



Representation Meaning & Identity

Philippine Culture and Arts Studies

Steven P.C. Fernandez

foreword by
Victor N. Sugbo, Ph.D

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to **Leilani**, who inspires Love,
the Arts, and Life

acknowledgements

Daghang salamat to these friends-colleagues. Critical at times, they have contributed to the transforming of a Philippine School-of-Thought by their inputs and support. The original team that helped craft the Culture and Arts Studies program includes: Jazmin Llana, Christine Godinez-Ortega, Nelia Balgoa, Elmar Inglis, Sittie Pasandalan, and the present teaching staff of Hobart Savior, Carmencita Jasareno-Bernardo, Ivie Carbon Esteban, and Saturnina ‘Bebot’ Rodil, plus the other faculty members who remain “on-call” awaiting our requests to teach should their expertise be required.

The graduate students of the program coming from various parts of the island have contributed significantly bringing with them their own experiences of the indigenous creations in their communities. To reciprocate, they bring back to their communities the advocacies of the program.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) provided the grants and continues to sustain us with their endowments for a robust nationwide C&A program. All these with the backing of the animateurs of cultural education, Orlando Magno, Joseph ‘Sonny’ Cristobal and the staff of the Philippine Cultural Education Program.

My peers and their institutions continuously acknowledge our contributions through their invitations. The productions of these pedagogues have become inputs for our praxis and scholarship: the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Asia-Pacific Bond of Theatre Schools (particularly Shanghai Theatre Academy, La Salle College of the Arts in Singapore, the Yogyakarta Institute of the Arts, among others, and the notable Aubrey Mellor).

The MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) whose mandate of a well-rounded Humanities education is realized through the College of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of English, the School of Graduate Studies, and the Culture and Arts Studies Center I founded. Its cultural events have been implemented through the Cultural Development Office and its lead advocate Zayda O. Macarambon.

Present Chancellor Sukarno D. Tanggol inspires the “zeitgeist” surrounding MSU-IIT’s academic onslaughts and predecessor Marcelo Salazar giving the Institute’s “humanistic” seal real meaning.

The talents of the creative company around me are inspiring, past and present collaborators in IPAG who so willingly shared time mostly without remuneration. They will be properly acknowledged in another book that describes our productions and the creative processes in the last four decades.

Mindanao and its communities have been our inspirations of our creations for years, and as such they deserve the highest kudos and thanks for whatever inputs we have formed. There is no production, no book, no scholarship, no learning without these communities, all Islamized, indigenous, and settler cultures striving to live in harmony despite the challenges.

And to Victor N. Sugbo, also part of the original team, whose acerbic critiques I welcome all the way, and who so willingly accepted the invitation to write this book’s Foreword. Salamat hin duro.

Of course, to my family, living and in the other ‘worlds,’ the large Fernandez-Castillo clan, and my wife Leilani and precocious daughter Sophia Patrizia, they whose lives are reasons for my own living.

But there can be no Life or Living without the “Uncaused Cause,” the Creator of Creation in Whose Power we all dwell.

Steven P.C. Fernandez

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foreword

One who journeys into the field of culture and art studies is likely to encounter an array of theoretical perspectives and possibilities. The field itself embeds a string of word plays: culture in art, art in culture, the culture of art, the art of culture, cultural art, the relationship of art and culture, and so on. Due to these dizzying levels of view, it behooves that one, who undertakes the journey, possesses the ability of careful discernment, particularly in determining the appropriate processes of understanding cultural phenomenon or art form because an inappropriate epistemic choice could lead him to a false start or drive him to a false door.

In this book, Steven Patrick Fernandez creates a bold theoretical design which maps out a field, a road, and a space for one interested in apprehending Philippine culture and art. Originally a set of papers written for various symposia and conferences, this book comprises of Fernandez' essays that explore, excavate and disentangle dominant ideologies that influence, if not condition, scholars' and researchers' view of culture and art. Beyond delineating concepts as fundamental as "culture" and "art" and "order," he states the premises and principles that set the grounds for his project and program.

The idea of culture and art is not new. What is new is the notion of culture and art, their interrelationship and interaction, seen within the sociocultural and politically volatile landscape of Mindanao and at the larger level in the context of the ASEAN and globalization. Initially Fernandez sets the tone of his book with a proposal for a Philippine School-of-Thought, actually a broadcloth for examining Philippine culture and art. At the core of this frame is Mindanao, its culture and arts.

The choice of Mindanao emanates apparently from the idea that the island has been so inscrutable that its sociopolitical conditions demand a kind of understanding necessary to explain why peace has remained elusive in its environs. Positioning

Mindanao in the culture and art studies is well deserved. It is likewise the personal bias of Fernandez who believes that by studying the island's multifaceted culture and art, the scaffold, needed in setting the processes which would contribute to the installation of peace, would be determined and mapped for its development.

An interesting feature of the book is Fernandez' insertion of intertextuality and representation within the epistemology of culture and art studies. As a component episteme, intertextuality when taken as an expanded metaphor covers a wide range of associations that involve the interaction between a text and another text, text and art, art and culture, text and globalization, Philippine culture and the ASEAN, and the list can be long. The case of representation, in contrast, implies the relationship between a sign and the perceiver, the sign's representation and ideology, the arrangement of signs and symbols, the space between sign and meaning, and a symbolic representation and hegemony.

**“bold,
theoretical
design... .”**

This book is an invaluable resource for both students and researchers who wish to enter the sanctum of culture and art studies. Its countless questions open our eyes to what we have not done for Mindanao and what we have taken for granted in the other islands. It is also a form of wellspring from which one can draw up an intellectual pursuit that culture and art studies promises. It opens new uncharted avenues to explore and examine and it finally deserves our reading.

Victor N. Sugbo, Ph.D

INTRODUCTION

Culture and Art Studies Program

In 2017, the Culture and Arts Studies Center (CulArtS-C) gathered art leaders of indigenous communities, dance mentors, art teachers, and heads of units in the academe for us to appreciate the Culture-and-Arts landscape in Mindanao.

The forum allowed a vibrant venue for dialogue among diverse practitioners from different communities representing various cultures. Leaders representing Schools of Living Traditions, formally-trained artists, self-taught performers, and arts administrators joined the forum culminating a year of study (grant provided by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts) which main objective was to collate and assess the culture-arts learning processes in Mindanao.

The forum allowed us glimpses of the multifarious creative processes to sum, though not definitively, the character and context of production of the creative in Mindanao.

Much of knowledge has been collated in this collection of readings in our attempts to evolve a Mindanao, perhaps a Philippine, perspective and a school-of-thought. These are products of a now-implemented Culture and Arts (C&A) Studies Program, pioneering in the country.

Pioneering a Center

The proposal and subsequent approval of C&A Program at the MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) passed through circuitous routes, the norm in government procedures. The idea of a program that studied Art beyond its form and craft ideated in the early 2000s with my growing interest in Performance and its process of production among various cultures.

The significance of C&A Studies in the Philippine context is a complex one owing to the layers of influences that our Art-making praxis and history have gone through. Still, the study of a people's creative expressions and their production must complement the times alongside economic, social, and political realities.

“... a people's creative expressions manifest the times alongside economic, social, and political realities.”

The 21st century signals opportunities and challenges in the C&A disciplines repositioned to play a more urgent part in our development. The most compelling of these opportunities is in the Creative Industry touted one of the major purveyors of our economic growth. Yet ironically, the Creative Industry can be the paradox to ensuring the integrity of our creative and cultural expressions.

Our program of study engages with the emerging Creative Industry — an inchoate knowledge-based economic and social order — so powerful, it can redirect knowledge and imagination to its ends.

While the Center sets in place the consolidation of a system of operations to sustain the Culture and Arts Studies initiatives, this initial collection of readings sweeps through the academic picture putting in an inter-disciplinary perspective the frame-of-thought in the acquisition, process, management, and dissemination of knowledge.

(Prior to its implementation, a wide survey assessed the needs for a C&A Program outside of the traditional education centers — meaning, Metro Manila. The survey collated information from over 300 respondents from the Visayas and Mindanao. Inputs were pooled from focus group discussions, interviews of key stakeholders, and our own engagements as performers, art administrators, and training facilitators. The research surveyed respondents who came mostly from the academe and from among the practitioners of the seven arts.)¹

Introduction



Summit among leaders of Mindanao organizations and communities assessing the state of art and culture-oriented education in Mindanao, September 2017, MSU-IIT, Iligan City (hosted by the Culture and Arts Studies Center, and supported by the NCCA)



The C&A program was a hub in the convergence of a wide-reaching development scheme from: pinpointing the problem, analyzing the interlocking chains that influence the problem, understanding the context from where the problem emanates, establishing the principles from where a Vision can be set, formulating a set of principles and a Philosophy, and strategizing action plans.

After drawing the culture-and-arts landscape, a team of experts convened to consolidate all curriculum materials.²

Meeting Urgent Needs

Most teachers involved in C&A education (in their mid-career years) admit little learning in these fields having earned undergraduate degrees that are not Arts and Culture oriented. Most are involved in the Special Programs of the Arts in our National High Schools scattered around the country. Meanwhile, professionals engaged in C&A-related occupations gain income just slightly above the threshold of the poverty line³ thus the lack of interest to pursue or improve careers in these fields.

“Art Style equals Lifestyle.”

An extensive program in training, in crafts, arts and events administration, technical production, the study of theory, and research including marketing, business, and human resource management should address these deficiencies. Consistently, the three major training needs are in the performance/creation (craft enhancement), instruction (pedagogical strategies), and management (arts administration) areas,⁴ specifically:

- the enhancement of craft;
- the study of the theories, principles, pedagogy, history, development, and criticism related to these Art forms;
- the application of these forms in collaborative production complemented with management, organizing, and marketing; and,
- research.

There is no system-wide standard in the curriculum of these arts programs under the Department of Education as regional centers in schools are given the leeway to develop their own programs even with these schools' limited capabilities to plan and train. The same may be said for the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Not only is pedagogy absent, but the competence to develop a teaching method of a subject is wanting. Exacerbating the conditions are these factors:

- superficial knowledge of Philippine cultural practices that has produced a slew of misrepresentations;
- deficient management of cultural activities and other projects related to creative production;
- less-than-satisfactory results achieved when most art-related activities are treated as “amateur” projects;
- poor exhibition of craft -- the challenge to meet the demands of craft (read: technique) looms when training and know-how are absent; and,
- inability to draw in the resources when the demands of marketing, sales, and promotion are not practiced.

I have, therefore, summed up two major needs that these studies have drawn:

Education, the prospects of which shall nurture not only the enhancement of craft but more importantly the support that all art practices lean on: theory, principles, and history; and,

Management, that domain concerned with the control, accession, and allocation of resources, which nurtures small- and medium-scale industries and which expertise carries over to the fields of entertainment, the organization of events, the management of personnel, the development of products and services, and the like.

With promise, our C&A Studies Program has been designed to provide theoretical and practical knowledge to teachers, artists, and cultural workers about the intrinsic quality of the arts in Philippine culture.⁵

The Book: Primary Resource

Representation, Meaning, and Identity navigates through manners creative expressions make sense (and give meaning) from the “producer” to the “receiver.” These readings cut through the various inter-mediums of expressions as representations given meaning through inter-relating filters that culture provides. From formally-structured art forms like Literature and Dance, to composite mediums like Performance and Language, to integrated indigenous expressions, these readings dissect the manners “text” (or sign, signal, and expressions) move from source to understanding.

A totality of all these expressions as understood and imbibed outlines an Identity, giving substance to the paradigm that creative expressions are manifestations of cultures, or — *Art Style equals Lifestyle*.

These essays are products of my praxis (and over 4 decades of scholarship and production) shared through numerous lectures and workshops in Culture, Art, and Performance Studies here and abroad. These discourses shared among academics and practitioners have passed through collective processes of critiquing and enhancement. Yet in no way are these definitive. We all know that the only absolute character of studies is the discipline itself, yet even disciplines re-shape through time. We will agree that the studies we went through a generation before are now in the realm of the obsolete. But this “impermanence” is a challenge rather than a frustration, that new knowledge will requisitely confront the present, thus change is inevitable.

I have clustered the essays according to their dominant threads, yet in no way can one essay be independent of the other. Understand one as part of the greater integrated

whole, again recalling the Aristotelian dictum of “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. Like in Cultural and Arts Studies, the subjects’ component parts can be better understood in their interplaying references to each other, meanings being inter-textual, knowledge being inter-disciplinary. Such is our discipline which many qualify as an “anti-discipline”.

In this book therefore, I divided the thematic content in five parts according to Context, Typologies, Representation and Meaning, Culture and Peace, and Hegemony in Globalization.

**“the whole is greater than
the sum of its parts.”**

The stock
“written in stone”
cannot be more false

than in a collection such as this: changing times and spaces will necessarily alter ways of thinking. Precisely, it is this altering — more precisely morphing — that allows knowledge to progress. Contradictions become necessary. The challenge here is to present our quantifiable present and whatever deficiencies are noted become significant new routes toward more innovations and re-learning.

Meanwhile, this book tasks readers to challenge. The greater test here how we now can present a School-of-Thought that we appropriately can call *Philippine*.



Notes

¹ Full report and details on the Feasibility Study in “Meeting the Cultural Needs of the South: Establishing the Institute for Cultural Resource Management” (2009), by Steven P.C. Fernandez, through a grant by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

The planning proceeded through the Building Leadership (BL) Framework, a process that involved the various stakeholders of the C&A assets which objectives were determined via a collective consensus. (“Bridging” Synergos). “Bridging leadership,” creates and sustains “effective working relationships among key partners and stakeholders” whereby a common agenda and solutions to problems from different perspectives sweeping the breadth of various stakeholders are proposed. Synergos, a non-profit organization whose mandate is to solve complex problems of poverty (see: www.synergos.org) developed the concept. Incorporated are concepts from the field in the last 25 years among the partnerships at Synergos in the Philippines, Latin America and Africa.”

(Check: “An Overview of Bridging Leadership,” Synergos, The Synergos Institute, <https://www.synergos.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/synergos-bridging-leadership-overview.pdf>)

² Steven P.C. Fernandez, Artistic Director, IPAG and Professor of the Humanities (Doctor of Fine Arts, De La Salle University, Manila), Project Proponent and Team Leader; Jazmin Llana (Ph.D, Performance and Theatre Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, United Kingdom); Victor Sugbo (Ph.D Communication, U.P. Diliman); Christine Godinez-Ortega (DFA, Creative Writing, De La Salle University); Nelia Balgoa (Ph.D., Human Sciences, Osaka University, Japan); Elmar Inglis, Former Commissioner, NCCA, and Director, Philippine Cultural Education Plan (PCEP); Sittie Pasandalan, Peace Studies and Language Teaching (MAELS, MSU-IIT, Iligan City)

³ In 2006, the average poverty line for a family of 5 in the Visayas and Mindanao was pegged at P15,759.00 (urban communities) and P13,702.00. This average was drawn from figures published by the National Statistics Coordinating Board. It seems, therefore, that the economic and professional engagements in the culture and art fields do not pay enough for a comfortable “living” considering, too, that there are little opportunities for additional income in these fields.

⁴ These are the Art areas, ordered according to the number of respondents who are engaged in these areas’ activities: dance (17.2%), music (14.7%), theatre (14.5%), visual arts (12.8%), and literature (11.7%). The bottom half of this order of engagement includes: multimedia (9.6%), creative writing (9.2%), film (5.0%), and others (5.3%). (“Meeting the Cultural Needs,” 2009)

⁵ The 24-unit certificate course (Culture and Arts Studies) is non-terminal and may be “ladderized” for students to step up into the next Master’s degree program (Masters in Culture and Arts Studies). High-level instructions on the principles and their applications, skills training, and the teaching of these prepare the students in their vocations as teachers, artists, researchers, and managers, and in allied professions that engage with the creation and production of Art in its various forms.

Corollary to this, the program enhances the states of art/creative production and engagements of this production in the Philippine cultural context while preparing practitioners and scholars for research and further studies anchored on innovative paradigms, particularly that of new learning in Performance and Culture Studies.

Notes...

The programs embrace these qualities: interdisciplinary, relevant, community-based, collaborative, and research-oriented and take three tracks: Performance, Creative Writing, and Arts Management. (Applicants for the Certificate Course propose and submit a Study Plan with a final Creative Production, publication, or a Program-to-be-Implemented before they are accepted.)

To complete a Master of Arts degree, the student requires four (4) core courses, four (4) required courses in the discipline selected, two (2) elective courses including a subject on Independent Studies that complement studies in the student's selected discipline, all carrying 3-unit credits each (total: 33 units), and culminating courses on production/research procedures and the final production/thesis requirements (total: 6 units), to sum up 39 units.

Context
Culture, Performance,
and Art Studies

Chapter 1

Art in Culture

The study of Art has often focused on examining the inherent elements that shape its form. In the visual arts, we study color, lines in symmetry or contrast, and design. For music, it is rhythm, harmony, melody, texture, and orchestration. In Literature, we look for diction, metaphor, character development, plot, integrity. For performance, technique, spectacle, suspense, and thematic unity.

The combination of these elements in Art produces meaning and a corresponding response from an audience, listener, or reader. The form may be a painting, monument, a sonata, a sarswela, classical ballet concert, or short digital film.

In most cases, learning the Humanities is devoted to cutting up form — why a poem works, what moves listeners to a Mozart *concerto*, or why a is novel compelling.

While such methods are the norm, these fall short and do not allow our students to appreciate the idea that Art, creations of the imagination, grows from Culture and, in the process, produces Culture. To appreciate Art is to understand context.

Art in context

Art Studies seem alien to many, why appreciation for something foreign cannot be easily absorbed. (Surely, viewers can imagine what it was like to dance to a Johann Strauss waltz if studying waltz is contextualized within the conditions of 19th century Austria.) Contextualizing gives us a view of why widespread music-dancing like the waltz became quite popular during this era despite the initial disfavour of this dance-

music form by the upper class.

To experience Art as something separate from “real” living disengages the perceivers from Art allowing them to respond with apathy. Art becomes a detached entity valued as an object to wonder about. As a separate entity, Art becomes *Artifact*, lovely to look at, rousing curiosity yet failing to affect the perceivers to its innate powers.

I posit the prologue of this essay from this view because a *synchronic* approach to the study of Art is NOT what Culture and Art Studies postulates. Here too, I will recurrently refer to imaginative expressions as *Art, form, creative expressions, and expressions of the imagination*. They mean the same.

Art as Form

Philippine Art Studies

Let's sample *form* (synchronic approach) to study Philippine creative expressions. We may go as far as to indicate the functions of these expressions in the community. For

“To appreciate Art is to understand context.”

example, we study the Cebuano dance-music *balitaw* indicating its $\frac{3}{4}$ time, the humorous improvised lines, the overall structure, and the instruments that accompany it. We study the *balitaw* as a product of its milieu, in a place and time, situating the form to an era when it was an expression for courtship.

In another, we define the *moro-moro* (*linambay* in Cebu, and *komedya* in many parts of the country) through its thematic Christian-Moro conflict. This performance codifies stereotypical characters — the rough Moro villain, the virtuous but weak Moro princess who will be baptized a Christian (as will always be the case), and the chivalric Prince. The *moro-moro* is performed in verse in *plosa* or dodecasyllabic quatrain (Tiongson, “Philippine Komedya” 17), ordained gestures, and the colors in costumes are assigned to characters acting in a story that ends with the mandatory Christian victory. The *moro-moro* signaled Christian hegemony that highlighted fiestas and the commemorations of patron saints. Moreover, this performance brought Catholic communities together.

Still another. We study the intricate finger-hand gestures and flowing arm movements of the *pangalay* (translated: “to dance”), the TauSug dance form. With feet flexed and legs splayed in balance, the dancer coordinates movements of the torso and limbs drawing in energy from the center of the body. The torso slightly bent forward balances to gravity as the dancer slides and minces, the weight of the body landing on the balls of the feet. Figures of the dance are dissected in twenty-six stances (Fernando-Amilbansa).

1 Art in Culture

In contrast to the gravity-aligned executions of the *pangalay*, the highly-technical *classical ballet* opposes gravity by developing movements of flight and height. Ballet which developed in the courts of Western Europe has formalized body figures marked by a vocabulary common to every ballet dancer.

Approach from *form*

From these artistic expressions, we can speculate about the origins of their names (etymology). Language reveals truths about the character of these expressions. Extracting from the etymologies, we can explain how these forms were created.¹

Describing these forms requires that we use conventionally-prescribed parameters. Conventions prescribe how creative expressions are composed in space and time. Parameters evolve from a practice of a process known and shared through time by the community.

These conventions, by large, determine how a medium, its elements and techniques of execution produce design to complete a composition. The composition manifests expressive content, meanings, and representations.

We investigate the milieu the artist or the community of artists works in — time and place, a history and locus — that should display these artists' beliefs and values influencing their creation. A milieu is that environment which influences the mindsets of the creators, their perspective of a “reality” determining their art. Besides the mindset, *setting* will include, among others, the natural environment, the social interactions, a level of technology, structures of power (economic, political, social), and the pervading “orders” (of tendencies and dispositions)² these artists have been nurtured in.

The production of art connects to some “reality.” Expressions are created within a setting directing how the artist navigates through steps (a pre-determined process) to produce art. The option to choose how an expression is to be completed becomes a cultural decision.

A determining factor is *function*. What is this expression for? — every artist will begin with this. Function reveals how important expressions are to the life of the community. In a milieu, function can change depending on the needs of the times, the places, and the mindsets.

“Expressions of the imagination will be refered to as *Art, form, and creative expressions, all referring to the same.*”

Connecting art and its production to a milieu provides us a method we call the *diachronic approach*, a corresponding relationship art keeps with its social environment and time in history.

This diachronic horizontal connectivity requires the appropriate understanding of the parameters that decide art's relevance to the community. There is always the risk that the parameters we employ have nothing to do with the expressions we study.

Using formal parameters of expressions from another milieu (Europe's for instance) may not work for specific expressions in ours. Let me illustrate. Music has always been studied for its key signature, scales, harmonic structure and composition design. But to apply these parameters to Maguindanon *kulintang* playing in the Cotabato-Southern Mindanao milieu will be a *non-sequitur*. This will also be true for the study of music of most indigenous Mindanao and Cordillera groups. Parameters like the above are irrelevant to certain forms even if these forms belong to the same genre. Maguindanon music (usually accompanied by a performance) will require another set of "rules".

To study the Matigsalug's *Ulahing* using T.S. Eliot's "objective correlatives," in another instance, or the strictures of "character development" as in the narratives of the novelists of Europe is to flaunt ignorance. Moreover, there is no basis when we categorize indigenous and folk creative expressions using the genres based on the Seven Arts (Dance, Music, Literature, Theater, Architecture, Visual Arts, and Film). Nor is there basis when Folk Literature divides into Prose and Poetry. Europe-based typologies don't apply to indigenous classifications.

In many instances of Art studies, we cannot apply the same parameters that describe our Art *forms* we learn in the universities to those expressions grown within the contexts of our communities.

Art is language. Form is language, a system of signs and symbols, meaningful to the culture using these. Used for a purpose, these signs engage in an exchange. Meanings emerge when these signs — words, images, sounds, action, and any idea demonstrated by some form — merge with other signs.

The production of meanings is a cultural process. A lit candle as a single image is meaningless. But when this candle is set before boxes wrapped in colorful Christmas-designed paper, *meaning* forms. Meaning shifts when this same candle is placed beside a bloodied portion of a street pavement. Beside a wreath, another meaning forms. Same lit-candle, different meanings, only because other images/signs in combination contextualize representation in the settings.

Form and Order

Art tells us more than about how well-conceived and intricate the elements of form have been skillfully shaped to produce spatial and aural finesse. But beyond technique, organic to what we see-hear and experience are clues that reveal the most intricate secrets of Culture: how members of a culture understand their world, how they deal with this understanding to

1 Art in Culture

cope, how this understanding evolved, and what to them is *Order*.

These clues we find in Language, and Art is Language. Culture makes sense through demonstrated expressions like Art. Art gives ‘reality’ shape and meaning. It makes the ‘world’ around a community palpable, understandable.

Culture is us; it is everything we think and do. In school, however, there is the tendency to study Culture as if it is an “other,” a reality apart from ours. We often say “culture and arts” as if it were a ‘dress’ seen apart from our own. The viewer examines an object, appreciating its design, its symmetry, its well-sewn portions, its color, and its appropriateness to its wearer. The ‘dress’ can either reveal what it dresses or, in the opposite, conceal the ‘real’ character of the user. ‘Dress’ too can mislead. (Words are ‘dresses.’ Words clothe to reveal *meaning* appropriately. Language grows from a plethora of these words. Language builds from usage establishing rules set by time-nurtured practice. Language represents ideas by words connecting with other words. Meanings morph from more conjunctions intersecting images, sounds, action, and thought. Communication is a system of dynamic inter-acting and inter-morphing components.)

The study of Art should not end with *form*. When we stop at *form*, we admit the separation of art from its environment. As a separate entity, Art becomes an object to behold, an object whose value lies only in its external manifestations – that which we *see* and *hear*. To the community that we study (ours included), Art is inherent. It is organic to living and does not only exist for its external sake. Art survives because it is necessary. It is not a capricious invention nor is it solely a decorative expression. Art embeds itself in the lifestyle of the community.

But Art is not the sole manifestation of cultural expression. While it may be the most telling, art joins other equally-revealing indicators of cultural practice, behavior, and thought. Besides Art (or expressions created by the imagination) are these other ‘signs’ — like actions, behavior, and thought — that can reveal culture: allocation of space, perception of time, manner of reasoning, reason in explaining phenomena, language structure, and other demonstrative acts.

These demonstrative elements, because of their nature, fulfil actions that are performative. *Performative* means an act intended to consummate an expected response. These include such ‘everyday’ instruments of action like language, gestures, interactions, use of spaces, selection of designs, production of creative objects, and other means to express, produce, and consummate some pre-determined course. Performative acts do not only express meanings but significantly reveal a reality and an identity.

Correspondingly, these actions evolve Culture determining Order, worldview, and values.



Notes

¹The *moro-moro* a.k.a. *komedya* a.k.a. *linambay* are named relative to their introductions from Europe. However, these nomenclatures are understood in their local contexts. There is little in their origins in the medieval metrical romances that reveal what these represent to the community now. “Moro” is a reference to the Islamic Moors that invaded the Iberian Peninsula in the 8th century, thus a *moro-moro* (as a Philippine Linguistic practice, word duplication implies that what is referred to is not the real but a reflection of the ‘real’) suggests some distant reference to the European religious wars. Confronting our Islamized communities, the Spanish conquistadores subsequently referred to them as “Moro.”

The *komedya* is rooted in the Spanish three-act play *commedia* but there is little in the original form and substance that have been adapted in the indigenous play. A derogatory reference to it in Carcar (Valladolid), Cebu is how the *linambay* got its term, accordingly from the attacks of writer Vicente Sotto, referring to the duels similar to the motions of crabs (*lambay*). (Mojares 3)

²For a discourse on “embodied dispositions” and “tendencies” that orient and organize how individuals respond and perceive the social world around them, read: Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) whose works are popular in various publications in Sociology and Culture Studies. (see Works Cited)

Chapter 2

Cultural Studies: Inherent Principles

The Cultural Studies we propound is about “representation” — how expressions (or *signs* and *symbols*), because they mean to a culture, give meaning to culture. Culture is determined by the way a community makes sense of these expressions, gives meaning to these, and defines them. Meanings shape from tangible expressions like Art and other performative actions.

Art is a system of signs and symbols, a Language System. The interrelationships of these signs and symbols produce meanings. Shared meanings by a community through time produce *identity*. Cultural Studies analyzes *form* of these systems to deduce how Culture is constructed.¹

Form is a consequence, a ‘by-product.’ It is not the beginning nor is it the end of a process. Form shapes because of a process that is culturally determined. The process itself is a representation of a cultural meaning. Process is necessary for Culture to survive; progression towards a pre-determined outcome is essential to coping.

**“Form is a
consequence,
a ‘by-product’.”**

Art and other events and/or actions that are performative in nature (and our studies attempt to make sense of these acts) draw out some cultural order.

Art is Language nurtured and shared. Language maps a reality. Communities comprehend their world through words, images, sounds, music, and action in a

system that combines all these. There can be no meaning without Language. No meaning, no world, no culture. No Art, no identity, no culture.

We think using these forms of Language. Our mental concepts are mapped by them. Our narratives make sense only because these stories are made tangible and are demonstrated to us by Language.

Defining Cultural Studies

Defining *Cultural Studies* has been difficult. As an area of study, it is new, radical, and progressive. It is a 20th century discourse that has questioned the manner conventional disciplines have been fragmented. In fact, many scholars agree that it cannot be a *discipline* as it uses the methodologies and principles of Cultural Anthropology, Sociology, Literary Criticism, Linguistics, Psychology, the Humanities, and Art Theory, among others, effectively corralling this interdisciplinary method as an “anti-discipline” (Sardar and Loon 8). Its lack of a fixed methodology, certain in other academic specializations and the combinations of theories and principles appropriated from other disciplines, gives Cultural Studies its *Anti-Disciplinary* tag.

Cultural Studies’ kinship with predecessor Cultural Anthropology is inherent but their differences would be telling, too. While it similarly studies Society and Culture² and their external manifestations, Cultural Anthropology proposes studying Culture from the point-of-view of an ‘outsider.’ As a 19th century discipline (with methodologies dated to the ‘scientific’ outlook of this era), Cultural Anthropology denotes Culture to be an ‘other’ suggesting Culture to be a separate entity. The method of study is like dissecting a specimen through the lens of a microscope. This analogy describes the scholar postulating principles-methodologies gained from his viewing vantage position.

The scholar takes a perspective looking in from the outside, a space-time environment separately situated from the specimen. Being in his/her ‘position’ vis-à-vis the subject-specimen’s position, the scholar then proposes answers gravitating from what he/she would think of as rational. Values are similarly set from this scholar’s position. Dates fall within the periphery of the scholar’s perspective of a timeline. History is marked by timelines that is Christian oriented because of the Eurocentric viewpoint of the scholar. The conventional B.C. and A.D. tags mark events set within the points of reference to the life of Christ.

Moreover, the scholar explicating his ‘present’ position suggests that other phenomena are ‘past.’ E.B. Tylor’s concept of a “primitive” society (1871) implies that this society in time will develop towards an ‘advanced’ state that the scholar now occupies.

2 Cultural Studies: Inherent Principles

Reasoning out from an already-set position underlines an implicit relation of power between scholar and subject. Decisions emanate from that who wields the instruments of discourse.³ In this case, the ‘outsider’ scholar determines outcome, decides on what constitutes knowledge. In any case, all demonstrations of expressions (even tacit ones, or subtexts) in a culture are subjects for study.

Art as Expressions

Art demonstrates the clarity of creative expressions since these can represent and reveal meanings. Art is the more stable and permanent among many demonstrable representations. These expressions are easily ascribed and documented. Architecture, dance, song, music, performance, film, and the like are evidences themselves engaging a whole society intermingling with other representations like the most conspicuous: the audience. The creative demonstrations engage a chain of cultural practices, behavior, and beliefs that cannot belie the character of Culture. Art is present in ritual, sacred expressions, entertainment, commemoration, and all other performative actions a community engages in.

Culture Studies subsumes Art Studies and Performance Studies as interconnecting disciplines. Performance is a more focused cultural indicator according to its enactment of a pre-conceived action. Where formal and more structured performances like plays, opera, or ritual music-dances are concerned, *Performance Studies* embraces other activities where “performance” is involved. Used to study Culture, *Performance* (“doings” – action, behavior, and event) is the object of inquiry (Weaver, 2016). This includes plays, games, sports, mass, meetings, and anything daily enacted, even sex. The elusive and temporal nature of *performance* equates to its tentative definition, nothing absolute, many versions noted, even as foremost Performance Studies pioneer, practitioner, and scholar Richard Schechner would define it.⁴

I recap the concerns of *Cultural Studies*:

1. Interdisciplinary field of inquiry drawing on a variety of theories and disciplines (eclectic in its methods) exploring the production and representation of meaning;
2. Exploration of Culture and cultural practices signifying representation in relation to *Power*;

“There can be no meaning without Language. No meaning, no world, no culture. No Art, no identity, no culture.”

3. *Form* studied for its social and political context;
4. Culture as object of study and moral evaluation, and the locus of political criticism, action, and change;
5. Outcomes produced from both objective and intuitive knowledge;
6. The Premise that knowledge, including our own, takes a position;
7. The “environment” of Culture grows around the concepts of “signifying practices, representation, discourse, power, articulation, texts, readers and consumption” (Barker 38).

Culture Studies: Beginnings and Ideology

Overlapping cultural ‘spaces’ (specifically, economic and political spheres gripping territories) confront social classes. In fact, these intersecting interests once generated tensions coming at the heels of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Capitalism in Western Europe. Capitalism produced more pronounced class distinctions. Subsequently in these conditions, the Marxist ideology gained support that sprung from the “new order” the Industrial Revolution fostered. Social structures — the power elites, bourgeoisie, working classes — defined the fragmentation and subsequent “class wars” between the “haves” and the “have-nots”. These class wars, which were fostered by the “contradictions” in Capitalism that grew from Feudalism, were theorized to become the impetus which would re-structure society into an advanced economic state of shared resources. From Capitalism, the modes of production were posed for an egalitarian setup. Resources were to be equally shared by the working class in a classless Utopian state. However, these outcomes have still to be realized.

We trace the origins of Cultural Studies in the industrializing West in these circumstances.

Marxism has been “modified” in more ways imagined than what was first theorized amidst the supposed contradictions among the classes. And so has modifications been enacted in Cultural Studies in its place in the social and historical context of the working class in England where this inter-discipline was born.

Working class and labor problems were keenest after World War II following the steep economic recession. To understand economic and social phenomena, an academic inquiry like Cultural Studies filled this gap.

In England, there grew in the academe a concern about how American Popular Culture pervaded the lives of the English working class. This new “colonization”

2 Cultural Studies: Inherent Principles

had become unnerving, particularly because the dominance of the British Empire, once the “Greatest Power on Earth,” had dwindled. America had positioned itself as THE hegemonic power with its ubiquitous influence worldwide, its popular culture spreading pervasively. Cultural Studies provided the analyses of values and changing attitudes.

These conditions produced new modes of inquiry into cultural dynamics, *Culture* as demonstrated by elements within (Art, for instance) and as determined by external forces (like economics and the environment).

In 1964, the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was established at the University of Birmingham, England. It was an attempt to recognize Cultural Studies as an acceptable field in the academic world. Other Centers in the US and worldwide soon followed. Cultural Studies branched out into Performance Studies, Gender Studies, Feminist Studies, Language Studies, and other cross-disciplines. They harbored the same character of inter-merging paradigms from the Social Sciences, Anthropology, and the Humanities (Art Studies). Its defining thesis entitled “Working Papers in Cultural Studies” was published in 1972.

Pioneering names include Founder Richard Hoggart (1918-2014), Raymond Williams (1921-88) at Oxford, E.P. Thompson (1924-93), and the more noted Stuart Hall (1932-2014). Founder Williams posits the all-inclusive nature of Culture as structures of family and institutions which govern social relationships and values, the “forms through which members of a society communicate.” Stuart’s premise is succinct but full: “Society is driven by conflicts based on sex, race, religion, and region, as well as class. Culture shapes people’s sense of identity just as much as economics” (Sardar and Loon 37).

The same trains of thought and academic practice recruited scholars to leading Philippine universities, the U.P. in particular, where trained Performance Studies specialists now learn, access, and produce knowledge. Still, there are too few academics putting their time on the interdisciplinary principles of Cultural Studies. We have, however, taken a leap of faith, so to speak, to establish the pioneering Cultural and Arts Studies Center in the Southern Philippines where a graduate program is being implemented.



Notes

¹The study of signs and symbols is called *Semiotics*. This inter-discipline is organic to Cultural Studies.

²Widely considered the Father of Modern Anthropology, E.B. Tylor took the Darwinian stance of an evolution of development, from the primitive to the modern. In his famous work "Primitive Cultures" (1871), Tylor postulated an evolutionary relationship between the primitive and modern cultures, that cultural achievements mark the progression of all humanity from a "savage" to a "civilized" state. His iconic definition of Culture is such: "...complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

³Ideas neatly "packaged" constitute discourse. These ideas are thematically-collected signs, codes, and representations gathered for analyses. Like any structure, discourse suggests knowledge and power as it locates itself within circles of historical, cultural, and social realities.

⁴To Schechner, Performance and the Social Sciences share methodologies in the areas of Performance as a daily occurrence, structure of sports, ritual, play, and public political behavior, Semiotics and analyses of communication modes, Human and animal behavior patterns, Psychotherapy emphasizing person-to-person interaction, Ethnography and history (from a Western perspective), and the Constitution of the theories of behavior. (Schechner, 2013)

⁵Working Class to Cultural Studies Founder E.P. Thompson is not "Structure" nor is it a category but a product of a specific historical period. "Class" forms in social relationships and cultural formations wrought over a historical period. ("The Making of the Working Class," 1978)

⁶Stuart Hall, a Jamaican migrant, later rejected Marxism. To Stuart, Cultural Studies needs both theoretical and political questions in permanent tension. The intellectual is always at the cutting edge of knowledge and theory, but class struggle (the tugs-of-war between the "haves" and the "have-nots") explains and determines everything.

Chapter 3

Culture and Art Studies: Our Context

Contextualizing to Mindanao and the Philippines

The undefined borders of Cultural Studies and its offspring in Performance Studies offer a most welcome field of study in Mindanao. Overlapping cultural spaces of traditional indigenous, Islamized, Hispanic settler-migrant communities, and the cosmopolitan communities invite conflict and rapid reforming of culture and its manifestations.

Traditional cultures easily define their indigenous roots in approximately 30 communities in Mindanao. Cultural Studies discerns the characters of these cultures and their products in this island of multifarious communities. Often unique in their practices, these communities have been under tremendous duress to maintain the integrity of their culture. Easily swept away are age-old traditions and creative expressions and their instruments exacerbated by the incursions of settlers, the media, formal education, globalization, the denigration of the environment, and consumerism, among others.

“Culture can never be preserved because the survival of any community depends on how well culture adapts to change.”

Besides the rapidly morphing cultural landscape, these challenges assault the very existence of these communities. Breach of cultural orders breeds dislocation,

uncertainty, anxiety, and disorientation — which are responded to by the Mindanao communities often with violence. A case in point is the May 2017 siege of Marawi, gunbattles lasting over five months devastating the city, the confrontations and uncertainties continue. Conflicts relating to rehabilitation continue. Beyond the simplistic binaries defining the conflicts between authority and rebellion are complex ramifications of confrontations that have culture as sources. Overlapping spaces that jostle for a sense of Order and Power preclude war. This should be the subject of a separate treatise.

Appropriating the principles and methodologies of Cultural Studies allows the scholar to dissect the dynamics of change to propound positive action. The varied Mindanao cultures within the larger hegemonic control of a political and economic system, subsumed under a majority culture mostly alien to the island's communities, interact among each other with a large degree of tolerance. Islamized Meranaos constantly interact with Christian settlers in the Iligan area in the North (the people popularly called *Iliganun*) and indigenous animistic Higa-unun intermingling practice with both neighboring Meranaos and Iliganuns. In the long course of these interactions, as cultural spaces overlap, regular conflicts have erupted.

Cultural Studies in the Southern Philippines

Taking Mindanao as our arena, we adapt from Western scholarship the principles of Cultural, Performance, and Art Studies. The principles are universal to human behavior. Clusters of contiguous cultures occupying shared boundaries will exhibit practices and expressions that have similar patterns. There is the relationship among the Manobo, the Matig-salug, and Higa-unun. Similarly, the Meranao will have similar patterns of behavior with that of the Iranun and Maguindanon. The same is true with the indigenous communities in the Cordilleras. In the cities, the influences of the dominant Afro-American popular culture determine the ways behavior and thinking form through a long thread of Manileño, Cebuano, and Davaweño lifestyles.

Culture Studies may still be the nebulous study that it is. But such is the norm of 21st century scholarship where the liberal identity and ambivalence of the Humanities persist. The disciplines that can study the phenomena in culture

“Nothing can be more basic than Culture.”

(Anthropology, Sociology, Art Studies, Linguistics, etc.) when used separately produce limited specialized individual results.

3 Culture and Art Studies: Our Context

But when these venues of knowledge are combined, their inter-connectedness realize that Aristotelian concept of the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. Liberal accession of knowledge through trans-disciplinary means enhances learning in combination (in contrast to the methods of the Pure Sciences); study proceeds more meaningfully by its connections with Humanity that is a network of combined practices producing a synergy from its parts.

While Culture embraces a complex system of thought, action, and patterns, MSU-IIT’s Culture and Art Studies paradigm truncates to the investigation of Creative Expressions — Art as both Product and Process being the object of study. These expressions manifest a Cultural Order constituting structures, relationships, production, engagements with the metaphysical world, drawing out a whole consciousness. Its pragmatic intention is to provide resources and additional knowledge and practice to our inchoate Creative Industry, Cultural Education included, in many ways to affect culture’s directions for the better good of our society.

**“Strengthen rather than
preserve Culture.”**

Three tracks, each intersecting the other, direct the studies: Performance Studies, Literature and Creative Writing, and Arts Administration.

Why Culture and Arts Studies?

Change. The truism that Culture can never be stagnant prologues every study. But to what quality is this change moving to? What constitutes “positive” change that will be for the “overall greater good” of a society?

Change is what inspires most artists to create. They set for the “ideal” which to them is a “good” that redounds to the advantage of the majority. In the same fervor to exact positive political and social developments, academics and art practitioners dissect the forms to check the inherent forces within these forms that determine the movement of culture. Ultimately, it is the Culture itself that determines the values that define “good” and the destinations where it wants to head to. We scholars articulate this for us to appreciate, understand, and perhaps influence how these forces operate. Nothing can be more basic in human life than Culture which is similarly defined as “everything” to all.

What is it in there, therefore, for Cultural Studies in the Philippines and in Mindanao? If Culture is the organic base-work of all Lifestyles, then the pervasive violence is a cultural outcome, of varied lifeways overlapping, of contradicting patterns of economics and politics confronting. Culture is the culprit of underdevelopment as Culture can be the booster of progress. Every inspiration, intent, vision emanates from Culture. Culture interjects imaginative creation that will not only boost economic production through a Creative Industry but also cement integrity (and confidence) in Culture.

Engaging in Cultural Studies allows us to understand and perhaps propose actions to unite fragmented cultures, communities often engaged in violent confrontations. Studies produce understanding. Understanding initiates tolerance. Tolerance is the roadway to Peace. Peace accompanies stable economic and social orders.

All in all, Cultural Studies articulates our narratives that explain our changing world. We artists and scholars participate because we are hopeful we can have a better world. Cultural studies should provide ultimately the knowledge and information for national culture planning that recognizes cultural pluralism and does not aim for monoculturalism.



Typologies

Classification as a Cultural Construct

“There is no one Mindanao culture; the various communities speak of multifarious lifeways, diverse and even contrasting. The notion that there is a ‘Mindanaon’ culture is a gross misrepresentation.”

Chapter 4

Charting a Mindanao Cultural Studies Map

The island of Mindanao is peopled by about 18 indigenous communities (“Indigenous People” UHM; Ulindang, “Lumad”) and multifarious settler groups from the North. Mindanao is likewise home to 13 Islamized communities (UHM) with cultural ways manifested in their expressions.

Media accounts about the island often represent events as a “Mindanao” happening as if there is a singularly definable territory inhabited by a single community. Despite the span of the Philippines’ second largest island (97,530 square kilometers), Mindanao events, even those reported in the far corners of the island, are misconstrued as happening within a confined territory. The overused and often misappropriated “Mindanao” is the established nomenclature even in conceiving of a “Mindanao” culture. There is no one Mindanao culture; the various communities speak of multifarious lifeways, diverse and even contrasting.

Islamized communities mostly found in Mindanao are roughly made up of approximately 11-13 ethnic groups, the more major ones are the: Meranao, Maguindanon, Iranun, TauSug, Yakan, Sama (including the Sama Laut or Badjao, Jama Mapun, Sama Balimbing, Sama Simunul, Sama Sibutu, and Sama Bangingi), Sangil, Kaagan, Kolibugan, Palawan, and the Molboc

Labelling has been determined by nurturing. Labeling is a by-product of a formal education abetted by colonial rule. Euro-American

constructs imported and overlaid in our own manners of representing our world categorize from frames where order is set in boxes — the frames of Science. Framing creates a state of mind of a world objectified to allow ‘truth’ to become tangible to the mind. In the absence of other systems of ordering, putting labels in boxes suffices. Such has been our orientation in the manner we conceive and map our world.

Learning labels: the Stamps of Science

Science maps classification and hierarchy. Science understands Life as kingdoms, phyla, classes, orders, families, genera, and species. The manners of inductive and deductive reasoning are linear and boxed. Tangible states of matter are mapped according to the densities of their particles: solid, liquid, gas, plasma, and most recently, the Bose-Einstein condensate (or BEC) (Bagley, “Matter”).

Framing categories develop mindsets in the spheres of the imagination where creation is medium for representing, thus understanding the world. Art presents the same manners of labelling: Visual, Temporal, and Combined. If classed according to mediums, Art classifies: Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, Literature, Music, Dance, and Film.

Classification in this manner can be detailed divisions of Literature, like Prose and Poetry. Detailed sub-classifications have emerged from the *Fiction* category, like Speculative Fiction, Flash Fiction, Historical Fiction, and the like. In Theatre, conventional orders label Tragedy, Comedy, Musical Theatre, and Dance Theatre.

“Power ensures that a cultural order is in place.”

Using the same system of classifying clusters inherent in Mindanao, practice has produced the “tri-people” label. The system produces the impression of an island composed of three major cultures, one group separate from the other. This clustering may be convenient, but it poses a lot of questions and is deficient in many respects.

Our studies have been replete with labels plastering some sense of order. The dialectics of “otherness” has mapped our boxed categorizing. Our sense of reality abounds with opposites called *binaries*. The opposite of *good* is *evil*, for instance. If one is not *male*, she would be *female*. Dichotomies set our contrasting ideas of “primitive” vis-à-vis the “advanced,” of the Third World (in economics) or the Third Sex (in gender placements) as an added “other” to *male* and *female*.

Labels and categorizing have been determined by culture and history. At the helm of such ‘decisions’ is power well positioned in a social hierarchy that decides the meanings

4 Charting a Mindanao Cultural Studies Map

of concepts. Power need not necessarily be persons (because persons can only become vehicles to perpetuate a status quo). Power is the centrifugal force which ensures that a cultural order is in place.

Order as Reality

But are these classifications indicative of the Mindanao orders? (Or the total Filipino “Order” in general?) Have we been nurtured in a landscape of knowledge that has adapted classification that do not apply to Mindanao realities? Are we filtering a reality through alien lenses? What options can traditional ordering therefore take?

Why have epics like the *ulahingan* and the *darangen* been often classified as literature when in fact these epics are conglomerations of trans-mediums? Being performative acts, these epics may be more appropriately labelled *performance*.

Using the manner of the knowledge we have been nurtured in, how does one therefore reconcile inconsistencies? Will these classifications work in instances when we describe *performance* rather than as specialized *dance*, *music*, or *literature*? Is it possible to research about these multifarious groupings in one trans-discipline rather than deal with the aspects of their culture in separate multi-disciplines?

Classifications depict a sense of order. Language is a system of order. These demonstrated expressions show us how a culture maps life. In making sense of life, the bearers of these languages solve how to deal with their world, to harmonize with or confront it, to survive, to cope, and to enjoy what to them is beauty and pleasure.

When we refer to “language,” we do not only refer to text spoken or written but to the whole system of multifarious inter-engaging expressions. These include chants, prayers, gestures, use of space, song, music, guttural or nasal utterances, facial expressions, and many, many more.

These expressions manifest how a people has “ordered” and understood their reality. These demonstrated expressions (Art not being the least important) are representations of a people’s world — what they see, how they see, what they feel, and how they feel. These expressions signify meanings and make sense of a world.

These creative expressions are understood through forms. Forms allow persons to communicate, to break down barriers to build understanding that integrates a community. Forms become living cultural archives of how people

shape their identity integrating a whole sphere of commonly shared knowledge, values, and practice. Forms ensure that knowledge link one generation to the next through institutions a people themselves establish: family, schools, narratives, rituals, communal gatherings, Art and language among the most effective.

But there is more to *form* than just appearance.

FORM

Form as beginning meaning, not end

Many see *form* as the end indicator of culture. *Form* is insubstantial without the values, functions, and meanings it designates. Being a 'dress,' *form* therefore bears the meanings it outfits. Content dressed in a *form* is given sense by the culture that produces the *form*. This signification should be meaningful to those who belong to the same culture but may not bear the same meanings for those outside of this culture.

Signification is looking beyond the 'dress' of form that grows from many influences and determinants. Form is shaped by milieu (time and place) grown in a defined space for a long time (history).

Consider the natural environment that has produced the TauSug *pangalay* (Sama *igal*, similarly). This dance form developed bio-mechanic¹ techniques particular among sea dwellers who have lived for generations with the sea. Their reared skills differ from that of the Kalinga women of the Cordillera ranges who could balance *banga* water jars atop their heads while navigating winding and steep mountain steps.

Cultural qualities of a community can also determine the quality of the music it produces, generally. A community creates music nurtured by generations in defined places to serve social functions. Thus, music morphs mirroring values. While this argument may require more evidenced probity, the differences in every community's musical qualities lie in the intrinsic lifestyle that have influenced musical structures and techniques.

The 'tight' melodic character of an Ilocano lullaby contrasts the 'soaring' melodic structure (wide note intervals) of a Sugbuanon *harana* or the lilt in a *kuratsa*. Meranao singing, like Manobo chants, flow in close note intervals overpassing the 'precise' separated pitched tones of a 12-tone scale flowing from one tone to the next semitone.²

Dance is *form*, and so are music and literature. These represent meanings for human sense facilities to discern. People hear, see, touch, and understand from the mediums that have made these forms tangible to us. Response ensues because

4 Charting a Mindanao Cultural Studies Map

people 'sense' form. The resulting representations from these forms grow from cultural nurturing. Representation can only mean if the receivers identify with the expressions.

Form like the *sagayan* that mimics war demonstrates to the Meranao what its community expects from them. The *sagayan* as a pervasive expression indicates that defense and integration are a community's primary concerns. Every Meranao male is expected to know and enact the *sagayan*, which signals a symbol as well as a meaning shared among them. *Form* as a cultural construct signals survival. It showcases expectations. That is why form makes sense to its owners.

Forms as Expressions, as Mirrors of Culture

Mindanao cultural communities settle as contiguous clusters. One community resides beside the other. One influences the other, their practices and values overlapping the others'. Overlapping cultures continuously create 'cross-breeds,' cultures constantly evolving through time and space. Islam influences indigenous values as indigenous practice influences the practice of Islam. Cosmopolitan centers bring new practices to traditional folk settler communities. Liberal access to media and technology changes outlooks. In these all, Culture cannot be static.

Clear-cut divides among cultures will be contentious. The indigenous spirit world of the *nitibo* Rogongon Higaunon will adapt elements from the Folk Catholicism of the lowland Iligan settlers because their interactions are constant. The values shared by these same Higaonon community will be shared by next-door neighbor Islamized Meranao particularly because inter-marriages between these groups are usual. The intermarriages have produced an emerging sub-culture which natives call the *kalibogan* (Cebuano, half-breed).

Defining Cultural and Art Studies

Critical discourses may be explored in various innovative ways. Cultural Studies and its descendant Performance Studies analyze art beyond *form* (the *Synchronic Approach*). Form presents to us the initial step in appreciating a culture we study. Again, we are introduced to 'dress' first. Studies extend to investigating Art further understanding it as a manifestation of a milieu (*Diachronic*). Our studies dissect further into reading culture and communal values in form using Semiotics, Linguistics, Literary Studies, Sociology, Philosophy, Cultural Anthropology, History, and other inter-disciplines that combine to produce the approaches in Cultural Studies.

Eclectic methods explore the production and representation of meaning. Meanings are produced from both objective and intuitive knowledge. Culture grows around the concepts of “signifying practices, representation, discourse, power, articulation, texts, readers and consumption” (Barker, Theory and Practice 38).

Our own pioneering Center in Mindanao directs itself to evolving a Mindanao school-of-thought, should this be reasonable. The establishment of a studies center in the fringes is auspicious because it breaks the hierarchical hold of the ‘center’ on our education. Our educational system is held by monolithic centers declaring fiat after fiat on *what* and *how* to teach. Precisely, the study of Culture and Cultural Studies is revolutionary. Cultural Studies is anti-center. It is an anti-discipline, because it is a “discipline without a discipline.”

Such iconoclastic landscape empowers scholar-artists to question long-held theoretical frames. Can we as ‘revolutionary’ scholars fit into these frames? Should we reconstruct innovative frameworks inspired by the cultures of the island? (Take the case of Feminist/Gender issues popular in capitalist countries: do these issues apply to our traditional cultures.

We ask: is female empowerment a *lumad* issue? If it is, how is this manifested in, say, the weaving designs of T’boli women or in the manner males dominate politics in traditional hierarchies? Using Marxist paradigms, dialectics point to binary positions (opposites), but are these contradictions operational in the evolution of indigenous communities? Are creative expressions we examine built on universally-accepted pre-conceived structures?) The excitement of such explorations lies in the fact that the field of inquiry is practically a frontier.

A Mindanao School-of-Thought

Mindanao presents challenges and opportunities for Cultural Studies. It hosts more varied indigenous communities interacting with Islamized, settler, and cosmopolitan cultures than any region in the country. The overlapping of cultural spaces has produced conflicts. Interests confront. Intersecting spaces have also merged values manifested in creative expressions like designs, performances, music, narratives, and the mindsets of these communities. In the process, constructs are constantly re-forming. The field is exciting.

These circumstances shape the character of the cultures of the island. From them, we can develop frames to draw the theoretical dimensions that can produce our own schools-of-thought.

Charting a Mindanao Cultural Studies Map

We reiterate this list of the Mindanao cultural situation, though cursorily:

1. Varied cultures of largely opposing values interact;
2. Colonial incursions were most minimal relative to other Philippine communities;
3. Tradition manifested in many of the island's creative expressions is strong; and,
4. A typology emerges drawn from the all these representations, but not from the scholar's points-of-view but from the sources themselves.

The variety of cultures depicts a multi-cultural "Mindanaon" landscape. However, not in any measure is "Mindanaon" homogenous in the usual manners "Mindanao" and its connotations have been depicted. Not only do beliefs differ but lifestyles and their expressions contrast. The wars are indications of these clashes of overlapping spaces. Stating therefore with the notion that there is a "Mindanaon" Culture is a gross misrepresentation.



Notes

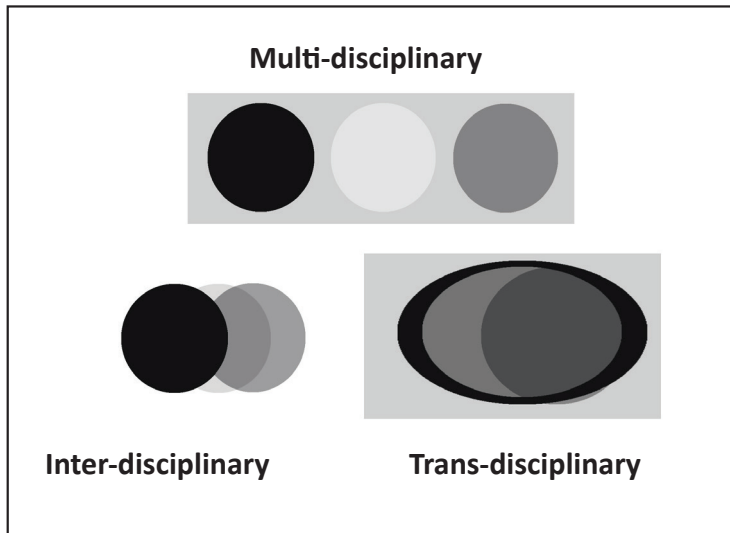
¹Biomechanics appropriates the study of how external forces affect bodies and the orientations of movements and muscular tendencies. The control of action and dance vis-à-vis gravity defines the movement character of the body. Derived from the science of mechanics, these investigations date back to the work of Italian physiologist Giovanni Alfonso Borelli during the Renaissance. Russian Vsevolod Meyerhold adapted the system for his acting and movement techniques in the 1920s.

We use "biomechanics" here to approximate the various movement characteristics developed from differing environments. Different environments have produced differences in the orientations of the muscles vis-à-vis the whole body, thus the character of dance varies. Sulu dances which are sea-nurtured will have a distinct quality from mountain-environment dances such that enacted by the Cordillera cultures.

²Intervals between tones to the next higher or the next lower have often been divided through a "logarithmic scale," usually a twelve-tone equal temperament (also, 12 equal temperament, 12-TET, or 12-ET). The octave is divided equally into 12 parts, the smallest being 1/12 the width of an octave, also called a semitone. The division between C (do) to C# (do#) will formulate the same logarithm between E (mi) and F (fa), being semitones. For the Western scale therefore, one octave of 12 semitones moves from the root (Do or C, for instance, to Ti or B, before another higher Octave begins). Scales are usually tuned to a standard pitch of 440 Hz, called A440 (la). All other notes emanate as semitones from this standard upwards or downwards.

This Science of Music demands precision. "Pitch perfect" is the standard, an accuracy based on Mathematics. Musics of non-Western cultures, however, have different norms and standards among these the instrumental and vocal expressions of indigenous and Islamized communities of Mindanao.

Learning processes draw from other fields of knowledge cutting barriers merging modules to come up with new solutions and a deeper understanding of Humanity



Chapter 5

The Order of Disciplines¹

“The humanities are the stories, the ideas, and the words that help us make sense of our lives and our world. The humanities introduce us to people we have never met, places we have never visited, and ideas that may have never crossed our minds. By showing how others have lived and thought about life, the humanities help us decide what is important in our own lives and what we can do to make them better. By connecting us with other people, they point the way to answers about what is right or wrong, or what is true to our heritage and our history. The humanities help us address the challenges we face together in our families, our communities, and as a nation.”

Ohio Humanities Council, www.ohiohumanities.org

The ‘division’ of Disciplines is founded on the principles that explicate the manner or mode knowledge is acquired. These manners make realities understandable and are called “cognition”. Knowledge acquired in the course of human history has developed the Sciences. Science has taught us methods in a way that is structured.

In a quick glance, the kind of learning we nurture allows us to dispose of an “order” from our abstractions about what we ‘sense’ around us. What seems to be a confused environment can only allow meaning to form if these are put into an “order” which our

minds can make sense of. Therefore, we chart, we map, and we classify because this is the manner our minds comprehend disparate ideas.

Much of this kind of ordering and interpretation was constructed during the Renaissance in Europe and found widespread adherents in 19th and 20th century Science. The development of this kind of inductive logic came after years of “dogma” and strict religious prohibitions. Thus, the provenance of truth laid in “Objective Knowledge” where a thing can only be real if it is tangible and observable. Belief, feeling, and intuition laid in the other dimension of knowledge that was subjective and mattered little to the exposition of “truth.”

The concept of “perspective” and “Man” as measure took focus after the Medieval Period (circa 5th to 15th century A.D., after the Fall of the Roman Empire), resuscitating Platonic, Aristotelian, and Cartesian philosophies and their counterparts in Newton and Bacon. The focus bloomed as European education moved into the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason using a version of “reason” as basis.

We took our education from this system even while indigenous learning systems continue to this day. There too are the systems, imposed by ancient civilizations like those of China, and Japan, whose learning schemas cannot be considered ancient even when viewed in a contemporary sense.

“Science is structured knowledge. It cannot quantify the ‘supersensible,’ the moral, the virtuous, intuition.”

But the Sciences, whose sense of Order has been nurtured primarily in the West — Euro-centric, rooted in classic Aristotelian philosophy, reasoning later re-ordered by Kantian², Hegelian, and Foucauldian principles, among many others — bring a perspective in thinking and understanding that requires observation and testing: the empirical sense. It was convenient to test two opposing concepts, *binaries* we call these: good-evil, light-dark, primitive-advanced, male-female, as this became the bases of the structures of knowledge. However, in this binary way of reasoning there is always a “world” (the “supersensible,” the moral, the virtuous) that Science cannot quantify.

The Order nevertheless rooted our manners through how we assign disciplines in our contemporary universities, our Orders of Learning. There is abstraction, certainly, as when non-tangible realities are made tangible to us by equations, as in the recent findings on gravitation proposed by Einstein or in the explorations of matter down into the quantum (sub- sub-atomic) levels. But much has remained in the “realm of the senses”, so to speak. These can only be quantified as far as human knowledge can detect them.

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We can abstract, induce, and conceptualize. Not all can be the domain of order that Science proposes; hence we have intercrosses. Because in the domains of the intuitive, creation takes place. Science has no answer to this.

How then is Culture and its multiple manifestations in Art and action fit into Objective Knowledge when the sources of all these expressions are intuition and imagination?

Order

We need to “order” Order, to order Dis-order in the manner we are taught. These manners are our tools but we may be hampered by the limitation of our tools. There is thus the need for “cross-border” knowledge, as all learning begins with trying to make sense of what we as far as human faculties can sense. We begin by assigning texts for tags that delineate concepts. In the process, we formulate a Language. (Note that this does not only refer to a generic “language” as our everyday medium of communication. I refer to a specialized conglomeration of texts and their accompanying contexts that evolves within a discipline or within a culture.)

The formulated Language uses our everyday language and carries the latter’s cultural attachments, meanings that are better understood in context. Major inadequacies hamper the use of the Language because when used in context, meaning becomes significant only to its user.

Our disciplines in the university display the manners Humans have dealt with the accession of knowledge. *On one end, the empirical, on the other, the intuitive.* Like a pendulum, one end is pre-disposed to proving truth by being empirical and the other end, by intuition. This is how we have ordered learning in our universities.

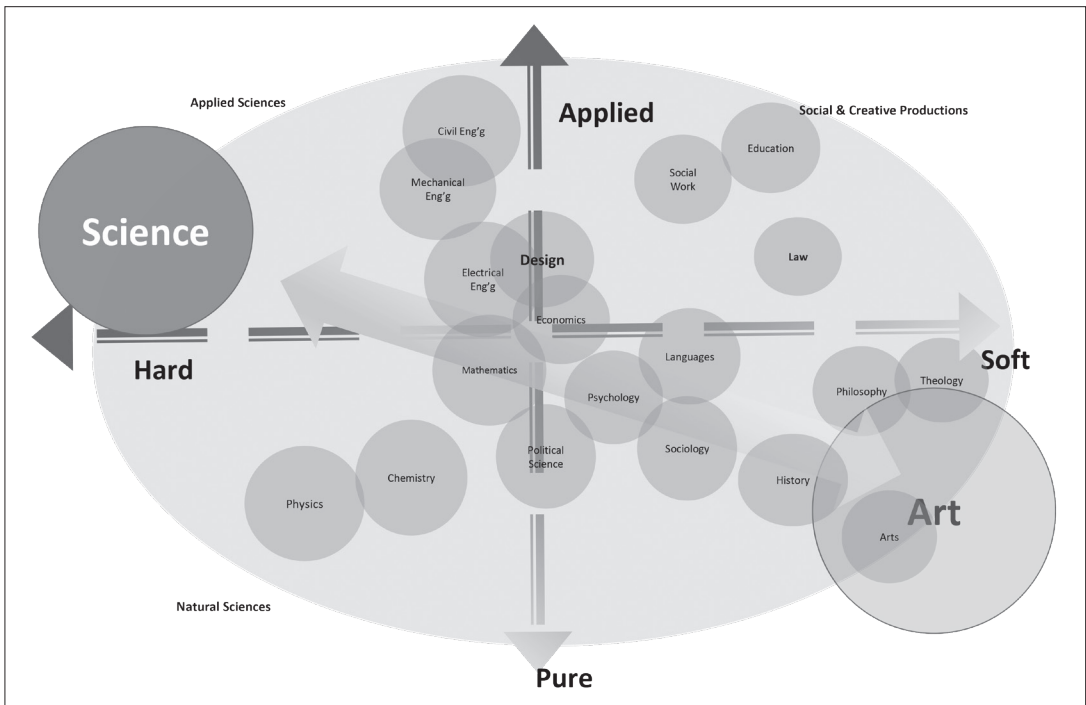
Learning tells us that all should begin somewhere, and that is what making sense of our realities refer to. So we create disciplines, and occupying extreme points in this pendulum is Science on one end and Arts on the other. The binaries cannot tell us the whole story. Grey areas lie in between.

The division of disciplines is an irony because there should be none. Psychologist Anthony Biglan classifies disciplines into “hard” or “paradigmatic” disciplines and “soft” or “pre-paradigmatic” disciplines. The divide indicates boundaries between the natural sciences and humanities/social sciences. (qtd. in Krishnan 11-12). Biglan also distinguishes

“... the university displays the manners we have dealt with in the accession of knowledge: on one end the empirical, on the other the intuitive.”

disciplines that are “pure” or primarily theoretical (e.g., mathematics) from disciplines that are “applied” (e.g., engineering), and disciplines that engage with “living systems” (e.g., biology) from those that deal with “non-living systems” (e.g., history). He continues to inform us about how disciplines may be more respected than others, but his points are contentious.

My proposal is to overlap disciplines, like circles intersecting with other circles. As one moves towards the centers of these circles, specialization to the discipline will become more essential. The core principles these disciplines operate in become more pronounced. Further from the center means a dilution of content as the discipline merges with the contents of other disciplines that may operate in opposing methodologies.



Adapted from the iconic work of Anthony Biglan's taxonomy that identified three dimensions to academic disciplines: (1) paradigmatic (hard versus soft); (2) application (pure versus applied); and (3) involvement with living or organic matter (life versus nonlife systems). The diagram moves from disciplines that have clearer paradigms (Sciences) to those with more “intuitive” modes of inquiry (Arts and Social Sciences). Applied fields refer to the practical application of knowledge to present situations. Mathematics, history, and philosophy (to majority of academicians) seem to have less “practical” application hence their “pure” dimension. (Biglan, “Characteristics of Subject Matter” 195-203); (Education Encyclopedia “Academic Disciplines”)

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Mathematics, for instance, will have practical application further from the core of its circle. “Practical application” means its use in instances like in measuring of kilometers driving from school to home, time spent on the road in traffic, or the percentage for leisure money from one’s monthly income. Towards the center of the Math circle will be more abstract and theoretical formulations of algebra and calculus. The fringes of the Math circle overlap with Design, Visual Arts, Architecture, Economics, and many more.

Disciplines with particular methodologies produced by similar constructs of “logic” are clustered (i.e., system of how knowledge was abstracted). In this regard, Science will have a shared method, while the Arts will access knowledge in subjective ways different from the impersonal means of Science. The boundaries do not entirely make one discipline exclusive from the other. The differences do not lie in their content but in the manner their contents have been arrived at — their “logic”. Again as an example, Science takes objective abstraction to arrive at information that is empirical. Certain disciplines in the Social Sciences appropriate these “scientific” quantitative methods like Sociology and Psychology. History abstracts postulations via an order that is time-based in a community’s story. Political Science (precisely a “science”) abstracts from events that have been observed and formulated into principles.

At the other end of the pendulum are disciplines whose outputs are produced by intuition and passion. The Arts, like Creative Writing, are organized also in orders set by inductive logic. Literature, while being products of the imagination, has set structures influenced by Science. Like Psychology and Anthropology, Literature studies characters and the development of their personalities in a plot through motivation stirred by conflict. So this is how our disciplines in the Universities are ordered.

The logic may be sound. Yet consider: *all knowledge cannot be boxed.*

There is knowledge we have accessed and categorized as “indigenous systems,” beyond the logic of science. Consider acupuncture, trans-meditation, astral travel, the lore of the ancient Vedic or indigenous medicine. De-constructions — how the logic of Science is challenged — happen every day not only in the manner we think. A University requires deconstructed thinking because it exists to question, to build by destroying old frames, to open new routes, to journey into the unknown. This is how new knowledge is borne.

We cannot and should not cut ourselves into disciplines because to do so would be to court ignorance. We take in from all disciplines, to collaborate means. That is why we are called the **University**.



All knowledge cannot be boxed. To frame knowledge would be to court ignorance. We take in from all disciplines, to collaborate through means where we can access knowledge. That is why we are called the “University”.

Notes

¹The essay was first presented as a Keynote Lecture in the Forum “Strengthening the Identity of the Humanities in University Research,” at the Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro City, in February 28, 2017.

²Through reason human beings can “discover and live up to the basic principles of knowledge and action without outside assistance, above all without divine support or intervention” (Critique of Pure Reason, 1871). The human being ‘creates the elements of knowledge of the world himself, a priori, from which he, as, at the same time, an inhabitant of the world, constructs a world-vision in the idea’ (Opus postumum, 21: 31). All inquiries answer: “What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope?”

Chapter 6

Inter-textuality¹

Giving Meaning to Living is Inter-textual

Text can never be neutral. It cannot stand independent and must refer to something or many other things to produce *meaning*. Text produces meanings in *con*-text with other texts. The resulting understanding is shaped by these intersections of texts, texts which bring with them their own prior signification. Inter-textual understanding, in fact, occurs in every representation, in utterance or in every gesture we make. Meanings form in the resulting responses to these significations. A cough. A stare. A wink. Even a stoic response. These actions are signified as far as their representations connect, or when connections of understandings are consummated between producer and receiver.

The producer of the representation — the *signal* or *sign* — and the receiver will commit meanings in a transaction that is culturally negotiated. That is why a receiver will give meaning to texts depending on how he/she has been nurtured in a cultural environment.

Inter-textuality occurs in everything tangible we represent. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (2016-) has the propensity to ‘curse’ especially during his impromptu speeches. This habit, we will argue, is his upbringing, a habit he has imbibed in a cultural environment that has shaped this kind of exchange.

To translate his ‘profanities’ literally will get him into a lot of trouble especially when his phrases are lost in translation. This kind of speech also

does not well represent his President's office, as many will argue, because the office symbolizes the country. His language, to his critics, is 'gutter-bred', unbecoming of one occupying the highest post. His is the type of language one does not utter in 'polite' circles. Here already are expectations of representations — that a president should speak and behave like what a society expects a president to be.

In context, however, these 'expletives' drive down certain points, especially during emphatic moments when Duterte interjects a "*putangina!*" (trans: "son of a whore"). What seems literally correct in translation is not exact in its contextual representation. While "putang-ina" is a popular expletive among the masses, its translation "son of a whore" is distant and awkward, not even used as idiom among native English speakers. "Sonnamagan" is more natural, but in no way is "putangina" an insult to one's mother, as in its use in the Duterte language.

In the above example, the 'dress' misfits the assumed signification, unless one really means this — to insult another's mother, literally.

In Iligan, good friends greet each other with "*bilat-i-'nanay mo!*" translated as "your mother's vagina". But in no way is one insulting the other. In context, these are greetings of kinship, of endearment.

The terms of endearment of Meranao adults for children are *orak* (for boys, translated as "scrotum") and *puki* (for girls, translated as "vagina").

The mis-representations become more complex because we deal with "texts" or language that we borrow, a 'dress' that in many instances misfits its body. In the mind, we 'dress' our thoughts with native signs and when we utter these with language we borrow, then "*na yawa na 'ta!*". Translation: "we have been possessed by the devil," which is not what it means.

Culture as Platform

The clearest example of how meanings are produced by inter-textual processes is by analyzing how experiencing a performance works. The verb "experience" here is used rather than "watch" because this is what really happens: action and meaning are recreated by the combination of texts that occurs in the mind and transforms into experience. The reader-receiver is not an observer but a participant.

"Performance" recreates action in the mind. When one reads a novel or any printed work like a short story or poem, or listens to epics, a performance ensues. In all these, the stage is Culture. It may not be a physical stage but a virtual imagined space where action and meaning takes place. Culture is our mind's filtering prism. Culture provides the lenses through which we filter meaning and the sound box that

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allows us to recognize the representations of text. All these meanings become tangible because we dress them with “text” either visually, aurally, or both.

So what is “text” and why “inter-textual”?

What is “text”?

Intertextuality was first mentioned in the 60’s when Bulgarian immigrant to Paris Julia Kristeva wrote of the concept in her essay “Word, Dialogue, and Novel” (1966). She was a student of Roland Barthes whose seminal “Death of the Author” (1967) gave us new perspectives on the subjective readings of text.

Kristeva reinforced Mikhail Bakhtin, where “literary structure does not simply exist but is generated in relation to another structure” (Kristeva 36). Meaning generated from “intersections” of “textual surfaces” cannot be fixed, as dialogue among the writings of the writer, the character, and culture. The writer being a product of a society and history intervenes in the writing, thus a diachronic intersecting where that which the author represents transforms into the form (synchrony) of the texts.

In much of what we read about intertextuality, a limited illustration applies to novels and other literary works where their present texts have references to earlier works. Intertextuality here has come to mean literary works inspired by earlier works so that new readings (and therefore re-formed representations) are layered on old understandings.

For instance, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* anchored on the ancient Homeric epic journey is reset in the author’s Dublin. This can also refer to the many “re-forming” of the narratives of Shakespeare’s plays today. These have kept the essential plot and I am certain were also traced from earlier narratives and texts: *Lion King* from *Hamlet*, *West Side Story* from *Romeo and Juliet*, and even more obviously Akira Kurosawa’s *Ran* from *King Lear*.

Lore in epics is not exempt. The *Sarimanok* is an inter-textual image translated whose bird marks are found all over Asia, even long back to the Classical Phoenix. Lacsamana and Raja Mangidiri in the Meranao *darangen* are clear traces of the Ramayana, whose textual evidences are all over Asia².

Poets layer their texts with references to sizzling political and social issues using irony, tongue-in-cheek, sarcasm, or direct satire to generate hearty comic responses. There will be NO meaning in these poems without “prior knowledge” to real issues represented, again, by “text,” the totality of which is “Language.”

These samples show that meanings are produced from the remnants of representations (the sources) transformed from their earlier signifying systems re-formed and combined to produce new meanings in new environments.

The broad meanings of Language as a representation (“sign” or “signal”) do not only refer to the printed or spoken word (as “text”) but to other signs and systems that signify, like action, music, design, color, shape, utterance, and the mediums used to express anything.

Intertextuality works within a mosaic of other texts. In an “ecology” of signs and symbols³, language exists and functions (Lotman in Noth 3) in confluence to produce meanings. “Text” as representation of meaning evolves from these “relational process and practices.” This posit opposes the study that “text” is a “static structure and product” and confronts the Saussurean view of formal lexical semantics — the study of meaning in the structure of language.

Three dominating spaces are at play: the writing subject, the addressee, and the text to distil new representations. That is — the author communicating to his /her perceived readers, and his/her work that will draw meanings from the “intersections” of “texts.” (Kristeva 34)

Still, genres defined by their mediums and forms are outcomes of language structures. The novel, for instance, was created from a mindset and a language habit nurtured by Industrializing Europe and, later on, America. The linear logic of the novel in its narrative (as was the logic of Science during these industrializing times) betrays a reasoning accomplished by a chronology analogous to the assembly-line production of goods. So too is the short story and other narrative types that have been shaped through this assembly-line logic.

In the theater of *Realism*, a character’s motivation moves plot towards an ‘ending’, a resolution. Plot operates consequent to the development of character. It is subordinate to character. Actions of character develop because of an underlying psychology that prods persons to act on their “wants”. Psychology was a product of scientific investigation of behavior relying on empirical information that detailed how a character acts in given circumstances.

From the above models, meanings in “text” are based on objective representation — what-you-see is *what* is represented, this being in the *Realist* mode. In these “scientific” times, Objective Truth played a dominant reference.

These samples point to *forms* in Language and expressions reflecting the author’s external world, his perspective of the space of his “universe” manifested in the internal manners he orders his “texts”. In Linguistics, there is such a concept called *syntagma*, or the manner linguistic units is structured (similar to a sequence of events forming a narrative). Syntagmatic relationships identify meanings especially when used to analyze multi-media expressions like posters, ads, film, and the like.

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In another dimension, storytelling among non-Western cultures grows from modes nurtured in spaces (and Language) where time is measured in cycles, in eons, where existence is a “mystic” religious experience rather than an objective occurrence. Note the absence of any linear narrative in epics, where life and after-life spaces move back and forth or in circles.

Performance

Let me use the instance of *Performance*, at the risk of simplifying our concepts.

Any act (or notion) of this process of communication combining subject, addressee, and text (within a cultural, social, and historical environment) is *performance*. When you read a novel or short story, the action induced by text

“Meanings are produced in the interplay of ‘text’ during performance. ‘Text’ to have meaning cannot be independent.”

recreates in the mind; you — the reader-observer-participant — sub-consciously immerses in these spaces. Text stirs action and meaning through a combination of texts. Your involvement and understanding anchors to some cultural landscape. The ‘dress’ that

demonstrates these ideas and actions can only become alive in conjunction with other ‘dresses’ or texts. This places the reader-viewer in an actively participating position. In the process, the reader-viewer determines meaning.⁴

Performance is the active engagement of the exchange of meanings between the work and the audience within a “semiotic” environment of other texts. Let me posit my argument with specifics.

The author will have intention: to teach or to elicit an emotional or intellectual response. He will therefore select text that to him will form meanings with his intended readers-audience. Expectations are already set in the beginning. Negotiations originate from the seed of the exchange. The narrative will bear a logic that should be clear both to him and to his intended audience. If it is a singular effect or theme he wants to express, he selects from a plethora of texts — music, visuals, sounds, dialogue — that will be central to his intention.

American stand-up comedy will elicit little or no response from a Filipino audience because the intertextual references are vague. In comedy, material is directed to existing social institutions that are satirized through irony or any device. To respond and laugh, the audience needs to be inside the circle of these institutions

knowledgeable about them. The audience requires “prior knowledge” about them to enable response. Response is anchored on concrete reference shaping meaning from inter-connections with other references.

Meanings are produced in the interplay of text during the active engagement of the *performance*. Performance embraces space, time, prevailing moods, references to institutions, to gossip, popular quotes, images attached to prevailing sentiments, words, and many more. “Text” to have meaning cannot be independent.

Intertextuality

We condense our concepts:

1. all Lit/Art/Performance are shaped in relation to one another, one referring to another, one traced to another and others;
2. all Lit/Art/Performance use Language with meanings that refer to other Languages with their meanings to represent a new meaning;
3. new meanings are produced with these interlayering; this interlayering becomes more complex with Performance when more elements are involved; and,
4. understanding of meaning depends on “prior knowledge” usually determined by Culture

Caveat: Intertextuality as Method

The study of intertextuality is both complex and nebulous. Consequently, its comprehension will have to be thoroughly scanned with the appropriate “semiotic” lenses. The Linguistic and Literary patterns we grapple with are built from structures fostered in “literary” Europe and Russia, extending to America. At certain times of their histories, these forms and their representations subsequently trickled down to us colonies that have adapted English as a *lingua franca*.

Language structures have been analyzed, particularly by the Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Schools where language structure becomes “prior knowledge” rooted in cultures different from ours. Principles in an inter-discipline of explanations by known Literary Criticism and Linguistic philosophers like Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Bakhtin, Lotman, and a lot more have consolidated our understandings of language and “text”.

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To us in in these disciplines, the adaptation of these theories and principles challenges Formal Criticism (the so-called “New Criticism”), Structuralism, or the manners we are taught to analyze in formal semantics the study of Language.

So here’s the caveat. The manners of writing subject, decisions to addressee, and the rootedness to a specific linguistic landscape that produces context different from ours can upturn all prior theorizing if transplanted here.

Intertextuality poses itself a method we can re-form to adapt to the manners we understand Living and the Texts of Living transplanted to our spaces. By certain principles of transcreation and translations, our scholarships gain bases and relevance.

Intertextuality is a method, a cultural process we inherit from Living itself. Around us is the World, our Reality. But we can only make sense of these if we represent these with Language. Arbitrariness in Language means picking up that ‘dress’ of an idea with little logic in its origins; but when this ‘dress-text’ mingles in time with other texts, *meaning* forms and choice/use no longer becomes arbitrary. By choice (which is a cultural option), Language cannot be arbitrary.

But Language too is not the first in the order of understanding. We have developed Maps of meaning cultivated in us, of how we sense things, how we make ideas logical to us, how we order *Order*, consequently to become tangible only if we ‘dress’ them up in our terms. (see also **Chapter 5, The Order of Disciplines**)

Understanding is induced by text: a sound, a written symbol, or an image. Around us, to understand means grasping that idea ‘dressed’ by text. Signification is construed when the ‘dress’ of an idea combines with other ‘dresses’ of ideas to form meaning.

“Intertextuality is a method, a cultural process we inherit from Living itself.”



Notes

¹The original essay was first presented as a Plenary Lecture in the conference Proposals on *Language and Literary Studies*, MSU-IIT, September 13, 2016.

²My works have intertextual re-formings: *Suhi* from *Oedipus*, *Sita* from the *Ramayana*, *Ranaw: Isang Alamat* from the Higaunun narrative of Bato Lakungan, and the multitude of transcreated pieces morphed from layers of texts and sub-texts. My process called *Transcreation* employs the logic of the “human sciences” to grab meanings in one dimension to be understood in a similar manner in another dimension, but this is another story. (see: Fernandez, *Making Theatre: The Craft of the Stage*, 2017)

³Refer to Yuri Lotman’s “semiosphere” for further readings (see: Nöth, Winfried. (2014). The topography of Yuri Lotman's semiosphere. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. 18. . 10.1177/1367877914528114.)

⁴However, scholars and linguists can dissect meanings from the authors themselves through a reading-viewing of any work. Authors reveal through their works their intended representations, leanings, and cultural profiles.

Chapter 7

Imagined Performance

Philippine Literature in English as “Transcreated Reality”

Filipino students in high school and college have been taught stories of mainstay selections that are standard readings in our teaching of Literature. Using this as springboard, this essay explores how prose narratives in English — the short story and novels included — are understood by readers whose first language may not be English. Or if English be their first language, how meanings have been formed from the representations nurtured by their local upbringing.

Understanding the process of meaning-giving which language constructs allows the reader a critical appreciation of how “reality” shapes in the mind. Here, I shall take a Cultural Studies approach of how understanding is shaped by narratives which language to many is appropriated. (“Appropriated” because *English* is absent in the original settings and context of these narratives.)

The “reality” re-produced by reading transforms through these stages: the *source* (the origins where material is based), the source given form by its original language (if, for instance, it is the *Hudhud*, it is Ifugao; if the *darangen*, it is archaic Meranao), the source material transformed and given meaning by English, and, finally, the ‘reality’ of action ‘transcreated’ in the reader’s mind.

A performance is experienced.

Transcreation

Transcreation describes a creative process when subject expressed in one medium is re-expressed, or re-formed, in another or other multiple mediums. Not essentially translation or adaptation, the appropriation from the source attempts to maintain the ‘organic’ context in meaning, feeling, and insight. However, in the experience performed in the mind, the *source* is now transposed to an experience determined by the experience and mental ‘map’ of the reader.

A separate ‘reality’ is composed through representations that the reader defines — the “dress” of meaning. This “reality” re-forms its own milieu seeming to re-define the original. Consequently, a different “world” forms. It is a *world* given a life by its own creating a panorama based on “prior knowledge” the reader bears.

This “world” may not be that of the source. It is a “world” recreated by the reader. This reality is a performance acting in the mind of the reader. When one reads, one ‘re-experiences’ (re-composes) a reality processed in the mind.

The ‘reality’ in the source culture (e.g. Ifugao, Ilokano, TauSug, and the like) is re-formed and appropriated to a separate world we — the readers — conceive, anchored on meanings our own (always contemporary) worlds have set. This re-created world morphs through the text stamped by habit and culture — *ours* — providing meanings that are moored on other texts and metatexts surrounding the ‘environment’ we are nurtured in.

“The reader recreates a ‘world’ in the mind, an imagined performance. We understand this ‘world’ in our terms.”

So as readers, we image a “world,” but we understand that world in our terms.

To illustrate, I have selected stories that deal with tradition. These narratives are built from a cultural platform that banners the community’s identity. I chose these stories about tradition because even before we read, we already expect an experience about a lifeway different from how we think and what we do.

While there are many more familiar Mindanao-subject stories, much of what we study in our textbooks are mainstays owing to their already institutionalized status as “Standards” in Philippine Literature. All these are determined by a hegemonic ‘center’ typical of the structure of our education system.

This considered, I will use three “classic” resources: “Wedding Dance” by Amador Daguio, “The God Stealer” by F. Sionil Jose, and “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife” by Manuel Arguilla – all mainstays in our textbooks and teaching.

7 Imagined Performance

Giving Meaning to “Cordillera”

Not a Cordillera culture specialist, I surmise the similar ways we give meaning to these stories. As laypersons, we see little difference among the Ifugao, Benguet, Tingguian (Itneg), Kalinga, Apayao, Bontoc, and Ibaloi (loosely and perhaps erroneously clustered as “Igorots”). Each community, however, will have their idiosyncratic lifeways unfamiliar to many of us. We understand the “Igorot” world and its accompanying concepts from our own positions.

The opposition in the ways of cultures is best personified by the final image of a “transformed” Ip-pig, the Philip Latek of Sionil’s “The God Stealer,” who in deep regret after stealing the god, dons an Ifugao garb:

“...a well-built Ifugao attired in the simple *costume* (*italics mine*) of the highlands, his broad flanks uncovered, and around his waist was the black-and-red breech cloth with yellow tassels.”

Already in this short story, the position of the narrator is revealed with the term “costume,” to denote garb that’s not ours. “Costume” is not everyday dress. To the subject in the narrative, it is clothes, common, ordinary dress. To us, it is an exotic object. Terms load sense, a connotation of an “other” and ‘exoticization’ of a special kind of dress.

The process of shaping an experience — producing a ‘performance’ in the mind, and producing cognitive, emotional, and critical responses — meanders through simultaneous inter-actions and mental processes.

Readers will produce meanings anchored on “prior knowledge,” nurtured in their cultural environments. These environments synthesize a plethora of other texts merging and intermingling to produce what is the mental, emotional, and critical panorama of the reader.

Language brings to us meanings mined from the source. English is the conduit that shapes the representations the mind recreates. The language Filipinos use and have been accustomed to approximates the utterances of our languages. The “reality” shaped in the mind is dependent on the cultural nurturing of the reader.

Understanding these “determinants” of meanings, the teacher of Language and Literature becomes a necessary intercession. But this “arbitration” between text and reader can either mislead or enhance understanding. Understanding and producing meanings go through a process that the teacher should well appreciate, moving beyond the synchronic formulations of plot, character, conflict, mood, and theme (which is a pre-determined construct culturally nurtured).

The interactions therefore occur between the texts (as printed, then imagined) and the readers (their representations of the texts wrought from their own experience). The well-informed teacher mediates being the conduit for liberal interpretation rather than restriction.

The manner through which understanding and response form is the readers' own; teachers intercede properly only through their well-grounded understanding of how texts operate. Only then can teachers be effective intercessors.

Transcreation of Tradition

Daguio's "The Wedding Dance" has Awiyao appeasing a distraught Lumnay who is separated for failing to give her husband a child after seven years of marriage. Despite their deep love for each other, village custom dictates that Awiyao marry Madulimay. In the night of the wedding amidst the clanging *gangsa* and the dances, Awiyao furtively leaves the wedding ritual to profess his undying love to his separated ex-wife.

"How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" by Arguilla narrates of the arrival of beautiful Maria in the small town of Nagrebcan in Bauang, La Union. Using evocative language to image the pristine pastoral landscape, the short story chronicles the anticipation Maria's appearance among her husband's family would stir.

In National Artist's Sionil's "The God Stealer," now city-bred Philip and American friend Sam Christie travel to Ifugao to visit Philip's aging grandfather. Sam, irrepressible collector of antiques, is 'gifted' a real Ifugao god by Philip. Sam is not aware that Philip stole his grandfather's god. Consequently, the grandfather dies, and Philip, deeply regretful of his sin, decides to live permanently among his people.

The cultural spaces of these authors are revealing. Revelations are not about the exquisite use of language (although being 'exquisite' manifests a mindset shaped in some environment where the study and use of English are apparent).

Backgrounds of these eminent authors show their education after being 'uprooted' from their native birthplaces: Daguió from Ilocos Norte, Arguilla from La Union, and Jose from Rosales, Pangasinan. All were educated in the 'best' Philippine universities (two in U.P., Sionil in UST) at a time when English had already taken hold as a *lingua franca* here. Consider therefore the linguistic and cultural syncretism that occurs when English is used to depict native tradition. Add: the readers' own interpretation of meaning taking off from their own mental nurturing.

In "The Wedding Dance," requisite progeny and fertility dictate Awiyao's separation

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from Lumnay. The survival of the “tribe” is primary. Such expectations are imbibed in traditional societies. Monogamous relationships as multiple marriages are the norm. Knowing such expectations, there will be little regret among its members who see the greater good from communal rather than individual interests.

Romantic attachments as we know of today are unheard of in rudimentary societies. Understanding and sympathy, however, ensue when the ‘romantic’ angle dominates the whole narrative. Meanings approximate the sentiments or sentimentality many of us perceive, for instance, in our tele-novelas that have become our representation of relationships. The world of the Ifugao (I speculate the setting to be Ifugao considering Daguio’s familiarity with the community) is lost among our contemporary understandings where the semiotics involving male-female relationships operate.

The tele-novela kind of romantic relationship attaches to the traditional Awiyao-Lumnay love saga where, in the real Ifugao world, would be rare, if ever. The context through which this Daguio obra has often been represented through the romantic relationships operative in the cities. The framework has been pre-set by the reader even before the plot progresses.

Arguilla’s classic images another utterly “romantic” setting, the idealized *probinsya* and the further idealization of this landscape and the indispensables of skies, hills, clouds plus the unexpected albino carabao Labang. The exquisite descriptions paint an idealized picture we view through the articulateness of Baldo, as gorgeous as Maria whom Leon “brings” home. I try to image the scenery but from the point-of-view of a realistic barrio-bred character of Baldo’s age (perhaps not even finishing grade school), and my imagined descriptions come out differently.

In all three stories, the narrators seem well-steeped in their own exquisite articulations giving us readers the impression of “worlds” we see for the first time.

In “The God Stealer,” while the narrator is a third person, the attitude betrays Philip’s and Sam’s cosmopolitan lifestyles. The omniscience of the narrator hides the fact of the eternal struggles of the marginalized Ifugao.

We decide on the representation. Our already-pre-set mind maps a world close to ours. It will be difficult to understand and feel text we cannot identify with. Metaphor, humor, irony will be lost. But this will be far from being critical. This too may be far from the original.

Perhaps this is the deficiency of fiction, or more specifically fiction written in

English appropriated by us.

The UP Baguio Cordillera Studies Center explains: “The unavailability of equivalent American or English terms for local Cordillera terms has forced catalogers to use broader or the more general subject access terms like ‘rites and ceremonies,’ ‘social life and customs,’ ‘manners and customs,’ ‘politics and government,’ ‘religious life and customs.’ Alternatively, the use of the names of the indigenous groups that practice particular customs and traditions have been resorted to as the main subject heading (Villanueva 5).¹ “

Our discourse sums these up:

1.) English presents to us “our” world (when we read, the space becomes “ours”) even as the text attempts to describe an “other” world. We admit that in our attempt to approximate the source, we contextualize through our perceptions the original.

2.) We have appropriated English, its syncretic character we now own, and articulate our thoughts and behavior approximated in English.

3.) Because of language, a wide gap distinguishes the original from the appropriated and the transcreated, as English too displays a distinct spectrum of social and cultural hierarchy.

4.) When *transcreation* ensues, the “authentic” disintegrates; what we understand are representations but from our perspectives.

The differences in perceptions are manifested in the use of language, its morphology, syntax, and patterned use through generations. One makes sense of his world through language, how the world is ordered, how a typology develops. (To the West, Science means knowledge, but to Asians, intuition is “logic.” Find this in Language.)

And in a cycle, this structured sense we nurture determines our world, our culture. Therefore, people of different cultures and different languages perceive and respond to the world differently. English being a language that values material “possession” belongs to a consumerist society where ownership of objects spells success. It is a *having* Language. How, therefore, can we reconcile an “I have” Language to an “I am” cultural value that is the core value of our indigenous languages.

Linguist-Anthropologist Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941), a student of Edward

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Sapir, developed his **principle of linguistic relativity**, which sums this:

“users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observation and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world.” (Whorf in Ottenheimer, 32-33).

How does one understand the Ifugao world, or any other world bred in the indigenous soil, with English?



Notes

¹Cristina B. Villanueva "Classification and Indexing of Philippine Indigenous Materials with Emphasis on the Cordillera". <http://library.ifla.org/1335/1/151-villanueva-en.pdf> <accessed: 8 Nov. 2017>

Same forms, two environments, two designs, different meanings defined by inter-textual representations. The Bukidnon Tala-andig *pigagawan* transcrites to a choreographed performance. The original dance-music-narrative reveals to the community significant understandings of their "world" — courtship, progeny, male-female relations, a structured Order. To an audience watching a choreographed piece, the performance entertains allowing them glimpses of another "world."

(credits: photo grabbed from the YouTube posting of Aguiman, John Mark Vhick. "Higaunon-Talaa dig (Pa gagawan Dance)" (sic). 21 Nov. 2013. "Pigagawan choreographed performance by the MSU-IIT Integrated Performing Arts Guild, photo: Ronald Salazar)



Chapter 8

Language and Cultural Sensitivity

Multifarious communities live adjacent to each other in multi-cultural Philippines. It's a patchwork landscape. One patch blends with another, another may be totally divergent. Catholic urbanites live side-by-side with hill-dwelling animists; Muslims intermarry with the indigenous *lumad*.

Relations are more complex among these diverse interrelating cultures in Mindanao of about 18 indigenous communities interacting with about 13 Islamized groups and numerous settler communities from the North like the Sugbuanon, Ilokano, Ilonggo, Hiligaynon, Waray, Pampango, and Tagalog, among others.

Such a landscape of varied cultural communities adjacent each other invites conflict. As space overlaps, so do interests. In these overlapping spaces are differences, the sources of conflict. It is therefore not surprising that in many places, conflicts do occur where economic interests vie, political leaderships compete, religions oppose, and values confront.

Language

Yet in another arena are planted the seeds of conflict: *Language*.

Language is primary. One's world is understood and made meaningful by language. Reality makes sense with language. Language orders Reason. Language allows people to connect with each other, as it allows dialogue with the spiritual world. As it is an expression to communicate, language too can become a tool for misunderstanding. As *Language* is meaning significant to its user, its misuse therefore misrepresents. Consequently, misunderstandings spark gaps between parties.

If we take language to communicate, to understand, to connect, then misuse of language abets the already-volatile overlapping of cultural spaces. A sense of "otherness" (*Us* versus *You*) shapes. The majority-minority, center-margin, indigenous-Western, and traditional-modern dichotomies may be well articulated. Language identifies a people. It

"Language is primary. Reality makes sense with language. Language orders Reason. Language allows people to connect with each other, as it allows dialogue with the spiritual world. Language too can become a tool for misunderstanding."

is a cultural stamp, perhaps the most distinctive of all other marks.

When I mean *Language*, I do not only refer to words spoken or written. I refer to that complex system of demonstrated expressions. These carry meanings including: gestures, actions, sound, manners how space are ordered, spatial and aural designs, manners males and females (and persons of differing statuses) arrange themselves in one space, and, most significantly, creative expressions we all refer to as *Art*. Include here non-actively demonstrated expressions we can only define intuitively, that which we call *sub-text*.

These expressions represent how one views reality. Being products and processes of persons belonging to cultures, these manifest values.

Because people perceive, evaluate, and understand reality in different ways (even to the same realities), what can seem appropriate to you may mean differently to another. The key is awareness of and sensitivity to intercultural differences which Honglin Zhu terms as "intercultural empathy," a tool necessary in Foreign Language Studies (Zhu 1).

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Cultural Sensitivity

It is, therefore, when we acknowledge the differences among cultures that we become “culturally sensitive”. Language cannot make sense alone. There has to be a “culture” that decodes it. Meanings form because words and images only mean when related to other words and images, we all know as “intertextuality.” The one that determines meaning through intertextual layering is the culture itself.

A white cloth is meaningless, but when this cloth is pinned and hung outside a Meranao *torogan*, we know right away that someone has died. The same white cloth used to drape the aisle of a church means a wedding is about to take place. In war, the same cloth will mean “surrender”. So that the white cloth is meaningless without other connecting “languages” that will situate these combinations in *context*. Thus, meanings form.

A joke can only be funny when set before a prior background. Metaphors can only draw clear comparisons when anchored in real objects and situations that which a culture is aware of.

More complex combinations of “language” in large designs like the theatre, dance, and film will have multiple and diverse anchoring to antecedents to make sense.

With the nuances in language, relations can take directions in favor of or opposed to culture. This depends on how “language” is used. Hence, the need to be circumspect especially when we represent a culture separate from our own.

The value of the epic *darangen* through its hero Bantugan will be lost to many of us schooled in the formal canons of Literature. These parameters cannot apply to indigenous performances of such kinds. For instance, the hero prototype to the naïve should be a morally “straight” Clark Kent *cum* Superman with only a Louise Lane as a love interest. But to the polygamous Bantugen or Agyu with their many ‘indiscretions’ (but only to our moral sense), having more than one partner is normal. In one episode, Bantugan marries his sister Lawanen. Heroes are significant cultural markers because whether these are real or imaginary serve as behavior models within a culture (Jandt 15)¹.

“Language refers to that complex system of demonstrated expressions including gestures, actions, sounds, manners how space are ordered, designs, manners males and females arrange themselves in space, and most significantly Art.

Around the world, values differ. As a Rotary Study Exchange student in America in the 80s, my hosts provided me the attic, the basement, or the living room sofa for bed. To Filipinos, this is rude. Here, hosts vacate their best bedroom (even if this is the Master’s) and transfer to less comfortable quarters.

Still in America, I was surprised to realize that exact numbers of invited guests to parties are the only ones allowed to sit around the dinner table. An uninvited person, even if you are the host's friend, will either wait outside or return home should he arrive at this unscheduled time. Our hospitable character would seem abnormally awesome to Western strangers especially when during fiestas the whole clan joins parties with or without the invitation.

Wife-sharing among the Eskimos is not about lending a host's partner for sexual gratification. There was a religious context to this practice done at the instigation of the *angedkok* (shaman) for communally-beneficial ends. In other instances, wife-sharing was the mark of the highest relations between host and guest (Rubel 60).

Seeing progeny and fertility (for the survival of the Bontok community) more important than sexual satisfaction, the Bontok practiced courtship in the "*pangis/ulog*" — *akhamang*, among the Ifugao — where young males would visit unmarried females. These visits eventually lead to sexual consummation. Sex ensured biological and emotional compatibility. To the non-Ifugao, the "ulog" suggests "trial marriage" or even "sexual experimentation." Cultural "outsiders" applied a different mindset to such practice that also appalled American Christian missionaries in the Cordilleras. Corollary to this, eminent Cordillera Anthropologist June Prill-Brett mentions of the absence of a concept of "rape" (and therefore a term for it) among the Ifugao (Prill-Bret in Rabang). Moreover, meanings were misrepresented by "outsiders" after cinema narrated of the same practice in a 1981 Manila movie *Ang Babae sa Ulog* (Women of the Ulog) that suggested this institution a "pre-colonial motel." (Rabang)

Elsewhere, we are not aware of taboos signified by action which to us are simple everyday gestures. We love to rub a child's head to show endearment. But to the Thais, this is taboo. Male friends greeting Muslim females "*beso-beso*" (cheek kissing) style is *haram*, a no-no.

When you refer to colored persons as "negroes" or "orientals" in the US, you are a racist and may court trouble. Many examples show how misrepresentation of signs and actions, given meaning by those outside of a culture, can be threatening.

There can be no better misuse when ignorance almost cost the life of the late showbiz icon German Moreno. In his "That's Entertainment," one opening production number used text and music from the Koran. This angered the Muslims who were on the verge of issuing a *fatwa* (religious ruling) to Kuya Germs, until he realized his naïveté and apologized publicly. Nobel winner Salman Rushie is fortunate to have lived through death threats stirred by his novel *Satanic Verses* (1988). His novel infuriating Muslim clerics backed by the then Iranian government issued a *fatwa* of death. He had to hide for many years.

8 Language and Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural Sensitivity therefore is knowledge that another culture understands things differently. More than acknowledging this difference is recognizing the fact that one culture cannot be better than the other.

Insensitivity or naïveté?

Misrepresentation creates an erroneous impression of a culture. The presentation of wrong meanings maligns a people. It confronts the integrity of a community.

Are these products of indifference, or mere ignorance?

For so long, media has presented a distrustful image of Mindanao. Even considering the fact that our island is the second largest (97,530 square kilometers) hosting a population of 22M (or approximately 25% of the total Philippine population), the general impression of “Mindanao” is that it is a land beset with violence, blood, and conflict. The impression is that it is a land of Muslims (when I was in school we called them “Mohammedans,” another misrepresentation widespread during those times). It is naïveté because Muslims are practitioners of Islam and religion had little to do with the conflicts.

Let me draw from popular samples of how “Language” has misrepresented cultures.

Language as *Performance*.

“Cultural Sensitivity is knowledge that another culture understands things differently.”

Creative performative expressions have been misappropriated from their sources in cultures of region-based communities. We sample these in the various street-dancing spectacles, the repertoire of dance groups (e.g. *singkil*, and ritualized *lumad* performances transported to the stage), the wanton invention of forms to (mis)represent these communities (costuming, music, visual designs, space order, male-female

engagements), and the total re-designing of compositions that do not in any way represent their origins.

And as is often the case, Visayans in film and on TV are depicted as *kasambahay* (implied subordinate to Manilenos, the “texts” embracing suggestions of inferiority even if indirectly most of the time). The case is not isolated. In the regions we find similar impressions of superior-inferior majority-minority relations among locals, where the Visayans this time position their superiority over less-empowered *lumad*.

Then there is the appropriation of icons. Organizers of the 1974 Ms. Universe adopted the *Sarimanok* logo (Meranao symbol of wealth and prestige) looking more like a *pang-sabong* rooster. The icon continues to have popular use in costumes, dress displayed in fashion shows, décor, but the usage taken out of its original cultural context.

Marriage, gender statuses, and hierarchy in traditional communities are often marked by conventions in the use of dress (the *malong*, for instance), ornaments, and emblems. For most, the Church is perhaps the institution with the most number of emblematic symbols because Religion can only be metaphorically represented.

Language as Text.

Epics and folklore have been translated taking the characteristics of Western Literature in narrative form, characterization, mores, values, and even text. However, these translations hardly capture the essence of the original. Both the spirit and structure of the original language are lost when translated into English.

There, too, is the negative response, scorn, when words are “mispronounced” or spoken heavy with region-based accents. Filipino humor evidences this. Anecdotes are many about misadventures of verbal articulations, always at the expense of the less-empowered community. Manila Tagalogs, for example, humor the Tagalog spoken with the accents of Batangas or Bulacan communities. The provincial “flavor” of the lilting Ilonggo speech and the vowel-tight pronunciations of the Sugbuanon — assigned to househelps and those belonging to the lower economic strata — are often subjects of ridicule.

Even among Visayan communities, humor presents subtle means about how the differences in language spoken by the “others” invite ridicule. Cebu, for instance, will have narratives that subtly deride Tagalog and the Tagalog speaker.

In contrast, cultural sensitivity has been used to great advantage through the marketing of products. Just as McDonalds transformed its logo and branding tag (“love ko ‘to”) into something more culturally-acceptable to Filipinos, multi-national food chains such as this cater their menu to the tastes of their host countries. Jollibee, its being Filipino-owned, has a deeper understanding of the Pinoy emotional state. Knowing this, it has successfully juxtaposed its “deeply emotional” (*hugot*) video ads with values and the subliminal injection of these values into their chicken joys and yumburgers.

8 Language and Cultural Sensitivity

Semiotics: Sensitivity for Conflict Management

How therefore can we apply this sensitivity towards other cultures?

First, we realize that cultures are not the same, that one cannot merit higher points than the other. There can be no such basis (only achievement in technology and economics, but these are not good indicators of culture). Yet, one culture influences the other in so many ways, so that cultures cannot be static nor can they be preserved.

Being aware and sensitive of others' cultures mean that we understand the representations of the symbols of these cultures, not the least being Language. Language (even with the same words) can mean differently to different cultures. Language can only mean if linked with other texts anchored in the realities and experiences of the source culture. An English text may mean three different ways to three different cultures, and I don't even refer to homonyms (analyze: *boy*, *black*, *Oriental*, *geisha*, *freedom fighter*, *McDo*, *squatter*, *tribe* — there are so many).

And when one appropriates cultural expressions, one borrows to transform these correctly. [*Transcreation*² appropriates creative expression from their original sources through careful study attempts to approximate the original representations expressed in another medium. (Fernandez, *Making Theatre*, 163-185).]

These references remind us that we are not isolated islands. Islands subsist with other islands, each feeding the other, an ecosystem dependent on one another. But we feed each other with nutrients, not poison.



Notes

¹Jandt refers to G. Hofstede (1994) who classified, besides heroes, these categories of culture including: symbols, rituals, and values.

²Fernandez, Steven P.C. *Making Theatre: The Craft of the Stage*. IPAG-ARM: 2017.

Chapter 9

Culture and Art Studies

A Precursor for Peace

Nothing can be more basic than *Culture*. Everything you are develops from *culture*. The way you understand your world is rooted in culture. The manner you articulate about your world is culture: language, actions, sound, music, even intangibles like how we position our physical selves in spaces, or how we understand time.

You are here because of Culture. Culture tells you how to learn, what to learn, where to learn.

And in the same manner, *culture* and the beliefs it carries are reasons why we go to war, why we select only those ideas allowed for us to learn, why we cannot accept other beliefs,

Culture is nurtured through years as a community learns to survive. It is our means of learning how to deal with our world, how to explain the inexplicable, how to soften our fears.

Science and technology stem from *culture*. Government and family are products of cultural processes. Education constructs the way culture determines how we are to think and act. Religion and its many manifestations are ways we attempt to explain the mysterious. History is a documentation of the evolution of culture. Even in the manners we love and make love, culture determines our positions.

It is everything we do and think.

And when you express *culture*, the best expressions form Art, that well-conceived combination of shapes, color, tones, words, movement that all means something significant to a community.

Art in Culture

This prominence of Art in our lives will have to be highlighted some more in our education. Art is here, there, and everywhere (to borrow a line from the Beatles) yet many of us hardly care. This is ignorance not worthy of us.

Many of us think that Art in our lives belongs to only those who can understand art, an appendage to daily living, a preoccupation of the elite, something only the educated indulge in, a reality that is separate.

This is completely false. How well we mirror ourselves in our narratives, in the language we use, in the choice of our colors, in the music that lulls our babies to sleep, in the mass as *performance* we attend every Sunday, in the practices we have institutionalized that have kept our identities intact for eons?

From our beginnings, Art figured centrally in our lives. It was that preoccupation that allowed us to survive as we dealt with the ramifications of living. Even Science, and how Science taught us how to look at our world in objective ways, was triggered by Art. Art incited by imagination was the Mother of all Mothers.

So that every culture, distinct from one another, produces expressions that are distinct too. And because they will mean differently, one expression of one culture will be valued differently from that of another. Art will mean differently because it meets needs decided by the culture where it comes from. Values cannot and will not be uniform.

This plurality is what makes understanding Art — as mirrors of a culture — interesting to study. Note that in the Philippines alone, we cannot have one set of expressions meaning the same all over. Art cannot be valued uniformly in over 80 plus cultures. In Mindanao, we have categorized our cultures, not precisely, though, in very general terms: settler, *lumad*, and Islamized. Yet even the settler communities come from cultures that are different from each other in many ways. An ethnographer can give you general classifications but even each classification can have sub-categories.

Study Culture, Practice Peace

Now think about the plurality of cultures in our islands and the corresponding hundreds of expressions valued distinct from one another by each culture.

9 Culture and Art Studies

To study Art is to study the culture of a people. To study the culture of a people is to understand (and appreciate) their history. Ours will be different from the others. We cannot impose what to us is beautiful (or more beautiful) even if beauty shares the universal elements of order. If we impose (or vice-versa, the other imposes on us), then confusion occurs; our imposition will be meaningless to those we impose our values on.

The study of Culture and its expressions allows us to see the whole picture, of communities separated by language, beliefs, and values. Beyond the building of tolerance because of understanding is the appreciation of difference. In our schools we cannot impose what can be inimical to another. A people's identity evolves through generations, their narratives their own, their history theirs alone. We cannot take these away from them.

Our ignorance is cause of why we cannot live side-by-side. By our ignorance we impose. The "otherness" disappears only if we eradicate ignorance. By knowing, differences meld. Distinctions cease.

"Science and technology stem from culture."

This is not ordinary ignorance. The most articulate intellectual can be ignorant of culture. One can appreciate the best opera or ballet can offer yet be the most ignorant about culture.

For instance, the resistance to providing autonomy and the opportunity for self-determination to

the indigenous and Islamized people of Mindanao lies in the ignorance of many of us about the history of these people.

Ignorance feeds the misimpressions we have held driving wedges among our diverse cultures.

Art is not only about craft. Art develops a logic to confront the challenges reality stares us in the face. It is about harmony, our sense of order, the other's sense of order. It is about what a community wants to become. Strengthening a community's identity means integration, integration means defense, and defense ensures survival. It is about working together. It is about inspiring. It is about the pursuit of perfection. It is a reflection of what the universe is to us, bodies in a system so organically attached, so perfectly moving in order.

Cultural Studies is about Peace.



Hegemony in Globalization

Chapter 10

Localizing the Global, Globalizing the Local¹

Culture can only be understood through overarching disciplines. One discipline cannot be fragmented from the other. Like the nation, culture is composed of various parts. Each component relates with the other parts producing causal relationships that act on all the others. Each part seeks its own functions in confluence with the others. These functions operate in a spontaneous way and produce the environment society survives in. The connectedness of all these parts forms society. It is *what* and *how* we live in.

Culture through forms articulates values, ideals, social relationships, hierarchy, the manifestation of Order, and the consciousness nurtured through time. Through Culture's creative expressions — the Arts — its various components intersect and interact with each other. The Arts are therefore a veritable manifestation of Culture.

These expressions constitute the marks of culture and a people's identity, which in reflexive ways ensure the integrity of culture. Yet the foundations of one's identity, one's social relationships, and one's lifestyles are threatened by a deluge that comes

“The stronger the culture, the less chances of a nation being overwhelmed by globalization.”

with the 21st century. This deluge called Globalization² is a threat we can do little about. It is imminent. It will drown our culture in due time to produce new states of consciousness expressed with new forms manifesting newly acquired values. We can only slow down its effects countering the disintegration of our 'nation-state' by buffering it with knowledge from our own indigenous wells.

Subtle Subjugation

The concept of a 'nation-state' is contentious, particularly today when 'sovereignty', cultural plurality, multi-culturalism, and cultural homogeneity are often-debated definitions all incapable of being exclusive. Is there a 'national' culture in the manner we speak of a 'global' one?

Efforts of the state to become a nation involve implementing policies where similar or shared meanings are consciously instilled to "streamline" culture, like the national language policy, a bounded basic education program, the identification (or even invention) of icons, and the like. Unwittingly, the global 'culture' immerses slowly into our consciousness through frequent contacts with powerful entities and their instruments of subtle subjugation, namely: technology, the media, trade, and the continuing diaspora.

Mindanao is a good case of multicultural diversity and cultural pluralism. Here minorities engage in the affairs of the state (secular) under the terms of the majority. The island alone hosts an unspecified number of differing cultural communities that live within contiguous areas but differ in their practices, language, and literature. The *tri-people* typology has set divisions according to religion and practice of these diverse groups: the indigenous (also *lumad*, which will also include the negroid), the Islamized (counting about 12-13 communities that embraced Islam, the largest being the Meranao, followed by the Maguindanaon, and the TauSug), and the majority settler communities of Hispanized migrants from the North.

This typology of classifying communities may be applied to the whole archipelago. One could add a fourth or fifth category (at the risk of generalizing) identifying the urban cosmopolitan cultures of Manila and other large cities, their cultures more closely identified with such 'global' signatures as Starbucks and McDonalds. The "cosmopolitan" has embraced the lifestyles of "global" cities including their own representations and dispositions.

It is under these conditions that the rationale of a Culture and Arts Studies Program positions itself in the fringes. While the mainstream dictates the homogeneous character of an emerging monoculture central to all these, the plural cultures in the fringes react through resistance spurred by their "otherness" — the sub-altern opposing the hegemonic "internationalizing" of the center.

Globalization: Slow Death of Identity

'Globalizing' cultures did not start today. The first time Humanity realized that other cultures existed outside of its own stimulated curiosity which led to inquiry, exploration, and then conquest. The ancient Phoenicians understood this. So did the Greeks, the Persians, and the Romans who were the first powerful instruments of global influence.

The connections of peoples and therefore cultures reconfigured behavior and thinking on a wide scale and reconstructed spaces. It was the conqueror's rule that likewise reconfigured cultures. With the morphing of culture followed the reshaping of a people's expressions and the reforming of new consciousness that benefitted the conquerors.

"The Arts are the least dictated by the instruments of power yet are the most intimate indicators of our identities and ideals."

To continue the subtle subjugation and colonization, new forms and instruments have been developed: trade, investment, knowledge, and migration³. Our own diaspora morphs both the host culture accepting the migrants and the source culture where these migrants originate. We are a community that shares narratives — our personal journeys, our histories, our spirituality — all made perceptible through our stories. This interchange dilutes our life ways as new spaces are born, formed, and reformed. All these exchanges happen through such innocuous vehicles as remittances, gifts, related stories and experiences, long distance calls, exchanged images and sounds, clan reunions, and a multitude of other interactions⁴.

The internet whose unimaginable power has generated the stupendous interchange of information is now a ubiquitous presence. Spaces have become less distinguishable, one overlapping the other. The alterations can become more indistinguishable over time. Local lifestyles and their expressions can be radically altered over time. Anthropologist Anthony Giddens states: "*Local transformation* is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space... as social relations become laterally stretched and as part of the same process, we see the strengthening of pressures for local autonomy and regional cultural identity" (64-65). [italics mine]

Globalization stirs reactive cultural and social actions from the fringes, the sub-alterns. In the process, as reactions occur to confront the interventions from the mainstream, the central power is threatened with a diminished influence. In effect, the rills in the fringes stirred active by these interventions unite to offer alternatives to the mainstream.

Let us take only a few of the many cases of this cultural 'rebellion':

1. the insistence to use Tagalog as bases for our National Language has incited opposition from regional language users, particularly among the Sugbuanons, creating counteractions like the singing of the national anthem and the conduct of business in Cebuano. *Filipino* (from *Pilipino*) has become the developing lingua franca now being enriched by a wide range of regional languages. These regional languages have been asserted by their growing presence in public usage, publications, workshops, and literature including the now-imposed use of the mother tongue in basic education.

2. Aesthetics has been rethought of and redefined to cover criticism of a whole spectrum of artistic outputs from theatre, dance, literature, film, and music veering away for the formalist schools-of-thought of the past generation.

3. Movements for self-determination of contiguous communities have sparked the clamor for federalism most prominent among these actions being the Bangsa Moro Basic Law.

Cultural Studies as Counter-force

Cultural Studies cannot bar the hegemonic onslaught. But as enhanced knowledge to an enlightened society, the discipline — or more appropriately a conglomeration of disciplines — can redirect wholesale global invasion and provide local culture its integrity.

The devouring tide of globalization makes Cultural Studies urgent. It is for this reason that the Arts tie most intimately to Culture; these expressions of values, heritage, and knowledge sustain culture. Their sum, the integrated parts of culture, is greater than its parts. A culture's strength emanates from this integration in that one generation links to the next and to the next chained by shared meanings. These meanings are drawn from tangible forms as literature, performance, music, epics, myths, poetry, and the visual expressions. These links ensure that the strong nation-state continues.

Cultural Studies sustains and manages our creative resources and encourages the environment in the creation, sustenance, and dissemination of these expressions.

Cultural Studies as Process

Cultural Studies strengthens roots so that we can withstand the gales uprooting us from our grounds. This transdisciplinary knowledge allows us to distinguish the “other” as it allows us to be part of the “other” in critical collaboration — the judicious wherewithal to accept or reject elements not to our interest. Knowledge allows us to transform and reconstruct conditions, to transfigure our places and gain footholds, decisions we can be fully conscious about.

Cultural Studies investigates how we create and transform our experiences that deal with our social relations within the interplay of power. The distinctive ways of life that is culture are revealed in expressions and symbolic activities. By working across disciplines, cultural studies addresses new questions and problems to develop the means to grapple with our rapidly transforming world. Cultural studies understands the processes which our communities complement with history, community life, and the challenges of the future.

The Arts are the least dictated by the instruments of power yet are the most intimate indicators of our identities and ideals. Being the most symbolic of all cultural indicators, the Arts are products of spontaneous acts that are least bound by utility. Their meanings are drawn beyond the objective realities which we can readily define; their symbolic significances delve deep into the consciousness revealing truths that objectification fails to do.

Extracting and disseminating knowledge, we realize the act that we have to arm ourselves. Knowledge becomes the armor that keeps body and soul intact. It is the most potent defender against our loss of a soul. It is the counteraction against the desecration of our beings, the leverage to continue keeping us in our esteemed human states threatened to be defiled by crass materialism and the dictates of consumerism. The sacredness of one’s culture cannot be compromised.

Cultural Studies as an interdisciplinary discourse has had some presence in Philippine universities in the last thirty years or so. The Philippine Studies program of the University of the Philippines has been replicated all over. As there are Art Studies programs, though still disposed to “Western” platforms, we have now more focused inter-disciplines — delving on discourse approached through the lenses of two or more related academic disciplines — like Language Studies, Literary Studies, and the like.⁵

Ultimately, globalization is a cultural state rather than a network of economies. In such a state, “capital” and investment agencies structure ways of living. The knowledge of culture, its expressions and processes, is *sine qua non* in protecting it from its disintegration. As values embed culture, changing values will naturally change cultures. Values defend, liberate, or oppress. Our perceptions spring from values that are borne by culture.

Given the onslaught of the global juggernaut energized by capital, trade, and material gains, we assert that even among the overwhelming tirades to form a global order, there can exist a national culture. The more emphatic assertion is that the nation can stand from a convergence of cultures to keep it in place. In our situation, our national culture is a convergence borne from a conglomeration of the nation’s regional cultures. We liken this to a gushing river fed by rills collecting into streams. The stronger the culture, the less chances of a nation being overwhelmed by globalization.



Notes

¹This essay was pooled from a paper presented at the forum “Creating New Spaces in a Global Setting”, July 1, 2015, MSU-IIT, Iligan City.

²Globalization is “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” [Anthony Giddens. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991. p. 64.]

³International Monetary Fund. “Globalization: Threat or Opportunity?” <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2000/041200to.htm>

⁴Spaces have been “re-territorialized” rather than “de-territorialized” [Gupta, A. and J. Ferguson 1992. Beyond “Culture”: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference. *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1):6-22.] Referred from: Okamura (see **Works Cited**). A whole discussion on the diaspora and its concomitant effects on globalization may be available from various references.

⁵In the MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, we direct Cultural Studies to the study of the Arts not as fragmented entities but in engagement with other mediums, a social environment, history, and place. A track in the program is Performance Studies, a “radical” discourse about performance outside of the formal theatre stages. The pioneering Program provides us with the keepers of our soul, the protectors of our identities, the insurers of our heritage.

Chapter 11

Culture and Art Studies in the ASEAN Integration¹

ASEAN 2025 declares this: *Forging Ahead Together*. Will it? Can it?

When 10 countries launch a single market for goods, services, investment, capital, and labor, a way of life forms. Cultures re-form.

The vision of the ASEAN Community is to form a cluster of nations with an outward-looking character powered by integrated, competitive, and vibrant economies, but with a regional identity. The main direction is to address poverty and economic inequalities.

The ASEAN Integration can be either a fairy tale or a horror story for the 10 nations that have bound to form the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). The repercussions of such a network will be substantial, not the least being the impact on cultures and the manners education will be implemented. Conversely, opportunities in the new order stir competition. While there will be integration, there too will be competition.

The AEC is basically an economic action. The changes on the social orders on member countries and their cultures will be permanent if not irreparable. Economic changes beget political re-structuring, structures of power shifting, the status quo broken, indigenous communities threatened, values reworked, the environment exploited, and education re-directed.

Can we buttress the onslaught? Inside the loop are 6,500 higher education institutions and 12 million students, our system included. The ultimate goal of the scheme is to “set up a Common Space of Higher Education” in Southeast Asia (Sirat, Azman, and Abu Bakar, “Towards harmonization of higher ed”).

Cultural Re-constructing

These threats assault the cultural diversity in the region as forceful economic and political collaboration ensues. Opened economies more likely will commodify their cultural expressions. The pressures on our cultural communities to ‘conform’ are pressed on by the need for uniformity.

With open borders, increased diaspora and migration lifeways morph at the expense of the integrity of culture.

On the positive side, the AEC provides opportunities for its 622 million inhabitants addressing poverty and inequalities promising to be the 7th wealthiest region by 2025 of one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Of the three community pillars, two focus on *Prosperity* (Economic) and *Peace* (Political-Security). Education will be concerned with the third that focuses on *People* (Socio-Cultural). Education ensures the integrity of culture (ASEAN). Education too provides us the skills and critical thinking as we immerse in the inchoate Creative Industry, touted as the economic booster of the 21st century.

Education as Buttress: Cultural Studies

Will capital and market be the driving forces that re-form education?

Student mobility, credit transfers, quality assurance, and research clusters identified as the four main priorities to harmonize the ASEAN higher education system are interventions that speed up change. These have outcomes that can be measured. These speak of a uniformity in actions and subsequently behavior in the educational system of the 10 nations.

Consequently, in no time in the history of education has Cultural Studies been more urgent than today to buttress globalization. The situation is likened to war. Let me quote from Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*:

“If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”

11 Culture and Arts Studies in ASEAN Integration

Cultural Studies is about texts — language, art, performance, behavior — and how these expressions produce power and subsequently determine power themselves. These expressions not only reveal to us the human genius of our past, but strengthen our moorings in the present ensuring our well-directed future — if wielded according to what a culture considers appropriate. Understanding Culture and the manners expressions like language play pivotal roles present us means to slow the disintegration of tradition and reinforce the integrity of our ways of life.

My discourse suggests innovative ways Culture Studies may re-form the landscape of education. Opening borders means unimpeded interchange not only of goods and services but of lifestyles and mindsets. “World-class”-ness drives universities to compete for students, resources, and attention. Incompetence to reach benchmarks rings the death knell of schools. These are the binaries at play in the ASEAN Integration. Safety nets have not been in place. Our K+12 system is in its infancy.

“Economic changes beget political restructuring, structures of power shifting, the status quo broken, indigenous communities threatened, values reworked, the environment exploited, and education re-directed.”

K n o w l e d g e

accession and research compel a transdisciplinary approach overlapping borders of disciplines such as what we pursue now. This approach is articulated by the new Core Education curricula. Collaborations merge disciplines (integrating Linguistics-Literature-Anthropology-Education-Mathematics) being the crucibles of new learning. The spheres of disciplines where collaborations merge (say, in between Linguistics-Literature-Anthropology-Education-Mathematics, integrated) are the spaces where new knowledge will be generated.

This approach — integrating the curriculum and dissolving the boundaries between conventional disciplines — will be the core principle in the Arts and Sciences. Teaching and learning will be “organized around the construction of meaning in the context of real-world problems or themes.” (UNESCO). The multi-disciplinary approach where subjects are studied from the various viewpoints of separate subjects will be obsolete. Now, the inter-disciplinary approach integrating approaches from various disciplines has broadened knowledge and provided solutions to social problems. Changes in these paradigms have altered outlook and erased parochial mindsets.

Meeting the ASEAN Challenge

The challenges and opportunities of the ASEAN Community stare education in the face.

People are the most valuable resource of each nation. People make up culture. A responsive culture boosts productivity and wealth catapulted by the strengths anchored on an identity that grows from Culture. Culture-and-the-Arts Studies is therefore central in meaningful ASEAN economic integration.

ASEAN Integration is not only about politics, economics, and security. Material growth should be tempered with humane ends. While education complements the economic and political demands of ASEAN 2025, education uses the instruments to temper cultural disintegration.

Culture fuels the will to fulfill these demands. Culture nurtures a Creative Industry that births products of the collective imagination that manifests the signature strengths of a people who harvest these artistic goods.

A strong integrated culture defines a nation, and this condition is a precursor for stability. There can be no development without order. Cultures therefore need to be strengthened and protected particularly when global forces threaten the integrity of each nation.

A Culture and Arts Studies Program is one venue where the study and management of Philippine cultural resources can be anchored on. The program develops the future *tanods* of our artistic wealth, the managers of our inchoate Creative Industry, and the scholars who will ensure our culture's protection and integrity. Economic wealth derives from political stability all anchored on a strong cultural base.²

The bulwarks against the disintegration of culture and memory will be provided by a well-envisioned system of learning. In the center will be the Humanities anchored by Culture-and-Arts disciplines. The UN motto is well-placed: *Think globally, act locally*



11 Culture and Arts Studies in ASEAN Integration

Notes

¹First presented as a Keynote lecture, 1st Annual National Conference for Language, Kultura, and the Integration of Technology (Langkit), MSU Marawi City, February 29, 2016

²The Commission for Higher Education has its Strategy and Action Plan, in determining necessary policy reforms for the Philippine HE system in light of AEC 2015. Below are the initial considerations for drafting the HE-SAP:

1. The presence of a compelling need to ensure that the country benefits from the integration process;
2. The changes economic integration will bring to the way we deliver higher education;
3. The status of the Philippine HE sector vis-à-vis its fellow ASEAN members;
4. The imperative to determine strategies for participation in the AEC initiatives for HE aligned with the national strategy; and
5. The importance of consolidating and enhancing present HE reforms in the context of the AEC.

(read also: <http://www.ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/1-ASEAN-CHED-Briefing-Paper-on-AEC-2015.pdf>)

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other books by the author
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Making Theatre: The Craft of the Stage
Directing From the Fringes
Performance Level
The San Miguel Fiesta Rituals of Iligan City

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Francisco Demetrio Award for Culture and the Arts, U.P. Likhaan, SM Global Pinoy, and Lifetime Awards Gawad Pedro Bucaneg, and Pambansang Gawad Francisco Balagtas from the Writers Union of the Philippines (UMPIL). He trained in the School of Theatre Anthropology (Sweden) besides completing fellowships with Japan Foundation and the Rotary Study Exchange program in the U.S. As Visiting Professor, Culture-Performance Studies specialist, and Playwright-Director, he lectures abroad and in most Philippine universities, his subjects claiming his innovative pedagogy in transcreation and distillation. Listed in the Cambridge International Biographic Centre's 2001 edition of *Who's Who in the World* (1st ed), he is also featured as "Defender of our Heritage" in *Fookien Times' Philippine Yearbook*, the *CCP Encyclopedia of the Arts*, and in various film documentaries. He holds a Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the De La Salle University. He is married to dance artist Leilani Monterola; they are blessed with a daughter, Sophia Patrizia.



“

In this book, Steven Patrick Fernandez creates a bold theoretical design which maps out a field, a road, and a space for one interested in apprehending Philippine culture and art... . Fernandez sets the tone of his book with a proposal for a Philippine School-of-Thought, actually a broadcloth for examining Philippine culture and art. At the core of this frame is Mindanao, its culture and arts.

”

Victor Sugbo, Ph.D

