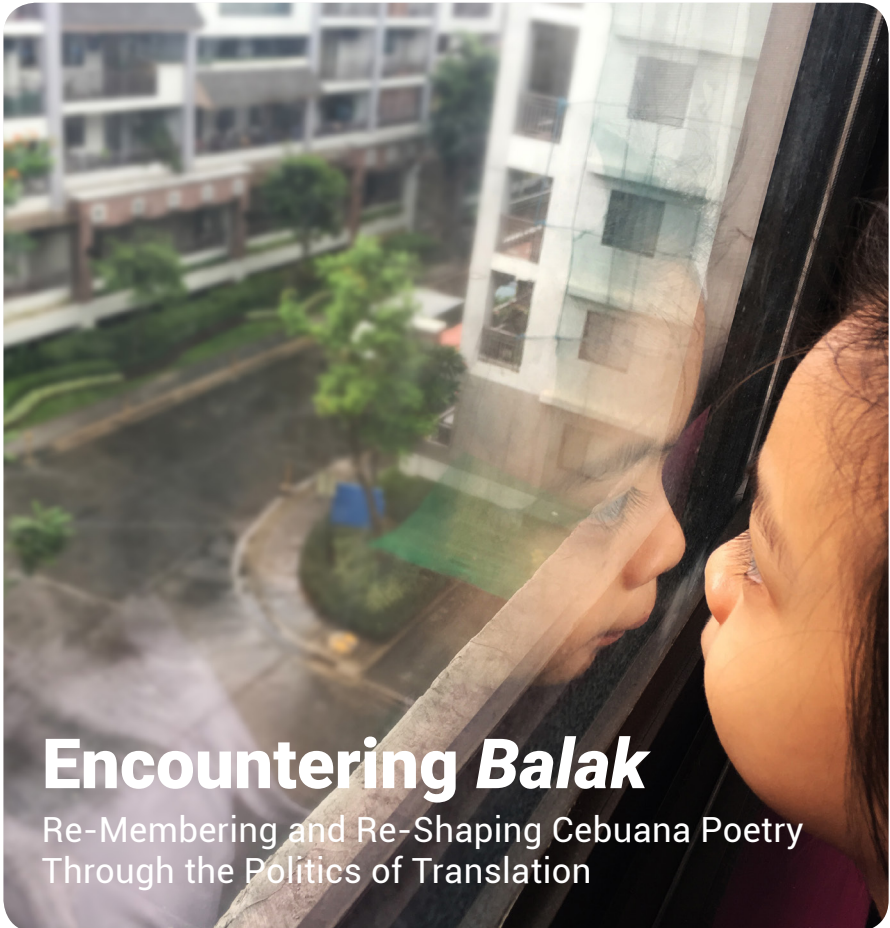


UNITAS

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



Encountering *Balak*

Re-Membering and Re-Shaping Cebuana Poetry
Through the Politics of Translation

JUSTINE U. CAMACHO

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*Encountering Balak:
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Through the Politics of Translation*

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Abstract

To date, there is no systematic inventory of Cebuano literary forms or native aesthetics, unlike that of Tagalog which has been rigorously studied. Cebuano is a marginalized Filipino native language and its poetry has been equally unstudied and obscure. Among the upper class and educated, English is the preferred medium over Cebuano even among Visayans. This is what this study sets out to do: to study and analyze the political power of translation in the English and Cebuano languages, providing both poets and translators creative power in adding to the body of work in Cebuano.

The activity of translation and its politics have made translators invisible, attributing all credit to the author. It has been regarded as a rote activity to get the message across. Today, translation stands alongside creative writing in its ability to produce a sibling for the source text by virtue of a different cultural perspective.

In its effort to define translation as political action, the study worked on the theoretical framework of translation as dialogic, empowering the translator and giving her the tool of dialogue to take hold of language not to destroy or tear down but to build her own cultural identity. This study also explored the “ideology of the Cebuana” through an analysis of her translated work in a postcolonial context. The study analyzed the work of three Cebuana writers: Erlinda K. Albuero, Ester Tapia, and Marjorie Evasco.

All the writers analyzed in this study were able to practice translation in the framework of the dialogic. The study also validated the political aspect of translation through the analysis of the translated works of each writer in the postcolonial context as each of the writers created new versions of the original poems, reflecting their unique experiences and ideologies.

With this, the study of translation continues to be a compelling area of study. There is a need for more scholarly study on translation, particularly that done on native languages of the Philippines.

Keywords

Translation, memory, orality, otherness, heteroglossia, dialogic translation, the split self, postcolonial context

Introduction

Many Filipino poets choose to write in English. It is considered a medium of intellectual expression, a language with, supposedly, a universal audience and a language that is taught in all levels of education in the Philippines. One could call it a continuing colonial influence since the postwar era. As a result of this influence, native languages have been considered secondary and, in terms of intellectual and literary expression, inferior. Erlinda Albujo describes this phenomenon in her article: "Because of the rise in prestige of English and later Tagalog, postwar Cebuano literature was relegated to third class although Cebuano was still the language of home and street" ("Cebuano Literature in the Philippines"). Resil Mojares bewails the state of the Cebuano language in the preface to *Cebuano Poetry/Sugbuanong Balak: 1940-1988*: "Even more basic is the problem of Cebuano itself as a language: neglected, ill-used for serious expression (in modern forms of intellectual discourse), inadequately preserved, studied, and propagated. Even now, the language is not formally studied in Philippine universities" (6).

However, Filipino poets and writers who have used English as their primary medium for writing are beginning to realize the need to write in

their native language. Particularly for Cebuano poets, although Cebuano poetry exists, native influences and the history of indigenous literature, both oral and written, have not been studied formally. To these poets' dismay, apart from Encarnacion Gonzaga's *Bisayan Literature from Pre-Spanish Times* (U.P., 1917), Adela del Rosario's *Cebuano Literature from Pre-Spanish Times to 1922* (U.P., 1922), and Alburo's and Mojares' *Cebuano Poetry/ Sugbuanong Balak: 1940-1988* robust reviews of written literature in their native language have been few and far between. To date, there is no systematic inventory of its literary forms or of its native aesthetics, unlike Tagalog which has been rigorously studied by Bienvenido Lumbera in *Tagalog Poetry: 1570-1898*. Cebuano is a marginalized native language and its poetry has been equally unstudied and obscure. Among educated Visayans, English is the preferred medium over Cebuano.

These Cebuano poets and writers have, however, a rich body of works in English. The problem of identity surfaces as these writers struggle with the question of language.

There is a pressing need to address this problem but it is not as simple as doing a review of all written Cebuano poetry and a scholarly anthology. The problem goes deeper than this solution promises. With the exception of a few titles like *Saloma*, the *Bisaya*, and the *Babaye*, Cebuano has been undermined as a medium of intellectual and poetic expression because of a long history of colonization. It stands alongside all other native languages as marginalized. A poet will not find it easy to return to Cebuano. The way has been blocked by centuries of having learned a preferred foreign language—first Spanish, then English.

A Brief Review of Cebuano Literature

Cebuano literature pertains to the body of oral and written literature of speakers of Cebuano, the mother language of one-fourth the Philippine population who reside in Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor, Negros Oriental, and parts of Leyte and Mindanao, like Cagayan de Oro.

Cebuanos have an abundant oral tradition, including legends that are linked to specific local areas like Maria Cacao from Southern Cebu and those referring to Lapu-Lapu and his father, Datu Manggal of Mactan. There are also the folktales like "*Haring Gangis ug Haring Leon*" which cautions against

the abusive behavior of a dominant group. Many of these tales teach lessons, but there are also those that advocate the value of humor and keeping one's wit and ingenuity like the Juan Pusong tales.

Erlinda Albuero mentions in her essay "Cebuano Literature in the Philippines" that among the early poetic forms are *garay* (verses), *harito* (shaman's prayers), *tigmo* (riddles) and *panultihon* (proverbs), as accounted by Jesuit Francisco Alzina (1668). The generic form for poetry is *balak* characterized by the presence of enigma or metaphor called *balaybay* or *samingay*. Most of the poems are occupational songs and lullabies. The *balitaw* is an extemporaneous poetic debate between males and females and is sung and danced simultaneously. Spontaneous versifying is also highly valued, as in the dramatic form called *kulilising hari* (a variant of the Tagalog *duplo*) that is usually performed during funeral wakes (Albuero, "Cebuano Literature in the Philippines").

According to Resil Mojares, *balak* remains the term currently used for poetry in Cebuano, though, more specifically it pertains to the formal use of poetry. *Garay* is used to describe informal poetry. Based on the etymology of the word, *balak* refers to intention or design (Mojares xiv).

Written literature only became significant in the late nineteenth century. Tomas de San Geronimo's "*Soneto sa Pagdayeg can Santa Maria Gihapon Virgen*" (1751) is one of the many compositions at the time that show the loss of the enigma or metaphor of precolonial poetry. Spanish influence gave birth to new forms of literature like *pasyon*, *corridos* (secular narratives), and *linambay* (plays which are also called *moromoro* because of their anti-Muslim theme).

With the spread of publications like *Bag-ong Kusog*, *Nasud*, and *Babaye*, more poets emerged, producing more than 12,000 poems before the war. Metrical precision and balanced structure as found in traditional Cebuano poetry became the criteria for the poetry at the time. Vicente Ranudo's "*Hikalimtan?*" and "*Pagusara*" are examples of such poetry.

Another group of poets, veering away from the love and folksy pieces, advocated occasional and non-sentimental works. Notably, Aglipayan bishop Fernando Buysler was at the center of the group and was the one who invented the sonnet form called *sonanoy*. Diosdado Alesna also created the *siniloy* which is made up of two amphibrach lines.

Today, a big influence on literary growth in the South comes from writers' groups, notably the Lubas sa Dagang Bisaya (LUDABI) and Bathalan-ong Halad sa Dagang (BATHALAD), an offshoot of the former group. By sponsoring regular workshops and contests and publishing their output and entries, these groups have encouraged generations of writers to continue publishing their work. Among these writers, there are several who are now writing in their mother tongue: Rene Amper, Simeon Dumdum, Jr., Vicente Bandillo, Melito Baclay, and Ester Tapia. A notable addition to these groups is the Women in Literary Arts group (WILA), founded in 1991 by seven women writers and which currently has twenty-five writers, half of whom write mainly in Cebuano like Ester Tapia, Ruby Enario, Leticia Suarez, Linda Alburo, Jocelyn Pinzon, Cora Almerino, Delora Sales, and Marvi Gil. Most, if not all, of these groups are composed of writers who have attended the annual Cornelio Faigao Memorial Writers' Workshop conducted since 1984 by the Cebuano Studies Center of the University of San Carlos.

One will see the consistent duality of Cebuano literature in its history. Native language poetry has always vied with a colonial language since the beginning of Philippine-written history, most of the time overlooked in favor of the dominant language of universities at the time. It is only recently that Cebuano writers in English are focusing on their native language as the medium of their poetry.

Translation and Native Language

On the following page is an example of my original poem and my translation of this poem into English—my own personal and initial attempts at beginning to understand the difficulties of a language learned from *yayas*, a language spoken in the market, a language repressed in private schools (i.e., students being penalized for even speaking it). Despite the fact that Cebuano is the first language of a quarter of the Philippine population,

a Cebuano poet, whether writing in English or in her native language, today does not come upon a language that is already there, ready to use; she has to recreate it not only out of the rawness of daily speech but summon out of language that which has already fallen away from common consciousness and use (Mojares 6).

MY ORIGINAL POEM IN CEBUANO

*Kung asa pangitaon ang panga'n
Asa pangitaon ang
tinuod na panga'n?*

*Sa yuta pangitaa,
kung asa gilubong ang
imong inahan,
kung asa naa'y
sagbot,
kung nasa naa'y
tanom.*

*Kay ang imong panga'n
naa'y sugilanon.
Usahay maayo
madunggan,
usahay dili.*

*Basta naa ka'y
mabarugan,
basta naa ka'y
makubkub
mao na na
ang imong tinuod
na panga'n ug
Diha ka gikan.*

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

On where to look for one's name
Where does one look
For one's true name?

Find it in the earth,
Where your mother
Was buried,
Where there are
Weeds,
Where there are
Plants.

Because your name
Has a history,
Sometimes good
To hear,
Sometimes not.

As long as you have
Somewhere to stand,
As long as you have
Something to unearth,
That is your true
Name and that is
Where you came from.

Translation is always at once both a scholarly and yet very personal experience. It calls for both a detached literary analysis and a material encounter, an immersion, so to speak, in both source and target languages.

Traditionally, translation has been viewed as a mechanical activity: one of coding and decoding a message. However, there is an emerging view that translation is not at all merely transference of substance from one container to another.

Instead of pretending that there really is a one-to-one pattern of correspondence or equivalence in translation, we should recognize and encourage the translator's own personal creativity (Robinson xv).

As a creative activity that requires the full involvement, commitment, and self-examination of the translator, translation offers itself as a step towards recognizing and applying one's ideology and influences. More than this, it is an examination of the self divided into two languages. For a poet who has been steeped in the tradition of the West, this is a challenging approach to encountering native language. And this was my own personal experience in translating the aforementioned poem. It was an example of a poem that emerged first in the native language and then translated into English even though my experience in writing has always been the other way around. It was an experience of myself divided into two languages: struggle, denial, judgment. Firstly, it was difficult to come up with a poem entirely in Cebuano and that is why I began with the imagery of digging in the earth. Secondly, I have denied Cebuano as a first language, relegating it to street talk and thus, coming up with a poem in Cebuano was an exercise in letting go of that denial and just producing work in the language. Lastly, the work was full of self-judgment. It was not good enough; it was not eloquent. But that is what it is. And then I went into the work of translation. The following discussion will address the self divided into two, in translation, and the emergent creativity that comes from the dialogue of these two.

As the '60s and '70s saw the emergence of Tagalog writers in English returning to their native language, the '80s and '90s heralded the re-emergence of writers south of "Imperial Manila" beginning to write in their native languages. These writers are now using Hiligaynon, as mentioned in Villareal's *Translating the Sugilanon: Re-framing the Sign* (1994), and Cebuano, as mentioned in Marjorie Evasco's essay, "Song and Substance: Women Writing Poetry in Cebuano" (2002). The problem of language and identity continues to be relevant to the Filipino writer in English and in particular, the Cebuano writer in English, as she suffers two levels of marginalization: the dominance of a colonial language, English, and the dominance of a Tagalog-influenced national language, Filipino.

Self in Translation

The focus of this study is the self-translation of poetry in two books published in the same year. Both use the same languages of English and Cebuano and yet both are total opposites in the treatment of translation (one translates original work in English to Cebuano and the other translates original work in Cebuano to English). In *Ochre Tones* (1999), Marjorie Evasco translates her poems originally written in English into Cebuano whereas Erlinda Alburo and Ester Tapia Boemer translate their original Cebuano poetry into English in *Sinug-ang* (1999). The problem of identity is analyzed in this study, using translation as a means to encounter and understand the Cebuana poet's struggle with language.

This study problematizes the self in translation. Given the Philippines' colonial background, who is the "self" in the Cebuana writer's translation? Who is the "other"?

This study asks how the translation process is relevant to the Cebuana writer. With the aim of answering the problem, this study will:

1. define translation as a confrontation of "otherness" in language;
2. delve into the nature of the translation process used by the writers in this study through an approach in translation theory that moves forward from traditional frameworks and proposes that translation is a dialogic experience for the translator. This means that the activity is not merely an intellectual process (and, even eventually a cybernetic process) but requires cultural immersion of the translator in the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) as opposed to traditional translation theory (from Aquinas to Saussure) which claims that translation is a word-for-word (or sense-for-sense) process that requires (or attempts) equivalence between SL and TL. This, therefore, implies that translation is a way for Cebuano poets in English to encounter their native language; and
3. analyze how the writers approached language through their translated works in the context of their cultural and ideological framework.

This study asserts that the Cebuana writer who has facility in both Cebuano and English encounters her "split self" in the translation of language.

In this activity, she faces both her native culture and the Western tradition of her education, the latter being her default expression for academic and professional communication. She re-members, as in the case of reconstructing Cebuano from English through translation, and re-shapes, as in the case of translating Cebuano to English.

Memory and Colloquiality as Confrontation with Otherness

The problem of identity in language stems from a specific experience of the Cebuana writer. She has the heritage of Cebuano colloquiality and at the same time a long history of colonization and colonial languages. Even though the Cebuana poet may write exclusively in English, she experiences her native language colloquially. Though her use of her native language as a medium of written expression is limited, she is culturally enriched by her native language which remains alive and widely used in her region. Memory is a way of confronting “otherness” in one’s own self. According to Gabriel Motzkin, the past does not surface because it has been forgotten, *pace* Goethe and Santayana, but when it can be neither remembered nor forgotten (281). This is the case with the Cebuano language among Cebuano writers in English: it has always been there, a part of their lives. The experience of imbibing English as an accepted, and even preferred, form of expression through education makes it difficult for the Cebuano writer to distinguish her “Cebuano” self from her “English” self. Motzkin continues to explain that “Otherness can be integrated into self without confronting the absolute ‘otherness’ of the other. Memory makes other and self part of the same identity, denying otherness to the real other” (272). He emphasizes that “the idea that memory can be communicated assumes that memory can modify experience not only as act but also as significance” (279). In this way, memory is powerful. Remembering and using Cebuano colloquially is key towards using it as a means of written intellectual and artistic expression, whether in original poetry or in translating poetry.

Translation as Key to Confronting Otherness in Language

Building from traditional translation theory which states that translation is a process of finding equivalence between source and target languages, Douglas Robinson posits that translation is “dialogic”. This makes the translation

process active and experiential, and therefore, a way for the translator to encounter and immerse herself in both the source and target languages.

A key element in the statement by Robinson, which is not explicitly stated, is the role of memory and colloquiality in the process of translation. The assumption underlying Robinson's claim is that whatever is experienced can be remembered. The experience of Cebuano (oral or written) for many Cebuano writers who write in English is a framework for their translation projects. It is the sensation of Cebuano, or the collective body of written and spoken Cebuano and their accompanying contexts in the translator's memory (and not only cognition, as stated by Robinson), that will inform the translator's project.

Mikhail Bakhtin also posits that translation is an internal dialogue or *heteroglossia*: "As a living, socio-ideological, somatic thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, her own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention..." (293-294).

Bakhtin, above, explains that language itself is dialogic in nature. Simply put, there is no language if there is no dialogue. Whatever we have to say has been learned from someone else and since dialogue assumes a relationship the question of power always accompanies language and translation. This further grounds translation as an experience of encounter since, not only is it experiential, it is also dialogic in nature. The experience of translation requires the translator to be open to the "internal dialogues" in the text she is translating. This allows the translator to confront what Motzkin calls "the absolute otherness of the other." The dialogic nature of translation allows the translator to recognize that the source text is spoken by someone else—someone else's words, someone else's culture, someone else's opinion. This becomes even more problematic in the case of self-translation, where the "other" voice is coming from the "self". In this situation, the translator is challenged to examine her language proficiency—how she is able to express herself in one or the other language. For example, if she is more fluent in English (language of thought, emotion, and articulation) as opposed to Cebuano (her language to communicate ordinary, mundane things, the colloquial). But more than this,

translation frees the translator to make the text truly her own, through her perspective. This further supports the assertion of the study which claims that the writer/translator encounters herself in language and has the opportunity to address her culture and ideology in the translated text because language is not neutral and carries with it its own politics.

Finally, Tejaswini Niranjana, in *Siting Translation* (1992) situates the role of translation (or rather re-translation) in the postcolonial context by linking it to a “history of resistance” in the culture of a colonized society (163). She grounds her study on the experience of her own country, India. Niranjana’s postcolonial context of translation supports this study’s assertion that translation is an inherently creative activity which gives voice to the translator. By re-writing history through re-translation, the translator transforms the colonizer’s text into her own words and thus becomes a producer of meaning and not merely a mimic.

Niranjana’s work is thorough and a sound basis from which this study can move forward in the Philippine context. The postcolonial questions she poses in her book are the same questions asked in this study. This study further explores Niranjana’s direction by focusing on the works of poetry by three writers. It localizes the translation project in the Philippines and chooses a particular focus of study—poetry.

Niranjana’s translation framework is relevant to and supported by Douglas Robinson’s translation theory (dialogic), which asserts that translation is a moment of encounter (dialogue). In the Philippines, English has been accepted as the language of higher status, education, and culture. In contrast, Cebuano has been relegated to the margins, especially in circles where poets mingle. Now that poets are postcolonially aware, they can use translation not just as a means for encounter but also as a site for resistance. Robinson supports his theory with actual translation experience and Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia. His theory acknowledges that translation is a powerful tool and must be engaged in by a translator who has a firm desire to immerse herself in two languages. This further strengthens the notion that the translation process is inherently dynamic and is thus parallel to and even a jumping board towards writing in a target language.

This study builds on Robinson’s assertion by actually studying samples of individual works and by focusing on particular writers’ experience through

the examination of their translation process and their translated work. Just as with Niranjana, this study localizes Robinson's translation theory in the Philippine context.

The Postcolonial Context of Translation

Since translation is dialogic in nature, it is possible for the translator to actively engage the text as a subject and not merely as a passive (and distanced) medium of transfer.

The translator can situate the text in her own ideological framework. Translation, here, may be seen as a "disruption" (Niranjana 163) since it re-examines accepted colonial tradition and attempts to "re-write" history: "The post-colonial desire to *re-translate* is linked to the desire to *re-write History*. Re-writing is based on an act of reading, for translation in the post-colonial context involves what Walter Benjamin would call 'citation' and not an 'absolute forgetting'" (qtd. in Niranjana 172).

This refers to no simple rupture with the past but a radical rewriting of it. To read existing translations against the grain is also to read colonial historiography from a postcolonial perspective. A critic alert to the ploys of colonial discourse can help uncover what Benjamin calls "the second tradition," the history of resistance (qtd. in Niranjana 172).

The statement above emphasizes that translation is an empowering and creative activity since it allows the translator to subvert dominant ideology by framing the source text and coming up with a new text that is informed by a different perspective. A writer, translating the source text from a certain socio-cultural perspective, engages in a creative and expressive activity, thus forming the groundwork for writing from a position of power if she chooses.

Homi Bhabha states that the act of remembering is never a "quiet act of introspection or retrospection, but rather a painful re-remembering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present" (172-173). In this statement, Bhabha emphasizes that translation, seen from the post-structuralist perspective, is a painful part of postcolonial culture. Niranjana underscores the role that a particular framework takes in any translation project. Translation, when grounded in the translator's perspective, helps the translator perceive her own voice as she translates or interprets the source text and makes her own assertions, whether conscious

or unconscious, and thus engage in a creative activity. This view of translation in the postcolonial context allows the Cebuano translator to confront her “otherness” (whether as a writer in the colonial English or her native Cebuano) within her split or “disunified self” (Abrams 240). As Niranjana emphasizes, the process of piecing together fragments will not accomplish bringing back the whole to the translator but will open up sites of resistance and will lead to a richer understanding of the translator’s identity.

As part of the postcolonial problem of the Cebuana writer, the question of which “self” takes precedence in her identity surfaces. Margery Fee, in her essay, “Who Can Write as Other?” asks important questions about identity, singling out the postcolonial native steeped in a colonial upbringing. Can a majority group member speak for a minority group? How does one determine authenticity of voice among writers of mixed ancestry or colonial upbringing? According to Fee, if the context is firmly kept in mind, it is possible to argue that one has a native voice if one’s writing promotes indigenous access to power and acknowledges the unique differences between the majority group and the minority group (242). This is what the translation process brings to the Cebuana writer, indigenous access to power in the face of dominant ideologies that were set in place generations before her.

In summary, as shown in figure 1, the translator encounters her split self in the translation process. The translator encounters both the source and target language cultures as dialogic. Because the source and target languages are very much enmeshed in the self, the translation process surfaces the disunified self of the translator. It is the dialogic nature of the translation process which allows the translator to be self-reflexive. This results in an encounter between the translator’s disunified selves, giving her the choice to surface. It should read: her unique culture, voice, or perspective in the translated work.

The Writer, Otherness, and Translation

First, this study discusses Gabriel Motzkin’s theory of memory and the confrontation of otherness in language which points to a need for writers to encounter both their native language and their colonial, if not first, language in their own writing. This entails a discussion of continued colonial influence through the use of English as a preferred language in education and

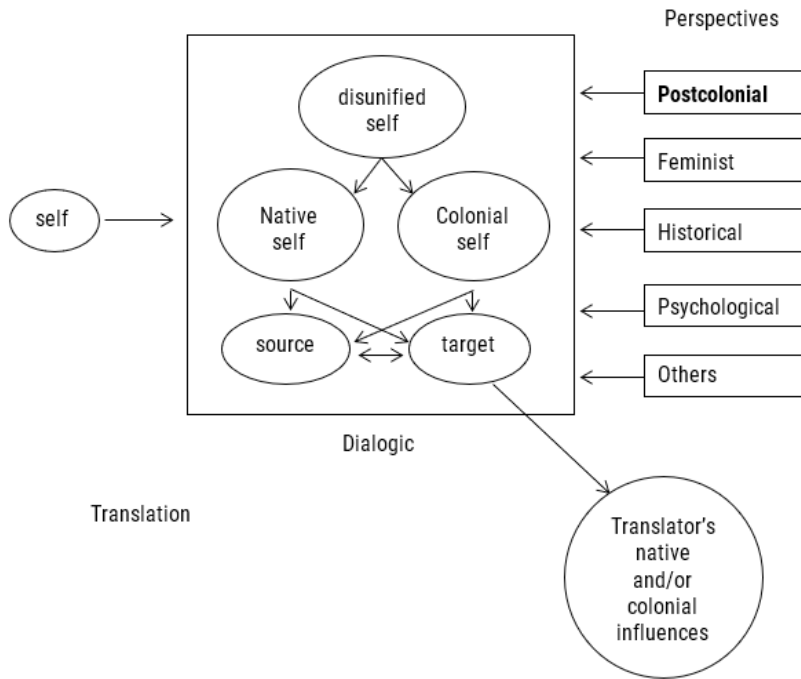


Fig. 1. The Dialogic in the Translation Process

through an exploration of the Cebuana writer’s choices in using “English” and “Cebuano.” The rationale behind a translation project of surfacing one’s voice or perspective through the translation process is discussed here. It supports this study’s assertion that the Cebuana writer who writes and translates in both English and Cebuano encounters her split self in the translation process and surfaces her cultural and ideological framework in the translated work.

Second, the study defines translation as a means for a writer to become aware that by using one language over the other, one empowers that language of choice, using Douglas Robinson’s and Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic approach to translation. This entails a discussion of translation as dialogue through a thorough and in-depth study of the translation process engaged

in by three Cebuana writers who practice self-translation (Evasco, Tapia, and Alburo). This discussion illustrates that the translation experience is a dialogic activity which completely involves the writer in two languages and thus, makes it possible for her to encounter her two selves and surface her unique voice.

Third, the study validates the translation process as an experience of encounter resulting in a voice that reflects the writer's ideological framework through a thorough and critical examination and analysis of the postcolonial context (translation choices and poetic framework of several selected poems) of the three Cebuana writers' translated work. This discussion is informed by the postcolonial theories of Tejaswini Niranjana (translation as disruption), Homi Bhabha (translation as re-membering), and Margery Fee (authentic voice in translation). This part of the study will address issues of personal and political expression through the postcolonial context of dialogic translation. This discussion highlights the internal dialogue of the translator by examining its result, the translated work.

Finally, the study emphasizes the significance of the project by articulating the implications of the dialogic translation for the Cebuana writer. Some of these implications include the importance of engaging in translation studies to further refine and explore a large body of works in English written by Cebuano writers as well as the need to compile and do critical study on the emerging works of bilingual poets and poets who are writing poetry exclusively in their native language.

Given the fact that English is widely accepted as a medium of poetry and that the Cebuano language is emerging as a new force among Cebuano writers, it is vital to explore, relate, and transform both languages to bring the Cebuana writer closer to her own identity and give her a unique voice.

This study will focus on two literary cases (*Ochre Tones* and *Sinug-ang*) and three writers/translators (Evasco who wrote and translated the poetry in *Ochre Tones*, and Alburo and Tapia who both wrote and translated poetry in *Sinug-ang*). While the area of bilingual poetry for Cebuano is limited, it is unlike the case for *sugilanon* (or the Visayan short story) which has been rigorously studied in terms of translation by Corazon Villareal. The chosen literary cases are actually the first of their kind to be published. The study demands in-depth interviews with the Cebuano writers/translators and a

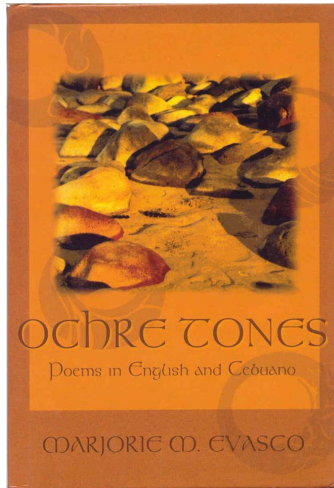


Fig. 2. The book cover of Marjorie M. Evasco's *Ochre Tones: Poems in English and Cebuano* published by Salimbayan Books in 1999.

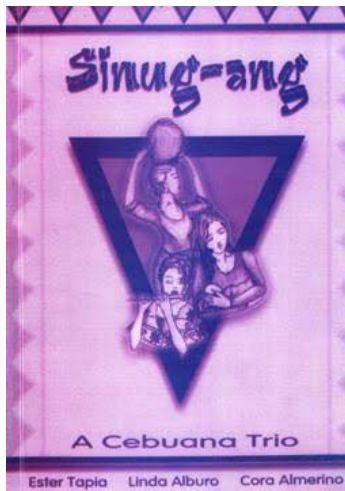


Fig. 3. Book cover for *Sinug-ang: A Cebuana Trio* published by Women in Literary Arts, Inc. in 1999.

comprehensive review of selected poems contained in the two literary cases cited earlier since Robinson's and Bakhtin's translation theory emphasizes the translators' dialogic process of translation. Thus, this calls for specific examples and instances of encounter and self-reflexiveness in the writers' translation projects.

Also, the study is focused exclusively on Cebuano to English and English to Cebuano translation, for a more comprehensive, focused and in-depth analysis. Cebuano poetry was chosen because it has not been covered as extensively as Tagalog poetry. English was chosen as its counterpart (source or target language) because of the site of postcolonialism that this study would like to explore. This study focuses on the methodology of writers in their poetry and self-translation. Discussion of the writers' other works shall be limited to a few examples and only in the context of the writers' literary history.

The study concentrates on the translation process as it focuses on the assertion that translation allows the writer/translator to encounter her split self and express her unique voice, her unique perspective. The study is further limited to self-translation as this is the best way for a writer/translator to experience self-reflexiveness.

Although there is a range of contexts and frameworks by which to examine the content of the writers' works, this study will take on the postcolonial perspective. As in any dialogue, power and position are important elements in a relationship. English and Cebuano represent the colonial and the native. Translation to and from both languages illustrates a political struggle. The postcolonial context of tension and power very much applies to the translation process.

Cebuano Literature and Translation Studies

The politics of traditional translation theory makes a medium of the translator, robbing her of identity, as it emphasizes the importance of "equivalence" in the process of "transferring" text from one language to another. The significance of this study lies in going beyond traditional translation theory and using instead the dialogic approach to translation which allow writers who produce work in English and Cebuano to encounter and immerse themselves in their native and colonial languages and enrich their poetic voices.

This study, through a different approach to translation, addresses the experience of colonization for many Filipino writers on both a social and political dimension.

Lastly, this study is an initial step to a more comprehensive study of Cebuano poetry and translation studies in Cebuano.

Toward those ends, the study takes off from the assumption that translation has always served as a means to bring literature and knowledge from one culture to another. However, in a postcolonial context, translation serves as a different tool as well. Colonial powers used translation to propagate the dominant ideology and to subjugate the colonized. This continues even today. Altbach states in “Literary Colonialism: Books in the Third World” that the dominance of a colonial language forces authors to use it to reach a wider audience: “authors wishing to write for a national audience and to reach their intellectual peers generally write in a European language” (487). This, however, does not necessarily limit them in terms of creativity and empowerment. The same language that binds them to a history of colonial experience is also the language that allows them to express their native realities in a different light. As Braj Kachru states in his essay, “The Alchemy of English”: “The English language is not perceived as necessarily imparting only Western traditions. The medium is non-native, but the message is not” (qtd. in Altbach 294). This points to a contact with English that is native in content if not in structure.

In the context of scholarship on or related to translation studies in the Philippines, a number of works have been instructive.

Lorenzo Alexander Puente in his thesis, “Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Translating N.V.M. Gonzalez’ *A Season of Grace*,” cites Eugene Nida and Charles Taber (*The Theory and Practice of Translation*) who “debunk the traditional insistence on translation to be a word-for-word substitution and see translation as a dynamic equivalence” (38). This thoroughly supports the study’s claim that translation is a dialogic process and not a mechanical activity.

Puente’s translation project covers a comprehensive review of the state of translation in the Philippines, emphasizing the pioneering work of Corazon Villareal’s *Translating the Sugilanon: Reframing the Sign*, which discusses the state of postcolonial translation in the Philippines and focuses on the power

struggle occurring in any translation, particularly in translating vernacular literature into English (33).

Villareal's provocative question is consistent with this study's assertion that the translator is empowered and creative (thus the term Sign-Giver). She asks, "in the ceaseless continuum in which one finds the 'trace' of a sign in what went before and in what will follow, where does the translator, she who would be Sign-Giver, begin?" (33). Villareal states that the translator has the capability of "reframing the sign," thus implying that the sign exists and though it cannot change literally, it is only a question of what we choose to interpret and how we interpret it that matters. This is consistent with the study's claim that translation has the inherent qualities of empowerment and creativity which can lead the translator to new insights and expression in whatever target language she chooses.

Villareal thoroughly discusses the history of translation in the Philippines and highlights the semiotics of translation. This study takes off from where Villareal has led the way. She already pointed out that "not much has been written on translation in the Philippines" (7). Her study focused on translation in a postcolonial context and Hiligaynon in particular. This study tackles feminist expression apart from postcolonialism. It also expands the form of literature chosen as subject of the study, in this case, poetry. Villareal chose the short story (*sugilanon*) for practical reasons: it is shorter than a novel and therefore more accessible to the reader. In contrast, this study focuses on *balak* (poetry), deals with the tropes and gaps that accompany the form, and explores the actual translation process as somatic and dialogic, moving from Villareal's scope of semiotics.

Puente has observed the tendency in translation studies in certain academic settings to "give no indication of self-reflexivity in the process of translation. What we have are translations of texts with no articulation of translation theory used in the project" (42). Puente's work remains the only one which engages in a full translation project and which is firmly anchored on postcolonial translation theory. This reflects a need for more translation studies in the academe, and especially those which focus on marginalized vernacular works. Though Puente asserts the need for more translation studies, he does not problematize identity in translation or the political nature of translation. He does, however, call for more studies in this field.

This is what the present study addresses and hopes to launch into further study.

Ileto's *Pasyon and Revolution* (1979) and Rafael's *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule* (1988) also discuss translation as a tool for colonization (Rafael) and re-translation and reinterpretation as a framework of subversion (Ileto).

Both Ileto's and Rafael's works support the idea that translation is a creative activity because they discuss how translation was a site of subversion of the dominant ideology. Rafael, in particular, discusses "playful misinterpretation" as a means of subverting the colonizer (211).

Rafael and Ileto open the way for this study by relating translation (and re-translation) to colonialism and subversion, tools both for the colonizer and the colonized, thus illustrating the dialogic nature of translation. Both works, however, are historical in nature and are thus merely ground or base for the present study which deals with more contemporary works and writers.

Furthermore, Mojares, in *Cebuano Poetry/Sugbuanong Balak: 1940-1988*, calls for reimmersion in the Cebuano language among Cebuano writers: "In a sense, this (recreating the Cebuano language out of the rawness of daily speech and summoning out literary traditions nearly lost) has always been the task of the poet in any language. Yet, in the case of the Cebuano (and of poets working in languages dominated and marginalized) the challenge is new, difficult and exciting" (Preface 6). He calls for the Cebuano poet to encounter and immerse herself in her native language not as an end in itself but to define more clearly the native grounds on which she stands. The Cebuano poet, he adds, must define "the local parameters of language and experience, toward the end that he can stand in the world confident in the singular value of his own voice" (Preface 6).

Marjorie Evasco, in her dissertation, "Poetry in Translation as Discourse: A Reconstructive Translation into Cebuano of Poetry in/from English by Contemporary Writers of the Central Visayas Region," suggests a translation method that uncovers the discursive constructs of the poem in and from English to reconstruct the poem in Cebuano. She emphasizes that translation is an acculturation process, a contact between cultures, which is also what this study proposes. However, Evasco's study focuses more on reconstructive

translation and canon-building than on a self-reflexive approach to the translation process itself. She however calls on translators, literary scholars, and publishers to “collaborate to contribute to the burgeoning of translation practice and publishing in the country” (284). Evasco concludes thus that “the dialogue . . . between different languages and cultures that occurs during and within the translation practice itself can give the cultures-in-conversation a richer, deeper resource for understanding” (284).

Rosario Cruz Lucero asserts in her essay, “Ang Pitong Buhay ni Anabella: Ang Tagasalin Bilang Malikhaing Manunulat, Kritiko at Literary Historian,” that the translator creates a new text with her translation, bringing forth her own ideology. The translator does not merely show the similarity or difference between two cultures but creates a new text which reflects her own thinking and her own view of the original text. According to Lucero, the story “Si Anabella” by Magdalena Jalandoni has seven versions: the printed manuscript of the author, the printed manuscript that Villareal appended in her dissertation, the published text, the English translation by Villareal, the Filipino version also by Villareal, Bienvenido’s edited version for his anthology, and Lucero’s own re-translation of Villareal’s Filipino translation (59). Lucero re-translates Villareal’s Tagalog translation of Jalandoni’s short story highlighting her own Marxist translation versus Villareal’s more literal translation. She claims that the translator’s ideology will always color the translation. Lucero’s essay fully supports this study’s assertion that through the dialogic nature of translation, the translator reveals her unique perspective.

The development of the key ideas in this monograph follows this general outline:

First, “The Forked Road of Otherness in Language” explores the disunited self of the translator. This section discusses translation as the space in which the Cebuana translator encounters two languages she lives in and memory in colloquiality and the confrontation of otherness in language. This entails a translation exercise and a discussion of continued colonial influence through the use of English as a preferred language in education. This section also explores the “English” and “Cebuano” identities of the Cebuana translator, the multiple identities or split selves within the Cebuana writer. This part of the study supports the assertion that translation is a dialogic activity

by establishing the “split selves” of the translator and her awareness that she has a choice over which language to empower.

Second, “This Language Which Is Not One: Embodying the Translation Experience” focuses on the experiential and dialogic process of translation for the three Cebuano writers cited in this study (Evasco, Tapia, and Albuero). This involves an extensive discussion of insights and actual examples of translation methods which use the dialogic approach to translation based on in-depth interviews. This chapter focuses on the dialogic translation process and supports this study’s assertion that the dialogic space created by translation allows the writer to encounter her split self and create a new text based on the original work which reflects her unique perspective.

Third, “*Balak*: Translation as a Crossroads Encounter in a Postcolonial Context” discusses the content of the writers’ works (selected poems from each writer) in terms of their postcolonial context, whether their perspective reflects colonial influence or an empowered native stance. This part of the study validates the translation process as an experience of self-expression through a thorough and critical examination of selected poems contained in *Ochre Tones* and *Sinug-ang*. This part will address issues of political expression as well as colonialism and native identity. As the earlier section focuses on the translation process, this present one focuses on the translated works actually produced by the translator. By discussing the translator’s perspective in a postcolonial context, this section supports the study’s assertion that the translator, after encountering her split self in the space of translation, emerges with her own separate creative work which reflects her political perspective.

The final section summarizes the significance, insights, and implications of the translation as dialogue, an inner struggle of two languages within the Cebuana translator, which results in a creative work that reflects her unique political perspective. This part of the study also includes recommendations for further research.

The Forked Road of Otherness in Language

As part of his introduction to Marjorie Evasco's *Ochre Tones*, Simeon Dumdum, a respected Cebuano lawyer/ judge and writer, describes Visayan poetry and Visayan poets who chose to go back to writing in Cebuano in a disturbing way. He says, "the other strange but fortunate thing about these 'recreations' [Evasco's English poems that have been translated to Cebuano] is that they give Cebuano a polish and an urbanity unknown to native poetry, which, being of the folk, is Falstaffian, ribald, humorous" (xiv). Dumdum brands native poetry as humorous, removing from it all potential of intellectual and serious artistic expression (the very things which Resil Mojares so clamored for in an introduction to another book of Cebuano poetry). Although it is true that Evasco's Cebuano poems are polished and urbane, it is unfair to the rich heritage of Cebuano to call all its native poetry folk and therefore ribald.

Apart from this, Dumdum adds, "Many local poets who originally wrote in English have turned to writing in Cebuano . . . via translation. The process can take them to a point of no return and they might never write again except in the native tongue. This is a loss to the readers of their English poems, but

gain to the poets' Visayan soul . . ." (xiv-xv). Dumdum seems to see the idea of writing purely in Cebuano a fearful fate, as he calls it a "point of no return," not exactly the synonymous term for a happy journey. He calls it a loss first before a gain and describes the loss in terms of the readers and the gain in terms of personal satisfaction (as if writing in Cebuano were a purely self-fulfilling activity without any readers benefitting from it). Dumdum's statements, however, remain valid. It is a loss because the poet is empowering Cebuano and not English – any addition to the local language is an empowerment – so English will lose. For a writer like Dumdum to refer to Cebuano and Cebuano writers in such a way calls for what Motzkin describes as a confrontation with "otherness" in the self. It is this "English" other in the "Cebuano" self that speaks in Dumdum's statements. It is this "other" that has become so much part of the self that one must confront in translation work. Conversely, for writers who have been schooled in English, writing in English has diminished Cebuano to the margins, rendering it an "other." This is, in fact, where Dumdum is coming from. Translation is the process that foregrounds this repression of an "other," allowing the translator to encounter and uncover the native self in Cebuano and surface the "other" in English.

English as Privileged Language and the "Self" that is the "Other"

"The question of English in the Philippines has always been a political one, the language having been historically associated with elitism" (Villareal 56). It is common knowledge in the Philippines that English has a privileged place. In fact, among all the Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines has the highest rate of English-speaking citizens with an accent adaptable to that of the United States. It is the reason behind a sudden surge of U.S.-based customer service call centers here in the Philippines. The U.S.-based call center service, Sykes, set up shop first in the Philippines in 1998, followed by two more U.S.-based call center services, E-Telecare and People Support (Friginal 15). Where else can one find college-educated customer service associates who can speak perfect English and can mimic American accents (from the North to the South) to a tee (and not receive pay as much as minimum wage-earners in the U.S.)?

Although we have a law that supports and encourages the propagation and use of Filipino both as the national language and as a medium of instruction, we have, nevertheless, kept English as the other official language, if not the preferred medium of instruction in schools and universities across the country. The 1987 *Philippine Constitution* stipulates in Sec. 7 and Sec. 9:

Sec. 7. For purposes of communication and instruction, the official languages of the Philippines are Filipino and until otherwise provided by law, English.

Sec. 9. The government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as a language of instruction in the educational system.

Could this be how English has become part of the Filipino “self”?

What constitutes a Filipino self? Or a Cebuano self, for that matter? Postmodern theory cautions us against assuming that the “self” is a given. The “self” in the “Filipino” and “Cebuano” is constituted by the constructs of the national and the vernacular. What informs these constructs are the cultures from which they sprang. The materiality of these cultures, including the heritage of a colonial culture, forms the complex backdrop of a national and regional identity and language. Thus, this perspective supports the study’s assertion that a translator necessarily has several selves.

“Between the hope of freedom and decent life and the reality of indignities they suffer abroad, the Filipinos live in translation to survive” (Steconi and Torres-Reyes 75). This telling statement is borrowed from Steconi and Torres-Reyes in their discussion of the role of translation work in the Philippines and the Filipino’s longing for a language that “binds even as it disrupts” (75). It is an ironic situation and yet it is the perfect way to describe the state of language in the Philippines, where, aside from a long history of colonial rule, one has to take into consideration the vast number of Philippine languages that abound. The Filipino identity, as far as language is concerned, is far from homogenous. It is a true melting pot as it is still in the process of overcoming centuries of colonial influence and coming into its own.

Cebuano, as a language and a culture, is thriving and alive in the southern regions. As Mojares states, “there is an imperative for the Cebuano writer to

be re-immersed in her native culture” (Preface 5). The Cebuano poet is heir to a rich and dynamic culture. Too often in the past, the Cebuano poet has “approximated foreign metrics instead of enhancing the natural rhythms of native speech; aspiring to large abstractions instead of cultivating the rich concreteness of dialect; repeating ‘literary’ themes instead of confronting the particularities of his social experience” (Preface 5). There is a need to add to the Cebuano body of literature drawing on concrete local experiences.

Memory in Colloquiality as Trigger for Confronting “Otherness” of English

“Perhaps it was the confluence of the Boljoon hills which seemed to carry all the blue of the world on its back, the quiet sea which felt like a huge hammock enduring my weight and never letting me fall...and the verve of *balak* that gave me a direct link back to my desire to write poetry in *Binisaya*,” writes Marjorie Evasco of her experience of longing for her native language. First, she describes it as a literal physical closeness to her native earth, Boljoon, and then as an experience of language (*balak*) which brought her to desire to write in her native language.¹

Both Evasco and Villareal have a memory of their native language in orality and colloquiality. They are clear that they both write and speak in English (without saying it, perhaps more fluently than they can write in their native language) but they are linked to a past, a heritage which they wish to return to. And in fact, they literally return to where they come from to be able to achieve this goal. As Motzkin said earlier, the “other” and the “self” can become so enmeshed with each other that it is difficult to confront the real “other” in the “self” (272). It is memory that jolts the “self” into confronting “otherness” because memory records the moment when the “other” has not entered into the picture yet. It is the sounds, smells, sights and tastes of a world where *Binisaya* and *Hiligaynon* were spoken freely and in abundance. It was the language of *yayas*, of gossip, of the marketplace, of everyday speech before one was taught to become fluent in some other language in school. This is the memory that jolts: this language is as natural to the native as breathing.

As earlier discussed, the self, as construct, is already a fragmented or disunified self. A subject or self is always made up of conflicting and even

contradictory fragments as the subject is a product of history, of culture, of materiality, of a diverse and rich background. The “English” self is distinct from the “Filipino” and “Cebuano” self. However, this “English” self is so entwined with the native self that it can no longer be recognized as what one might call a proper “Englishness” or “Americanness.” This is not to say that the Cebuano identity is confused or chaotic but rather that the Cebuano character and culture is made up of acculturated colonial languages and traditions as well. The Cebuano grew up with this hybrid history and thus, a confrontation of a colonial “self” within her Cebuana “self” will be quite daunting.

According to the three Cebuana writers of *Sinug-ang* (i.e., Ester Tapia, Linda Alburo, and Cora Almerino) in their introduction to their book:

Kadaghanan sa mga nanulat sa Binisaya karon, labina kadtong nakasugod og panulat sa panahon pa sa ilang pagka-estudyante, miuna pasulay sa Iningles. Karon ato nang angay ipasigarbo ang panulat sa atong kaugalingong pinulongan. (Alburo et al., i)

(Many of those who write in Visayan, especially those who started writing when they were students, first wrote in English. Now it is time to suit our writing to our own native language. [Translation mine.]

Here, we see the imperative to write in one’s native language or to express one’s native culture. Unlike Evasco and Villareal who are both based in Manila, these three writers are already based in their own birth city. Despite this, one will see the strong influence of English in their work. There are even Cebuano pieces in the collection which already appropriate English in a certain way. This strong English influence actually triggers an even stronger desire to reflect what Cebuano is. If English is the “self” that one needs to confront as the “other,” it is memory and colloquiality in Cebuano that triggers and surfaces this “other” in translation.

“Ug Gianod Ako”²: An Exercise in Confronting “Otherness”

*(A Sugilanon by Marcel M. Navarra with
English Translation by Teresita G. Maceda)*

The Visayan term for short story is *sugilanon*. It is also the same word one uses for history or past; thus “history,” “past” and “story” all become linked

as “narrative” in one word. Although this study focuses on *balak* as an exercise in confronting “otherness,” it is Marcel Navarra’s award-winning *sugilanon*, “*Ug Gianod Ako*” (“And I Was Swept Away”) which will be discussed for purposes of exploring language encounter.

This story (“*Ug Gianod Ako*”) could be considered a metaphor for the colonial and patriarchal experience (and in a way, of the hegemony of the English language in the Philippines). It tells the story of a seduction. The story takes the form of a letter written by a man named Loloy and addressed to a good friend of his. Towards the end of the story, one finds out that Loloy is begging for forgiveness because he seduced his friend’s youngest sister, Pepita. The main excuse he gives is, “I was carried away.”

My personal encounter with “otherness” in language showed no difficulty with the English translation of the story. In fact, I began with the translation before I tackled the original Visayan. Once I got to the Visayan version, I had to read it aloud, slowly, to be able to get the sense of each sentence. My reading in the original Visayan actually deepened my understanding of the story and called my attention to some English terms that Maceda used in her translation.

The following are examples of what I feel were inconsistencies between the original Visayan and the language used for translation:

1. The use of the word “devil” as a way of expressing the word “*panuway*” (p. 10 for the Visayan, p. 213 for the English translation). “*Panuway*” is actually closer in meaning to temptation rather than to “devil”. It is quite extreme to describe woman as “devil” rather than as temptation since the devil is the embodiment of evil, theologically speaking, whereas temptation is just an occasion for wrongdoing and not even the wrongdoing itself. This colors the English translation in a new light: it establishes, from the point of view of the virtuous brother of Pepita that woman does the tempting and is not merely the temptation. This makes the English translation significantly different from the original meaning;
2. The use of the phrase “feasting on buko” as a way of expressing the word “*makigpanglamaw*” (p. 12 Visayan, p. 211 English). “*Lamaw*” does not just mean “*buko*” (young coconut) but a sweet drink made from buko. Simplifying the activity by calling it “eating buko” is

different from the traditional *barangay* or town activity where a group of people actually make the sweet drink from “*buko*” as part of the festivity;

3. In the Visayan version, Pepita does not actually say the words, “*Nasuko ako kanimo, Loloy, nasuko! Nasuko!*” (p. 13), although it is suggested that Loloy reads them in her eyes. These implied words of Pepita can be literally translated as “I am angry with you Loloy, angry! Angry!” However the English version (p. 215) states, “I am angry with you, Loloy!” This has a different tack to it. It does not express the same anger as the original version; and
4. Lastly, the English translation “And Pepita smiled.” (p. 215) is actually more obscure when compared to the original “*Ug mipahiyum si Pepita.*” (p. 13) since “*pahiyum*” is a benign smile in Visayan as compared to “*ngisi*,” which means “to smirk.” Thus, “*pahiyum*” is a more specific kind of smile as compared to the generic term “to smile.”

After careful analysis of the English translation by Maceda, I realized that Maceda actually came to own her translation, making it a creative work and not merely a task of equivalence.

Perhaps without meaning to, Maceda’s terms actually support a more feminist reading of the text when compared to Navarra’s original story. By referring to woman as “the devil,” the translation makes the woman no longer mere object but an agent. Although she is now identified as evil itself (since the translation calls her “the devil”), she is now more than a mere temptation or temptress and actually wields power over the fate of men (albeit in a negative sense). This is a departure from her intransitive state in Navarra’s original story.

Maceda’s use of the term “*buko*” instead of “*lamaw*” actually emphasizes the youthful state Pepita represents (young coconut as opposed to sweet drink) and calls attention to her freshness and vigor.

Instead of focusing on her anger, Maceda emphasizes Pepita’s directness and fierce sense of knowing what she wants. Maceda separates “I am angry with you” (without emotion, here, because she ends the sentence with a period) and focuses the emotion on the one word, “Loloy!” thus, emphasizing

how Pepita hails him both as a person she desires and as the object of her anger.

Lastly, “*pahiyum*” (in Navarra’s original version) means that Pepita is satisfied with her lot. It is a benign smile. However, Maceda leaves the interpretation of the smile in her version to the reader. It could be a smile of triumph. It could even be a derisive smile, depending on how the reader interprets Pepita’s actions and motivations.

This exercise in encountering translation (and re-translation on my end) opened up avenues for me to understand and contextualize translation and my own desire to write the Cebuano experience. It is an encounter with the “otherness” within my own self since I was able to examine my own English translation as I was reading through the original text and compare it with another woman’s English translation of the text.

This exercise also emphasizes the importance of the dialogic aspects of translation and how a feminist or postcolonial framework affects the entire translation project. As illustrated by Maceda’s translation of Navarra’s *sugilanon*, translation is a creative activity that results in a text that is distinctly different from the original work. It is always influenced and created (not merely “processed” as implied in traditional translation theory) by the person who is translating the work. Translation, as creative activity, requires the translated work to be written in the body. The translation process is an encounter, a dialogue between two languages within the writer/translator.

The Need to Engage in Translation to Confront “Otherness” in Language

It is clear from the discussion in this section that there is a need to confront “otherness” in language. It is something that Filipino writers already express both in their scholarly and creative works. In particular, it is memory in colloquiality that usually triggers this desire to confront “otherness.” The writers mentioned in this section (i.e., Evasco, Villareal, Tapia, and Alburo) all speak about their dominantly English-language background and how their colloquiality, their living experience of their native language continues to influence and develop their writing in the native language. An examination of Maceda’s translation of Navarra’s “*Ug Gianod Ako*” showed how Maceda was able to keep her identity as translator by working on the

story in a feminist context (either consciously or unconsciously), thus establishing that translation work is a way of confronting “otherness” as well as a creative activity.

From this section which establishes the need to confront “otherness” as a necessary part of the dialogic process of translation, the next section examines the translation process itself (based on actual translation experience by the three writers who are the foci of this study) as a dialogic encounter. This supports the assertion of the study that translation allows a writer/translator to encounter her split self and choose her unique perspective which is reflected in the translated work.

This Language Which Is Not One

Em-Bodying the Translation Experience

During a WILA (Women in Literary Arts, a Cebuana group of poets) reading at Ester Tapia's house, Tapia's husband, Frank Boemer, read a German poem. No one in the group could understand German and yet the audience sat raptly listening to and experiencing the humorous shifts and turns in the language. Afterwards, Frank did a rough translation of what the poem was about. I saw that the members of the group had a love of poetry that respected the borders of language. This is one of many occasions where I experienced and understood how a setting of equality and common interest in poetry can allow different languages to enrich and not dominate, resist or diminish a culture it comes into contact with. This is the space that translation creates for the translator, a place where the translator is able to encounter her split self, the "otherness" in her own self, in dialogue.

The writers of *Ochre Tones* and *Sinug-ang* share this practice of enriching poetry through their translations. In this section, each writer's distinct and unique ways of dealing with their translation projects will be discussed in the light of dialogic context. Based on in-depth interviews with the writers themselves, this part of the study supports the dialogic nature of translation

which leads to the study's assertion that the translation process helps the translator encounter her split self, her "otherness," and surface her unique voice from that dialogue.

It should be noted that Albuero and Tapia translated works in *Sinug-ang* from the original Cebuano to English (though it should be noted that Tapia also translated some of her English poems into Cebuano for the collection as well). On the other hand, Evasco, in her book, *Ochre Tones*, translated her English poems into Cebuano.

Erlinda K. Albuero: The Feel of Two Minds³

Albuero is a writer who decided to write poetry exclusively in Cebuano. She started writing in 1991, largely for WILA, and has since consciously devoted her creative writing to Cebuano. She has a Ph.D. in literature from Siliman University and is now director of the Cebuano Studies Center of the University of San Carlos (Cebu). She also teaches English, literature, and research. She was a past chairperson of WILA and she coordinates the annual Faigao Memorial Writers Workshop of Cebu (Albuero, "Cebuano Literature"). She has also been published in *Sands and Coral*, *Sun Star Weekend* (a Cebuano magazine), *Diliman Review*, *Bakud*, *Filipinas*, *Centering Voices*, *Mantala* and *Fern Garden* (Albuero et al., *Sinug-ang*). Although she has written a few poems in English and still writes in English for her scholarly work and her column in a local paper, she believes that her commitment lies in Cebuano when it comes to poetry. She says, "Not many people write in Cebuano nowadays. It is [a] conscious decision for me to do so" (Albuero, interview).

As she describes her translation process for *Sinug-ang*, it becomes clear that she is translating "from the gut," from experience:

At first I did it line by line. But then it is the general feel that you try to keep as much as possible. In fact, that's the most important thing. Not really equivalence or the exact literal sense but rather a feeling is evoked. In translation, I am aware that if the poem were written in English it would feel a certain way. Sometimes I consult a dictionary if I am of two minds. Sometimes I leave it alone and then when I take it a different way it sounds better. (Albuero, interview)

From this passage, it seems that as a translator she went beyond accuracy and was more concerned with the intuitive nuances of the poem—how it feels, how it sounds. She acknowledges the dialogic nature of translation when she refers to her experience of translation as being “of two minds” and one of “evoking feelings,” something encountered in conversation rather than a technical or rote activity. (Albuero, interview).

She also acknowledges the limit of her translation skills: “Sometimes *nawawala talaga ang pagka*—colloquial (the colloquial quality is lost) *ng* poem. My English side is more formal, scholarly. Cebuano is entirely a different outlook, you have to experience it” (Albuero, interview). This is where the dialogic nature of translation is manifested. As she describes it, when she was “of two minds” she was conscious as well and could see her “English” self encounter her “Cebuano” self. This encounter, though engaging, is difficult. She discusses her reluctance to translate from English to Cebuano thus:

I would never try to translate my English poems to Cebuano. I wrote those poems specifically for English speaking readers. Take one of my poems, ‘Proverbial Rain.’ It ends with the line, ‘into each rain some life must fall.’ Now, how would I translate that? It was occasioned by the flood in Ormoc and the last line is an allusion to Longfellow’s line: ‘Into each life some rain must fall.’ It’s intertextual. (Albuero, interview)

She chooses her translation projects well because she also knows how taxing translation can be. Because WILA wanted the publication to reach a wider audience, she and her co-translators translated the Cebuano poems into English for *Sinug-ang*. For her, without this reason for translation, she would prefer that the poems be kept in the original Cebuano. “Let them (non-Cebuano speakers) learn the language as well,” she says (Albuero, interview).

Another manifestation of the dialogic in her translation experience was the collaborative approach the *Sinug-ang* group chose to take. All three writers regularly met to discuss their translations. The final choices were always a group decision. One could call *Sinug-ang* a truly collaborative translation.

Ester Tapia: A Field for Play⁴

Tapia is an example of a Cebuana bilingual poet. She started writing poetry when she was still an undergraduate taking A.B. Philosophy at the University of San Carlos. She then went on to study urban and regional planning at the University of the Philippines, Cebu. She has been published in *Sun Star Daily* (Cebuano newspaper), *Freeman Magazine* (Cebuano publication), and anthologized in *Jose, Little Finger, Ani, Mantala, Sugbuanong Balak/Cebuano Poetry: 1940-1988*, *Panulaang Cebuano*, *Centering Voices*, and *Fern Garden* (Albuero et al., *Sinug-ang*). To date she continues to write both in English and in Cebuano. As she is learning the German language, she is thinking of doing translation work with the language as an exercise. Tapia has also recently decided to devote her poetry to Cebuano: “I just felt that a lot of things can be done with Cebuano poetry. There’s still a lot to do. I know the language (Cebuano) whereas with English, the tradition is not ours. I know something about what I’m doing. It’s from my experience, my context, my culture. It’s what I know more” (Interview).

Like Albuero, Tapia claims that the translation process is largely intuitive: “When I write a poem, I’m not conscious of whether I will translate it or not. When I do decide to translate, the poem also feels ready to be translated. It’s not a question of difficulty. It’s a question of fun, whether it feels good to do it” (Interview). Like Albuero, as well, Tapia is hesitant about translating her earlier English work into Cebuano: “Because it wouldn’t fit. *Lu-od bitaw* (truly repelling). For me, if I feel that the concept, the feeling, and the atmosphere are right, if the way of thinking and the perspective are matched, then there is a translation project”. She describes translation in very personal terms: again, feeling is involved, the right fit, the right atmosphere, the right sound. This process for her, is also very much like play. She insists that a translation project has to be fun to be worth her while: “None of the poems in *Sinug-ang* were forced. They all came naturally. If there was a poem that I felt I was forcing into translation then I wouldn’t include it in the collection” (Interview).

Tapia explains the dialogic encounter between English and Cebuano in translation: “Our culture (Cebuano) is more rural in sentiment, more lyrical. The English language is more terse, precise. A poem is easier to translate when there is a match in perspective” (Interview). For Tapia, the encounter is what makes the whole experience very enriching:

Translation opens a lot of doors for both languages. A lot of possibilities: for images, associations with words, ideas, concepts. *Ganahan kaayo ko* (I really like it). I have some books in German. I try translating some passages to English and then think of the possibility of translating to Cebuano. Indeed, it's very fresh. There's a certain twist to language translation that challenges me. I do it just as an exercise for myself. The important thing is the exercise of it. Find out how words would sound, how certain concepts and ideas would look if brought into the Cebuano context, the Cebuano experience. It enriches your language, your writing. (Interview)

As mentioned earlier, the collaborative translation that the *Sinug-ang* writers employed was helpful for Tapia: "It was very interesting for us. We always consulted each other" (Interview). This constant dialoguing made each of them confident in the body of translated works.

Marjorie Evasco: Transcreation and Resonance

Evasco is the author of *Ochre Tones*, a book of poetry in both English and Cebuano. She is an assistant professor at the De La Salle University (DLSU). She is also the Executive Director and Associate Director for Poetry at the DLSU Bienvenido Santos Creative Writing Center. Her collection of poetry *Dreamweavers* (1987) won for her a National Book Award for Poetry from the Manila Critics Circle and the Gintong Aklat Award from the Book Development Association of the Philippines. Her essays have also won major prizes at the Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature ("For Telly . . ." 98). She has written in English ever since she began writing. She speaks Cebuano but has never used the language for her literary work. Her interest in the Cebuano language started ten years ago, in 1983, when she was assigned to write on Cebuano literature for a project on the literary history of the Philippines. Afterwards, she did her doctoral dissertation on Cebuano, "Poetry in Translation as Discourse: A Reconstructive Translation into Cebuano of Poetry in/from English by Contemporary Writers of the Central Visayas Region" (1998) for the De La Salle University. Today, she is still continuing her scholarly work on Cebuano and is waiting for the right time to start writing original poetry in Cebuano.

For Evasco, translation is visceral. Although she did the translation poem by poem, doggedly going through each work, she noticed that she

could hear some of the poems, like “*Baba sa Kalayo*” (Rim of Fire), in her head. Evasco says that even in her English poetry, she knows that a poem is ready to be written if she can hear the music in the words of the poem very clearly: “For me poetry is really sound and music” (Interview). Similarly, the translation of a poem for Evasco is ready if it is resonant. When what happens is like a whole string that just vibrates with music or sound, her gut is happy with the result: “There is a sense of rightness that you feel. You will know it with your body. The body resonates to it. It’s a visceral response to the line you had just crafted. That’s why the book was long in the making. I loved the process. Even if the process is difficult, it’s the writing which is for me the living experience, the re-experiencing of language” (Interview).

For Evasco, the contact between her English original and her Cebuano translation is not about conflicting points of view but about her particular culture:

I would reiterate that the concept of transcreation (reconstructive poetry) is more than the practice of “free translation.” I had hoped to emphasize the fact that in the translation of these English poems into Cebuano, I was mobilizing my knowledge of *Bisaya* culture and putting that into high relief. The problematic concept of “fidelity” in the translation is, for me, “fidelity to the cultural context within which the English poems had been written.” While the language in which I wrote ‘originally’ is English, it is not English culture that is the context of the writing but *Bisayan* culture. (Interview)

This echoes Kachru when he says that a native culture can appropriate a colonial language (“The Alchemy of English” 200).

Evasco also talks about the limitations of her translation (she did not translate six of her poems in English for *Ochre Tones* because she was not satisfied with the translation work). “There are really poems that resist translation due to two things: (a) either the cultural equivalent was not accessible to me at that point or (b) my poetic gifts are limited. I will probably grow in translation the more I use the language” (Interview). Here, it does not mean the dialogue failed. Based on her observation, one could, instead, describe the nature of translation as an ongoing dialogue. If at this point it is not ready, later on the dialogue can still continue and produce work worth publishing.

In the same manner that *Sinug-ang* was a collaborative translation,

Evasco, too, needed a sounding board. He came in the form of Santiago Pepito of *Bisaya* Magazine (of the *Liwayway* Publications). She needed clearance from people who knew the language more, who have been writing in Cebuano for a long time. She asked Pepito to go through her work and to tell her if they were literary enough. She was ready to drop the Cebuano translations from the publication if he indicated that they were awkward and not ready for publication. Fortunately, for her, when he returned the manuscript he told her that *Bisaya* would publish around five or six of the poems. That was validation enough for her. In this way, Evasco's experience of translation was also literally a dialogue with a proponent of native literature.

This section illustrated the dialogic process of translation through the personal insights of the three writers in this study. Each author/translator was interviewed regarding the process of their translation. All of them described the translation process as an interplay between their two languages. Albuero described the process as "being of two minds" and of "evoking feelings;" Tapia described it as "play;" and Evasco described it as "resonance." All of these descriptions show how the translation work was essentially an internal dialogue for each of them, though they described the experience in different ways. This section supports the study's assertion that the translation process is dialogic and leads to the emergence of the author's voice through her cultural and political perspective. The next section will deal with the result of the dialogic process in translation. The translated works will be analyzed through their postcolonial context. Their perspectives may be consciously or unconsciously worked out in their translated form work though, in the end, it does not matter if it was intended or not. The result of the dialogue in translation is the author's new message in the form of a new text beside the original.

***Balak* Translation as a Crossroads Encounter in a Postcolonial Context**

The traditional role of the translator was to be invisible, to act as a medium for a greater work of art which was the original. However, modern theory supports the different view that the translator is as much a creative writer as the writer of the original work and that the translated work is a different creature altogether from the original, “This is a radical view of translation, which sees it not as a marginal activity but as a primary one, and it fits in with similar comments made by writers such as Gabriel García Márquez, Jorge Luís Borges and Carlos Fuentes.” (Bassnett and Trivedi 3). As the previous section suggested, the translation process is a creative activity, the result of dialogic activity between the source and target languages within the writer. This section of the study delves into the outcome of the creative process of translation, the actual translated works. Just as the previous section discussed the dialogic encounter of the translator, the succeeding discussion analyzes the content of the translated works in terms of their postcolonial context.

This part of the study hopes to show how the re-memoring and re-shaping of language brings to the fore the personal and political will of the writers.

This section provides an analysis of how the dialogic experience in translation transforms the original work within a postcolonial context, given the cultural encounter within the disunified self. Although the perspectives already exist in the original, the translation process empowers the translator to create another version of the text and further reveal her unique voice in the target language.

Erlinda K. Albuero: “*Babayeng Nag-atubang sa Salamin*,” translated into “*Woman Facing the Mirror*”

The poem deals with the persona’s struggle to understand the writing of poetry. It is written in free verse and is visually formatted in the shape of a pregnant woman. The first part of the poem describes Pablo Picasso’s opinion of his painting, “*Woman Facing the Mirror*.” In the poem, the persona says that Picasso had no idea why he painted or why he painted in such a way. He just painted. In the same way, she begs the reader not to ask why she wrote the poem in this manner. It was born from sleeplessness and wanting to see if she could understand the core of poetry. The last few lines describe how the persona looks into her own mirror and understands why everything is inverted and why she will never get to the meaning she is searching for.

This poem, under the category of “*Pag-ila sa Kaugalingon*” or “*Self-Identity*” is unique for Albuero as it is the only one in the collection that she wrote experimenting with form, thus already borrowing from Western culture the trope of visually shaping the printed text. According to her, it was unintended that the poem came out shaped like a pregnant woman (Interview). However, in the English translation she strives to capture the same form, thus showing the importance of the shape of the poem. The Cebuano original borrows the style of free verse and the visual formatting of the text from Western literature. The poem is already translated, in a way, as it reflects a Western way of writing and even a Western way of thinking: analyzing the self and the motives of the self.

There are a few nuances in the English translation that digress and reshape the original language of the poem. One is the translation of the line “*nagsugod ko sa walay kulukatulog*.” The transliteral meaning would have the word “*ko*” referring to the self. However, in the English translation “*ko*” is replaced by “*it*,” (“it was started by sleeplessness”), referring to how the

poem started itself. It is interesting to note that the shift from self to poem is done in the translation, differentiating self and poem and giving the poem its own volition apart from the self. This further highlights a Western way of thinking, dissociating the self from the act of writing and letting the poem gain an identity apart from the persona.

Another shift is found in the lines “*nag-atubang ko karon / sa usa sab ka salamin.*” Here, there is a conscious effort to relate the persona with Picasso’s painting, “Woman Facing the Mirror.” However, in the English translation, we read, “now I face / my own mirror.” A more faithful or literal translation would be “I am now facing / a mirror as well.” There is a slight change. Instead of just referring to a mirror “as well,” the persona refers to “my mirror,” making the act more personal. From a poem moving on its own volition, the focus shifts to the persona’s image in her own mirror rather than just a mirror “as well.” The English translation of Alburo highlights the self-reflexiveness of the persona and the postmodern idea of a poem as a being separate from the persona.

Lastly, Alburo transforms the lines “*nganong dili / matusok / ang naglawig / nga kahulogan,*” which can be literally translated as “why (I) cannot / pierce the drifting meaning.” Alburo’s English translation states, “why the meaning / remains / elusive.” Here, the “I” disappears and it is only “meaning” that remains. In fact, meaning, now becomes more than the persona.

All these nuances point to a reshaping of the English translation, calling attention to three aspects of the poem: (1) the poem itself having volition, (2) the emphasis on the persona’s own perception, and (3) the active nature of meaning for the persona.

The translator is able to bring across the dialogue between Cebuano and English. In the Cebuano, the poem is already conceptual, borrowing from the Anglo-American style of experimentation. In the English translation, the translator tries as much as possible to keep the passive voice found in the Cebuano poem except when emphasizing the importance of the persona, the “I” and the “my” as well as the dilemma of meaning in poetry. In its postcolonial context, the English translation takes advantage of the inherent self-reflexiveness of the language, emphasizing the self at the crucial point where the persona shifts from the poem to the role of author’s identity in relation to the poem. The Cebuano poem, as mentioned earlier in the analysis,

is already translated. The ideas in the poem are already Anglo-American. The English translation captures this thinking in the new target language with ease. The English translation was reshaped by the translator to further capture this postmodern, Anglo-American way of thinking, thus surfacing her already translated Cebuano poem in the language that most suits it.

“Iringon na Kinabuhi” translated into “Cat’s Life”

This short poem revolves around the misfortunes of a woman. The poem enumerates them: she is left by three lovers; her store goes bankrupt; she is widowed; her house burns down; her feet get amputated; and finally, her son becomes a drug dependent. Given all these sorrows, the subject of the poem is ready to die.

Like *“Babayeng Nag-atubang sa Salamin,”* this poem, too, borrows a lot from Western thinking. The concept of a cat having nine lives is not native in origin. This poem also appropriates words in English and transforms them into Cebuano words: *“reserba”* (from reserve) and *“adik”* (from drug addict). Already, there is a dialogue between English and Cebuano even in the original poem.

In the translation, the line *“kapoy nang i-asoy”* (literal translation: “tiring to narrate or tell”) is reshaped as “it’s a long story,” finding an English idiom for the Cebuano idiom. This slight change highlights the dialogue between English and Cebuano, expressing the Cebuano sentiment perfectly captured in the English phrase.

The poem is an example of a faithful translation from Cebuano to English. One reason behind this is the fact that the Cebuano original poem, like *“Babayeng Nag-atubang sa Salamin,”* already uses Western words and frameworks. “Cat’s Life” is not necessarily Cebuano in nature. However, *“Iringon na Kinabuhi”* localizes what the persona went through. The English translation only removes the local scene and highlights what the Cebuano poem is trying to emphasize: the unfairness of life for some people who survive tragedies only to face more. In a postcolonial context, the English translation removes the particularity of the original poem and replaces it with what could be called universality, making it more easily understood by a Western audience.

“Wala Lay Sapayan” translated into “Never Mind”

This poem by Alburo takes its form from the *balitaw* (native poetic form that involves two speakers, male and female, replying to each other, with each stanza containing two or four verses). The poem is about a conversation between a man and a woman. The woman asks after the man’s son, Dodong, citing his wrongdoings. The man replies that everything is all right, for after all his son Dodong is just a boy. The woman asks if he is not practicing favoritism by excusing everything Dodong does; he replies that no one is shown favor at home—a girl really has to stay put whereas a boy does not have to. At the end of the poem, the man states that because it’s Dodong, it doesn’t really matter; after all, he takes after him.

“*Wala Lay Sapayan*” is an interesting poem in that it is a very contemporary treatment of the traditional Cebuano *balitaw*. Also, the expression “*walay sapayan*” actually has many meanings in English: it could mean “you’re welcome,” “it doesn’t matter,” “it’s okay,” “never mind,” or “no problem.”

The English translation reshapes and encounters the Cebuano on several levels. First, the English mimics the Cebuano in terms of grammatical sentence structure. Some lines are left enjambed like the lines “Aren’t you going to scold him / he’s always bumming in Colon?” The translator does not end the thought or connect it with a conjunction like “because” or “since.” This follows the sentiment of the Cebuano and not the proper structure of the English language.

Second, the translator chooses to leave some words in the native language like “*Inday*,” “*Mare*,” “*Pre*,” thus keeping the context and the flavor of the Cebuano in place.

Third, in the critical eighth stanza, the Cebuano line “*Mare, wala bayay pinalabi sa amo*” is translated thus, “Mare, at home no one’s favored.” This is interesting in the sense that the Cebuano can have two interpretations. “*Amo*” could mean “us” (as in “among us”) or could refer to an “owner” or boss of the property. The English contextualizes this line and situates it specifically in the home, thus removing the context of power which could have been used in the English translation.

In the postcolonial context, the English translation appropriates from the Cebuano several native terms and even preserves the format of the *balitaw*, giving the English version an authentic and contemporary voice. However,

the English translation does not play up the power relations at home, given the opportunity to play with the word “*amo*” to further emphasize the position of the patriarch which is later overturned by the woman in the last verse. This actually favors the Cebuano text over the English translation, lending it more flexibility and opening it to interpretations of power play.

“*Patay na Tuod si Maria Clara*” translated into “*Maria Clara is Dead Indeed*”

This poem is written in free verse and describes a woman’s status. First the poem describes Maria Clara of old—model of femininity and martyrdom. Then the persona situates Maria Clara in the contemporary world where her behavior is most likely out of place. What a woman needs now, the persona asserts, is independence and quickness of mind to survive. At the end of the poem, the persona speculates that her own dead mother would probably say it is a pity that Maria Clara is dead.

It is interesting to note that in the title, the word “*tuod*” could mean two things in English: “indeed” and “deadwood,” both applicable to the poem. This highlights the particular challenge of translating this poem.

The original Cebuano also makes an interesting appropriation of English with the word “*ispilingon*,” a term taken from the word “spelling.”

The English translation, though not able to capture the rhyme of the Cebuano and the humor of the lines “*nangluspad na hinigugma / sa linuiban nga si Crisostomo Ibarra*,” is able to reshape the Cebuano towards a contemporary Cebuana voice.

The line “*Si kinsa lay gustong santoson kay atong paantusun*” (literal translation: “whoever wants to be saintly, let’s make her suffer”) is translated as “Let whoever wants to be a saint suffer.” This re-writing makes the statement more direct and encompassing, transforming the adjective “saintly” into the noun “saint.” It also removes the complicity of others—the complicity of the persona implied by the word “us” (in the literal translation, “let us make her suffer”)—and makes the suffering more general (as implied by Albuero’s translation: “Let whoever wants to be a saint suffer”). This opens up the possibility that suffering may be attributed to other outside factors.

The term “*kalaay*” is another term with more than one English equivalent. The more formal English equivalents are “ennui,” “weariness,” “fatigue.”

However, the choice of “boring” most fits the contemporary tone of the poem, bringing it to irreverence for religious and dated traditions.

Lastly, the use of the term “model” to refer to “*sulondon*” is an interesting choice. Another equivalent for this is the word “role model” which would have made the context more specific. Since the translator chose the term “model” it could refer to the shop window model or mannequin, which gives richer meaning to the entire phrase. A model is a thing that one can clothe with whatever one chooses. This further emphasizes the idea that Maria Clara is a construct of society, doing whatever the dominant gender and social class require.

In the postcolonial aspect, the directness of “let whoever wants to be a saint” emphasizes not just the plight of women but the plight of those who agree to be victims. Also, the choice of “boring” to describe the novena further emphasizes the break between the contemporary view of the Cebuano and the colonial and dated traditions of a previous generation.

Furthermore, the translator’s choice of “model” emphasizes and refines the Cebuano by giving another dimension to Maria Clara: a construct of male patriarchy and a colonial society, providing a new aspect to the Cebuano text.

“Si Sharon Silingan Nangitag Saktong Proverb” translated into “Neighbor Sharon Looks for the Right Proverb”

This poem uses the native form of *sanglitanan* (*sanglitanan* or *panultihon* is the Cebuano equivalent of a proverb). The poem is divided into four verses with each verse quoting a native proverb. The poem is about the persona’s neighbor, Sharon, who is looking for the right proverb to describe her situation. Sharon, the poem persona’s neighbor, begins by quoting traditional proverbs. She then proceeds to talk about the persona’s own proverb which states that behind fierceness lies mercy. Sharon says it is an awkward proverb as it does not even rhyme and tries to make up her own proverbs which would illustrate the same thought. However, towards the end of the poem, Sharon describes her situation more clearly by saying “battered wife.” She cannot seem to find another phrase that will soften what that implies. At the end of the poem, she simply states that a battered wife is not sainted.

Although there is a Cebuano equivalent of “proverb” (*sanglitanan*, *panultihon*), the translator still deliberately chose to write the original title as

“proverb,” preferring to maintain the English language in the title. As can be seen, the poem is quite contemporary, mixing both English and Cebuano in the same poem, a practice even among Tagalogs who mix both Tagalog and English, thus the term “Taglish.”

The English translation has some difficulties which cannot be helped. Proverbs in Cebuano always rhyme. However, the rhyming simply cannot be repeated in the English if the proverb is to make sense. Thus, there is a line in the English translation that goes: “It doesn’t even rhyme,” which doesn’t make sense because none of the other proverbs written in the same poem rhyme anyway, thus calling attention to this difference in the use of language.

One thing that is noticeable is that the English translation uses more extreme words for violence. The line “*Ahos nga makagaba sa ginhawa*” can be literally translated as “garlic which can curse the breath.” However, the English translation uses the stronger term, “kill” (“Garlic that kills the breath”). In the phrase “*Ang pagbunal sa favorite son*,” the word “*bunal*” can be interpreted as “spank,” but the translator chose the term “beating up” instead (“Beating up a favorite son”). Even for the lines “*Bugnaw ng yelo kon kuptag dugay / Makapaso sa inamay ng paglana*,” the word “*pas*” can be interpreted as “scald,” but, again, the translator chose the more extreme word “burn.”

In the last stanza of the Cebuano, the line “*ug di ko ka-take anang siya diay masanta*” is translated as “And I don’t believe she is sainted.” The Cebuano is more humorous in execution (in the same way that a Taglish phrase may sometimes be considered a *colegiala* way of misusing Tagalog, the mixed phrase in this poem calls to mind a similar way of mangling Cebuano) though not less painful. The English translation makes the entire poem more grave and cryptic through the choice of words.

In the postcolonial context, the poem in English creates a new tone for the Cebuano original. As it could not capture the ironic humor of the Cebuano, the English went for the jugular, focusing on the brutality hidden among the cited proverbs. This new tone creates a more urgent voice for the marginalized Cebuana, calling attention to the dire condition that some women live in because society is silent about their condition.

Ester Tapia-Boemer. “*Drei Swatzer*”

This poem is categorized under the label “Self Identity.” It is written in free verse and includes German words. The poem is about the persona’s experience of alienation in a foreign land. She describes how she is walking along a street in a town in Germany and how one of the tramps by the statue, *Drei Swatzer*, goes toward her. She predicts that he will ask her for money. She then says that both of them share “the same drink / of sweet digression (being lost)” and have no right to beg. In this poem, the experience of a Cebuana in Germany is captured in a quick portrait, its poignance seeping in but not transparent. It is interesting to see how three languages interact in this poem and translation: Cebuano, English, and German.

There are a few nuances in the Cebuano poem that are altered in the English translation thereby reshaping the original Cebuano. First, there is the altering of the kind of metal used on the statue of the *Drei Swatzer*. In the Cebuano it is “*bronse ug puthaw*”; however, in the English it is “aluminum and iron.” This deliberate changing of metals calls to attention the colors of these metals. Whereas bronze has a reddish and warmer tinge, aluminum and iron have a silver and gray palette. This change further reinforces the lines “cold syllables flowing / from their mouths.”

Second, the Cebuano has the line “*nga dili makita sa mapa sa kalibotan*,” (literally, “that cannot be found on a map in the world”) whereas in Tapia’s English translation, the phrase “*sa kalibotan*” is lost (“that’s in no map”). This localizes the experience and focuses on that particular place in time, calling attention to the unreality that the persona is feeling.

Third, the attention that the parenthetical statement of “being lost” brings to the line “of sweet digression (being lost)” is absent in the original Cebuano line (“*tam-is nga pagka-hisalaag*,” which can be literally translated into “sweet being lost”). The extra word (“digression”) gives the statement an alternate meaning as “digression” is purposeful compared to merely “being lost.” This makes the English translation ironically unsure (two meanings in the same poem) while it emphasizes “digression” over “being lost” thus empowering the persona and giving her the choice of where to go.

In the postcolonial context, the English translation reinforces the contrast between the foreign milieu and the native Cebuana walking there. The translation enhances this by surrounding the persona with words that

denote a frigid environment: “aluminum and iron,” “cold syllables flowing,” “dark...Markplatz,” “gazing through my brown skin.” Also, the poem emphasizes the persona’s will. Instead of being intimidated by this environment and by the longhaired man who begs, the persona refers to her sweet digression, her purposeful and deliberate path in that particular place that belongs to no recognizable map. She resists and triumphs.

“Ang Banga” translated into “The Jar”

This poem is categorized as “For and Among Women.” The poem uses free verse and is situated in a pastoral setting. This poem is lyrical and rural in theme. It describes a woman carrying a jar of water while walking along a trail beside a cliff. The persona describes how she carries the water, her dress, the jar she carries, and how “the awe-filled water” possesses her.

The simplicity of the description and the single-minded focus of the subject bridge the Cebuano and the English in a flawless manner.

There are only two significant translation choices which reshape the English version. One is the line “*Ang lukon sa akong ulo bus-ok*” which is translated as “The coil upon my head is firm.” The term “*bus-ok*” has different alternative meanings in English, one of which pertains to fullness (after having stuffed oneself), or to being compact or compressed. The term “firm” is deliberate in the sense that this word also carries with it the image of balance and weight or a sense of groundedness.

Another line, “*Misanaw sa akong tunob*” refers to “steps” (taken by the persona) whereas in the English translation, “Floats under my feet,” makes the experience referred to in the line more direct and in contact with the persona’s body.

In the postcolonial context, the English translation reverberates with a love for the provincial life, for a notion of the precolonial where the elemental and the sensual are of utmost importance. It is this feeling for the elemental and sensual, in the form of water, which possesses the persona. Although it is ironic that the poem is about surrender, this act of surrender is in relation to nature, to the elements, to the persona’s sensuality as opposed to the colonial ideology of surrender to religion or progress. The English translation takes advantage of the language in as much as it brings more directness and a sense of grounded encounter to the Cebuano.

“The Renegade” translated into “Ang Masupilon”

This poem is written in free verse and is divided into four stanzas. The third stanza is made up of two lines only, compared to the first two stanzas which are made up of eight lines each and the last stanza which contains only four lines. The third stanza functions as a kind of transition device. The poem is about the persona’s relationship with a renegade. The first stanza describes how the persona in her bridesmaid’s dress sees the renegade brilliant in the sun. The second stanza describes how he has flown over the church, onto the beaches where “Lovers made love and smuggled guns / Are blessed by the sea.” Then there is a shift where the persona says that the renegade “has gone too far / For that.” The poem ends with the persona predicting the future. After she has folded away her bridesmaid’s gown, when the revolution will have caught up with him, he will go to the mountains not as a renegade but as St. Francis.

This poem is one of the few poems by Tapia which were originally written in English. According to Tapia, the poem was published in *The Philippines Free Press* and won an award sponsored by the same publication. The translation is also an example of a successful reconstruction in Cebuano. In fact, the poem gains more grace and fluency in Cebuano. In an interview, Tapia said that it might have been because she had originally thought of it in Cebuano but wrote it in English as, at the time, she was writing exclusively in English.

The Cebuano is particularly enriched in several translation choices. First, there is the line “*Naglupad na siya ibabaw sa mga estatuwa.*” This is more fluent and clearer compared to the English “He was flying now over the icons.” Somehow, the English is awkward, describing something that the Cebuano does better with similar syntactic structure.

Second, there is the line “*Sa dihang hiposon ko na ang akong sinina.*” The word “*dihang*” is more specific in the Cebuano compared to the English “When I shall have folded my gowns,” as it does not only pertain to time but to place as well, referring not only to the moment of folding away the gowns but also to the exact place.

The third is the line “*Sa ginaptalihanang mga kaban nga nanimahog kahusay,*” which in the original English is “In the mothballed trunks smelling of order.” Although “*ginaptalihanang*” is an appropriation, a “Cebuanizing” of

the term “naphthalene balls,” the musicality of it fits the Cebuano language. There is also the awkward phrase “smelling of order,” which in the Cebuano “*nanimahog kahusay*” sounds authentic and right. In the English, the concept of “smelling of order” is forced. However, in the Cebuano, the exact same translation (which is actually a literal translation) sounds natural and very Cebuano in cultural context.

In the postcolonial context, the translation is a triumph of the Cebuano culture. It is able to fully reclaim the Cebuano experience from the English original, in fact, making it sound more original and authentic than the English.

“Ang Asawa sa Mangingisda” translated into “The Fisherman’s Wife”

This poem is written in free verse and is divided into three stanzas. The first stanza describes how the fishermen leave for the sea in the evening, “their sails unfurled / and blown by the wind.” The second stanza describes the fisherman’s wife left on the shore, “her heels dug into the sands.” The “rocking of the waves” is the rhythm of life and death to her. The third stanza describes how “she picks up her basket / of salt and grains” and how “tears of pure garlic / and onion fall.”

The poem, similar to “*Ang Banga*” (“The Jar”), focuses on provincial life but not in a romanticized way. The English translation builds on the Cebuano in several ways.

First, there is the line “Again it is evening” which differs slightly from the original Cebuano, “*Gabii na usab.*” The literal translation would have been “It is evening again.” However, the translator chose to highlight the word “again” instead of “evening.” The English translation highlights the ever-repeating seasons that the fisherfolk are accustomed to and reinforces the feeling of provincial life.

Second, the phrase “*milugsong sa dagat,*” which describes how the fishermen go to sea, can actually be literally translated as “launched into sea.” However, the English bodes the tragedy that haunts this kind of life in the line “have gone down to the sea.”

Again, this choice is repeated in “*nga ganay sa kinabuhi / ug kamatayon*” which is translated as “is all the rhythm of death and life to her.” The word

death precedes life whereas in the Cebuano, the word for life precedes death. Again, this calls attention to the inherent danger that a fisherman's wife is constantly anxious about.

In the postcolonial context, the English translation consciously reinforces the life-and-death (in fact, to the point of reversing it to death-and-life) importance of the Cebuano fishing livelihood. However, as in the Cebuano, the translation does not make this maudlin or sentimental. It elevates the sea-influenced Cebuano culture.

"Insomnia (for Tiny, our cat)" translated into "Tukaw (alang kang Tiny, among iring)"

This poem is written in free verse and divided into four stanzas. The first stanza is made up of seven lines, the second stanza is made up of eight lines, the third stanza is made up of ten lines and the last stanza is made up of eleven lines. The first stanza describes how the persona notices that toward the dawn, it rains. She smells mice everywhere even on her clothes. The second stanza describes how she enters the rain-drenched rooms. She dusts the sofas and the beds and airs the bookshelves. The third stanza tells of how the persona describes the rain, the "smell of mice" and the "memory of Tiny," the persona's cat, now buried in the backyard. The persona makes an offering or a sacrifice ("I offer these veins"), describing her wakefulness as "a riverbed / Where stones draw hollow rings / Like the lost sobs of a guitar" and like "you" (she addresses the reader or another person) crying in the other room. The last stanza attempts to wipe clean all that was said with the words "Already I begin to forget." The persona tells of nights when she heard the piano and the neighbors telling jokes. At the end of the stanza, the persona wishes she were still there, without her present cares, rocking in a hammock under a tree.

This is another example of a poem originally written in English but translated into Cebuano. Like "The Renegade," this poem gains richness in the Cebuano language.

First, there are the lines "*Midugang sa ilang patay nga gibug-aton / Sa kisan,*" a reference to dried leaves gathering in the ceiling, which is a translation of "Throw their dead weight upon the ceiling." Instead of focusing on the outside force of leaves, the Cebuano translation focuses on the persona

with the word “*midugang*” which means “to add.” One can see the image of weight after weight piling upon the persona after the flood, highlighting the experience of the persona.

Second, the Cebuano introduces a new Cebuano word “*hangin*” (not in the original English poem) in the line “*Mitapot sa hangin sa akong sinina.*” The original English lines are “clinging to the seams / of my skirt, my sleeves.” The translation removes the multiple references to clothing and introduces the wind to the line, making the smell of mice more pervasive and more disturbing. This emphasizes even more the absence of Tiny, the cat that the persona refers to in the title.

Third, the original English line “Now, cuddled by the rain in the back garden” is translated into Cebuano as “*karon na sa sabakan sa ulan / Sa mga dalan-dalan sa tubig*” (literally, “now in the lap of the rain, in the trails of the water”). The Cebuano translation thus brings Tiny even further away from the persona, completely claimed by the elements, by the rain.

Fourthly, the poignant turning point in the poem, “I give up my veins, my capillaries” is rendered even more intense in Cebuano as “*Akong ihalad kining mga ugat kining dugo*” (literally, “I offer these veins, this blood”). This highlights the Cebuano concept of sacredness in the offering as in a sacrifice. Moreover, the mention of “blood” in the place of what transports it in the body (“capillaries”) is also meaningful in the Cebuano, making the offering weightier, more costly to the persona.

These creative alterations in the translation highlight the postcolonial context of the poem. The re-membering of the language is in itself a hewing from the colonial language and a replanting in native soil. The poem in Cebuano succeeds in enhancing the English original, making it more grounded in the native experience.

“Pinulongan” translated into “Language”

This poem is written in free verse and is made up of only one stanza with twenty-two lines. However, in the English translation, the poem is broken into two stanzas. The last four lines compose the second stanza. The poem talks about the persona’s feeling of exile. First she talks about how the night’s dew clings to her hair, leaving stories that are not hers. She claims that these stories belong to the beeches that own the forest. The persona describes

how she is filled the whole day by this cold that she has never known. She describes how the breeze rustling through the trees sounds just like the breeze at home. However, the persona, having no relations in this land, feels that her tongue has snagged among the branches.

Again, as in “*Drei Swatzer*,” the persona in Tapia’s poem speaks of exile. The isolation expressed in the Cebuano is reshaped at several points in the English translation.

First, the lines “*tibuok adlaw gipandongan ako / niining katugnaw*” are translated as “all day I am filled / by this cold.” “*Gipandongan*” refers to being covered or shaded whereas in the English translation, this is altogether altered to “filled.” The difference highlights and heightens the bodily experience of the persona. Instead of saying that the persona is covered by the cold, the phrase refers to the idiom of “chilled to the bones” when it translates the line into “filled, by this cold.” It appropriates this direct expression of the cold and makes the experience more visceral for the reader.

Second, the lines “they speak only one language / under this cathedral” slightly differ from *usa lamang ang ilang pinulongan / niining katedral*. The change from “of this” (“*niining*”) to “under” highlights the contrast between the human world of constructs versus the universal language of nature under one sky. The word “under” denotes a higher order.

These alterations from the original, in the postcolonial context, serve to highlight the views of the marginalized persona. She speaks for the isolated, the displaced, those broken off from relations and native culture. The English translation enhances the bodily experience of this exile and the meditation of its irony in nature.

Marjorie M. Evasco: “Anamnesis” translated into “*Walay Pagkalimot*”

This poem is written in free verse and is divided into five stanzas. The first four stanzas have five lines each while the fifth stanza only has four. In the first stanza, the persona says that we all sit atop separate pillars in the mind’s desolate places, calling out our names, entire genealogies of selves we cannot save nor resurrect. In the second stanza the persona asks the reader what strange religion afflicts us that we pay ritual homage to a severe god-of-tongues, creating words, names and identities against the silence of the

wind. In the third stanza, the persona asks if it is not true that words cannot make monuments permanent. The persona says that our common language splits memory into uncommon spheres. In the last stanza, the persona asks if we do not sometimes wonder if mountains really stood still.

This poem, from the section “Earth” or “Yuta” section of Evasco’s book, speaks of language and identity. The original English is highly abstract and conceptual and yet the Cebuano translation is able to re-member the poem in the Cebuano experience, enriching the English concepts with new meanings in Cebuano.

First, there are the lines, “Why pay ritual homage to this / Severe god-of-tongues, / Hedging words, names, identities, / Against the wind’s insidious silence.” These are translated as *Ngano mobayad man ta ug buhis niining / Walay puangod nga bathala nga daghan og dila / Ug gibugti ang atong mga pulong, ngalan, pagkatawo / sa mabudhiong kahilom sa hangin*. According to Evasco, the term *bugti* is very rich in meaning for the Cebuano. *Bugti* refers to the material equivalent of one’s word of honor (Interview). It does not just refer to a balance between the material offering and one’s word of honor; it also emphasizes the gravity of such a commitment. Thus, the Cebuano translation further emphasizes the sacrifice that the persona is offering to this “god-of-many-tongues”: it hangs her very life and identity in the balance.

Second, the lines “. . . Our common / Language splits memory into / Uncommon spheres” are translated into . . . *Ang atong / Pinulogan mobuak sa atong panumdoman / Ngadto sa mga kalibotan nga dili magkamay-ong*. “Into uncommon spheres” is further refined into “unto worlds that are not alike.” “Spheres” is translated as *kalibotan* (“worlds”) because Evasco, as creative translator, chose to evoke the “roundness inherent in the word not only as a shape but as a quality of integrity or wholeness” (Interview). *Kalibotan* is one such word that is richer in meaning, starting from the shape it refers to, to the concept of a world’s integral diversity and richness.

Third, the lines “Do we not sometimes wonder / If mountains really stood still?” are translated into *Wa ba ta makapangutana kon tinuod bang magkanunay / Ang mga bukid nga magbarod sa kalinaw?* Literally re-membered in English, the translation is “Do we not question if it is true that always / The mountains will stand serene?” This highlights the nature of the Cebuano culture, calling to mind its riddles and proverbs as well as poetic

traditions, like the *duplo* and the *balitaw*, which call for creative questioning leading to a folk wisdom.

In the postcolonial context, this re-membling into Cebuano does not resist the colonial language but rather enriches it by weaving the Cebuano culture more tightly into the original through the creative choice of Cebuano words in place of the English source text.

“Maria de las Flores (Hymns for the end of May)” translated into “Maria de las Flores (Mga Awit sa Katapusan sa Mayo)”

This poem is written in free verse and divided into six stanzas. The first three stanzas compose the first part of the poem (numbered by the author) and the next three stanzas compose the second part of the poem. In the first stanza, the persona asks the “Great Mother” what brings the children to her feet. The persona describes how the children come to her, beseeching, “their hands / folding their flame.” In the second stanza, the persona continues by comparing the little girls’ mothers and grandmothers to them, so young, not yet touched by bleeding and piercing of flesh that marks a woman’s lot. The persona asks in the third stanza if the mothers remember what it was like to be the little girl offering flowers at the altar. In the second part of the poem, the fourth stanza describes the procession of young girls like a bridal entourage without a groom. The persona urges the Great Mother in the fifth stanza to tell the young girls that life will not be fair to them. This continues in the last stanza where the persona asks the Great Mother to reveal that her power comes with her own imprisonment.

In this poem on the Virgin Mary, there are two distinct creative changes in the target text. The first change is in *Nga wala pa makasulay sa katam-is / Sa pagdungab sa ilang kaunoran* which comes from the original, “... who know not yet / the piercing of the flesh.” In the Cebuano there is the added word *katam-is* which is not found in the English source text. According to Evasco, it is a cultural belief among Cebuanos that something fresh is always sweet (Interview). The poem talks about the young girls’ innocence as sweet in both the literal and symbolic sense. In the English original, the piercing of the flesh is a sexual image; however, in the Cebuano translation the mention of sweetness is sacred. It is a richer resonance of the English original.

The second change is in the last line “precarious on that pedestal.” In the Cebuano translation it is rendered as *Nangurog sa imong gituntongan*. Though

the English source describes the Virgin Mary with irreverence by way of her “precarious” position, the Cebuano translation further brings down the image of Mary with the humorous and experiential *Nangurog* (literally, shaking with fear). The translator is able to communicate the shaky perch of the Virgin Mary while imparting at the same time a feeling that the reader can easily identify with.

In the postcolonial context, the Cebuano reconstruction further defies the colonial heritage of religion especially in the image of Mary, redefining what is sacred and toppling that which reinforces the social imprisonment of the Cebuana.

“The Quick Bruise and Run of Love (for Mary Ann and Marc)” translated into *Ang Daling Pagkabun-og ug Pagtubid sa Gugma (Alang Kang Mary Ann ug Marc)*

This poem is in free verse and is divided into three stanzas. In the first stanza the persona describes her home. She is at the table by herself describing where her children are and the summertime. In the second stanza, the persona moves on to describe the night before, when they speak of a familiar family topic. She does not describe it directly but as a metaphor—a child newly born whose bones would break were one of them to take the child by the heels and bash it against a wall. The persona ends the stanza by saying that the story needs to be set right. The last stanza talks about a different story. The persona tells of a mother staying beside a child with a fever. She vows to give her life just so her child will get better. And the child does get better. At the end of the stanza, the persona tells her children to take care of this story-child. She describes their “father’s fruit” as having survived a fall and becoming a “bruised but living grace.”

This poignant poem is further enhanced in the Cebuano as it uses the metaphor of trees to complement the English reference to fruit as both yield and child.

The lines “It is your hurt fathered / Into child’s shape, vulnerable / To faithlessness” are translated as *Kini ang semilya sa inyong kahiubos / Nga karon nahulma na sa usa ka bata nga mapukan usab / kon siya luiban*. The Cebuano introduces the word *semilya* (which means “tree shoot”) in the place of “fathered.” This is a significant alteration and it is supported by another word, *mapukan*,

which refers to the falling of a branch or plant. This word replaces the English word “vulnerable” and unifies the image of tree in the stanza.

The lines “Your father’s fruit survives the fall / Become your bruised but living grace” are translated thus, *Ang bunga sa inyong amahan dili mapukan / Hinuon mamahimo kining inyong nabun-og / Apan buhing paghigugma*. This deliberate use of the word *mapukan* again re-invents the original English text. In the Cebuano, the persona of the mother pronounces that “the fruit of the father will not fall / Instead these will become the bruised / but living forms of love.” This departure, though ironic, since one needs to fall to be bruised, is a defiance of the persona’s resignation to the necessary hurt and pain in the family bond.

In the postcolonial context, the Cebuano text contrasts with the English image of the life-giving tree. Whereas the English focuses on the brutal brokenness of the persona and her children, the Cebuano redeems the family bond as it makes reference to trees, plant shoots and a refusal to fall. The Cebuano resists the colonial impulse to break and subdue and reconstructs it in the image of growing life.

“Third World Music on the 23rd Day of Rain” translated into “Huni sa Kawhaa’g Tulo ka Adlaw sa Ulan”

This poem is the shortest in the collection. It is composed of only three lines and it describes how the roof leaks, how the rain falls, and how the persona’s pots and pans are half-full with “monsoon music.”

This short poem has one major creative change in the Cebuano translation. This is apparent in the loss of the phrase “Third World” in the title. Evasco points out that “Third World” is a First World construct in the first place (Interview). She points out in this decision that it is unnecessary to translate the construct into Cebuano. Although the term “Third World” is not there, the condition of Third World-ness remains in the poem. Despite the removal of the term “Third World,” the holes in the ceiling of the house of the persona do not go away. The Cebuano translation repeats the music that the persona hears through the repetition of certain sounds. In the English it is the letter “l” (“leaks,” “falls,” “fill,” “half-full”) that produces the musicality in the poem whereas in the Cebuano, it is the “n” and “ng” sound (“*nagkalingaw*,” “*ulan*,” “*Napuno’g katunga*,” “*huni*,” “*tinghabagat*”).

In the postcolonial context, the poem in Cebuano defies colonial imposition by totally ignoring the colonial construct of “Third World.” In the same vein, the persona, in the Cebuano, is still defiant of her condition as she celebrates the musicality of rain in her midst. She does not refer to her condition as poverty but as plenty. Though this is in the English original, it is further heightened by the word “*nagkalingaw*” (in the line “*nagkalingaw pa’g ulan.*”). In the English poem, the condition of both the roof leaking and the rain still falling brings to the poem a sense of haplessness. However, in the Cebuano translation, the rain does not just “still fall,” it falls with merriment (“*nagkalingaw*”) reflecting the persona’s attitude towards the rain. She is not indigent; she is blessed with the music of the rain.

“Poet in Exile” translated into “*Paghingilin sa Magbabalak*”

This poem is divided into four stanzas, each evenly composed of four lines. The first stanza tells of the persona describing her voice “on tiptoe” in a castle, treading lightly and awkward at each turn. In the second stanza, the persona speaks of “they” who move in “night-maze of their narratives” while she is losing her way, the threat of a minotaur lurking in the dungeons. The persona addresses herself in the third stanza telling herself to tunnel herself out of the darkness of syntax. The fourth stanza shows how the persona promises to stride boldly out of the maze, outside the castle walls, “threading their syllables with mine,” trusting her way out of the labyrinth.

This poem, like “*Huni . . .*,” has a conspicuous gap in the Cebuano text, and this is the deletion of an entire stanza. According to the translator, the deletion was necessary for the simple reason that the self-reflexiveness in the English form cannot be carried out into the Cebuano form because in the Visayan culture, as evidenced in the language and syntax, it is not the doer of the action that is significant but the action itself (Evasco, interview). The danger of translating the stanza—“I tell myself: tunnel out! / With songs, invent a new life / For every creature in this glen. / Dispel the syntax of darkness”—would have been a too dramatic, if not maudlin, reconstruction.

Already, the English has references outside the culture of Cebuano when it refers to “castle,” “minotaur,” “labyrinth.” However, the Cebuano reclaims the defiant stance of the native, refusing to lose a fight. In the Cebuano, the minotaur’s action of “driving [the persona]” is transformed into “*Nagtukmod*

kanakong” (literally “pushing me,” to start a fight) calling forth the image of a bully that needs to be dealt with. True enough, in the last stanza, the English poem talks about “striking boldly” whereas in the Cebuano translation, the persona goes a step further with “*Molakaw na maisog*,” (i.e., “walk”, but could also mean “leave” or “go,” fiercely).

In the postcolonial context, the Cebuano defies the dictates of traditional translation and ignores what is not useful in the native language. It rants and raves, appropriating foreign words and making them Cebuano (“*labirinto*,” “*toro ni Minos*”), appropriating from the English and “Cebuanizing” foreign words and references.

Summary

This section describes the result of the dialogic activity of translation, the unique voice of the translator that emerges out of the translation. In the process of translation, the writer re-members and re-shapes the original work in the target language, reflecting her own cultural experience, making the translated work significantly different from the original work and imbued with the translator's ideology. In translation, the Cebuano writer "writes back," transforming the language of domination by appropriating it for her own native expression.

Conclusion

According to Bakhtin, nothing we speak is entirely ours and everything that comes out of our mouths has come from other people's mouths, has been transformed by its use in society (293-294). In this sense, the languages we use today are living in the dialogue that we make out of our everyday lives. The power of language lies in its ability to give shape to our thoughts and experiences, to refuse or allow the thoughts and experiences of others to enter our beings.

This is what this study set out to do: to study and analyze the political power of translation in the English and Cebuano languages. The study also focused on the precedence of culture in the use of language (language living in society), proposing that the Cebuano culture emerges in the language of the Cebuana writer, whether it be a reconstruction into Cebuano or a reshaping into her unique English.

To do this, one has to revisit the role and nature of translation. Whereas before, translation was a rote activity relegated to writers who needed to be invisible to get the message across, today, translation stands alongside creative writing in its ability to produce a sibling for the source text by virtue of a different cultural perspective.

In its effort to define translation as political action, the study worked on the theoretical framework of translation as dialogic. This view of translation empowers the translator and gives her the tool of dialogue to take hold of language not to destroy or tear down but to build her own cultural identity.

This study also explored the ideology of the Cebuana through an analysis of her translated work in a postcolonial context. The theoretical framework of the split self, from the postmodernist, post-structuralist discourse, was brought into perspective, showing how the Cebuana writer today is constantly struggling with her postcolonial identity. This is manifested in her parallel use of her native language (either in writing or in orality) and the colonial language.

Because a translator is always writing from a particular perspective, this study chose to focus on her postcolonial context. Whether the translation was from English to Cebuano or the other way around, the culture of the Cebuana is manifested in her ideology.

The study analyzed the work of three Cebuana writers: Alburo, Tapia, and Evasco, each approaching their translation work differently (being of “two minds,” “play,” “resonance”) and yet describing their process in a similar thread (dialogic). Two of them collaborated on the book, *Sinug-ang*, which contained mainly Cebuano-to-English translations with the exception of Tapia who translated from English to Cebuano for two poems in this study. On the opposite end of the pole, Evasco translated her English poems into Cebuano, with the deliberate objective of reclaiming her native language. Each book had different objectives for the translations (Alburo and Tapia

wanted to reach a wider audience while Evasco wanted to re-construct her English poems in Cebuano) and each writer had different stories to tell.

The study validated that the writers practiced translation in the dialogic framework as the writers were all responsible for both source and target text. Surprisingly, each writer, though interviewed separately from each other, claimed the imperative of resonance with the translated text. The writers validated the dialogic nature of translation when they recounted their internal struggles with the language, always describing it as an “inter-activity”: being of “two minds” and “evoking feelings” (Albuero), language as play (Tapia), the cultural interaction between texts (Evasco). Interestingly, to further validate translation as a continuous dialogic encounter, all the writers collaborated either with each other or with a representative of cultural reference to be able to determine the ripeness or readiness of their translations.

Finally, the study was also able to validate the political aspect of translation through the analysis of the translated works of each writer in the postcolonial context as each of the writers created new versions of the original poems reflecting their unique experiences and ideologies in different languages. Whether the writer was translating from English to Cebuano or Cebuano to English, her unique perspective was enhanced in the translated work. Her distinctly Cebuana voice was manifested in the creative changes she made on the target texts, always enriching the source texts and building on her unique context (postcolonial subject and woman) to create an alternative and compelling voice which is still all her own.

Thus, this study has attempted to show the political power of the translation process through its dialogic nature and its ability to enrich the culture of the translator by allowing the translator to encounter her “split self” through the source and target languages. After focusing on the different translation processes and the translated work of the chosen writers, this study asserts that the translator is an empowered subject as she engages in creative changes that enhance her poetic voice and surface her cultural perspective.

For a practicing translator or a scholar of translation studies, this project exposes a new perspective of translation which emphasizes the political power of the translator through the self-reflexive nature of translation and the importance of cultural enrichment in the translation process itself.

With this, translation continues to be a compelling area of study. There is, however, a need for more scholarly studies on translation, particularly in the native languages of the Philippines.

Apart from this, there is also a need for more translation work in Cebuano, either to English from Cebuano, to give wider access to an audience that reads in the language, or from English to Cebuano, as both Tapia and Evasco have done, to both manifest the reconstructive art of translation and to enrich the body of works of Cebuano poetry.

In line with this, native languages need champions in the field of language instruction. There are too few educators who are devoted to this field and there is an impending danger of the loss of the rich heritage of native words with their continued disuse in contemporary oral communication.

All in all, translation continues to bridge and create gaps among languages and cultures. The writer who engages in this practice will be rewarded with creative insights that would have been otherwise lost without the cultural contact that translation brings into being. It is a powerful tool and an art in itself. This study encourages writers, poets, educators, and scholars to take advantage of this creative process and produce works that will enrich their culture.

Appendix: Source Texts and Target Texts

Poems by Erlinda K. Alburo

Babayeng Nag-atubang sa Salamin – Source Text

*Matud pa ni Don Pablo Picasso
ang kahulogan sa iyang mga dibuho
sama adtong Babayeng
Nag-atubang sa Salamin
wala sa iyang hunahuna
dihang gisugdan niayg badlis
ang nagkahibat niining
nawong
sunod sa pagbati
ang tandiay
sa lainlaing bulok
dili mahubit
ang sugid sa panagway niini
nganong ang pias mata gatakilid
ug ang aninag sa salamin sukwahi
maong ayaw na lang pagpangutana
nganong walay porma kining balaka
nagsugod ko sa walay kulukatulog
namasin kon diha sa pagkuriskuris
makita ang lintunganay sa panulat
nag-atubang ko karon
sa usa sab ka salamin
kahibalo na ko
nganong nabali
ang tanan
nganong dili
matusok*

*ang naglawig
nga kahulogan*

Woman Facing the Mirror – Target Text

According to Don Pablo Picasso
whatever meaning his paintings might have
like that one of the Woman
Facing the Mirror
was not in his mind
when he started drawing
its distorted
face
the sequence of colors
went the way
of feeling
one can't describe
what its form says
why the other eye is in profile
and the mirror's reflection is crooked
so I tell you don't ask
why this poem is formless
it was started by sleeplessness
wanting to see if in actual writing
one gets to the core of poetry
now I face
my own mirror
now I know
why everything
is inverted
why the meaning
remains
elusive

Wala Lay Sapayan – Source Text

*Di ba imo man tong anak
nagdugay uli gabii sa Basak?*

*Bitaw, apan wala lay sapayan
kay si Dodong man.*

*Di ba nimo siya badlongon
gasige mag bagdoy-bagdoy sa Colon?*

*Pasagdi lang siyang mapul-an
walay sapayan, si Dodong man.*

*Di ba imo man tong puting awto
iyang nabangga sa eskina Bacalso?*

*Ah, kadto, gipaayo na man
walay sapayan, si Dodong man.*

*Di ba gud na pihig-pihig, Pre Imok?
Si Inday lagi, binantayan mag lihok?*

*Mare, wala bayay pinalabi sa amo
basta babaye gani, kinahanglan magpuyo.*

*Apan kay si Dodong man, wala lay sapayan
Unsaon, ako man guy iyang naliwatan.*

Never Mind – Target Text

*Wasn't that your son
home late last night to Basak?*

Yes, but it doesn't matter
because it was *Dodong*.

Aren't you going to scold him
he's always bumming in Colon?

Let him alone until he's bored
it doesn't matter, if it's *Dodong*.

Wasn't that your white car
that he crashed at corner Bacalso?

Oh, that, it's now under repair
it doesn't matter, if it's *Dodong*.

Isn't that favoritism, *Pre Imok*?
Why, you guard *Inday* all the time.

Mare, at home no one's favored
but a girl has to stay put.

Because it's *Dodong*, it really doesn't matter
You see, it's me he takes after.

Patay na Tuod si Maria Clara – Source Text

*Ah, kadto bang nagluspap nga hinigugma
sa linuiban nga si Crisostomo Ibarra?
Matud pa ni Mama kadto siya sulondon
magsigeg kablit sa arpa, manggiulawon
laming motimplag hamonada, hinayon
moamin kada humag nobena, matinahuron
ug unsa pa dihang uban nga mga –un-on
nga karon malisud ug ispilingon.*

*Wala na tingali nahibilin rong arpa
ug labihan kamahal maglutog hamonada
ug unsa to, kalaay ba anang magsigeg nobena?
Si kinsa lay gustong santoson kay atong paantuson.
Ang kinahanglan sa babaye karon
maalam molalik sa ait na iyang tukaron,
maabtik mangitag idalit na sud-anon,
molihok bisag wala pay bendisyon.
Kon naa pa ron si Mama unsa kahay iyang ikasulti?
Nga labaw pang an-anhing kaniya si Maria Clara, miris.*

Maria Clara is Dead Indeed* - Target Text

Ah, you mean that pale sweetheart
of the betrayed Crisostomo Ibarra?
According to Mama she was a model
always plucking the harp, shy,
cooked delicious ham dishes, somewhat slow,
kissed the elders' hands after novena, obedient,
and was many other adjectives
that today we find difficult to spell
Perhaps there's no more harp left,
it's expensive to cook a ham dish
and isn't it boring to always pray the novena?
Let whoever wants to be a saint suffer.
What a woman needs now
is to compose the song she will play,
be quick to find the food she'll serve,
proceed even without a blessing.
If Mama were still alive what would she say?
That Maria Clara is deader than she is, a pity.

***Tuod** in the title means both "indeed" and "deadwood"

Si Sharon Silingan Nangitag Saktong Proverb – Source Text

Ang mga karan kon tukion,
Anaay daghang panultihon,
like:

“Ang ulang nga matulog
I-anud gayud sa sulog.”

And:

“Bisan unsa kataas sa prusisyon
Sa simbahan kini modayon.”

Apan imo-imo ra man tingali nang
“Sa luyo sa kabangis
May nagpahiping kaluoy”?
Wa man gani na mo-rhyme.
Bi, sulayan ta one more time.

“Ahos nga makagaba sa ginhawa
Makapahumok sa cholesterol nga problema.”

And:

“Ang pagbunal sa favorite son
Makatanus sa iyang batasan.”

How about this one:

“Bugnaw nga yelo kon kuptag dugay
Makapaso sa inanayng paglanay.”

Apan kadtong kabangis imong giingon
Lisud pangitaag kombinasyon
Bisag adto na sarap sa langit
O sa ispidno ka pa mamingwit.

See:

“Ang asawang gikulata....”

Unsa man, “daghan bag kwarta”?

Or “maanindot na siyang mokanta”?

Ug di ko ka-take anang siya diay masanta.

Neighbor Sharon Looks for the Right Proverb – Target Text

If we ask the old folk,
they have many sayings,
like:
“the shrimp that sleeps
is swept away by the current.”

And:
“No matter how long the procession
it always winds up in church.”

But isn't it your own concoction to say
“Behind the fierceness
hides mercy”?
It doesn't even rhyme.
Here, let's try one more time.

“Garlic that kills the breath
softens cholesterol.”
And:
“Beating up a favorite son
will right his conduct.”
How about this one:
“Cold ice in the hand
burns in gradual melting.”

But the fierceness that you said
is hard to put in any combination
whether you scour heaven
or fish in hell.
See:
“The wife who is battered..”
what then, “has a lot of money”?
or “can sing very well”?
And I don't believe she is sainted.

Poems by Ester Tapia-Boemer

Drei Swatzer – Source Text

*Ngitngit na pag-agi nako sa Markplatz
ang mga estambay ug ang ilang mga iro mipahiluna
sa tiilan sa Drei Swatzer
rebolto sa bronse ug puthaw
ang tulo ka mga nagtabi haruhay kaayong tan-awon
apan ngamig ang mga silaba
nga migawas sa ilang baba
ug milusot lang ang ilang panan-aw
sa akong tabunon nga panit
siguradong pangayoan ko og kwarta
niining taas og buhok
Nga misaliring sa akong agian
ug mikibo lang ko sa iyang pagsulay
ikaw nga nagkupo pa gani og panit
ug ako nga nasawumsoman sa Markplatz
nga dili makita sa mapa sa kalibotan
nagsalo sa pagdimdim niining
tam-is nga pagka-hisalaag
ug walay katungod sa pagpakilimos*

Drei Swatzer – Target Text

It is dark when I pass by the Markplatz
and the tramps and their dogs have lain
by the foot of the Drei Swatzer
statues of aluminum and iron
the three chatterers look so comfortable
cold syllables flowing
from their mouths
gazing through

my brown skin
I am pretty sure that the one
long-haired who saunters towards me
will ask for money
but I merely shrug at his attempt
you who wear your leather jacket
and I caught in the dark at the Markplatz
that's in no map
share the same drink
of sweet digression (being lost)
have no right to beg

Ang Banga – Source Text

*Puno ang banga sa tubig
Pagkabug-at sa banga
Anga matag lusok sa tubig
Miyungyong sa akong buhok
Ang lukon sa akong ulo bus-ok
Puno sa kabuntagon
Gisawang ko sa akong duha ka palad
Ang hagawhaw sa napukaw ng tubig
Ang hiaganas sa ilang kahimungawong
Ang bukton sa akong sinina
Mga pakong nahumod sa milukop sa akong dughan
Ang dalan daplin sa pangpang
Misanaw sa akong tunob
Pagakbug-at sa banga
Pagkahilan sa tubig
Nga miangkon kanako*

The Jar – Target Text

The jar is full of water
How heavy the jar
Each drop of water
Clings to my hair
The coil upon my head is firm
Full of the morning
I hold in my two palms
The whisper of rising water
The rustle of their awakening
The sleeves of my dress
Are wet wings enfolding my breasts
The trail beside the cliff
Floats under my feet
How heavy the jar
How awe-filled the water
Which possesses me

The Renegade – Source Text

I saw him along the white walls
Broad shoulders long hair
From the church plaza
Brilliant in the sun
Where the wedding entourage was gathering
I was a bridesmaid
And in my braided hair and gown of green
The vines climbed up to my heels

He was flying now over the icons
And I knew he could break or heal them
With his touch
Over the darkening acacias and on to

The sudden beaches where under the coves
Lovers made love and smuggled guns
Are blessed by the sea

But he has gone too far
For that

When I shall have folded my gowns
In the mothballed trunks smelling of order
When at last the revolution catches up with him
He shall have gone to the mountains
But as St. Francis

Ang Masupilon – Target Text

*Nakita ko siya lumbay sa puting koral
Lapad nga abaga taas nga buhok
Gikan sa plasa sa simbahan
Misidlak diha sa adlaw
Diin naglinya ang parada sa kasal
Ako usa sa mga abay
Ug sa akong sinapid nga buhok ug berde na sinina
Ang mga bagon mikapyot sa akong tikod*

*Naglupad na siya ibabaw sa mga estatuwa
Ug ako nahibawo nga mahimo niya kining buk-on o tambalan
Sa iyang paghikap
Ibabaw sa naglugitom nga mga kasya ug ngadto sa
Takulahaw nga mga baybayon diin ilawom sa mga langob
Nadulog ang mga managhigugmaay
Ug ang inismagol nga mga pusil gibisbisan sa dagat*

*Apan halayo na siya
Niana*

*Sa dihang hiposon ko na ang akong sinina
Sa ginaptalinahang mga kaban nga nanimahog kahusay
Kon sa kapulihay ang rebolusyon makaapas na kaniya
Nagpabukid na siya
Apan daw si San Francisco*

Ang Asawa sa Mangingisda – Source Text

*Gabii na usab
ug ang mga mangingisda
milugsong sa dagat
ang ilang mga pasol
milatid sa palad sa baybayon
ang ilang mga layag
gibuskad ug hinuypan sa hangin
ang ilang mga dulong nagpunting
sa mga bituon*

*ang asawa sa mangingisda
nagtindog sa baybayon
mga tikod mikutkot sa balas
ang tapya sa mga balud
mao ang tanan alang kaniya
nga ganay sa kinabuhi
ug kamatayon*

*gipunit niya ang iyang basket
nga puno sa asin ug bugas
ug unya
mga luha nga lunlon ahos
ug sibuyas nangatagak*

The Fisherman's Wife – Target Text

Again it is evening
and the fishermen
have gone down to the sea
their fishlines
line the palms of the shore
their sails unfurled
and blown by the wind
their prows
point to the stars

the fisherman's wife
stands at the beach
heels dug into the sands
the rocking of the waves
is all the rhythm of death
and life to her

she picks up her basket
of salt and grains
and then tears
of pure garlic
and onion fall

Insomnia (For Tiny, our cat) – Source Text

Towards dawn it rains
The gutter needs fixing
The rotting leaves of the trees
Throw their dead weight upon the ceiling
And the smell of mice
All throughout the day the smell
Of mice clinging to the seams

Of my skirt my sleeves
But towards dawn it rains
I walk into rooms of rain
I dust the sofas and the beds
And replace the old sheets with ones
From old trunks now afloat
I open the windows
And air the bookshelves
And the pages of the books
I release the voices

Always the rain claims its own
The smell of the mice from the torn roof
And the memory of Tiny, his supple and agile body
Now, cuddled by the rain in the back garden
I give up my veins, my capillaries
This wakefulness, a riverbed
Where the stones draw hollow rings
Like the lost sobs of a guitar
Or you in the other room crying
Already I begin to forget
That she had read in Bisaya comics.
At night too, the music from the piano
And the fingers of Mr. Lim's daughter
Sailed in the wind to the cacophony
Of voices of Digol, Onit,
Nang Delia, Noy Itan and others not wanting
To be outdone in their jokes.

Haay, I wish I was still there.

There cares are forgotten in the hammock
Under the nangka tree.

Tukaw (alang kang Tiny, among iring) – Target Text

*Sa kaadlawon miulan
Ang balisbisan kinahanglang ayohon
Ang nadugtang mga mga dahon
Midugang sa ilang patay nga gibug-aton
Sa kisame ug ang baho sa ilaga
Mitapot sa hangin sa akong sinina*

*Ug gisulod ko ang mga lawak sa ulan
Akong gipaspasan ang abog sa sopa sa katre
Akong giilisan ang mga hapin og bag-o
Gikan sa karaang kaban nga naglutaw
Akong giablihan ang mga bintana
Ug ang kabinet sa mga libro
Akong gipahanginan ang mga panid
Akong gipagawas ang mga tingog*

*Karon giangkong na sa ulan kadtong iyaha
Ang baho sa mga ilaga sa nagising atop
Ug ang panumduman ni Tiny ang iyang tigson
Ug abtik nga lawas karon anaa na sa sabakan sa ulan
Sa mga dalan-daan sa tubig
Akong ihalad kining mga ugat kining dugo
Ug pagtukaw usa ka sapa
Diin sa mga haw-ang nga bato gipuga ang mga bakho
Daw gikan sa sista nga nahanaw
Ug kanimo nga sa pikas kwarto nagbangutan*

*Karon sugdan ko na ang paghikalimot
Sa tanan niyang nabasa sa Bisaya komis.
Inig gabii sab, layagon sa hangin ang huni
Gikan sa piano ug mga tudlo sa anak
Ni Mr. Lim ngadto sa mga nagtingkagol
Nga mga tingog nilang Digol, Onit,*

Nang Delia, Noy Itan ug uban pang dili

Palupig sa pasiaw.

Haay, maayo pag wala ka nibiya.

Didto ang kalisud duyan-duyanon lang ilawom

Sa kahoy ng nangka.

Pinulongan – Source Text

Ang tun-og sa kagabhion

nga mitapot sa akong buhok

nagbilin kanakog mga sugilanon

na dili akoo

kondili niadtong mga beeches

nga nangag-iya niining lasang

tibuok adlaw gipandongan ako

niining katugnaw

nga wala ko hihilhi

may gitukbil ang huyohoy

nga miuliot sa kadahonan

may gilakbit ang paglubid sa hangin

susamang mga epistola

sa mga tugas ug dapdap

sa akong gigikanaan

usa lamang ang ilang pinulongan

niining katedral

nga gikisamehan sa dag-om

apan ako lumalangyaw

ug walay kaamgid dinhi

ang akong dila nasangit

sa mga sanga sa kahoy

Language – Target Text

The night's dew
that clings to my hair
has left me stories
that are not mine
belonging to those beeches
which owned this forest
all day I am filled
by this cold
I've never known
the breeze mutters
through the leaves
the wind weaves
the same epistles
of the *tugas* and the *dapdap*
where I come from
they speak only one language
under this cathedral
with its ceiling of rain clouds

I a stranger
and have no relations here
my tongue is snagged
among the branches

**tugas* = molave tree

dapdap = ornamental tree growing along the seashore

Poems by Marjorie M. Evasco

Anamnesis – Source Text

In the mind's desolate spaces,
We sit atop separate pillars
Calling out each other's names,
Entire genealogies of selves
We cannot redeem or resurrect.

What strange religion afflicts us?
Why pay ritual homage to this
Severe god-of-tongues,
Hedging words, names, identities,
Against the wind's insidious silence?

Is the truth perhaps that words
Or incantations cannot shape
Monuments permanent? Our common
Language splits memory into
Uncommon spheres.

In the settled villages of our days
Do we not sometimes wonder
If mountains really stood still?

Walay Pagkalimot – Target Text

*Sa pag-inusara nato didto sa wanang sa panumdoman
Namungko ta sa ibabaw sa tagsa-tagsa ka haligi
Nagtaawanay sa usa'g usa sa atong mga ngalan.
Ang kagikan sa atong pagkatawo
Nga dili na nato maluwas o mabanhaw.*

*Unsa man kining langyaw nga pagtuo nga naghasol kanato?
Ngano nga mobayad man ta ug buhis niining
Walay puangod nga bathala nga daghan og dila,
Ug ibugti ang atong mga pulong, ngalan, pagkatawo
Sa mabudhiong kahilom sa hangin?*

*Tinuod kaha nga ang mga pulong
O pangaliyupo dili makahulma
Og mga rebulto nga molungtad? Ang atong
Pinulongan mobuak sa atong panumdoman
Ngadto sa mga kalibotan nga dili magkamay-ong.*

*Diha sa balangay sa atong panahon
Wa ba ta makapangutana kon tinuod bang magkanunay
Ang mga bukid nga magbarog sa kalinaw?*

Maria de las Flores (Hymns for the end of May) – Source Text

I.

What brings them here
to your feet, Great Mother,
all smothered with flowers
in the bloom of their still
young faces? See their hands
folding their flame. Hear
their lips beseeching
your perpetual name.

Their mothers and grandmothers
Watch them march up the aisle,
young maidens in summer
among buds and girlhood
friends who know not yet

the piercing of the flesh,
bleeding dry in the labors
of our common lot.

Do the mothers remember
how the flower stalks smelled
in their own damp palms,
green sap staining lifelines
of hand-me-down destinies?

II.

Mark the littlest ones carrying
your frugal icons: veil, cord,
white robe, sprig of summer flowers,
as unto a strange wedding,
the grooms absent.

As they crowd your altar,
Great Mother of the sun, stars,
moon and sea, tell them how
the balance beam of justice
always tips the scale down
to their burden, the contrapuntal
silence of the lyre playing
dirges to their stillborn dreams.

For your daughters must know:
the crown and scepter of your rule
go with the guarded towers
where you are kept pure and pallid,
your blood frozen stiff in stone,
your feet way above the earth,
precarious on that pedestal.

Maria de las Flores (*Mga awit sa katapusan sa Mayo*) – Target Text

I.

*Unsa may nagdala kanila dinhi
Sa imong tiilan. Gamhanan nga Inahan,
Pinurong-purongan og mga bulak
Ang ilang ambongan ug walay kahasol
Nga mga dagway? Tan-awa ang ilang mga kamot
Daw kalayo nga nag-ampo. Pamatia
Ang ilang mga tingog nangaliyupo
Sa imong ngalan, Inahan sa Kanunayng Panabang.*

*Nagbantay ang ilang mga inahan ug apohan
Samtang sila naglakaw paingon kanimo,
Mga dalagita sa ilang pagbukhad sa ting-init
Uban sa mga kabulakan ug higalang babaye
Nga wala pa makasulay sa katam-is
Sa pagdunggab sa ilang kaunoran,
Kasakit sa pagbati, pagdinugo hangtod nga kamad-an
Nga ato nang natagamtaman.*

*Nahinumdoman ba sa mga inahan
Kon giunsa pagpangalimyon sa mga bulak
Diha sa ilang mga palad,
Ang lunhaw nga duga nagmansa sa ilang mga kinabuhi
Mga tinuboang kapalaran?*

II.

*Timan-I ang kinagagmayan nila mga nagdala
Sa imong mga yanong kabtangan: belo, pisi,
Puting sinina, pinungpong nga mga bulka sa ting-int,
Daw usa ka kahibulongang kasal
Diin wala pay mga pamanhonon.*

*Karong nag-alirong sila sa imong tiilan,
Gamhanang Inahan sa adlaw, mga bituon,
Bulan ug kadagatan, tug-ani sila kon ngano
Nga ang imong timbangan sa kapatasan
Kanunay gayong moduyog sa gibug-aton
Sa ilang mga giantos, ang walay kumpas
Nga kahilom nagdanguyngoy alang sa ilang
Mga patayng-buhi nga mga damgo.*

*Kinahanglang mahibalo ang imong mga anak nga babaye:
Ang korona ug baston sa imong gahom
Anaa sa sulod sa binantayang mga kuta
Diin gitino nga ikaw magpabiling putli,
Ang imong dugo nabagtik sa bato,
Ug ang imong mga tiil nga layo kaayo sa yuta,
Nangurog sa imong gituntongan.*

The Quick Bruise and Run of Love (for Mary Ann and Marc) – Source Text

I.

Summer twilight slices into two
Halves of a sweet cantaloupe;
At table, the speckled stargazer
Opens its fragrant petals windward;
At my foot, our old cat dreams.
Nothing here betrays the grace
We speak of at each meal, together
Or alone. Today, while one of us
Sits under the tamarinds,
And another wades the golden river,
I alone sit at table, a mother
Attending to the core of fruit
Cleaving to the knife, the fuchsia

Flower sundered by summer's heat,
The cat purring its ninth life away.

II.

Yesterday night after dinner, we told
An old story, pausing at a part
We did not love but could not
Gnaw off. It is your hurt fathered
Into child's shape, vulnerable
To faithlessness. As the story twists
In the telling, you speak of a new-
Born child, whose limbs could break
Or neck snap, were one of you to hold
The tender heels and swing against a wall.
We need to put this story right.

III.

Long, long ago on a fevered night,
A mother sat by her child's bed,
Damp cloth soothing flame of forehead.
Limbs. In her vigil she vowed
On pain of death, to beg the life
Or health back into those cheeks.
The fever broke, she held her kind
And knew the gods had ears.
Son, Daughter, take this story-child
With care. In the curve of your arms
Your father's fruit survives the fall,
Becomes your bruised but living grace.

Ang Daling Pagkabun-og ug Pagtubig sa Gugma (Alang kay Maryann ug Marc)
– Target Text

I.

*Gihiwa sa kilum-kilom sa ting-init
Ang tam-is nga milon ug kini natunga:
Sa atong kan-anan adunay bulak nga manan-aw'g bituon
Mibukhad sa iyang nangalimyong mga gihay sa hangin:
Sa akong tiilan, nagdamgo ang atong gulang na iring.
Dinhi walay nagluib sa grasya
Nga atong gihinganlan sa matag pangaon,
Sa panag-uban o sa pag-inusara. Karon, samtang ang usa kanato
Nagpalandong sa ilalom sa sambag,
Ug ang usa pa naglabang sa suba nga bulawan,
Nag-inusara akong naglingkod dinhi sa atong kan-anan,
Inahan nga nagbantay sa kasingkasing sa bunga
Nga mikuyog sa hiwa sa baraw, ang rosas nga bulak
Nangalaya diha sa alinging sa ting-init,
Ang atong iring naghagok sa iyang ikasiyam nga kinabuhi.*

II.

*Gahapon sa gabii pagkahuman sa panihapon, atong giasoy
Ang daang sugilanon, ug mihunong ta sa bahin
Nga wa nato kahimut-I apan dili usab nato
Maingkib ug maluwa sa dayon. Kini ang semilya sa inyong kahiubos
Nga karon nahulma na sa usa ka bata nga mapukan usab
Kon siya luiban. Sa pagbaliko sa sugilanon diha sa pagsugilon,
Naghisgot kamo sa usa ka bag-ong gipanganak nga bata,
Kung kinsang mga kamot mabali
O liog mabanggi, kon ugaling anaay usa kaninyo nga mohawak
Sa iyang mga tiil ug mobunal sa iyang ulo sa bungbong.
Kinahanglan natong ibutang sa tarong kining sugilanon.*

III.

*Kaniadto, sa mga gabii pagsalimuang.
Nagbantay ang usa ka inahan sa kilid sa higdaan sa iyang anak
Nagpahid sa gihilintang agtang, bukton ug mga tiil.
Sa iyang pagtukaw iayng gibugti
Ang iyang kinabuhi, aron lamang ibalik
Ang kahimsog sa aping sa iyang anak.
Nahuwasan ang bata sa hilanat, iayng gisapnay
Ang iayng bunga, ug mituo siya
Nga adunay dalunggan ang mga bathala.
Mga anak, kugosa kining bata sa sugilanon
Ug alimahi. Sa inyong mainitong gakos
Ang bunga sa inyong amahan dili mapukan,
Hinuong mamahimo kining inyong nabun-og
Apang buhing paghigugma.*

Third World Music on the 23rd Day of Rain – Source Text

Roof leaks, still falls rain.
My pots and pans fill, half-full
With monsoon music.

Huni sa Kawhaa'g Tulo ka Adlaw sa Ulan – Target Text

*Nagtulo ang atop, nagkalingaw pa'g ulan.
Napuno'g katunga ang akong mga kaldero'g kulon
Sa mga huni sa tinghabagat.*

Poet in Exile – Source Text

My voice walks on tiptoe here.
The floorboards of the castle creak
As I tread lightly, the corners
Of my speech, awkward at every turn.

They move through this night-maze
Of their narratives, while I lose
Thread of mine, the minotaur's shadow
Driving me mute, down to the dungeons.

I tell myself: tunnel out!
With songs, invent new life
For every creature in this glen.
Dispel the syntax of darkness.

My poems shall stride boldly there
Tomorrow, outside the castle walls.
I shall thread their syllables with mine
And trust my way through the labyrinth.

(5) *Panghingilin sa Magbabalak* – Target Text

*Nanginto-kinto ang akong tingog dinhi.
Nanglagiik ang mga salog nga kahoy sa kastilyo
Bisan hinay kong paglakaw, ang mga suok
Sa akong sinultihan, salikwaot sa matag likoon.*

*Magpaturatoy sila'g laag niining galiko-likong kangitngit
Sa ilang mga sugilanon, samtang nabinbin
Ako sa tanod sa akong sugilanon, ang anino sa toro ni Minos
Nagtukmod kanakong naamang na didto sa ilawom sa atob.*

*Molakaw nga maisog ang akong mga balak
Ugma damlag, sa gawas niining bungbong sa kastilyo.
Akong tuhogon ang ilang mga pinulongan uban sa ako
Ug mosalig sa akong agianan lagbas sa labirinto.*

Notes

1. This experience is echoed by Corazon Villareal in her Hiligaynon (vernacular language of the Ilonggos of the West Visayas) translation work: “But I had to come back to Iloilo I wanted to step foot once again in Panay, the land of my birth I wanted to experience that which Bakhtin had termed as the ‘brute materiality’ of a culture, something that I feel is indispensable to a translator” (97). Here, her sentiments reflect those of Evasco’s, that one must be in contact physically with one’s birth island to be able to experience language fully.
2. This story can be found in Marcel M. Navarra’s *Marcel M. Navarra: Mga Piling Kuwentong Sebuwano* (1986).
3. Erlinda K. Alburo, interview by author, 14 January 2003, Via Mare Restaurant, Tektite Towers, Pasig City. Hereafter, all quotations from Alburo in this part of the study are from this interview.
4. Ester Tapia, interview by author, 20 January 2003, Ester Tapia Residence, Martinez Compound, Cebu City. Hereafter, all quotations from Tapia in this part of the study are from this interview.

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