

## REACTION PAPER

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Good afternoon everybody. My reaction to the paper of Fr. Demetrio is focused on the specific aspect of the paper, on the change of place, and I will discuss thoroughly the place as cosmos and less thoroughly the quotations where most of the samples are taken from: the poetries and literatures. Now, this change of place actually also refers to the change of identity. In the paper of Fr. Demetrio, he described the inhabitants and related them to some places like the Pulangi, peoples living in Pulangi, peoples who live in Tikalaan, peoples who live in the Tagbulauan, and people who live in Bulan-Bulan. So, this identification of peoples with places generates changes of the peoples identity. For example, people who are known to be living in the Talaandig, or Tikalaan are known to be peacemakers. So, without telling other people that you are a peacemaker, the people expect you to be one. At the same time, the place also implies sense of people's culture, and a sense of a people's responsibilities.

If you are known to live in a place, such as Bulan-bulan, which means "center of the earth" you will be identified as a peacemaker. Bulan-bulan is like the center of the earth because it is the place where the peacemakers live. The people who live there have maintained the balance, peace, and harmony with nature. So, there is a sense of responsibility. Because I am from Bulan-bulan, then I am expected to be a peacemaker. It is my responsibility to know the history of my people. So, the sense of place also involves the sense of some influence or control of your behavior. There is a psychological thing that controls you. You might be putting the people to shame if you do things which are not related to the culture or the behavior expected of that place.

Now, I would like to comment on the conception. In the discussion of the place as cosmos, man is related to water, man is related to fire, man is related to plants, man is related even to sound. So, that's why, in the tribe, there are seven spirits of man, i.e. *pepito hamakutu*.

The child, or the fetus in the womb, will someday become a good man. So, I would stick to the relationship of man with the other elements of creation. The fruit is actually just an element that adds or contributes to the development of that fetus.

Now, in the *balagon*, there are several elements. For example, *balagon*, what is *balagon*? What is rattan? Why is rattan involved in the discussion of the peace pact? *Balagon* was used as a medium of communication. A knot was sent to invite a peace pact. So, that was understood by our ancestors. The digging of a hole in the ground, the burying of materials, when somebody is buried, means it has to be forgotten. So, burying of the material objects means they have to be forgotten. The conflict has to be forgotten. So, everybody must forget it. So, no more conflict. The use of animals, like, for example, chicken, involves the principle of substitution, or a principle of repayment. For example, life that is repaid by the life of an animal, usually a carabao. It is called "*bangon na*" meaning to revive his strength, his service to his family and to his community, because the carabao is a symbol of service. Now the symbolic giving of and the use of blood is a symbolic washing of the country. It is also used as a symbolic revival, the giving back of life, and the peaceful relationships of the people.

When you pour water on a plant, it means you want to make it live. Man's relationship is sacred. Water is used as a symbolic way to give back the life of the relationship. There is also the ritual of winning back destroyed relationships. The use of oil is a symbolic way of giving peace. If your hair is tangled, you can pour oil in your hand and apply it on your hair, and you can comb it easily. So, oil is a symbolic material for a peacemaker. That is why, when oil is used to refer to a place, it means the place is peaceful, a home to the peacemakers.

Now, Bulan-bulan, being also the center of the earth, is the place of people, of the leaders who maintain the balance, the harmony of the entire place. It is the center where everybody gathers around, mix together and talk about good relationships. So, Bulan-bulan, the center, the place of the peacemaker, is a source of hope for leadership. If you are from Bulan-bulan, you are expected to be a leader.

In the paper of Fr. Demetrio, there is much discussion about peace and harmony. But man's relationship with nature, is that which causes conflict. In the course of man's relationship with nature, or in his struggle for survival, he destroys the balance. He destroys the harmony. There is disturbance because the peace invested by God in this earth has been disturbed. So, there should be a repayment. If there is disturbance, it might cause illness.

The environment gives life to man. Man is to understand that there are seven aspects of the environment that will give him light. Man has seven spirits, seven sources of life. If man wants to live a long life, it is his responsibility. If he will not recognize his relationship with these things it means that his life may be shortened because these things will not help him, will not support him, will not contribute to his existence. That is why material things, plants, and animals are always mentioned. They are always involved when the life of man is discussed because man could not be separated away from these things.

Plants are used as symbolic elements to influence the story or the situation. For example, the Kilala plant is used as a marker, a marker of land. Since Kilala means to recognize, when you see a Kilala, you will understand that this is a marker. So maybe this is the boundary or maybe somebody died in this place. Thus it explains the meaning of something. Another flower for example, like Kalanigyan has a bright yellow and reddish color. The symbolic meaning here is in the flower, the brightness of the flower. The beauty is easily identified because of the color.

Now, let us say something about earth as a home, and earth as an abode of man. The concept of home or a house is expanded. For example, a house has a center post and it has four corners. The earth is also believed to have four corners and it has also its own center post and it has its own roof, the sky, the heavens. It has its own room, the earth, and the pillars are the east, the west, the north and the south. So, it is actually like a home. So, earth is a place, earth is an abode of man, earth is a home. So, man describes his place. If he wants to expand it, he can move to the west, he can move to the south, north or east. He can expand upwards, which is the sky. He can expand downwards, under the earth.