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A STUDY OF VALUES OF RURAL FOLK

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INTRODUCTION

This study makes use of the definitions of *value* formulated by Rokeach¹ who in turn made use of the concepts of Kluckhohn.

Rokeach defined a person's values as standards that guide his actions or guide him to take particular positions on various social, ideological, political, and religious issues. By these standards he evaluates and judges himself and others.

We employ values...to decide what is worth and not worth arguing about and influence others to believe in and to do...Thus, the ultimate function of human values is to provide us with a set of standards to guide us in all our efforts to satisfy our needs...²

Rokeach categorizes values as either terminal or instrumental values.

Terminal or ends values are beliefs or conceptions about desirable endstates of existence that are worth striving for, like happiness and wisdom.

Instrumental values are conceptions about desirable modes of behavior that are instrumental to the attainment of desirable endstates, such as behaving honestly or responsibly.

The Research Instrument

To get at the values of rural folk, the Sentence Completion Technique (SCT), a projective technique, was used because it was felt that much of psychological data like attitudes, fears, interests, and values often elude accurate measurement with the use of direct methods.

A projective technique, like SCT, may lack objectivity since the material given to complete the stimulus may be interpreted by various content analysts in different ways. So, the researcher defined each value by listing under a value the various responses which she interpreted as reflective of that particular value. These definitions are given in Appendix A³. The readers can judge for themselves the validity of the researcher's interpretation and of the categorization of such responses.

Procedures

The responses to the incomplete stimuli were elicited by interviews conducted in August, 1987 by social

¹Milton Rokeach, Understanding Human Values: Individual and Societal The Free Press A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1979.

²*Ibid.* p. 48

³Appendix A is included only in the complete report.

work students who had training in interviewing in their research course as well as in their social work subjects. After establishing rapport, the interviewer read aloud each of the thirty SCT stems which has been written in Hiligaynon, the dialect of the interviewees. The interview technique was used instead of a questionnaire because some subjects were not highly literate.

The 30 stems used as stimuli in the interview survey were culled from 61 items used in a similar survey conducted in a fishing village in 1985.*

After explaining what the interviewee was supposed to do with the stimulus, the interviewer read the stimulus aloud and waited for the interviewee to complete the stem with whatever thought/idea came to her/him without taking too much time to do so. Then the interviewer quickly jotted down the interviewee's words on the interview form. This was done for each of the thirty items but some of the interviewees did not complete some stems and the interviewer did not press them to do so. This explains why the number of responses to some of the 30 items did not coincide with the size of the sample. In view of this fact, the percentages which were computed later were based on different n 's.

The Samples

The SCT was conducted on three accidental samples. The first sample consisted of 147 residents in six barangays near Iloilo City which are being surveyed as probable participants in the CPU Outreach Program.

Only about 150 interviewees were at first targeted for the purpose of this study

on values because tedious content analysis was anticipated. So when 150 barangay residents had been interviewed by the six interviewers in the six barangays, the data collection with the use of the SCT was ended. By that time only a portion of each of the six barangays was covered. The rest of the barangay residents were surveyed with the use only of the main interview schedule, of which the SCT was made a part for the first 150 residents covered. (Later three SCT forms were discarded because of incomplete data on age, SES or educational attainment.)

Another sample consisted of 164 residents in barangays of Alimodian and Sta. Barbara, randomly selected from the members of the core groups participating in the CPU socio-economic development program in those municipalities.

Eighty women composed a third accidental sample. These were interviewed by social work students enrolled in Research (SY 1986-1987, Sem. II). These work students were asked to administer the SCT on women who were easily accessible to them, so most probably the interviewees were women in their households/neighborhoods. Since the social work students are mainly from low-middle and low SES groups, the 80 women they interviewed were likely to be only slightly better off economically than the first sample of 147.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

As soon as some SCT forms were received from the field, these were content analyzed. To reduce the unwieldy

*Conducted by Elisea Saldaña of the University of the Philippines, Visayas, in Barrio Buyuan, Miagao, Iloilo.

number of responses, responses expressing similar or equivalent ideas were grouped under one response category; it was this response category for which a frequency and percentage were obtained and which was further analyzed to ascertain the value that it reflected. Between nine to eighteen response-categories were eventually listed for each SCT item.

After the coding of responses, the frequency of mention of each response category was recorded. There were instances where a response was mentioned by much less than 1/10 of a sample or two but by at least 1/10 of the third sample; this response was included in the list of responses to be further analyzed.

The items mentioned by at least 10 per cent of the cases in one of the three subsamples were further analyzed to determine what values they reflected/indicated.

Framework of Values Used for Data Analysis

Books in sociology and in psychological and sociological foundations of education, authored by Filipinos were reviewed to set up a framework of values to be used in analyzing the interviewee's responses to determine what values these reflect.

The chart on THE PHILIPPINE VALUE-SYSTEM¹ prepared by Filipino sociologists gives three aims, goals, and aspirations---social acceptance, economic security, and social mobility. In this study, the last was substituted for by "value placed on children's education" because the interviewees' desire for

social mobility surfaced specifically in terms of their concern that children complete college studies so that their future will be brighter.

The other value-categories used in this chart were not found useful in the categorization of the responses elicited by the SCT items.

In addition to the three aims and goals and the two value themes adopted, the following terminal and instrumental values listed by Rokeach found useful in the categorization of the responses to the SCT items, were included in the framework of values.

A. Terminal Values

Family Security
Economic Security
Social Acceptance
Freedom from Illness
Happiness
Inner Harmony, peace of mind,
freedom from inner conflict
Salvation, saved, eternal life

Since terminal values are defined as desirable endstates of existence that are worth striving for, the researcher included under terminal values "family security" which was listed above as value theme; "economic security" and "social acceptance" which were cited above as aims and goals. "Freedom from illness" was added by the researcher to terminal values because its frequency of mention warranted a separate treatment and it did not fit under any of the categories already set up.

B. Instrumental Values

Ambition
Humility
Broadmindedness
Helpfulness, service to others

¹Chester Hunt, etc. Sociology in the Philippine Setting. A Modular Approach. Phoenix Publishing House, 1987, p. 80..

Honesty
Independence, self-reliance
SIR, *pakikisama*
Patience, endurance and suffering
Goodness (in general)
Avoidance of gossip
Faithfulness through thick
and thin
Freedom from vices

The last five were included by the researcher under instrumental values because they are desirable modes of behavior. "Patience, endurance, and suffering" was also listed above as a value theme. The last four were categories which the researcher set up for they did not fit under the categories included in the Philippine Value System or in the Rokeach list.

"Value placed on education of children" was not included in either terminal or instrumental list because it is not clearly an endstate of existence or a mode of behavior.

The complete list of 20 values used in the data-analysis is given in Table I and Table II. To clarify the meaning of each category the statements (in Visayan) typical of the responses classified under each category are given in Appendix A (not printed in this article)

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

Only the data on the first sample of 147 were computerized. For this sample, the chi-square test was applied to the data to determine whether each of the independent factors (age, SES, education, and sex) was related to the interviewees' tendency to select certain response categories under each item. Since chi-square analysis cannot be computed if certain expected frequencies are too low, it was done on only two response-categories under certain items and on

three or four or five responses categories under other items. Under Item 10, there was no response category with frequency bigger than ten, so no chi-square could be computed on it.

The chi-square analysis was done only on the first sample of 147 interviewees in the six barangays adjoining Iloilo City.

The data on the second sample of 164 Sta. Barbara and Alimodian barangay men and women and the third sample of 80 women were collated manually, so only frequency distributions of these were prepared. These were compared with the frequency distributions for the first sample of 147 to identify which responses were the most frequently mentioned.

The results of the content analysis of the interviewees' responses are given in the complete report. In this article only the results on Items 1 and 2 are given. As seen in the sample page giving data on Items 1 and 2, the SCT item is given in both Ilongo and English.

Table I shows the 20 value-categories which were deduced from the responses found worthy of further consideration. This table shows how each value-category ranked as a response to each SCT item. (Since Table I is too big to be included in this article, only Table II which summarizes the data in Table I, is included here.

In Table II, after each value-category are given the number of times the value occupied first rank, second rank....ninth rank, in the 29 groups of responses.

The last column in Table II is the score of a value, which was obtained by getting the sum of the products of the frequency of each rank multiplied by the weight of a rank. The 1st rank was given a weight of 9 and the last rank (9th) was given the weight of 1.

**Item 1 Naga hatag sa akon sang daku guid nga kalipay ang
(What makes me very happy is)**

Value	Response-Categories
Family Security	<p>**</p> <p>a. akon familia/kon maayo ang kahimtangan sang akon familia (my family/good condition of my family)</p>
Inner harmony Peace & order home	<p>b. pangabuhi nga malinong kag matawhay/maayo nga paghangpanay sang akon familia. (harmonius, peaceful home life)</p>
Social Acceptance	<p>c. akon participation/attendace sa mga social activities parcho abi sang CPU outreach activities (participation in social activities like CPU outreach activities)</p>
Helpfulness	<p>d. pagbulig/pagserbi sa isigkatao, sa iban (helping/serving others)</p>
<p>** ranked first in two samples but ranked lower in one sample *** ranked first in all three samples</p>	

**Item 2 Daku ang akon pagsalig nga makasarang ako mag
(I am confident that I am capable of**

Family Security	<p>***</p> <p>a. padaku kag pagpabesti sang kabataan/magtatap sa akon familia,ang magplay sang role sang isa ka iloy [taking care/meeting the needs (physical and psychological) of the family]</p>
Self-reliance	<p>b. trabaho/obra (doing my work)</p>
Self-reliance	<p>c. pangabuhi/magtatap sang akon kinahanglanon living my own life, taking care of my own needs)</p>
Helpfulness	<p>d. bulig/serbi sa iban (help others)</p>

No. of Interviewees responding

N = 164		N = 147		N = 80	
F	%	F	%	F	%
93	56.7	36	24.49	31	38.75
22	13.41	9	6.12	7	8.75
2	1.22	56	38.09	19	23.75
2	1.22	16	10.88	4	5
N = 157		N = 141		N = 75	
61	38.85	31	21.98	26	34.66
54	34.59	26	18.44	11	14.66
27	17.20	14	9.93	10	13.33
6	3.82	31	21.98	7	9.33

TABLE II
NUMBER OF TIMES EACH VALUE CATEGORY* OCCUPIED A RANK

Value Categories	R A N K S									Score ¹
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	
1. Economy Security	7	4	4		1					128
2. Family Security	5	2	1	1						70
3. Goodness (in general)	3	2	1	1	1					61
4. Self-reliance	1	3	2		1		1		1	56
5. Helpfulness (including charity)	1	1	1	3		1		1		48
6. Value placed on education of children	1	2	2	1						45
7. Peace and order in home/ inner harmony		2	3	1						43
8. Honesty/Frankness	2	1	1							42
9. Salvation (Belief in God)		2	1	1	1					34
10. Social acceptance/ recognition	1	1	2							31
11. Having no vices		1	1	1	1					26
12. Freedom from illness/ disability	1		2							23
13. Avoidance of Gossip	2									18
14. Broadmindedness	1		1							16
15. Ambition		1	1							15
16. Patience/Endurance	1									9
17. <i>Pakikisama</i>	1									9
18. Humility		1								8
19. Faithfulness through thick and thin		1								8
20. Happiness				1						6

* Actually, the responses to each SCT item were the items ranked according to their frequency of mention. Here, a response-category is substituted for by the value which was deduced from it.

¹ Score = sum of the products of the frequency of a rank multiplied by weight of the rank. First rank has weight of 9 and 9th rank has weight of 1

VALUES OF THE RURAL FOLKS

If the score of a value is to be taken as an indicator of the importance of that value, Table II clearly shows that economic security was the most important to the rural folk interviewed. The economic difficulties they faced day in and day out made them almost one-track-minded in response to different stimuli. This value was reflected in their response to twelve SCT items that have to do with their reasons for wanting to work, with what they wanted most above everything else, with their greatest fear, with their greatest dream, with what they felt capable of doing, with their biggest worry, with what they think about often, with the person they most respect and admire, with the thing they are most ashamed of, with their greatest problem, with what they do when they have money, or when they have no money. The score of the second-ranking value (70) is only about 5/9 of the score of economic security (128).

It was often difficult to differentiate between the interviewees' concern with economic security and their concern with family security. As shown in Appendix A, in the list of typical responses categorized under "economic security", emphasis was on financial difficulty rather than on safety and well-being of the family which is the emphasis of "family security", the second-ranking value, a poor second. The closeness of the Filipino family which is often talked about seemed to be borne out by this finding.

Lately, it has been the consensus that the root of the serious problems of the country is the moral deterioration among Filipino folk. Yet goodness ranked third as a value of rural folk. It came out in responses to six items. Whether this

shows that the rural folk were more concerned with goodness than were the urban folk or whether this is another proof of what Fr. Bulatao calls "split-level Christianity" was not ascertained. It may be that when they said, "The worst of evil deeds is to do wrong or do bad to others, to sin" and when they said, "I admire and respect most a man who has good character", or "I am very much ashamed when I commit sins or bad deeds or when I have bad character," they had in mind killing or committing violent crimes rather than being involved in graft and corruption or losing moral integrity.

Close to "goodness" is "self-reliance", with a score of 56. Most of the rural folk interviewed in this study have not shown much self-reliance as seen in their wanting social workers who have worked with them in the University Outreach programs to continue to stay in their communities long after the expected date of phase-out of the community outreach program. So it is rather surprising that self-reliance emerged as a high-ranking value. It was reflected in responses to five items. These facts may show that even if they are not very self-reliant now in the midst economic difficulties, they aspire to achieve self-reliance.

Probably because they know intimately what it is to be poor, the pain of hunger and of helplessness when they are without any money, they sympathize with others in their situation. "Helpfulness and service to others" ranked fifth with a score of 48; it was reflected in response to eight items.

Related to the interviewees' need for economic security, was the value they placed on their children's completing their studies, i.e., their college studies, knowing that a college degree is a

passport to getting a good-paying job, hence, to economic stability. The value placed on children's education was reflected in the interviewees' response to six items that have to do with reasons for working, what they would do if they had money, what they wanted very much above everything else, their greatest dream, what they worried about often, and the person they admired and respected the most.

That these folk also highly valued "inner harmony, peace of mind" was reflected in their responses to five items. This ranked seventh, with a score of 43. The kind of responses forced the researcher to differentiate carefully between the responses that emphasized inner harmony per se from those that reflected the desire for economic security.

It was pointed out earlier that "goodness" was probably expressed to mean "not killing or doing violence to others," rather than "moral integrity and honesty". However, honesty also ranked eighth, with a score of 42. It was reflected in response to items that have to do with the worst thing a person can do, what the interviewee was most ashamed of, what he/she disliked the most in a person.

Salvation, belief in God, ranked ninth, with a score of 34. This emerged in response to four SCT items; i.e., those that have to do with cause of loss of confidence, what religion is, what one usually does during periods of rest and what one does as he/she goes about his/her daily work. The surfacing of this value is not surprising among people in a country that has long been known as the only Christian nation in Asia.

Social acceptance/recognition which psychologists have listed as a dominant psychological need, came out tenth, with

a score of 31. It was reflected in response to "What makes me very happy" and "When I think of moving to a new place." All three responses to the latter item which meet the criterion, reflected the need for social acceptance.

The fact that the rural families surveyed are burdened by vices of some of their members is revealed by the interviewees' singling out drunkenness and gambling (sometimes "lying" is made a part of the trio of sins.) "Avoidance of vices" seems to be an odd category in considering values but dislike for "*palahobog, tahor, kag butigon*" surfaced so frequently that it was decided to make it a separate category. This came out eleventh in rank, in response to items that have to do with the worst thing a person can do, what the interviewee was most ashamed of, and what he/she disliked most in a person.

Responses that reflected concern with "freedom from illness/disability" may also be considered as reflecting need for "economic security" because very likely it was the fact that they lived a hand-to-mouth existence that made the interviewees dread getting sick or being disabled, for then their families would go hungry if they got sick or disabled. "Freedom from illness/disability" ranked twelfth, with a score of 23.

That gossiping is prevalent among rural folk and that it hurts many may be concluded from the fact that it is the first-ranking response to "the thing that I hate most in a person." This is also the third-ranking response to "The worst of evil deeds is..." Hence, even if "Avoidance of gossip" is another odd value-category, it is included here. It ranked thirteenth, with a score of 18.

Broadmindedness, fourteenth in rank, was reflected in the response to "When I

hear about new ideas" and "When I want to do something that others don't like..."

The fifteenth-ranking value was ambition, expressed in the second-ranking response to "When I see that others have more than I have..." and in the third-ranking response to "I lose confidence in myself when..."

Each of the last five values was reflected in only one response category.

(a) "patience-endurance" in the first ranking response to "When I see that others have more than I have..."

(b) "*pakikisama*" in the first-ranking response to "When I want to do something that others don't like..."

(c) "Humility," in the second-ranking response to "What I dislike most in a person is..."

(d) "Faithfulness through thick and thin" in second-ranking response to "A real friend is"

(e) "Happiness" in the fourth-ranking response to "I frequently think that I"

Of the twenty values, six can be classified as terminal values, i.e., they reflect desirable end-states of existence worth striving for. Below is an attempt to classify the fourteen remaining values that are instrumental to the attainment of each terminal value. The table below shows that the main values revealed by this study are economic security, family security, inner harmony, salvation and social acceptance. The reader can see that the fourteen values are instrumental to the attainment of the six terminal values, some of the fourteen being instrumental to more than one terminal value. In fact the first five terminal values can be subsumed under the last, "happiness".

The only reason "happiness" ranked last in the list of values here may be that only responses that specifically expressed *Kalipay*, *malipayon* were tallied under "happiness."

<u>Terminal Values</u>	<u>Instrumental Values</u>
Economic Security	Self-reliance Value placed on education of children Having no vices Freedom from illness/disabilities
Family Security	Ambition Self-reliance Having no vices
Inner Harmony	Broadmindedness Patience, endurance Humility
Salvation	Goodness (general) Helpfulness Honesty Patience, endurance
Social Acceptance	Goodness (general) Self-reliance Honesty, frankness Helpfulness Avoidance of gossip <i>Pakikisama</i>
Happiness	All the instrumental values above as well as the five other terminal values

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF THE STUDY OF ASSOCIATION

If the significant differences between groups are used to describe the values of the different groups, one can say that the

*As revealed by the chi-square analyses done to determine association between tendency to select certain responses and each of the following factors: age, SES, sex, and educational attainment.

values of the rural folk interviewed did not vary with age. On the whole, the values of the sex groups, of the SES groups and of the educational attainment groups did not vary too much.

In regard to only one SCT item (When I have money), certain SES groups significantly differed with others in three responses, but all these three responses reflected economic security.

In connection with one item (I often think that I) the female significantly differed with the male, in that the female tended to be pessimistic and the male tended to be optimistic as they strove for economic security.

The male's responses to "The thing I hate most in a person" and "The worst of evil deeds" reflected their dislike of the habit of watching other people's lives, drunkenness and stealing, while the female's responses reflected dislike of boastfulness, gossiping and of doing bad things to others.

Their definitions of religion seem to indicate that the male were more concerned with inner peace and harmony and that the women were more concerned with goodness (in general).

Although the most popular answer of the three educational groups to "Above everything else I want" is "financially stable life," reflecting the value of economic security, this response was given by significantly more of the elementary and high school groups. Since the college group had more employment opportunities and hence had more financial stability, this was not as pressing to them as to the lower educational groups. A significantly greater percentage of the college group than of the two lower groups showed concern that their children finish their studies. Having tasted the benefits of a

college education, the college group were more anxious that their children enjoy the same. Since completion of a college education was farther out of the reach of two lower groups, their responses showed more concern with immediate and pressing needs--a financially stable life that would guarantee that their basic necessities are met.

In their description of a real friend, the college group put more premium on loyalty and faithfulness; the two lower groups gave more weight to understanding and help in solving problems, indicating their greater need for security and assistance and their lesser self-reliance.

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Do the rural folk interviewed for this study have values that dispose them to the changes which need to be brought about, if our rural communities are to be developed?

This study highlighted a well-known fact--the severe hardships that have been the lot of the majority of Filipino rural folk through the years. Hardships which accompany unsteady employment, low-paid odd jobs and menial labor have inevitably colored all of their lives. If out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh, then out of the pains and frustrations of their deprivations, their mouths speak. Hence, out of 29 SCT items that reflected values, 12 elicited responses which indicated the premium they placed on economic security. In these 12 items, the responses reflecting economic security ranked first, second, or third in importance.

But these responses also indicated that these rural folks are not inhabitants of Sleepy Hollow. They not only are painfully aware of their hard lot but also

signify determination and wish to rise above their deplorable situation. Hence, they worry about their having no stable jobs which could guarantee them a steady source of income for food and other primary necessities. They greatly fear sickness and disability which would endanger whatever income-generating activities they engage in; and they express faith in themselves and their capability for earning a living, if given opportunity. All these facts are ingredients for development.

An additional incentive for these people to strive harder for economic amelioration is emotional closeness and security of the family and the resultant overriding concern for the welfare and security of their families. This has driven them to sacrifice everything, including their own comforts, and health, especially as they strive to support their children's education, particularly college education that would ensure the latter's economic and social betterment. Probably, they sacrifice even their peace of mind, which is inevitably lost when one engages in graft and corruption discussed below.

Probably because they are religious and peaceable people, they gave responses which reflected "goodness". "Goodness" here is in terms of not doing wrong to others and of not sinning. The phrases used by the interviewees reflected more the reluctance to do violence or harm to others rather than moral courage and integrity and *delicadeza*. The last three values are singled out here as missing because these have been pointed out as values that would stem the tide of graft and corruption that have snarled

real, rapid development of the Philippines.

Even so, such "goodness" as was expressed in their responses as well as their desire for inner harmony and for peace and order also motivates people to be law-abiding, a condition that contributes to development.

Honesty did emerge as the eighth-ranking value, but this was equivalent to not telling a lie rather than to moral integrity, a fact that bears out what was already mentioned in connection with "goodness." It seems that moral integrity and courage and *delicadeza* are not foremost in the minds of the rural folk studied, for if these were, these would have been expressed or even just hinted at in response to four SCT items like "The worst deed a man can do," "The person I admire and respect most is one who," "The thing I am most ashamed of is," and "I am most proud of ____"

The other values identified also generally dispose people to changes that usually contribute to development or at least do not hinder development. The rural folk's religious sentiments (loss of confidence when they are out of God's grace, their wont to pray during their rest periods and as they go about their daily chores), their desire for social acceptance and recognition; their abhorrence of vices like gambling and drunkenness and of gossiping (suggestive of unproductive idleness); their openness to new ideas and their ambition and desire for better things in life for themselves and their family--these serve to accelerate development.

The last five values, each of which

was reflected in responses to only one SCT item (different item for each value)--patience/endurance, *pakisama* (Smooth Interpersonal Relations), humility, faithfulness through thick and thin, and happiness¹--are what might be considered "passive" values, not those which might counteract the greed that obviously infests the body politic, a greed that seems to have thrived on severe economic suffering and want. Still they cannot be considered inimical to development, except probably patience/endurance, if the responses

which were tallied under this category really meant "servile patience." There was no attempt to determine to what extent the rural folk's religiosity (their religious beliefs, their tendency to pray during rest periods and as they do their daily work) has interacted with or has resulted in patience/endurance.

But it is doubtful that such an effect or interaction validates the belief that religion is an opiate of the people, for as was pointed out earlier, the people studied are not indifferent, apathetic or resigned to their poverty.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Filipino Character²

The main strengths of the Filipino character are:

1. *Pakikipagkapwa-tao*
2. Family orientation
3. Joy and humor
4. Flexibility, adaptability and creativity
5. Hardwork and industry
6. Faith and religiosity
7. Ability to survive

The weaknesses of the Filipino character are:

1. Extreme personalism
2. Extreme family centeredness
3. Lack of discipline

4. Passivity and lack of initiative
5. Colonial mentality
6. *Kanya-kanya* syndrome
7. Lack of self analysis and self reflection

The major root causes of the strengths and weaknesses in the Filipino character were identified as follows: (1) the family and home environment; (2) the social environment; (3) culture and language; (4) history; (5) the educational system; (6) religion; (7) the economic environment; (8) the political environment; (9) mass media; and (10) leadership and role models.

¹Please see page 9 for earlier comment on "happiness"

²Findings of a study conducted by the Task Force of the Moral Recovery Program. The study report was submitted to the Senate Committees on Education, Arts and Culture and on Social Justice, Welfare and Development on May 9, 1988.

TOXICANTS IN THE AQUATIC ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR EFFECTS ON SELECTED ORGANISMS*

Dahlia H. Pescos

Our marine environment is being harmed nowadays by discharge of waste materials and run-offs of highly polluted waters. This may, via food chains, contaminate commercial important food species and through them harm human beings. The impairment and progressive deterioration of water systems exposed to pollution was noted long ago, but the first control measures were taken only after some serious accidents involving human victims occurred. The case of Minamat disease¹ caused by mercury is one of the most illustrative cases.

Effective control measures for toxic pollutants require the development of range of standard procedures for the measurement of toxicity on aquatic organism. To create standards for environmental management, there is a need for more knowledge about the effects of pollutants on marine organisms. In most cases it is very simple to speculate but more difficult to identify and explain the primary effects and their eventual environmental consequences.

The general approach to toxicity testing is the exposure of an appropriate biological material to the toxic action of a polluting substance under control laboratory conditions. Later, on the basis

of the results obtained, the predicted effects of the pollutants are estimated in relation to the environment.

Today, it is clear the pollution of the hydrosphere represents a major hazard not only to aquatic life but to the health of the whole biosphere.

Toxicity tests conducted to measure the toxicity limits of pollutants on aquatic organisms are classified according to the duration of the experiment and the methods of adding the toxicant to the test solution. In these tests, test organisms are exposed to increasing concentrations of a toxicant for various lengths of time to determine changes in the organisms. The 96-hour, 50% live-death response-method is the most frequently used in conducting toxicity tests because of the minimal laboratory requirements and rapid results. With this kind of tests, it was found that toxicants have effects on the activity, feeding and reproduction of marine organisms.

The solubility of pesticides influences their effects on marine species. They are less toxic when their solubilities are high. Salinity, organic materials, pH and temperature affect the solubility of pesticides in water. On the other hand, contaminated sediments were found to

* A study made to comply with requirements for the Master in Engineering program at Central Philippine University, 1988.

undergo a slow biodegradation which causes a reduction of the dissolved oxygen in water. Suspended particles reduce visibility in the water thereby limiting the foodgathering capacity of aquatic animals. These pollutants cause water to become turbid, lowering the rate of photosynthesis which fact results in plant death. The presence of these toxicants also causes water temperature to rise. Only few species can exist in water temperature of over 40°C. Oils and allied petrochemicals interfere with natural reaction, endangering aquatic life. These toxicants cause a variety of adverse effects at lower concentrations and potential damage to marine food chains at higher concentrations.

Heavy metals are considered the most harmful aquatic pollutants. These metals produce physiological poisoning after accumulation in the tissues of marine organisms and the effect produced varies with the composition of the pollutant, the concentration in the tissues, and the metabolism of the organism. Copper and zinc are considered among the essential nutrients for marine organisms as long as they are present at tolerable levels. Lead, cadmium, mercury and chromium accumulate in human organs causing damage and malfunctioning especially in the nervous system and the effects vary from brain damage to damage of peripheral nerves causing uncoordinated muscular control and poor eyesight.

Recommendations:

The production of wastes cannot be eliminated and its disposal is a necessity.

The diversity and quantity of wastes produced will continue to increase in the future and to protect the aquatic environment, toxicity tests play a vital role. The knowledge of toxicity test procedures that can be done on common toxicants is useful to assist in the research on and application of measures for the protection of the aquatic environment.

The following are also recommended to resolve problems of pollution in the aquatic environment:

1. The development and application of sensitive and expeditious laboratory techniques to measure, explain and confirm the biological significance of the exposure of test organisms to actual or potential pollutants in the aquatic environment.
2. The study of basic biological, physiological and bio-chemical characteristics of single species to differentiate between pathological effects and normal physiological response to natural and artificial environmental pressure.
3. The development of satisfactory hazard evaluation plan, which would include the essential steps and possible alternatives for evaluating potential environmental pollutants and prescribing the necessary limitations and control.

Finally, public authorities and administrators can make their contribution through the enactment and enforcement of legislations designed to manage and protect the aquatic environment.

STRATEGIES OF READING: SEXUAL POLITICS IN
AIDA RIVERA-FORD'S
"LOVE IN THE CORNHUSKS"

E. San Juan, Jr.

Once upon a time--this phrase is less rhetorical than it seems--we were taught that art, great literature, is essentially a creation of genius, an expression of a divine spirit, an epiphany of a god. Artists are heroic souls or geniuses who agonize to produce a masterpiece; that is to say, the artist resembles an oyster suffering in pain when a grain of sand enters its bowels until later, after its gratuitous martyrdom, it throws up a pearl. This is called the oyster theory of art production.

If you are one of those delicate sensibilities offended by this metaphor of the oyster and consider it a desecration, you can replace it with any one of such familiar images like Edgar Allan Poe drinking his way to greatness. Or Byron, the aristocratic individualist riding his horse and declaiming rebellion against tyranny. You can recall any number of pictures of mad or crazed painters, musicians, sculptors, or mass media superstars. You will notice that in doing so, you have fallen into that time-warp I've signalled earlier-- "once upon a time," where you have just escaped reality into fantasy island, a realm of Ideas--to use the philosophical term--akin to that of Plato's or of religious and

mythical thought. This is a safe refuge which hides and shields us from the terrible menace of History.

For anyone who has studied this particular notion of the artist, perhaps a banal or trivial one that is still part of the collective "common sense," I would like to suggest that this notion has a specific origin: it sprang from the edge of romanticism in Europe, during the last half of the 18th century and after the French Revolution (1789). It was then a period of radical transition from a feudal or precapitalist system to a capitalist and industrial one. As a protest against the savage exploitation and ecological disaster produced by the birth of an order founded on cash, profit and the market, writers and artists began to assert the value of the authentic self. Think of William Blake, Shelley, Goethe, Lamartine, and later Emerson and Whitman. "Feeling," "nature," and the "imagination" became the slogans of the romantic artist's fight against the breakdown of the homogeneous organic society they still remember and the onset of an atomized, fragmented world which has reduced art into commodities. What the scholar M.H. Abrams calls the

"expressive" theory of art focusing on the artist, a theory which replaced the pragmatic conception centered on the audience and the more traditional mimetic theory centered on a knowledge of reality, should then be situated in the historical context of its origin. In doing so, we can then appreciate how this particular view of art has been universalized as an answer to a still felt need, especially in line with the cult of heroes, magicians, movie stars, etc. For those of us in the academy who would like to feel more informed and sophisticated than the crowd, there is another view of literature which in fact, I think, is still the dominant and orthodox mode of thinking in our universities. We who went to school in the fifties and sixties have been indoctrinated in what is called New Critical formalism--even if some of us didn't realize it then. Unlike the romantic or expressive orientation, this view excluded the artist and the audience from the field of study and concentrated on the form, the organic unity--of the text or verbal icon. I am sure most of you are familiar with close textual analysis of poems and stories, the explication of such properties in the work as ambiguities, ironies, symbolism, etc. Form thus became a fetish transcending time and place. Here is a recent testimony from a professor at De La Salle University:

The literature we write will be excellent only if it is capable of crossing barriers of time and class distinctions in our national structure. Excellent literature, then, is classless and timeless. Politics, by necessity, derives sustenance from temporal eventualities, but literature, by necessity, seeks to articulate and enhance timeless human values."

(Cirilo F. Bautista, "After the February Revolution, Where is Philippine Literature Going?" *Ani* Sept. 1987, 116-121.)

Conceiving the text as a "self-sufficient" entity, the formalists upheld what they called an "intrinsic" approach to grasp the essence of aesthetic object. This, to them, is the only correct or valid way of understanding any literary text.

Although this formalist standard looks very different from the romantic one, it shares a common tendency: both have the habit of looking for an essence behind appearances in time and space, an essence that would then provide the key for explaining phenomena. However, instead of explaining the concrete object, it substitutes a mystical invention--such as we've seen in the oyster throwing up the pearl.

Now this move to universalize a particular approach will remind you of the way the romantic consensus arose first as a particular opinion and then subsequently, for various reasons, became everyone's favorite theory. I should like to remind you what is now public knowledge about the New Criticism we imported from the United States. The major American critics like Ransom, Robert Penn Warren, Tate, etc. who articulated the principles of New Critical formalism in the thirties and forties shared a conservative and even reactionary view of society. While they rejected capitalism, they endorsed the agrarian slaveholding South as a model society.

Reacting like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound against an alienative commercial civilization, the New Critics were also combatting a Marxist-oriented thinking popular in the thirties, during the militant union-organizing days of the depression and the united front of the western democracies against global fascism. Obviously, if one's attention is

concentrated on the verbal tensions of the poem, a tension which is left ideally suspended in the void, then you hardly have any time left to fight for better working conditions, against racist vigilantes and fascist violence in everyday life. In the fifties, the Cold War against global communism virtually granted a "Good Housekeeping" seal on New Critical formalism.

How then were we able (or at least some of us) to free ourselves from the stranglehold of formalism? It was, to tell the truth, not by lifting our bootstraps through a superhuman effort of will. Events overtook our minds, events that were also shaped by the critical reflections of participants and protagonists--millions of them.

When the abstractions of organic form and metaphysical conceits could no longer a satisfying explanation for what was happening in the real world in the fifties and sixties--one can cite the Korean and Vietnam war, the problems of sexism and racism, the profound alienation of youth and intellectuals, together with the upsurge of national liberation struggles in the Third World--two trends superseded New Criticism by incorporating some of its insights and giving it a semblance of scientific rigor and coherence. I am referring to archetypal or myth criticism systematized by Northrop Frye, and structuralism. Since I would assume that most of you are familiar with archetypal analysis--every other hero is a Christ or Hercules figure--I'll limit my remarks to the structuralist method.

The chief inspiration of European structuralism came from anthropology and linguistics. Like the formalists, structuralist critics concern themselves with the descriptive analysis of individual

forms with a view to constructing a grammar of taxonomy of plot structures. An element or unit acquires meaning only when placed within the totality of the structure. But beyond this preoccupation, structuralists (especially the French like Levi-Strauss and Roland Barthes) were also interested in comparing the forms of discourse, the internal mechanisms or style of a text (not just linguistic but also rituals and practices with forms of consciousness obtaining in a given society. Unlike myth criticism, which deals with essences removed from any empirical context, structuralists engage in correlations between literary and extra-literary structures. For example, the anthropologist Levi-Strauss, after isolating and describing the structure of the Oedipus myth in all its existing variants, proceeds to investigate the function of such narratives in the life of the community. It turns out that myth is a form of unconscious thinking whereby a group attempts to reconcile lived oppositions, to solve in the imagination the concrete contradictions that plague the community. So here we arrive at a point where, by analyzing the formal specificities of a text, the critic comes to grips with the imaginative work as an act or event whose value is embedded in its social context or grounding. This is a discovery that the intrinsic structures of a text cannot be separated from the cultural and ideological functions that ultimately invest them with more than purely formal significance.

Events in the late sixties and seventies overtook the mind again before it could take second thought. With the cataclysmic upheavals of the anti-war rights, feminist and youth movements, a radical questioning of norms and values sparked a vigorous interest in the works

of the major thinkers Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. In this atmosphere, students of literature began to question the assumptions of structuralism--poststructuralism was born, even as the renaissance of Western Marxism attained its peak in the early seventies.

In general, one can sum up this change as a crisis of the autonomous, rational subject--a crisis of the myth of fiction of the self, to be precise. We can no longer assume the existence of a thinking, coherent ego (as Descartes once assumed) as the self-evident foundation of every truth we can formulate. In short, all such statements need to be questioned by placing them in situation. All texts or artworks are to be problematized by placing them in the historic conjuncture where manifold forces interact. There is no longer any innocent reader. Everything is overdetermined, or shaped by multiple factors one of which is the reader or viewer herself. Everything is problematized.

One of the decisive effects of this crisis of belief in the traditional notion of the subject (consciousness, self) is the recognition that the reader--the once passive consumer--is an active participant in the construction of meaning, and that meaning in fact is an effect of the transaction of interface between the reader's repertoire--her selection of beliefs, habits, practices and assumptions--from the ideology of the given society and the text's own repertoire (both literary conventions and moral values) which is also derived from the general ideology of the author's milieu. Thus both literary work and reader inhabit a specific sociocultural formation. Both are implicated in practices and institutions usually taken to

be normal, natural, or universal by everyone immersed in them. Given this complicity between text and reader, it is also necessary to be sensitive to the variety of cognitive styles--the ways by which you process and react to what you perceive, conditioned or determined by your gender, class, ethnic or racial affiliation, etc. One must be aware too of various reading strategies deployed to process a text and produce meaning.

Instead of further elaboration in theoretical terms of what is generally called a reader-centered approach, let me consider how we can explore the various ways of reading, interpreting and critiquing a particular text. For this purpose, I have chosen a story by Aida Rivera Ford's "Love in the Cornhusks." Let me summarize the story here (of course, there is no substitute to the experience of reading the whole text yourself. This is easy to do and gives a general orientation, but remember that this is not really "objective". It presumes a knowledge of the codes--the basic elements of narrative coding--which are mobilized to compose the text and the historical situation in which it was inscribed. In summarizing, the reader fills in the gaps, makes correlations and inferences--in short, actively recomposes the text. Here's my summary:

Tinang, a young mother with her baby goes to her former mistress' house to seek her favor as the child's godmother. While in the house she recalls her past as caretaker of the house; her nostalgia for the "essence of the comfortable world" is evoked by the Señora's "faint scent of *agua de colonia*." She confesses to her former employer that marital life is hard and wishes that she were back to her position as maid. But she realizes that she is now a visitor.

The Señora mentions Amado, an efficient driver of the plantation tractors, who suddenly left the house one day.

After consenting to be *madrina*, the Señora reminds Tinang to pick up a letter at the drugstore. "Desperate to read the letter," Tinang stops at the corner of a cornfield. The letter from Amado Galauran discloses their past liaison. Tinang discovers why he left and assures herself that her love "never meant to desert me." She cries, recalling the past and her seduction. While in this transport of remembering, she is jolted by the sight of a green snake near her baby. Panicked and stricken with guilt, she grabs her baby while the letter falls unnoticed among the cornhusks.

To be sure, this bare summary leaves many blanks, but the next stage of this pedagogical strategy is interpretation. Properly speaking, we interpret when we fail to read. What is the meaning of these incidents? What are the major thematic concerns?

From the image of that singular "intoxicating" letter whose fall (ignored by the receiver) we cannot evade noticing an image that seems to simultaneously confirm Tinang's estimate of herself as a loved object and induce overpowering guilt, we can at once suggest here the fatal division in Tinang's character. We confront a major theme: the split in the subject whose choice of the baby over the letter cannot hide. This fissure or cut in Tinang's psyche can scarcely be concealed by the artful closure of the narrative and the reader's identification with this suffering woman whose victimization makes her resemble Felicite, that memorable protagonist of Flaubert's story "A Simple Heart." I might interject her that Tinang's religiosity--"Ave Maria Santisima! Do not punish me," she prayed, searching the baby's skin for marks--betrays an impulse of narcissism that makes the narrative ambiguous in spite of its surface clarity. We shall watch Tinang examine her baby's skin for marks in order to distract

us from the baby itself as the telltale mark or inscription of her "I" forever postponed from revealing its plenitude by being caught up in language. The baby, the letter and "Constantina Tirol" will all be interred in the place of *jouissance*, in the lover's death (both literal and symbolic here), in the site of the dreamer who is forever refused by that Symbolic Order we call society, the law, family, phallic supremacy.

Before elaborating further on that theme, I might propose here an application of the structuralist strategy of reading. We can post it initially by binary opposition that gives a synchronic pattern of the elements of the text unfolding in time. The opposition involves the outside and the inside: the inside refers to the Señora's home associated with Christian charity, abundance, patriarchal order, social success and decorum. We cannot forget the dogs that greet Tinang, the hierarchical code that dictates the syntax of her request, and the lover's style of communication. The outside is the world of mud, cornhusks, the pagan space of the Bagobo tribe. Despite his ownership of two hectares of land, Tinang's husband--nameless, unaccepted except in stereotype and banter, remains on the margin of civilization. We see the mud that smears Tinang's baby, bundle, letter and shoes when she trudges home lost in thought over the unopened letter--bifurcated between the body that forges a path in the mud and the unconscious that removes her from present time and space. She is indeed lost even before the letter is opened, the agency of the letter or language functioning as that utopian ideal space where an enigmatic subject can be reconstituted. The narrative suggests that cornhusks, snake and mud all belong to

the fallen world of matter and sin which Tinang has failed to escape.

A crystallization of the polarity of inside/outside can be discerned in Tinang's sensibility, itself an epitome of the tensions dramatized in the story and a wish-fulfillment of its possible resolution. Embodying the conflict in herself--an outsider now wanting to be back as an insider, Tinang assumes the role of a mediator. She occupies the boundaryline of visitor and former resident, recipient of charity and petitioner for ritual inclusion into the family of the Señora. Note how she feels warmth for her former mistress and for Tito the boy:

Her eyes clouded. The sight of the Señora's flaccidly plump figure, swathed in a loose waistless housedress that came down to her ankles, and the faint scent of *agua de colonia* blended with kitchen spice, seemed to her the essence of the comfortable world, and she sighed thinking of the long walk home through the mud, the baby's legs straddled to her waist, and Inggo, her husband, waiting for her, his body stinking of tuba and sweat, squatting on the floor, clad only in his foul undergarments.

Our sympathy for Tinang is aroused here when the narrator discloses her attitude to her Bagobo husband. She confesses that "it is hard, Señora, very hard" to be married; subordination as maid or servant is preferable. The Señora, knowing her plight, reminds Tinang of her advice that she refused to heed: "Didn't I tell you what it would be like, huh?...that you would be a slave to your husband and that you would work with a baby eternally strapped to you." Tinang's motherhood and her second pregnancy seems to be less a blessing than a curse, a penalty for leaving the Señora's house in order to serve a Bagobo master. But the ending of the narrative seeks to reconcile us to Tinang's fate because the alternative is sin and the taboo on *jouissance*, the

forbidden site where the subject as desire of the Other is inscribed.

Underlying this antithesis we have sketched is perhaps a more all-encompassing but abstract opposition definable from an ethical and psychological perspective. It is the antithesis between the guilt of erotic pleasure, that bliss seized from transgressing a prohibition or violating a taboo, and the innocence of obedience to the rule of the Father, or the patriarchal code. One way of formulating this by borrowing the terminology of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan by posing the conflict here between that of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, between the mirror-stage of narcissistic identification with the pre-Oedipal mother called the Imaginary phase of the psyche, and the Symbolic order of culture and language, of Desire, marked by the castration complex (about which more later).

Now what the narrative unfolds in its diachronic sequence is the attempt to reconcile the opposition we have described by valorizing one part of it against the other so that one term becomes dominant implicitly or explicitly. When Tinang returns to her former employer to seek her favor as *madrina* in baptism, this wife-mother who now should submit to her husband, returns to the fold of Christian/civilized law in effect seeking to reinstate her identity as subaltern of the patriarchal household. Although the Señor is absent--a symbolic concealment, the Señora acts as an effective stand-in--a signifier that represents the subject (the father) to another signifier. The Señora affirms the law of class distinction and gender asymmetry. The Señora's house becomes the privileged place Tinang longs for--she seeks to recuperate the

aura of the past, looking for the flowers she watered with so much care only to see the new "girl who was now in possession of the kitchen work" barring her return. With the Señora as godmother to her child, Tinang will partly restore that original state of bliss and innocence--not completely because Amado's will and her disappearance has more permanently barred her return to that schizoid condition where the "I" can still elude the threat of castration. It is the letter, of course, that restores her to the past if only on the imaginary plane, but it is also this letter that uncovers a death-drive--the death of the lover/seducer--and a revolt against her fate as subordinate female servant. She gains the recognition of the Other, the desire of the Other being the locus of her emergence as subject which for a moment flickers in the gaps of the signifiers in Amado's letter. It is the letter and its peculiar language that positions Tinang in the endless chain of signifiers which Lacan calls the metonymy of Desire: it is that letter which exposes the negativity or abyss of *jouissance* forever undermining the supremacy of the male-rational order signified here by the efficient tractor driver, the bolts and tools surrounding him. The baby displaces the letter in the incessant sliding of signified over the signifiers--until, finally, the utterance of "Ave Maria Santisima," grasped as both address and apostrophe, seals Tinang's fate.

After establishing the structural oppositions in broad outline and sketching possibilities of deconstructing them, the question we should ask next is: What actual lived contradictions of the writer's society are being acted out and staged in this narrative? And what resolutions are being proposed to these

contradictions? In other words, in what way is the narrative an imaginary re-writing of performance of the real situation ascribable not just to one individual writer or character but to a whole community? It might be recalled here that the Oedipus myth and its multiple variants, according to Levi Strauss, represented on the imaginary level the attempt to resolve the urgent problems of Greek tribal society. Just like Freud's dream-work, the myth articulates a collective working through of a social crisis.

It should then be clear by now that the structural opposition is not really a neutral equation, a ratio of equal and complementary terms. Earlier I have pointed out that the opposition between outside and inside resolves itself with the inside (through ritual kinship, guilt as symptom of lack, assumption of gender subordination) eventually installed as the hegemonic standard of values of the whole society. Subordinated to the authority of the Señora, Tinang's future a prefiguration of the Virgin Mother invoked spontaneously to purge her sin, Tinang assumes her maternal position on the fact of the snake's presence--a castration threat to this substitute phallus, in the psychoanalytic terminology.

I should like to point out, at this juncture, that it is possible to qualify the seemingly unchallenged domination of the patriarchal order by stressing the pre-Oedipal mother's gesture of revolt when the Señora chides Tinang for being a slave to her husband. But with her announcement of the letter's presence at the drugstore/post office which dispenses not medicine but a chain of signifiers whose cultural idiosyncrasy catches "Constantina Tirol" in a trap laid by a mother's death, Tinang plunges into an

abyss which sacrifices "Tinay," "our lover," to the guilt-stricken object of sexist practice, the wife-mother Tinang.

I should like to formulate here my idea that the collective problem that the text grapples with has to do with how to re-impose discipline on the Constantina Tirols who presume themselves a cut above the laborers in the fields, who are drawn to such figures as Amado because they can shift from the role of filthy, dark workers to educated, finely dressed professionals, and therefore dare to cross boundaries. A moment of "great excitement" disrupts Tinang's unquestioning servitude: "The shadows moved fitfully in the bamboo groves as she passed and the cool November air edged into her nostril sharply...He embraced her roughly and awkwardly, and she trembled and gasped and clung to him." But order and hierarchy are reinstated when the snake, that mythical emblem of taboos and prohibitions, slithers into sight.

We can now conclude that "Love in the Cornhusks"--note that the field littered with cornhusks is the scene of reading the love letter, not that of physical union--given our interpretation so far, proves itself vulnerable to a feminist deconstructive reading, and to a critique by all those excluded from the Christian, patriarchal dispensation.

It is at this point that I would like to signal the transition to the third stage of the reading strategy I have been demonstrating here, and this stage is properly that of criticism. Criticism signifies here not a purely literary judgment about grammar, plot consistency, plausibility, etc., but a critique of the themes and especially the codes out of which the text has been constructed. Criticism happens when the

reader puts into play her human ethical and political reactions that she shares with others. Let me quote Robert Scholes' proposal from his instructive book *Textual Power* (1985):

The individual reader is in no position to take a critical view of a text. This is so because fiction deals with types, with representative characters, and can thus be criticized only from a position correspondingly broad. The most striking recent examples of this sort of critical work have come from feminists, but any group that has identified its interests as a class can mount a *critical attack* on a story's codes and themes from the position of its own system of values...A major function of the teacher of fiction should be to help students identify their own collectivities, their group or class interests, by means of the representation of typical figures and situations in fictional texts.

My point here is that criticism is always made on behalf of a group. Even "taste" is never a truly personal thing but a carefully inculcated norm, usually established by a powerful social class...The whole point of my argument is that we must open the way between the literary or verbal text and the social text in which we live. It is only by breaking the hermetic seal around the literary text--which is the heritage of modernism and New Critical exegesis--that we can find our proper function as teachers once again.

I should be clear now that criticism is a collective act that each of us is bound to perform if art and literature are ever going to be not just a privileged, luxury education but a liberating experience.

Our target for critical reflection is the ideology of the text which is mainly constructed on a skillful rendering of Tinang's character as schizoid sensibility. Tinang's thoughts and feelings, her view of the world, confirm the Señora's milieu and ethos as the source of her social identity, the space where the Other's question--"What do you want?"--is posed for her. In short, the Señora represents the Symbolic Order of culture, language, and the law of the phallus: the taboo on

incest. The letter is the rhetorical ruse of condensation which generates Tinang as the subject of the Symbolic Order. Tinang learns from Amado's letter that were it not for his mother's illness and subsequent death, he would not have "deserted" her. He left the Señora without visible excuse, but "deserted" Tinang. The highly stylized language of his letter conveys a protest against a legitimized social alienation where communication between persons is mediated by the official authority of the property-owning class. Juxtaposed with the official English of the text, the letter's idiosyncratic style releases the power of difference (gender, ethnic, class) suppressed by the linear authority of the plot. This love letter which at first evokes the thought of death (Tinang's sister's death) later serves as a metaphor for the lover's death administered or delivered through that very knowledge of reading she prides herself in possessing as a sign of her superiority over her co-subalterns. In decoding the script of the letter, Tinang unveils her body, as it were, to the clutches of an impersonal need coming from "the screen of trees beyond." We see here how the text sacrifices the woman to the model tractor driver who, in the letter, displaces the Bagobo husband halfway to her marital "prison." She is sacrificed to a past of infinite displacement which can never be fully grasped as plenitude and which can in fact only be interrupted by a trope from Christian mythology: that little green snake slithering out of the reader's conscience. This is of course not a question of author's intention but to the text's own motivation.

I should like to emphasize here that the power of this astutely crafted narrative depends to a large degree on the pathos of this honest, capable, suffering

young woman who seems all alone in the world, a solitary heroic figure struggling for status, survival, and an affirmation of integrity in a world characterized by gates and hogfences guarded by fierce hostile dogs; a world surrounded by mud and suspicious workers, by a husband "stinking of tuba and sweat." As a compensation, the text offers us that poignant cut in the narrative, Amado's letter—a husk to be discarded with other cornhusks, where the "I" of the speaking voice, the subject of the enunciation, is irrevocably separated from the "I" of the grammatical subject (subject of the enunciated) by the dying mother whose loss guarantees the rupture in Tinang's being and the preservation of the status quo:

My dearest Tinay,

....It is not easy to be far from our lover.

Tinay, do you still love me? I hope your kind and generous heart will never fade. Someday or somehow I'll be there again to fulfill our promise.

Many weeks and months have elapsed. Still I remember our bygone days. Especially when I was suffering with the heat of the tractor under the heat of the sun. I was always in despair until I imagine your personal appearance coming forward bearing the sweetest smile that enabled me to view the distant horizon.

....I hope you did not love anybody except myself.

Note the utopian impulse sublimated here: "Someday or somehow I'll be there again to fulfill our promise." Consider here the echo of repetition in the gap between Tinang's reading (her pursuit of the chain of signifiers) and her catching sight of that castrated member disappearing in the grass. Could this post-official voice claiming a monopoly of love act as a subversive force that can

explode the patriarchal regime? Or is it a pitiful cry of help from a child forever tied to the sacrifice of the mother, a voice that can liberate Tinang and her sisters if it is finally condemned to the cornhusks?

A plausible reading of the concluding paragraph would consider the two-year old baby as the love-child of Tinang and the "disappeared" lover who has in effect acquired the ambidextrous, dual-faced visage of Dionysian, trickster figure. His schizoid (dark/bright) image disrupts Tinang's servant identity. Her guilt springs from the split between obedience to the Christian prohibition against pre-marital sex and her desire. The coherence of the self appears threatened by its dissolution, the unitary psyche fragmented by antagonistic claims. To forestall this crisis, the text forces a closure: desire is suppressed, the fear of punishment supervenes. The Madonna image signals a restoration of order and the patriarchal norm.

But I submit this final thesis against other readings: While the child implies thus a dual significance--it (note the neuter position ascribed here to this love-child) proves Tinang's defiance of the subaltern code and at the same time her submission to it by her impulse of guilt--Tinang's choice of the child's body as the site of an as-yet-uninscribed future, the index of the power of female desire, over the hallucinatory promise and memory of the letter, may be taken as the triumph of a feminist politics-in-the-making. This particular reading unmasks the fissures, gaps, ruptures of patriarchal ideology. Despite Tinang's return to the fold of her Bagobo husband, we see in the end how the male impregnator's letter, symbol of male privilege and class domination, is finally consigned to the fate of the cornhusks and of texts that we discard after extracting the ears, the grains of meaning--seeds and progenitors of other texts, future readings, new rewriting.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MAJOR THEMES IN THE LIBERATION THEOLOGY OF LATIN AMERICA¹

Chum Awi

This thesis is an analysis and evaluation of the contents of several major themes of Liberation Theology. Furthermore, it is a response to the criticisms which arise against Liberation Theology. Four major themes, namely, "Man is the master of his own destiny," "Faith without ideologies is dead," "Hermeneutics of suspicion," and "The Church: A new breed of Christians," were chosen because they are heatedly discussed in Christian circles all over the world.

The aim of this study is also to make clear the main points or thoughts of Liberation Theology so that people may understand the contents and aims of Liberation Theology. This may clarify unnecessary misunderstanding and confusion.

To enable one to understand why Liberation Theology evolved, its background, history and development are traced in chapter one. The basic situation of poverty in Latin America, which is seen as a "sinful situation," is the reason for the formulation of this theology.

Certain conferences, councils, encyclicals and significant personalities are mentioned which begin to bring out this theological concept.

The aim of the study of the first major theme is to answer the question, "Is man the master of his own destiny?" The importance of commitment to "praxis" is discussed as well as the significance of human limits and conquests in history. The problem of "What is truth?" is addressed and the untrustworthiness of man and his ability is critically studied. As a result of the study, which is based on Biblical concepts, theological understanding and historical facts, it is concluded that God alone is the master of man's destiny.

The study of the second major theme is centered on the relationship between Christian faith and secular ideologies. The successes and/or failures of these secular ideologies such as, "Development," "Communism," and "Capitalism" are pointed out. Moreover, the concepts and objectives of "ideology" are traced. On the other hand, the

¹An abstract of a masteral thesis done at Central Philippine University for the Master of Divinity, 1988.

importance of the Christian faith is also emphasized. Since the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of god are believed, the Christian faith is above every human institution, ideology, and activity. On the other hand, secular ideologies are necessary for the temporal needs of man. Because of this fact, the study concludes that faith must be supplemented by ideologies.

The third major theme is "Hermeneutics of suspicion." Because of the historical changes in the situation of the poor majority of Latin America, the traditional teaching of the Church is suspected. To meet the purpose of liberation there is a new Biblical interpretation which emphasizes God as Liberator: Exodus; God's demand: "Doing Justice"; Jesus and Liberation: the Kingdom of God; and Jesus and conflict: the political dimension. In order to endorse the above hermeneutical approach, the rootedness of all theologies, including Liberation Theology, is pointed out. Because of its historical development, the study concludes in favour of the legitimacy of the new hermeneutical approach.

The fourth and last major theme is concerned with the Church as a new

breed of Christians. The structure and role of the Church has not been satisfactory to meet the demands of the time. To meet these, the Church has to take sides with the poor and oppressed because of the stark realities of the world. To help liberate these people the Church also must choose or create a political and economic system, and implement it, for their betterment. The members of the Church have to play their role as helpers of the broken and the bruised. By doing this, justice might be established. This is the way the new breed of Christians must act and live, with humility before God.

On the whole, this study leads to the conclusion that Liberation theology is not only an important subject of the time but also a necessary subject-matter of the world. It is pointed out that Liberation Theology needs improvement. By correcting and adding it can be widened. Liberation Theology must not be biased only towards the poor and the oppressed. It has to liberate the rich and the oppressor as well. A true Liberation Theology has to deal with the liberation of everybody. Only theology which aims to liberate both parties can be a true theology.

JESUS AND POWER IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE¹

Limuel Rome Equiña

Against the background of domination and power struggle both in the religious and the political conditions of the time, the author attempts to explore the Biblical theology of power according to the Gospel of Luke. This study focuses on the Jewish experiences under a series of foreign political powers; namely, the Persians, the Hellenists and the Romans.

The survival of the Jews through the complexities of cultures and political pressures which they encountered was fundamentally fashioned by their nationalism and religious fanaticism. The Jews remained faithful to their own indigenous practices and beliefs in a monotheistic God which they were ready to defend at the cost of their lives. But on the whole, the Jews were obedient to the policy of the dominant power as long as the latter did not interfere in their religious life.

In the gospel of Luke, the evangelist portrayed Jesus as one in constant conflict with the Jewish religious groups. For the religious authorities, the teachings and deeds of Jesus appeared revolutionary and a threat to the existing religious system. As such, they eliminated Jesus from the Jewish society. For Luke, though Jesus was tried and crucified under the Roman law, the Jewish religious leaders were especially responsible for his death as they were the "masterminds" of the plot.

In his Gospel, Luke described Jesus' power as both institutive and operative. God authorized Jesus to exercise his messianic power in the form of miraculous works and prophetic teachings and preaching in order to fulfill the divine plan for the world. Moreover, Jesus gave his power and authority (on a limited basis) to his disciples for the continuance of his ministry on earth until he comes back.

In his exercise of institutive power, Jesus followed the model of servanthood cited by the prophetic oracles of Isaiah. With that motif, Jesus rejected the use of violence and might as a pattern for ruling. Rather, he taught service and humbleness as the paradigm of greatness. This new teaching and philosophy of leadership was properly demonstrated by Jesus himself in his life and works which challenged the ruling elite and those who dreamed of power and glory.

The historical and biblical findings serve as the foundation for the author's reflection on the present religious and political struggle for power. His study was made with the belief that his findings therein would offer a challenge to the religious and political leaders as well as to the people to re-examine their own systems of leadership, rule and cooperation for the common good so that a more humane and ordered society of people might emerge in this epoch of complexities and illusions.

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