Mabini Review

VOLUME 5 (2016) | ISSN 2012-2144

contents

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Mabini Review

VOLUME 5 (2016) | ISSN 2012-2144

A note from the editor

On Church, Consumerism, Migrants' Idealization and Knowledge Economy in the Peripheries

This issue of Mabini Review gathers articles that converge in similarities and diverge in dissimilarities. All articles are bound by a single thread as they interrogate concrete social contexts—without going highly speculative that may baffle uninitiated readers. However, each article maintains distinctive voice in theoretical and methodological ways; and each intellectual investigation possesses uniqueness as authors elucidate, discuss and appraise concepts, praxis and milieus within their respective idiosyncrasies, academic orientations and styles.

Ballano, a thinker with a deep background on sociology of religion, concludes that *"the persistence of clerical abuses in the Catholic Church has something to do with the plurality of informal doctrinal, biblical, ethical, and cultural norms which compete with the ecclesial canonical provisions*". With this plurality of standards, the church leaders are given wide latitude of options as regards construction and application of policies (which could benefit the abusers) especially when the lofty reputation of the church is at stake. The leaders of the church may perhaps lean towards the abusers' favor within the bounds of the said standard (that is) if given a slightest opportunity. Of course, the church leaders deciding the cases remain to be harbingers of the overall church protection and welfare, notwithstanding their duty as deciders of cases.

Ballano notes that *"The Church has given the bishops more ecclesiastical powers to settle local cases"*. This empowers them to exercise their discretion having in mind the church's concepts of *"forgiveness, unity, sanctity and eternal nature of the priesthood, and the ecclesiastical stand that clerical abuse should be dealt with internally within the church..."* Ballano stresses that diocesan leaders respond to sexual abuse allegations within the institution employing internal mechanisms such as investigation and administrative leave. In most cases, these internal actions are not transparent to those who are not in the church hierarchy. This response framework cultivates a suspicion of 'cover-up', 'white-wash' and 'downplaying'.

'Cover-up', albeit used differently, is also a term that may describe what is going on in online media platforms as migrant workers

project themselves positively; and as official websites of state institutions portray migrants' conditions auspiciously. Aguirre calls this as *idealization* or *romantization*. Migrant workers, and so the State, tend to sugar-coat their plight. They show their families, relatives and friends the pleasures of life in a foreign country but (in some instances) all these projections are lies. Their agonies and pains are thickly clouded with narratives of success and enjoyment.

The Filipino migrants' self-presentation is attributable to the experiences they encounter in their daily lives. These experiences are shaped, cultivated and configured by both the home and host nations. With this, the migrants tend to construct images that their home and host nations want to see projected. Aguirre points out: *"Hegemonic images of 'home', 'family', and 'childhood' act as nodal points in setting up discursive boundaries"*. These images are painted so beautifully in the migrants' online and offline self-projection despite the apparent ambivalence of their experiences. What dominate their narratives are those things which bring about auspicious picture of themselves. The migrants are caught up in the web of officially sanctioned discourses. Their individual narratives become part of powerful grand narratives that serve the interests of nation-states.

Aguirre observes, *"At the very least, they demonstrate the agentive capacities of individuals in using new media forms to signify and make sense of their diasporic lives. However, the agentive possibilities offered by the multimodal resources of online new media, in the particular case of social media engagement, do not necessarily translate to alternative or dissenting imaging and imagination of a romanticized and idealized migrant life"*.

Ogatis' article explicates the possible salvation of Filipinos from the exceedingly consumerist environment that modern capitalism nurtured in its womb. She sharply criticizes the way capitalists manipulate the buying habit of consumers. *"The dominating power of the capitalist becomes more visible in its capacity to manipulate the mentality and desires of the members of the consumerist society",* Ogatis stresses. 'Reason' sometimes cannot fight against this 'manipulation' because of the latter's sheer strength. She says, *"It creates an infatuating technique which engenders "false needs" among consumers. This manipulation torments the very rationality of man"*. Hence, consumerism destroys the very core of humanity that is reason. *"Reason can no longer create protective armor due to the fact that the common ideology of the consumerist society demands for a blind conformity"*, she wittingly remarks.

Filipinos, like their global counterparts, are seemed to be taken over by the insanity that advanced capitalism proffers. Failure to distinguish what is 'true needs' from 'false needs' becomes the rule rather than the exception. People turn away from the *"true meaning of necessity"*. Ogatis claims that the society creates a simulated culture that is consumer-centred which dilutes our intellectual culture. She points out, *"In effect, the new power of consumerist culture legitimizes the hedonistic tendencies..."*

Ogatis recognizes possible solutions for this problem. She opines that moderation (Aristotlean Golden Mean) can be an attempt to move away from the manipulative power of consumerism; save for some issues that she herself observes. Another, *"One possible solution to escape from this trance created by consumerism is to create a demystified state in one's consciousness"*. She calls this demystification. *"It is important to note that in demystified state, man's consciousness is no longer mesmerized by what is given in the consumerist environment. As Marx reiterated, once man becomes a victim of his very own consuming life, man is always being controlled and seduced by the Capitalist spell"*.

The importance of knowledge that springs forth from the peripheries is what Nelson Turgo emphasizes in his article. Turgo tries to find points of intersection between and among concepts like capitalism, local knowledge, knowledge economy, modernity and others. To realize this, he investigates the daily affairs of fishmongers, fishermen and fish traders as they locate their place in local economy. He observes, among others, how small scale fishing business which found its crude genesis from conversations that took place only on small boats and private spaces suddenly metamorphosed and expanded into public trading. Because of the limited resources available in the community, the fisherfolks *"created a pool of knowledge that they get to deploy in their quest for a living".* This knowledge also helps them present their modern selves. This is all marshalled, he believes, by the demands of capitalism.

The scholar claims, *"As centre of knowledge production and consumption, the fish markets stand as the fishing community's emblem and connection to modernity. As knowledge knows no boundaries and as information travel, the fish markets serve as the people's expressed affinity to the wider world, to facts and figures that matter to their daily lives which are also very much a product of the outside world—of places, far and away"*.

He shattered the myths about (knowledge) economy. He believes that knowledge economy should not only be limited and associated with stock market, software programs, or other similar work regime and market actors. Knowledge economy from the margins should also be highlighted as this marks the desire of those in the peripheries to have an active engagement with the modern capitalist world. He recommends, in fact, that a continuous excavation of local or place-specific knowledge must be done.

With the articles herein featured, the Mabini Review hopes that the readers are given a clear view of the societal contexts that constitute the overall dynamics of public lives. May the readers reassess or re-evaluate their respective engagement with religious organizations, with compatriots abroad (online or offline), with state-sponsored industries, and with those small scale entrepreneurs in the margins. This is to allow the emergence of a critical public that thinks, reasons, and understands; and ultimately to nurture a public that is free from all forms of manipulation.

Joseph Reylan B. Viray

D(I)aspora: Discourse, Multimodality, and the Speaking of Migrant Subjects in New Media

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abstract

The paper has two main aims: first, I emphasize the need for a multimodal lens in discourse analysis; second, I present a critique of the discursive construction of migrant identity on Internet-based new media platforms that are produced by state institutions (i.e. official websites) and created by individual migrants on their own personal social media profiles. Using a multimodal framework that accounts for not only words but the various semiotic resources available to participants in online media content production, I focus my analysis on two sets of cases of official texts from Philippine and New Zealand government migration websites and three sample cases of social media content by Auckland-based Filipino migrants in New Zealand. In both the official and individual texts, there is an apparent idealization and romanticization of migrant life in New Zealand depicted mainly through the hegemonic images of "home", "family", and "childhood" that act as *nodal points* in setting up discursive boundaries. Although it may seem that individual agency is not realized in the purported democratized avenues of expression of the Internet, I argue that migrant self-presentation online or offline is contingent on the very complexity and contradictions of migrant daily life as configured by both the home and host nations.

keywords:
Multimodal Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Diaspora, Filipino, New Zealand

 | ISSN 2012-2144

Introduction

The notion of "diaspora" has been appropriated by various groups within the academe and sectors outside it (Clifford 1997). Defined, in general, as a dispersal of a people from a single original place, a classic conceptualization by Safran offers a model of diaspora that is largely based on the Jewish experience of having been driven away from the Holy Land (2005; 1991). As such, the formed expatriate minority communities continue to attach themselves to this place of origin as a source of their identity and solidarity, commits to maintaining and restoring the homeland, and imagines an eventual return to it at the right time. However, the concept's alliance with transnational, post-structural, and post-colonial projects has largely defined the theoretical route of diaspora discourses and experiences at present. Clifford's "polythetic" understanding of diaspora, for instance, embraces a more fluid notion of the idea. Homeland, by his definition, does not necessarily pertain to a physical place of origin that a people with an experience of dispersal long to return to. In fact, in this view, the diaspora discourse need not even be restricted to the idea of a symbolic homeland since a people's origin, a prolonged separation from it, and a resolute drive to come back are not the only elements that could characterize the phenomenon. He frames the concept with a very appealing catchphrase, "dwelling-in-displacement," summarizing both the spirit of today's transnational subjectivity and a more generous version of diaspora as a conceptual tool (Clifford 1997, 310).

Opening up the diaspora discourse to a more varied and differently angled view to capture people's global movements in the twentieth century is the basic impetus for conceptual and terminological innovation such as "transnationalism" and "transmigrants" as outlined and theorized in Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992) and Schiller (1995). The move to a new name is fuelled by the objective of revising the belief that immigrants are "uprooted" from the homeland since, in reality, they are able to "build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" in which activity "they develop and maintain multiple relations" (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 1-2). The greatest contribution of the framework is, perhaps, the release of immigrants or diasporic subjects from the rigid coupling of home and identity, since the premise is that they possess the creative capacity to manage and appropriate ideas and objects in order to

establish their place in both the home and host countries. A transnationalist perspective, therefore, claims that immigrants can be firmly rooted even outside their countries of origin since they are able to maintain "many different racial, national, and ethnic identities" (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 11). The assertion reveals a global perspective in migrant identity formation and reconceptualizes the limits and agency of the immigrant subject. However, it is important to remember that certain confinements in identity construction will always be in place since "it is in terms of these bounded identity constructs that migrants frame their individual and collective strategies of adaptation" (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992, 19). In this light, the role nation-states play in regulating the movements of their population is at once affirmed and questioned in the context of globalization and transmigration.

Turning to a "transnational" standpoint is clearly influenced by the post-structural and social constructionist strands of thought in social science. But, as a dilemma charged against the postmodern enterprise, there is the danger of slipping into a pluralistic, yet nebulous, approach such that all analyses become receptive to a wide array of experiences and perspectives but at the same time deprived of any historical consciousness. San Juan (2000) issues a caveat against the postmodernist tendency to eschew politics by noting that any analysis of identities "will remain vacuous if it does not take into account the reality of imperial world-systemic changes" (231). Neoliberal globalization may be the prime example of these world-systemic changes that San Juan encourages critical inquiries on identity to consider. This is an invaluable perspective in today's paper since globalization is the condition of late modernity characterized by, among other things, the defiance of spatial and temporal distance (see for instance Harvey 1989; Giddens 1991; Fairclough 2010), the context in which I aim to situate my readings of articulations of Filipino migrant identity in new media.

My main research questions, therefore, are: first, what form of agency do Filipino migrants, specifically, possess in constructing and understanding a diasporic identity, that is, an understanding of themselves as Filipinos living in a place outside their homeland? And second, what role do Internet-based new media have in migrant identity work? In particular, I draw on the experiences of Filipino migrants in Auckland, New Zealand – a relatively new destination site for Filipinos wanting to move permanently (i.e. acquire residence and eventually, citizenship) or temporarily (e.g. for work or study)

abroad. New Zealand is also unique in the sense that it attracts a particular kind of Filipino migrants as statistical trends demonstrate: the kind that could be considered as "ideal immigrants" (e.g. of middle class background, highly educated) based on a human capital paradigm similar to the case of Filipino skilled immigrants in Canada who, as reported by Barber (2008), are preferred by the state since they are able to "land on their feet" and immediately become "economically productive" (1280). For instance, in 2013 Filipinos in New Zealand had the highest labor force participation among the Asian ethnic groups and even the general New Zealand population (Statistics New Zealand nd).

This paper is also largely about representation. In particular, I analyze the construction of migrant identity in state-produced texts from the Philippines and New Zealand and identity work of Auckland-based Filipino migrants on their individual social media profiles the context of which is the overall diaspora dynamics, as discussed above, intersecting with new media affordances, that is, Internet-based information and networking technologies. In particular, the texts of interest are the following:

1. Official or state-produced texts (2012 to 2014): three cases of video testimonials of Filipino migrants in New Zealand, deposited in and accessed from the official New Zealand immigration website New Zealand Now (https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/).

2. Official or state-produced texts (2012-2014) from the Philippines taken from the website of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO): an audio-visual brief that introduces and promotes CFO as a government agency in charge with issues pertaining to Filipinos based abroad, especially in asserting their role in nation building.

3. Individual social media of Filipino migrants in Auckland (2010 to 2012):
   a) Mga Kuro-kuro ni Ka Uro (http://a-pinoy-in-nz.blogspot.com/)
   b) Filipinos in Auckland (https://filipinosinauckland.wordpress.com/)
   c) Personal Facebook account of a Filipina in Auckland

These materials are accessible online and nearly all are public-access except for the personal Facebook account. This fact is important to consider since the context of the Internet assumes not only a location for storing and distributing content but also capacities in terms of meaning-making resources and technologies of content production potentially available to many Internet users. Indeed, though partial and conditional, Internet-based media offer a more democratized space in terms of participation and content creation compared to traditional media (e.g. broadcast media). In teasing out the semiotics and politics of representation in these texts, I employ the analytic potential of integrating the frameworks of Discourse Theory (DT) outlined by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001; Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2009; van Leeuwen 2005; van Leeuwen 2008). Methodologically, then, I would like to emphasize the need for a multimodal lens in studying discourse, that is, there must be a constant and systematic approach to studying the many resources for meaning-making in our largely textualized contemporary culture especially when we take the Internet and its new media offering as data site. The information and network era, as the migrant experiences in my study show, has provided mobile persons not only the practical but also an ideational and performative means of connecting with others and continuing relationships from a distance. Social media, in particular, are not just ways to express views but are inevitably occasions for self-presentation (Aguirre 2014) beyond the way of language since images and sound, for instance, are undeniable aspects of these new media engagements. What I will stress by way of demonstration using particular cases is the importance of multimodality in critical discourse studies as it integrates the non-linguistic dimension of semiotic processes in the attempt to understand certain aspects of human experience.

Conceptual and Analytic Frameworks

Aside from laying my understanding of diaspora on the table, identity is the other major concept that needs a little more discussion. As an exercise in interpretive work with a focus on the subject of identity, I rely on Stuart Hall's elucidation of the concept when he said: "though we speak, so to say 'in our own name', of ourselves and from our own experience, nevertheless who speaks, and the subject

who is spoken of, are never exactly in the same place" (2003, 233). Essentially, what I attempt to do is locate the place of the "I" or the speaking subject in instances of migration discourses where the migrant voice is invoked. Echoing Hall (1996) once more in contending that identity exists within and not apart from discourse, I also forward the perspective that it is only through discourse events that identities are able to be expressed and apprehended; displayed and comprehended; performed and (mis)construed. This assertion brings us to another level of discursive relations that involves the analysis of power in discourse events. As explained by the positions of, among many others, Foucault (1983), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Hodge and Kress (1988), and Fairclough (2010; 1992) a critical analysis of discourse is an interrogation of the politics of meanings and the construction of certain truths within structural and agentive positions that define the place of both institutions and individuals in society (Giddens 1984).

By discourse, I mean what critical discourse analysts (CDA) since the 1980s have been saying about the problematic and political relationship of language, institutional structures, and individual lives. Ruth Wodak summarizes effectively the methodological and political task of critical discourse analysis by saying that there is a need to analyze opaque and transparent manifestations of power, dominance, and control in actual and extended social interaction that take partly linguistic forms (in Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000). Discourse, a term often used in everyday talk, is generally understood within the theorizations and practice of critical discourse studies in the following manner:

> Discourses are characteristic (socially and culturally formed, but historically changing) ways of talking and writing about, as well as acting with and toward, people and things. These ways are circulated and sustained within various texts, artefacts, images, social practices, and institutions, as well as in moment-to-moment social interactions. In turn, they cause certain perspectives and states of affairs to come to seem or be taken as "normal" or "natural" and others to seem or be taken as "deviant" or "marginal…" (Gee 2000, 183)

The specific strand of critical discourse analysis I am using in today's presentation is one that engages with the multimodality of texts. Blommaert & Bulcaen (2000) in their assessment of CDA after roughly two decades of development claim that a virtually sole

reliance on a "linguistic outlook" weighs down the practice of critique within the discipline and limits what could be done in terms of fusing linguistic and non-linguistic semiotic practices. As a response to calls to go beyond the linguistic to achieve a fuller understanding of discourse situations, Kress and van Leeuwen, for instance, have developed a multi-semiotic framework to deal with the various resources for meaning-making available for people to use in their sign-making practices within particular cultural contexts.

Van Leeuwen, in particular, prefers to call signs "resources" to veer away from the connotation conveyed by the former that meanings are inherent in objects (2005, 3). Kress (2009), on the other hand, puts it best when he asserts that people are not sign-users but are sign-makers; the focus should then be on the making of signs and not the use. In a similar vein, Lemke (1995) underscores the active and deliberate process of meaning-making by calling it a "kind of doing" within a social context. This perspective implies that people are not merely consumers and recipients of meanings bestowed by higher authorities in society for social structures and the agents of social action are involved in a "dialectic of control" (Giddens 1984, 16). In this relationship, structures built into social institutions do not necessarily dominate "docile bodies" for even the subordinate(d) can exert influence, perhaps change, on the superior (Giddens, 1984).

The theoretical ability of resources or signs for making meaning Van Leeuwen calls "semiotic potential", which –

> ….. is constituted by all their past uses and an actual semiotic potential constituted by those past uses that are known to and considered relevant by the users of the resource, and by such potential uses as might be uncovered by the users on the basis of their specific needs and interests. Such uses take place in a social context… (2005, 4)

In this paper, I account for the linguistic and semiotic resources put into use by my participants in their sign-making endeavors in online new media. These resources are themselves carriers of a history of sign-making whose potential relevance to the diasporic experience is only revealed by the specificities of the social context of the individuals involved in the practice of making signs. They are semiotic resources that are at once distinctly available within the spatiality and temporality of Filipino diaspora experience in New Zealand and as affordances of Internet-based media.

The concept of meaning-potential is fundamentally an analysis of power in society in general and power in the making (or holding down) of meanings in our signifying practices in particular. The fact that these resources or signs have no fixed meanings does not mean that meanings are made equal or on equal terms. When the meaning-potential of a possible resource is restricted, there are those who benefit from the occlusion of either dissent or change.

Discussion

Case 1: The CFO Audio-Visual Brief

The "I" in leaving: (De) articulating participants in the migration process

The Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) looks after the interests, rights, and welfare of Filipinos residing abroad – whether short or long-term –and ensures their continued connection to the country. It was created through a national act in June 1980 and operates under the Office of the President.

The official website of CFO (www.cfo.gov.ph) is a rich source of information if one wants to learn more about its mandate and programs. One of the smaller but, nonetheless, critically engaging elements that is available on the website is a downloadable audio-visual presentation (AVP) – produced in 2012 and runs for eight minutes – that summarizes what the commission is all about. Table 1 provides a thematic outline of the AVP.

Table 1: Thematic outline of the CFO Profile AVP produced in 2012

Time	Theme	General content
00.00	Introduction/Opening	Migration in the world and in the Philippines
00.41	Migrant profiles	Filipino migrants in different countries and their reasons for going abroad
01.25	Commission on Filipinos Overseas profile	Presenting its history, mandate and programs

05.50	Social costs of migration	Negative effects of emigration in the Philippine society
06.15	Financial issues of Filipinos who go abroad	Helping Filipino migrants handle their earnings wisely
06.29	Aquino government speech on Filipino migration	Making the decision to go abroad a choice and not a necessity
07.14	Conclusion	Reiteration of the thrust of the CFO

Focusing for now on Theme 2 that runs from 00.41 to 01.25, it is easy to see how viewers are led to the individual personal telling of migration experiences, an action that gives a human face to abstracted information about migration, such as statistical data. In many instances, resorting to aggregated data and numerical information is an efficient way of depicting an overall picture of a particular phenomenon. Such is certainly true for the CFO AVP in question particularly in its introductory section, which provides an overview of the traits and trends of Filipino migration in general terms. What aggregated representation misses is the specificity and uniqueness of individual cases that are not captured by the modal privileging of large generalizable data often conveyed in abstracted forms (e.g. numbers). However, although the individual testimonials of Filipino migrants in different geographic locations provide a *warmer* complement to "cold" figures, the deployment of these "migrant voices" in the CFO AVP performs a construction of migrant discourse both at the level of representation, and necessarily, at the level of ideology.

As an official voice of the state, the CFO through the audio-visual brief endeavors to give prominence to the notion of emigration as a purely "individual" decision and the migration process as a volitional act while softening the articulation of the role of the state in people's decision to leave. The migrant profiles sequence is introduced by a question, *why do Filipinos leave the country?* because while the use of "Filipinos" makes it appear that everyone in the country is leaving, it places the responsibility on the individuals themselves and in so doing reinforces the evocation of migrants being the only clear participants in the migration process. As a response to the question, a series of brief testimonials of Filipinos who have migrated to other countries is showcased. Curiously enough, there is no representation

of a Filipino permanent or labor migrant in an Asian territory except for one from the Middle East. This is remarkable considering that Southeast Asia is one of the most popular destinations of Filipino overseas workers (see for instance POEA 2014). This detail becomes more significant when viewed as a move to make invisible particular characteristics of the Filipino diaspora, perhaps, those that go against the construct of an ideal immigrant image.

Table 2 gathers the reasons why Filipinos leave as 1) identified by the video (voice of CFO, presumably) through the actual texts that are generated on the screen (first two columns from left); and, 2) as narrated by the very migrants through the clips of their interview supplemented by shots of them at work/in action, pertinent still images, and other ambient shots. These testimonials are to be taken as real cases that exemplify the identified reasons for migration. Easily enough, this feature gives credibility to the purported reasons through the "authentic" voices of the individuals telling their own stories. I focus on the representation of the process or act of migration and its participants or actors through the discursive strategies that make up this particular section in the AVP.

There is a prominence of the subject "I" and this is understandable since the individuals shown in the video clips are talking about themselves. This, however, gains a specific meaning when viewed relative to the overall discourse on Filipino migration that the AVP outwardly conveys and the ideological underpinnings that it does not express explicitly. The "I" becomes a central signifier because the *sign complex*, to use Kress' terminology (2009), at this particular juncture in the text revolves around the projection of the "I" as the main actor in the process of migration. As a response to the question "why Filipinos leave," the testimonials of individuals referring to themselves and their reasons for going abroad provide suitable and quite expected answers: greener pasture, family unification, better opportunities, marriage. In recognizing the various reasons for engaging in the act, the subject "I" becomes central, therefore, in identifying which actors or participants are involved in the migration process by favoring its immediate presence while suppressing that of others.

However, though there is a ubiquity of the "I" in this section, other participants are nominated as also involved in the final decision to leave. Personal relations are mentioned such as parents (for Chuck Lapus) and the brother-in-law (for Wilfred Tua). Also, a very interesting supernatural category could be considered as another

actor in the process. This is exemplified by Grace Manuel's attribution of her being outside the Philippines as a consequence of "God's plan"— an attitude not difficult to understand considering Philippine society's religious underpinnings. Taking into account the mention of these other participants in the migration process, it can be argued that the text attempts to represent the act of leaving as either a volitional choice or a providential move made by the migrant.

In order to pin down a definite answer to the query "why Filipinos leave," it was prudent to supply answers that appear personal, actual, and truthful. This was achieved primarily through the use of semiotic resources that are high in naturalistic modality – what the audience see are real people speaking about their real experiences. The text gains believability by nominating each individual migrant that in turn projects an honest and authentic voice. The positioning of the audience is, thus, achieved when they are made witness to "real" people sharing only their "real" stories and when they develop a sympathetic regard for what the series of testimonials imply about the (f)actors that impel migration. In addition, the generated onscreen texts synoptically highlighting the themes of what each featured migrant say (first column on left of Table 2) perform a legitimation of the purposes for each decision to leave. Such utterance constructions are what Van Leeuwen calls "moralized actions," which are realized by means of abstractions that reference moral qualities or values undergirding the identified action (2008, 126). "Greener pasture", "unification", "advancement", and "better opportunities" are immediately perceived as desirable purposes without careful scrutiny as to what each actually means or entails. A deeper account of specific cultural and social undercurrents explains how "following god's plan" and "marrying a foreigner" also become something "good". While the former is hinged on the religiosity of many Filipinos, the latter is based on the stereotype of a better life with a foreign partner. While both are premised on arguable assumptions, their prevalence cannot be dismissed. What is clear, as demonstrated by a socio-semantic analysis of this specific section of the AVP, is that migration or diaspora, at least in the case of Filipinos, is driven by personal agency where the "I" or individual subject is in absolute control of the decision to move, or else driven by family or supernatural providence.

Table 2 Represented Participants in the Process of Migration as Shown by the Testimonials of Filipino Migrants in the CFO AVP

Text on the screen		Migrant testimonial	Represented participant/actor in the process/event
To find greener pastures...	Sammy de Hitta, USA	I'm in this country for greener pasture. Although I have a good job in the Philippines but I like it better here.	'I' *Actor is nominated and individuated; Country is likewise identified (same for the rest)
Destined to live abroad…	Grace Manuel, USA	I never dreamed of coming to this country pero (but) I think God has other plans for me.	'I' God
Family unification…	Chuck Lapus, USA	I'm in this country because my parents brought me here for a better life.	'I' Parents
Professional advancement…	Eduardo Rodriguez, Saudi Arabia	Nagsimula ako bilang, ah, field salesman at kalaunan ay na-promote ako bilang spare parts manager. (I started as, ah, field salesman and eventually got promoted as spare parts manager).	'Ako' ('I')
For better work opportunities…	Wilfred Tua, Australia	Yung isang brother in law ko, nauna siya rito sa Australia and then nagsabi sa akin na mas maganda raw dito sa Australia. So, sinubukan naming mag-apply. (A brother in law, he came here to Australia first and then he told me that it is better here in Australia. So, we tried to apply).	Brother-in-law 'We' (presumably his family)
Marriage to foreign nationals…	Susan and Malcolm Conan, UK	Susan: Nung nakilala ko siya…ayun…nagkapamilya… (When I met him…we had a family…	'Ko' ('I')
		Malcolm: Filipinos are caring and an…fantastic people [sic].	Filipinos (collectivised)

Case 2: New Zealand Now Migrant Testimonial Videos

Romancing immigrant life in NZ: Home, family, and children as nodal points

My specific objective for this particular section addresses both a particular conceptual issue and a specific methodological step: I forward the deployment of multimodal analysis of texts that employs the notion of *nodal points*. In analyzing three video testimonials of Filipino immigrants in New Zealand, I would like to demonstrate how the use of words and images in a state-managed new media site achieves a *hegemonic intervention* in migrant identity discourses of/on Filipinos in New Zealand. By hegemonic intervention, I make use of Laclau's explanation that it is the process by which conflicting discourses, or at least those that are characterized by ambiguity, achieve a fixation in meaning (Laclau 1990). Hegemonic intervention as I use it here is not entirely in line with Laclau's original discussion though, which, if I correctly understand, has to do with the application of force in order to achieve a suppression of other potential meanings within a discursive field. I am using the concept instead with reference to a more Gramscian take on hegemony and the development and maintenance of "common sense" to prolong the status quo. In essence, the concept of hegemonic intervention I forward pertains to making certain discourses more long-standing than others through cultural intervention, not only and not necessarily by force or direct violence; a kind of discursive hegemony where there is an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity by arresting the flow of differences in order to construct a center through the use of nodal points or privileged discursive points that momentarily fixate meanings.

Exposing the *myth* of certain prevailing discourses being natural and universal is the main task of critical discourse analysis. To Laclau and Mouffe (1985), the politics in discourse lies in the *artificial* cessation of making possible meanings. Jørgensen and Phillips (2001) explain this stance:

> A discourse is established as a totality in which each sign is fixed…This is done by the exclusion of all other possible meanings that the signs could have had…Thus a discourse is a reduction of possibilities. It is an attempt to stop the sliding of

> the signs in relation to one another and hence to create a unified system of meaning. (26–27)

The more important facet of this premise, however, is in its implication of the process by which certain "fixing" of meanings becomes more recognized than others and how this forms the dominant discourses that rule over the ways we make sense of our lives. Laclau and Mouffe remind us further that a critical stance towards discourse means that we should endeavor to "map out the processes in which meanings of signs are fixed" and the process by which "some fixations of meaning become so conventionalized that we think of them as natural" (in Jørgensen and Phillips 2001, 25). From a multimodal semiotic perspective, we can analyze the process through which meaning potential is arrested by looking at compositionality or the system for integrating disparate modes into a multimodal whole (van Leeuwen 2003). I am at this point, for the sake of time and simplicity (although I would like to underscore the fact that textual analysis is a messy undertaking), using the notion of "salience," which refers to ways of making some elements more noticeable than others, thus, privileging one element while marginalizing another. Salience is achieved in the design of a text by, among others, frequency, regularity, and relative position within the composition. Further, my assertion is that in order for nodal points to be realized as pinning discursive possibilities across several textual compositions, there must be *intratextual salience* and *intertextual salience,* as the diagram below shows. Intratextual salience, of course, means that certain elements are more noticeable than other elements within a particular textual composition. Intertextual salience, on the other hand, pertains to certain elements' being more easily observed (because more apparent) than other elements across different textual compositions (possibly of the same genre or type, but not necessarily) such that there appears to be consistency or regularity of their presence, therefore, having the potential of being construed as unquestionably "what is".

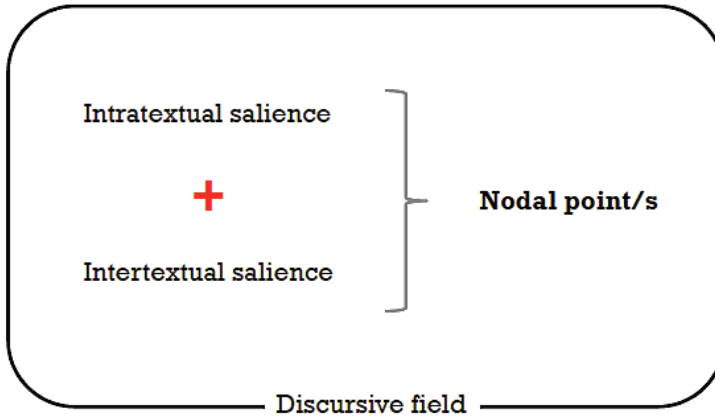

Diagram 1: Multimodal realization of nodal points through the notion of "salience" within a field of discourse

The three texts in question are video testimonials of Filipino migrants in New Zealand. These are available and can be accessed from the state-managed website New Zealand Now, (www.newzealandnow.govt.nz), under the "Video Resources" section. Also, these are all the testimonials that feature Filipino immigrants on the website at least up to 2015, the year I last checked for data verification. The videos go by the following titles on the website:

Video 1: John Evangelista (https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/resources/john-evangelista)

Video 2: New life in Christ church (https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/resources/new-life-in-christchurch)

Video 3: Nursing and new life (https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/resources/nursing-a-new-life)

"Home" as nodal point

The notion of "home" is one of the privileged signifiers in the representation of Filipino migrants in the above texts, as effectively demonstrated by the following lines from the featured testimonies delivered by the featured subjects themselves:

> Video 1:
>
> In a way if I would summarize it, I would say that this is the place that we could really call **home**.
>
> Video 2:
>
> We're lucky here. We're safe here. We like the place. We like the people. We feel at **home** here – in New Zealand.

Notice that along with thematic repetition, the word "home" is articulated in the final instance. Kress and van Leeuwen term as the notion of "information value" the relative position of elements in a text and the relative importance such a placement bestows upon the said element considering the overall meaning the composition attempts to convey (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; van Leeuwen 2003). Uttering "home" at the closing of the video makes it the last information delivered, thus, potentially achieving greater memorability or resonance in the viewers. Such a position in the succession of elements, I argue, is a means of granting the image and imagination of home a privileged status as signifiers in constructing the Filipino migrant discourse in the specific case of New Zealand as destination.

"Family" as nodal point

Closely related to the notion of home is the "family," acting as second nodal point at least across the testimonials. More apparent in Videos 2 and 3, the representation of the family appears to be paramount in constructing Filipino migrant life in New Zealand. Notice too that the families featured conform to a set of cultural norms as they are elementary, heterosexual, complete, and intact. Video 1 features a cutaway sequence of the Evangelistas (the parents and two children) at 00.22, standing together (smiling and waving at

the camera) for a family shot in front of their home, on the green lawn. Videos 2 and 3 provide a more significant rendition of the "family photo" since the preview images of their respective video testimonials on the website feature a static shot of the entire family not seen at any point in the actual video. The case of Video 3 is especially germane in this regard since the actual testimonial only shows the father talking about his experience of moving to New Zealand (i.e. the rest of his family is only a subject of talk but is neither seen nor heard in the video). The photo of an entire family, standing as the preview image of the testimonial on the webpage, is the first image seen by visitors who find themselves browsing the said section of the website. This potentially makes salient the notion of an idealized family that is successfully preserved amidst the challenges posed by migration. Although absent in the actual footage (probably due to timing issues during filming), the wholeness of the family is made present in the textual composition of the webpage, paving the way for the audience to apprehend the idea of "family" as the thematic feature of the said testimonial, possibly privileging it as main signifier of a Filipino migrant situation in New Zealand.

"Childhood" as nodal point

Imagining ideal "childhood" is another salient image in the videos. In Videos 1 and 2, specifically, childhood issues and the children in the family are rarely talked about and, further, the children's voices are not heard at all. However, each of the family's children/child becomes a persistent image essentially bringing to the fore what I would like to term as "vocal silence" in which the children form a legitimate part of the entire semiotic landscape of the particular video environment – salient and prominent – though not rendered as literally speaking subjects. Not only are the children featured in cutaway sequences in the videos (essentially comprising a third of the entire testimonial), they are always depicted as being active (e.g. playing on the trampoline or in a playground) outside the home through exterior scenes. If not directly seen, children as a topic is also collocated with the outdoors as subject of talk, as the case of the father in Video 3 demonstrates when narrating his expectations of a foreseeable future in the verbatim excerpt below:

When my children will be here, my plan is just like a Kiwis' does: going camping. I actually have sorted places to go fishing. So maybe we'll do that later on when the children arrives.

Case 3: Migrant Identity Work in Online Social Media

Reproducing the romanticized immigrant life in New Zealand

As an official state arm dealing with the promotion of New Zealand as migrant destination, the videos above allow for an imagination of the country as an ideal place to build a better life for Filipinos and their families. It is understandable of course that contextually speaking any material found in the NZ Now website should serve the purpose of promoting the country as ideal destination to attract equally ideal immigrants. However, looking at individual social media content generated by Filipino immigrants in Auckland, we can see that particular pronouncements about life in New Zealand resonate the official texts' nodal points examined above. Two examples demonstrate this claim; notice the texts in bold face:

Excerpt 1: Mga Kuro-kuro ni Ka Uro
(http://a-pinoy-in-nz.blogspot.com/)

> Happy 10th Anniversary
> Monday, February 21, 2005
>
> Some things in life cannot be measured by how much money you earn. A stroll on the beach, Sunday at the park, the sense of security, being stress-free. All these make up the lifestyle we choose. For us, **New Zealand is definitely the perfect place to raise a family**. Where you can **let your kids play and run around like kids**. Not afraid of child molesters or kidnappers. Where people around you are friendly and more trusting and not paranoid of one another. Where fellow kababayans are more than willing to approach and assist other kababayans.

Excerpt 2: Personal Facebook account of a Filipina in Auckland

> 2011 Facebook post commemorating 2nd anniversary in New Zealand
>
> We've been here in New Zealand for two years now, and though we still sometimes miss UF, Le Chen, isaw and all our friends and family, **NZ has become our home now**. We love how **Ben and Sarah can run around the park and enjoy being kids**. We love the clear blue skies, the fantastic views and **kid-friendly activities everywhere**.

Admittedly, the samples above may be biased since the authors are all parents who not surprisingly may put at the center of their lives and daily activities their family's experiences and welfare upon migrating to New Zealand and quite possibly share these as writings on social media. The website, *Filipinos in Auckland* (https://filipinosinauckland.wordpress.com/), however, holds no such claim, purpose, or identity. In fact, judging by the website name alone, it is not hard to see that it is largely oriented to the Filipino community in Auckland and its various concerns. It is vital to raise then that as a matter of semiotic operation, the potential reasons and potential discourse fixation the website header design engenders is in consonance with at least the "family" acting as a nodal point when depicting Filipino migrant life in New Zealand. Such discourse is present in the cases I have observed earlier – both in the official state-produced texts and the individual social media content of two Filipino migrants.

The centrality of the family in Filipino migrant life as imagined in the discursive instance of the website header is exhibited by the choice of the image that literally tops or heads the homepage of the entire site, as the screen grab in Figure 1 below shows. Not only is the notion of a purportedly Filipino family the most apparent visual element in the header, its Filipinoness is further emphasized iconographically by the images of three stars and a sun – an unmissable allusion to possibly the most banal and highly recognizable emblem of the Philippines and perhaps the easiest, if not most obvious, portrayal of one's unwavering attachment to the country despite distance – the national flag. Aside from this remembrance of origin, it is of course not difficult to notice how the notion of the family once again becomes salient as a nodal point

because its character, as far as the depicted image is concerned, conforms to a dominant heterosexist and elementary imaging as seen in the official texts analyzed prior.

Figure 1: Screen grab of homepage of *Filipinos in Auckland* featuring an image of a nuclear, heterosexual family on the website banner

Conclusion

Analysis of the above cases of discursive work made available in online new media largely illustrates how the state plays a significant role in the attachment and identification of the Filipino migrant to the home and host nations. The discursive maneuvering employed by particular government agencies has the potential to establish legitimate meanings of the migration situation, including the "necessary" traits one must possess in order to successfully build a life overseas.

The samples of social media writings in the study reveal how individuals "find" themselves in the grand narratives of officially sanctioned discourses. At the very least, they demonstrate the agentive capacities of individuals in using new media forms to signify and make sense of their diasporic lives. However, the agentive possibilities offered by the multimodal resources of online new media, in the particular case of social media engagement, do not necessarily translate to alternative or dissenting imaging and imagination of a romanticized and idealized migrant life. This is not to say that migrants do not have the capacity to resist the tendency to conform to dominant discursive formations propelled nonetheless

by dominating structures (e.g. the nation-state) or their proxies, such as state institutions (e.g. immigration agencies) or discursive technologies (e.g. state-run websites). My examples in this paper are not meant to demonstrate the triumph of compliance to hegemonic meanings or meaning-making although it may seem as such given the characteristics of the cases I mentioned and the potential discourse paths they appear to take.

Migrant life, as with life in general, is defined by complexity, ambiguity, and contingency. In my interactions and conversations with Filipino migrants in New Zealand (some of whom served as actual participants in the study), making sense of their diasporic lives and diasporic identities is a daily confrontation, with some days more benign than others. Their social media engagements are occasions for thinking about and interrogating, *inter alia,* their position as outsiders in the host nation, no matter how accommodating or conducive it is, since the limited space they occupy as migrants becomes a defining feature of who they are and what they could possibly become in the new place. Indeed, social media content creation becomes a way of self-presentation. The participants in my study attest to the special use of social media as a practical way of maintaining communication with family across the globe. At the same time, such communicative platforms also necessitate that they gain editorial proficiency in terms of the multi-semiotic meaning-making resources suddenly at their disposal and the discourses about their migrant lives and identities they display to their known and, possibly, unknown readers. One participant explained succinctly such personal discursive navigation that a migrant could potentially deal with in engaging with social media: *you can't readily talk about the sad or negative side of moving to New Zealand because Filipino friends and family have certain expectations of "achievement" attached to migrating.* Nevertheless, writing (talking) about their daily experiences as migrant persons on a platform that allows them relative autonomy, affords them multimodal expressive resources, and offers them an audience potentially beyond their immediate relations is also potentially a means to rethink long-held assumptions not only about themselves as immigrants but also about the complex and conflicted social milieu of migrant life.

In the beginning, I hoped to show the importance of multimodality as a framework to critique discourse situations in society since in reality we do not only use words to construct meaningful engagements in daily life. What I am hoping right now, however, is that I have garnered enough interest in not only

integrating a multi-semiotic lens in the study and critique of culture and discursive situations but also the incorporation of such an optic in unravelling relations and engagement of power, dominance, structure, and agency in personal, which is inevitably also social, life.

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Enforcing the Canon Law: Normative Pluralism and Clerical Abuse in the Catholic Church

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abstract

This article investigates why clerical abuse of Catholic priests persists in the Church using the sociological and normative pluralist perspectives. It analyzes how the various informal normative standards of the Church—doctrinal, ethical, or biblical—affect the enforcement of Canon Law on clerical abuse by bishops, particularly on how they decide on specific cases on the diocesan level. It also investigates how the cultural values and norms influence the bishop's decision whether to sanction erring priests or not or to prosecute abuse cases in civil courts. Unlike the state, the Church has no professional judicial system with a set of legal codes, a hierarchy of ecclesial judges and prosecutors, as well as a comprehensive penal law to assess cases of clerical abuse objectively following the principle of "rule of law." Thus, the informal norms of mercy and compassion, eternal character of the priesthood, camaraderie in the ministry among priests, and other cultural values and norms in the local culture, tend to dominate over the strict penal provisions of the Canon Law against clerical abuse in the bishops' investigation and decision. Faced with multiple normative criteria in judging abuse cases and given the wide ecclesial powers given to them by the Church, local bishops then acquire more discretionary powers to keep investigations of clerical abuse internally in the spirit of evangelical mercy and compassion in order to preserve Church's unity and fellowship of the clergy. This strategy, however, slows down the filing of clerical abuses cases in civil courts and faces the risk of being seen by victims and Church members as a cover-up and grave injustice.

MABINI REVIEW | VOLUME 5 (2016): 28-43
 | ISSN 2012-2144

keywords:
Canon Law, Clerical Abuse, Normative Pluralism, Catholic Church, Law Enforcement

Introduction

Structural analysis, rather a mere investigation on the moral and psychological defects of people, to understand the major causes of a persistent deviant behavior is important for sociologists. In a sociological analysis of deviance, investigating how different formal and informal normative orders within a social order interact and are implemented by enforcement agents is often necessary if one wants a holistic view of the rule-breaking pattern in group, institution, or society. A structural analysis provides a comprehensive assessment in understanding the effectiveness of a law enforcement system, on why a deviant behavior is tolerated rather than sanctioned strictly and how judges view and apply the official law in relation to other informal normative standards in a particular institution. Despite these benefits, the sociological structural analysis continues to be often overlooked in ecclesial investigation and literature concerning the persistence of clerical abuse in the Catholic Church.

Clerical abuse in the Catholic Church is often attributed to the conspiracy of bishops, supervisory clerics, state functionaries, and erring priests by some investigators. Because of this, the investigation and resolution of cases are said to be surrounded by an aura of secrecy. Cover-ups as well as mere transferring of assignments, instead of bringing the accused to justice, seem to be the typical response of bishops in dealing with criminal acts of secular priests such as sexual abuse. Cardinal Law who resigned as Archbishop of Boston on 11 April 2002, for instance, admitted that he just transferred pedophile priests to new parishes despite knowing that they were guilty.[1] Clerical abuse has caused scandals and severe damage to the Church not only spiritually but financially. Dioceses in the United States, for example, have paid out more than US$2 billion in compensation claims. In July 2007 alone, the Los Angeles diocese

[1] The Guardian, "How the Boston Globe exposed the abuse scandal that rocked the Catholic Church", (21 April 2010). Retrieved 3 May 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/21/boston-globe-abuse-scandal-catholic.

paid out US$660 million to 500 victims. In Canada, 81 victims at the Mount Cashel Orphanage were paid US$16 million in 2003.[2] Thus, one may ask: Why do clerical abuses persist in the Church?

Research and literature in the Catholic Church that analyzes clerical abuse, such as sexual abuse of minors in the Catholic Church often point to developmental and psychological factors as important causes of this problem. Although it considers some organizational causes of clerical abuse, the 2011 report on sexual abuse of priests by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), for instance, focused only on the pathological and psychological causes rather than on the structural, particularly on law enforcement aspect of the problem[3] This approach seemed to be consistent with the dominant literature on clerical abuse that primarily applies the psychological[4] rather than the sociological perspective in understanding the perpetration of clerical abuse in the Catholic Church. One dominant explanation that carries psychological undertones on the persistence of clerical abuse is clericalism.[5] Clericalism mainly refers to the general belief that clerics constitute an elite group and, because of their powers as sacramental ministers,

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[2] Brendan Daly, "Sexual Abuse and Canon Law", *Compass Review* 23, (4) (2009), 33. Retrieved 3 May 2017, http://compassreview.org/summer 09/5.pdf.

[3] John Jay College Research Team, "The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010: A report presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops". (2011), 3-5. Retrieved 1 May 2017, http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/ child-and-youth-protection/upload/ The-Causes-and-Context-of -Sexual-Abuse-of-Minors-by-Catholic-Priests-in-the-United-States-1950-2010.pdf.

[4] See for instance the prevalence of psychological theories in the literature review of child sexual abuse by priests: John Jay Research Team, "Child Sexual Abuse: A Review of the Literature," (2004). Retrieved 5 May 2017, http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protect/ upload/child-sexual-abuse-literature-review-john-jay-college-2004.pdf. For some samples of studies using psychological theories, see Thomas G. Plante, "Catholic priests who sexually abuse minors: Why do we hear so much yet know so little?", *Pastoral Psychology*. 44 (1996), 305-10; M. F. Ruzicka, "Predictor Variables on Clergy Pedophiles," *Psychological Reports*.81 (1997), 589-90; P.J. Isley, "Child sexual abuse and the Catholic Church: A historical and contemporary view," *Pastoral Psychology*.45, (1997), 277-99.

[5] See for e.g. Michael L. Papesh, "*Clerical Culture: Contradiction and Transformation: The Culture of the Diocesan priests in the United States Catholic Church"*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004); George B. Wilson. *Clericalism: The Death of Priesthood*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008); Thomas Doyle. Clericalism: Enabler of Clergy Sex Abuse. *Pastoral Psychol.* 54: 189. (2006), 189–213, doi:10.1007/s11089-006-6323-x

they are superior to the laity.[6] It sees the clergy as a privileged class in the Church. It gives an impression to the laity that bishops and priests knew best, resulting in the reluctance to acknowledge or report the misconduct of priest.[7] Clericalism is said to produce a profound emotional and psychological influence on victims of clerical abuse, church leadership, and secular society and explains why many victims remained silent for years.[8]

But abuses of Catholic priests seem to point to a profound structural flaw in the Church's accountability system. Clericalism alone may not be sufficient to account for the persistence of clerical abuse. Abuses of priests did not only start in the contemporary era after the topic of Roman Catholic priests sexually abusing children emerged as an international crisis since the mid-1980s.[9] Church's legal documentation revealed a steady stream of disciplinary pronouncements from the papacy and the bishops beginning in the fourth century and extending through to the present day. Clerical abuse then is embedded in the Church's 2,000-year history.[10] This perseverance suggests a deeper problem in the Catholic's Church's law enforcement system that tolerates clerical abuse rather than just clericalism or weak moral and psychological formation of priests. The legal and canonical standards of the Church under the new Code of Canon Law (CCL), especially Canon 1395 (§1 & §2.), explicitly condemns clerical abuse such as sexual abuse and punish them penal sanctions, including suspension and dismissal from the priesthood:

> Can. 1395 §1. A cleric who lives in concubinage, other than the case mentioned in can. 1394, and a cleric who persists with scandal in another external sin against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue is to be punished by a suspension. If he persists in the delict after a warning, other penalties can gradually be added, including dismissal from the clerical state.

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[6] Thomas P. Doyle. Clericalism: Enabler of Clergy Sex Abuse. *Pastoral Psychol* 54: 189, (2006), 189–213, doi:10.1007/s11089-006-6323-x.

[7] Andrew Hamilton. "Cultures of Accountability for Priests and Celebrities". *Eureika.com.au*, (9 March 2016). Retrieved 20 April 2016, https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=46061#.WQmrWYiGPIU.

[8] *supra*, note 5.

[9] P.J. Isley & P. Isley, "Sexual abuse of male children by church personnel: Intervention and prevention" *Pastoral Psychology*. 39. (1990),85-98.

[10] *Supra*, note 6.

> §2. A cleric who in another way has committed an offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, if the delict was committed by force or threats or publicly or with a minor below the age of sixteen years, is to be punished with just penalties, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state if the case so warrants.[11]

Despite the CCL's strict penalties against abuses involving priests, the clerical abuse continues. Ecclesial investigations of clerical abuses by local bishops and their prosecution in civil courts are scarce. And those cases that prospered in courts often happened after intense media scrutiny. Thus, one may ask: What's wrong with the Church's law enforcement system? Why is it difficult to prosecute erring priests despite the CCL's explicit provisions against clerical abuse?

This paper which applies the sociological perspective aims to explain how the plurality normative system, both informal and canonical, affect the law enforcement system in the Catholic Church, particularly on the bishops' judgment in applying the Church's statutory provisions against clerical abuse. It examines how some biblical and doctrinal teachings and normative standards which might compete with the canonical statutes and blur the bishops' penal judgment on the criminal offense of their priests. This paper has three parts. The first part provides the overall theoretical framework of the article and expounds the effects of normative pluralism on law enforcement. The second part investigates the various informal normative standards in the Catholic Church and how they compete with the legal provisions of the Canon Law and complicate the normative criteria of bishops or supervisory priests handling cases of clerical abuse.

Normative Pluralism and the "Rule of Law"

What constitutes law remains a continuing debate among sociologists. But one thing is sure for socio-legal scholars: If there is no law enforcement, there is no legal order. The German sociologist Max Weber was the first to point out the necessity of a "gapless" law

[11] "Code of Canon Law", Retrieved 4 May 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/eng1104/_index.htm.

where the law is enforced in all its aspects by a specialized staff to ensure coercion, sanction, and deterrence against persons who intend to violate the law.[12] Having clear and "gapless" laws constitute an essential requirement in the three- stage process of an effective law enforcement.[13] Both the state and the Catholic Church uphold the "rule of law" in society. But this principle requires, above all, clarity and coherence of standards to attain its criteria of impartiality, neutrality, objectivity, and universality in judging cases.[14] The "rule of law" cannot exist without a transparent legal system, the main component of which a clear set of legislation that is freely and readily available to all.[15]To achieve moral certainty and the guilt or innocence of the accused, lawyers and judges are expected to follow objective and stable criminal standards to attain justice in penal proceedings following "due process" of law.[16]

But the Catholic Church has no professional judicial system to achieve clarity of rules and to pursue a more objective criminal investigation and prosecution in accordance with this principle of the "rule of law." Under this situation bishops who already possess broad ecclesial authority would then acquire more discretionary powers on how to appreciate, judge, and prosecute cases of clerical abuse within their jurisdictions. In the absence of a formal penal code and lack of review courts in the diocesan level, the bishops' handling of abuse cases can be prone to subjectivism owing to the pluralist normative standards of the Church.

Legal Centralism and Normative Pluralism

The awareness that a plurality and intertwining of formal and informal normative standards that govern society and institutions started gaining ground in the social sciences and sociology in the early 1970s. "The idea of "legal pluralism" emerged as a counterbalance to the then dominant notion of "legal centralism," according to which

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[12] Vivencio O. Ballano, *Sociological Perspectives on Media Piracy in the Philippines and Vietnam*, (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2016), 191.

[13] The second stage is implementation, and the third is monitoring and, where necessary, enforcement of implementation. See C. Stewart, "Enabling Environments: The Role of the Law", in V. Luker & S. Dinnen (eds.), *Civic Insecurity: Law, Order, and HIV in Papua New Guinea*", (ANU Press, 2010), 277.

[14] A. Sarat and T.R. Kearns, *The Fate of Law,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 36-37.

[15] See http://www.lexisnexis.com.ph/en-ph/about-us/rule-of-law. page.

[16] *supra*, note 13.

"law is and should be the law of the state, uniform for all persons, exclusive of all other law, and administered by a single set of state institutions." The advocates of legal pluralism rejected the monolithic view of legal centralism that supports the "rule of law" and claimed that law is not a single system necessarily linked to the state as a unified entity, but rather a complex of overlapping systems or normative orders."[17]

The difficulty of defining what delineates the legal from the non-legal normative orders has led some scholars to adopt instead the concept of normative pluralism which sees the legal or judicial order as only one of the many normative systems in society. In this sense, legal pluralism, particularly juristic pluralism, is one of the species of the larger normative pluralism in society. The policy system relationships between the official legal system and the social normative system are "various and complex, sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary, sometimes benign and sometimes cautious engagement. Thus, people can invoke these coexisting systems in various ways for various instrumental and normative reasons. The official legal realm affects and is affected by the multiple regulatory orders in the social realm; the regulatory orders in the social realm affect and are affected by the official legal realm"[18] Normative pluralists argue that legal norms can only become laws if actors in a particular social organization and setting perceive them as such. Under an environment of normative pluralism, judges can invoke coexisting normative systems in various ways for different instrumental and normative reasons.

Judging Clerical Abuse in the Church

The Catholic Church as a complex religious institution in society does not only have a legal code but also a myriad of intertwining doctrinal, ethical, sacramental, and moral normative standards that affect decision-making and behavior. Thus, local ordinaries or bishops face a variety of normative considerations in judging clerical abuse aside from the Canon Law. Without a clear

[17] P. Sartori, & I. Shahar, "Legal Pluralism in Muslim-Majority Colonies: Mapping the Terrain", *Journal of The Economic & Social History of The Orient*, *55*(4/5), (2012), 638. doi:10.1163/15685209-12341274.

[18] Brian Z. Tamanaha, "A Holistic Vision of the Socio-Legal Terrain", *Law and Contemporary Problems, 71* (2), (2008), 90. Retrieved 10 March 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27592239.

hierarchy of judicial authority, the inconsistent and conflicting applications of the Church's normative standards to specific cases are not automatically subject to judicial review.[19] The Church has given the bishops more ecclesial powers to settle local cases. The Vatican seldom interferes with bishops' discretion in deciding cases of clerical abuse of their priests unless these cases erupted into public scandals such as the sexual abuses of priests in the United States that attracted the attention of the Roman Curia and the Pope. With many norms and religious teachings to apply to individual cases, the bishops' decisions may not always follow the Church's canonical provisions and people's judicial expectations strictly.[20] To local ordinaries, legality is not the only criteria for the Church hierarchy in deciding cases, but also morality and, ultimately, the unity of the Church as one Body of Christ. The Church's common response to clerical abuses supports the belief that criminal abuse by clergy should be sanctioned by the Church internally—if at all—under canonical commands of contrition and forgiveness, and not by civil authorities.[21] Thus, the state's version of legality based on a professional judicial system is not the absolute standard for the Church to judge clerical abuse—to the dismay of the victims and the general public.

The Church's Normative System

Unlike the state that adheres exclusively to the legal provisions in judging cases, the Catholic Church has overlapping doctrinal, scriptural, ethical and canonical standards to address clerical abuse. A religious or moral norm, for instance, can also be a canonical standard or vice versa. The canon law condemns and punishes sexual abuse of priests as grave sins (canon 1395), but it also highlights the

[19] The lack of a professional judicial system in the Catholic Church is a major cause of delay in the investigation and prosecution of abuses committed by priests. See Nicolas N. Cafardi, "*Before Dallas: The U.S. Bishops' Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse of Children*". (New York: Paulist Press, 2008).

[20] Canon law is the of the Catholic Church. It includes the Code of Canon Law and many other canonical documents issued by Popes, Roman Congregations, Bishops' Conferences and Bishops. The current ecclesiastical code in the Catholic Church is the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Church was promulgated on January 25,1983, and went into effect on the First Sunday of Advent that same year (Daly, 2009, p.33).

[21] Wayne A. Logan, "Criminal Law Sanctuaries", *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, Vol 38, (2003), 321.

importance of following the biblical teaching of mercy and compassion to sinners (canon 960). The universal Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) likewise recommends the norm of forgiveness and the reception of the sacrament of penance to deal with serious offenses. Canon 1446 of the CCL states:

> Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification.

The Catholic Church is said to have many rules. But most of these regulations are not like state penal laws of the state that carry formal penal sanctions such as death penalty, imprisonment, or fines. In the Church, only those few actions that injure ecclesial life or seriously imperil the soul of the offender have penalties. Thus, a completed abortion carries the automatic sanction of excommunication or expulsion from the Church (canon 1398). Likewise, a priest's direct violations of the seal of confession or the sexual abuse of minors require severe penalties. But most of the Church "rules" do not impose a penalty for transgressing them like the violation of fasting or abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent.[22] Adopting the Scriptures and sacred tradition as the two primary sources of the Christian faith, the Catholic Church does not have a clear distinction of what is scriptural, doctrinal, or moral norms.

> There is a difference between doctrine and law but for the Church they serve the same religious function of helping people to understand the meaning of the Gospel and the action of God in people's. Doctrine may be purely theological — that is, focused on the mysteries of God such as the Divine Trinity, or the nature of Christ (Christology), or Divine Revelation. But it may also deal with the practical application of the Gospel to

[22] Will King, "Why does the Church have so many rules?", *Our Sunday Visitor*, (30 Nov 2010), retrieved 5 May 2017, https://www.osv.com/thechurch/article/tabid/563/artmid/13751/articleid/10534/why-does-the-church-have-so-many-rules.aspx.

daily life, as in moral theology, or the social doctrine of the Church (ecclesiology).[23]

Aside from a plurality of normative standards in the institutional Church, a variety of cultural and social norms and values could also influence the bishops' decisions concerning clerical abuse in their dioceses. The Church is not isolated from society. It interacts with society and culture. Thus, the cultural values and norms of the larger society could affect and, at times, reinforce the ecclesial institutional rules. Although it teaches the evangelization of cultures, the Church also considers what is culturally appropriate in deciding cases. The cultural values[24] of "hiya" (shame), "pakikisama" (fellowship), sambayanan (community) and smooth interpersonal relationship (SIR),[25] for instance, are important values in Philippine culture and can thus influence Filipino bishops in giving favorable decisions to accused priests. Thus, is it "nakakahiya" (shameful) for the Church to have abusive priests in its ranks and so abuse must be hidden to the Christian community. Clerical abuse can also create conflict and thus undermines the SIR between the clergy and Church members. "Pakikisama" among priests and bishops for having been serving the ministry and united by one priesthood of Christ can create compassion for the accused. In this case, the cultural values that act as informal rules can reinforce the ecclesial and biblical norm of preserving Church unity and fellowship of the clergy. The concern to maintain the harmony of the clerical community can unwittingly encourage bishops, particularly in the Philippines, to cover up clerical abuse to conform with local cultural norms and expectations.

Canonical Standards against Clerical Abuse

The primary source of legal norms in the Catholic Church is the Code of Canon Law. Canon law is the name for the official set of rules of the Catholic Church that includes the Code of Canon Law

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[23] ibid.

[24] The anthropologist Felipe Landa Jocano sees cultural values such as Filipino values as "pamatayan" (norm). Values set a paradigm for action; thus, they set standards for behavior and ultimately serve as social norms. See Felipe Landa Jocano, "Filipino value system", (Quezon City: Punlad Research, 2000).

[25] Frank Lynch, "Social acceptance, reconsidered". In Frank Lynch and Alfonso de Guzman II (eds.), *Four Readings on Philippine Values* (IPC Papers No.2). (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 1973), 1-63.

(CCL) and many other canonical documents issued by Popes, Roman Congregations, Bishops' Conferences and Bishops. Other nonlegal moral, sacramental and pastoral norms can only indicate what is fitting and proper conduct, leaving it to each faithful to make responsible use of his freedom to act accordingly."[26] But canon law is said to stipulate what is juridically binding and hence owed if not outright enforceable. However, most of the canonical laws deal with church administration, general norms, hierarchical structure, institutes of consecrated life, and only a few concerning criminal offenses of the clergy.[27] One of these few penal provisions includes Canon 1395 of the 1983 CCL which explicitly provide that sexual contact with a minor qualifies as one of four classifications of sexual offenses for which a priest may be permanently removed from the clerical state. The other three grounds include any form of coerced sex, a public offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue, and continued open concubinage with a woman after an official warning. The permanent removal from the clerical state constitutes one of the most serious penalties contemplated by the CCL. Canon 1389 of the 1983 Code imposes a penalty, including deprivation of ecclesiastical office, for bishops or officials who abuse church power or omit through culpable negligence to perform an act of ecclesiastical governance. "A bishop who fails to employ the appropriate provisions of canon law in a case of sexual abuse of a minor is liable to penal sanctions imposed by the Holy See."[28]

The penalties under CCL against clerical abuse are of two types: expiatory and medicinal. On the one hand, the expiatory penalties aim to deter offenders, to restore right order and to repair the harm caused to the community. They include removing a parish priest because of sexual abuse. Medicinal penalties, on the other hand, are aimed at reforming the offender. They include penalties such as excommunication, interdict, and suspension. Unless they are automatic penalties, the offender must be warned first and told if that if he carries out this action again, he will be suspended (Canon

[26] Jaime Blanco Achacoso, "The Canonical Imperatives of Priestly Sanctity: Priests as Witnesses and Apostles of Christ's Love in the Light of Canon 276, 1", *Philippine Canonical Forum*.XII, (2010), 188.

[27] See *Code of Canon Law*. Available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/eng1104/_index.htm.

[28] John J. Coughlin, "The Clergy Sexual Abuse Crisis and the Spirit of Canon Law" (2003), 980. *Scholarly Works*. Paper 45. Retrieved 2 May 2017, http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/law_faculty_scholarship/45.

1347).[29] An excommunication (canon 1331) is the harshest penalty in the Catholic Church. This sanction means that the priest is cut off or expelled from the Church, reserved for severe cases such as marrying a woman in civil court without authority. An interdict (canon.1332) is a medicinal censure that prohibits a person from ministerial participation in and reception of the sacraments and sacramentals." A suspension (canon 1333) prohibits the clergy from "some or all acts of the power of orders" and the "power of governance, (such as performing the sacraments or administering Church property). It can also include "some or all rights or functions attached to their offices" (such as witnessing marriage).[30]

Despite the strict provisions of some canons of CCL against clerical abuse, canonical penalties are only seen by the Church as a last resort when all other pastoral efforts to help the erring individual by warnings, instruction, etc. have been exhausted and have failed (canon 1341). Pope Francis' traditional address to the Roman Rota, the Church's ecclesiastical court, for instance, exhorted canon lawyers to consider, above all, mercy and compassion, when applying canonical sanctions to individual cases in the Church.[31] This ecclesial attitude towards compassion rather than strict legality implies that the legal norms is not the absolute normative standard in the Church, but only one of the many normative criteria to consider when judging misbehavior of priests. Bishop-judges or supervisory priests who are handling abuse cases must first explore other biblical, doctrinal, pastoral or informal ecclesial norms that do not prescribe penal sanctions before turning over abusive priests to the civil authority.

Non-Canonical Normative Standards

The following are some significant Biblical and Church teachings which can serve as important normative criteria that compete for the strict provisions of the canon law against clerical abuse. These exhortations or informal norms can influence the bishops' judgment or supervisory priests dealing with cases of clerical abuse:

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[29] *supra*, note 2, 34.

[30] Canon Law, Crimes, and Fitting Punishments. Retrieved from http://www.ewtn.com/library/canonlaw/zfitpunish.htm.

[31] Kevin McKenna, "The First Canon: Mercy: Pope Francis and the Canon Lawyers", *America,* (12 Oct 2015), 19.

The Biblical Teaching on Eternal Character of Priesthood

One important consideration that weighs heavily on the decision of bishops whether to punish severely the abusive priests or not is the eternal character of the priesthood. Although secular priests only share the fullness of priesthood of their bishops, they are nevertheless seen as "Alter Christus" (Another Christ), the representative of Christ, the High Priest. The Church believes in the indelible character of the priesthood. Once a person is ordained, he remains a priest forever in the Order of Melchizedek. Even clerics who are officially removed from the ministry are still considered as priests until their death. The norm of compassion can color the judgment of the bishops as it is painful to see their priests who share the priesthood with them rotting in jails. Once ordained by the bishop, the person will always be a priest due to the permanent character of the ordination. In cases of emergency or danger of death, the suspended priest can still administer the sacraments. The belief in the eternal and sacred character of priesthood creates clericalism or belief that priests are a special group of people in the hierarchical Church. The priest is different from the rest of the population by the dignity and authority inherent in the priesthood. The Old Testament typified priests as the seventy elders who were chosen by Moses to assist him in the government of the people (Exodus 18: 4-26; 24:1). So, there is a tendency of the local bishop to see the priesthood in the offender rather than the personal offense. To him, the priesthood is sacred and thus—unintendedly—sees it as a priority than what happened to the victim, as one bishop confided:

> So, no matter what the person did, the priesthood, as a thing, must be saved. I sometimes think it's even more important than the person who's actually a priest. It's certainly, for many, more important than any victim.[32]

The Informal Norm of Christian Forgiveness

Unlike secular institutions that apply formal sanctions against abusive persons, the Church uses the ultimate norm of mercy, forgiving persons who commit sins or rule-breaking behaviors inside

[32] Dreher, R. (4 Feb 2013) "Priest: Here's Why Bishops Cover Up Abuse". The American Conservative. Feb. 4, 2013. Retrieved from http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/priest-bishops-cover-up/.

and outside the Church. Although the Church requires restoration of the damages caused by serious sins, confession and forgiveness can nevertheless obliterate grave sins, including clerical abuse. Except for very few grave offenses reserved to the Holy See, all sins of Catholics, including sexual abuses, can be forgiven by priests and bishops. In this sense, bishop-judges can view clerical abuses as part of the fallen nature of humanity that needs forgiveness and restores the person to a state of grace. There is a popular belief among priests that the challenge to observe chastity applies to all clerics regardless of sexual orientation. All priests are also sinners and need God's mercy in confession for grave violations including sexual abuse and concubinage.

The norm of forgiveness is a mode of resolving canonical violations in the Church. Thus, mercy and confession to the bishop or priest, for instance, can absolve the crime of abortion through mercy and confession to the bishop or priest. Unlike the state that requires judicial process and imposes formal punishment such as imprisonment, death, or paying of fines for violators, the Church requires only retribution, sincere repentance, and penance from confession to receive God's mercy. The ultimate spiritual goal of the Church is the reconciliation of the offender to God and Christian community. Thus, the Church prefers mediation, reconciliation, amicable settlement rather than strict legal and judicial justice in courts in resolving normative violations.

The Biblical Exhortation not to Commit Scandal and Hypocrisy

The biblical exhortation not to commit scandal to maintain the unity of the Church can be an informal norm for bishops in deciding clerical abuse of priests. Scandals in the Christian community is also strongly condemned in the Gospel: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matt. 18). Bishops know that discovery of sexual abuse of priests creates scandal and has a huge impact on the Church. Clerical abuse undermines the credibility of the Church and pastors to moralize and to preach the Gospel. Discoveries of clerical abuse can accuse the Church of hypocrisy. This scenario is one reason why bishops transfer erring priests to

another work assignment, hoping that the new parishioners would not know their past abuses and thus avoid hypocrisy.

> How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while there is still a beam in your own eye?
>
> You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Matt.7: 4-5).

Summary and Conclusion

This paper has shown that the persistence of clerical abuse in the Catholic Church has something to do with the plurality of informal doctrinal, biblical, ethical, and cultural norms which competes with the ecclesial canonical provisions. With the absence of a professional judicial system in the Church, vast ecclesial powers of local ordinaries in dealing with domestic cases, and overlapping and numerous formal and informal normative standards to judge abuse cases, the bishops then possess a broad discretionary power when and how to handle clerical abuse. The Church's teaching on forgiveness, Church unity, sanctity and eternal nature of the priesthood, and the ecclesial stand that clerical abuse should be dealt with internally within the Church rather than externally through the state's judicial system can prevent the expeditious filing of clerical abuse cases in civil courts. The state's version of legality is not the primary criteria in judging clerical abuse. Following the doctrine of separation of Church and State, the Catholic Church has its accountability system founded on mercy and compassion and not just on the cold neutrality of the state's judicial system. This difference of law enforcement system can create conflict and misunderstanding among Catholics. The Church and the bishops may view the slow investigations of clerical abuse as a way of protecting the sanctity of the priesthood and the overall image of the Church. But for the lay victims and Church members who get used to the state's judicial system and who lack knowledge on the inner dynamics of the Church, this strategy can be interpreted as a mere negligence, conspiracy, and injustice. Unless the Catholic Church starts crafting a comprehensive penal code for the clergy and developing a professional judicial system that handles criminal cases within the

institution, accusations of cover-ups and conspiracy will continue to hound the "People of God".

About the Author

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Knowledge Sits in Places: The Vernacularity and Emplacement of Fish Markets in Southern Philippines

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abstract

Markets sit in places and knowledge produced in these places also constitute the very foundation of markets' viability and market actors' performative competitive edge. However, not all markets are created equal primarily in the context of their importance in the global economy. Thus conceived, we imagine a world economy or markets populated by people in front of wide computer screens making sense of financial algorithms and derivatives. In a way, here, we see a market that is run by codified knowledge, or scientific knowledge that transcends boundaries. But what about a conception of market that recognizes the production of knowledge in the periphery, and this instance, fish markets, where place-based knowledge marks the contours of engagement of fishmongers to their wider world and yet, concomitantly, also underscores their attachment to place? In this article, in an ethnographic study of four fish markets in a small coastal town in southern Philippine, fishmongers engage with market processes via their production and deployment of vernacular knowledge which is performed in the form of public specialized knowledge, tacit knowledge and network knowledge. In these forms of vernacular knowledge, we become cognizant of the complexities of market processes even in places that are relegated to the margins, where knowledge plays a crucial role in sensing the world and making it lived and real.

keywords:
Auction, Fish Market, Fishing Community, Modernity, Philippines, Vernacular Knowledge

 | ISSN 2012-2144

Introduction

Nowadays, there are very few markets, regardless of their size and location, the kinds and volume of product they trade, which are not impacted by events and processes that take place beyond the confines of their geographical situatedness. On the other hand, markets are also rooted in places, embedded in local networks of relations and knowledge pools, imbibing local jibes and vibes and operating within circumstances that also speak about their spatio-cultural belongingness.[1] Fish markets in many parts of the world in so many different ways are both; they are global and local at the same time. In this article, however, I am interested in the local materiality of markets as experienced in the ways in which vernacular knowledge (place-based) is produced and consumed by fishmongers in four fish markets in a coastal town in southern Philippines.

In recent years much has been written about fish markets and their embeddedness in places where they operate. For instance, regardless of measures to extract fish auctions, from the pull of local contexts (like the flow of privileged information between fishmongers to influence the price of fish, for example), undeniably, fish markets do not operate in a cocoon of purely economic relations and contexts, where decisions are based solely on rational and scientific grounds. Peterson, in describing the Honolulu fish auction, has shown that "non-economic factors such as the social relationships among bidders, different cultural cycles of holidays, and ethnic group species preferences affect bidding behavior and price".[2] It also along this line that while most fish market regulations are structured to provide tools of the trade to all market participants to create an even playing field, 'market imperfections' like "market power of a group of buyers, the fishermen's lack of information on the market, and the buyer's lack of information on quality of the landed fish"[3] continue to persist affecting and shaping market dynamics in many places.

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[1]Stig-Erik Jakobsen, "Development of Local Capitalism in Norwegian Fish Farming," *Marine Policy* 23, no. 2 (1999): 117-130.

[2] Susan B. Peterson, "Decisions in a Market: A Study of the Honolulu Fish Auction" (PhD Dissertation, University of Hawai'i, 1973), 241.

[3] Ibid., 238.

To highlight the emplacement of fish markets, Fluvia et al.[4] have observed that in most cases social relationships and their attendant social dynamics have an impact on the outcomes of fish trading, like the ones in Palamos and Ancona fish markets in Spain.[5] Furthermore, many studies also show markets for perishable products, including fish markets, contrary to what is expected, are characterized by patterns of behavior that may suggest imperfect competition and a segmented market.[6] These behaviors are borne out of market players' engagement with and in places where they conduct their business. And rather than market processes becoming homogenous as world goes turbo-charged towards globalisation, in fish markets all over the world, there are still different selling and buying practices which influence outcomes desired by fish traders.[7]

In recent years, fish markets have undergone dramatic changes and this involves the digitization and use of technology in trading processes.[8] As new technologies are introduced, this also has an effect on the quantity and quality of information available in the market. Electronic auction systems, for example, have been introduced as a solution to the power imbalance between buyers (primary processors) and sellers (fishermen) in favour of the latter. However, as Guillotreau observed, "the diversity of trading and bidding systems in use, sometimes within a single country or region, demonstrates that the selection of market technology is not entirely motivated by economic efficiency, but reveals the negotiation of the

[4]Modest Fluvia, Anna Garriga, Ricard Rigall-I-Torrent, Ernesto Rodríguez-Carámbula and Albert Saló, "Buyer and Seller Behavior in Fish Markets Organized as Dutch Auctions: Evidence from a Wholesale Fish Market in Southern Europe,". *Fisheries Research*, no. 127-128 (2012): 18-25.

[5] Mauro Gallegati, Gianfranco Giulioni, Alan Kirman and Antonio Palestrini, "What's that Got to do with the Price of Fish? Buyers Behavior on the Ancona Fish Market," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, no. 80 (2011): 20.

[6] Gianfranco Giulioni and Edgardo Bucciarelli, "Agents' Ability to Manage Information in Centralized Markets: Comparing Two Wholesale Fish Markets," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, no. 80, (2011): 34.

[7] Ilene M. Kaplan, "Seafood Auctions, Market Equity and the Buying and Selling of Fish: Lessons on Co-management from New England and the Spanish Mediterranean," *Marine Policy*, no. 24, (2000): 165-177.

[8] Pedro S. Rodriguez-Hernandez, Francisco J. Gonzalez-Castaño, Jose M. Pousada-Carballo, Manuel J. Fernandez-Iglesias and Jaime Garcia-Reinoso, "Cellular Network for Real-Time Mobile Auction." *Wireless Personal Communications*, no. 22, (2002): 23-40.

social structure in the market".[9] In affect, what this says is in the midst of purported modernization and technologisation of fish markets, fish markets, unavoidable, sit in places.

In all these talks about fish markets being located in places and the flow of information that circulate amongst market players being a product of their own social and spatial situatedness, however, quite interestingly, one very important issue that is left unproblematized and underexplored and yet underpins the operations and viability of fish markets is the production and consumption of knowledge in these places of commerce. As fishermen and their knowledge of fishing and fish trading have been amply covered in literature,[10] the other market player in the equation, fishmongers, their activities and their knowledge of the trade, have elicited limited attention in mainstream research. This article contributes towards filling in that lacuna.

In general, this study will make a modest contribution to our sustained engagement with peripheral markets like the fish markets cited in this article and how, regardless of the perceived homogenization of markets across the globe as a result of globalization, markets are still spatially situated in specific places and concomitantly, markets are also very much an effect of how knowledge is used in these places. This article adds further ethnographic nuance to what we already know about fish markets in the context of their social embeddedness and the processes that attend fish trading. Fish markets considered in this article are four small fish markets and are very much in the margins, in so many ways, as they are located in a small coastal town and with a very limited exposure to external forces and with few market players compared to similar markets in other places. In a way, this is a study of markets in the margins and as such a contribution to understanding the processual dynamics of commerce in markets such as this. This is also about vernacular knowledge and the role it plays in markets. Specifically, this article examines the forms of vernacular knowledge

[9] Patrice Guillotreau and Ramon Jimenez Toribio, "The Price Effect of Expanding Fish Auction markets," *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, no. 79, (2011): 224.

[10] See for example Jennifer F. Brewer, "Harvesting a Knowledge Commons: Collective Action, Transparency, and Innovation at the Portland Fish Exchange," *International Journal of the Commons* 8, no. 1, (2014): 155-178.

at play in fish markets in a fishing community in the Philippines as they are produced and consumed by fishmongers.

Following this introduction, the methods employed in the study are explained together with the description of the place where the study was conducted. Immediately after, a brief history and descriptive accounts of fish markets, and auctions in fish markets are presented together with a look at vernacular knowledge and its relation to place. The discussion part provides the ethnographic account of the forms of vernacular knowledge deployed by fishmongers in their daily transaction in fish markets. The conclusion provides a summation of the arguments presented earlier with regard to fish markets and the use of vernacular knowledge and how they show us the continued emplacement of markets in many different interesting ways.

Methods

This article is part of a bigger study that looked into the everyday life of a fishing community in the Philippines. The fieldwork from which the large bulk of the data used in this article took place in 2008-2009, July-January. Successive visits of the author to the community thereafter until 2015 allowed the author to add further empirical muscle to the article.

There were four fish markets in the community and while some fishermen from the community would sell their daily landings direct to fishmongers, most of the fish trading took place in fish markets. They were all on the town's promenade and close to the port although they were set apart from each other. Two of the fish markets had their own fleet of boats while the rest of the two relied mainly on the landings of local fishermen. On top of local fishermen living in the community, fishermen from neighboring communities as well as those from other towns sold their catch to these fish markets. In total, there were 35 fishmongers who did business in fish markets although not all of them would transact business in all of them. Some would do the rounds while others would concentrate on one or two fish markets only. Their reasons varied but most of the time their preference to transact business with any specific fish markets would boil down to their relationship with fish market owners and the volume of landing that fish markets would usually have. One fish markets, for instance, would only open their premises in the months of March to October and would close in the typhoon

season (November – February) as it was heavily reliant on local fishermen compared to other fish markets which were open the who year-round as their suppliers were also fishermen from other towns as well. Some of these fish markets would also source their fish from the city port in times when no fish landings were expected.

Information were gathered through participant observation and unstructured interview. In total, I did fieldwork in fish markets for a month. The first fifteen days were used for observation. I would come to fish markets at around 8:00 in the morning and leave at 5:00 pm. As fish markets operated in different hours, I saw to it that I would have the time to visit the four fish markets everyday. In addition, as some fish markets were far busier than others, I would at times spend more time in one or two than others. In case (though very rare) all fish markets would hold auctions simultaneously (I would know this from the fishmongers themselves who would be informed via sms by fish dealers), I would choose the one which I did not have much information on. In my daily round of fish markets, I would keep myself in a corner, trying not to call attention to myself, while busy jotting down notes. My first days in the fish markets made me a curious object of attention and I had to explain myself to the fishmongers. At times, fish dealers (whom I talked to first to gain permission) were at hand to explain my presence. As time passed by, I became just one of them, blending in with the crowd, or like a piece of furniture, very much present and yet not heard especially during fish auctions. However, before and after fish auctions, I would join the banter and ask some questions with things and procedures that were not clear with me or needed further clarification. I started my formal interviews on my next 15 days and all interviews were done in the houses of fishmongers, fish auctioneers and fish dealers. The fish markets were not conducive for formal interviews and deeper probing of issues as they were always very busy and noisy and some questions could only be answered in the privacy of someone's house. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to two hours. Out of the 35 fishmongers, four refused to be interviewed. All the fish dealers and fish auctioneers agreed to be interviewed and two of the fish dealers opened their accounts for the author to have a look at although they refused their annual financial statements to be photocopied.

All interviews were audio-recorded while at the same time when necessary, the author also jotted down notes in the course of the interview to signpost interesting ideas that came into mind or as a way to identify follow up questions. The language used in the

interview was Filipino, the Philippine national language and the language used by people in the community.

Fish Markets, Auction and Vernacular Knowledge

Fish markets now litter most fishing communities although in some other places, mostly remote and with no facilities and infrastructural support from the national and local agencies, or no private investment is available, fishermen directly sell their landings to fishmongers who are also, most of the time, tend to be family members and close associates. In fish markets, auctions are the usual method of setting the price of fish brought in by fishermen. While fish markets and auction could have a much later introduction in the Philippines as the first and the biggest fish port and fish market in the country was not constructed in Manila until 1973, they have a much earlier genesis in other parts of the world. For instance, in France, their introduction in big harbours such as Boulogne sur Mer or Concarneau dates back to the late 19th century. In some parts of the US, the establishment of fish markets and use of auction took place much later. As recounted by Brewer, for example:

> Until the 1980s, most New England boats unloaded and sold groundfish through long-term relationships between fishing boat owners and small, private fish buyers….These deeply local relationships were especially prevalent in more remote harbours.[11]

The first fish market in the town where this study took place was opened in 1985 although in a neighboring town which was known for its more developed fish port, the first fish market opened in the 1970s. In many parts of the world therefore, fish markets and auction only gained credence much later. Before then, fishermen would sell their landings directly to sellers and buyers.

Fish markets vary in size and concomitantly the volume of landings that is sold through auction. For example, the four fish markets where I did my fieldwork were a relatively modest affair. Each of them was housed in a small if not dilapidated building which could occupy not more than 10 people and 10 boxes of fish at a time. Although I was not given by owners any figure of their combined fish landings and earnings (they were wary that the information they

[11] Ibid., 160.

would supply me might land in the revenue district officer's desk), I estimated that each of them would have a gross sale of not more than P 2 million annually. Compared these fish markets to Tsukiji, the world's largest market for fresh and frozen seafood. This is a marketplace where 60,000 traders come each day to buy and sell seafood for Tokyo's 22 million mouths, where every day over 2.4 million kilograms of seafood changes hands.[12]

We can attribute the establishment of fish markets where fishermen and fishmongers could come together and maximize the economic rent of fish to the increase in demands for fish as source of protein and also an effect of cities and towns being host to a bigger number of workers as the push for industrialization and modernization of economies gathered pace in many places. Along the same line, it also paved the way for an increased exposure of fishing communities to the market economy. Markets such as this are seen to provide the necessary space and opportunity for competitive markets to flourish. The most powerful argument in favor of perfectly competitive markets is that in the long run they supply the quantity and quality of products which consumers demand at a price equal to minimum average cost of production.[13]

Concomitant with the formalization of fish markets as a necessary fixture to any fishing community aiming to maximize the value of fish as commodity, auctions became the preferred way to settle the price of fish in the market between the seller and the buyer. Auctions would likely generate mechanism for solving the information problem, such as prior inspection of the product or trust.

Auction is the marketised embodiment of rationalized pricing as it tried to do away with the influence of extra-market forces to determine the price of commodity. In a way, by putting fish on auction, the logic of the market prevails. As a modernist way to do market, auctions are conceived as a manifestation of objectivist knowledge materialized as it "eliminate(s) all social influences over knowledge creation and in so doing determine the 'true' nature of the

[12] Theodore C. Bestor, "Supply-Side Sushi: Commodity, Market, and the Global City," *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 1, (2001): 84.

[13] Susan Peterson and Samuel Georgianna, "New Bedford's Fish Auction: A Study in Auction Method and Market Power," *Human Organization* 47, no. 3 (1988): 235.

world outside of the individual mind".[14] Through auction, people would use their reason and the information that they have to compete for goods. Everything would be transparent, rationalised and numericalised.

However, auctions are not just about the recalibration of market processes since coupled with these transformations are changes in people's behavior, habits and attitude towards information gathering, and the ways people valorize certain methods of doing things over others, the very exercise of knowledge production and consumption. In a way, no matter which label one prefers, the production, acquisition, absorption, reproduction, and dissemination of knowledge is seen by many as the fundamental characteristics of contemporary competitive dynamics.[15] As Brewer explained:

> When a centralized, regional auction co-organised by fishers and civic interests replaced local ex-vessel fish buyers, it precipitated subsequent changes along the market chain from harvest to consumption, and raised the economic value of industry knowledge. By extricating initial product sales from dense and multivalent social relations long entrained by undifferentiated commodity markets and localist dependencies, it provided a newly transparent and information-rich arena in which a wider range of differentiated product standards could arise and compete.[16]

However, though auctions are supposed to level the playing field, with all possible information ready for consumption and evaluation by market players, there are other things that get in the way for perfect competition to take place. Buyers or sellers may be restricted from entering auction, and trading may take place outside the auction. Within the auction, sellers and buyers can form coalition to rig bid prices. Central meeting places and the appearance of fairness can be useful settings for opportunistic behavior. The rules

[14] Nigel Curry and James Kirwan, "The Role of Tacit Knowledge in Developing Networks for Sustainable Agriculture," *Sociologia Ruralis* 54, no. 3 (2014): 345.

[15] Meric S. Gertler, "Tacit Knowledge and the Economic Geography of Context, or the Undefinable Tacitness of Being (there)," *Journal of Economic Geography* 3, (2003): 76.

[16] Jennifer F. Brewer, "Harvesting a Knowledge Commons," 158.

of the auction can cause problems even when bidding is competitive.[17]

This tells us how the rationalities of market are also about the people's own negotiation of what appeals to them and what engages them, in a way, what brings them better return regardless of the method or the ethos that attends them. The knowledge that they use in achieving these ends is therefore generated and deployed in a given time-space envelope. Indeed, all knowledge is both performative and representational. It is historical, contingent and is coproduced with society.[18] It is along this line that fish markets are a good place to explore the different ways in which vernacular knowledge is articulated in pursuit of market ends.

Vernacular knowledge, as deployed in this article, refers to place-based knowledge. I am cognizant of other possible variants to the concept, local and indigenous knowledge being the most popular and discussed in literature. However, as Bartel notes, the use of vernacular knowledge is most appropriate when there is a need to underscore the role that place plays in the production of knowledge:

> Vernacular knowledge includes both biophysical and social and cultural phenomena. It derives from places, and produces places. Vernacular knowledge is knowledge gained not via theory and not just through practice, but practice-in-place.[19]

In a way, this also brings into the equation the role and importance of place in understanding knowledge productions in marginal places and as such places where a vernacular expression of market logic is most apparent. Vernacular knowledge then is a concept that recognizes that setting is not inert and that place is active and has agency.[20]

In placing vernacular knowledge at the centre of market processes in the fish markets under consideration, the article also recognizes the active role that fishmongers perform in making sense of their relations to the people around them, the public events and occasions that punctuate the tenor of their working lives and the flow

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[17] Peterson and Georgianna, "New Bedford's Fish Auction: A Study in Auction Method and Market Power," 236.

[18] David Turnbull, "Reframing Science and Other Local Knowledge Traditions," *Futures* 29, no. 6, (1997): 553.

[19] Robyn Bartel, "Vernacular Knowledge and Environmental Law: Cause and Cure for Regulatory Failure," *Local Enviroment* 19, no. 8 (2014): 893.

[20] Ibid.

of information relevant to their trade. Places beget knowledge and knowledge vernacularise places in return.

The performativity of vernacular knowledge in fish markers takes three forms: public specialized; tacit and network knowledge. As will be shown in this article, there are different facets to vernacular knowledge and by looking at them, we will be able to present vernacular knowledge as a contingent combination of information, skills and capacities, constituted within and responsive to the specificities of the place.[21] This helps in rendering more nuanced and ethnographically clear the epistemological richness of markets in the context of how knowledge is produced and consumed in places.

Public Specialised, Tacit and Network Knowledge: Markets Sit in Places

An uninitiated in fish markets would have a casual description on how auctions are done and on my first day in one of the fish markets, this is what I wrote in my notebook:

> Once the four boxes of fish are opened, the gathered fishmongers swarmed around them and for several minutes they went around them, like in a dance, eyeing the boxes, intently. One fishmonger dipped his hand into the open box and stayed there for a second, feeling the density of fish inside. Another fished out several pieces and examined them. When I asked about the weight of each of the boxes, I was told that no one knew. They had to guess. It's part of the auction process. Soon, the auctioneer asked the fishmongers to submit their bid. One by one, they went up to her and whispered into her ear their bid. When all was done, the auctioneer conferred with the fisherman who brought in the boxes of fish. I was told she was asking him if he would accept the amount of the winning bid. Apparently he did because in a matter of seconds, the winner was announced.

The auction looked so simple and easy. However, what was going on in the minds of the fishmongers as they were preparing their bid could be an entirely different matter. So many questions could be

[21]Andrew Wilbur, "Cultivating Back-to-the-Landers: Networks of Knowledge in Rural Northern Italy," *Sociologia Ruralis* 54 no. 2 (2013): 170.

asked but the most important is: What could be the best price for the boxes of fish wherein a good return could be had?

While putting in a bid is no exact science, in my days in the fish markets, I was able to identify three types of vernacular knowledge at work in every auction that was taking place. The first one is all about the deployment of public specialised knowledge. This form of knowledge refers to all the publicly available and accessible information that fishmongers must know and have in their pursuit of a most appropriate bid, appropriate in the sense that the bid must be high enough to be competitive and yet not too high enough to incur a good return. These information is available to everyone though only those who are into fish trading would be most likely to be interested to acquire and meticulously keep track of these information. As such, they are public and yet specialised since while everyone is free to acquire them, their acquisition takes time and effort and only fishmongers would be willing to spend time and energy mastering them. In what follows below, I list down some of these information:

Quality of fish:

If the eyes of the fish is red, it is not fresh anymore

If the gills are red, the fish is in a good condition.

If the flesh is soft and not firm, then it will not last for more than a day

If the fish is properly packed in a box full of ice, and the eyes are not red and the flesh is firm, the fish will last for two-three days more

Buyer has to check the stomach if it is still intact or innards are starting to come out (fishmongers refer to this state of fish as 'nagtatae', or 'shitting'), if it's the latter then it is in a bad state

Size of fish

Small size means a lower price
Medium means a premium price
Big size means a lower price

Availability of fish in the market

If there is a big volume of the same species being sold in the market the price is greatly reduced

Availability of different species in the market

There is a hierarchy of fish species in the market in terms of people's preference. So if two species are landed and come in huge quantity, the most popular one becomes more expensive over the other.

Supply of fish in the market

If there is a low supply of fish in the market and what is available are mostly cultured varieties like milk fish and tilapia, the usual cheapest varieties of caught fish becomes 'gold' and thus, buyers must maximise this opportunity. If there is an abundant supply of different types of fish however, one has to know the most popular or preferred types by consumers as they are a bit more expensive than others. However, certain fish varieties, the premium ones, like snapper, hold their price regardless of the volume of supply of other varieties of fish in the market but command an even better price if their supply is low.

Fish price biography

Buyers should always keep abreast of the fish's price history at least for the preceeding week to have a handle of the fish' average and 'regular' price

Town's calendar of events and other public occasions

Public events affect the price of fish in the market as this also drives up consumption. Events like Easter break is usually known to drive the price of fish up as people tend to consume fish rather than meat and not many fishermen go out to fish. Buyers should also have an ear for big private events since this could also have an impact on the prices of premium varieties of fish.

Other considerations

If a particular fish which is unknown in town is landed, its price will depend on its closest fish type.

In so many ways, fishmongers should have a knowledge of all these information to be able to weigh properly the best tactic possible

to approach a particular type of fish up for auction. However, mere acquisition of these knowledge is not enough. How one makes sense of them all, trying to figure out what particular information is more salient than others matters. In addition, some information are still subject to the fishmonger's own personal interpretation. For example, when it comes to the constitution of the fish, whether it's soft or firm is still very much subjective. For an untrained eye, all fish's flesh could be soft but for those who had been in the business for many years, they could easily decide and make an outright clear-cut evaluation whether a particular fish is firm to the touch or soft which would have an impact on its longevity in the market and therefore its price. And there are different degrees to being soft, I soon found out. Some fish' flesh could be soft but could still be sold for a number of hours in the market before they get stale. In a way, there is a particular shelf life to this quality of fish and there is always a different way to feel it. One good example is when Lou won a box of fish. One of the fishmongers who lost to her told me:

> May angur yang si Lou. Malambot na ang isda ang taas pa ang bulong. Bukas sira na yan, tatae na. Malulugi pa s'ya.

Rather puzzled by his observation, I asked Lou about the fish quality and he told me that it was okay, the flesh was firm. I was left wondering about their divergent opinion. This however proves that regardless of the public nature of these information, there are some facts that depend much on the personal evaluation of fishmongers.

However, bids submitted should not be competitive only, they should also be calibrated properly to make profit. I had been told a number of stories where fishmongers got their number so wrong that they ended up incurring huge losses. A number of them had been hauled to the local court to force them to pay up while others were barred from fish markets until the time they were able to meet their commitments. One that I met had to stop from sending her only daughter to a private college in the city to be able to raise the required money to pay her debt. In the four fish markets, she could only transact business in one because of her unpaid debts in the remaining three fish markets.

One crucial task in coming up with a competitive and yet profitable bid is the ability to guess the approximate weight of the box of fish being auctioned and this is a difficult task. Years of participation in auction does not guarantee the ability to properly

assess the weight of a box of fish. A fishmonger with a knack for it would not err by more than five kilos more or less the actual weight of the box of fish. For example, if the total weight of a box of fish is 50 kilos, his 'computation' should not be less than 45 or more than 55. Guessing a figure which is less than five of the actual weight while promising a much better profit could lessen the competitive edge of the fishmonger as this dramatically reduces the amount of his bid. On the other hand, making a guess which is more than five kilos the actual weight could also prove disastrous as this could translate to lesser profit or worse, a big loss. Thus, the imperative here is to minimise the margin of error on both sides of the equation and doing so is not an easy task. On this 'talent', this knack for guessing the weight of a box of fish, some fishmongers seemed to be better than others.

This type of knowledge falls under tacit knowledge. As one of the great commentators of this type of knowledge explains, tacit knowledge is that which derives from experience and intuition and through shared experience. As such, it is often difficult to translate into rational language because it derives from a context, or a set of cultural rules. Furthermore, tacit knowledge cannot be overtly learned. It has to be experienced and assimilated rather than simply passed on.[22] Out of the 35 fishmongers that I met and interacted with in the field, only four were deemed to have the 'talent' to guess with a very small margin of error the actual weight of a box of fish. Two were in their 50s and had been selling fish for almost 30 years, the other one was in his 40s and was into fish trading for close to 10 years while the last one was in her 30s and selling fish for only three years. The 'talent' of the first two could be possibly attributed to long years of exposure to the trade. However, many fishmongers had more than 20 years of experience and yet could not do better than the people I cited.

Fishmongers who were good at it could not point a finger on how they could do this. A fishmonger who had a talent for this said:

> Hirap ipaliwanag ay. Basta pag tiningnan ko tapos nacheck ko ang box kung anong hitsura at nacheck ko ang loob, matatantya ko na ang laman. Tapos medyo aangatin ko, yung bang bigat ay nakukuha ko dahil parang nararamdaman ko.

[22] Nigel Curry and James Kirwan, "The Role of Tacit Knowledge in Developing Networks for Sustainable Agriculture," 345.

Fishmongers who did not have this 'talent' could only say that these fishmongers are "magaling sa simbiran", "simbiran" in the local language means guessing the weight of something. No one in the fish market could offer any rational explanation aside from saying that these fishmongers had the 'talent' to guess close to the real weight of the box.

Based on my field observation, these four fishmongers were almost always very close to guessing the weight of any box of fish although in some instances, they would also err. For example, most of time these four fishmongers would only have a margin of error of 2-4 kilos on average, compared to other fishmongers whose guess could go as far as 10 kilos more or less than the actual weight of the box of fish. However, having this special ability is not a guarantee that auctions could be won outright. It could provide an edge but did not guarantee success in any auction. Nonetheless, such 'talent' is very helpful in preventing fishmongers from incurring big losses as they would not submit inflated bid compared to others.

There is one form of vernacular knowledge, however, which is highly selective and secretive. I would call it network knowledge or the knowledge that comes from one's social network. This knowledge comes in the form of one's association with people. Further elaborations are needed here.

In relation to information, after all other considerations, one's bid could also be influenced by extra information known only to the fishmonger via her close association with other people. For example, one could submit a relatively high bid for a kind of fish if the fishmonger is told that the fish could command a good price in other places or there is a particular demand for this kind of fish by someone who is willing to pay a good price for it. It could also be the case that a fishmonger had a customer who was willing to pay a good price for a kind of fish. Such information of course was not available to others and therefore they could me more timid and subdued in their bid.

However, network knowledge is not just about information derived from close associates or relations. Network knowledge could also be about obtaining favours from those who are involved in the auctions themselves. In a way, this kind of knowledge is all about who one knows and as such the kind of arrangement that could be had in such kind of social network. In this instance, having network knowledge could translate to the rigging of results in favour of a particular fishmonger.

Bidding though thought to be following certain rules and conducted in the presence of many people is open to manipulation. In a number of auction houses (not fish markets though) studied by Smith, he speaks of how bids are rigged by the participants themselves. One of them is called a pool bid. Professional buyers may enter into collusive practices of their own, known as "pools" and "rings". In such cases, in order to buy a particular item at the lowest possible price, a group of professional buyers agree not to bid against each other. They rather select one of their members to bid against any nonpool- members and then hold their own private auction later. These private auctions are called knockout auctions.[23]

In the case of fish markets mentioned in this article, the rigging of bids was done differently. Fishmongers did not make a pool bid. They acted independently of one another. Furthermore, whereas in cases cited by Smith, the auctioneer was not involved in any form of chicanery, in the case of fish markets, the auctioneer plays a big part. Without her consent, no rigging would take place. As previously mentioned, however, relations between the auctioneer and the participating fishmonger should be intimate enough so as to secure unshakeable trust in one another. In a way, one's network or who one knows makes it possible.[24]

Though I was told that the practice is not widespread, and in fact I was only able to confirm two fishmongers who were doing it (out of 35), the fact that it was being done points to the utilisation of a particular form of knowledge which is illicit in many respects. The way to do it is to make an arrangement with an auctioneer wherein at least an auction could be arranged to be won by a particular fishmonger. This could only be done if the fishmonger had a long standing close relationship with the auctioneer. The rigging goes like this.

Once all the bids had been communicated to the auctioneer, and after the winning bid was accepted by the fisherman (or owner of the boat that brought the fish), the fishmonger concerned who arranged the rigging would be proclaimed winner regardless whether he submitted the highest bid or not. What the auctioneer would do is to add an amount, usually between 100-200 PhP to the winning bid and proclaimed it to be the bid of this particular fishmonger. Thus, for example, if the actual winning bid was 3,000.00 PhP, it would

[23] Charles W. Smith, *Auctions: The Social Construction of Value* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), 70.

[24] Ibid., 70, 91-93, 98, 125.

become 3,200.00 PhP or less, as long as it was more than the winning bid. This kind of set-up would be arranged a day or early morning before the actual auction. The auctioneer would inform the fishmonger how many auctions were expected that day. In some instances when knowing the actual volume or species of fish would be impossible, on the actual auction itself, the fishmonger would send an SMS to the auctioneer detailing her preferred fish. Usually, not to attract suspicion from other fishmongers, there would only be one case of an arranged auction. If there would be six boxes of fish for auction, one box would already be marked for the fishmonger concerned. In all this, in return, the auctioneer would get 200-300.00 for every case of rigging (which would translate to once a day) from the fishmonger. In some cases, the auctioneer could ask for an advance, say, 2,000.00 PhP which would ensure the fishmonger a series of winning bids for several days.

In these two examples, the social network of the fishmongers allowed them to execute arrangements to their own advantage. Thus, one's membership in a social network has become a 'knowledge' on how to make money in fish trading. As mentioned earlier, not everyone would have the opportunity to be involved in such arrangements as they needed trust between people. Such trust could only be gained through years of social intimacies which a few could only afford to have and enjoy.

Conclusion

Central to my discussion is the importance of fish markets as fulcrum of knowledge used in the daily affairs of fishmongers, fishermen and fish traders as they make sense of their place in the local economy. Assessment and assimilation of newly received information, the reframing and integration of observations into useful knowledge, were further enabled by the more public spaces in which burgeoning business activities transpired. Conversations that once took place only on small boats, and in private spaces of shore side fish houses, homes, and pickup trucks expanded into largely public locales, enabling a much freer exchange.[25] Like money, markets can convey noneconomic values rather than efface them. Spiritual practices and political relations mediate markets on the capitalist periphery. In short, capitalism's most fundamental forms

[25] Brewer, "Harvesting a Knowledge Commons," 173.

are vulnerable to us. We can saturate them with our anxieties, fetishes, and fictions and structure them with our political practice.[26] As centre of knowledge production and consumption, the fish markets stand as the fishing community's emblem and connection to modernity. As knowledge knows no boundaries and as information travel, the fish markets serve as the people's expressed affinity to the wider world, to facts and figures that matter to their daily lives which are also very much a product of the outside world – of places, far and away. In their daily interaction, fishmongers have enacted ways to negotiate their precarious state in a place that is both peripheral and at the mercy of nature – fishing is very much dependent on weather condition. As everyone competes with everyone in staking their small portion in the available resources in the community, they have created a pool of knowledge that they get to deploy in their quest for a living. It is also in this sense that fishmongers have enacted their modern selves.

Nowadays it has become common place to refer to the global economy as predominantly knowledge economy and as such our vision of the world is inundated with workers solving and creating formulae that underpin the foundations of global wealth creation. We have this vision of people in smart suits in front of wide screens tinkering with numbers and concepts that deal with market derivatives and software programs, amongst many. However, knowledge economy should not be limited to such work regime and market actors, otherwise, such highly specialised and constraining conception of knowledge will result in the marginalisation and trivialisation of other types of knowledges and work places and their contribution to global economic developments. Corollary with this, and in recent years, the importance of other types of knowledge, most notably local knowledge, as they are incorporated and recognised in policy documents and academic studies has signalled the recuperation of the will of the people from the margins and their active engagement with the world. In a way, as much as knowledge economy is about people with universal and technical know-how of how market derivatives affect the ebb and flow of interest rates in various places, it is also about place-based knowledge, the more limited and constrained expression of people as a response to the

[26] Aaron Ansell, "Auctioning Patronage in Northeast Brazil: The Political Value of Money in a Ritual Market," *American Anthropologist* 112 no. 2 (2010): 283.

demands of everyday life. The habituated practices of formal science tend toward universal or translocal explanations and applications, whereas local knowledge may apprehend such phenomena within a particular and contingent range of causative, practical and cosmological possibilities.[27]

As premium is put on knowledge economy, there should also be a continuous excavation in peripheral places of what and how knowledge makes these places work and thrive. As shown in this article, there is a need to re-evaluate our understanding of peripheral markets such as fish markets considered in this article as they signify the richness of place and how in so many ways knowledge sits in places and markets typify this given. As evinced by the people involved in the daily operations of fish markets, the vernacular knowledge that they have evolved and deputised is, as it were, a many splendored thing, as it involves an array of information for evaluation and execution.

In setting out a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of knowledge produced and at work in fish markets, we saw how fishmongers made use of publicly available knowledge on the social biography of fish, immersing themselves in facts and data that allow them to make judicious assessment in fish trading. Such hoard of data, complex in their own terms, alert us to the richness of vernacular knowledge in fish markets. On the other hand, with similarities to other work places, fishmongers were able to develop their own ways of appraising the weight of fish for auction. Tacit refers to embodied capabilities that defy formalization and explication.[28] This knowledge can't be transferred and is unique to individual fishmonger. Some of them were able to develop this eye for mathematical accuracy of assessing fish weight through years and years of participation in and exposure to fish trading. However, long years of being a fishmonger does not guarantee the acquisition of such tacit knowledge and also the way to winning auctions. Such accuracy in prediction helps in avoiding a bloated bid which could result in financial losses for the fishmonger concerned. The ability to

[27] Wilbur, "Cultivating Back-to-the-Landers: Networks of Knowledge in Rural Northern Italy," 169.

[28] Ibid., 170.

tap into the advantages and benefits of one's social network, on the other hand, enables some fishmongers to turn their social relationships into financial gain. In a way, as shown by this article, chicaneries could be performed for the purpose of monetary accumulation through the exploitation of social affinities. Not everyone had this opportunity as some could have chosen not to or others did not have the same network that would enable them to engage in such illicit activities.

This article therefore contributes to our understanding of local economies in developing countries. It is also an exercise in highlighting the territoriality of market forces and the adaptability of people who make use of them.[29] It is a contribution to the burgeoning literature on the geographical situatedness of knowledge like how knowledge is deployed and put into action in certain places and context and how such forces are received and fashioned in different ways in different locales at different depths and degrees of commitment and involvement by people on the ground. How knowledge plays a crucial role in facilitating the daily affairs of a peripheral market compels us to pay close attention to the robust domestic informal economy of the fishing community studied and contributes to its further articulation as a rich domain of knowledge production.

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[29] T. Roopnaraine, "Constrained Trade and Creative Exchange on the Barima River, Guyana," *Royal Anthropological Institute* 7, (2001): 51-66.

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Rethinking Marx: Demystifying the Nomos of Filipino Consumerism as Conditioned by Capitalism

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abstract

This paper is an attempt to expose the underlying forces which shaped Filipino consumerism at present. It becomes evident that the postmodern world has engendered strong support to the development of the forces of production. It even creates a crucial turning point in the manner the members of society change their priorities of consumption from necessity to luxury. The 21st century has pushed our society towards the creation of the consumerist environment. After the frantic circulation of capital which eventually landed in concentration on the hands of the few Filipino economic elites, our society's drive for consumption was set in motion. In essence, this is a genuine reflection of Marx's belief on the manner the productive forces manipulate the desires and interests of their subjects- the consumers. The ideas of Karl Marx have never been more relevant than they are today. Looking at the present state of Filipino consumerism, it is the exact scenario prophesized by Marx in his writings regarding capitalism and its preservation of the economic order. The plight of consumerism is dictated by the power of the capitalist which in effect, controls different modes of exchange in our society. As such, it is a crisis which creates a thirst for a Marxist theory in our attempt to analyze the problem from its very core. The dominating power of the capitalist becomes more visible in its capacity to manipulate the mentality and desires of the members of the consumerist society. It creates an infatuating technique which engenders "false needs" among consumers. This manipulation torments the very rationality of man. The dangerous spell it creates on the rationality lies in the

MABINI REVIEW | VOLUME 5 (2016): 44-65
 | ISSN 2012-2144

manner commodity is taken as seemingly possessing a magical power navigating all possible desires created by man in his interest for consumption. In effect, the society enters a mystical state as consumption is controlled by the capitalist system. This mystification of consumerism is subtle yet a potent technique used by the capitalist to exploit the consuming minds of the public. Thus, the real challenge faced by the Filipinos today is to move away from the manipulative power of the ruling economic elites and break the spell by forming a demystified state in one's consciousness.

keywords:
Capitalism, False Needs, Consumerism, Economic Elites, Mystification

Introduction

The world of change demands an extra strength from man to catch up with evolutionary processes and developments in the social context. The present situation in the Philippines is characterized by the need for an increasing skill for survival, especially in the manner the economic part of man's life becomes complex because of the diversity of offered products and services in the market. During the time of Karl Marx, he came to a prediction that a time will come when society would have to adapt its character from the ever changing economic forces. This calculation turned out to be a reality as it is enormously felt in the global setting today. Such evolution in the economic field is controlled by money, the most basic commodity necessary for exchange. If we are to establish the power that money gives to man, it is evident that possession of it makes one capable of controlling the mode of production and consumption. Thus, historically speaking, when the productive forces was stirred by the presence of money, it became the starting point of capitalist formation which was not only felt in the global setting but localized as well.

The power invested by money on commodity is reshaping the course of history of our nation at present. For instance, Filipino values are redefined, social interactions are becoming more complex, and the authentic value of the individual identity becomes blurry. We are all cognizant of the fact that evolutionary changes demand a skillful manner of survival which can be aided by the rationality of

man. In Darwinian sense, it demands for the creation of a coping mechanism strong enough to surpass the tide of uncertainty in the economic field. However, economic changes as dictated by the surge of capitalism and consumerism elevated its status on a higher ground, high enough that even the rationality of man can no longer surpass and control. Given this situation in our society where consumption becomes the norm, reason can no longer create protective armor due to the fact that the common ideology of the consumerist society demands for a blind conformity. It is likewise blatant that in the advent of capitalism, consumerism becomes the core of human existence. It is the source of identity, the defining factor which shapes the interpersonal, and also a manipulative force behind survival. This tide of consumerism eats the very value of life, what it demands is a passive acceptance of the new reality blowing away all strands of rationality. Thus, the consumerist culture becomes the prevailing theme of different nations in the global scheme creating a society characterized by apathy and misery.

The Filipino consumerist society at present mirrors the character of production prevalent in the land. There is a conjunction between production of unwanted goods and the demands shaped by the individuals' consuming life. We develop a consumerist society saturated by proliferated desires in which production was geared to consumption. [1] It is a simulated culture characterized by stylish promiscuity which downgraded our traditional values and belief system at large. This paved way to the invention of the new mass consumer culture which created a blow destroying our intellectual culture. In effect, the new power of consumerist culture legitimizes the hedonistic tendencies in the nascent mode of exchange of goods in our society which turn our people away from the true meaning of necessity. [2]

Consumerism in the 21st Century: A Movement from Subsistence to Subservient Economy

In an article written by Zygmunt Baumann (Consuming Life: 2001: 5), he mentioned that "all living creatures need consumption in

[1] Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, (2nd Edition, Sage Publications, 2007), 10.

[2] Ibid.

order to stay alive."[3] However, being human sets an additional task for one has the tendency to consume more than mere survival would demand. Being alive in the human way requires an additional demand which may go beyond mere biological existence and that is to be in conformity with elaborate social standards of decency and propriety in one's intention to design a good life.[4] Such social standards might have been rising over time, though in the past, life's simplicity empowered man to have a good control in defining what is needed from what is not. For instance, the sum total of 'consumables' needed to gratify man was at each moment fixed: it had its lower as much as its upper limits. The limits were drawn by the tasks expected to be performed: before humans could perform them, they had to be fed, clothed and sheltered first, and all that in the 'proper manner'. They had a fixed number of 'which they had to 'satisfy' in order to survive. But consumption, being servant of needs, had to justify itself in terms of something other than itself. "Survival (biological and social) was the purpose of consumption, and once that purpose was met (the 'needs' had been satisfied) there was no point in consuming more."[5] This scenario led to the creation of needs beyond the biological and social aspects of one's life. In this respect, consumption was set to be directed to a different angle. Thus, giving birth to the introduction of commodities intended to redefine the wants of every man.

It is not to be understood however that this demand for consumption was easily followed in a passive way. A resistance was built by the consuming public in the manner they also want to take control of the direction of their needs. In addition, part of the resistance is practicing temperance and moderation in one's consuming life. According to Bauman, "falling below the standard of consumption was an ethical reproach to all the rest of society, but climbing above them was equally an ethical reproach to all the rest of society, though this time personal fault."[6] Indulging in the pleasures of the flesh, gluttony and intemperance were long frowned upon if not condemned as mortal sins in the past. It is also the line of argument taken by Thorstein Veblen who wrote at the threshold of the consumer age and made a massive attack on the leisure being

[3] Zygmunt Bauman, *Consuming Life,* (Journal of Consumer Culture, Sage Publications, 2001), 5.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

taken in commodity consumption. He lambasted the presence of 'conspicuous' or 'ostentatious' consumption which was highly visible in the urban areas by claiming that it is only "serving nothing but vainglory and self-conceit."[7]

Eventually, the authors behind the promotion of the consumerist culture discovered an evasive tactic to move away from ethical constraints and criticism. For instance, Baumann mentioned in his research that the distinctive mark of the consumer society and its consumerist culture is not solely dedicated to consumption as such; not even the elevated and fast rising volume of consumption. "What sets the members of consumption from its past instrumentality that used to draw limits- the demise of 'norms' and the new plasticity of 'needs', setting consumption free from functional bonds."[8] As needs proliferates from different angles in man's consuming life, societal norms as it seems, even become the very instrument in legitimizing the culture of production and consumption. In every society, one can easily observe that people are easily swayed by their desire to buy and consume beyond what they truly need.

In order to understand the nature of consumption at present, there is a need to revisit the past character of the means of production. The early 19th and 20th century responded to the call of man's need for survival by providing the necessities dedicated only to everyday subsistence. At that time, the technology used in production was not yet at the cutting-edge, thus making it hard to meet everyone's basic needs. The challenge faced by the people of that era, our great-grandparents, is on how to produce as many goods as possible as quickly and efficiently in order to sustain the needs of the social sphere. Despite the limit in production though, they learn to see themselves as rational minds, humans who were active in producing what they need and managed to design the world in front of them to fit their survival. In Theodore Roszak's thinking, this rationality represents the manipulation of the "In-Here" to whatever is given "Out-There". It is in the manipulation of the "In-Here"

[7] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class,* (The McMillan Company, New York), 46.

[8] Bauman, *Consuming Life*, 17.

which makes the "Out-There" systematically in line with its improvement.[9]

As the economy shifted from subsistence to a capitalist system, it gave birth to the consumerist society. In the consumer society of the middle and late 20th century, we are no longer needed as producers of goods and services. With the availability of technology, machines can do almost everything without us. Nevertheless, to keep the system going, we are badly needed as consumers of goods. Production of goods is energized by the presence of its buyers. In order to make it alive, we must keep buying. Given this kind of concrete reality, we experience the world "out-there" not as a raw material to be shaped by our rationality and skills but as items to be purchased. In return, we experience ourselves "in-here" not as rational and skillful manipulators but as passive consumers, who are often impulsive rather than rational.[10]

Characterization of the present mode of consumption is also being highlighted by Herbert Marcuse in his attempt to describe the mentality of the entire society towards the creation of different needs. It is evident in Marcuse's theory that the creation of false needs is being deliberately done as a mechanism of control from the owners of production as a way of protecting their investment in the economic order. According to him, until the present century most human labor was directed toward meeting basic needs. Goods and services were valued because they were useful; they could help meet basic needs (economists call this use-value following the line of thought of Marx).[11] But the middle part of 20th century has launched the greatest revolution in the history of humanity: our technology now allows us to meet all the basic needs of all the people in the world with very little labor. Marcuse thinks this is true no matter how much the population grows. Indeed if everyone worked at producing goods to meet basic needs, there would be far too many of these goods. This would drive the price way down, and no one could make a profit. So to keep the capitalist system going, most work must be done for socially created needs that have little to do with basic human needs. In other words, most work must be done

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[9] Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter-Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition,* (University of California Press, 1995), 224-225.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, (Beacon Press Boston, 1970), 4.

to meet "false needs".[12] These needs are shaped simply as products of socially created needs. They intensify the satisfaction and even the character of human needs beyond the biological level. As such, human needs are now preconditioned and seized by the prevailing societal institutions and interests, the satisfaction of which is subject to overriding critical standard.[13]

According to Marcuse, "false needs are those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which propagate negative values and experience i.e. hardship, hostility and discrimination among others".[14] Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and to consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category. Most importantly for Marcuse, "the rewards of the system are handed out very unfairly."[15]

> Looking at the world as a whole, a few people get huge amounts of money, power, and other resources. But most get virtually nothing. They live their lives in relative poverty, often a squalid grinding poverty. So the system perpetuates toil, aggressiveness, misery, and injustice---all of which are unnecessary.[16]

In this respect, it is evident that a shift in orientation from subsistence to subservient mode of consumption is a trap of misfortune veiled by the promise of shallow hedonism when we buy things offered to us in the market. Despite our claim that the present moment is characterized by advancements and speed of recovery from our underdeveloped past, it is noteworthy to the very least to face the sad truth that our great-grandparents worked in order to gain mastery over nature. The mode of consumption of the past is controlled by the rationale of man, a controlled psyche that makes him the determining force in shaping the given reality in front of him. The present mode of consumption is characterized by passivity of reason; the consumerist behavior is subservient to what is given. We work in order to be able to consume. This indispensable desire to consume shapes our very character and behavior. It even dictates

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[12] Ibid., 5.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

our behavior for we learn to work within the system, although most of the time the work it provides is repetitive, boring, and useless. The same sentiment was being highlighted by Marcuse when he mentioned that "the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need to modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this stupefication".[17]

The sad truth is we do not really pay attention to the shackles that consumption has created for us. Goods and services that meet "false needs" are valued simply because they have a high price tag, which usually, has nothing to do with their use-value. We are willing to pay a lot for them only because everyone else is willing to pay a lot as well. This reality captures the present state of the Filipino consumerist behavior. It is indeed a movement from subsistence to subservient economy. It is likewise a shift in orientation where the rationality of man is no longer needed in the manner he responds to social pressures imposed upon him by the consumerist society. What makes it worst is the institutionalization of socially created needs as further legitimized by mass media, social media, and other sources determining the entire course of consumption of the Filipinos at present.

The 'Nomos' of Filipino Consumerism

The word consumerism has two meanings; at one point it means the protection of consumer interests but on the other hand, it is more commonly taken as the doctrine of people's consumption of goods and services. It is the latter import which will determine the entire course of analysis in this study as a tool for exposition of the true nature of consumerism in our society today. A closer look at the behavior of consumerism in our place will bring us to the realization that people are often influenced by variety of sources. Despite our attempts not to be overly controlled by them, we commonly embrace its power for we believe that consumption is in our best interests. We constantly become active players in a consumerist environment because our mentality is shaped by the belief that it will in some way, long or short term, make our lives better. Consumerism is such a key element of our world today; it is something we cannot help but be part of. Despite the availability of reading materials written as an

[17] Ibid., 7.

attack to consumerism such as pollution, bad health, and poor working conditions, the society's rationality is being hijacked by a counter campaign of the profiteers to reinforce the consumerist society.[18]

The Greek word 'nomos' representing a law or custom as used by Plato in his early writings can best describe the state of affairs of Filipino consumerism today. The sophist Anthipon for instance believed that "human beings cannot decide on their own for they have to follow rules and conventions. Actions are predetermined by set of standards on what ends a particular human being should or should not pursue."[19] In this regard, all beliefs about what people should do are products of nomos. In a consumerist society, we internalize the powerful 'nomos' of consumerism and blindly mold our identity upon it. We experience ourselves, above all, as consumers. We define our characters in terms of what we consume and put an extra pressure on the need to exhibit a power in consuming. As a matter of fact, there is a conscious effort on the part of the promoters of consumerism to train our mentality at an early stage in shaping our desire towards patronizing all those unnecessary consumer items available in our environment i.e. a child weeps for he demands an item displayed in malls, an adult becomes restless at night for he needs to satisfy his desire to buy a product offered in the market, a woman shaped her femininity as to what is dictated by the mass media and the list is endless. Our belief system has been twisted, our desires has been reshaped by consumerism. As an obvious reality, the apparatus of control has been developed by the masters in the consumerist society. They managed to create an easy access to almost all consumer products that an individual might need vis-à-vis convenience stores, shopping malls, online markets and other means of response to the public demands for goods and services. Just by simply observing what is happening around us, Filipinos at present can be easily deceived by the new social reality as imposed by the trend in the present society. Whatever is in for instance as fads and crazes would dictate, it also means consumption. Likewise, the reason why we spend a lot on unnecessary things because we come to believe that we need everything that is being offered in the market or shopping malls. Our sense of individual

[18] Roger Swagler, *Modern Consumerism*, (Encyclopedia of the Consumer Movement, Santa Barbara, California, 1997), 172-173.

[19] David J. Riesbeck, *Nature, Normativity, and Nomos in Anthipon*, Volume 65, No. 3/4", (Published by Classical Association of Canada Stable, 2011), 275.

identity is shaped by these socially created needs. As Marcuse observed:

> This civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body…The people recognize themselves in their commodities. They find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment.[20]

Our sense of identity is shaped by our capacity to consume. We are confronted by this sad reality that consumerism feeds its very soul from the irrationality of the consuming public. This customized irrationality proliferates in human behavior turning itself into an apparatus of control in the manner one faced his immediate realities. According to Marcuse, this irrationality represents a false consciousness. But this "false consciousness" of man's rationality turned out to be the prevailing true consciousness[21] of the entire society under the tactical guise of capitalism. Accordingly, "the rationality of consumer society is built on the irrationality of its individualized actors".[22] In addition, with man's uncontrollable desire to consume, he keeps doing unneeded work so that he can earn money to buy unnecessary goods and services too. Analyzing the present behavior of Filipino consumerist society, this becomes the very essence of our 'nomos' today which created in turn a cycle of useless labor and consumption. Marx is right after all, that capitalism is a blood sucker---it sucks the blood coming out from the irrational passions of man.

Mystified Consumerism in the Guise of Commodity Fetishism

An investigation on the capitalist mode of production must start with an analysis on commodity as a single unit of exchange. Marx described the character of the capitalist society as an "immense accumulation of commodities".[23] "A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties which satisfies

[20] Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, 9.

[21] Ibid., 11.

[22] Bauman, *Consuming Life*, 17.

[23] Frederick Engels, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1*, Trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Progress Publishers, Moscow, USSR, 1887), 26.

human wants of some sort or another".[24] The nature of human wants, according to Marx, whether they spring from stomach or from fancy makes no difference at all.[25] It is simply because under the capitalist economy, the focus of the owners of production is to maintain the phenomenon of exchange. Commodity existed before capitalism; however, it was given its intrinsic value in the manner of exchange. For instance, in feudal or slave societies, a person would usually exchange a commodity to obtain something that he truly needed for survival. The value of money, if ever it was used, was simply an intermediate stage of the process.[26] However, when capitalism entered the social sphere during Marx days, commodity production dominated the economy, a scenario that did not exist in the pre-capitalist society. Marx's date for the beginning of capitalism was the last third of the eighteenth century, a time when industrial development led to the factory system of manufacture.[27]

In a capitalist economy, social relations are effected only in the exchange of products. The social character of labor is hidden for the dominant theme is putting a value of exchange on the available commodities, and this in turn, gave birth to the fetish character of the latter. Marx believed that "under capitalism people experience social relations as value relations between things".[28] This is the illusion of fetishism- "value appears as a natural attribute of commodities" excluding the reality of interaction among men. To summarize, while value (in its true sense) must be taken as a relation between people, it is expressed as a relation between things, and it is through exchange of commodities that relations between people in their place remain hidden.

In primitive societies, inanimate objects are sometimes thought to have supernatural powers i.e. voodoo dolls or holy statues. This belief changed in sophisticated manner when the capitalist society evolved because of the given new set of reality. People suffer from the illusion that inanimate money or commodities have powers and properties on their own, thus, giving birth to the commodity's fetish character. In effect, "a fetish is an object of desire, worship or

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Gill Hands, *Marx: The Key Ideas*, (Published by McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2010), 71.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 94.

obsessive concern."[29] In this sense, Marx begins his discussion on fetishism of commodities by inferring that although a commodity initially appears a trivial thing; further analysis reveals it as very strange, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. However, so far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it is capable of satisfying human wants, or from the point that those properties are the product of human labor.[30] Given this scenario, the enigmatical character of a commodity arises:

> Simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour.[31]

The fetish character of commodity which was also being described by Marx as "mystic character" originated in the peculiar social attributes of labour.[33] In this sense, the fetish originates from the process of production. When production is being undertaken in the capitalist system, it is privately organized by atomized producers. It does entail a conflict between *sociality* and *asociality* as further strengthened through the process of commodity exchange.[34] Putting it into context, the *sociality* represents the relation existing between the producers and the forces of production i.e. labourers, but its *asociality* is seen in the realization that this relation is not directly established between persons (in the process of production) but through exchange of products or commodities Thus, the commodity relation entails circularity. Capitalist social relations have become reified in commodities, which in turn come to act as a regulative force over society. The mystery or the fetish character of commodity

[29] Ibid.

[30] Frederick Engels, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1*, Trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (Progress Publishers, Moscow, USSR, 1887), 46.

[31] Ibid.

[33] Hans G. Erhbar, *Annotations to Karl Marx Capital*, 469.

[34] Guido Schulz, *Marx Distinction Between the Fetish Character of Commodity and Fetishism*, (University of Sussex), 5.

describes this external social force that commodities come to be by virtue of their autonomisation:[35]

> What is mysterious about the commodity form is therefore simply that the social characteristics of men's own labour are reflected back to them as objective characteristics inherent in the products of their labour, as quasi-physical properties of these things, and that therefore also the social relation of the producers to the aggregate labour is reflected as a social relation of objects, a relation which exists apart from and outside the producers. Through this quid pro quo, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time extrasensory or social.[36]

The same tone of argumentation was used by Chris Wyatt (Defitishized Society 2011) when he mentioned that in Marx days, the verb "to fetishize referred to the tendency to worship an inanimate object due to its supposedly mystical and magical power."[37] Marx manner of interpreting this underlies an obscure character of the commodity that once being introduced to the market, it possesses illusionary and seemingly natural qualities that can relocate and displace our social relations. Commodities are being granted autonomy to be regarded as subjects, personified in a given extent. It is in this personification of the inanimate which gives control at the end to social relations. In this context, objects in the form of commodities are now treated as subjects, thus, the illusionary and mystical character of commodities gives birth to mystification of fetishism.

The contemporary capitalist society, according to Wyatt, still confronts the very same serious problems faced by Marx in his conceptualization of the capitalist scheme of reality. The media for one, as an instrument of commercialization weave all forms of persuasion and control in order to portray how commodities are possessing magical powers:

> this razor attracts a beautiful woman, this perfume allures the man of your dreams, this slick car confirms the composure of

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[35] Erhbar, *Annotations to Karl Marx Capital*, 457-458.

[36] Ibid., 451-452

[37] Chris Wyatt, *The Defetishized Society: New Economic Democracy as a Libertarian Alternative to Capitalism,* (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 1.

> the driver; the list is endless. It is not only that capitalism permits the fetishism of commodities; it is, rather, that fetishism is actually indispensable to it. Capitalism is not just an economic system that is profit based; it commands the maximization of profit.[38]

The key aspect of commodity fetishism is that it deliberately focuses attention on exchange relations for once the products of labor entered the market, individuals bestow onto commodities their personal relations. With such tendency of the consumers to depersonalized interactions and impart on commodities their social bonds through exchange, the capitalists are now encouraged to expand and multiply their needs. Understanding Marx leads me to conclude that the capitalists' vis-à-vis their power to produce all forms of instrumentalities is shaping and dictating our needs. As such, social needs are posited as necessary because the capitalists say so. In effect, under the spell of capitalism, social needs are no longer on the side of the most necessary ones, rather, they become part of the contingent aspect of one's desire powerful enough that it really calls for its satisfaction. So, nothing is remote from Marx claims during his days that capitalism engenders 'false needs' arising from one's social existence as conditioned by the values imposed by capitalism. These values include possession of property, wealth, money, and social status among others. The origin of "false needs" is deliberately being introduced by the capitalist in the advent of commercialization which has reached its peak in the early part of 21st century paving way to the creation of consumerist culture in the global scheme.

Misology: The Present Plight of Filipino Consumerism

Misology is a term I borrowed from Immanuel Kant's Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals. He suggested that "people who cultivate reason and consecrate themselves to the pleasures of life and happiness begin to suffer from *misology*, the closest interpretation of which is hatred of reason. This is because according to Kant, they seem to discover that all the time they spent thinking, reasoning and arguing condemned them to isolation (of pleasures) causing, thus, more fatigue than enjoyment."[39] Kant also

[38] Ibid., 3.

[39] Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals on a Supposed Right to Lie Because of Philanthrophic Concerns*, (Hacket Publishing Company, Inc., USA), 8.

suggests that once misology sets in, thinkers begin to envy those whom (the philosopher classifies as being "of inferior condition") do not allow reason to influence their actions. It is suggesting that once humans purge reason and give in to their sensation, they accept the reality of the outside world with joy, thus it means being one with life. This attitude of giving in to sensational demands and embracing misology is a resemblance of consumerism in a mystified state as Marx suggested that it is a condition where happiness is bestowed on the reality of an outside entity like that of commodity.

The first characterization of misology is seen on the creation of the vicious cycle of work and consumption. It is a reality at present faced by the Filipino society and it is best captured on how Marcuse characterized the 21st century as dominantly controlled by consumerism. Our positive self-image depends in an endless round of buying; our shallow hedonism defines our very essence at its core. The consumerist behavior represents a "vicious cycle of work-and-spend- just like a fast-spinning wheel in which consumption must be paid for by long hours of work – which need to be rewarded by more consumption, and so on."[40] Fueled by advertising and social pressures, expectations tend to rise with income, but satisfaction does not. Thus, they say that "there is always an element of dissatisfaction which increased income cannot cure".[41] This dissatisfaction is something that reason cannot totally comprehend. For instance, a study conducted by Carley and Spapens conclude that:

> It is no accident: workers who are earning a lot of money because they work long hours provide the market for the very goods they are producing, and never mind if they do not really need the goods in question. The consumption becomes the reward for the hard work and the long hours.[42]

Another reflection of misology in our society can be seen on how the family as an important institution in our society is also being shaped by consumerism. In a study made by Gerry Lanuza focusing on Filipino Sociology, he mentioned that "as the Philippines rides the vehicle of modernity, there is also a phenomenal dispersal of

[40] Carley, M. and Spapens, P., *Sharing the World: Sustainable Living and Global Equity in the 21st Century,* (Earthscan, London, 1998), 143.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

Filipinos worldwide through migration."[43] This in turn creates an impact in reshaping the dominant values in Filipino families. It is an obvious reality that the main reason behind migration would be an attempt to mobilize the family income and put an improvement on the social status. In their realization of such dream, they just do not want this mobility to be manifested in simple means; they want to show it. And by showing it, it means to concretize this manifestation of success by purchasing material goods i.e. latest gadgets, designer clothes, building a big house, acquiring a car or even travelling in different places. It is similar to being 'in the swim', the tendency to go with the flow with the latest fads and crazes. Not being 'in' is taken by many as a moral lapse, a defeat in one's purpose to succeed in life. This 'seemingly' high incident of Filipinos migrating abroad as domestic workers gives birth to a material culture. Parental absenteeism is in part being rectified by materiality; parents would justify their absence with the noble intention of providing for the basic needs of family members. As such, it stimulates the creation of the consumerist culture for one way of covering up for one's shortcoming would be buying material things for the family members. Notwithstanding the actual labor condition in other countries, what matters to the migrant workers is the hope in mind that they will earn big time so that they can buy the needs of the loved ones they left behind. More promising is the exchange value of money; even family members of these migrant workers are at times blinded by materiality and consumption. The quality of family relations is being measured now by consumerism; happiness is stirred by the presence of material things. In this sense, there is a threat of decay in the quality of interaction among family members for the authenticity of relationship could possibly be ruined by the consumerist attitude. For instance, they are no longer concern with the actual situations of the migrant workers i.e. the person's safety, working condition, and emotional trauma that one has to go through while being away from the family. Instead of showing concerns, what is dominant in air during their conversation on social media would be an endless reminder of the consumer goods that they want to have i.e. shoes, clothes, gadgets, chocolates, and most importantly money. In addition, one particular example of the consumerist attitude is the "balik-bayan box", a seeming must-have for every consumerist

[43] Gerry M. Lanuza, *Towards a Relevant Filipino Sociology in the Age of Globalization and Postmodernity*, (Published by: University of San Carlos, 2003), 242.

Filipino family. In a study conducted by UNICEF, it is conclusive that absentee parents possibly promote a culture of consumerism:

> Most children accept the migration of their parents as an opportunity to have a better life, they only see the "money equivalent" of migration. As long as they receive their money regularly, they will be fine. This also leads to a materialistic attitude of children of migrants.[44]

Families are forced by this pursuit to live beyond their means and they blindly prioritize the luxuries over the necessary. The symbol of love is consumer goods. The owners of production in this aspect really like to stir up the materialist stance of the consumerist families since these are the patrons of their products. The depiction of a "happy" family in media is associated with consumer goods. Thus, our families are drawn into consumerism and further into poverty.

Given the above scenarios of how consumerism stunted the rationality of the members of our society, the present plight of consumerism in the Philippines is characterized by a "fetish character" that Marx had engendered in some of his writing regarding the economic structure of production. Looking at the entire environment, there is a strand of consumerism from the simplest unit of exchange to the more complex ones. Our society, because of its consumerist character became a reservoir of different types of surplus products. Almost everything is made available in a market-driven society. Ours is a place where luxury has magically shifted into a 'seeming necessity'.

In an article written by Ira Chernus, it was mentioned that we internalize socially created needs; we not only have those needs in mind but feel them in our bodies. We physically crave the latest faddish foods, or massages, or fast cars. We get an erotic satisfaction from color TV images and beautiful restaurants.[45] Only the consumption system and its apparatuses can meet these needs. The mysticism also lies in the manner of persuasion being popularized by

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[44] Melanie M. Reyes, *Migration and Filipino Children Left-Behind: A Literature Review*, (Miriam College – Women and Gender Institute, for the United Nations Children's Fund -UNICEF, 2007), 11.

[45] Ira Chernus, *Herbert Marcuse: A Critique of Consumerist Society*, Retrieved from University of Colorado at Boulder website, (http://www.colorado.edu/religiousstudies/chernus/sixties/herbert%20marcuse.pdf), 81-82. Accessed March 20, 2015.

media in our present state. This is how we can best characterize the Filipino society, and it was also being captured in one of the researches done by E. San Juan Jr. when he mentioned that:

> Without the prosperous development of the material resources and political instrumentalities, a Filipino cultural identity can only be artificial, hybrid fabrication of the elite- an excrescence of global consumerism, a symptom of the power of transnationalized commodity-fetishism that, right now, dominates the popular consciousness via the mass media, in particular television, films, music, food and fashion styles, packaged lifestyle that permeate the everyday practices of ordinary Filipinos across class, ethnicities, age and localities.[46]

In addition, San Juan mentioned that "the consumerist habitus (to use Pierre Bourdieu's concept) acquired from decades of colonial education and indoctrination has almost entirely conquered and occupied the psyche of every Filipino, except for those consciously aware of it and collectively resisting it."[47] He also added that in our time today, this trend of consumerism "serves as a useful adjunct for enhancing the fetishistic magic, aura and seductive lure of commodities-from brand-name luxury goods to the whole world of images, sounds, theoretical discourses, and multimedia confections manufactured by the transnational culture industry and marketed as symbolic capital for the petty bourgeoisie of the periphery and other subalternized sectors within the metropole."[48] In commercial ads, products of all kinds are offered with persuasive tag lines and display of power possessed by a given commodity. This is turn creates the mystic character of the products being endorsed in the market. It is also a manipulative technique and the target of which is the sentiments and ego of the members of the consumerist society.

Another aspect of man which became an obvious target of consumerism is the appetite. Filipinos are generally food lovers, as such the abdomen is the source of weakness for most of us. In this case, one of the strategies promoted by the consumerist society is to create restaurants offering unlimited consumption. For instance,

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[46] E. San Juan Jr., *Sneaking Into the Philippines, Along the Rivers of Babylon: An Intervention Into the Language Question*, (Published by Ateneo de Manila, 2008), 69.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

restaurants are designed with "eat-all-you-can" banner, combo meals, and other choices are made available to satisfy the demands of the appetite. However, not all of the things included in the ingredients of the food menu are necessarily safe and healthy in category. But the possible danger of consuming artificial ingredients which are detrimental to one's health as part of the food menu is not being minded by the blind consumers.

Technology also added an extra strength in the marketing strategy of the owners of production. It adds sophistication on the manner advertisements is being shown today making consumption more eye-catching than ever. The latest gadgets, fashion and other goods easily penetrate the psyche of desire of the consuming public. It is as though owning them becomes the very goal of existence for it adds an air of prestige to the possessor of the goods. The owners of production also develop a subtle seduction to the consuming public with their famous tag lines- "what are you waiting for", "there is more to life", and "open your minds to the world of wonders" etc. The success of consumerism is therefore defined by the very attitude of the consuming public. Their blindness and irrationality made it easy for the owners of production to make them an easy prey of the profit makers. This is misology to its very core.

Demystification as a Compromised Alternative to Gain Back Control over the Consuming Life

When Aristotle perceived virtue as being situated in the middle, it includes a proposal of moderation in the realization of our basic needs. This guideline offered in antiquity could still be of relevance in combating the power of consumerism at present times. It is because once moderation is being practiced by man, one can possibly create a personal apparatus of control to what is given. It is likewise an exercise of rationality, an attempt to move away from the manipulative power of the material world. However, the consumerist ideology says otherwise, it engenders cunning techniques in controlling the consciousness of man, the target of which is the stimulation of desire inside one's nature. Thus, one of the best strategies used by capitalism in order to succeed in its operation is taking advantage of the weaknesses of our passions and emotions.

One possible solution to escape from this trance created by consumerism is to create a demystified state in one's consciousness. Although it seems to be a hopeless endeavor at first, it is plausible

granting that the will is in line with reason. There is a need to be awakened from the mystified state, and this calls for a possibility of dialectics as it is required in this sense for man to question what is given. There seems to be a big shadow of impossibility to establish a defetishized society for man can no longer control all its economic activities. However, there is a wider road to recovery if man takes control of what is inside, besides- "self-determination is the negation of alienation".[49] It is important to note that in demystified state, man's consciousness is no longer mesmerized by what is given in the consumerist environment. As Marx reiterated, once man becomes a victim of his very own consuming life, man is always being controlled and seduced by the Capitalist spell.

Gaining control over one's consuming life is a challenge which must be discovered by the reflective nature of the self. One's reflection needs a realization that mystification is a mental manipulation created by the ruling class. It thrives in our personal desires and wants imposing a 'seeming' reality that our capacity of consuming gives way to a form of equality- that we can buy things the way the elites do. A certain layer of reality in this scenario is ignored that there is a discrepancy in the quality of consumption of the upper class and the lower class. For instance, Featherstone wrote that "new levels of luxury are evident at the top end of the social structure with a good deal of celebration of the lifestyle and consumption patterns of the rich. But for those below, who watch the celebrity and elite consumption in the media, their consumption is more of dreams, plus the occasional purchases of cheaper scaled-down luxuries".[50] This is because regardless of the capacity to consume of those below the social stratum, they can never compete with the consuming power of the upper class. Social institutions also take advantage of the irrational behavior of the consuming public. In the present system for instance, the Filipino consumers are bombarded by financial institutions to sign up for easily accessible credit cards. It becomes a trend that both our government and individual consumers are encouraged to borrow excessively. As a result, our society suffers more because of its members being deluded by shallow hedonism brought about by consumerism. A plausible

[49] Chris Wyatt, *The Defetishized Society: New Economic Democracy as a Libertarian Alternative to Capitalism*, (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011), 14.

[50] Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, (2nd Edition, Sage Publications, 2007) 19-20.

solution lies on one's capacity for restraint. Abandoning our obsession for unnecessary possessions must become the central theme in our consuming life. Thus, it also means thorough contemplation must reign over consumption.

The offered solution above is taken as a compromised alternative to demystify our culture of consumption. It cries for the cooperation of the rationality to gain back control over the consuming life. This is high time to pull out the rationality of man from the consumerist bag. Certainly, demystification involves an abandonment of our obsessions towards material goods offered in our society. It is also a desire to win over the enchanter's wand of consumerism and become more vigilant in one's execution of the consuming life. As such, it needs a personal campaign to vanquish the spirit of consumerism and to move out from mysticism.

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The Figure of the Filipino Exile in the Poem "Here" by Conchitina Cruz

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In an essay by critic J. Neil Garcia entitled *English and the Filipino Imagination: A Critique of Gemino H. Abad's Poetics of Filipino poetry in English*, he unpacks and discusses the controversial essay by Gemino Abad (*One Hundred Years of Filipino Poetry from English: Language as Site of Nationhood*) which purportedly serves as a cartography of Philippine literature in English, and in which, it is stated that the current phase of literary production in the Philippines has reached the point where it can already be called an "open clearing" because "poets from this period follow the structures of the New Critical poem less, finding themselves becoming increasingly interested in other issues: social and political realities, semiotic theories etc."[1] The problematic thing however, and Garcia is quick to point this out, is that Abad argues rather absurdly that this turn in the logic of production and aesthetics of Filipino poets, this negation of New Criticism as a mode of poetic practice via subscription to more theoretical discourses, is something that happened out of the poet's inner curiosity and not because of outside factors that influenced her/him, privileging therefore the poet's artistic autonomy. Adding another blow to his already searing criticism of Abad, Garcia states that this discourse of Abad is just a "refunctioning" of Almario's nativist discursive agenda in which the latter essentializes "Filipino language as sui generis and pronouncing the culture that this language represents as fundamentally incomparable." Abad's theory, therefore, is just a copycat of Almario's with just a few minor tweaks.

In this review essay, I will try to discuss Conchitina Cruz' poem "Here" (from the collection There is no emergency),

[1] J. Neil Garcia's critique appears in his book, "Postcolonialism and Filipino Poetics" published by the University of the Philippines Press.

specifically, I will attempt to show how this poem, produced in this era of the "open clearing," is reflective of Abad's diagnosis that poets today are increasingly becoming interested with social and political realities and theories to the point of making them the subject of their poetry—but veering away from Abad's reductive and essentialist posture that effectively rejects the notion of ideology and the socius in its assertion of the primacy of the poet's will and autonomy over external contingencies, I will argue that this turn is not a product of poet's autonomous mind as Abad ignorantly believes but something that is influenced by a worldwide trend, particularly the intellectual trend of continental philosophy in Europe, something that Abad, I believe, is not aware of. Also, I will attempt to show how the figure of the exile manifests in Cruz' poem.

The poem, "Here," is a poem of journey, of the unconscious exile of a wanderer, of identity loss. The persona in the poem perpetually moves from one place to another, a city, a room—she transitions and drifts like a speck in the air, in this line she's in Chicago, she's in Makati in the next. She is never transfixed in one place. I remember this specific essay by one of my favorite theorists of exile, Andre Aciman (novelist and currently, chair of the literature department of NYU) in which he mentions that there are two types of exiles, those who are uprooted and those who are derooted, and if I remember it correctly, this is the difference between the two: those who are uprooted, can be planted to other lands, meaning, even if they were removed from their motherlands, they will thrive on other lands—this is not the case with derooted exiles, as the word suggests, these exiles have their root totally cut off, they cannot grow on other lands. I mentioned this because I believe this is the case in the poem, we have a persona who is grappling with the notion of her identity, a notion of identity that is inextricably linked with the spaces she has been to, a kind of identity that is arbitrary: in one line she says "*In Bangkok, I am addressed in Chinese*" and in another, "*In Los Angeles, I am thought to be Mexican*." She has been in transition from one place to another, but she never feels alright in these places, she never feels at home, she never feels herself whoever that is—if I remember it correctly, Garcia says in another one of his essays (and almost all the postcolonial theorists says the similar thing for that matter), that the preoccupation of the postcolonial artist or intellectual is to help in the struggle for the reclamation of the collective/national identity, this I believe is also the project of this specific poem, and if not, at least it exposes the dilemma of the exiled soul.

The most poignant line in the poem, for me, is the last line: "*In Los Banos, I am told to keep my voice down*." Of course an intellectual/artist finds her comfort in her home, because presumably, this specific locus is where she grew up, and hence, this is where she is most comfortable with because familliar—so it is okay to be rejected in other places by other people, to be mistaken for somebody else in unfamiliar territories, but imagine the metaphysical violence of being considered an alien even in your own place.

Conchitina Cruz, who received her PhD in English from State University of New York (Albany), is one of our finest poet and not only that, she is also one of our finest critics as well, in a short essay, The Filipino Author as a producer (note the use of producer instead of creator), she shows an expert knowledge of some of the most famous theories and discursive practices in the West, in her critique on Charlie Veric's poetics, she says: *"…the professionalized poet, whose poetry is, by default, unfree, and who nevertheless reaps professional gains from his unfreedom.*" This sounds very much like Adorno in his seminal book Aesthetic Theory: *"For absolute freedom in art, always limited to a particular, comes into contradiction with the perennial unfreedom of the whole."* This practically means that, those who claim the possibility of absolute freedom, at least in the field of aesthetics, are ignoring the fact that while there can be relative freedom in it, this goes in contrast with the "perennial unfreedom" of the fields beyond aesthetics.

To call the poetry of Cruz and her contemporaries who express similar political and ideological positions as merely a break from earlier forms of poetic practices, but without the proper explanations, is simply wrong. This break from New Criticism and the poetic practices before it is necessary in the development of the literary tradition of the Philippines, if we remained New Critical until now (a lot still are), we will just be proving what Bakhtin has believed all along—that poetry is a genre devoid of potentialities.

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