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Including Mindanao: A Review of Mindanao in Literature[1]

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October 14, 2008. The highest court of the land declares the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) unconstitutional. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leaves the negotiating table. There is fighting on the ground; the AFP bombs suspected MILF areas; whole villages are displaced. Scores die, many of them civilians, and 600,000 or more are rendered refugees in evacuation centers. Food supply is dangerously low; people's shanties burn on highways. Children die from dysentery, malnutrition, pulmonary disease, bullets, and bombs.

This is the general context for this paper, actually a broken record of a context for the past thirty years. More immediately, it is the fruit of having to contend with the following remarks from students in these past decades of my teaching Philippine and Asian literature:

1. The Philippines was saved from becoming a Muslim country by Spanish colonization.
2. Muslims are allowed more than one wife and practice divorce; ergo, they are immoral and promiscuous.
3. The Muslims are warlike; they kill when forced to eat pork, they are *juramentados* and terrorists.
4. The conflict between the Muslims and the government forces is due to religious differences.
5. The Moros were pirates and enemies of the Filipinos.
6. To paraphrase former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada, the war between the Muslims and the government should continue to teach the Muslims a lesson.
7. *Lumad.* What's that?

In fairness, more critical Christian students point out that being Muslim is not a hellish fate to be saved from, and that Christianity has had its own dark history during the Crusades, the Inquisition, as well as the frailocracy in the Philippines.

The matter of Muslim polygamy is easily answered with this wag's formulation: *Ang Muslim, puwedeng mag-asawa, apat. Lampas apat, Kristiyano na 'yan.* Not coincidentally, this joke made the rounds during the presidency of Erap Estrada.

Moros as "pirates and enemies of the Filipinos," "juramentados" and "jihadists," and the roots of the conflict in Mindanao are issues dealt with by citing contemporary research. Fortunately also, not too many are convinced by Erap's words that the centuries-old war in Mindanao should continue, just to teach the Muslims a lesson.

Such Christian chauvinist remarks came to a head when an otherwise bright student of mine illustrated the Muslim with a skull and crossbones in a presentation, while another said "Muslim *kasi*" on a comment that Indonesians seemed more aggressive than Filipinos. Muslim students from Mindanao and abroad studying at a Catholic university in Manila wanted to organize themselves into a co-curricular organization, but could not find a faculty member to be their moderator.

There are many more and much worse examples of discrimination against the Muslims and Lumads that could fill a whole book.[2] It will be a long long time indeed before the Philippine government could ever institute a *National Sorry Day* for Moros and Lumads, the way the Australian government did for their aborigines.[3] It seems we have learned only too well from our former US colonial masters how to deal with indigenous peoples, if what has happened to the great tribes of native Americans is any gauge. On the other hand, there may be some hope to gain from US President Barack *Hussein* Obama's stepping into history.

Distortions

Norma Mangondato-Sharief speaks for the Moro people in particular, by listing the "distortions against Islam, against the Moros as Muslims, and against the Moro Nation as a people" (2000, 4) in history books. She notes how the Muslims are

> unkindly dubbed or described as pirates, bounty hunters and plunderers, conveyed as blood-thirsty juramentados after the Christians' heads, and generally referred to as "Mohammedans," if not pagans. .. These sow the seeds of hatred, antipathy and contempt and hinder sympathy, understanding and peaceful co-existence (4).

This is still probably true, even in pulp fiction. For example, anyone researching Mindanao literature may come across this blurb for the first book of a certain Tom Anthony, *Rebels of Mindanao* (2008):

> Al Qaeda terrorists are spreading silently throughout the globe wreaking violence on all who oppose them. Their newest target: The Philippine island of Mindanao. ... Thornton recruits a hunter-killer team of Manobo tribesmen to begin covert actions against the insurgency. The mission: Eliminate a Turkish warrior carrying millions in cash into Mindanao to finance an Islamic revolution. The deal: Make the Turk and the cash disappear, no questions asked.

The blurb reiterates Mindanao as a site of terrorism, and the Manobo tribesmen in particular as killers who help the Americans in an illicit undercover mission.

Objective

Mangondato-Sharief comments that the educational system directed by Manila is responsible for continuing the discrimination against the Moros, through the sin of commission and omission.

I concur. As academics, it is our responsibility to learn what is out there about Mindanao, and to help correct the centuries of ignorance, distortion, and discrimination among ourselves in Manila through our lessons.

The objective of this paper therefore is to find out if Mindanao is included in contemporary Philippine literature, and if it is, how it is represented in literature textbooks and references used in Luzon. This paper is limited to Philippine contemporary short fiction that represents Mindanao and its tripeople of Christian settlers, Moros, and Lumads that are anthologized in books and journals available in Manila. I also look at texts collected from Ian Casocot's website "A survey of Philippine literature."[4]

This is just an initial attempt of a non-Mindanawon academic based in the imperial center of Manila to include Mindanao literature in the syllabus. Although I am extra careful about taking on a Manila imperialist gaze in reading this marginalized body of work, I cannot be a hundred percent sure I've got it down pat. My only claim to

some knowledge on the topic is my having followed Mindanao issues a little more closely than most of my colleagues in Manila have. I have also visited Mindanao several times since 1997 for conferences, meetings, and holidays.

While my training as an academic has fostered an aesthetic skewed to writer-ly and modern types of literature rather than the oral tradition which might be prevalent in Mindanao, the study of post-colonialism and the romance mode provides me some space to include othered literatures.

Lastly, my research has focused primarily on the marginalized in Philippine literature, particularly women, and Bikol literature. Knowing what it is like to be at the margins, Bikol literature also largely invisible in Philippine literature, is just one more rationale for my taking up an advocacy for Mindanao literature in Luzon where I teach and research.

Absent

Looking back at my own education in literary studies from high school through graduate school in Manila, I realized that we never took up any text from Mindanao, by a Muslim, or about Muslims and Lumads. I had never heard of the Darangen until postgraduate studies in the mid-1990s. For that matter, I had also never heard of the Ivatan *laji*, Mangyan *ambahan*, or the Bikol *tigsik* either, literary forms in the preeminent island of Luzon. In fact, most of the texts we took up in college were in English or translated to English. We knew little and cared less about the "nation outside Manila," as Rosario Lucero puts it, especially Mindanao.

Mindanao figured in my university education only twice, in extra-curricular activities. One was when, as college students, we were part of a campaign to help Jolo refugees when the island was razed by government troops in February 1974. Later in that decade, I attended a seminar where UP professor Nicanor Tiongson pointed out to us the negative image that the *moro-moro* wrought in the minds of viewers. Three decades since then, is Mindanao more represented in literature references available in Manila?[5]

CCP, NCCA, and CHED

The study of Philippine literature usually starts with a look into Vol. IX of the *Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) encyclopedia of the arts* (1994). This volume uses a historical framework, starting with pre-colonial through Spanish, American, to contemporary literature, and even includes Chinese-Philippine literature. Literature from the Philippine regions is relegated to Vols. I and II, the Peoples of the Philippines; this foregrounds the country's tribes and archipelagic landscape. The sections on Moro and Lumad literature are all folk literature. Jaime An Lim says of the *Encyclopedia*,

> "From novels to books of poetry to critical studies, etc. of the 272 individual works identified as major, only 7 are from Mindanao... Who made the decision what to include or exclude? You can be sure the Mindanao writers were not consulted" (An Lim 1998, 140). Two Muslim professionals are however listed in the Encylopedia's Board of Editors, Tausug Carmen Abubakar and Maranao Nagasura Madale; they probably contributed the folk literary pieces.

A cursory survey of the textbooks and references in the past three decades likewise shows that most of the literature from and about Mindanao are still folk, particularly the epics, folk stories, and folk poetry. This creates the impression that Mindanawons do not produce good enough contemporary written literature.

Nevertheless, because more attention is now being paid to the literature from the regions, a space for Mindanao literature has been carved out. There are local efforts, for example, by university academics in Mindanao. *MindaNews* lists 191 books and journals published from 2000 to 2008, although most are still on politics and the peace process (Arguillas 2009). In Manila, the CCP, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) are to be credited for supporting Mindanaó literature. The CCP tapped Mindanawons Jaime An Lim and Christina Godinez Ortega for two journals dedicated to Mindanao literature, *Ani 14* (1990) and *22* (2002). These two writer-academics also published *Mindanao harvest I* (1995), a collection of fiction, and a second volume on poetry and drama, *Mindanao harvest II*. Lumbera's *Philippine literature from the regions* (2001) has a chapter on Mindanao literature, compiled and edited by Godinez-Ortega. Sillimanian Ian Casocot's formerly hyperactive website, "A survey of Philippine literature," includes "Muslim-Filipino literature."

There has also been more effort to include Mindanao literature in the curriculum, at least at the De La Salle University. Dr. Nagasura Madale once taught a graduate course in Muslim literature there and his students had the good fortune of visiting Marawi City as part of that course.

Mindanao tripeople in Philippine literature

Given the efforts to include Mindanao in the study of Philippine literature, let us now take a closer look at the short fiction by Mindanawons available in books and references in Manila. I would expect, for example, that Mindanawons, and especially Muslim Filipinos and Lumads, present a fairer and more balanced picture of their regions, culture, and people. What image then of Mindanao and its tripeople[6] do they present to the readers?

Christian settlers

Writers coming from among the Christian settlers are the most visible in Mindanao's literature. Truth be told and without denigrating their talent, it is they, like the academics in Manila, who have had the most support through universities, writers workshops and guilds, competitions and awards, conferences and publications, and cultural organizations. It is their work that is most likely to be read in classrooms outside Mindanao.

Of all of their stories, those most likely to be read are Mig Alvarez Enriquez's "The white horse of Alih" and Aida Rivera Ford's "In a village called Talim." Enriquez's short story appears in his own book (1985), in An Lim (1995), and in two anthologies of Cruz (1995, 2000). It is also the only contemporary piece of fiction that represents Mindanao in the CHED handbook for literature; a sample lesson plan for it is provided in that handbook.

Enriquez's story is about Alih and his brother Omar, victims of poverty and injustice. They turn juramentado to expiate their shame and to go to heaven where beautiful *houris*[7] await them. Upon seeing Omar go after a girl who personifies all the women he has ever loved, Alih hacks his brother until he himself is shot.

The story tries to get into Alih's head, told as it is from his perspective, his vicissitudes and aspirations. But what picture of the Muslim does it

show? As victim of circumstances, of a greedy Chinese merchant, of shadowy men with guns. The story shows Omar beating up his own brother for spending money on a merry-go-round to be near a pretty American girl. It shows Muslims not only drinking but getting drunk, lusting and grabbing at a waitress, and insulting their *ulama*. When Alih says he does not want to die before he has "tasted a woman," his brother packs him off to a prostitute for the ritual *binyag*. Alih is also depicted as crazed and hallucinatory, someone who values the houri more than the white horse of heaven. My stock knowledge about Islamic and Filipino practices makes me raise an eyebrow: Is Enriquez writing here about Muslims, or non-Muslim Filipinos? On the other hand, like members of any other faith, some Muslims may not necessarily follow their religion's injunctions against drinking and prostitution, and yet Enriquez chooses to focus on them.

This story highlights the image of the Muslim as juramentado. The author's explanation for this reads:

> Juramentados were a trauma with me. They followed me in my dreams until I was old enough to fight them off. But I loved the Moros for their garish bravado and exotic colorfulness. ... [Writing this story] was my way of helping myself to understand that this bizarre fanaticism is never whimsical but profoundly motivated and, like any other strange behavior of people, expressive of the human being (Enriquez 1985, 7).

Enriquez thus uses literature as salve to his individual trauma, but at the expense of the Muslims. He depicts the Moros as "garish" and "exotic," as strange and bizarre fanatics. His story reinforces the view of the Moro as violent killer who will slay even his own brother for a beautiful woman. If this is how love for a people is manifested, no wonder then the ignorance and discrimination against the Muslims in the Philippines. The story seems culturally insensitive in pandering to the stereotype, despite the writer's professed love for the Muslims.

This is not to say that conflict and violent behavior do not exist in Mindanao. The *rido* or violent family feuds, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) banditry, war and the resulting evacuations are common occurrences in the Mindanao regions. Besides, fiction is not reality but art distilling that reality. One writer's Mindanao is heaven, and another's is hell — these are not news reports or documentaries. Still, some sensitivity in the distillation could instead foment fear, hatred, and prejudice.

The second story from Mindanao that is anthologized in Lumbera (2001) and *Ani 14* is Ford's "In the village called Talim." Ford uses Ryonosuke Akutagawa's technique of multiple voices to tell the story of an ex-convict who settles in Davao after his parole. He has been drinking when newcomers throw mud at him. He runs after the men, is stopped by a policeman, and calms down only when his wife goes into a seeming epileptic fit. The story about settlers from the Visayas paints a picture of deprivation, injustice, and violence in Mindanao. The protagonist once beheaded a man in Leyte, apparently in self-defense, and was jailed. A bloody battle between his bull and that of an Ilonggo neighbor's is a metaphor for the conflict among the settlers. The words juramentado and amok (Lumbera 2001, 528) figure once more in this story, thereby painting Mindanao and its Waray settlers as prone to violence. It is a clever story, with a clever protagonist of a wife, but also well within the discourse of Mindanao as a land of violence. If there is any saving grace in that regard though, the story at least does not limit the image of violence to the Moro, at the unfortunate expense of the stereotypically *palaaway* (quarrelsome) Waray-Waray.[8]

The excerpt from Antonio Enriquez's 1982 novel reprinted in Lumbera (2001),[9] and therefore likely to be the novel excerpt read in Manila, portrays Liguasan Marsh, metonymically Mindanao, as a dark mire full of dead things. The "Moro interpreter" Ismael guides an engineer and his staff out of the swamp. The author notably finds it necessary to preface Ismael's name with the word Moro to foreground his ethnic identity. On the other hand, the men he guides are identified only by their occupations, the engineer and the rod man, never by any ethnic identity such as Manileño or Ilonggo or Ilokano. Moro is also made to sound like an epithet that "others" the host and guide Ismael from the non-Muslim surveyors of Liguasan Marsh. In addition, Dan whispers to Alberto, "I don't trust this Moro. He is leading us deeper into the marshes..." (Lumbera 2001, 530)

The persona further describes Ismael:

> The Moro squatted with his bare feet set firmly on each side of the hull, looking straight ahead past the men... Quiet and immobile, with eyes fixed in their sockets, Ismael stared past the men... He squatted there with his bare feet on each side of the hull, as his ancestors had done before the Spanish missionaries came to this fecund land, instead of sitting, like the surveyors, on wooden boards laid across the *banca* (Enriquez in Lumbera 2001, 530).

and

> The rod man Dante stood up in the banca, gripped the wooden paddle and then unclenched it in frustration; For all his anger he still had the sense to fear any Moro in his own native land, even a thick and nearly toothless one like Ismael (Lumbera 2001, 531).

The "common sense," actually ideology, of the text is that Moros are an ancient people who remain primitive and exotic in their belief in spirits. More than that, they are not to be trusted, and in fact are to be feared. Ironically, Ismael never shows any hostile action; it is Dante, presumably a Christian, who exhibits unprovoked distrust, frustration, anger; he would have even struck Ismael if he were not so fearful of Moros.[10]

I turn now to stories published in journals from Mindanao that are available, but often not readily accessible, in Manila. The Mindanao State University in Marawi published four contemporary stories, giving different faces of Mindanao in *Aday* (1994): Anthony Tan's tale of a wife mourning her husband, Juan Rodion M. Herrera's love story in the computer age, Therese P. Abonales's fairy tale *a la* Ibong Adarna, and Calbi A. Asain's tale of revenge. An Lim and Godinez-Ortega's *Mindanao harvest 1* has a dozen fictionists, among them the most well-known: A. Enriquez and M.A. Enriquez, Muslim Filipinos Ibrahim A. Jubaira and Calbi A. Asain, Ford, An Lim, and Tan. Other names not usually anthologized are Cezar Ruiz Aquino and Aurelio A. Peña, while stories by Generoso B. Opulencia and Josefina Carballo-Tejada appear in both *Mindanao harvest 1* and *Ani 22*.[11]

Aside from "In a village called Talim," Ford has two other readable stories, "Adula" in *Mindanao harvest I* (64-78) and "My Sangrela" in *Ani 22*. The first story is about a half-Spanish half-Bagobo flight stewardess Adula who has a sexual fling with a married man for physical satisfaction, money, and privilege. She thus shocks the persona, a history teacher, and breaks the heart of suitor Adrian. The story portrays the Lumad woman, in the person of Adula's betel nut-chewing *gayuma*-concocting mother and in Adula herself, as sirens who would not think twice about sexual affairs for lust and profit. Their Bagobo forebears are also said to practice slavery and human sacrifice, with the corpses chopped into pieces by all, including little children, to lend them courage (72).

Ford likewise takes a peek at Christian-Muslim tensions in this story. A young Muslim woman, insulted by a Tagalog man's murmur of *Ang bango*! when he passes by her in the classroom, searches for her knife-

wielding male kin to avenge her. Ford then mentions bloody incidents wrought by "imagined insults" between Muslims and Christians in a provincial sports meet. The Muslims are thereby portrayed as a people prone to rage, who would pull out their knives and kill at the first sign of even an unintended insult.

The second story is a Filipino version of a sharpshooting American cowgirl who sets up a cattle ranch in the thinly populated Maragusan Valley (now a town of Compostela Valley province). The rancher persona employs Bagobo tribesmen as bodyguards, guides, and workers, and provides education, medicine, and livelihood to the Mansaka women. She calls the ranch on a plateau her *Shangri-la*, which the Bagobos and Mansakas pronounce as "Sangrela." After she pays off the amortization, new settlers grab some of her land, kill her cattle, and hunt down her employees and herself. They are backed up by NPA rebels, and she is henceforth unable to visit her beloved ranch again. The story positions the readers to sympathize with the seemingly well-meaning woman rancher unjustly labelled Big Landlord and Capitalist by communist rebels. However, the story fails politically. The story portrays Mindanao as a wild and wooly West that a two-gun Pinay Annie sets out to conquer, her trusty savages beside her. Greedy landgrabbers backed by armed goons, in this case NPA rebels, take her away from her Eden. John Wayne, Robert Conrad and Michael Landon[12] live on in Ford's Mindanao! The Lumad tribes are, as usual, primitive, illiterate, sick ("goiter-necked") beasts of burden ("short, malnourished, my trusty Bagobos") that a privileged educated lowlander sets out to save. Unlike their native American counterparts though, not even one is at least romanticized as a "noble savage;" there is no Chingachgook, Hiawatha or Pocahontas among them.

Opulencia's "The cross, the guillotine and Father Andrew" (An Lim and Godinez-Ortega 1995) is set in southern Cotabato, historically sparsely inhabited by Lumad and Moros, and eventually settled by thousands of pioneering settlers from Luzon and the Visayas in search of land.[13] The story focuses on the relationship between a *lechon*-eating American priest and a settler boy, whom the priest orders around as a "gofer." It is an amusing story that subtly critiques Fr. Andrew's attack on revolutionary movements. The priest had made the boy read *The cross and the guillotine* about French Revolution leader George Jacques Danton's conversion to Catholicism. He condemns "the carnage ... [as] the work

of the devil, but in the end God triumphed." The persona despises the thesis; it nevertheless gives him shivers because of the possibility of revolution also coming to southern Philippines. He also finds time to be kind to the aging priest whose life and ideas are about to pass on.

Aurelia A. Pena's "Full moon over Mt. Diwata" (An Lim and Godinez-Ortega 1995) is a slice of life of poor Visayans searching for gold in the human and animal excrement of Mt. Diwalwal in Mindanao. It is, however, best studied from a moralistic and ecological point of view, for it shows Nature lashing back at the greedy excavators.

In "The concert," Tita Lacambra Ayala mentions a grenade-throwing incident that kills two policemen and injures shoe shine boys (An Lim 1995). It seems to say "What else is new? Just another incident of 'pre-election terrorism' that need not get in the way of dental appointments or campus concerts." A fifteen-minute brownout is shown as creating more of a hassle than the bombing.

Although E. Rene R. Fernandez's "Reunion" is set in wintry Cleveland, USA, the story is Mindanawon in spirit. Felix reunites with his sister Lara after twenty years; they have lost their parents, Lara has lost one child, and is about to lose the other. Lara has become thoroughly American, yet grief and despair make her turn to a shamanic ritual and the healing herbs of her childhood in far Zamboanga. Felix witnesses the healing ritual and his niece's subsequent miraculous cure.

An interesting story is "The cargo" (An Lim and Godinez-Ortega 1995) by Tan, a well-known poet and fictionist in Mindanao. This story is Asmawil's account of the death of nine men engaged in barter trade/smuggling in the waters between Sandakan and Tawi-Tawi. The nine corpses are the cargo of the title. The persona killed his nephew-in-law in self-defense; this same nephew had earlier mowed down all the eight other passengers for money. Throughout the long short story, the persona mulls why and how he should bring home the nine men for a proper burial, the repercussions of living the life of a fugitive, versus the suspicions and retribution his wife, children, and he would suffer. The thought of his family's suffering motivates him to return to port. The story deals with a massacre at sea, thereby conflating the Mindanao islands with smuggling, greed, robbery, and murder. At first glance, it seems no different in subject matter from M.A. Enriquez's "The white horse of Alih." A second look however shows that the killer here is like many other killers motivated by greed. Ethnic and religious background

have nothing to do with his stealing and killing; on the other hand, these have much to do with concern about the deceased and their families. Moreover, the persona is an impoverished hero who loves a woman but is practical enough to elope with her even if this is against tradition. He is almost coldly analytical in assessing the numerous options left to him, in planning the strategy of bringing in the cargo of warm corpses and cold cash. His great love and concern for his children and courage make him a far far greater hero than the unfortunate Alih. This is an excellent story, worth anthologizing in place of the CHED-recommended tale by M.A. Enriquez.

Another one of the better stories coming from among the Christian settlers in the four Mindanao journals is "Tapsi" by Eduardo Ortega. It is readable and plays fair in its politics. The story starts out with Andy as a typical educated Christian who is afraid of Muslims. He is in a boat with four Muslims, on a trip to collect seaweeds for a biology project. He imagines battles and amoks and is constantly looking over his shoulder because he is told, "Never turn your back on a Muslim." He even imagines blood flowing from the breast of a Muslim mother feeding her baby. In the boat, he names only the sole educated professional Muslim, Mr. Gani Lontawar. That in itself is a kind of prejudice. Later, he finds out that the boat captain's name is Tapsi, who wields what for him is a fearsome *keris*. However, he gradually gets to know Tapsi, and by the end of the story, Andy is a changed man. The story is the educated Christian settler's self-criticism of his own discrimination against Muslims. The reader gradually shifts with the persona from discrimination, to a realization of an objective truth, and finally to admiring gratitude. I believe this is a must-read story for its gradual unmasking of Christian chauvinism against the Moros.

One significant anthology from among the Mindanao settler communities is *Sky rose and other stories* by Macario Tiu (2003). Among the eight stories, two mark a literature of place, "I am one of the mountain people" and the title story "Sky rose," also published in *Muog* (Guillermo 1998) under the pseudonym Felipe Granrojo.

In "I am one of the mountain people," the Lumad child persona frames his story with the same sentence, "I did not want to go to Santa Barbara, but Ita Magdum forced me to go there." He says this when at the age of seven, he is sent to a Christian school in the lowlands; he says this again after seven years in that school, when he is fourteen.

Through the years, his father wants him to learn Christian "magic" to repel the Christian landgrabbers and murderers. This is yet another story of conflict, but interestingly enough, it speaks of the landgrabbing and massacres of native tribes by Christian settlers. The Muslims, termed "Allah worshippers" by the mountain tribe do not get good press here either; they are hated and feared although some of the tribesmen seem to be learning from their resistance to the Christians.

"Sky rose" is the story of NPA commander Rolly, told from the shifting viewpoints of comrades Betty, Tonyo, Joey, their peasant hosts, and Rolly's own memory. The reader learns what motivated some middle class students to go to the hills of Davao, to escape prison and martial law, and to serve "the masses." The squad's activities, including their killing and being killed, are described in detail. Rolly dies at the hands of a comrade in a mistake encounter and is hailed as a hero in their mass base.

Tiu's stories portray the conflicts in Mindanao, between the communist rebels and the government, between the Moro rebels against the government, and between the Lumads and the Christians and Moros. The difference is, in these particular stories of conflict, the Christians are actually named as the perpetrators in landgrabbing and massacres. This contradicts the typical moro-moro or warrior image of the Mindanao Muslims. The Moros are however not painted as saviors by Tiu's Lumads either; the non-Muslim tribes after all must have been pushed higher up the mountains during Moro incursions into their tribal highlands. The stories are perhaps suggesting that the problem with war in Mindanao is war itself and that there is therefore a need to address the root causes of that war.

The Mindanao writers with Christian settler background depict the many faces of Mindanao, although usually from the viewpoint of educated city folk. Written mostly in the social realist vein, they often show Mindanao as a land of conflict, rather than promise. Some writers, particularly M.A. Enriquez, A. Enriquez, and Ford also tend to show the Muslims and Lumads as violent, primitive, illiterate people. A refreshing change, however, are the stories of the younger writers Tan, Ortega, and Tiu. Though they also show conflict, they give a more balanced picture of the dynamics and tensions among the Mindanao tripeoples.

Moros writing[14]

The publication of *The many ways of being Muslim* (Barry 2008) by no less than Anvil Publishing indicates that indeed, Muslim Filipino literature's time has come. The book has twenty-two stories by four men and five women, divided into three sections. It is curious though that the authors' names do not accompany the titles in the table of contents; they are listed in the contributors' page at the end.

The first set of stories from pre-World War II to 1960 is represented only by Jubaira. "Blue blood" is in this collection, along with three other Jubaira stories, about a tall big man who gives a child nightmares, an oriole that haunts a childless married man, and a woman who lovingly facilitates a "Mohammedan" burial of a drinker and womanizer.

"Blue blood of the big astana," first published in 1941, is one of the most anthologized stories by a Muslim Filipino from Mindanao. The story is also in Cruz's *Best Philippine short stories of the 20th century* (2000), in Bangkok-based American scholar Coeli Barry's *The many ways of being Muslim* (2008),[15] in Castrillo, *et al.*'s *Philippine reader* (2006), and on an internet site.

It tells the story of poor orphan boy Jafaar, given as a servant to the *datu* who owns the big *astana* or royal house, as a servant. He suffers the laughter of the datu's "blue-blooded" daughter at his harelip. Because the teacher cannot beat her for her laggard academic performance, Jafaar takes on for the girl her teacher's lashings. He agonizes when she marries a young datu. He leaves the astana, works hard, and earns a modest living. He visits her years later and finds her haggard and impoverished; her husband has been jailed for asserting his right to the ancestral land against the Christian and American government.

Noted literary critic Cruz says this of the story,

> Jubaira weaves into one flowing strand various streams of politics, religion, violence, folk beliefs, class struggle, physical deformity, even a full-blown wedding. Yet the story is easy to follow, even to readers not familiar with the doctrines and practices of Islam. What Ibrahim says in this, as in his other stories, is that beneath religious and political concerns, readers are all alike, in that they all share a common humanity. Love transcends all religions and all political struggles. In the story, Jubaira offers a new way of looking at this eternal truth (Cruz 2000, 114).

Barry, the critic who reprints the story on the web and in her book, also describes the story thus: "With great economy of words, Jubaira crafts a love story, a coming of age story, and a plea for the separateness of this re-created, seaside Muslim world which would not preclude accommodation with the Philippines" (2004).

The story condemns Muslim upper classes for mistreating the poor and disfigured, thereby highlighting class and "lookist" conflict. It relishes the success the poor boy has garnered from his own hard work and entrepreneurship as against the feudal backwardness of the royalty. Politically, that's good.

Nevertheless, there are two problems with the story, from a more historically informed vantage point of 2009. First, Jubaira uses the term "Mohammedan" to describe the school the *Dayang dayang* (princess) was sent to. The term Mohammedan, as pointed out by Mangondato-Sharief is a distortion because the religion is Islam and not Mohammedanism. The Muslims worship Allah, not their prophet Mohammed (Mangondato-Sharief 2000, 5). Second, the story condemns the actions of the Dayang-dayang's datu husband. The young datu had refused to pay the tax on the land and was hauled off to a penal colony, leaving his wife and children to till the soil by themselves. The story prefigures the MNLF and MILF and seems to condemn them.

The writer has however obviously succumbed to the American-Filipino hegemony of his time. As Barry points out, Jubaira who himself has Moro blue blood is limited by his class, his American education, and if I may add, his government position in the Department of Foreign Affairs:

> Both as a writer and as a high-status Muslim with the benefit of a colonial education, his voice assumes a distance from the world he describes . . . like many intellectuals and political leaders of his generation, Jubaira advocated an integrationist approach in the southern Philippines, believing that only a measure of accommodation with the "Christian state" could protect Muslims from unscrupulous newcomers (2004).

Another Jubaira story, "The prophet came to my city," (An Lim and Godinez-Ortega 1995) seems to espouse the same integrationist ideology. When Mohammed miraculously comes to visit his people, they tell him of their suffering, for example, of the government's neglect and non-payment for the blind streetsweeper's services. A child, tentmaker, and old poet then confess to him how the people had sinned by sowing

deceit, distrust, hate, enmity, and shedding blood. The prophet enjoins them to "Sow in your hearts the seeds of love and harvest the fruits of hope for kingdom eternal" (An Lim and Godinez-Ortega 1995, 82).

Jubaira's integrationist approach has inevitably proven him wrong, given the state of affairs in Mindanao after years of conflict. The ideology of Jubaira combines the traditional concepts of prayer, love, and peace, since Islam means peace with the American dream of hard work and entrepreneurship to surmount barriers of class and disability. The feudal clans will have their day, especially if they rebel against the change brought about by modernization and westernization. Jubaira is an excellent writer who fits very well the ethos of his Americanizing time, but who may perhaps later be relegated to literary history as the first notable Muslim Filipino writer.

Barry's second literary period which historically covers the years of the First Quarter Storm, Martial Law, and EDSA is very ably represented by the excellent stories of Noralyn Mustafa, the brothers Said Sadain, Jr. and Mehol Sadain, and Asain. Speaking as a university-trained academic with some background in formalism and post-colonialism, I believe that these are the best stories in the entire book. They have all the elements one looks for in a modern short story—credible and angsty characters, conflict, tension, ambiguity, interior monologue, epiphany, motif, theme, aside from a non-orientalizing or othering gaze. None of the writers are creative writing majors, but students of culture (Philippine Studies, Islamic studies), journalism, and even engineering, but they are storytellers who have a good grasp of the language they choose to use. Their stories deal with the cognitive dissonance of the Mindanao-born who resists being swallowed by the city. The romantic yearning for the pastoral setting of yore clashes with practical realities; alas, the personae have shed old skins, for "... the big city had a way of gobbling up its visitors. Nobody entered its abysmal depths and came out the same. Everybody changed" (M. Sadain in Barry 2008, 127).

An interesting reversal of the *tagabayan/tagabukid* binary is Mustafa's "A day in the life of Dr. Karim." The exhausted doctor is urged by his classmate to join him and live the good life in Maryland, USA. Dr. Karim is stretched to the limit by the vile conditions in the one-oxygen tank joke of a "hospital" in his hometown, where he is forced to play God in choosing whom to save. He is compelled to save the aged governor suffering from hypertension over one of his people, a

poor young farmer with a fatal gunshot wound. His name, Arabic for "generous," suggests how the story ends.

In "Ocean" and "The river below," Sadain writes about religious and political encounters, between an Islamic mystic and secularist, and between Muslim academic in Manila and armed ideologue in Basilan.

Asain has three stories. The first, "The middleman" (*Aday* 1994), is about a son's vengeance against his father's killer. In "The return" (*Ani 22*), an old man adopts a sickly child left behind by his mother who joined her soldier-husband in Manila. The plots of the two stories are predictable. Shining through though in "The return" is the kindness and love that the poor old man and abandoned child share in the grim scenario of the *bakwit,* or evacuees, and war in Mindanao. Panunggud ("The rebel"), published also in An Lim and Godinez-Ortega (1995), is for me, the best of the three stories. It is about a child who turns his back on his grandmother's traditional beliefs after lessons from a "northern" teacher's and doctors' pronouncements. The ending asserts that there is something still to be said but cannot be explained about tradition. This story somehow inverts the nightmare in Jubaira's "The tall big man."

The third period in Barry (2008) is 1991-2002, covering the regimes of two heads of state, one who forged peace in Mindanao, Fidel V. Ramos (1992-1998), and another who donned fatigues to wage all-out war, Estrada (1998-2001). Four women's stories represent this period, and they all deal with a critique of tradition, especially on gender issues. They are more self-critical of traditional ways such as the hated rido and the patriarchal polygamous setup of the traditional Muslim family rather than the ethnic and national politics of their predecessors. Elin Anisha Guro's tragic "The homecoming" about the evil of rido does not flow well in terms of voice and structure, but is nevertheless an emotionally informative piece about an important issue. Arifah Jamil has the most acerbic tone; for example, the personae mock their mothers' adherence to traditional practices, such as about menstruation or fashion. "Mukna," meaning "veil," is about a seventeen-year old woman rebelling against her father's strictness and wanting to run away from home. Pearlsha Abubakar is undoubtedly the most talented of the young women, and has an excellent grasp of the English language. Her "Ayesha's pretty hate machine" and "Maghrib" speak of woman's plight in a polygamous Muslim setup, but indirectly, subtly, suggestively, and therefore with the most impact.

Abubakar also has one well-written contemporary story, "Limbo years," published on the internet, and once available on Casocot's academic site "A survey of Philippine literature." The story is told in the first person by a Muslim woman who grows up in Manila and suffers a crisis of identity. When she joins the UP Collegian, her editor is aghast that she isn't Muslim enough to give the school organ the ethnic representation it seeks. She herself shrugs off the fact that her father has two concurrent families, grits her teeth at being forced to pray on schedule, and lackadaisically deals with her ancient history and ancestry. After a forbidden journalistic activity and love affair, she is sent to Mindanao and dons her *mukna* or *hijab,* seeing no contradiction between her Muslim identity and the fashion statements of Jackie O and Audrey Hepburn. I believe students will enjoy this story, as it shows that the issues of Muslim youth are much the same as the issues of youth everywhere — generational conflict, ambition, love and heartbreak, identity crisis, and finding oneself in a new/old homeland.

Because this paper is limited to studying the contemporary fiction available in Manila, absent here is a review of the writing in Filipino and the Mindanao languages, and there might be fair pickings from those who write in those languages. There is some of that now, if the website *Dagmay* is any indication.[16] Nevertheless, for works written in the native languages, translation is still needed for access outside Mindanao.

Of all of the Muslim writers, I believe that Asain, M. Sadain, Mustafa, and Abubakar are worth anthologizing and teaching in Manila. They will also probably make it to the canon of Muslim Filipino fiction from Mindanao. Their writing skill is unquestionable; their stories, gripping. They depict Muslim Mindanao from the insiders' heart and soul, portray realities and aspirations without exoticizing, and therefore seem most fair and balanced in fictionalizing their region. Jamil, published on the internet, also holds promise among the younger batch of Muslim Filipino women writing.

The Lumad in literature

There is much information on Lumad folk literature from the *CCP encylopedia,* journals, and theses and dissertations. There is also some contemporary fiction about them from an American anthropologist, H. Arlo Nimmo's *The songs of Salanda* (1994) on the Badjao people, and

from the Christian settler writers in Mindanao. Tiu has a story which features the Lumad tribe of the Manobo, "Sigaboy," first published in the 1 December 2008 issue of *Philippine graphic* and available online at Dagmay (2009). Dagmay also features "Tnalak" by Joy Rodriguez, an interesting love story set in a Tboli village. Ford has "Adula" and A. Enriquez has a novel entitled *Subanon.* Nevertheless, all these stories are told not by the Lumads themselves but by "outsiders" who may either sympathize with or exoticize them.

A collection of Lumad literary texts not readily available in Manila is *Sikami'n Lumad* edited by Albert E. Alejo, SJ of the Ateneo de Davao University. This book came about because of the absence of the contemporary Lumad in literature. Paring Bert, as he is called, says that the Lumad youth had applied to creative writing workshops in the past, but their output was dismissed by workshop organizers as not literary, and therefore not worthy enough to be considered for writing grants. He says that this stemmed from the different aesthetics of those running university-sponsored workshops *vis-à-vis* the aesthetics of the tribespeople from Mindanao's hinterlands, a contention that someone could look into for a dissertation.[17]

Alejo quotes a Manobo's sigh as the rationale for the collection of poems, legends, rituals, histories, and essays:

> *Kapag isinusulat nila kami, para kaming laging bakas ng lumipas o biktima ng pag-unlad. Di naman masama ang intensyon nila, pero parang hindi naman makilala ang aming sarili sa sinasabi ng ilang akademiko at aktibista. Dapat talaga may sarili kaming mga tinig* (Alejo 2005, vii).

There is only one text that qualifies as contemporary fiction in *Sikami'n Lumad,* the rest being poems, legends, rituals, histories, and essays written in the native languages with Filipino translations. In *Nagpalitan* by Ata Manobo Rolando Losad,[18] a datu, his wife, and daughter mistreat their servants, a mother and daughter, and throw them out of the household when the mother falls ill. She is discovered to have leprosy, supposedly a hereditary disease. Meanwhile, the datu's daughter also falls ill and no healer can help her. At her death bed, the old servant tells her daughter that she is actually the datu's daughter; her husband had exchanged the babies at birth so that their real daughter would not suffer the hardships of servitude. At the end of the story, the datu and his wife realize their wrongdoing and embrace their real daughter, while the servant's real daughter expires of the same disease and at about the same time her biological mother dies.

The aesthetic of this story is very different from that of the modernist and writer-ly texts produced by Tiu, M. Sadain, Asain, or Abubakar. Nevertheless, the context is Lumad aesthetics of oral tradition. Its structure, with the prolonged account of the old servant's illness, sounds very much like post-dinner storytelling amid the fireflies. The romance mode takes over in terms of theme, a Mariang Alimango story with its *deus ex machina* ending but sans magic. It is however quite valuable in terms of understanding the worldview of the Ata Manobo writer, apparently a culture that emphasizes family and forgiveness. What a contrast from the picture of the Manobo as hired killer in the Tom Anthony novel.

Addressing the distortions

Of the Mindanao fiction available in Manila, those produced by the settlers and Muslims based in the academe seem to be the most developed, but the fiction of the settlers is the most widely anthologized. The literature by the Muslims is beginning to catch up though. The written fiction of the Lumad, if any, is still invisible or inaccessible, with only one story written by a Lumad making it to a book. This landscape seems to echo the socio-economic-political situation in Mindanao, with the Muslims waging war and peace to catch up with the world, and the Lumads still struggling for identity and stable territory in their own homeland. Studying Mindanawon literature could be the little assistance academics in Manila could lend in that arena.

Mangondato-Sharief proposes a ten-point agenda to address the distortions about Moros and Islam in history books. The first is to rewrite the history books to correct historical distortions, and second, to "condemn the Moro-Moro literature" which perpetuates the image of Moros as "savage, barbarian, bandit, lawless and wicked." This statement could be extended for the Lumads and the settlers, and the whole of Mindanao.

I suggest therefore that a module on Mindanao literature be included in courses in Philippine literature. The choice of texts should be made without sacrificing aesthetics, but keeping the historical context, truth and fairness, and the need for peace in Mindanao in mind. There should be special care to avoid sowing "the seeds of hatred, antipathy and contempt and hinder sympathy, understanding and peaceful co-

existence" (Mangondato-Sharief 2000, 4) and avoid ghettoization in literature toward a more inclusive canon of Philippine literature. This is a challenge for scholars and academic to contribute to a peace constituency in Mindanao.

If I were to teach contemporary Mindanao fiction for example, I would require various essays, among them Asain's "Folk literature of the Muslim cultural communities" on Casocot's website and Godinez Ortega's introduction to Mindanao literature in Lumbera (2001) to establish a literary history and context. I would mention Jubaira's place in Mindanao's literature, pointing out the role of American hegemony in the Muslim author's mind as a historical context. I would, however, not require it as a reading. I would also *not* require M. Enriquez's "White horse of Alih," Ford's "A village called Talim," and the excerpt from A. Enriquez's Surveyors of Liguasan Marsh. I would refer the students to these, precisely to elicit how they contribute to the distortions about Mindanao.

In this connection, I would cite the arguments raised by Frances Sangil and Eduardo Ugarte in their respective postgraduate papers. Sangil, using a postcolonial framework, concludes that the images of the indigenous tribes in selected films are those of "cannibals, war-freak savages, expert entertainers, sex-starved, easily fooled individuals, and plain subordinates" (77-78). Although she does not study the Moro or Lumad peoples in particular, her findings affirm Mangondato-Sharief's contentions about minorities, while this study also confirms Sangil's findings.

Ugarte, on the other hand, focuses on the image of the Moro. He notes that

> the idea of the Moro being prone to the form of homicidal behaviour is merely a construct, in particular, used by the American drive to acquire information about Filipinos that would enable them to control their newly acquired subjects, and the conflict between Americans and Filipinos generated by this attempt at control. The association of amok with Muslim Filipinos is the outcome of the mistaken conflation of amok with the juramentado convention of the Moros, and the idea that the Muslim Filipinos were the most Malay of the the Malay 'subraces' in the Philippines and thus most likely to run amok (Ugarte Abstract, 1999).

This would be a good pre-reading material for a discussion of stereotypes of the concerned minorities.

For class discussions, I would instead take selections by Muslims Mustafa, Sadain, Abubakar, and Jamil and Christians Tan, Ortega, and Tiu and the Lumad selections from the collection of Alejo. I would have the students do their own research and choose among the works of the other authors and from the website of the Davao Writers Guild, Dagmay. There are many excellent and entertaining stories on this website. As a project, students in Manila could read the texts and choose which ones they like best and why. I would also have the class watch Marilou Diaz Abaya's eye-opening and inspiring film "Bagong Buwan."

On an institutional level, I also pick up from Mangondato-Sharief's suggestions for addressing distortions in history books about the Moro, this time for all Mindanawons, for the literary field:

1. Include contemporary texts from the tripeople of Mindanao in Philippine literature.
2. In choosing the texts from Mindanao, consult also Moro and Lumad literary scholars, critics, and creative writers to avoid exoticization and commodification of literature. This requires some networking and dialogue with Mindanao's writers and educators.

I also suggest the following:

1. Include Moro and Lumad literary scholars in the CHED Technical Panel for Literature, Department of Education (DepEd), CHED, and university departments outside Mindanao, if there are none.
2. Help the Mindanao writers produce and market their own texts in and outside Mindanao. Karina Bolasco of Anvil Publishing, Inc., Alejo of Ateneo de Davao University, and Diaz-Abaya have shown that this can be done.
3. Institute exchanges between classroom students in Manila and Mindanao.

Land bridges

There is another academic gold vein for research, or to put it in another way, a bridge between Philippine and Southeast Asian literature, indicated in this paper. Lumbera sees any such bridge as something past, in pre-colonial literature (2000, 225). That may well be, but it would take archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and linguists working together

some time to map this out. However, after having read contemporary fiction in English from Mindanao, I believe that literary historicans and critics need not only go to a remote past to find cultural bridges. They exist at present, through the similarities between Mindanao, especially Muslim literature, and Malaysian, Indonesian, and Singaporean literature. The dynamics of Mindanao and the Philippines as enshrined in literature, just to push it a bit farther, brings to mind Malaysia's Singapore as well as Indonesia's East Timor and Aceh. And therein lies a eureka moment, the epiphany that all modern litterateurs crave.

In an/other country

While I was reading the more than fifty stories constituting contemporary Mindanao fiction by Mindanawons, I was getting a whole new education in the culture of peoples supposed to be, but not quite are, our Muslim and Lumad brothers and sisters. I felt I had embarked on a virtual tour of another country, of othered *bangsas*. The experience of studying Mindanawon literature has been akin to traveling to and within Mindanao, where I sometimes felt like a foreigner in my own country, especially in Marawi where I donned a veil to blend in with the populace. Except in Cordillera and Aeta territories, there are mostly variations on the themes of Manila in the literature of Luzon and the Visayas. For the literature of Mindanao has its own unique landscape, distinct from that of Luzon and the Visayas, and marked by its peculiar history and tripeople character.[19]

The fiction by the Christian settlers sounds familiar enough, akin as it is to that churned out in Manila. The stories, especially by Moros however, sound more similar to some Malaysian, Indonesian, even Singaporean stories rather than Filipino stories in English. For example, there are parallelisms in the themes of Jamil and Abubakar in Indonesian Titis Basino's short story "Her" about polygamy.[20] Islamic beliefs and practices are topics in Malaysian and Singaporean stories as they are in Muslim Filipino fiction. The characters' names alone, and the religion, culture, and practices are unfamiliar to an academic trained in Manila. I had to keep researching for the meanings of names such as Karim, Asmawil and places in case I had missed important meanings, symbolisms, or allusions. For the first time in my life, I cared enough to look at Tawi-Tawi more closely on the map, to find the route of the

barter trade from Sandakan to Siasi, after reading Tan's "The cargo." I also realized that Compostela Valley, which otherwise always figures in landmine reports that I write,[21] used to include a "Marlboro Country" called Maragusan Valley.

In addition, while the Muslim Filipino writers acknowledge the real conditions in Mindanao, they have no image of Muslims as terrorists, fanatics, and jihadists, showing them instead as young and hardworking men and women with much the same issues as people of other races and groups, with the occasional added facet of being Muslim in a time of conflict.

While on this virtual voyage to and in southern Philippines, I realized that perhaps I should not be batting for "Including Mindanao," thereby subsuming Mindanao to Philippine literature, a.k.a. Manila hegemonic literature. Perhaps the way to give Mindanao and its people a voice is to excise it first from the Philippine map. In fact, perhaps this paper should have been entitled "Excluding Mindanao." After all, Mindanao *is* generally excluded and neglected by Manila-centric socio-economic-cutural politics anyway, in between its being bombed and burned intermittently. With East Timor in mind, perhaps by advocating the exclusion of Mindanao, which is in fact its past and present reality, we will finally be able to include it in our studies as another Southeast Asian country. Exclusion in Philippine literature but inclusion in Southeast Asian literature. Perhaps only then can the Mindanawon writers claim their rightful place in history and literature. This Manila-based paper, in solidarity with Mindanao, is therefore a small contribution to the debate towards finding the path to peace in the South.

Insballah. Amen.

Notes

[1] This is a review of Philippine contemporary fiction that represents Mindanao and its tripeople of Christian settlers, Moros, and Lumads anthologized in publications available in Manila. It is an initial step towards a fairer inclusion of Mindanao in the teaching of Philippine literature and is limited to a study of the images in the selected texts.

[2] See, for example, "Measuring the bias against Muslims" in the *Philippine human development report 2005*, 53-58.

[3] Australia held the first National Sorry Day on 26 May 1998, to apologize for removing aboriginal children from their families. In 2005, the day was renamed National Day of Healing.

[4] I do not include here three other printed texts and two important websites: An Lim, *et al.*'s "Landscapes of the imagination: The Fifth Iligan National Writers Workshop and Literature Teachers Conference in Mindanao;" Duerme, Judith M. *et al.*'s *Kulturang Caraga*; another publication with the same title of *Mindanao harvest*; and the Davao Writers Guild's e-journals *Dagmay*, *Davao harvest I* and *II*. The three printed texts are not available in the library, and the e-journals deserve a study of their own.

[5] Jaime An Lim points out the marginalization of the Mindanao writer in a paper he delivered in Bukidnon in 1997 and subsequently published in *Mindanao forum* in June 1998. The average teacher and student in Manila however has little if any access to that journal. I received my own copy from playwright Saturnina Rodil when I first visited Iligan City in the late 1990s.

[6] Macario Tiu (2002) provides a good overview of the dynamics among the Mindanao tripeople. Objections to the term "tripeople" led to the use of another term, Mindanawon (Rudkin 2002).

[7] *Houris* are beautiful maidens that in Muslim belief live with the blessed in paradise.

[8] The politically correct term for residents of Leyte and Samar is "Leyte-Samarnon," not Waray, which actually means "*wala*" or none.

[9] *Surveyors of Liguasan Marsh* has reportedly been re-titled *Green sanctuary* and published by Giraffe Books in 2007 (*MindaNews* 2007).

[10] This paper is limited to contemporary short fiction and novel excerpts by Mindanao-based writers in anthologies. It would be interesting however to look into Enriquez's later novels *Subanon* (1993) and *Samboangan: The cult of war* (2007), as well as his short stories. *Subanon*, for example, is said to have a "significant change in ethical and political perspective" from *Surveyors* and deserves a second look by anthologists and educators (Macansantos, "Selected book reviews"). Given the big and excellent harvest of Philippine novels in recent years, it may not likely be picked up again though unless critics set their sights on Mindanao once more. Other papers could also be written on contemporary poetry and essays from Mindanao. *Children of the ever changing moon* edited by Gutierrez Mangansakan II, a collection of sixteen essays texts is worth a good review. Finally, writing about Mindanao by Visayas-based writers such as the Dumaguete-based Tiempos and Ilonggo Leoncio Deriada would be another interesting study.

[11] Only the stories of Ford, Opulencia, Ayala, Peña, Fernandez, and Ortega are tackled in this section. I will not consider Carballo-Tejada's "The house on Calle Seminario," set in Iloilo rather than Mindanao, and her "Lunch with Victoria" which deals more with friendship with little Mindanaoan context. I also do not include A. Enriquez's story of a sexual vampire in the guise of a Patroness of the Arts; An Lim's story about a new father's realization of his homosexuality; and Cezar Ruiz Aquino's incoherent set of stories reviled by Edilberto Tiempo. In *Ani 14* and *22*, I exclude Leoncio Deriada's story because the author is more identified with Iloilo; Anne-Marie J.E. Eligio's "Clea," an attempt at future fiction circa 2013; Ricardo Hynson's "Kadtong gradwasyon nga gitambongan ni Miss Noble" which has no English translation, and Jess S. Ibanez's "The covenant," a novel excerpt about the Moro National Liberation Front's ascendancy. The last excerpt is better read as part of the novel.

[12] Wayne often starred in "Westerns," or cowboy and Indian movies. Conrad was Capt. James West while Landon was the youngest son Little Joe Cartwright in two popular 60s TV series, Wild Wild West and Bonanza.

[13] Seven towns of South Cotabato became Sarangani province in 1992. General Santos or GenSan is now a progressive and developing city situated in but not part of South Cotabato. A brief history of South Cotabato may be found on the website of the provincial government on *http://www.southcotabato.gov.ph/test/gen_ifo/index.html.*

[14] Castrillo, et al.'s *Philippine literature: A Mindanao reader* (2005), meant for the Ateneo de Davao Univesity students, includes several folktales: Jubaira's "Blue blood of the big astana," Don Pagusara's "Salamat, mama, sa pahinumdom" and Felipe Granrojo's (Macario Tiu) "Sky rose." Notably, Castrillo, *et al.* do not include M.A. Enriquez's "White horse of Alih."

[15] Coeli Barry's nationality begs the question: Why is an American editing a volume of Muslim Filipino fiction? In the same token, why should someone from Manila and Bikol be writing about Mindanao literature? These questions feed into the debate about academic turfing, intellectual space, and commodification of literature.

[16] Macario Tiu and Don Pagusara are among those who write in Cebuano, and Tiu in particular, provides translations of his stories. To expand the scope of this paper from contemporary fiction by Mindanawons in Manila textbooks would make this already lengthy paper even longer. A reader, however, sees the limitations of this paper as a weakness, stating that it "would have been much stronger and persuasive in its call for Mindanao's (self-)exclusion from and resistance of Imperial Manila if it had actually attempted to do so. As it reads now, the paper's self-acknowledged limitations actually mimic the 'hegemonic' impulse that it is critical of, and it makes the last paragraph somewhat lacking in the irony that is nicely evident elsewhere in the text."

[17] Paring Bert also says that literary critic Isagani R. Cruz had dismissed the collection as by "*pipitsugin*" (small-time) writers (Personal communication, 16 February 2009).

[18] The fact of Losad being Ata Manobo was provided by Dr. Macario Tiu (Personal communication, 15 April 2009).

[19] A reader points out that this concept of Mindanao tripeople "has its own occlusions. Texts by Enriquez (Antonio and Mig) often carry stereotypical representations of the Chinese as part of their depiction of Mindanao, and yet there are also writers like Tan and Tiu who have not only written about Mindanao as self-identified Mindanawons, but also about being Chinese as well as the Chinese in Mindanao. In other words, while the concept of 'Tripeople' highlights the necessity for a nuanced understanding of Mindanao and literary production in and on that area, it may also set limits on the conceptualization and construction of 'Mindanao writings' as a field of study and analysis." This comment deserves more thought and study.

[20] Arifah has never read these writers, so it is interesting how their stories resonate (Personal communication, 17 February 2009).

[21] As member of the Philippine Campaign to Ban Landmines, the Philippine campaign of the Nobel Laureate International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and Philippine researcher and correspondent to *Landmine monitor.*

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