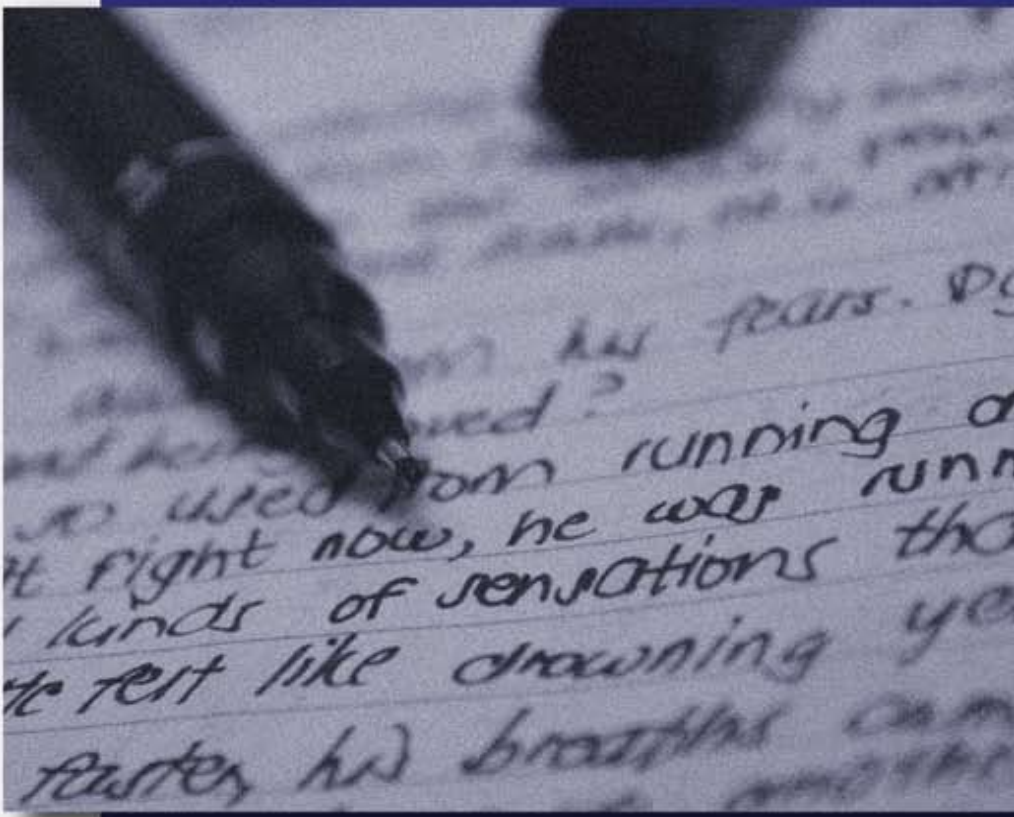
ISSN 2244-0585

# The Scholastican Journal




St. Scholastica's College Manila

VOLUME 3 | 2013

# The Scholastican Journal

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ISSN 2244-0585



Cover Design by:
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Printed by:
**Ample Printing Press**

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# On Calamities and Critical Discourse: Notes from the Editor

The spate of calamities, natural and human-made, that recently wrought havoc on certain parts of the country has elicited different reactions and interpretations. Some have romanticized it, claiming that the catastrophes have tested our resilience and stoicism as a people. True to form, corporate media in particular has exalted the spirit of "bayanihan" and "cooperation" while selling shirts and prepaid cards which proceeds would supposedly go to the victims (commodifying misery?). Others have viewed the calamities as a punishment, a "divine" wake-up call. But the most glaring reaction is the public outcry over the failure of authorities to prepare and respond immediately. The tragedy that befell Leyte and other areas struck by Yolanda, for instance, was more than enough to jolt us into rethinking our confidence in the existing dispensation for its failure to save the lives of thousands.

In this time of crisis, the school as a relatively autonomous public sphere becomes all the more important in promoting and assessing critical insights and discourses. Unless it has been thoroughly corporatized and/or its teachers have been completely "zombified," the school remains a venue for the democratic exchange of ideas and the narrativization of our experiences of collective pain, suffering, despair, and hope as a people. There is no point embracing a spirit of lethargy and fatalism in these critical times. The educator has a role to replace the sense of general apathy, helplessness, and Sisyphean submission to fate with empathy and hope, while maintaining a critical attitude toward institutions and relations of power especially within the context of recent natural and social disasters. The teacher as transformative intellectual is not only to teach but to engage in critical discourse, casting doubts, critiquing claims, questioning singular "truths." As Edward Said suggested, the teacher as public intellectual should "raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma, to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments and corporations."

The research outputs included in this issue serve that purpose. It is their researchers' modest efforts toward affirming, situating, systematizing, problematizing, innovating, destabilizing knowledges, through the use of varied designs and approaches and according to different theoretical perspectives.

Prof. Louie Paraan's "Losing the Filipino and Female Voice in Postcolonial Translation: How the West Has Won," the recipient of this year's "Best Research Award" from the IRAD, is a postcolonial critique of selections from a literary anthology. The book in question contains literary selections from different regions of the country and has been used in some of the Literature classes in SSC. But a postcolonial analysis of some of the texts, particularly those that have been translated from the local languages into English, would reveal wide gaps between the original and the English version that appears in the book. The female voice, for instance, is put "under erasure" (to borrow a phrase from Heidegger) in the English translations of Leona Florentino's poems. Professor Paraan's study seems to suggest that translations, in a manner of speaking, are not to be trusted as they are arbitrated by the translator's own *habitus*.

"Hatred and Violence in Light of Emmanuel Levinas' Disinterested Responsibility" by Dr. Alma Espartinez-Santiago sheds light on some of Levinas' philosophical musings, such as his notion of "disinterested responsibility" which necessarily involves the bridging of the "I" and the "Other." In a world characterized by indifference and self-centeredness, cruelty and oppression, Levinas' teachings, if practiced and actualized, will do much to address many of the concerns that bedevil contemporary humankind. What's interesting about Levinas, as can be inferred from the discussion, is that it puts a premium on individual and collective agency in making a "better" world possible, unlike other strands of contemporary philosophizing that privilege the discourse of pessimism and despair.

Dr. Ma. Victoria Trinidad's "Thesis Quality, Emotional Reactions, and Coping Resources of College Thesis Writers of St. Scholastica's College Manila" underscores the role of affect in the completion of the students' final academic requirement. This quantitative, correlational study suggests the need for teachers to make thesis writing less stressful for the students and,

thus, ensure the completion of "quality," and even publishable, papers. Also implied is the importance of congenial, but professional, mentor-mentee relationships during the research process.

Like Dr. Trinidad's study, Dr. Richard Pulmones' "Personal Epistemology and Learning in a Chemistry Classroom" also foregrounds the process of learning in a formal setting. In particular, the study distinguishes between two types of epistemology — naïve and sophisticated — and their bearing on students' metacognitive behaviors. As Dr. Pulmones observed, students with naïve epistemological beliefs would use "simplistic" ways to negotiate learning, whereas those with sophisticated beliefs would use approaches that treat knowledge as "complex, tentative, and evolving." Such observations should, of course, guide teachers in dealing with pedagogical issues within the classroom and beyond.

Lastly, my article entitled "Narrativizing Marginality and Hope: Testimonial Narratives of Students in a Night Secondary School" re-appropriates the Latin American genre called *testimonio* as counter-discourse. Specifically, I analyzed, using a thematic approach, the letters written by students in a night secondary school. My discussion centers on how the letters transgress some of our assumptions about working-class youth.

*Maligayang pagbabasa!* Let me end with another, lengthy quote from Said:

> *All knowledge that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgment and interpretation. This is not to say that facts or data are nonexistent, but that facts get their importance from what is made of them in interpretation… for interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place.*

**Noel Christian A. Moratilla**

# Hatred and Violence in Light of Emmanuel Levinas' Disinterested Responsibility

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**Abstract**
*This article is a rethinking of the status of the subject in relation to one's responsibility to the Other and on how the latter affects the former with an overarching objective of acquiring the complete reality of the person. It initially examines Emmanuel Levinas' disinterested responsibility which describes the ethical relation between the I and the Other, giving primacy to the Other. Secondly, it outlines carefully Levinas' concept of justice which announces the entrance of the Third. Thirdly, it presents the conditions under which violence is justified and the constraints within which such measures can be introduced. Finally, it attempts to establish the connection between Levinasian concept of justice and the wisdom of forgiveness – an idea Levinas did not address directly in his philosophical works but which can be perceived as a valid response to honoring, rather than canceling out, justice.*

## Introduction

How can Levinas' concept of *disinterested responsibility for others* prevent the egoism of the self from lending itself to hatred and violence? How can we display sympathy and understanding towards our malevolent enemies? These are the questions this paper aims to answer. This study attempts to understand the subtleties of hatred

and violence by drawing from the insights of Emmanuel Levinas, a contemporary Jewish philosopher, whose own family members were hapless victims of violence during the Holocaust. Levinas recognizes the possibility of the legitimate use of violence for the sake of the natural dignity and the inherent value of the person. It is the novelty of Levinas' approach to the problem of hatred and violence that elicited seduction in his works.

To begin with, the paper examines Levinas' *disinterested responsibility* which describes the ethical relation between the *I* and the *Other*. Secondly, it outlines carefully Levinas' concept of justice which announces the entrance of the *Third*. Thirdly, it presents the conditions under which violence is justified and the constraints within which such measures can be introduced. Finally, it attempts to establish the connection between Levinasian concept of justice and the wisdom of forgiveness – an idea Levinas did not address directly in his philosophical works but which can be perceived as a valid response to honoring, rather than canceling out, justice.

This present research invites us to see the event of hatred and violence from a different order – or *dis*-order, if you will. It is motivated by an appreciation of, and interest in, the process of rebuilding a wounded humanity, not by hatred masquerading as justice, but by violence borne out of justice and *infinite responsibility* that is never nullified when violence is rendered necessary.

## Disinterested Responsibility

The thrust of Emmanuel Levinas' work is concerned with his attempt to replace ontology and to make *ethics* the *first philosophy*. For Levinas, we cannot have the ethical and the ontological together for the former interrupts the latter. He argued that ontology has been concerned with the question of *Being,* and maintained that ethics should be concerned with what is *otherwise than Being*.

Levinas presented a highly original and profound view of the *self* in relation to *Others*, causing a sense of "disorientation" from the traditional notion of *I-You* relation. He showed, by his concept of responsibility, that responsibility is more basic than my subjectivity and which founds that subjectivity. Levinas spoke of the constitution of subjectivity through the approach or coming of the *Other* –

who assigns me to my being *me*. I do not exist as an *I* prior to my being exposed to the *Other*. My subjectivity arises from my being responsible for that *Other* person whom I bear within my very self: it is *my* – and no one else's – irreplaceable responsibility for it is that other person that makes me *me*. The response to the *Other* is the condition upon which the self develops. The self is developed and completed through the *Other*. The event of responsibility, for Levinas, imposes an obligation upon the subject to serve and to be responsible for the *Other*, to respond to the *Other's* demands. Levinas described the event of responsibility as a singular event that happens each time one person comes face-to-face with another person.

Thus, the Levinasian perspective on ethics draws the subject out from the interiority that philosophy has traditionally posited as the essence of the self, and into the exteriority of responsibility that realizes subjectivity. Subjectivity is reinterpreted as essentially *for-an-Other* rather than for-itself (Levinas, 1985). This is not a decision I may agree or disagree with; rather, I am ordered to do so. Levinas argued that subjectivity needs to be rethought from an ethical perspective, in order to arrive at an understanding of the *subject* that is "founded in the idea of infinity" (Levinas, 1969, p. 26).

The epiphany of the Face, which bears the idea of Infinity, is the beginning of the transition from a movement from *"being-for-itself"* to a *"being-for-the-Other"*. The *Face* presents me with a being outside the parameters of my own interior existence. Surging forth, the *Face* suspends my solipsistic, infantile enjoyment and puts my enjoyment of the element into question. By questioning my possession of the world, the *Face* requires me to establish a distance between myself and my elemental existence. The *Face* addressing me reveals that my domination has come to an end. Nothing would ever be the same. I am substantially changed. My encounter with the *Face* affords me, for the first time, an authentic future by going beyond my present. For a long time, in Western tradition, we live with the insight that being the subject is the ultimate call for us all. It takes the wisdom of Levinas to reflect on a paradigm shift, to recognize the truth that there is a call beyond the call to be for-oneself. It is the call to be for-the-*Other*. With the irruption of the *Face*, there is something more important than my life – and that is the life of the *Other*. It is the unselfish effort that arouses in me a joy more sublime and pure than the delight of narcissistic enjoyment.

The Face that shows up is most primordially, essentially and radically exterior. It is beyond the grasp of my possessive powers. Refusing to be absorbed, the *Face hides* as it *shows* the *Face*. The relation with the *Other,* Levinas explained, introduces a dimension of transcendence totally different from the relation with objects seen in the light. (Levinas, 1969). The approach of the human Other breaks the ego away from its concern for its own existence. One's apprehension of the Other forever trembles on the possibility of novelty, owing to its irreconcilable strangeness and its brimming autonomy.

The Face has a dual expression: *height* and *nudity*. The *Other* is not my equal. His grandeur comes from his commanding me, not from his power. The *Other* calls me to be for-the-Other. The radical exteriority of the *Other* becomes a height in order to indicate the non-reciprocal relation between the Other and me. The height and grandeur of the *Other* reveals the ascendancy that the *Other's* Face wields on me and the reverence that he inspires. The epiphany also expresses ***nudity***. The *Face*, in its nudity, is ***defenseless***. It has no recourse except to me. The *Other's* height is not established by his power but by his ***nudity, destitution*** and ***humility***. This is the ***paradox of height:*** coming from an eminent height, possessing radical otherness, the *Face* is an extreme vulnerability. I am approached by the destitute *Other*. Complacent in, and jealous of, my sense of self-sufficiency, being *"all right"*, I am shocked by the approach of the street child, the beggar, and the beaten fellow. And each *Face* facing me reveals my responsibility to each beyond escape. In his frailty and vulnerability, the *Other* is exposed to danger, and worst, to death. Issuing the demand: *"Thou shalt not kill!"* the Face testifies to his factual and ethical *"nudity."*

The kind of ethical relation envisioned by Levinas is not one of mutual obligation and reciprocity or give-and-take; it is thoroughly asymmetrical as expressed by the height of the *Other*. The *Other* has absolute priority over the self and imposes on the self an unconditional and absolute, non-negotiable demand. The force of economy and egology is condemned and broken by the asymmetry of the interpersonal relationships, not by a fundamental equality of subjects sharing the same human rights, but by the approach of the *Other* with the height of authority that prevents me to stand in equal footing with him. In order to ease the understanding of this asymmetrical responsibility, Levinas refered sometimes to our

experience of being more obliged toward *Others* than justified to impose demands on them. I may dedicate and even sacrifice my own life for another, but I cannot oblige the *Other* to sacrifice his life for me. Quoting Dostoyevsky, Levinas said: *"We are responsible before all for everything and everybody,* and *I more than others"*(Levinas, 1985, p.101). Levinas maintained that the ethical relation between the *I* and the *Other* must be acknowledged, from the very start, as asymmetrical if it is to remain ethical. If not *asymmetrical,* the ethical relation would fall short of its disinterested character, for "without the other's being 'first,' above myself, there can be no ethical relation."[1] Clearly the issue of asymmetry is central to, and is affirmed in, Levinas' analysis of the *I-Other* relation. Challenging the idea of reciprocity,[2] Levinas maintained that giving primacy to the ego and closing off a response to the *Other's* particularity give rise to reciprocity which may be tainted with utilitarian content. For Levinas, ethics originates in and emanates from the *Other.* It is not a creation of the self; neither is it something that I bring to my relation with the *Other.* Rather, it is a condition of responsibility which summons the self, hardly caring what the *Other* is with respect to me for that is his own business; for me, he is above all the one I am responsible for.

Responsibility for the Other speaks of my allegiance to the Other. It demands that I be *hostage* to the *Other.* Being hostage, I am obliged to open myself to – because opened by – the height and destitution of the *Other.* To the question "Why would I feel responsible for the *Other?"* is reminiscent of Cain's answer when asked by God: *"Where is your brother?"* He replied, *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* In fairness to Cain, this is the most sincere answer he can give. His response is *pure ontology,* devoid of *ethics: "I am I, and he is he. We are separate ontological beings."* As Levinas argued, "the sober coldness of Cain consists in conceiving responsibility as proceeding from freedom or according to a contract." But Levinas radically departed from the ontological clutches of Being by claiming that I am not an ontological being. I am not *for-myself;* I am *for-the-Other.* For Levinas, I am the *Other's hostage.* Ordered, summoned, commanded by the *Other,* I have to assume all responsibilities incumbent upon me.

Further, according to Levinas, "I am I in the sole measure that I am responsible, a non-interchangeable *I.* I can substitute myself for everyone, but no one can substitute himself for me. Such is my inalienable identity of subject" (Levinas, 1985, p.101). This brings out

the 'unsubstitutability' of the *I* in his obligation to the *Other.* No one – not even God – can substitute for me. This responsibility belongs to a class of one: "there is *nothing* that is named *I"* (1981: p.56) other than *I*. No one can *"pinch-hit"* for me; no one can stand as my proxy. That is my ownmost responsibility; there's no getting away from it or passing it off to someone else. A responsibility shifted to someone is no longer a responsibility. In all of these moments of *service* to the *Other,* the *I* is not awarded a site for itself where it can live; rather, the over-exposure to the *Other* unsettles him more, forcing him to give more, serve more, be hurt more - for the *Other*. This is *disinterestedness* par excellence.

Leaving behind a fixed sanctuary it has inhabited for long and with which it has grown familiar, the *nomad,* once a *monad,*[3] embarks on its wanderings to an unknown territory. Always uprooting, placeless, homeless, nomadic, not owning anything – not even myself – I am, paradoxically, always ready to give myself for the Other. This is radical homelessness. Levinas' philosophy is an "abandoning of active and sovereign subjectivity" (Levinas, 1981, p.61). Leaving home proves that I remain homeless unless I *"dwell"* in the *Other*. In a sense, the *Other* is my *"oikos"* – my home.

To conclude this entire section, we bring to the fore two vital points in Levinas's discussion of the demand of responsibility: one, responsibility for the *Other* is *dangerous;* second, it is *disinterested*. It is dangerous – in the positive sense – because it disturbs my complacency, challenging my deepest biases, leaving me alone groping in the dark, finding my way out of them. It is disinterested because it does not carry any heroic accents; it speaks only of the unconditionality of being a hostage; it gives until, and even if, it hurts – and despite of itself being denuded – it still falls short of being disinterested!

Clearly, Levinas's elevation of the *Other* is too much a burden for the *I;* it is precisely at this level that Levinas's thought makes us tremble; indeed, it is an excessive one. To love my concrete and present *Others* is to "feel the other's skin," without making any demands, without waiting for rewards, without let-up, without any thought of recouping the loss, with all that we can give until giving runs us dry. Responsibility is giving myself to the other in every moment, ceaselessly berating myself for not having given enough. And it is this feeling of inadequacy, this feeling of always falling short of my infinite responsibility, that keeps me responsible and staves off my self-complacency.

While disinterested responsibility cannot be realized in the present, the ideal itself – precisely because it is unrealizable – has enormous pragmatic value to the extent that it serves as the transcendent measuring stick by which to judge our distance from the utopia of full ethical relationship. Levinas tries to work his way out of the pessimism intrinsic to the nature of responsibility by distinguishing between our trying to live up to the ideal of love and our merely heeding the ideal. While the former is futile, the latter is of indispensable importance. Indeed, our awareness of the ideal should motivate, rather than distract us, from the fulfillment of what should be.

But human relationship is not only limited to the *I-Other* relation. There is an *Other* other than the Other for which I may also be responsible. We always have some responsibility to others, and thus we are always called in more than one direction at once.

## Justice: An Opening To The Third Other

Besides and behind this *Other,* present here and now, who is the absolute for me, other *Others* also present themselves to me. The problem of the relation of an *I* to multiple *Others* is announced in Levinas texts by the movement from the ethical relation with the *Other* to the realm of politics through the introduction of the Third. Levinas called the opening to the Third *justice* which takes place in the State. The concept of justice emerges as a transition from the vertical inequality of the transcendent *Other* to the horizontal equality of all *Others*. There is the shift from the *Other* to the third *Other,* from the ethical *I-Other* to the social *We*.[4] Thus, according to Levinas, the appearance of the third party introduces a relation of equality and reciprocity; it limits my responsibility. The entry of the *Third* marks the moment at which 'I am no longer infinitely responsible for the other, and consequently no longer in an asymmetrical, unequal relation.' This is, in Levinas's terms, the "correction of the asymmetry of proximity" (1981: p.158) introduced in the *I-Other* relation. Responsibility for-the-*Other,* at once excessive, is tamed by a return to rationality in justice, in that justice entails fairness and equality. Weighed down by the infinity of responsibility, the *I,* through the appearance of the third party, becomes *another* like all others.

While justice is an impartial appreciation of the interests of *Others,* it should, however, always borrow its inspiration from the spirit of the asymmetrical relationship through which I am infinitely more responsible than any *Other.*[5] While the *Third* universalizes the anarchical relationship with the *Other* into politics, it does not displace the original ethical relationship with the *Other.* Rather, a never-ending oscillation arises between ethics and justice in order to preserve the status of the original face-to-face relationship with the *Other.*

With the advent of the *Third,* new questions surface. How can the ego be infinitely responsible for more than one *Other?* Who has greater claim to me? Who therefore merits the most care and attention? Whose needs are the most urgent? Now, who is *"more Other"*? Who is the first? Levinas himself would not be comfortable with speaking of degrees of otherness. First, if one person is *"more Other"* than another then there arises the possibility of saying that some people are not as important as *Others,* and this Levinas unequivocally opposes. Second, to speak of degrees of otherness would be to set the parameters that allow me to decide who is more of an *Other* to me. In experience we do need to choose whom to help. I might be forced to help one person at the expense of another. Levinas would not deny the possibility of such a situation. However, Levinas's goal is not to tell us whom to help or what to do. Levinas is simply describing the very meaning of the ethical, prior to any possible choice. In sum, for Levinas each *Other* is infinitely and uniquely *Other,* even when I am faced with many Others.

In fulfilling my obligation toward the *Other* do I not in turn risk not only ignoring but also injuring the *Other?* Can the ego defend the *Other* against attacks from an-*Other?* If so, can the ego use violence, even kill an-Other in defense of the Other? The introduction of the third person challenges the intimacy of proximity, creating an ethical dilemma: "the presence of the third party, which introduces a problem or "contradiction" in responsibility itself, gives rise to the question: *"What have I to do with justice?"* (Levinas, 1981, p.157) How can I be fully concerned for all others? Realizing the fragility of human nature and the enormity of the task at hand, I find myself incapable of responding to many *Others*. Thus, Levinas' peculiar formulation: justice is *un-ethical* and *violent;* justice is already the first violence.'[2]

This problem brings us into the much more complicated scenario in which we live, where there is not just one Other in front of us, but many others who we are responsible to and responsible for.

## Justice That Necessitates Violence

The experience of being Jewish, and witnessing persecution at firsthand, first as a Jew in Lithuania, and then again during World War II, doubtless did little to make Levinas advocate pacifism, much less preach it. Levinas was no pacifist. He was perhaps the philosopher who had personally suffered the brutal effects of 20th century history more than any other, from the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917, to the rise of National Socialism which he witnessed in France when he enlisted in the French army. He was then captured in 1940 and spent the remaining five years of war in two prisoner-of-war camps. Most members of his family were murdered in the camps while his wife and daughter were kept in hiding.

While never explicitly condoning the use of physical force, Levinas insisted that *I* must defend the *Other* from the hands of the oppressive *Others*. Justice is necessary to preserve *Others* from evil ones. One cannot forgive violence in the place of those who have endured it or perished from it. This is the limit of substitution. To make peace in the world implies justice. However, Levinas did explicitly grant that force is necessary to punish transgressors. Punishment is necessary or evil will run unbridled. The extermination of evil by violence means that evil is taken seriously and that the possibility of infinite pardon tempts us to infinite evil. When alterity takes the shape of an enemy and aggressor, the principle of respect for the otherness of the *Other* no longer holds. The existence of the *Other* is no longer justified when he/ she injures the third party.

In a world where injustice ceaselessly torments us to the point that even our responses to it seem to implicate us in it or make us powerless before it, in a world where redemption seems to be elusive, we cannot possibly expect to find a response to evil that is simple, unequivocal, clear-cut, and devoid of the anguish it hopes to redeem. I shall now outline carefully the parameters under which intervention in the form of violence is justified and the constraints within which such measures can be introduced. I shall also try to show how ethics is always to be criticized from the perspective of justice, which in turn must be criticized from the point of view of ethics, if justice is to remain genuine and ethical.

**When Violence Heals**

What, for Levinas, are the parameters within which violence borne out of justice is permissible? When does violence cure?

First, violence is the last resort when the lives of the innocents hang in the balance. In justice, we can find an enemy, or at least then we are faced with the problem of knowing who is right and who is wrong, who is just and who is unjust. There *are* people who are wrong (Levinas, 1989). The continuing threat of terror and violence demands that we protect others who fall under our responsibility from the hands of the malevolent aggressors; *"peaceably if we may, forcibly if we must."* On the level of socio-political justice, a certain degree of violence is unavoidable and even – as final means – necessary. Justice is about righting a wrong, protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty. There can be no question of refusing violence outright. Not only is the doctrine of non-violence powerless to put an end to violence, it risks connivance in violence. Sometimes, we need to make *"the cut that heals."* Justice is necessary to rule out murder in all its size, shape and form. It is not only a question of seizing the evildoer but also of not making the innocent suffer. We can no longer afford another *'Auschwitz.'*

Second, ethics should remain the critical overseer of justice. When we attack the aggressor, does our action manifest fear of him or fear for him? When we correct injustice, are we saving the *Other* or are we saving ourselves? What are we afraid of – *dying or killing?* When we kill, who do we rescue and whom do we attack? Let it not be forgotten that ethics reminds – no, commands – us that we are fully committed to the *Other,* never to ourselves. If our glory tastes better when contrasted with the adversity of those we assail, then our motive betrays our act. Ethics informs justice by contributing something to the meaning of justice, namely, an awareness of its impermanent nature. Without ethics, we will come to accept violence as normative, become callous to horrors of war. Justice is both part of and subordinate to ethics as responsibility. Responsibility for the *Other* is never rendered obsolete when violence is made indispensable. Levinas suggests that we can never become so immune to tragedies caused by human evil that we no longer feel aversion as they re-emerge before our eyes.

Third, those of us who defend an Other with violent means must not fail to recognize that we have also attacked an Other, namely

the violent aggressor. There is a value in retaining a sense of moral dissatisfaction about the necessary resort to violence, that is, in feeling contrite about the harm we cause to our oppressors. The one who uses violence must remain as indignant by its undeniably horrible costs as he is convinced of its necessity. We therefore ought not to interpret the repelling on injustice in society as a triumph, for such self-congratulation is self-defeating. The only solution to countering the seemingly endless parade of injustices is by audaciously doing what needs to be done while grieving over the indispensable wounds we ambivalently created. The hand that grasps the weapon must suffer in the very violence of that gesture.

Fourth and last, justice can validate violence against the Other and ask only that it be done without hatred. In seeking to live out Levinas' challenging ethics, we purge ourselves of rancor. Levinas' ethical relation provides a check against the polarizing and dehumanizing tendencies which are characteristic of violence grounded on hatred. An understanding of our enemies reveals that the real enemy is *hatred* itself. Levinas' phenomenology of hatred gives us an insightful awareness of how hatred begets hatred, dehumanizes, and anonymously seeks one out, making all suffering meaningless.

## Hatred Masquerading As Justice

There is violence borne out of *justice;* but there is also violence borne out of hatred. The former we condone; the latter we condemn.

There is no monopoly on hatred of the *Other*. Probing the depths of human heart, we can discover that unspoken human tendency, that darkness that leads human beings to commit ruthless acts against each other. What we are witnessing today is a game of retaliation, our heart getting calloused from so much tragedy besetting us. So far, we have fundamentally misunderstood the enemy. Even more tragically, we have misunderstood ourselves. What we have developed is a blind rage toward the enemy. The immediate desire was to annihilate, not to understand, the foe.

In hatred, the *Other* is the enemy, the wild animal, the pure evil, someone that will destroy us if we do not destroy him first. Suspicion that takes form as hatred causes one to run towards an enemy to annihilate him, giving no chance to uncloak him otherness. Only

by depriving these evildoers of their dignity and humanity could the victims of injustice placate their own grief and pain. Yet, very few, if any, among these victims realize, let alone concede, that even our enemy's eyes cried, that even our enemy's heart felt the pain and that even our enemy's soul aches in disgust over this senseless loss of innocent lives. That our enemy's pain was all the more unbearable because he stands up for a cause which, for him, is greater in value than his own precious life establishes greater unspeakable narratives in the litany of sorrows that consumed the world. The enemy, there's no mistaking, is as much of a victim in this tragedy as any other.

The ultimate weakness of hatred is that it begets the very thing that it seeks to destroy; instead of annihilating it, it increases it. Hatred murders the evildoer, not the evil; it extinguishes the corrupt, not corruption. The very thing hatred wants to tear down remains alive with renewed strength to retaliate from the harm. If we hate our enemies, then we share the characteristics of evil and sinfulness they display. The cycle goes on *ad infinitum*.

## Forgiveness Validating Justice

While it is imperative to avoid holocausts at all costs, these are the occasions when Levinas condones the use of violence that prompts us, if we are truly responsible, to loathe and exhibit remorse for the role we play in its advent. Levinas passionately responded to the historical event (Holocaust) which profoundly influenced his ethical view throughout the course of his scholarly career.

What is asked of us now is an *ethico-moral* vision that addresses the malaise of our common wounded humanity by embarking on a rethinking of violence aimed at transcending this *pain and anguish* and at reorienting the self to being *forgiving*. Levinas emphasized in his *"Totality and Infinity"* that "subjectivity is not for itself" rather, it is, from the very start, *for-the-Other*. Forgiveness heals deepest wounds and rebuilds troubled human relations from their foundations. It does not nullify justice; on the contrary, it honors justice. I get inspiration from Pope John Paul II on this respect when he argued that,

> only to the degree that an ethics and a culture of forgiveness prevail can we hope for a "politics" of forgiveness, expressed in society's attitudes and laws, so that through them justice

> takes on a more human character. Forgiveness is above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to pay back evil with evil … Consequently, *society too is absolutely in need of forgiveness*. Families, groups, societies, States and the international community itself need forgiveness in order to renew ties that have been sundered, go beyond sterile situations of mutual condemnation and overcome the temptation to discriminate against others without appeal. *The ability to forgive lies at the very basis of the idea of a future society marked by justice and solidarity.*[6]

Those whom we perceive to be *Others,* and whom we assume are distantly foreign and opaque, are really our intimates – our *excluded interior* – and it is precisely because of their intimacy, that they frighten us. Our enemies, especially, frighten us, because we believe, naively, that they *cross over* from somewhere *out there to here (the home),* and threaten our fragile bodies, which we believe are bounded and inviolable territories of identity. No one can violate our territory; no one can violate our identity. And this is why sowers of violence are often referred to as being inhuman, and even, monstrous, and their acts, evil and unspeakable. But we must never forget that our enemies are real persons with real lives grounded in all the material and spiritual particularities. They too have face like we do. They are our enemies, yes – but they are hurting, too.

## Conclusion

The responsibility generated by the irrecuperable antecedence and precedence of the *Other* encountered via the *Face* is always ever greater. The ethical relationship is "one-way," non-reciprocal, asymmetrical, obligating the self, never the *Other.* As Cohen describes it, "the demands of the other on the self are in no wise connected by the self into the mutuality or reciprocity of demand placed by the self on the other," for such would amount to economy rather than ethics. Giving from my excess does not constitute "real giving" for this is tantamount to not giving anything at all because it leaves one still full. Only when I deprive myself of my prized, hard-earned possession, of

something that is so precious to me as if it is almost my *"second self,"* and offer it to the *Other* can I say that I have truly given concretely and completely. Saving a drowning person with the possibility of my getting drowned, giving my meager income to the needy, the mother contentedly watching her children struggle and eat for the only plate of rice and dried fish she hard-earned from doing a load of clothes, sibling offering his spare kidney to the other sibling – these are instances of concrete giving, the height of selfless donation and altruistic heroism! While it may not really mean death for the giver, it is as if death had already claimed him. This is the claim of the ethical! No, the *Other* does not need our well-intentioned compassion, not our emotional or spiritual sympathy. What the *Other* needs is our concrete offering of our possessions – our very substance.

Responsibility demanded of the subject by the *Other,* according to Levinas, is not something that can approximate the ideal which, in its proper time, can be fulfilled. Rather, the responsibility of the subject to the *Other* all the more increases when fulfilled; it grows ever more and never gets satisfied because the *Other* always demands more than the subject can wholly give. This ethical paradigm, which Levinas carefully develops, is only possible in the realm of the ethical, not of the ontological. The ontological order is disrupted; it is muted.

Even on the question on how far can we be infinitely responsible for others other than our *Other* will allow different alternatives – more or less expensive, more or less extensive, but must always be corrective and less corrosive. Our infinite responsibility for the *Other* consents to harming an-*Other* to protect the *Other* only when necessary. If not based on the prior asymmetrical relation of inequality vis-à-vis the *Other,* justice would then be a perversion masquerading as ethical. The hapless victims of violence, however, believe that fanatical murderers hear no logic and feel no compassion. Hatred has bred within them and has been continually fuelled. The fact is some people have grown abusive and these abuses have to be restrained – right now. While it is evil to kill, it is with grief that we admit it is no longer possible to love this enemy – right now. Enough is enough. But Levinas insisted that the norm that must continue to inspire and direct the moral order is the ethical norm of the interhuman. Living with our enemies reveals to us that "friend" and "enemy" are irrelevant in the call of the *Other.*

There is a value in retaining a sense of moral dissatisfaction about the necessary resort to violence. Justice should not slip into

vindictiveness for it may threaten to become as tyrannous as the injustice it seeks to thwart. While forgiveness wouldn't change anything about the crimes committed, one nevertheless has to renounce hatred and advocate true responsibility. The redemption of hatred, inseparable from the drama of forgiveness, reveals our true capacity to carry the *Other* – and the many *others* – without being weighed down. Ethics must take the form of absolute humility towards the *Other.* There is no other way. It is only the *Other's* way.

## Notes

[1] Levinas made it clear that it is the *Other* which cannot be totalized, assimilated and comprehended. He does not speak of the same with regard to the *I*.

[2] This is also Levinas critique of Buber's ideas about meeting the *Other,* as studied by Philip N. Lawton in "Love and Justice: Levinas's Reading of Buber," in *Philosophy Today*. Vol. 20, #1, Spring 1976, 77-83.

[3] Levinas mentioned in one of our discussions that, "to be is to be isolated by existing. Inasmuch as I am, I am a monad." Existence *and existents* (1978). (A. Lingis Trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 42.

[4] Describing this shift, Cohen's words are insightful: "just as the shift from one person to two is the transformative shift from atheism to ethics, the shift from two persons to three is equally transformative shift from ethics to justice."

[5] See Adriaan Peperzak, "Emmanuel Levinas: Jewish Experience and Philosophy" in Philosophy Today. Vol. 27 #4 Winter, 1993, 303-304; Burggraeve gives an insightful reflection on Levinas's insistence that the third *Other* is already present in the *Other:* "In meeting with another person's naked *Face*, I become confronted with all other people who are just as much in need of my help as the one who stands before me. In reality my relationship with the Other is never merely a relationship with this one individual Other: from the very beginning the third party is also present in the Other. Even though

the *Face* represents the third party as the one who is absent, yet it still evokes him as present in his absence. By means of the Other's appearance, the third one already looks at me." Burggraeve, R. (1981). The ethical basis for a humane society according to Emmanuel Levinas (C. Vanhove-Romanik Trans.). Leuven: The Centre for Metaphysics and Philosophy of God, p. 103.

[6] Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2002.

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# Narrativizing Marginality and Hope: Testimonial Narratives of Students in a Night School

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**Abstract**

*This exploratory paper suggests a critical reading of students' personal narratives and letters as testimonial narratives or* testimonios. *As a genre, testimonios are transgressive of canonical literary and literacy practices while giving voice to traditionally marginalized groups. Testimonios, in this regard, always implicate an "absent polyphony of voices," and the imbrication of the private/personal and public/political spheres. Using the letters written by 20 working class students of a night secondary school in Metro Manila, I did a textual analysis of the materials according to the dominant themes. The paper discusses how the letters and narratives written by students constitute counter representations of working class youth vis-à-vis hegemonic assumptions and representations, such as those propagated and sustained by and within dominant social* dispositifs. *Furthermore, the paper suggests how these "little narratives" may be deployed as a praxis-oriented pedagogical praxis that subverts the supposed neutrality of classroom discourse and foregrounds lived experiences of subalternity and exclusion.*

## Social Marginality and Testimonial Narratives

Modern society is characterized by inclusion and exclusion. Not only does marginality exist in material relations, with the widening gap between the poor and the rich; it is also apparent in the kind of discourse that is considered official, legitimate, and from the center. Knowledges that lie outside the frame of legitimate discourse, including stories that center on the lived experiences of the marginalized and the oppressed, are occluded, whereas the logic that shapes the language of domination is privileged and sustained. Echoing Raymond Williams' problematization of culture, Stanley Aronowitz (1994) acknowledged the existence of cultures and logics that challenge hegemonic history, and implicated their subversive potential:

> While the existence of peasants, workers, and artisans able to read and write was firmly established in all urban centers and in rural districts as well, the criteria for citizenship in a situation of popular participation are shaped histories of oppression and shared modes of life, not high cultural formation or literacy. I want to suggest that these commonalities are one form of specification of what Dewey was to call *experience*. (p. 310)

This instantiation of giving importance to experience bears affinity to recent efforts in the area of cultural/critical studies to interrogate traditional history as a totalizing entextualization of the past that highlights "big" events and "big" personages, and thus inevitably results in the exclusion and, to borrow from Foucault, the subjugation of knowledges that lie outside the frame of history's grand narrative.

In the field of education, teachers and students are now taking on more important roles as cultural workers in critically engaging the universalizing principles and assumptions that have traditionally skirted the issues of politics, power, domination, subjectivity, and difference. Informed by theoreticians like Antonio Gramsci, John Dewey, Michel Foucault, and most importantly, Paulo Freire, educators are developing more radical approaches to pedagogy, which problematize the supposed neutrality of classroom discourse

and take stock of experiences of subalternity especially on the part of the students over epistemic abstractions (Giroux & McLaren, 1995). It is a kind of pedagogy that "emphasizes the link between experience and the issues of language and representation" (p. 42), and aims to equip learners

> with the critical means to examine their own lived experiences, deep memories and subordinated knowledge forms…. This means not only understanding the cultural and social forms through which students and embattled subjects/ learn to define themselves but also learning how to engage student experience within a pedagogy that is both affirmative and critical. (Giroux & McLaren, 1995, pp. 42-43)

Therefore, instead of silencing students, educators should democratize the discourse of the classroom by encouraging students to tell their own stories, especially those that pertain to lived experiences of marginality and oppression, and together interrogate hegemonic or dominant assumptions about life and society. McLaren (1995) maintained, "Every body carries its own history of oppression, residues of domination preserved in breathing tissue" (p. 46). Critical pedagogical praxis necessarily involves the recuperation of these histories as a response to the postmodern call for widening the range of texts that constitutes the politics of representation. Testimonial narratives or *testimonios*, which originated in Latin America and now gaining interest elsewhere, exemplify a mode by which these little stories may be brought to critical attention.

According to Ma. Odine de Guzman (2008), testimonios may be oral histories, diaries, letters, memoirs, and eyewitness accounts. Testimonios share certain elements and features with autobiographical writing primarily because they both foreground the narrator's own story. However, unlike the traditional autobiography which focuses on individualism (autobiographies mostly center on personal accomplishments), the testimonio is written by someone from a marginalized sector of society (e.g., workers, peasants, women, LGBTs, the homeless, the disabled, undocumented immigrants). Thus, the testimonio attempts to negotiate while heightening at the same time the inherent problems of communication in a highly

structured society. As a "genre," testimonial writing rubs against the grain of canonical literature, which is of course inextricably bound up with western epistemology, as it does not concern itself with the problematizable aesthetics of the canon, but rather with narrativizing the lived experiences of abjection. In other words, the testimonio is a kind of "grassroots literature" or "literature from below." On the basis of this seemingly egalitarian character of the testimonio, John Beverly (2004) called it the "popular democratic" simulacrum of the epic narrative (p. 33). In testimonial writing, Paul Ricoeur's concern with the "hermeneutics of suspicion" is applied not only to postmodernist or poststructuralist "reading against the grain" but "reading against literature" itself.

Testimonios are also subversive of the traditional concept of history as a totalizing, linear narrative of "big events" and "big" personages. History, in the context of testimonial writing, comprises stories from the peripheries and is refashioned into a collage of individualized and collectivized representations of events, which does not have pretensions of objectivity and truthfulness. Testimonios constitute a textualization of the social memories of a subaltern group, with the narrator retelling the lived experiences and conditions of abuse and exploitation of a marginalized group or sector to which he/she belongs.

This metonymic character of the testimonio amplifies the ever-present role of social memories in negotiating subjectivities. According to Ngugi (1986, as cited in Mills, 1993), "there are so many inputs in the actual formation of image, an idea, a line of argument and even sometimes the formal arrangement," and the discourse we deploy is "a product of a collective history" (p. 128). The testimonial narrative is, therefore, not just a single person's story; it is *always already* communal and collective.

The emergence of testimonial writings is informed by the social upheavals on the Latin American continent in the past century, in response particularly to shared experiences of colonialism, as well as the rise of dictatorships which have been abetted in no small measure by the colonial powers. Examples of testimonial narratives are those of Elvia Alvarado (published in 1987), Rigoberta Menchú (published in 1983), and Domitila Barrios de Chúngara (published in 1977), but Menchu's is perhaps not only the most popular, but also the most controversial among the three.

*Me Llamo Rigoberta Menchu* is the first-person account of an indigenous Guatemalan (Quiche Indian) woman about her family's and her tribe's oppression in the hands of the military. The regime's draconian policies, especially those directed at alleged subversives and ethnic communities had led to several deaths, including those of Rigoberta's parents and siblings. The book, co-written with Elisabeth Debray, soon earned international attention and Menchu would also win a Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her efforts to protect human rights in her home country and elsewhere. Praised by many because of its bold and vivid narration of the excesses committed by the Guatemalan state and its military, Menchu's testimonio has also had its share of critics who challenge the veracity of its author's claims. Nonetheless, as a sort of rebuttal to questions about the "truthfulness" of her account, Rigoberta claims that her story is not just hers alone, but, in a manner of speaking, a grafting of her community's shared experiences onto her own (Clark, 2007).

Beverly (2004), a recognized "authority" on testimonial writings, also asserts that the testimonio does not concern itself with "how things really happened" and should instead be seen as one of the few available strategies for a subaltern group, such as Rigoberta's ethnic community, to make known its experiences of harassment, abuse, and exploitation. Belaboring the issue of "truthfulness" as regards Rigoberta's narrative, according to Beverly (2004), suggests a sense of class anxiety that aims to confine or re-confine the subaltern within the discourse that gratifies the western bourgeois palate. In Foucauldian terms, the testimonio, as textual production, operates according to, and involves, heterogeneities that allow certain events to be told and described.

The testimonio, according to de Guzman (2008), also exemplifies emergent literature, which is "non-traditional literature that uses the language of the common people, interrogates the feudal and patriarchal system of society, and takes as its form various modes such as radio, TV, and community theater" (p. 605). Testimonial literature serves as one of the few opportunities for subaltern people, voiceless in the literary world to make known their own discourse in a system characterized by the "hegemonic fabrication of western, elitist literatures" (Armstrong, 2010, p. 1). Whereas the liberal-humanist emphasis on individual genius or creativity is given space in much of western canonical literature, the collective, rather than the individual,

voice is foregrounded in testimonial writing, with a single author being replaced by a "community of witnesses" (Armstrong, 2010, p. 3).

In the Philippines, given the growing concern for the "retrieval of alternative cultural practices" for countering the discourses of hegemony and domination (Patajo-Legasto, 1993, p.7), there is also a growing interest in non-canonical and otherwise marginalized literatures. One of the earliest studies dealing with testimonial writings was that of Arinto (1995) who gathered and analyzed the narratives of women within the National Democratic Movement (NDF). Her reading of the testimonios revealed multi-textured, multi-layered and, at times, contradictory discourses. For one, the narrators show signs of ambivalence about carrying on the struggle, especially when struck by the desire to go back to their families. The study of Arinto was groundbreaking as it re-appropriated the Latin American "genre," by using vignettes and letters, which differ from the book-length testimonios of Latin America.

Odine de Guzman (2008) also studied the testimonial writings of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), in particular women domestic helpers. De Guzman analyzed their letters within the context of the seemingly official state policy of labor export to address the shortage of job opportunities in the Philippines. In this regard, worth mentioning is that for the past three decades, there has been increasing feminization of exported labor, with the increasing number of women professionals and subprofessionals who work abroad. De Guzman's paper problematized letters as counterhegemonic, multi-layered narratives challenging mainstream discourses about women in general and domestic helpers in particular.

## Working Class Youth in the Philippines

Notwithstanding claims about "greater democratization" especially after the 1986 EDSA "revolution," youth in the Philippines find themselves enmeshed in a seemingly worsening socio-economic crisis. Instead of finishing school, more and more youth are driven by widespread poverty to take on jobs that would no longer require college, even high school, degrees.

Given their age, lack of experience, and lack of adequate educational preparations, many of these young workers end up

performing part-time menial jobs and often receive salaries that are not commensurate with the difficulty of the tasks that go with their work. According to a 2006 survey, almost 40% of the labor force was composed of young people; of these, 23% were young workers ages 15-19 (Canlas & Pardalis, 2009). These are figures that speak volumes with regard to the shifting of priorities among young people who are compelled by circumstances to quit school and work for their and their families' survival. Youth no longer represents a period of life that is supposed to be devoted to school and learning, let alone preparation for greater social responsibilities in the future. As a contestatory sphere, youth has been reconfigured into a period in life when a person has to decide whether to continue schooling and earn a degree, or quit his/her studies and join the labor force in the interest of capital.

Unfortunately, some tend to overlook the difficulties facing youth and instead highlight their seeming apathy, that is, their "lack of concern for social issues" ("Apathy is Top Problem," 2010). Others have harped on the problems "created" by youth, or associate young people with many of our unsolved social maladies: drugs, prostitution, crime, even the declining quality of education. Youth have become an easy scapegoat for their elders in the government and in the academe who have failed ignominiously to provide them with a sense of social security but have unflinchingly opened the floodgates for neoliberal economic policies that further promote deep social cleavages.

To confound it all, the state is contemplating the implementation of harsher disciplinary measures against "erring" youth. Given the spate of criminal incidents involving young offenders, some lawmakers have recommended that the age of criminal liability be lowered to 9 years old (Tan, 2011). What is absent in this discourse, however, is an analysis of the reasons why youth commit these offenses and whether lowering the age of criminal liability would be an effective deterrent.

Against this backdrop, it is, therefore, imperative to recuperate narratives not only about, but necessarily *from* the youth to give them a voice, as it were, and deploy these narratives to interrogate existing power relations and triumphalist claims about democracy/democratization and "better opportunities" in the shadow of modernity.

### Materials, Participants and Research Questions

The letters are written by the third year high school students of a night school in Metro Manila. The name of the school and the identities of the narrators (including their gender) are withheld for reasons that are ethical and professional. What is common among the narrators is their working-class backgrounds, and some are already workers themselves. The evening school, an outreach project of the institution, was originally meant to be an adult school as it used to cater only to "overage" students—that is, students 18 years old and above who had not finished high school primarily because of poverty and the need to find a job for the family's upkeep. However, since 10 years ago, according to our informant, the school has been accepting students who would fall under lower age brackets. These are generally students from working class backgrounds whose schooling has been interrupted or at is constant risk of being interrupted by financial difficulties. Many of the enrolees are working, some as house helpers who, through the kindness, generosity, and understanding of their employers, attend their classes after attending to house chores.

The school complies with the curriculum prescribed by the Department of Education. The daily classes begin at around 3 in the afternoon and end at 8 in the evening, with three (3) to four (4) subjects every school day. The class for a particular subject is held two times every week (say, Wednesday and Friday or Tuesday and Thursday) with 1 hour and 30 minutes devoted to every session. Because of these adjustments in the schedule, the night secondary school, unlike most secondary schools, has five (5) levels instead of the usual four (4), and each year level has only one class. As per the documents generously furnished by the night secondary school office, the number of students in the five year levels ranged from 25 to 27. The informant told me that the composition of a class in the night secondary school has never exceeded 40 students.

A friend, also a teacher, happens to handle the third year class from which the letters were gathered, and I asked her permission to have two sessions with the students for the writing event. Fortunately, I was given a quick approval to have these two sessions last September. The discussions were mostly in Filipino so as to prevent problems that may arise from a sense of "linguistic apprehension," which often disrupts the flow of ideas especially in writing. The activity was meant

to be more concerned with the content of the narratives rather than with the structure. Nonetheless, it would be difficult to simply ask or require them to write without building on their schema, that is, without introducing concepts that would *motivate* them to do so. The writing activity, therefore, would necessitate a "formal" session, if not a semblance of it, with writing prompts and discussions.

For this purpose, I used three sample texts all dealing with first-hand experiences of oppression and/or social marginality. The first two were relatively short letters from the book *Pagtatagpo sa Kabilang Dulo: Panitikang Testimonial ng Desaparecidos* (AVHRC, 2008), a compilation of the testimonial narratives written by the victims of enforced disappearances themselves, if not by their families, friends, and sympathizers. Many of the materials in the book I had used in an earlier study (Moratilla, 2012). At the outset, I explained to the students the phenomenon of enforced disappearances and how it has been used as a "strategy of terror" by the state to discourage and silence dissent since martial law. I also pointed out, to their surprise, that enforced disappearances still happen up to now even if there is no martial law and the political atmosphere is relatively "democratic." The subsequent discussion revolved around the content of each letter, written by a loved one of the desaparecido, primarily the feelings expressed by the narrator, and how s/he is coping with the loss.

The third sample text, the only one in English, is an excerpt from the first-person narrative of an undocumented Mexican immigrant, which forms part of the essay "Testimonios de Inmigrantes." The essay is a collection of Latino students' narratives about their being immigrant children, which they shared in a "mathematics methods class for future teachers" (Gonzalez, Plata, Garcia, Torres, Urrieta, 2003, p. 234). As I had done in the discussion of the first two texts, I deemed it necessary to talk about the context, that is, the phenomenon of migration to the United States in the pursuit of better economic opportunities. Although the narrative is in the second language, the corresponding discussion was in the vernacular, with not a few instances of code switching especially when referencing passages from the sample text.

Overall, foregrounded in the exchange were the virtues of perseverance and courage in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges — the loss of a loved one in the case of the letters about the desaparecidos, and the complications of illegal migration in the

case of the undocumented migrant's personal narrative. After the discussions, I told the students to close their eyes and picture in their minds the person they wanted to talk to at that very moment. Then they were instructed to write on a piece of paper the name of the person and list down in the form of sentences or phrases what they wanted to tell him/her. Implicated in the writing event are the students' own experiences of oppression and repression, as well as their idea of hope. This pre-writing output served as the germ of the narrative which they were to write in letter form. Central to the writing activity was the notion of *PAKIKIBAKA,* or *struggle*, which I wrote on the board during the discussion and which I wanted the students to tease out in their letter. The word of course is linked to the idea that life is by no means easy, especially in the face of financial difficulties that hound most working class families. Nonetheless, the word *struggle* also implies possibility and a sense of hope notwithstanding the challenges that these families grapple with. As I wanted them to have more time for organizing their thoughts, I told the students to turn in the final output at the next meeting three days after.

Although 25 students were present during the first session, only 20 students were able to give me their letters on the day of submission. Like the studies of Arinto and De Guzman, I also analyzed the letters as testimonial narratives, primarily because of their purpose and content (that is, they tell stories about the narrators' own experiences), and because of the narrators' subject positions. Of the 20 letters, I purposely left out those letters that are too short and therefore lack substantial details for the analysis until the number was eventually pared down to only 10. The analysis was predicated on the following questions: What students' concerns are foregrounded in the narratives? As testimonial (counter)narratives, how do these "little stories" illustrate resistance, opposition, and hope? How do these narratives exemplify counter articulations and counter representations vis-à-vis hegemonic assumptions about working class youth? How do these narratives instantiate the discourses of critique and possibility, of denunciation and affirmation, which, according to Henry Giroux (1985), compose a politics of resistance that ties up the interrogation of dominant institutions and discourse formations with the demand for social justice and emancipation?

## Analysis of the Letters

As has been pointed out, my analysis of the letters is schematized according to the dominant themes I was able to draw from them, namely: family; friends and employers; guilt, apology, and acceptance; and education.

*Family*

Family concerns, as expected, are intercalated into many of the narratives. Some are heart-rending expressions of love and affection for a family member, usually a parent, who is not staying with the narrator at the moment. In some cases, the narrators reveal their painful decision to leave their families and their home province to seek for educational and employment opportunities in Manila. They never fail, however, to remember their parents and siblings who serve as their inspiration in coping with the vagaries of life away from home:

> *Alam mo, mama, malungkot mang isipin na wala kayo sa tabi ko, lagi kong ipinagdarasal na magkasama tayo at mayakap ka. Mama, pagsisikapan kong makatapos ng pag-aaral para matupad ang lahat ng pangarap ko.... Sana, pag may pagkakataon, punta kayo dito sa Maynila, mama*. (Ma--)
>
> You know, mama, I am sad because we are not together. I am always praying that I will have the chance to be with you again and embrace you. Mama, I will try to finish my studies for my dreams to come true. I hope you will also have the chance to come to Manila. (translation mine)
>
> *Nung pumunta ako dito sa Maynila, pinanghinaan ako ng loob kasi hindi po ako gaanong marunong magtagalog at nahihiya ako makisalamuha sa mga tao. Pero sabe ng nanay ko hindi daw ako dapat mapanghinaan ng loob kasi wala daw ako mapupuntahan (kapag mahina ang loob ko)*. (Le--)
>
> I had my fears when I came to Manila. I didn't know how to speak Tagalog and I didn't know how to socialize. But my mother told me to have confidence because if not, I wouldn't go anywhere. (translation mine)

But there are also narratives about the students' disappointment with their own families. In one letter, for example, the writer seems to be berating her parents and elder siblings for apparently reneging on their responsibility to look after the younger family members, including herself. Here, the student musters the courage to question the separation of her parents which has had terrible consequences on the part of the children. It is worth noting that while the narrator is the youngest in the family, she shows more "mature" discernment than her parents and her elder sisters, thus illustrating a sort of counter representation of youth as it challenges shared assumptions about youth's supposed immaturity and proclivity to making wrong decisions:

> *Nakakainis kayong dalawa ni papa kasi pareho kayong gumawa ng mali — si papa humanap ng ibang babae. Ewan kung may pagkukulang ka. Siguro nga meron — hindi naman maghahanap ng iba yun kung wala (kang) pagkukulang sa kanya diba. Pero ang kinaiinisan ko talaga yung alam mo nang gumawa ng mali si papa, gumaya ka pa sa kanya. Naghanap ka pa ng lalaki kaya nga ako nawalan ng espeto sa inyo. Imbes na ibigay mo ang atensyon mo sa amin, dun mo pa ibinigay sa lalaki mo. Alam mo ba naiinis ako sa dalawang ate ko parang baliw. Imbes na magtulungan para gumanda ang buhay natin…nagrebelde pa, mas inuna nila yun.* (G-r-)
>
> You and Papa are so annoying because of what you did. Papa had another woman. I do not know if it was your fault. Probably it was, or he wouldn't dare look for another woman. But what I can't take is that you also did what Papa had done! You also looked for another man, and for this, I no longer respect you. Instead of giving us your attention, you chose to pay more attention to that guy. I am also angry with my two elder sisters who act like crazy people. Instead of helping make our lives better, they chose to rebel. (translation mine)

And she goes on to make a promise:

> *Pero alam mo ba, ma, hindi ako gagaya sa mga yun kasi masisira lang ang buhay ko….Para sa akin din naman yung mga ginagawa ko ei.* (Gr--)
> But, mama, I'm not going to do what they did because I don't want to ruin my life. What I do is also for my welfare. (translation mine)

A letter addressed to "God' reveals the visceral impact of family conflicts on the children. Notice how the narrator expresses her anxiety over her parents' frequent quarrels, suggesting a sense of maturity and sensitivity to family problems, which in most cases elders would rather ignore:

> *Marami sa aking problema ay problema sa aking pamilya dahil nung mga nakaraang taon, madalas mag-away ang aking mga magulang. Minsan nagtatanong ako sa 'Yo: Bakit hindi N'yo po naririnig ang aking mga dasal?.... Hirap na hirap ako kapag hindi sila nagpapansinan kasi pati ako nadadamay.* (Tr--)
>
> Many of my problems are problems I have with my family. Last year, my parents often quarrelled. Sometimes, I cannot but ask: Can't you hear my prayers? I felt so bad whenever they (the parents) ignored each other. (translation mine)

The following passage is about the narrator's kuya (elder brother) who got his girlfriend pregnant. The narrative expresses apprehension for the family especially because of the financial troubles that they were going through. Notice also how the student articulates concern and affection for her brother who, by her own account, was not really close to her:

> *Malaking dagok sa aking buhay ay nang magkaproblema ang aking kuya. Masasabi kong naging isa akong kapatid sa kanya dahil ngayon ko lang napapadama na mahal ko siya…. Nagkaroon siya ng problema na hindi niya masabi sa aming parents. Nabuntis daw niya ang girlfriend niya. Alam naming na hindi kayang tanggapin ito ng mga magulang naming pero alam ko na malalaman at malalaman nila 'yun. Nung malaman nila, halos isang*

> *lingo kaming iyak nang iyak dahil hindi nila matanggap ito. Kasi hindi ko akalain na magagawa ito ng kuya ko sa hirap ng aming buhay…. Pero hindi naging dahilan itong mga problema sa amin para maging magulo ang aming pamilya*. (Tr--)
>
> We had a tough time when my kuya had a problem. It made him realize how much I love him. He could not tell our parents about his problem: he had gotten his girlfriend pregnant. We knew that our parents would not be able to accept it right away, but they would know about it eventually. When they got to learn about it, we cried for about a week. We could not imagine that he would be capable of doing it because we were going through hard times. Good thing, it was not a reason strong enough to tear the family apart. (translation mine)

There is little wonder, of course, that concern for family is among the dominant themes of the narratives. But what is interesting is the sense of ambivalence about family members in certain instances such as the separation of parents. In some cases, the narrators vent frustration and anger, especially when the family's very survival is at stake, thus illustrating a sort of reversal of roles, with the children (i.e., the narrators) thinking and acting more mature than the elders, a blurring of traditional dichotomies. We can assume that these are feelings that the narrators would want to express if not for the traditional roles and spaces within which they are confined.

*Friends and Employers*

A long letter written by a student working as a domestic helper and addressed to her former employer again shows prudence and sensitivity on the part of the narrator, although she was not related by blood. Here, she reflects on her employer's problematic relationships and seeming irresponsibility which unfortunately resulted in the family's breakdown. The narration is crisscrossed by feelings of guilt, anxiety, and sympathy:

> *Always wala ka sa bahay n'yo. Ni hindi ka nauwi. Parang di mo inaalala na may anak ka. Masakit sabihin*

*pero alam mong may diperensya ang anak mo (special child)…. Lagi ka sa karelasyon mo. Di ka ba naaawa sa asawa mo? Nasa ibang bansa siya para sa inyong dalawa ng anak mo. Gustung-gusto niya kayong kunin at magsama-sama na kayo. Pero ano'ng ginagawa mo? Yung perang pinapadala ng asawa mo para kay C-- (ang anak) sa mga gamot niya, binabawasan o kinukunan mo. Di ka ba naaawa sa mama mo? Kung kani-kanino siya lumalapit para mangutang para sa pagpapaospital pag may sumpong si C-- para sa mga gamot niya*. (Vir--)

Always, you weren't home. You acted as if you didn't have a child. It pains me to say this, but you know that you have a special child. You would often be with your lover. Don't you pity your husband? He is working abroad for you and your child. He really wants to migrate so that you can be together. But what do you do? You spend the money he sends for C—'s medication. Aren't you sorry for your mother? She would borrow money from a lot of people just to have something for C--'s medicines? (translation mine)

Despite the passing of years and a falling out, she still expresses her gratitude for the former employer. However, she reveals apprehensions about paying her former employer a visit because of the misunderstanding. Her concern for the family, which the narrator's employer had construed as "meddling" in an otherwise private matter, is keeping the narrator from seeing the people that she not only served but also learned to love:

*Nagpapasalamat at masaya ako dahil nakilala ko kayo. Nagpapasalamat ako dahil kinuha ako ng mama mo dito sa bahay para may katulong siya mag-alaga kay C--. Isang malaking opportunity na maalagaan ang isang anghel na katulad niya. At natuto rin ako tumira at matulog sa ibang bahay. Ni hindi ako na-homesick. Hanggang ngayon nahihiya ako pumunta sa bahay niyo dahil sa kasalanan na nagawa ko sa 'yo. Sana mapatawad mo na, okay na yun kahit di na mabalik yung FRIENDSHIP (sic) natin. I'M SORRY (sic)*. (Vir--)

> I am thankful and happy that I got to know you. I thank your mother for getting my services to take care of C--. It was a great opportunity to take care of an angel like him. It gave me the chance to experience living and sleeping in another house. I no longer feel homesick when I'm not home. Up to now, I don't have the face to go to your house because of the mistakes I made. I hope you'll learn to forgive me. Your forgiveness will be enough, even if we don't get to have the FRIENDSHIP back. I'M SORRY. (translation mine)

Some letters are addressed to a "significant other." One narrator expresses how she turned to her boyfriend on the heels of her parents' separation. As in the case of the other students, the narrator had to bear the brunt of her family's breakdown, and, forced by circumstances, she chose to cohabit with her lover. But she shows no regrets as it was a decision that has made her become a better person.

> First of all, I still wasn't coping with the separation of my parents. I kept blaming my mom which you helped (me) realize was wrong.... *Nung makilala kita,* I felt accepted. When I felt alone, you were there…. Life is hard especially when you're used to the royal treatment. Adjusting to the harsh reality of life was a trial you helped me surpass. I am forever indebted." (Is--)

*Guilt, Apology, Acceptance*

The letters likewise show guilty feelings for the narrators' perceived shortcomings or misdeeds, countering, therefore, common assumptions about youth's indifference, ego-centeredness, and lack of discernment. As can be inferred from the following passages, young people know how to express compunction for mistakes they make:

> *Ma, sorry kung hindi na kita ginagalang kasi nga nawalan na ako ng respeto sa inyo. Pero salamat sa lahat. Salamat sa time niyo ni papa dati. Pero sana nga dumating yung time na hindi na kita sinasagot ng pabalang. Ma, sorry kung minsan namumura kita minsan ng patago. Ewan ko*

*pero alam mo sa tuwing sumasagot ako sa iyo, masakit din sa akin*. (Gr--)

Ma, sorry if I don't respect you enough. But I thank you for everything. Thank you for the time you and Papa have given me. I hope time will come when I won't answer you back. It also hurts me whenever I do something like that to you. (translation mine)

*Sobrang laki ng pasasalamat ko dahil ikaw ang naging tatay ko. Lahat ng gusto ko binibigay mo, sobra mo ako na-spoiled…. Sana may pagkakataon na makasama ka naming muli, sana mayakap kita, sana mahawakan ko ang kamay mo at mahalikan ka sa pisngi*. (An--)

I am so thankful that you are my father. You gave me whatever I wanted. I got so spoiled. I wish we could have the time to be together again. I wish I could embrace you, hold your hand, and kiss you on the cheeks. (translation mine)

Realization of wrongdoing is writ large in the following passage from a letter addressed to the narrator's deceased parent. Also worth noting is the narrator's code switching for emphasis, especially for accentuating, however belated, love for her departed father:

*I always remember all the happiest moment of my life with you papa.... Alam ko papa sobra kitang nasaktan sa mga pinaggagawa ko sa sarili ko. Nagsisisi ako sa lahat ng ginawa ko…. Hindi ko susuwayin lahat ng utos mo*. (An--)

I always remember all the happiest moments of my life with you, Papa. I know I hurt you with the things I did to myself before. I am sorry for all the wrongdoings. I will no longer disobey you. (translation mine)

One letter shows how the narrator tries to temper her ill feelings for her mother with a rather dark sense of humor. In a fit of anger, the mother had told her that she should have never been born, but notice how the narrator deploys witticism as a coping strategy to deal with the emotional wound:

> *Masakit lang nung sinabi mong sana pinatay mo na lang ako nung bata ako. Bakit hindi mo itinuloy? E di kung itinuloy mo, wala sanang sumasagot ng pabalang sa iyo.* (Gr--)
>
> I really got hurt when you said that you should have killed me when I was younger. Why didn't you do it? If you had done it, no one would have answered you back. (translation mine)

*Education*

As expected, the contents of some letters smack of the old, liberal-humanist idea that in education lies personal growth, a key guarantee to the realization of one's dreams, which may presumably be equated with social mobility. Nonetheless, these "dreams" are still bound up with overarching concern for the family, and finishing school, to many of the narrators, is an almost certain way, in a manner of speaking, to extract themselves from poverty. Education, in this context, serves a utilitarian purpose centering on the family, an idea that is different from the common bourgeois notion of education for individual accomplishment and self-actualization. This shows that the narrators, although young, do not project the carefree, irresponsible, intractable image of youth as depicted in films or on television. Transgressive of this representation, the narrations show a sense of responsibility and an eagerness to finish school for the family.

> *Mama, pagsisikapan kong makatapos ng pag-aaral para matupad ang lahat ng pangarap ko. Alam mo, mama, yung mga grades ko alam ko ikatutuwa at ipagmamalaki mo.* (Mar--)
>
> Mama, I will do what I can to finish school and realize my dreams. I think my school grades will make you happy and proud. (translation mine)

There are letters revealing reasons other than poverty for the narrators' delayed schooling. One letter, for instance, discloses how a hostile class adviser threatens to drop the student from her roster if the latter fails to submit a requisite document for school. Unfortunately, the document in question does not arrive before the date set by the

adviser because of on-going skirmishes between the military and Moslem rebels in her hometown in Mindanao:

> *Ako ay…huminto sa pag-aaral. Nais kasi ng aking masungit na adviser na maibigay ko na agad (ang requirements)… dahil kung hindi, ayaw niya na daw akong makita sa klase niya. Dahil sa may gera pa noon sa Mindanao, hindi ko po agad nakuha ang requirements ko. Hindi na ako pumasok noong Oktubre dahil natakot ako sa aking adviser…. Nakuha din ni papa yung mga requirement ko pero huli na.* (Ja--)
>
> I stopped schooling. My cranky class adviser wanted me to give all the requirements. If not, she wouldn't want to see me in class anymore. Because there was a war in Mindanao, I didn't get my requirements right away. That October, I decided not to attend school because I got afraid of my adviser. Eventually, my father was able to get the requirements but it was too late. (translation mine)

Because of financial handicap, the narrator soon decides to find a job for the family's upkeep:

> *Ninais ng aking mommy na magtrabaho na lang muna ako dahil wala pa ako pampaaral. Habang ako ay nagtatrabaho, laking pasasalamat ko dahil may tumulong sa akin na makapag-aral muli.* (Ja--)
>
> My mother wanted me to find a job because we didn't have enough money for schooling. I am very thankful that while working, someone helped me to continue my studies. (translation mine)

Returning to school with little financial assistance from her parents infuses her with a sense of pride. That the narrator can juggle work and school equips her with enough confidence to face any difficulties in the future:

> *Nakakapag-aral po ako na hindi nagiging pabigat sa aking mga magulang. Ako po ay natutuwa dahil kahit papaano, nakakatulong ako sa aking mga magulang…. Kaya po*

> *ako ngayon mag-aaral ng mabuti para makatapos agad at maabot ang aking mga pangarap*. (Ja--)
> I am able to study without being an additional burden on my parents. I am pleased because in a way, I get to help them. That's why I really study hard—to be able to finish school and fulfil my aspirations. (translation mine)

## Conclusion

The discourse of the letters is bound up with their writers' lived experiences of pain, suffering and despair, but also of hope and affirmation. In terms of the dominant themes, many of the letters interweave concerns related to family, friends, former employers, feelings of guilt, anxiety and acceptance, as well an overriding desire to finish school for the realization of their ambitions. What can also be inferred from the narratives are counter representations vis-à-vis dominant assumptions about working class youth. Instead of youth who are self-centered and lacking in ambition, the youth represented in the narratives have a sense of direction and are driven by the desire to help themselves and others. In some instances, the narrators appear more discerning and more mature than the elders. Working class youth, in the context of these narratives, represent a "fugitive culture" because theirs is a culture that is otherwise ignored, but whose "problems" are considered "symptomatic of a wider crisis in public life" (Giroux, 1996, p. 13).

Nonetheless, absent from the discourse of these narratives is any attempt to draw connections between their experiences of poverty and marginality on the one hand, and the broader social context within which these experiences take place on the other. They generally refuse to address the narrators' "subjective formation and incorporation in… social relations" which promote ignorance and disenfranchisement (McLaren, 1995, p. 78). In other words, these personal narratives, while highlighting shared experiences of marginality, are hesitant to situate these experiences within the context of existing social, political, and economic formations. Critical awareness of such problematic relations, fused with an acknowledgment of the possibility of, and the need for, social justice and transformation may constitute a better project to make such narratives truly emancipatory and liberative.

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# Losing the Filipino and the Female Voice in Postcolonial Translation: How the West Has Won

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**Abstract**

*A note from the writer: This paper was initially inspired by the K12 spiral curriculum, where the suggested "literature-based theme" in the seventh grade is given as "Appreciating Myself" under the heading of "Philippine Folk Literature in Translation" (Fermin, 2013). This writer's interest was piqued-- to discover how much of the translated folk literature used by our students is responsive to such a theme. Since Ilocano is a learned second language for this writer, two English translations of Ilocano poems in a popular anthology were chosen for critiquing. Noting, in the editors' foreword, that the purpose of their translations was to allow Filipinos to speak "with one voice that seeks to abnegate the colonial past and claim their distinct cultural identity," this writer used a postcolonial translation framework that puts culture at its axis.*

Among the books that are used by high school and college Literature classes in St. Scholastica's College and are available in their respective libraries is the English edition of *Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology,* edited by Bienvenido Lumbera and Cynthia Nograles-Lumbera.

Bienvenido Lumbera is a National Artist for Literature and Ramon Magsaysay Awardee in Journalism, Literature, and Creative

Communication Arts. He received his Litt.B. and M.A. degrees from the University of Santo Tomas and his Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Indiana University. Lumbera taught Literature, Philippine Studies and Creative Writing at Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU), De La Salle University, University of Santo Tomas, and the University of the Philippines, where he is Professor Emeritus. He was visiting professor of Philippine Studies at Osaka University of Foreign Studies in Japan and the very *first Asian scholar-in-residence* at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (About Bienvenido Lumbera, n.d.).

Cynthia Nograles-Lumbera is former Assistant Professor at the Department of English in ADMU, where she received her M.A. in English Literature, and where she was a student of Bienvenido Lumbera, whom she later married. She is editor of various English source books for schools (Lumbera & Lumbera, 2005).

The first edition of their anthology series was assembled in 1982 to provide teachers and students with "an overview of Philippine literature as this has developed in the course of our growth as a nation" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 2005, Foreword). It included selections from Tagalog, English, and Spanish, which the editors call "the three principal literary languages" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 1982, Foreword), and "which were assumed at that time as adequately representative of literary production by Filipinos" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 2005, Foreword).

One could argue that this is a new form of imperialism, where the "educated" colonized decide for the yet-uneducated or not-as-educated others what the standards are. At the same time, one wonders how such conclusions were arrived at: first, that these are the "three principal literary languages"; and second, that these works are "adequately representative" of Filipino literary works. There is, in fact, in the preface to the first edition, a caveat that the book is offered "as a guide to the study of the works of Filipino authors regardless of the language employed" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 1982, Preface). This seems to be a veiled apology for the inclusion of two languages that are not Filipino.

Yet, apology notwithstanding, the intent to include more vernacular works in future revisions of the English edition would seem to make the production of more such English translations *fait accompli*. Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera, when asked in email correspondence with this writer what he would do to improve the English edition, replied

"I would include more texts from other vernaculars" (personal email, March 19, 2013); it went without saying that these would be English translations as well, since the question specifically referred to the English edition.

To their credit, the editors acknowledge in the second edition that a true anthology should include works in other vernaculars, but that "the present state of research into and evaluation and translation of regional literatures does not yet allow for a reasonably definitive integration translation of certain vernacular writers into a national literary history" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 1982, Foreword). Does this mean, then, that the translations of those vernacular texts (into Tagalog in the second edition, and then into English in the third) pass muster insofar as this "reasonably definitive integrative translation" standard is concerned?

In the citation for Bienvenido Lumbera at the Presentation ceremonies of the Ramon Magsaysay (RM henceforth) award in 1993, the point was made that he "challenged" the point of view of the establishment and members of the Spanish and English-speaking classes which assumed that the higher arts consisted of western models, and that the literary canon, specifically, was comprised of Spanish and English works; "everything else was mere Filipiniana" (Ramon Magsaysay Awards Citation, 1993). Ironically, eleven years earlier, Lumbera had compiled an anthology of Philippine works written mainly in English, Spanish, and only one Filipino language, Tagalog.

In the second edition, the so-called "traditional" concept of Philippine Literature as being comprised mainly by writing in the "three principal literary languages" was struck down. The result: writing in other Philippine languages was included, so much so that the section on oral lore was significantly expanded, and the other periods had insertions of works by female writers.

In true postcolonial fashion, Lumbera and Lumbera acknowledge that the traditional canon had privileged male authors and thus had seemed to imply that their works were superior to those of women writers. However, of the sixty-five writers featured in this second edition, only thirteen are women. They explained away this discrepancy by saying that "representation…in the earlier literary periods remains to be improved", and add that "the contemporary scene abounds with works in every genre by women writers so

there was not much difficulty in projecting the feminist presence in recent years" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 1997, Foreword). Despite this pronouncement, only five of the thirteen writers featured in the new chapter mirroring this "contemporary scene" are women.

The editors also anticipated that they may be accused of tokenism and conventionalism in their choice of texts and authors in the first and second editions. As such, they "plead" that the second edition "is only the second step towards the ideal anthology of Philippine Literature. ..[and] when such … becomes feasible , we would like to envision it as characterized by unassailable comprehensiveness, depth of representation of literary figures hitherto marginalized, sensitivity to gender issues and, above all, genuine historical perspicacity" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 1997, Foreword). Such an appeal for acceptance of this second edition makes it apparent that the editors are well aware of its limitations, and yet are moving in a clearly identified and laudable direction.

In the third edition, however, they lose their way.

*Philippine Literature: A History and Anthology* is organized in historical periods, such that Philippine literary development is periodized according to a political framework. It is noteworthy that the beginning of our Oral lore is left open, suggesting that there may well be earlier ones found, and strengthening the editors' references to the "tremendous bulk of prehistoric Filipino culture" and the "pervasiveness of the oral lore of the early Filipinos…most of the time remaining unobserved because (it was) submerged in the culture of the colonizing power" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 2005, p.1).

It also makes sense that the fifth chapter, added in the second edition, is titled "Literature After EDSA" since the presentation of our literature is that it developed following a political framework. What is curious, however, is that in the third edition and reprints (2005, 2007, 2009), no new pieces were added to this chapter. It is inconceivable that no good works were produced in the period from 1997 to 2009.

It is curious too, that the latest anthologies-- which would logically be representative of the Lumberas' current leaning—is an English edition. It is one thing to compile Philippine literary works that were originally written in English, but quite another to compile literary works that are English translations of the originals in various vernaculars. The obvious question, naturally, would be whether the translations are worthy versions of the originals. To answer that

question—or to even begin to explain what comprises a 'worthy' translation-- we would need to investigate the translation framework used. Unfortunately it is not given; a rationale for the translations is not offered.

More curious still is that Bienvenido Lumbera has famously declared that language is the key to national identity, and that until Filipino becomes the true lingua-franca of the Philippines, the gap between the well-educated classes and the vast majority of Filipinos cannot be bridged: "As long as we continue to use English, our scholars and academics will be dependent on other thinkers, and Filipino literature will be judged by Western standards and not, as it should be, by the standards of the indigenous tradition itself" … Discerning such standards is an important part of Lumbera's work. He is learning, say his students, to see Filipino literature through Filipino eyes" (RM Awards Citation, 1993, n.p.).

One is therefore nonplussed to find out that twelve years later, he offers the world an English edition of a Philippine anthology, and thus lays himself open to judgment by those very same Western standards that he decries. Are we to infer that the standards of the indigenous tradition are not enough?

Has the West won, in the end?

Why rewrite literature in the colonizer's language, first of all? One possible answer is to argue that English is no longer the colonizer's language; it has become a language that is no longer owned by its so-called "native speakers", but of whichever user appropriates it for him/herself, usually transplanting particular idiosyncrasies of the user's mother tongue--- whether in phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, or even in discoursal and rhetorical styles-- and as such, has allowed the proliferation and "nativization" of various "englishes" all over the world (Kachru, 2006).

Secondly, it could be to reach a particular audience and send a message to the colonizer in whose language one writes: activist, writer, and senator Isabelo de los Reyes, for instance, wrote *El Folklore Filipino* because he was "intent like the other propagandists on proving the Spanish colonizers wrong in their contention that there was no pre-Hispanic Philippine civilization to speak of" (1994, n.p.).

The most obvious consideration is that one can reach the widest audience—the world—by using English, and can thus show to the rest of the world that there exists a body of literature outside the Western

canon that reveals a rich, beautiful, and diverse body of works.

What is the Lumberas' rationale for their English translation of vernacular works?

> The present edition has translated into English all selections hitherto available only in the Filipino language. It is hoped that by breaking down the language barrier, the book will find a new, broader audience and construct a comparatively more coherent picture of Philippine Literature as a multilingual body of works produced by a people splintered by a multiplicity of tongues but speaking, nevertheless, with one voice that seeks to abnegate the colonial past and claim their distinct cultural identity (Lumbera & Lumbera, 2005, Foreword).

This is how the Foreword of the English edition ends. This, it would seem, is its rationale. Unfortunately, it raises questions more than it answers.

Why is Tagalog, which is the only Filipino language that appears in the second edition, identified as "the Filipino language" ? Why were all the vernacular works translated into Tagalog, thus effectively privileging the latter and marginalizing the former, putting them in the position of 'other'?

What is this "one voice" that can presumably unite the "people splintered by a multiplicity of tongues"? Is it English? If we need to look to a colonial language to unite us, that would be a supreme double irony, for not only is the postcolony seeking to be decolonized by adopting (and adapting) the colonizer's language, but the editor himself would be backpedalling on his own statement that "as long as we continue to use English, our scholars and academics will be dependent on other thinkers, and Filipino literature will be judged by Western standards and not, as it should be, by the standards of the indigenous tradition itself" (RM Awards Citation, 1993, n.pag.).

Has the West won yet again?

Furthermore, is abnegation of the colonial past, as the editors call it, the same as decolonization? There is no reason to think it means something else. Which parts of the colonial past are renounced, then? The literary genres that appear in this anthology from Chapters 2 to 5 are all Western forms. Are they not part of the colonial past?

The question of whether one should write (or rewrite, in this case) postcolonial literature in a colonial language in order to reach a wider audience is a legitimate one in postcolonial studies, because there is the consideration that a return to a native language may be more relevant to groups in the postcolony. In fact, in postcolonial discourse, writing in the vernacular is viewed as an "act of reclaiming, of recentering of the identity, a reterritorializing operation" (Brisset, 2000, p.346).

On the other hand, texts in translation from non-colonial languages can enrich understanding of postcolonial issues, but the translations have to be clearly evocative of the struggles of the colonized whether in race, class, gender, or any other form of otherness, because the entire postcolonial discourse is a "critique of domination" (Patajo-Legasto, 2004, p.9), and so translations in an anthology that would seek to "abnegate the colonial past" (Lumbera 2005, Foreword) must reflect:

> …the oppositional/interventionary as well as re-defined consciousness of peoples whose identities have been fragmented, whose cultures have been deracinated by the physical and epistemic violence of imperialist incursions and colonialist systems of knowledge (Patajo-Legasto, 2004, p.8).

In most literature, Colonization and Decolonization are seen as a process, which seems to see the last chapter "Literature After EDSA" as a significant marker in the decolonization process, and so its label makes perfect sense. The inclusion of Philippine literary works that were originally in English especially during this period is unproblematic, since the point has been made that a people can and has appropriated the language for itself in the postcolonial realm. But two questions remain: why no new works after 1997 were added in this section in the 2005 edition, as well as in the 2007 and 2009 reprints; and the question of the merit of the translations of those texts that were not originally in English. The second question is a necessary component of any scholarly critique of translated works, and as such, will be attempted by this writer. The first question, however, is an entirely different paper.

The text translations in the anthology that this writer chose to analyze are "Desire's Unlikely End," translated by Lilia Quindoza

Santiago from the original Ilocano *"Sabali a Pannacakeltay ti Namnama"* by Leona Florentino. It is found in the "Literature under Spanish Colonialism" chapter of the Lumberas' anthology. Some aspects of another English translation, this time of *Nalpay a Namnama,* another poem by Florentino, titled "Blasted Hopes" by M. Foronda, Jr., will also be brought to bear in the discussion. This second translated text is found in Bienvenido Lumbera's anthology *Filipinos Writing: Philippine Literature from the Regions,* which is also available in the high school library of St. Scholastica's College Manila.

Leona Florentino was a Filipino poet and dramatist in the Spanish and Ilocano languages. She is considered the "mother of Philippine women's literature" and the "bridge from oral to literary tradition", and exhibited her poetry at the *Exposicion General de Filipinas* in Madrid in 1887 (About Leona Florentino, n.d.).

Born to a wealthy and prominent family in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Florentino began to write at a young age in Ilocano. Despite her potential, she was not allowed a university education because of her gender. She was instead tutored by her mother, and then by a series of private teachers. An Ilocano priest taught her Spanish and encouraged her to develop her voice in poetry. Florentino married the politician Elias de los Reyes at the age of 14, and had five children, including Isabelo de los Reyes, who later became a writer, activist and senator. According to local lore and in some short biographies, Florentino was shunned by her husband and son due to the feminist nature of her writings, and so made the choice to live alone, away from her family. She died at the age of 35, but her work is enshrined in anthologies and in the *Bibliotheque Internationale des Ouvres de Femmes* (About Leona Florentino, n.d.). Her memory and legacy are also honored in the Vigan City's Plaza via a statue in her likeness, as well as the Café Leona across it.

The translator, Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, is herself a writer, as well as an editor. Her works focus on feminism and on ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines. Two of her well known works include *Sa Ngalan ng Ina* and *Sexuality and the Filipina*. Santiago taught Philippine Literature and Creative Writing at the University of the Philippines and remains an Associate for Fiction in the Institute of Creative Writing in the same Institution. At present, she is Assistant Professor of Ilocano Language and Literature at the University of Hawai'i at Mãnoa (About Lilia Quindoza Santiago, n.d.).

There are differing paradigms in Translation Studies. Three classic criteria for assessing and evaluating the merits of translation are offered by the renowned Bible translation scholar Eugene Nida: efficiency, which can be judged in terms of the maximal reception for the minimal effort in decoding; comprehension of original intent, which is traditionally labeled as "accuracy", "fidelity", and "correctness"; and similarity of response, "which may be oriented toward the source culture, in which case the receptor must understand the basis of the original response" or oriented to the receptor culture, "in which case the receptor makes a corresponding response within a different cultural context" (Nida, 1964, n.pag.)

Nida very lucidly illustrates how the principle of "formal equivalence", where a translation is so highly literal that it contains numerous awkward expressions, can "overload the prospective receptors" (Nida, 1964, n.pag.) likewise, in the principle of "dynamic equivalence", the intent and response are the focus (what we Filipinos call *"datíng"*) can cause the translation to become unfaithful to the content of the original message.

Another framework by translation giants Susan Bassnett (2002) and Andre Lefevere (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990) highlights "the cultural turn" in translation studies. In brief, they envisaged that "neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational 'unit' of translation" (Petterson, 1999, n.pag.). Such a transformative view came about from the effort to understand the process and status of globalization and national identities, and the explosion of postcolonial studies in recent years, says Petterson, "entailed that the cultural turn in translation studies increasingly has become intercultural or multicultural"; in fact, he says it may well be called "the postcolonial turn" (1999, n.pag.).

Simply put, a translation is unacceptable if it universalizes the text and reduces its distinctly hybrid, multicultural uniqueness, or silences its articulation of cultural differences; a translation must enable its readers to place the text and its writer in what Bhabha famously calls the 'in-between spaces' "that provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Peterson, 1999, n.pag.).

In the absence of a translation framework in the Lumberas' anthology, it is these two frameworks that will guide this writer's analysis of the text (see original and translation below).

Table 1. **Sabali A Pannacakeltay Ti Namnama** (1880) (original Ilocano by na Florentino)

**Sabali A Pannacakeltay Ti Namnama** (1880)
(original Ilocano by Leona Florentino)

[1] Dayta imnasmo agnanayon a dardarepdepec
[2] tumingal rabi-I np innac maridep
[3] cas maquisasao-ac kenca a sumasainnec
[4] ket iti yas-asugco ti liday tuoc a agabaec.
[5] Nenang timudem daytoy ut-utec
[6] a pagsasainnecac iti naapgues
[7] a gapu piman iti awan a caicarianna ken pateg
[8] guptecon a toy rigatco a sansanguec.
[9] Oen imnas ta aniacad ti urayec
[10] no gulibto met ti lac-amec
[11] nasamsam-it la nga acatec
[12] ti patayco no sicat mangted.
[13] Daytoy biagco adda kenca a sitatalec
[14] no nakemmo uray magsat toy anges;
[15] bang-aram cadin toy pusoc a sumasainnec
[16] a umay umiping cadagita daeg.
[17] Temuden detoy ut-utec
[18] a pagsasaibbecac iti naapgues
[19] ta no ni ayat mabati kenca a sumasainnec
[20] ket ti tanemmo sangsangitannacanto met.
[21] Daytoy bancayco umasogto iti nabileg
[22] ket conanto ti tao a macangeg
[23] ay! Asipay unay ti gasatna a dakes
[24] ta napaay a aoan pateg

Table 2. English translation of **Sabali A Pannacakeltay Ti** Namnama by Quindoza-Santiago

**Sabali A Pannacakeltay Ti Namnama**
(English translation by Quindoza-Santiago in third edition)

[1] I always dream of your unique mirth
[2] Every night in my deep sleep.
[3] And in this dream, I earnestly plead
[4] With you as I wail over my plight.
[5] Nenang, dear one, heed my cries
[6] This searing pain, this ceaseless suffering
[7] All is meaningless now, so I will end
[8] And slay all this happiness before me.
[9] Truly, my love, for why should I desire?
[10] When all I get in return is your cruelty
[11] Death is a much sweeter reward
[12] From your benevolent hand.
[13] I have given all my life to you
[14] And should you wish that I end this life
[15] Please just bless my heart which has been torn apart
[16] But which has found a home in you.
[17] Try to fathom the pain
[18] This terrible agony I bear
[19] As you leave me in distress
[20] My tears will stalk you from the grave.
[21] My dead body will sigh with all its might
[22] And all those who shall hear me
[23] Will declare, Ay, what misfortune!

A first look at the form of the poem shows us that there are 6 stanzas in both versions (this is worth mentioning, because some translations of Florentino's works are mere excerpts), but that the rhyme disappears in the English version. This is unfortunate, because it significantly waters down the lyrical quality for which her poems are hailed. The romantic tone/spirit is intact, in the sense of following the dictates of one's heart despite societal conventions. But what convention is being broken? It is of heterosexual love, and to see this, we need to do a closer reading of its contents.

The title of Santiago's translation is *"Desire's Unlikely End"*, whereas the Ilocano original title is *"Sabali a Pannacakeltay ti Namnama."* The word *'sabali'* means 'different' but in the English translation it is given as 'unlikely': this translation works, because what is hoped for does not come about, according to the poem. The word *"Namnana"* means "hope", but is translated as "desire", perhaps because of what the poem is about. Here we see that the translation may well have been guided by Nida's framework, but one wonders why *"namnama"* could not have been simply translated as "hope", when that is what it means, and would have translated beautifully. Native speakers of Ilocano point out that translating *"namnama"* to 'desire' limits its evocative power: it confines the persona's feelings to the arena of romantic love, and is directed only to the desired beloved, whereas "hope" would have a far broader area of reference, covering aspirations for a future of togetherness, for instance (C. Agnir, A. Agnir, and F. Paraan, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

This is not to invoke the essentialist view of language, which is to suggest that the word *"namnama"* has "some essential cultural essence not subject to changing usage" (Ashcroft et aI,1989, p. 53); after all, the word "hope", which is the direct and literal translation of *"namnama",* carries with it the same broad area of reference which the native speakers of Ilocano interviewed gave as an example: the hope that the beloved would return the persona's love, and the hope for a future with the beloved.

In examining the different editions of the anthology series, one notices that the Tagalog translation in the second edition offers the word *"paghahangad,"* which successfully conveys the longing of the poet for the beloved and implies the hoped-for culmination of this longing. Perhaps this is why the English translation gives the word "desire" instead of the more correct "hope" because it is a translation from the Tagalog rather than from the Ilocano; after all, the translator of the two is the same. There is something patently wrong if that is the case—to translate a translation, not the original.

What is "unlikely" about the end of the poet's desire is that it is unrequited: the speaker in the poem laments the fact that the beloved (named as "Nenang" in line 5, and so is obviously a woman) repays the speaker-lover's love with "cruelty," and so the latter would rather die "if" it is given (i.e., Death, line 11) by the beloved. That is what the original says in lines 12 and 12", correctly translated in Tagalog as

*"Mamatamisin ko ang kamatayan kung sa iyo ito magmumula"*, but is slightly though significantly different in the English, where the "if" aspect of the Ilocano *"no"* and Tagalog *"kung"* is deleted (lines 12 and 13 "Death is a much sweeter reward from your benevolent hand").

In those same two lines, the English translation falters yet again. Using the "cultural turn" framework, we see that the very Filipino lover style of sentimental, self-sacrificing reproach in lines 11 and 12 is not delivered; instead, the reader wonders how the cruelty referred to in line 10 suddenly becomes "a benevolent hand" in line 12.

Another point where the translation does not deliver the "culture" of the original is the translation of the word *"imnas"* (in lines 1 and 9): the *"datíng"* of the word is lost completely. Ask any Ilocano what *"imnas"* means and s/he will be hard put to explain: it has no literal equivalent. It refers to an outer and inner beauty, an allure, an enchantment — all that, but not exactly so, and yet more (in line 9 of the original, for instance, it is used as an endearment!).

In the Tagalog version, Santiago translates it to *"timyas,"* which means a kind of "purity or loyalty of love" – again a flawed translation that gets so much worse in English, where it is translated as 'mirth'. "Mirth" not only does not mean *"imnas"* (neither does it mean *"timyas"*, just as *"timyas"* does not mean *"imnas"*), but it completely changes the picture of an *'imnas'* from a multi-dimensional one of a young Filipina who is alluring, beguiling, sweetly seductive (much like Manuel Arguilla's Ilocano lass in *"Midsummer"*) to one that is flat and so decidedly Western: all laughter and glee, with a hint of aggression and cockiness that is definitely not in *"imnas"*.

Table 3. Comparisons of lines from original and two translations of **"Sabali A Pannnacakeltay Ti Namnama"**

| **Sabali A Pannacakeltay Ti Namnama** (1880) (original Ilocano by Leona Florentino) | **Kakaibang Pagkalibing ng Paghahangad (1997)** (from Tagalog translation in 2nd edition) | **Desire's Unlikely End** (2005) (from English translation in 3rd edition) |
|---|---|---|
| Dayta **imnasmo** agnanayon a dardarepdepec | Ang kakaibang **timyas** mo'y lagi kong panaginip | I always dream of your unique **mirth** |

A master's thesis in China proposes that a translation of the beautiful classical poetry of China should "emphasize the recreation of beauty: the harmonic conveyance of the 'triple beauty' in sense, sound and form to the target language in translation" (China Papers, 2010, n.p.). This is because such "triple beauty" is at the core of what makes an essentially classical Chinese poem, the writer argues.

Such an approach is consistent with postcolonial theory, where the destruction of Western culture hegemony and building of a multicultural environment must be based on coexistence, equal dialogue, and mutual compliment, not the privileging of the One over the Other (Katz, 2000). Delivering the "cultural" in translation instead recognizes and makes room for the "other".

As we continue reading Florentino's poem in its English translation, we wonder: why would the poet's unrequited love be "unlikely"? This would seem to presume that the speaker-lover is worth the love of the named beloved woman "Nenang". Is the speaker a "good catch" then? A good-looking, eligible man, perhaps? Does that mean that Leona Florentino was writing as a man-persona? Was such a perspective (i.e., of writing not as the writer-self, but as an unnamed speaker-persona) already present in the Philippines in her time?

Furthermore, can this text be reduced to the universal meaning, such that it is a heterosexual love, and so this is a man-persona speaking to a woman-beloved? The sanitized version of her life story, in fact, is that her poems were "commissioned by men"—a version this researcher first heard in conversation with the staff of Vigan City's iconic restaurant "Café Leona", which is named after our poet.

Or can we assume that Leona was writing as herself, or at least, as a woman? After all, the classification of Florentino's poems as "lyric poems" (admittedly a Western category) automatically make their thoughts and sentiments those of the poet herself. Santiago, the translator in the Lumbera anthology, and who is herself a respected writer, would seem to think so, since the final lines in her translation use "her" when the speaker refers to self: "And all those who shall hear me, will declare, Ay, what misfortune! Has befallen her wicked and wretched soul" (line 24 of Quindoza-Santiago's translation).

Is there also a reference to the colonial religion here? There is, by some stretch: the word "bless" in line 15 speaks of a colonial context and origin, and the words "wicked, wretched soul" in line 24 allude to sinfulness, a condemnation of a damned soul. We could look at such

seeming references as influences of the colonial, but a stronger sign of colonialism is apparent in a popular English translation *"Blasted Hopes"* by M. Foronda Jr. of another poem by Leon Florentino, *"Nalpay a Namnama"*.

In the original Ilocano, as in all Philippine languages, pronouns are gender-neutral. In an English version, the translator naturally has to choose a gender-specific pronoun, because that is the case in English. We see in Quidoza-Santiago's English translation of *"Nalpay a Namnama"* (see excerpt below) that she chooses to have the woman-speaker address the woman-beloved as "you," thus staying faithful to Florentino's own point-of-view as used in her original Ilocano.

In M. Foronda Jr's translation (n.d.) of Florentino, however, the point-of-view is replaced with a third-person male by the use of the possessive pronoun "his" (see line 4 of Foronda's excerpt below).

Table 4. Excerpt from the English translation by Lilia Quindoza Santiago of Nalpay A Namnama by

Excerpt from the **English translation by Lilia Quindoza Santiago of Nalpay A Namnama** by Leona Florentino (1880)

[1] Ay, what destiny can this be,
[2] Where will this love take me
[3] When you refuse my desire
[4] To love you and be happy

Table 5. Excerpt from the English translation by M. Foronda, Jr. of Nalpay A Namnama by Leona Florentino (1880)

Excerpt from the **English translation by M. Foronda, Jr. of Nalpay A Namnama** by Leona Florentino (1880)

[1] What gladness and what joy
[2] are endowed to one who is loved
[3] for truly there is one to share
[4] all his sufferings and his pain.

What happens thus is that not only is the woman-speaker not free to be loved by the woman beloved to whom she speaks in the poem, but her female identity is obliterated entirely by becoming transformed into a male speaker. By doing so, Florentino's poem is sanitized and westernized, because heterosexual love is of course the norm. What is worse, however, is that in so doing, the Filipina poet's identity is disappropriated by the very text that tells us who she is.

One could argue that in translation, authorial intent is not important, and that it is not the poet that speaks in a poem but an imagined speaker—a created persona. Removing the poet's voice, however, is not the same as disappropriating the female identity of the persona. At the same time, students and scholars of language and literature will tell us that point-of-view here, when used in the sense

of the persona's point-of-view, is used in the linguistic and literary sense: the persona speaks from a first person point of view, and it is this first-person point-of-view that is removed in Foronda's translation. Instead, a third-person point of view is used, and the universal 'he' is used (see line 4 of the excerpt above).

In the colonizers' eyes, a woman such as this poem's speaker – who loves and professes her love for another woman — is disreputable; she becomes "the other", which, following the Manichean allegory, divides the world into mutually excluding opposites: the West is ordered, rational, masculine, good; and the "Orient" is chaotic, irrational, feminine, evil. If we accept that the poet was speaking as herself, or at least as a woman, as Santiago's English translation bears out, then we see that in colonized Philippines, the Filipina with the poet's soul had to find her own space so that her poet's soul could be free to write, much like Virginia Woolf's Judith Shakespeare. Rather than give up her writing, Leona Florentino chose to leave her own home and live in exile.

In pre-colonial Philippines, the Filipina was the powerful *babaylan,* or the homemaker-who-held-the-purse strings, or an entrepreneur; to the Ifugaos, she could even divorce her husband (Barrios, 2006). In the case of the poet Florentino, we see that she was denied a university education because she was a woman, was married off to a prominent man at the age of fourteen, and went to live in exile because she was shunned by her own husband and son for her "feminist writing". The ideal Filipina, in colonial times, had to be the subservient "Maria Clara", nothing like Leona. Even her own son, writer and senator Isabelo de los Reyes, wrote of his mother thus:

> She did not go to school and learned Spanish with a private native teacher. Her poems are interesting for their naturalness and originality; they are not composed in the European style, but in the crude, confused, and unaesthetic manner of chapbooks of Ilocano drama that proliferated in the region. They are written in the genuine Filipino style for the lady hated plagiarism and spoke contemptuously of plagiarists (Barrios, 2006, n.p.).

De los Reyes' description of his mother's writing as "crude and confused" almost seems contemptuous, but even if one were to argue

that it is an objective assessment, and that he in fact included her in his seminal work El Folklore Filipino, the glaring fact is that it is an assessment based on European standards. The author-son implicates himself by the earlier observation that "they are not composed in the European style," such that even as he seeks to castigate the colonizers' for their portrayal of the Filipinos as having no pre-colonial literature, he defeats his noble purpose by castigating his own, using a Western standard that is implicit in what he starts out condemning.

This is how the West has won its empire, and how it continues to insinuate itself in the postcolonial discourse—by taking a position of superiority and privilege, and by continuing to be placed in such position by the domination of western paradigms, even in the postcolonial and neocolonial discourse of non-western cultures.

Florentino's poems excited this postcolonial analysis because even while their contexts, temporally, are colonized Philippines, their translations are products of postcolonial Philippines. And yet, her poems already pose a form of creative resistance to the European culture of the colonized, where a woman's desire for another woman was unacceptable and unspeakable. Even that early, it carved out a space for itself in what poet and critic J. Neil Garcia (2007) calls the "ironic state of in-betweenness, exile or rupture" (p. 17) that resulted from the "unhousing" of the colonized "from their traditions and 'origins'" (p.17), and it is in this in-between space where two opposing and polar groups clash that new identities can be forged and found, and where the postcolonial poet can be "at home". It is in this sense, of a poet in the colonized period writing in the postcolonial spirit, that we see how postcolonial discourse is not restricted to a particular time or location, but instead is a matter of sensibility and spirit:

> Postcolonial discourse is… a question of positionality. Postcolonial discourse has a critical perspective. Postcolonial discourse can be produced by an ilustrado propagandist Jose Rizal or a working-class Andres Bonifacio, both writing before the granting of Philippine Independence in 1946 (Patajo-Legasto, 2004, p.8).

Scholars of translations studies such as Antoine Berman and Lawrence Venuti may differ in some aspects, but they agree on the idea of emphasizing the differences between source and target language and culture when translating, and especially emphasize

that an important consideration in translation is how the "cultural other [...] can best preserve [...] that otherness" (Venuti, 306). Our Leona Florentino may not be a postcolonial poet in the initial sense of the word, but a respectful translation of her works will enable her to find a postcolonial space -- the same artistic room that she found for herself at the cost of earning the disapproval of her husband and son. Any postcolonial translation of the writing of the colonized must honor its culture in all its diversity, hybridity, and yet take care not to classify all 'others' into the same mold: they must not be totalized and essentialized. At the same time, a worthy translation recognizes that the colonized people will "also be other than their pasts, which can be reclaimed but never reconstituted, and so must be revisited and realized in partial, fragmented ways" (Lye, 1997).

It is in such a creative sense, then, that the people "splintered by a multiplicity of tongues" (Lumbera & Lumbera, 2005, Foreword) can speak in the colonizer's tongue but in their own distinct "voice": perhaps in a style, perhaps a manner of expression, perhaps an approach to a genre, and even perhaps, something totally new, unexpected, and different.

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# Personal Epistemology and Learning in a Chemistry Classroom

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**Abstract**
*This paper reports a qualitative investigation of student's epistemological beliefs in science and in Chemistry and of how such epistemology is linked with their metacognitive behaviors. Epistemological beliefs are conceptualized as being made up of independent dimensions activated in context and operating as epistemic cognition. Epistemological beliefs were initially ascertained from an administration of the Epistemological Beliefs Assessment for Physical Science (EBAPS). Analyses of various qualitative data afforded the tagging of cases as exhibiting naïve or sophisticated epistemology. The paper reiterates that epistemological beliefs contribute to students' metacognitive behaviors. An individual exhibiting naïve epistemology resorts to simplistic ways of acquiring knowledge and demonstrates low metacognitive behaviors. On the other hand, an individual manifesting sophisticated epistemology selects study strategies for understanding, is more engaged in her learning, and overtly demonstrates high metacognitive behaviors.*

Students come into a Chemistry classroom with prior beliefs and pre-conceived notions on how they should learn and study Chemistry. Do students believe that science concepts are seen as isolated bits of information or as highly interrelated? Do students believe that science learning is mainly absorbing information or do they view it as

constructing one's own understanding? Do they believe that scientific ways of thinking are applicable only in the classroom or laboratory? Do they view science as mostly a matter of fixed ability? This set of beliefs is referred to as epistemological beliefs.

Epistemology is broadly defined as the nature and justification of human knowledge. Early research on personal epistemology assumed that the construct was uni-dimensional and developed in a fixed progression of stages (Schommer, Crouse & Rhodes, 1992). Hofer and Pintrich (1997) viewed personal epistemology as a developmental model, indicating a general progression in the development of one's ideas, about knowledge and knowing. An alternative conception of personal epistemology is to assume that personal epistemology is a system of more or less independent beliefs indicating that a learner can demonstrate naïve epistemology in one dimension and at the same time can manifest sophisticated epistemology in another dimension (Schommer, 1993).

The construct of personal epistemology can be reasonably delimited into dimensions that fit within the conventional definition of epistemology into certainty of knowledge, simplicity of knowledge, source of knowledge and justification of knowledge (Hofer, 2001). Certainty of knowledge is the degree to which one sees knowledge as fixed at lower levels or more fluid at higher levels in the epistemological beliefs continuum. Simplicity of knowledge is viewed on a continuum as an accumulation of facts or highly interrelated concepts. Source of knowledge is associated with the origin of knowledge within the individual as knower or as knowledge originating outside the self. Justification of knowing is the dimension that includes how individuals evaluate knowledge claims to include the use of evidence, authority and experts as well as evaluation of experts (Hofer, 2001).

Students' epistemological beliefs have been linked to various constructs of academic performance (Schommer, 1993), learning strategies and activities (Edmonson & Novak, 1993), and conceptual change learning (Qian & Alverman, 1995). Effects of epistemological beliefs were also associated with the comprehension of texts on social science or physical science (Schommer, 1990) and mathematics (Schommer, 1993), while cognition of the interpretation of controversial issues like AIDS has also been related with epistemological beliefs (Kardash & Scholes, 1996). Students' views about science, learning, and intelligence were investigated with knowledge integration

(Songer & Linn, 1991), learning orientation (Tsai, 2001) and students' cognition in a collaborative context (Hogan, 1999). These investigations underscore the idea that students' epistemological beliefs play a crucial role in their cognition. Students' epistemological theories might hinder or enhance academic performance as they choose various learning and study strategies.

In a previous investigation (Pulmones, 2007), academic tasks in Chemistry were structured in a constructivist fashion giving opportunities for students to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning as they negotiate and seek alternative solutions to problems in small group settings. This process afforded students to think and reflect on their thinking, thus, fostering their metacognition. This paper reports a qualitative exploration of students' epistemological beliefs and their link with metacognition. Students' metacognitive behaviors and their choice of study strategies can be influenced by their epistemological beliefs. Given these contexts, the study answers the following questions:

1. What are the students' beliefs and views on the structure of scientific knowledge and on the nature of knowing and learning (personal epistemologies)?
2. How do students' epistemological beliefs in Chemistry contribute to their metacognition and meaningful learning of Chemistry?

## Method

The study was a qualitative look at students' epistemological beliefs in science and Chemistry and at how these sets of beliefs play a role in their metacognition. Epistemological beliefs were assumed to be a system of more or less independent dimensions. These dimensions are (a) Structure of Scientific Knowledge (SSK), (b) Nature of Knowing and Learning (NKL), (c) Real-Life Applicability (RLA), (d) Evolving Knowledge (EK) and (e) Source of Ability to Learn (SAL). Consistent with a qualitative lens, multiple sources of data were obtained and adequate time was spent in collecting qualitative data noting the importance of seeking discrepant cases (Merriam, 2002). Detailed accounts of the methods, procedures, and discussion points in the study were carried out and documented.

Thirty-three female first year college students enrolled in a General Chemistry class at St. Scholastica's College, an exclusive school for girls in Manila, Philippines participated in the study. From 33, the participants were reduced to nine cases for a more detailed look into their metacognition and personal epistemologies.

Student's initial epistemological beliefs were ascertained using the Epistemological Beliefs Assessment for Physical Sciences (EBAPS). This is a 30-item forced-choice instrument designed to probe into students' views along five non-orthogonal dimensions. EBAPS was initially developed by Andrew Elby, John Frederiksen, Christina Schwartz and Barbara White at the University of California, Berkeley ("The Idea Behind The EBAPS," n.d.). Each item in the EBAPS was scored on a scale of 0 (least sophisticated) to 4 (most sophisticated) following a prescribed grid. A mean score for each dimension was calculated from the students' average score on each item in a subscale. These scores were multiplied by 25 so that a subscale score from 0 to 100 could be reported. Mean ratings per conceptualized dimensions of the EBAPS were calculated from this range of scores making it possible to posit cases at the low, moderate and high points of the epistemological beliefs continuum.

Other sources of data in ascertaining epistemological beliefs were the Students' Beliefs Inventory (SBI), the Epistemological Beliefs Follow-up Questionnaire (EBFQ) and interview data. The SBI, administered at the beginning of the study, is a researcher-made instrument that contains seven open-ended questions that probed students' beliefs in science, Chemistry, and in studying and learning Chemistry. The EBFQ which was administered in the middle and at the end of the study sought the students' views on science, Chemistry and learning after they had been engaged in a number of metacognitive activities. To obtain a holistic picture of students' epistemological beliefs, metacognition and the interplay of these two constructs, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the nine cases.

## Results

Due to space constraints, only two of the nine cases are reported in this paper, one exhibiting low and the other exhibiting high epistemological beliefs. The epistemological beliefs profiles of

Barbara and Hannah were generated from holistic analyses of the results of the EBAPS, SBI and Interview data.

*The Case of Barbara (pseudonym)*

Barbara claimed that the different topics she studied in Chemistry are related, citing the importance of atoms, molecules and ions in the understanding of the mole concept. But when asked about Physics, she claimed that the different topics in Physics are "topics by themselves" and not related at all. She defined science as a "means to acquire information and knowledge." She liked the computational aspects of the mole concept because there is one correct solution, and there is a formula to be followed, compared to being asked to explain concepts. Barbara claimed that "understanding" is more important in studying, but when asked to elaborate what she meant by understanding and the strategies she employed to understand, she was not able to elaborate. She mentioned that she knew that she understood a material if it "feels right." Barbara believes that natural ability is more important than hard work in a ratio of 6:4 in favor of natural ability. She claimed that with natural ability, "it is easier to understand science concept." She believes that being good in science is a matter of fixed ability, "something that you are born with." Barbara admitted that after all the metacognitive activities that she had experienced; she enjoyed the study of chemistry because "it was interesting and fun." She claimed that her study habits did not improve because her "grades did not go up." When asked about effective ways to teach Chemistry, she believed that the teacher should explain further the subject matter and should make certain that students understood the material.

*The Case of Hannah (pseudonym)*

Hannah defined science as the "study of things that are important and essential, that all things involve science, that science can explain almost anything, and it makes people's lives better or worse." Hannah believed that in studying science, one will not only learn "how this or that works, but one will learn about life itself and how to live to the fullest." She further claimed that because of "man's acquisition of knowledge, to understand and make it clearer, to be more adaptable and discover new things," theories need to develop. When asked about her study strategies, Hannah preferred

understanding to memorization, linking her degree of confidence in her solutions to problems with her understanding of the solution to a problem. She also claimed she understood a material if she "can think with the teacher," if she can follow the discussion and predict to a certain extent what the professor will say next. Understanding for Hannah also means explaining the concepts behind the formula and making sense of the numerical solution to a problem. She also believes that a Chemistry class should have lots of activities where students can actively participate so that they learn by doing and the classroom will be "more alive." Hannah further believes in the wider applicability of Chemistry and science in her immediate surroundings. This was apparent when she elaborated the practical usefulness of an experiment in determining the acidity content of antacid tablets. Hannah views hard work as more important than natural ability in a ratio of 7:3 in favor of hard work. By her own admission she claimed that "I did not know that I could excel and be interested in Chemistry." She further asserted that Chemistry is a subject that is "worth one's time and effort."

*Linking Epistemological Beliefs with Metacognition*

A second reading of the assertions and claims made by Barbara and Hannah on their own beliefs in various aspects of studying and learning Chemistry afforded the positioning of their beliefs as naïve or sophisticated. Table 1 gives this summary.

Table 1. **Profiles on Epistemological Beliefs**

| Dimensions of Epistemological Beliefs | Cases | |
|---|---|---|
| | Barbara | Hannah |
| SSK | Naïve | Sophisticated |
| NKL | Naïve | Sophisticated |
| RLA | Naïve | Sophisticated |
| EK | Naïve | Sophisticated |
| SAL | Naïve | Sophisticated |

One goal of this study was to link epistemological beliefs with metacognition and meaningful learning of Chemistry. In a previous investigation (Pulmones, 2007), activities in Chemistry were structured and designed in a constructivist paradigm where students were given opportunities to link prior knowledge as they constructed new knowledge. As they engaged in these activities students were repeatedly asked how they planned, monitored and evaluated their learning, thus, fostering their metacognition. Analysis of students' responses on these questions afforded the tagging of these students' metacognitive behaviors as "low", "moderate" or "high". Meaningful learning was also ascertained from successes of students in answering pencil-and-paper tests and judgments on their portfolios. Table 2 shows the linking of epistemological beliefs, metacognition and meaningful learning of Chemistry of Barbara and Hannah.

Table 2. **Linking Epistemological Beliefs, Metacognition and Meaningful learning**

| Constructs Investigated | Cases | |
|---|---|---|
| | Barbara | Hannah |
| Personal Epistemology | Naïve in all dimensions | Sophisticated in all dimensions |
| Metacognitive Behavior | Low | High |
| Meaningful Learning | Low | High |

## Discussion

This study assumed that epistemological belief is a system that is made up of more or less independent dimensions. Barbara demonstrated naïve epistemology in all dimensions. She claimed that Chemistry concepts are interrelated and yet did not demonstrate this same belief in Physics. This shows a dichotomy in her cognitive schema (Hogan, 1999). The same dichotomy was evident as she asserted that she liked the computational aspects of the mole concept

better than having to explain the meaning behind the solution to the problem. She liked memorizing things more than seeking alternative solutions to problems. This was supported by her preference for doing computational problems because there was a formula to follow. This is demonstrating a naïve epistemology in the Structure of Scientific Knowledge (SSK) and on Nature of Knowing and Learning (NKL). Also, Barbara was not able to elaborate on how she studied for understanding; she linked understanding with her intuitive feeling for what is right. She believed in authority (professor) as the source of her knowledge and not in herself. She favored natural ability as opposed to hard work. All these claims are indicative of a naïve epistemology in Source of Ability to Learn (SAL). Barbara relied on experts or authority when confronted with knowledge that is uncertain. Despite a claim that she enjoyed the different activities, Barbara did not adopt study strategies to propel her own understanding. Her metacognitive behaviors were tagged as "low" and she did not manifest meaningful learning even if she experienced a number of metacognitive activities.

On the other end of the epistemological beliefs continuum, Hannah demonstrated sophisticated epistemological beliefs in all dimensions. Her definition and goals of science gave insights into her sophisticated epistemology on Structure of Scientific Knowledge (SSK). She believes in the structure, order and hierarchy of science concepts. Likewise, Hannah believes in the integration of formula and concepts for better understanding of a material as well as in the wider applicability of science concepts outside the sphere of the classroom and laboratory. This is demonstrating sophisticated epistemologies in Nature of Knowing and Learning (NKL) and Real-Life Applicability (RLA). Hannah sees knowledge as tentative and evolving as evidenced by her claim that theories need to change and develop to explain scientific phenomena. This is demonstrating sophisticated epistemology in Evolving Knowledge (EK). Hannah relied on herself as the source of her own knowledge construction. She adopted study strategies that helped her construct her own understanding. She believes in hard work over that of natural ability with a ratio of 7:3. This is demonstrating a sophisticated epistemology in Source of Ability to Learn (SAL). Hannah demonstrated "high" metacognitive behaviors. As she planned, monitored and evaluated her learning, she adjusted her study strategies to achieve meaning and understanding. In the process, she demonstrated meaningful learning.

Barbara and Hannah's metacognitive behaviors as they chose study strategies are influenced by their epistemological beliefs. Barbara viewed knowledge as absolute truths and thus was contented with adopting study strategies that call for wrong or right answers. Rather than constructing her own knowledge, she studied for memorization. Hannah saw knowledge as complex, tentative and evolving; thus, she considered herself as the source of this knowledge as she collaborated with others in her knowledge construction. She studied for meaning and applied these knowledge and skills in other learning contexts.

Learning must therefore take into account students' epistemological beliefs. To make these beliefs explicit, instruction should be geared towards their development. Opportunities must be structured so that students activate context-dependent epistemological resources. Activities that let students solve ill-structured problems, that challenge them to question the certainty and source of their knowledge can bring about the activation of these epistemological resources. King and Kitchener (2002) gave these suggestions:

- Show respect for students' assumptions, regardless of the developmental stage(s) they exhibit. Their assumptions are genuine, sincere reflections of their ways of making meaning, and are steps in a developmental progression. If students perceive disrespect or lack of emotional support, they may be less willing to engage in challenging discussions or to take the intellectual and personal risks required for development.
- Discuss controversial, ill-structured issues with students throughout their educational activities, and make available resources that show the factual basis and lines of reasoning for several perspectives.
- Create many opportunities for students to analyze others' points of view for their evidentiary adequacy and to develop and defend their own points of view about controversial issues.
- Teach students strategies for systematically gathering data, assessing the relevance of the data, evaluating data sources, and making interpretive judgments based on available data.
- Give students frequent feedback, and provide both cognitive and emotional support for their efforts.
- Help students explicitly address issues of uncertainty in

judgment-making and examine their assumptions about knowledge and how it is gained.

- Encourage students to practice their reasoning skills in many settings, from their other classes to their practicum sites, student organizations, residence hall councils, and elsewhere, to gain practice and confidence in applying their thinking skills.

## Conclusion

Epistemological beliefs contribute to students' purposeful choice of study strategies. As they exhibit naïve beliefs, they tend to resort to simplistic ways of acquiring knowledge rather than constructing their own understanding or knowledge. Students exhibiting sophisticated epistemological beliefs manifest high metacognitive behaviors. They select study strategies consistent with their belief system that knowledge is complex, tentative, and evolving.

Epistemological beliefs drive students' selection of study strategies and affect learning performance. They draw on their epistemological and metacognitive knowledge to select study strategies in accomplishing tasks or to assess the validity of their constructed knowledge. Judging the legitimacy of these knowledge claims requires a complex interplay of metacognitive, cognitive, and epistemological knowledge and process.

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# Thesis Quality, Emotional Reactions, and Coping Resources of College Thesis Writers of St. Scholastica's College Manila

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**Abstract**

*This stratified correlational study investigated the relationship between thesis quality and emotional reactions, and coping resources. Ninety five (95) thesis writers from the courses Psychology, Marketing, Journalism, and, Advertising who have successfully passed their theses completed the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-42) and Coping Resources Inventory-Adult Form. Results showed there is a significant relationship between thesis quality and emotional reactions. No significant relationships were found between thesis quality and coping resources.*

## Introduction and Background of the Study

Undergraduate students are in need of resources to cope with physiological and psychological changes (Pfeiffer, 2001), especially in developing an autonomous personal life (Bayram & Bilgel, 2008). In schools, thesis writing may be a channel in helping develop autonomy as it is usually done independently (Greenbank & Penketh, 2009). Apart from other school requirements where knowledge content is usually provided, thesis writing has no predefined content domain

(Sachs, 2002). In St. Scholastica's College, Manila (SSC), it also follows that thesis writing is one requirement considered important before a student is allowed to graduate from the course she is enrolled in. Over the years, the fulfillment of such requirement has been considered an exceptional time in the life of graduating students because their graduation is hinged on its successful completion. This may evoke anxieties which often come from the quality of the thesis – that their work may not meet the standards mandated by the school. This happens particularly when they receive critical remarks and are required to do massive revisions by their thesis advisers and members of the panel (Nounopoulos, Ashby, & Gilman, 2006). Moreover, news from more senior students who experienced considerable difficulty or even failure dampens their spirits and trigger anxiety. Being unable to foresee or accept unavoidable delays in completing the thesis also add up to the negative emotions which could lead to depression. As the thesis stage progresses, the negative emotions tend to spill over other aspects of the student's life aggravating the difficulty of writing a thesis.

Being in the phase where one has to complete an undergraduate course is a sensitive period (Gjerde, 1993 as cited in Bayram & Bilgel, 2008). Even the most resourceful student can inevitably experience the pressures of responding to the challenges of thesis writing. Eventually, the impact of thesis writing as a stressful life event can be managed through the cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses known as coping resources which students rely on when facing demanding or threatening situations related to thesis writing (Devonport & Lane, 2004).

This paper provides a discussion of the relationship between thesis quality, emotional reaction and coping resources of college thesis writers in St. Scholastica's College, Manila. The results of the study propose to enhance awareness on these variables among students, thesis advisers and academic personnel. The results show that although thesis writing is a challenging phase in a student's life, it can also evoke positive feelings given that the student is actively involved in this self-regulating task with support from the advisers, teachers and mentors. The results also promote and encourage continuing the practice of psychologically conducive ways of writing a thesis; as it happens in the school that students are prepared for thesis writing early in their college years.

The following sections discuss the articles, studies and researches on thesis writing, thesis quality, emotional reactions and coping resources to provide sufficient background to understand the study.

*Thesis Writing and Thesis Quality*

Thesis writing is perceived as an intimidating task to students in their senior undergraduate year (Sachs, 2002) especially the experiences one has to go through can get challenging because it merits a high status in contemporary education (Lopatto, 2006). Unlike other course requirements which have predefined content and assessment criteria, thesis writing has none. Relatively, a student is expected to choose a topic for independent research and gain mastery of the chosen topic (Sachs, 2002). Thesis writing is often promoted as a way of advancing in independent learning. It offers a venue for students to move from dependence to independence (Greenbank & Penketh, 2009). Wolters (1998) characterized thesis writing as the ultimate self-regulated learning task which is the active management of an individual's own learning activity.

Thesis writing is also a process (Hardy, 2005). A thesis is a formal document submitted as a requirement to earn a particular degree or course. It is imperative that ample time is given to such requirement. Degrees requiring theses are examined and evaluated through both written and oral presentations. The oral examination gives opportunity for the panel to raise questions about vague points in the paper. It also allows the panel to examine the mastery of thesis writers on the topics they chose to pursue a research on (Hardy, 2005). To add, an earlier study (Gambell, 1991) made mention that writing is dominant in the undergraduate level because it is the mode by which learning is evaluated.

Research has been one of the most difficult and challenging tasks posed by an undergraduate degree. Research vicariously passes down the experiences of thesis completion to students belonging to lower year levels enabling the latter to begin preparatory work for such course requirement (Lane, Devonport, & Horrell, 2004). However, Papanastasiou (2006) argues that when thesis writers start working on their papers, they experience stress and anxiety and see such requirement to be overwhelming, almost impossible to finish. Studies

also say that many who engage in thesis writing do not understand the usefulness of such requirement (Pan & Tang, 2004) and this attitude may be the cause of the mentioned feelings of stress and anxiety. Papanastasiou (2006) further points out that it is necessary to take note that the anxiety is not always due to lack of ability or insufficient skills. This anxiety associated with research is multidimensional (Onwuegbuzie, DaRos, & Ryan, 1997). For college thesis writers, dissatisfaction with both the amount of writing requirement and the disparity between their writing competency and the graduation prerequisite may be an excuse to protect their self worth (Plata, no date) and thus a struggling experience. Anxieties are related to the perception of the rigid and formal nature of the methods done in research, student writers' fear of negative evaluation (Nounopoulos, Ashby, & Gilman, 2006), students' past experiences and attitude, and their fear of asking questions because this might be seen by mentors as incompetence. Other factors may also include the amount of work required, amount of material covered, test taking added classes, and the preparation for such individual research (Papanastasiou, 2006). Such requirement will make a student face a series of maxed out periods such as the final oral defense. In evaluative situations as such, there is an underlying pressure to complete the particular task at hand (Hudd, Dumlao, Erdmann, Murray, Phan, Soukas, & Yokozuka, 2000).

In St. Scholastica's College, students are introduced to research in their first year, particularly in their communication arts classes. Subjects that tackle intensive research fundamentals including literature review and methods are usually in their third year. This prepares them for their actual theses writing in the final year in college. SSC's thesis writers are given several deadlines for the submission of several parts of the paper for evaluation and revision before they are allowed to work on the succeeding steps. Students work with their mentors for proper guidance in writing. Towards the end, they are asked to submit a final paper for evaluation before their oral defense where they discuss and address the questions raised by the member s of the panel. The final paper submitted or a production, as a result of the collective effort of several critics and revisions from previous deadlines, and the oral presentation are graded. The grades are considered bases for the quality of their work, whether the paper and presentation fit the standards for them to earn their particular degrees. In the process, the grades/thesis quality serves as the tangible and

collective measure of the entire thesis writing process.

*Emotional Reactions*

The emotional reactions depression, anxiety, and stress are conceptually distinct constructs (Akin & Cetin, 2007) although relationships among them are also established (Rawson, Bloomer, & Kendell, 1994; Pfeiffer, 2001; Skowron, Wester, & Azen, 2004). This is also supported by other studies which proposed that these are three different domains although moderately correlated with one another (Brown, Chorpita, Korotittsch, & Barlow, 1997; Dobson, 1995 as cited in Akin & Cetin (2007). They are emotional reactions because they are forms of general affective distress behaviorally indicated by withdrawal, isolation, hyper arousal, and agitation in response to a particular situation (Akin & Cetin, 2007). Other studies claim that emotional reactions result from the dynamic interaction of appraisal, coping, and person-variable process that unfold over time (Cronkite & Moos, 1995; Lazarus, 1996 as cited in Blalock & Joiner, 2000).

Depression is an abnormal emotional state characterized by exaggerated feelings of sadness, melancholy, worthlessness, emptiness, and hopelessness that are inappropriate and out of proportion to reality (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 2009). . Studies suggest that undergraduate students experience depression (Daughtry & Kunkel 1993, as cited in Greer, 2007). Students from courses psychology, marketing, advertising, and journalism did not have significant differences in depressive symptoms (Bostanci et al., 2005). Students who are in the process of thesis writing generally fall in the age range of the transition stage to adulthood – a phase at risk for the onset of depression (Bayram & Bilgel, 2008). Anxiety is a response that is accompanied by concern about possible negative consequences or failure. In school, anxiety is normally experienced by students during evaluative situations (Zeidner, 1998). Monate and Lazarus (1977) defined anxiety as the results of an individual's perception that the resources to cope successfully with stressful demands are scarce. Stress is an emotional reaction that results from of an individual's response to environmental tensions, conflicts, and pressures. Stress and the experience of it are common, but the differences come in when the way it is experienced is considered (Pfeiffer, 2001). Monate and Lazarus (1977) define stress as internal and external demands

which surpass adaptive resources.

Depression, anxiety, and stress occur when an encounter is perceived as threatening (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Theory states that these are experienced depending upon the appraisal of any encounter. When an individual discriminates among encounters and evaluates them to induce threats, worries, disappointment, sadness or disgust, these evoke emotional reactions. The process is called cognitive appraisal. Appraisals may be classified into anticipatory and outcome appraisals in terms of emotions. Anticipatory appraisals are evaluations of potential harm with an upcoming encounter, while outcome appraisals are evaluations of an encounter that has already occurred (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). In school, emotional reactions are evident when a student receives a grade from an examination. Perceived difficulty of the examination may pose threat and challenge, and the grade given may cause feelings of guilt and disappointment (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). The appraisal is expected to contribute to the emotional reactions by the grade itself (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). In this illustration, the grade of the student served as the precipitator of the emotional reactions. These emotional reactions, though distinct constructs (Akin & Cetin, 2007) are interrelated (Rawson, Bloomer, & Kendell, 1994; Osseiran-Waines & Elmacian, 1994; Skowron, Wester, & Azen, 2004).

*Coping Resources*

A study in 1995 (Moos) conceptualized psychological resources, considering both personal and social, as aid to people who are confronted with acute and chronic life crises. Following the framework led to the development of measures of both life stressors and resources in particular life domains. This brought about specifics to coping resources – approach and avoidance responses, which in turn may have influences on psychological adaptation (Moos, 1995). He added that coping may be situation-specific but may also reflect an aspect of personal tendencies that may be applied as a general trend in personality [but] may also be flexible as responses are affected by personal factors, stressor characteristics, and available social resources. Coping resources is defined as the traits, abilities, and assets, both human and material, which are utilized to determine succeeding coping strategies (Matheny, Aycock, & McCarthy, 1993

as cited in Nounopoulos, Ashby, & Gilman, 2006). Largo-Wight, Peterson, and Chen (2005) add that coping is the act of managing emotions or behaving in such a way that psychological stress is lessened. These coping resources are perceived as factors that have already been in place before the stress occurs and triggers the need for them (Matheny, Aycock, Curlette, & Junker, 2003). Herrington, Matheny, Curlette, McCarthy, and Penick (2005) referred to coping resources as those personal characteristics and possessions drawn upon when managing stressful events.

Coping resources is divided to two dimensions, approach and avoidance responses, depending on a person's orientation in dealing with life crises (Moos, 1995). Moos (1993) also explains that each dimension of coping has its own cognitive and behavioral indices. Moos and Schaefer (1993) give details to this idea to both the approach/avoidant dimensions and cognitive/behavioral indices. The integrated classification scheme is characterized as follows: (a) Behavioral approach coping – particularly seeking guidance, the behavior is to taking concrete action to deal straightforwardly with a situation or its consequences; (b) Cognitive approach coping – which are logical analysis, positive reappraisal, and problem solving, classified as accepting the reality of the situation and opting to find what is favorable in it; (c) Behavioral avoidant coping – specifically seeking alternatives and emotional discharge manifests impulsive response behaviors to reduce tension, and (d) Cognitive avoidant coping – mainly cognitive avoidance and acceptance which answer to responses aimed at denying the situation or the seriousness of it, and accepting the situation outright and deciding that the situation can no longer be altered (Cronkite & Moos, 1995). Anshel & Delany (2001) add that coping serves two functions. These are to regulate stressful emotions such as venting and to alter the situation resulting to distress such as planning, labeled emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping respectively

Coping occurs when an encounter is perceived as stressful (Devonport and Lane, 2006). When an individual is confronted with a potentially stressful encounter, the process through which he or she may interpret and respond to it is called cognitive appraisal. In the process, the individual evaluates if the situation is relevant to his or her well-being and in what way it is relevant. The process then serves as the spring board for the individual to decide what can and cannot

be done to manage the situation (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Burns & Egan, 1994; Freydenberg, 2002).

*Conceptual Framework*

Thesis writing is an important part of student life. It is a requirement in completing the final year in college and is viewed stressful as presented by anecdotal and empirical evidences (Collins & Onwuegbuzie, 2003; Lane, Devonport, & Horell, 2004). It has no predefined knowledge content or assessment criteria. In the process, a student is expected gain mastery of the chosen topic through research (Sachs, 2002). This process will mean a lot of time and effort on the part of the student.

In St. Scholastica's College, Manila, graduating students are tasked to work on their theses as a prerequisite to earning particular degrees. As shown in Figure 1, thesis writing starts from being enrolled in research classes and assigned with drills to which research skills may be practiced. These assist students to work on their research skills and be able to start a thesis proposal on their own. Several deadlines are given to partially accomplish the thesis one step at a time. Ultimately, the expected output is the manuscript, which is then subjected to evaluation. Like most theses (Hardy, 2005), the institution requires students to pass both written and oral examinations where the actual thesis is graded given a rubric. A particular grade for a thesis is also its thesis quality. In the school, the thesis grade, or thesis quality as referred to in this study, is composed of both written and oral presentation grades, dependent on the objective of and items included in the rubric based on particular research standards. Along the way, the student may experience emotional reactions and manifest coping responses. However, thesis writing may also evoke positive feelings given that the thesis is well attended to by the student with support from advisers, teachers and mentors.

Depression, anxiety, and stress are emotional reactions experienced by students who are in the process of thesis writing (Pfeiffer, 2001; Daughtry & Kunkel 1993, as cited in Greer, 2007). College thesis writers experience these because the process itself is difficult (Lane, Devonport, & Horrell, 2004), overwhelming (Papanastasiou, 2006), and the benefits are sometimes unfamiliar (Pan

& Tang, 2004). These presented reasons are related to the attitude towards writing influencing the emotional reactions to surface (Pan & Tang, 2004). Depression is associated with how they perform and their performance compared to their classmates and other information brought by worrying (Pfeiffer, 2001). Also, strained cognitive resources are associated with learned helplessness and depression (Skowron, Wester, & Azen, 2004), anxiety is experienced as well.

Thesis writing involves several significant experiences on the part of the students. Emotional reactions and coping resources are evident during this stage in a college student (Devonport & Lane, 2006). This encounter is perceived as threatening (Sachs, 2002), and stressful (Devonport & Lane, 2006). Threatening and stressful encounters could trigger cognitive appraisal (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985; Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Burns & Egan, 1994; Freydenberg, 2002, Devonport & Lane, 2006). When the appraisal verifies an encounter to be threatening and daunting (Devonport & Lane, 2006; Sachs, 2002), emotional reactions depression, anxiety and stress are brought about (Devonport & Lane, 2006). This also constitutes to the encounter being appraised as stressful. Stressful encounters call for resources to catch up with the demands get overwhelming (Devonport & Lane, 2006). These means of coping are psychological resources, considering both personal and social, as aid to people who are confronted with acute and chronic life crises (Moos, 1995). Emotional reactions are further experienced when, in the process of thesis writing, college students are subjected to evaluation (Osseiran-Waines & Elmacian, 1994; Pfeiffer, 2001). In the school, this evaluation is in terms of the student's presentations (oral & written) of the manuscript. The evaluation results in a quantitative report which is also its thesis quality. Thesis quality in the measurable and tangible representation of the entire thesis writing process obtained from objective assessment through both written and oral presentation.

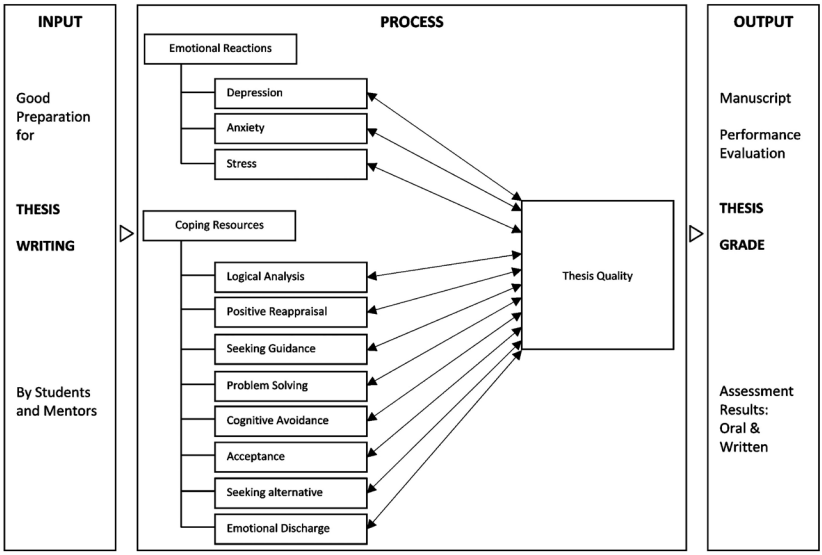


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

## Statement of the Problem

This study examined the thesis quality, emotional reactions, and coping resources of college thesis writers through the following research questions:

1. What is the thesis quality of college thesis writers?
2. What is the level of emotional reactions of college thesis writers in terms of:
    a. Stress
    b. Anxiety
    c. Depression
3. What is the level of coping resources of college thesis writers in terms of:
    a. Logical analysis
    b. Positive Reappraisal
    c. Seeking guidance
    d. Problem solving
    e. Cognitive avoidance
    f. Acceptance
    g. Seeking Alternative
    h. Emotional Discharge

4. Is there a significant relationship between thesis quality and emotional reactions of college thesis writers?
5. Is there a significant relationship between thesis quality and coping resources of college thesis writers?

## Hypotheses

It is hypothesized in this study that thesis quality would be related to emotional reactions and the coping resources of the students.

## Method

*Design*

The stratified correlational design was employed to obtain a perspective on the relationships of the thesis quality, emotional reactions, and coping resources of thesis writers.

*Participants*

The participants of the study were fourth year college students of St. Scholastica's College, Manila. A sample of all students required to write and successful defend their theses across the courses consisted of 95 respondents from Psychology, Marketing, Journalism and Advertising courses. The age range of the participants falls under the stage of transition to adulthood – a phase at risk for the onset of depression (Bayram & Bilgel, 2002). Recent studies suggest that there were no differences in their depressive symptoms of these students (Bostanci et al., 2005).

*Instruments*

Two measures were utilized in this study. The first one is the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-42) of Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). It is a 42-item self-report inventory that was used to determine the levels of emotional reactions, namely: depression, anxiety and stress of the 95 college thesis writers. Test-retest reliability of the three emotional factors is adequate with 0.71 for depression, 0.79 for anxiety and 0.81 for stress (Brown, Chorpita, Korotittsch, & Barlow, 1997).

Exploratory and confirmatory analyses have sustained the proposition of the three factors ($p < 0.05$; Brown, et al., 1997). The DASS anxiety scale correlates 0.81 with the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and the DASS Depression correlates 0.74 with the Beck Depression Scale (BDi). The scores for each of the seven questions completed by each participant were summed in each of the subscales and then evaluated based on the seventy-rating index below.

**Table 1.**
**Interpretation Guidance for Depression, Anxiety and Stress Factors**

| | Depression | Anxiety | Stress |
|---|---|---|---|
| Normal | 0-9 | 0-7 | 0-14 |
| Mild | 10-13 | 8-9 | 15-18 |
| Moderate | 14-20 | 10-14 | 19-25 |
| Severe | 21-27 | 15-19 | 26-33 |
| Extremely Severe | 28+ | 20+ | 34+ |

Normative data were available on a number of samples. From a sample of 2914 adults the means (and standard deviations) were 6.34 (mean; 4.7 (6.97), and 10.11 (7.91) for the depression, anxiety, and stress scales, respectively. A clinical sample reported means (and standard deviations) of 10.65 (9.3), 10.90 (8.12) and 21.1 (11.15) for the three factors.

The Coping Resources Inventory-Audit Form by Moos (1995) measured the levels of coping resources of the respondents. These coping resources have been classified into two – approach and avoidance. Logical Analysis is an approach coping response that occurs alongside the individual's cognitive attempts to understand and mentally prepare for a stressor and its consequences. Another approach coping response is Positive Appraisal which is a cognitive attempt to construe and reconstruct a problem in a positive way while still accepting the reality of the situation. Seeking Guidance and Support is a behavioral attempt to seek information, guidance or support. Problem Solving is a behavioral attempt to take action to

deal directly with the problem. Seeking Guidance and Support and Problem Solving are approach coping responses.

The Avoidance coping responses are as follows: Cognitive Avoidance is a cognitive attempt to avoid thinking realistically about the problem; Acceptance or Resignation are cognitive attempts to react to the problem by accepting it; Seeking Alternative Rewards are behavioral attempts to get involved in substitute activities and create new sources of satisfaction; and Emotional Discharge are behavioral attempts to reduce tension by expressing negative feelings.

The said instrument is a measure of eight types of coping responses to stressful life circumstances. These responses are measured by eight scales – Logical Analysis (LA), Positive Reappraisal (PR), Seeking Guidance and Support (SG), Problem Solving (PS), Cognitive Avoidance (CA), Acceptance or Resignation (AR), Seeking Alternative Rewards (SR) and Emotional Discharge (ED). The first set of four scales measures approaching coping; the second set of four scales measures avoidance coping. The first two scales in each set measure cognitive coping strategies; the third and fourth scale in each set measure behavioral coping strategies. Each of the eight dimensions of scales is composed of six items. In responding to the CRI-Adult, individuals rated 48 items using a four-point scale ranging from: "not at all" to "fairly often" to indicate how often they rely in the various coping resources.

*Procedure*

Permission was sought from the Dean of College to personally administer tests for data gathering to students of the Mass Communication, Marketing Management, and Psychology and Counseling departments of SSC. The schedule of test administration with the department chairpersons was determined. Test administration was done in several batches. Towards the end of the academic year, the thesis grades of those participants who successfully passed their theses were requested from the Registrar's Office.

## Results

**Table 2.**
**Thesis Quality of College Thesis Writers**

| | n = | Mean Score | S.D. | Classification |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Thesis quality* | 95 | 85.06 | 8.692 | Very Good |

**Table 3.**
**Level of Stress, Anxiety, and Depression and Coping Resources of College Thesis Writers**

| *Emotional Reactions* | *n =* | *Mean Score* | *S.D.* | *Classification* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stress | 95 | 17.95 | 8.351 | Mild |
| Anxiety | 95 | 14.66 | 7.941 | Moderate |
| Depression | 95 | 12.14 | 8.684 | Mild |
| *Coping Resources* | *n =* | *Mean Score* | *S.D* | *Classification* |
| Logical Analysis | 95 | 12.07 | 3.213 | Well Below Average |
| Positive Reappraisal | 95 | 13.02 | 3.300 | Well Below Average |
| Seeking Guidance | 95 | 10.91 | 3.275 | Well Below Average |
| Problem Solving | 95 | 12.38 | 3.455 | Well Below Average |
| Cognitive Avoidance | 95 | 10.21 | 3.579 | Well Below Average |
| Acceptance | 95 | 08.81 | 3.562 | Well Below Average |
| Seeking Alternative | 95 | 10.02 | 3.023 | Well Below Average |
| Emotional Discharge | 95 | 08.77 | 3.382 | Well Below Average |

Descriptive statistics for the main variables – thesis quality, emotional reactions, and coping resources – were computed for the 95 samples as shown in Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 shows that the average classification of thesis quality across samples is very good (M=85.06, SD=8.69). Means and standard deviations of emotional reactions are presented in Table 3. College thesis writers' stress is mild (M=17.95, SD=8.35), anxiety is moderate (M=14.66, SD=7.94), and depression is mild (M=12.14, SD=8.68). Means and standard deviations of coping resources are presented in Table 4. Logical analysis (M=12.07, SD=3.21), positive reappraisal (M=13.02, SD=3.30), seeking guidance (M=10.91, SD=3.27), problem solving (M=12.38, SD=3.45), cognitive

avoidance (M=10.21, SD=3.57), acceptance (M=8.81, SD=3.56), seeking alternative (M=10.02, SD=3.02), and emotional discharge (M=8.77, SD=3.38) are all classified as well below average.

**Table 4.**
**Pearson Correlations between Thesis Quality of College Thesis Writers and Emotional Reaction**

| | Thesis Quality | |
|---|---|---|
| Emotional Reactions | Pearson R | N |
| Stress | -.273 (**) | 95 |
| Anxiety | -.231 (* ) | 95 |
| Depression | -.389 (**) | 95 |

Pearson correlations were calculated to determine the relationship between the thesis quality of college thesis writers and emotional reactions

**Table 5.**
**Pearson Correlations between Thesis Quality of College Thesis Writers and Coping Resources**

| | Thesis Quality | |
|---|---|---|
| *Coping Resources* | Pearson R | N |
| Logical Analysis | -.112 | 95 |
| Positive Reappraisal | -.082 | 95 |
| Seeking Guidance | -.159 | 95 |
| Problem Solving | -.082 | 95 |
| Cognitive Avoidance | -.065 | 95 |
| Acceptance | -.023 | 95 |
| Seeking Alternative | -.063 | 95 |
| Emotional Discharge | -.089 | 95 |

Pearson correlations were calculated to determine the relationship between the thesis quality of senior college students and the different coping resources.

To determine whether there are relationships between thesis quality and emotional reactions, and thesis quality and coping resources, correlations between these variables were computed for the expediency of the data. The results of these computations are presented in Tables 4 and 5. Pearson Correlations between Thesis Quality of Senior College Students and Emotional Reaction are presented in Table 4. In the sample studied, findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between thesis quality and emotional reactions: stress (r=0.237, p=<.05), anxiety (r=0.231, p=<.05), and depression (r=0.11, p=>.05). Pearson Correlations between Thesis Quality of Senior College Students and Coping Resources are presented in Table 6. Results at face value suggest that there is no significant relationship between thesis quality and coping resources – logical analysis (r=-0.11, p=>.05), positive reappraisal (r=-0.084, p=>.05), seeking guidance and support (r=-0.159, p=>.05), problem solving (r=-0.082, p=>.05), cognitive avoidance (r=-0.065, p=>.05), acceptance (r=-0.023, p=>.05), seeking alternative (r=-0.063, p=>.05), and emotional discharge (r=-0.089, p=>.05).

## Discussion

From the ninety five (95) college thesis writers of St. Scholastica's College evaluated in this study, the results reflect an above average rating for the output they have provided (both written and oral) referred to as thesis quality. The mean score (85.06) or B+ falls under the classification "very good" (Very good=B+ to A-). This means that the paper presented met and have exceeded the minimum requirements for a thesis to pass both written and oral evaluation. Results of emotional reactions suggest that stress (M=17.95, SD=8.35) classified as mild is well below the typical severity of people who may have tendencies to be over-aroused, tensed, unable to relax, touchy and are easily upset, nervy, jumpy and fidgety, and intolerant of interruption or delay. Anxiety (M=14.66, SD=7.94) is moderate and may be characterized by reasonable tendencies that these behaviors occur: being apprehensive, trembling and shaking, breathing difficulties, pounding of heart, sweatiness of the palms and worrying about performance; and there may also be possibilities of losing control. This affirms the results of the study (Nounopoulos, Ashby, & Gilman,

2006) that discussed about the anxiety brought about by thesis writing due to several reasons. Depression (M=12.14, SD=8.68) is mild which means that self-disparaging, being dispirited, gloomy, pessimistic, and lacking initiative have minimal chances of occurring.

Results on coping resources suggest that the participants of the study seldom attempt to understand and prepare mentally for a stressor and its consequences, as logical analysis have been classified as well below average. Such results affirms the finding in Devonport & Lane (2006) where females dwell on emotions and resort to emotion-focused coping such as venting rather than the cognitive indices of coping. Positive appraisal is also found to be well below average which explains that these students seldom attempt to construe and reconstruct a problem in a positive way while still accepting the reality of the situation. Seeking guidance and support is also well below average which implies that the behavioral attempts to seek information, guidance, and support is seldom. Studies suggest that this is due to thesis writers' fear of being perceived as incompetent (Nounopoulos, Ashby, & Gilman, 2006). Problem solving results suggest that rarely do they resort to taking action to deal directly with the problem. The same is seen in the findings of Kiran, Shanaz, & Subbakrishna (2000) where female students prefer distress-reducing strategies which are emotion-focused than engaging in problem-oriented approach to coping. They also react to problems by accepting it, which constitutes giving up. The scores for cognitive avoidance reflect that there a very little chances that they would avoid thinking realistically about the problem. Acceptance scores reflect that they seldom react to the problem by accepting it. This is supported by the findings in the study of Devonport & Lane (2006) which discusses that rather than accepting, female students prefer blaming themselves and employ behavioral disengagement to cope. Results at face value also suggest that hardly ever do they get involved in substitute activities and create new means of satisfaction, as seeking alternatives also fall under well below average. Lastly, emotional discharge is well below average. Seldom do the participants attempt to reduce tension by expressing negative feelings. This negates the findings about emotion-focused coping by female students, mentioned in earlier discussion (Devonport & Lane, 2006). However, several studies may explain such results, especially the symmetry in all the coping resources scores. Lane, Devonport, & Horrell (2004) explain that since thesis writing is perceived to be one

of the most difficult and challenging tasks posed by an undergraduate degree, thesis writers vicariously pass down the experiences of thesis completion to students belonging to lower year levels enabling the latter to begin preparatory work for such course requirement. Therefore, even when thesis writing is considered daunting to students, most of them have already developed an understanding of the demands of completing this particular course requirement (Devonport & Lane, 2006). Also, utilization of coping resources relevant at one phase may be used to a decreased extent following another phase in the cognitive appraisal process. In order to assess cognitive appraisal and coping, several repeated measures are required to identify both stable and changing variables in phases considered (Lazarus,1999), which follows that in measuring coping, the following should be considered: context of a specific stressful encounter, the individual's behavior toward the encounter, and multiple assessments of coping, as changes over time may be noted (Devonport & Lane, 2006). In addition, students reported considerable differences in appraisal and coping scores over time (Devonport & Lane, 2006) specifically, researches consistently suggest college thesis writers have tendencies of using coping resources during the preparation stage than the waiting stage (Akgun, 2004). And in this particular study, data gathering was done not during the preparation stage.

In this study, significant correlates of college thesis writers' thesis quality and emotional reactions, and coping resources and relationships between these variables have been identified. Pearson Correlations among these variables were computed using the SPSS. Table 4 represents the correlation between the emotional reactions – depression, anxiety, and stress, and thesis quality. The figures in Table 4 show a significant correlation between the two variables.

Such research contributes to literature related to thesis writing, emotional reactions, and coping resources. Given the previous literature reviewed, and the results presented, this study provides some insight on thesis writing here in St. Scholastica's College which may be utilized in coming up with and or revising a curriculum framework anchored on research to help address the negative feelings brought about by thesis writing. Because this research paper was fundamentally a probing attempt to expound understanding on thesis writing and thesis quality, emotional reactions, and coping resources, it suggests a proactive partnership among students, mentors, teachers,

and guidance counselors to look into potentially helpful measures and practices to further improve thesis writing and its underlying practices and implications here in school. The results also support the practice of the school to prepare the students for thesis writing early on, resulting in good thesis quality, less stress, less anxiety and less depression.

*Recommendation*

Given the results and findings of the study, the following are the recommendations:

**Samples**

In this study, four courses were involved based on the criterion that they were found to have insignificant difference in levels of depressive symptoms. The basis for their thesis quality may be in accordance to one grading system but it is a limitation that the rubrics were dissimilar. It is recommended that in future similar studies, a particular course should be focused on. This will also enable the researcher to probe the underlying factors that affect the results in relation to thesis quality with one course as basis.

Should a future study aim to probe such variables with students from different courses, the rubrics should be considered so that the results may pave the way for specific results (e.g. significant differences) through the use of other statistical analysis tools.

**Data Gathering**

In this study, data gathering was done during the second semester. Literature on coping suggests the bearing of the period or time when data are obtained. It is recommended that data gathering and test administration be done during the preparatory stage – possibly the window from choosing a topic to proposal defense.

**Data Analysis**

In this study, not all results were significant as the data analysis did not address the specifics of the variables given the limitation of the samples having different rubrics though following the same grading system. It is recommended that similar studies in the future utilize a different statistical analysis tool so as arrive at more distinct results.

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# Guide to Submission to *The Scholastican Journal* [TSJ]

**Aims and Scope**

*The Scholastican Journal* is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes the scholarly papers of the faculty members of St. Scholastica's College-Manila. The journal aims to provide a forum for faculty members to share their expertise, professional practices and innovations in their respective fields. It seeks to sustain crucial discourse across academic disciplines in order to contribute to the vitality and effectiveness of teaching, learning and research/scholarship.

The journal is published annually by the Institutional Research and Academic Development (IRAD) Office of St. Scholastica's College-Manila in coordination with *The Scholastican Journal* (TSJ) Editorial Department.

**Types of Submissions**

General Articles, Reports, Book Reviews

**Manuscript Submission Guidelines**

Original manuscripts from individual and multiple authors are welcome. The manuscripts should be original, not under review by any other publication, and not published elsewhere. Submissions may be in English or Filipino. Inclusive language should be used with reference to human communities. "Man," "men," "he," "his" are to be used when they clearly refer to male referents. "Person," "people," or "he/ she," "his/ her," are to be used for mixed or indeterminate referents.

Manuscripts should be from 6,000 to 7,000 words, excluding references, and should follow APA guidelines (6th ed. 2009). Any submissions that fail to conform to the submission guidelines will be returned.

Two sets of the manuscript are to be submitted electronically to *The Scholastican Journal* Chief Editor at tsjeditor@ssc.edu.ph. The due date for submission every year is on or before November 30th for June or beginning-of-the-academic-year publication.

For Data-Based Articles:

Data-based articles should have the following sections: Abstract, Context of the Study, Methods of Inquiry, Results, Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations, References.

When submitting manuscripts, please follow this checklist:

- Microsoft Word document, 12-point Times New Roman font
- Double-spaced
- APA citation style
- Endnotes, not footnotes (optional)
- 6,000 to 7,000 words in length (indicate word count at the end of the manuscript)
- 100-150 word abstract
- 100-word author's biography
- Do not self-identify in the text or references of one copy of the manuscript, for the anonymous review.

For Book Reviews:

Book reviews, 900 - 1,200 words in length, should include the author, title, editor (if applicable), place of publication, publisher, year of publication, price, and total number of pages. They must provide a concise description of the content of the book and a critical evaluation of the work, its strengths and limitations, according to the nuances of the particular academic discipline. A courteous tone must be maintained throughout the review, respecting the work of the author, and providing a balanced critique. If citing directly from the book, the page number must be indicated in parentheses.

For book review submission and inquiry regarding the list of books to review or suggestions of titles to review, email tsjeditor@ssc.edu.ph.

**The Reviewing and Editing Process**

**Timeline:** The TSJ editorial board strives to review submissions and reply in a timely manner. We will acknowledge receipt of an article immediately. It may take us 1 to 2 months to review the article and decide whether or not to send it out for blind peer review. Contributors will be notified accordingly. If the manuscript is sent out for peer review, another 1 to 2 months' wait is expected until the reviewers' recommendations for revision are sent to the authors. In total, it can take 4 to 6 months from first submission to acceptance and publication.

**Peer Review:** Articles are sent to at least two peer reviewers, using a journal manuscript review rubric. In using a blind-reviewing system, the identity of the reviewer is not known to the author and vice-versa. The editorial staff will notify authors of the peer review decision in writing, along with any recommendations necessary for publication or reconsideration.

**Revisions:** Most articles will require some revision, and acceptance for publication is contingent upon how the author addresses suggestions for revision. In order to meet our publication schedule, we need the cooperation of all authors to return their revised articles promptly via email, according to the deadline.

**Copy editing and Proofreading:** Upon submission of the revised article, the copy editor will correct grammatical and mechanical errors in preparation for publication. Before publication, the printing proof of the article will be emailed to the author for final proofreading/review/corrections, and after the review, will be promptly returned via email to the TSJ chief editor.

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THE SCHOLASTICAN JOURNAL
Published by the
Institutional Research and Academic Development Office
St. Scholastica's College - Manila
2560 Leon Guinto Street, Malate, Manila