocolonial Femininity in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*," (2003) Chang shows how masquerade and hysteria are symptoms of global capital and neocolonial relations. She explains that the family romance in the European and American bourgeois family to which masquerade and hysteria have been feminine responses has been cathected at the level of nation-states and then extended to the colony. In the Philippine experience of US colonization, the policy of benevolent assimilation posited the Philippines as having been orphaned by Spain and adopted by the US as a country of little brown brothers. Chang writes, "Colonialism was thus represented as a homosocial, paternal-fraternal relationship in which the United States would provide tutelage and protection . . ." (639). Furthermore, the enduring economic and military dependence of the Philippines on the United States even after formal independence in 1946 continues to figure the Philippines as a younger brother of the United States, thus extending the colonial family romance to a neocolonial family romance. Feminine masquerade and hysteria are recognizable responses to the multiple hegemonies produced by the neocolonial order (639).

As responses to the neocolonial order, masquerade and hysteria are both ambivalent. They are ambivalent because each one simultaneously legitimizes and challenges the status quo. Chang describes masquerade as "a performance of femininity that masks feminine claims to power and covers over other contradictions of patriarchy" (638). It is a performance of

a patriarchally- sanctioned femininity, a fulfillment of patriarchal design that collaborates in concealing the contradictions of patriarchy but also comes with a covert claim to power. In *The Woman Who Had Two Navels,* such femininity is exemplified by Concha Vidal, the mother of Connie. Concha fulfills her role as the beautiful, elegant wife of the rising political star Manolo Vidal. Her social stature, drawn from and contributing to her husband's, is exemplified by the name by which she is known in the country's higher social circles: *La Vidal* (or "The Vidal"). The use of the definitive article "the" places her in a social position that is a cut above the rest. Dutifully, she fulfills the social expectations that come from her being the wife of a wealthy, powerful personage like Manolo Vidal. Dutifully, she denies the corruption imputed to her husband. However, her covert claim to power manifests itself in using her position to pursue extramarital relations with Macho Escobar and then later with Paco Texeira. She even uses her authority as mother to marry off her daughter to her lover, both to cover up their past relationship and to keep him legitimately proximate to herself. In Concha, the feminine masquerade accomplishes a simultaneous subversion and connivance with the patriarchal order buttressed by the neocolonial order.

The feminine hysteria, on the other hand, is a performance of femininity that maintains characteristics which are acceptable to patriarchal norms but carries these modes of femininity to extreme or excess. Chang explains, "The hysteric mimics the object of the other's desire, but to excess. Thus, the doubleness of the hysteric is that she apparently accepts her gender position while radically questioning it" (642). In Joaquin's novel, this is exemplified by Connie Vidal, with her excessive claim to having two navels. The navel, a physiological reminder of one's subjectivity and subjection as child to one's parents, also conveys the relations of dependence between the child and its parents. For Connie, the preoccupation with the navel and the excessive claim of having two are acts of resistance. These acts acknowledge the hegemony of her mother and father over her as their daughter, but these are carried to an excess so as to draw attention and to divulge the contradictions that her mother's masquerade has sought to conceal. Unlike Concha's masquerade where the continuation of the covert subversion relies on the

persistence of the status quo, Connie's hysteria seeks to divulge the contradictions of the hegemonic order and to dismantle it.

The subversive femininity of Connie Vidal finds resonance in the contrapuntal voice of excess passages of the novel. The character of Connie Vidal and the contrapuntal voice join in chorus divulging the lies in the patriarchal family order and the mimicry in the neocolonial social order. They create a metaphorical conflation of the personal life of the main character and the life of the nation. Connie does indeed emerge as a metaphor of the Filipino nation, but not so much to attest to a dual familial bond between the nation and its two successive colonizers, but rather to attest to the subjection by the patriarchal/neocolonial order. The hysterical claim of having two navels is an exaggeration, a surrender to her subjection taken to a degree of excess so as to transform the surrender to an act of resistance.

In Chapter 4 of the novel, Connie Vidal goes through a series of three fantasies or dreams in each of which she has a final conversation with her husband Macho, with her mother Concha, and with her father Manolo. Each fantasy places her and the person she is with in a situation of imminent death, which in fact ends each fantasy. In the first, she and Macho are swallowed up by the earth following a train wreck. In the second, she and her mother drown in water as the ship they are on sinks. And in the third, she and her father die in the air as the plane they are on crashes. In her conversations with each leading up to their deaths, the other tries to move Connie towards reconciliation, but in each case Connie expresses the impossibility of restoring the ties that have been broken. She severs their relationship even before the moment of death. The Chapter then ends with her car flying over a cliff into Hong Kong Bay. It is, however, an apparent death; but it is also a ritual death. Connie puts an end to her life as Connie Vidal. The next day she finds Paco and they elope, leaving their families behind. With Paco, Connie assumes a new identity and a new life, a life without the privileges of her previous life; therefore unwealthy and powerless, a life in the anonymity of the liminal recesses of society therefore unrecognized and unimportant. But with all the deprivations of her new identity, there is a sense of freedom.

The choice of Paco Texeira as partner in her new life is worthy of note. Paco the half-Filipino, whose Filipino musician father never told him about the Philippines and therefore never imparted the slightest sense of patriotism or nationalism, and whose other half of ancestry is not even revealed by the text, is a figure of nationless-ness. With Paco, Connie enters the nationless liminal spaces of a world organized by nations that are inescapably ordered by neocolonial relations.

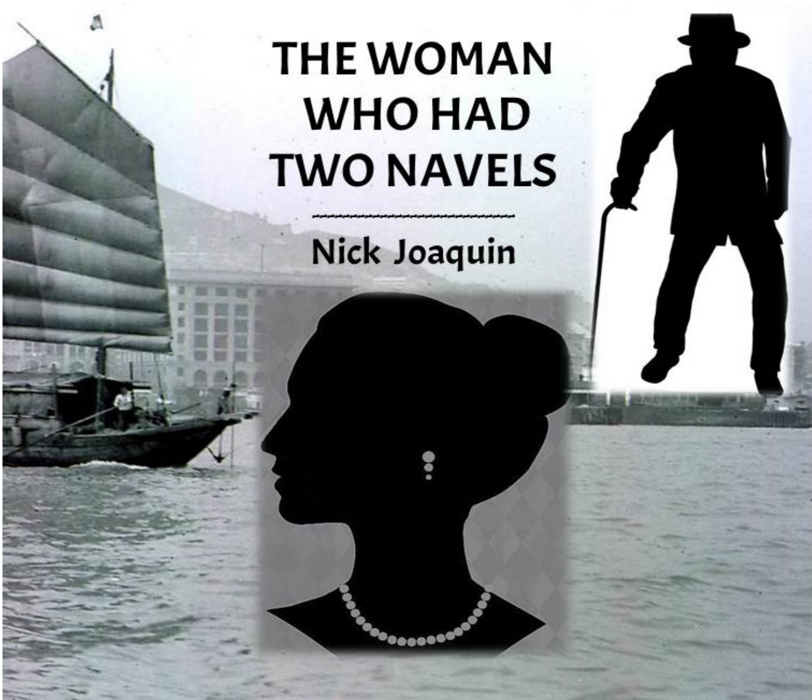

Fig. 1 "Two generations that had lost each other here met in exile." (*The Woman Who Had Two Navels*, 303). Image of this quoted passage as imagined by the author.

Connie, then, is a figure of resistance, divulging the contradictions of the neocolonial order, acting in unison with the contrapuntal voice of the novel to expose the neocolonial family romance that the Philippine nation-state has maintained with the US, a romance that perpetuates the former's dependency on the latter, that idealizes the development pattern of the US, and that maintains its subjection to global capital and its conniving hegemonies. Herein lies the significance of the encounter between Connie and the old Monzon in the final chapter. The old Monzon who continued to live in the 1898 moment, that moment when freedom from the colonial family romance with Spain had been at last gained at the cost of many lives, is, to Connie, the father that she has been looking for. In her encounter with the old Monzon, Connie finds what she has been searching for. The encounter allows her to recognize the revolutionary turn that her personal life needs to take and she realizes that, just as the revolution had been successful at the cost of lives, the revolution she needs to undertake will also cost her own life, at the very least the life she has always known it to be. Only such a radical move can break her free from the family romance that she has been dutifully living out, and only such a move will allow her to regain her agency and power of self-determination. In her new life, inaugurated simultaneously with the Chinese New Year, her first act of recuperated agency is to find Paco and run off with him, despite the great uncertainty of their future together.

As the novel comes to its end, the Monzon brothers who have come to know the story of Connie in its various dimensions, through the confessions of Connie, La Vidal, Manolo, and even their friend Paco, are caught in a moral dilemma of how to judge and what to think of what Connie and Paco have done. Rita is quite adamant about condemning her for running off with Paco, a married man, but the Monzon brothers find themselves not quite able to either condemn or condone her. Tony Monzon says:

> "Well, what did we think was the right thing for her to do: go back to Macho? However repentant he may be, he would always mean for her the world that almost destroyed her – the lies, the evil, the corruption—a world from which they couldn't have kept running away, in which sooner or

> later they would have found themselves lost again. That was the world we wanted her to go back to—but that world was death, and the choice before her last night was between life and death. She chose life and, having chosen, was inevitably drawn to Paco, to our Mary's Paco, because she wants to be like Mary, ordinary and decent and good. Don't you see, Rita? If she had done what we say is the right thing, she would have been lost, she would have ended up a cynical and depraved woman. To save herself, she had to do wrong." (317)

These words, notably uttered by a priest, acknowledges that it would not have been right to send her back to her husband, as Catholic religious precepts would surely and unequivocally require.

Fr. Tony continues:

> "Oh I know it sounds outrageous—but, ultimately, this is not a question of right or wrong but of charity. We can play it safe, we can stick to our rules and say that everything is either black or white and that this girl is nothing but a bitch. Or we can be reckless, we can tear up our maps and say that charity is a terra incognita in which there are no hard and fast rules." (317-318)

Through this dialogue, Tony Monzon as well as his brother Pepe acknowledges the inadequacy of Christian moral discourse, yet another hegemonic and prevalent reference of post-independence Philippines, in providing practical guidance on how Connie might have obtained life, for in fact adherence to the prevailing Christian moral discourse would have meant a living death for Connie.

However, Fr. Tony Monzon points to a more marginal reference within the Christian discourse, namely "charity." He says that charity is, however, a *terra incognita*, meaning that charity is a rather vague, perhaps ambiguous, notion the moral and ethical demands of which need yet to be discovered and articulated. The authentic transformation in Connie's life could be achieved only by abandoning a previously established ethical structure and venturing out to a yet unexplored, unarticulated moral field. Through this critique of the dominant moral structure, the novel then gestures to the necessity of a similar revolutionary act if an authentic social transformation in post-inde-

pendence Philippines is to be obtained. If the true freedoms that the people desire is to be obtained so that historical transformations will indeed signify real social transformations, there needs to be the readiness to abandon previously set moral structures and to venture into a *terra incognita,* even if such an initiative may seem outrageous or reckless at the outset. The contrapuntal voice of the text, therefore, not only uncovers the historical transformations as being bereft of authentic social transformation but it also points to the necessity for a restructuring of the state's dominant moral and ethical principles.

Like many other post-colonial texts, Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* does not end with a comfortable, heartwarming, back-to-equilibrium ending; rather, it ends at an open road, an uncharted and yet-untraveled road, a *terra incognita.* This open-endedness becomes doubly true and more understandable given a contrapuntal reading of the text. The contrapuntal reading allows a critical voice often overlooked or even ignored to finally be heard. The voice challenges the complacent presumption that historical transformations, that is, the changes in regimes of political power, automatically or necessarily result in authentic social transformations. Furthermore, apart from interrogating the dominant discourse of national independence and development, it uncovers the inadequacy of the dominant ethical structure to provide reference for effective actions that would lead to real and lived social transformations. While depriving the reader a comfortable and definitive closure, however, there is still consolation in knowing that we have at least recognized with certainty that the road we had been on was the wrong road and that the moment to enter *terra incognita* has arrived. The sense of closure comes from the understanding and resolution that a definitive and final severance with romance of the past must now be made.

NOTES

1. Nick Joaquin started to write *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* while on a Harper Publishing Fellowship in 1957. The Penguin edition appears on his birth centenary which is also thirteen years after his death in 2004. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels* was initially a short story that Joaquin later developed into a full-length novel. It is the short story version that appears in the Penguin edition.
2. In *Culture and Imperialism,* Said writes in particular about British novels which he believes are unequalled in the regularity and frequency of their allusions to empire. He acknowledges the references to empire in the novels of other nationalities like those of the French and the Americans, but he observes that the British novels have a significantly higher frequency of such references. As such, the British novel serves well as subject matter for proposing the contrapuntal mode of reading, without excluding the possibility of its later utilization on other texts.
3. Said gives the example of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* which needs to be read in the context of *Africanism* as well as Conrad's personal experiences. He writes: "Conrad's impressions of Africa were inevitably influenced by lore and writing about Africa, which he alludes to in *A Personal Record;* what he supplies in *Heart of Darkness* is the result of his impressions of those texts interacting creatively, together with the requirements and conventions of narrative and his own special genius and history" (67).
4. Among more recent studies on the novel are Marie Rose Arong's "Temporality in Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who had Two Navels"* that also argues that the novel should be read as a resistance to U.S. neocolonialism and as a critique of nativism; and, Miguel Antonio Lizada's "When She Started Acting Queer: A Queer Gothic Reading of Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels"* which explores the gothic tropes of doubling and monstrosity in the novel's main character Connie Vidal.

WORKS CITED

Arong, Marie Rose. "Temporality in Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who had Two Navels." Kritika Kultura,* vol. 30, 2018, pp. 438-454. Ateneo de Manila University, http://dx.doi.org/10.13185/2827.

Asghar, Jamil, and Muhammad Iqbal Butt. "Contrapuntal Reading of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*: Theorizing the Raj through Narritivity." *NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry*, vol. 15, issue 1, June 2017, pp. 144-160.

Chang, Juliana. "Masquerade, Hysteria, and Neocolonial Femininity in Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters." Contemporary Literature,* vol. 44, no. 4, Winter, 2003, pp. 637-663. *JSTOR*, doi: 10.2307/3250589.

Ferriter, Lindsay. "Contrapuntal Reading or Analysis". *Hamilton,* http://academics.hamilton.edu/english/ggane/contrapuntal.html Accessed 23 Feb. 2018.

Joaquin, Nick. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels*. Bookmark Inc., 1991.

---. *The Woman Who Had Two Navels and Tales of the Tropical Gothic*. Penguin, 2017.

Lizada, Miguel Antonio. "When She Started Acting Queer: A Queer Gothic Reading of Nick Joaquin's *The Woman Who Had Two Navels." Kritika Kultura,* vol. 30, 2018, pp. 438-454. Ateneo de Manila University, http://dx.doi.org/10.13185/2826.

Logue, Jennifer. "Deconstructing Privilege: A Contrapuntal Approach." *Philosophy of Education*, 2005, pp. 371-379, ojs.education.illinois.edu/index.php/pes/article/view/1649.

Nelson, Alissa Jones. "Justice and Biblical Interpretation Beyond Subjectivity and Self-Determination: A Contrapuntal Reading on the Theme of Suffering in the Book of Job." *Political Theology,* vol. 11, no. 3, 2010, pp. 431-452.

Reyes, Soledad. "Novel (Philippines)." *Encyclopedia of Post-Colonial Literatures in English.* Edited by Eugene Benson and L.W. Conolly, Second edition. Routledge, 2005, pp. 1142-1144.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism.* First Vintage Books Edition, 1994.

About the Authors

GABRIEL JOSE GONZALEZ, S.J. is assistant professor at Ateneo de Naga University and has taught in the graduate schools of Ateneo de Manila and Ateneo de Davao. He was Academic Vice President at Ateneo de Davao University from 2012 to 2016 and currently serves in the Boards of Trustees of Ateneo de Manila, Ateneo de Naga, and Xavier-Ateneo in Cagayan de Oro. He earned his MA degree in English from Ateneo de Manila University in 1994 and his PhD in English from Fordham University in 2012. His MA thesis was about Nick Joaquin's corpus entitled "Fictioning National Identity: Decolonizing the Filipino Self Image in Nick Joaquin." His dissertation "The Imaginations of Nation in Philippine Novels" explored the construction of the notion of nation in Philippine novels from various historical eras. His interests remain to be in Post-Colonial Studies and narratology, exploring how narratological concepts may be utilized for post-colonial analysis of texts.

ALEX TAEK-GWANG LEE is Professor of British and American Cultural Studies at Kyung Hee University (South Korea). He has written extensively on French and German philosophy and its non-Western reception, Korean cinema, popular

culture, art and politics. He has lectured and published widely in South Korea and beyond. In a quest to discuss today's continued importance of communist principles with contributions from intellectuals across the world and particularly Asia, he co-edited the book The Idea of Communism 3 with Slavoj Žižek (2016).

MITSUYA MORI is Professor Emeritus at Seijo University, Tokyo. He was the President of the Japanese Society for Theatre Research from 1996 to 2006. Mitsuya Mori's research works are categorized mainly into three fields: aesthetics of theatre, Ibsen and Scandinavian drama, and comparative theatre history focused on the modernizing process of theatre in Japan. His published books include *Scandinavian Theatre* (1981), *Ibsen's Realism* (1984), *Comparative Theatre of the East and the West* (ed. 1994), *Ibsen's fin de siècle* (1995), *The Poetics of Theatre, Structural Analysis of Theatre Performance* (2007), and *Changing Aspects of Theatre Studies* (ed. 2007). Mitsuya Mori has translated a number of Ibsen's and Strindberg's plays, and directed some of them with professional theatre companies. His production of *Double Nora*, a modern noh play based on *A Doll's House*, was invited to the International Ibsen Festival in Oslo in 2006.

E. SAN JUAN, JR. earned his MA and PhD degrees from Harvard University after graduating from the University of the Philippines, summa cum laude. He is a highly respected academic, scholar and creative writer who has taught at various

universities in the US, Europe and Asia. He has won awards, received grants and fellowships nationally and internationally for his critical and scholarly works as well as his creative writing. He is a retired Professor of English, Comparative Literature and Ethnic Studies from the University of Connecticut at Storrs, and was Chair of the Department of Comparative American Cultures at Washington State University, US. He was recently a professorial lecturer in cultural studies at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and visiting professor of English & Comparative Literature in the University of the Philippines, Diliman (Spring 2018). His recent books are *Learning from the Filipino Diaspora* (UST Publishing House), *Between Empire and Insurgency* (U.P. Press), *Lupang Hinirang, Lupang Tinubuan & Filipinas Everywhere* (De La Salle Publishing House), *Critical Interventions* (Lambert); and *Carlos Bulosan: A Critical Appraisal* (Peter Lang). His recent collection of poems in Filipino are *Ulikba, Kundiman sa Gitna ng Karimlan, Ambil, Wala,* and *Bakas/Alingawngaw.*

VINCENZ SERRANO (vserrano@ateneo.edu) works at the Department of English in Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines) where he teaches literature and creative writing; in addition, he is Associate Chairperson for Literature and Editor-in-Chief of *Kritika Kultura.* In 2011, he finished his PhD in Creative Writing and English & American Studies at the University of Manchester (UK). In 2009, he won first prize for poetry in the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature

for *The Collapse of What Separates Us*, which was published in 2010. His article on Nick Joaquin's *Almanac for Manileños* won the Loyola Schools Outstanding Scholarly Work Award (Ateneo de Manila University) in 2013. His poems have appeared in *High Chair*, *An Anthology of English Writing from Southeast Asia*, *New Poetries V*, and *The Manchester Review*. *When a map is folded cities come closer, when clothes are unpacked cities fall apart*, his latest poetry chapbook, was published in 2016.

FRANCIS C. SOLLANO is an instructor in the English Department, Ateneo de Manila University where he also finished his MA Literary and Cultural Studies. In 2015, he received the Best Graduate Thesis Award from the School of Humanities, Ateneo. His research interests include Filipino American Studies, Philippine literature in English, literature and the law, and the Philippine postcolonial experience. He is also the head copyeditor of *Kritika Kultura*, an online journal of language, literary, and cultural studies.

LILY ROSE TOPE is professor and current department head at the Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of the Philippines. She has a PhD from the National University of Singapore. She is the author of *(Un)Framing Southeast Asia: Nationalism and the Postcolonial Text in English in Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines* (1998) as well as several articles on Southeast Asian literature in English, Philippine

Chinese literature in English, and ethnicity in Southeast Asian literature. She is co-editor of the Anthology of English Writing from Southeast Asia.