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## Diaspora as Historical/Political Trope in Philippine Literature

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In the last forty years, the Philippine national economy has been increasingly fueled by remittances of OCWs (overseas contract workers). I prefer the term OCW to OFW (overseas Filipino worker) as the former highlights the nature of overseas work—contractual or forming the core of the latest labor imperative in postindustrial capitalism, flexible labor. OFW, on the other hand, represents the rhetoric of the Philippine state—“bagong bayani” or “new heroes” as signified by the growing abundance of its national labor abroad. So massive is the export of subcontractual human or Filipino/a labor that eight million OCWs accounted for some US\$9 billion remittances in 2005. The amount is roughly 52 percent of the 2005 Philippine national budget of P957.56 billion, and could have covered three-fold the Philippine government’s national deficit of US\$3.2 billion for the same year. Furthermore, if door-to-door deliveries were included, the amount would be US\$12 to \$15 billion.<sup>1</sup>

After India and Mexico, the Philippines is the third largest exporter of labor in the world. In some estimates, the Philippines is even a bigger labor-exporting nation than

India, considered second in the world.<sup>2</sup> In 1998, some 755,000 Filipinos went overseas to work, joining the already seven million workers abroad, and helped remit some US\$ 7.5 billion dollars.<sup>3</sup> The remittance estimate for 2005 is a record-breaking US\$9 billion, even as the World Bank estimates that \$11.6 billion was remitted in 2004.<sup>4</sup> One out of ten Filipinos is an OCW, working in some 194 countries and territories. As E. San Juan contends, “Since the seventies, Filipino bodies have been the No. 1 Filipino export, and their corpses (about five or six return in coffins daily) are becoming a serious item in the import ledger.”<sup>5</sup> Every hour, some 100 migrant workers leave the Philippines.<sup>6</sup> In 1999, half of overseas Filipino migrant workers were in the Middle East (26.5 percent) and Asia (23.5 percent), 42 percent in North America, and 8 percent in Europe.<sup>7</sup> In the early 1990s, women comprised 55 percent of overseas contract workers (OCW).<sup>8</sup> By 1994, some 60 percent of Philippine overseas contract workers were women.<sup>9</sup> It is estimated that two-thirds of OCWs are involved in domestic work.

Such staggering statistics on Filipino/a OCWs impact intensively on at least half of the 15 million Filipino families, as nearly half of these have a family member working abroad.<sup>10</sup> The OCW phenomenon becomes the undercurrent of the experience of the contemporary nation. What this entails is a rethinking of recent history along the impetus of this major yet subalternized current of Philippine development. In terms of the ethos of a collective utopia, Philippine literature has already foregrounded the locus of intimacy and aspiration in setting forth diaspora as integral to the constituency of a shared collectivity then and now. In this presentation, I look on selective texts of Philippine literature that both legitimize and interrogate past and present diasporic experience as an alternative coalition of desire in the production of nation, or as an alternative site of

cosmopolitanism, one that repudiates the romanticism of the national development framework.

Diaspora can then be read as a historical and political trope in Philippine literature. In this style of discourse, the diasporic trope is both historical and political. It is historical in providing for an account of the narrative of national development from a perspective that is a rewriting of a history from below. Literature itself becomes a source of and influence to history. It is political in that it is motivated by national politics on the one hand, and on the other hand, by the politics of everyday life—of constant returns and departures, negotiation of home and host-lands, day-to-day contractual work and the preparation thereof. Literature then becomes a symptom and receptacle of the political orchestration and its sense-making. To understand diaspora in Philippine literature or Philippine literature as history and politics, one can benefit from what Žižek has stated, “The easiest way to detect ideological-surplus enjoyment in an ideological formation is to read it as a dream, and analyze the displacement at work in it.”<sup>11</sup> The dream-work lays bare some of the traces of the hegemonization of diasporic culture, and the foregrounding of literary history as integral in the understanding of Philippine society and politics. The mapping out of the traces of the dream allows the possibility of subversion or ‘irony’ in what Linda Hutcheon asks about in her rethinking of the national, “Is there not a certain irony in such a utopian vision of postcoloniality in the age of globalization?”<sup>12</sup>

In Philippine literature, literary history was rewritten in the mid-seventies as a response to the nationalist ideals and the nationalist historiography of the 1960s. Nationalist historiography contradicted colonial history, and created a partisan history, as in the seminal writings of Renato Constantino that rehistoricize national history from the

point-of-view of the politicized masses. At this time, the concept of ‘autonomous history’ as a space of objective history became espoused in Southeast Asian history—as a counter-synthesis to the dialectics of Eurocentric and nationalist histories. As autonomous history was being emplaced, so too was the ethos of objectivity being established to negate the intrinsic nature of state violence and the perceived volatility of nationalism and revolutions of the period. In Maria Teresa Pineda Tinio’s observation, there exists an “uncanny connection” between autonomous historians and literary theory that generated currency in the period, at least in the Philippines: first, New Criticism which Terry Eagleton refers to as “a recipe for political inertia, and thus for submission to the political status quo,” and second, Structuralism in which “whole social ideologies may be implicit in an apparently neutral critical method; and unless studying such methods takes account of this, it is likely to result in little more than servility to the institution itself” (also by Eagleton).<sup>13</sup>

In Philippine literature, literary history was rewritten in the mid-seventies to historicize a politicized nationalist agenda (Bienvenido Lumbera) or a continuum of indigenous forms and adaptations of western literary forms (Soledad Reyes and Isagani Cruz). This literary historiography pushed for an anti-objectivist position as an intervention to the siege of the formalist emplacement of history—literary periods and transitions—in Philippine literature that emphasized the aesthetics of forms and genres, great texts and authors. What arises is that the issues in Philippine literature, up to this time, were never diagnosed as something outside of themselves. As Zizek has mentioned, “In psychoanalytic practice itself, the price of the global reflexivization of interpretation (“there is no outside-of-the-text,” everything becomes interpretation, the

Unconscious interprets itself) is that the analyst's interpretation itself loses its 'symbolic efficiency,' and leaves the symptom intact in the immediacy of its idiotic jouissance."<sup>14</sup>

The glaring symptom of Philippine national development is its people's diasporas. What remains absent is a literary history from below—covering the unpoliticized and unorganized masses who provide, at least in recent times, the major undercurrent in the production of the nation. What can also be included is the notion of the diasporic masses, whose everyday politicization substantially differs from the politics of official nationhood. Economically driven by the politics of disenfranchisement and corruption of the nation, eight million individuals are situated and dislocated overseas. What can then be re-posed is the experience of diaspora, at least in literature, that both historicizes and substantiates the idea of the present nation-thing. This is of immediate significance as Philippine diaspora is also gaining ground in the political sphere—as the organization of migrants, *Migrante*, is able to act politically on behalf of OCWs in nations that tolerate the counter-public sphere, or as part of new social movements via identity and labor politics in the U.S. and Canada. Literary criticism then doubly lags in the production of ideological readings of texts—it is already a retro-act of reading past texts, and more so, of the possibility of subversions to exist other than those earmarked as political in literary texts. For if diaspora becomes political of the very politics that negates it to do so, then literary criticism or its historicization has been remiss on this historical mark.

Diaspora refers to the physical scattering of people away from their homeland, and the negotiation that ensues between the idea of home and place. Diaspora also refers to an ethos of travel, temporality, permanence, separation, dislocation, liminality and subliminality, homing, hosting, departing, arriving—an anxious state of interpassivity or

interactivity. Epics in the Philippines have foregrounded much of the national diaspora because what gets to be narrativized is the journey of the epic hero away from his homeland, a quest that includes waging long battles, and the necessary return to the homeland. There are 28 indigenous epics already collected in the Philippines and estimates show that there are some 108 epics that exist. Through the more recent efforts of the French embassy in Manila—since 1991—four grants were given to scholars “to collect, transcribe, and translate into English or Filipino the epics sung in the vernacular languages.”<sup>15</sup> By 2000, there were sixty-six epics that have been documented by a team lead by Nicole Revel. In her introduction of the epic, Revel writes,

In contrast to more Indianized cultures of Southeast Asia, [in the Philippines] we find minimal theatricalization, a single voice rising from the singer of tales and telling us about the deeds and ordeals of a hero and his quest for a wife. A fresco of the world unfolds, in vivid reality, where the hero evolves and fulfills himself as a young man for his personal happiness and the good of his community. In more complex societies, the hero becomes an emblem of the group, at the ethnic or even the national level.

But in societies based on exchange, the hero has to be also a “model of man,” respectful of the rights and duties between kins and affines. By his actions he is progressively setting in proper order the family ties within the related social organization, or he is initiated to do so.<sup>16</sup>

The hero becomes symptomatic of a larger collective utopia, becoming himself a model of being. Such attributes and ideals also transpire in the saga of the OCW as typified in a homology by literary critic Isagani Cruz.<sup>17</sup> Based on Todorov’s framework, his analysis derived the stimulants present in the narratives of all the epics:

1. the epic hero leaves his “bayan” or homeland;
2. the hero receives a mysterious object;

3. the hero is brought to or arrives in a place where he finds what he is looking for, usually a loved one;
4. the hero starts a battle;
5. the hero engages in a long battle;
6. a “*diwata*” or nymph stops the battle;
7. the *diwata* reveals that the hero and his opponent are relatives;
8. the hero dies;
9. the hero lives again;
10. the hero returns to his homeland;
11. the hero weds.<sup>18</sup>

What Cruz then proposes is that there corresponds a homology in the structure of the epic and the experience of social reality. His schema is not as simple as it seems for each of the actions is entwined in its own complex discourse of Filipino kinship relations, social psychology, folklore and urban lore, identity politics, and nation-thing, among others. What is central, of course, in the perception of present Philippine reality, is the transposition of the exemplary epic hero into the “ordinary” life and subjectivity of the OCW. As the state engages in double-talk of the OCW as the modern-day hero as both memorialization and trivialization of their national contribution, the contractual or permanent life of the OCW nonetheless parallels the epic saga: the selflessness of the hero and contract worker, the domestic nature of the quest, departure and return, labor, belaboring struggle for the betterment of the community, and the promise of domestic closure, among others.



In retrospect, the seminal codes of the undercurrent of national development were early on established in the epic form. It would produce a nation whose citizens, like the epic hero, would unselflessly struggle for the betterment of loved ones, often acting out the role of sacrificial lambs, *mater dolorosa* (grieving mother), or *Nazareno* (passion and death of Christ), at least in the generally Catholic population of OCWs in the diasporic web. Although contractual in nature, the term of stay of the OCW also ensures a seriality of anxiety—of overseas laboring and homeland waiting—the constant possibility of staying on or moving elsewhere—as income generated abroad would always be higher than that earned in the nation-space. The OCW figure itself becomes a bound seriality in Benedict Anderson’s sense—typologized in state discourse through the nature of work, site of work, and income remitted from work, among others—all work-centered; therefore the boundedness of state identity for the OCW is based on the capacity to sell one’s labor abroad. However, within the everyday saga of the OCW, there exists an alternative typology, an unbound seriality—sense-making processes, displacement of guilt, redistribution of wealth. This alternative typology is dialectically attuned with the bounded seriality of the OCW: as preferences of purchase and investments, for example, become ingrained in what can be readily resold or pawned, and thus ensuring a continuum of the state’s typologization of the OCW figure at discounted or wholesale prices.

What then gets to be evoked in literary and social production is the consumption of the various ethos of the epic and national narratives. The promise of return, in lieu of an actual return, becomes a recurring imperative that drives the lives of OCWs and immigrants to work and better themselves abroad. It could even be a guilt-based

subculture for the material uplift experienced abroad for oneself or one's equally transposed family simultaneous with another plane of reality, where the majority of family members and the nation itself still wallow in general conditions of poverty. Filipina American Pati Poblete, for example, writes of this inculcation of guilt in her growing up and adult years by her parents:

When I refused to finish my food, I was told my poor cousins would be so lucky to eat my leftovers. When I complained about my clothes, my dad lectured me how my poor cousins had to walk the dirt roads of the provinces shirtless and shoeless.

And—my personal favorite—when I wanted new toys for Christmas, I was told my poor cousins had to drag around empty sardine cans by a string and imagine they were shiny cars.

I'd watch my mom fill up huge, empty boxes with cans of Spam, corned beef, Vienna sausages, chocolates, bed sheets, clothes and towels. "These are for your cousins and my brothers and sisters for the new year," she'd say. "We're lucky we're in America so we can help them."<sup>19</sup>

Everyday life in the hostland or new-found homeland becomes a site for negotiating the everyday life in the homeland. The family and social connections remain much emplaced, and the need to displace guilt becomes a primary mode of connection. The *balikbayan* figure—or returnee to the homeland concocted by Marcos' introduction of both OCW and tourism as dollar earners—becomes the embodiment of perceived guilt and wealth abroad, and the desire to redistribute these in the Philippine nation-space. In most cases, the *balikbayan* box—a giant goodie-bag—becomes the surrogate *balikbayan* figure, and its periodic arrival within the nation-space, its serialized redistribution of wealth and guilt.

Filipino American stand-up comic Rex Navarette performs the extreme desire of return in a spoof of the *balikbayan* and *balikbayan* box, “Death by *Balikbayan* Box.”<sup>20</sup> Together with other figures and events spoofing the Filipino American predicament of making do, such as Maritess, the domestic helper of the American superheroes in their Hall of Justice, Navarette parodies the trauma of everyday domesticated life of Filipino OCWs and immigrants in the U.S. The perception of “stupidity” that anchors the comedy was not without basis: the embodiment of wealth and guilt, the conflation of the *balikbayan* figure and the *balikbayan* box, and the issues of return and death, among others. As five to six coffins carrying the bodies of dead OCWs return to the Manila international airport daily, it has become an urban legend of sorts that those who arranged the bodies to be packed in coffins, also arranged for the shipping of the possessions and gifts of the departed OCW (the final form of departure) for their loved ones (the final form of gifting) in the same coffin. In a lot of cases, there always exists a *balikbayan* box to be filled up within a certain length of time, serving as a black hole for the never-ending displacement of wealth and guilt, and the attempt to fill up the void.

However, the guilt takes on a divergent direction in a parallel life of intellectuals who studied overseas. With an equally lengthy history, from the *pensionados* of the American colonial period to the Fulbright grantees of the present era, or through their own economic and cultural means, the figure of this transnational intellectual creates his/her own guilt trip. Earlier on, the Philippines’ foremost transnational intellectual Jose Rizal would write of a similar experience in the lead character Ibarra of his nation-defining novel *Noli Me Tangere*. Upon Ibarra’s return from Spain to Manila, he immediately soaks up the society he thought he had left behind in a gathering hosted in

his honor. He takes a carriage trip to Old Manila, revisiting familiar and new sites. What catches his attention is the panorama of the walled city, “like a young anemic covered with the clothes of the better times of her grandmother.”<sup>21</sup> He looks in the other direction, towards the bay, and realizes the following:

At the other shore lies Europe! Thought the young man: Europe with its beautiful nations in constant movement, searching for happiness, dreaming each morning and disillusioning themselves at sunset... happy amidst their disasters! Yes, at the other side of the infinite sea are spiritual nations, although they may not condemn matter, more spiritual than those preaching that they adore the spirit..!<sup>22</sup>

Ibarra imagines a connectivity between the infrastructures of old colonialism in the Philippines and the fading colonial powers of Europe. He imagines a utopia for the Philippines to have a status equal to that of the Spanish motherland. What he imagines therefore is a lack, and his primordial incapacity to return something substantial to the colony. The novel’s narrative hinges on both Ibarra’s attempt to do something for the colony—open up a school, create a community of native *ilustrados* and the Spanish elites—and his containment by the political and religious forces of the times. His guilt rests in his incapacity to transport that which he has learned from the European centers of colonial powers—primarily liberalism and the dream of modernity—into the colony. The narrator of the chapter prepares us to leave Ibarra temporarily, shifting our perspective to the city itself: “Let us leave the young man travelling, meditating or sleeping: the melancholy or animated poetry of the fields does not attract his attention [...] [the] sun has no enchantment for our young man.”

Thus, like Rizal’s return to Manila, Ibarra travels, meditating or sleeping in the relics of the city upon which he sees both the utopia and the impossibility of the colonial

promise reaching its shores. The transnational intellectual becomes the body that returns, only to suffer in the non-realization of western modernity in the homeland. He or she who has left, and has been profoundly transformed by the host country's education and modernity, has to suffer the non-realization of these ideals as the colony then or neocolony now chooses to track a divergent direction, one that makes modernity an incomplete project.

Providing an interesting contrast to the bourgeois guilt of the transnational returning intellectual, (the OCW and permanent resident) is the figure of the trickster or *pusong* in short and witty tales that outsmart and outclass the privileged individuals and established order in early indigenous society. The *pusong* is usually called by a proper name—Pilandok and Juan Tamad being the most famous—to provide for a generic tale of outsmarting the nobility, affluent individuals, and the morally decrepit. By using a lay person's logic—"pamimilosopo" or everyday philosophizing by ordinary individuals, and "pangangatwiran" or assertion of both rational and irrational in reason—the *pusong* is able to outwit those representing the upper strata of society. The foe is usually an individual who by his social status is already privileged and yet would desire more beyond what a distinguished individual would need. The excess is excessively punished, usually through a device of the trickster, entrapping the privileged individual's predictable positioning to desire more. The privileged person is deceived and suffers a severe fate, usually death.

Although the *pusong* is not a literal diasporic figure, his uncanny presence in unterritorialized time and space—to be where and when one is not supposed to be—relates to a similar sojourn of both OCWs and epic heroes: to be lost and dislocated, to

trespass and reterritorialize forbidden spaces, and to triumph in the end. The diasporic is figurative, philosophical and discursive, even as the character has predated and pre-existed before any massive national diasporization. But again, everyone then was a settler, having arrived from a foreign place, and seeking life elsewhere, making do with the conditions of the hostland or has transformed the host- into a new homeland.

The privileged individual is a generic representation of sectors in high status as the *pusong* character is also a generic expression of ordinary disenfranchized people. The entrapment leads to a Manichean climax and a resolution of reversal of fortunes—the greedy privileged individual is punished or killed, and the *pusong* is rewarded with treasures and opportunities left behind. There is no metaphysical guilt or actual wealth inherited. *Pusong* tales provide a pleasurable reassuring utopia for the underclass: that even without battles or wars, it is possible to reverse the usual position of high society and its disenfranchisement of the underclass. The *pusong* character desires a class resolution through its representative confronting the unjust conditions imposed by the privileged strata. It is a tale that exists in a series and that circulates among the underclass. Like political jokes that proliferate in the Philippines in times of great political crises, the tale is tailor-fitted by the storyteller and audience, and by the time and place of storytelling. The tale is accessorized, embellished and streamlined by those in the margins of power. The orality then and high technology (text messaging, *chikka* messaging, emailing, egroups) now are able to substantiate political subversion. And in the context of a Filipino laughter—laughing nervously always connotes a disjuncture in the internalization of a social anxiety—even before Bakhtin conceptualized laughter as a temporal social carnivalesque—the cacophony of boisterous and nervous sound alludes to

a community or a nation in turmoil. Laughter can then be seen as a gestural index of social anger, anxiety and inevitability to coalesce into action. But unlike Ibarra's contemplative mode, the masses' laughter is both noisy and unrepentant, and most of all, simultaneously guilty and innocent.

The anxiety over history and everyday reality leaves a mark in Philippine literature. All diasporic texts and their criticism pronounce the mark of social anxiety, interrogating the movement and displacement of individuals, families, communities and the nation itself. As Žižek has proposed, "The Real is an anamorphic stain which pops up all of a sudden in the midst of reality; such a stain [...] does not function merely as part of a reality; it is not a mere stain (in) the reality—rather, it indicates a process of the ontological disintegration of reality itself."<sup>23</sup> By marking the diasporic stain, the disintegration of diaspora itself is foregrounded, and the literary and social reality of the diasporic at this historic juncture of mass intensity can then be transformed from inquiry of politics to an inquiry into the political—what the people have been doing to assert OCW identities, to question disenfranchisement, and to empower the disenfranchised.

Otherwise, the dead just simply die. The final arrival and departure are marked. The redistribution of wealth and guilt grinds to a halt. Yet the diasporic desire continues. It is a lesson from the dead—the five or six dead bodies of OCWs arriving everyday, the resurrection of Ibarra through Simoun in the sequel novel of Rizal, and Simoun's eventual death, and foregrounding of a future generation to carry on the revolution, the everyday risk of the death of the *pusong* character—that foregrounds new struggles. Marx mentions a series of revolutions ongoing in literature and society, "In these cultural revolutions, then, the resurrection of the dead served to exalt the new struggles, rather

than to parody the old, to exaggerate the given task in the imagination, rather than to flee from solving it in reality, and to recover the spirit of the revolution, rather than to set its ghost walking again.”<sup>24</sup>

An analysis of diaspora as historical/political trope in Philippine literature locates new forms and struggles in the grand schema of older histories and geographies of both local oppression, poverty and corruption on the one hand, and on the other hand, imperialist globalization. Diaspora in social reality intensifies even as literary criticism and history have not yet too keenly focused on this undercurrent of Philippine national development and its cultural ethos. Philippine literature and society are moving into a new transition, as Raymond Williams says about transitions in literature, “What can be seen as happening , in each transition, is an historical development of social language itself: finding new means, new forms and new definitions of a changing practical consciousness. Many of the active values of ‘literature’ have been to be seen, not as tied to the concept, which came to limit as well as to summarize them, but as elements of a continuing and changing practice which already substantially, and now at the level of theoretical redefinition, is moving beyond its old forms.”<sup>25</sup> With these old forms, it is only when “the dead bury their dead” that there can be meaning to Philippine diasporization, and its ensuing deaths and dying. <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Raquel Rivera, quoted in Dabet Castaneda, “Barangay Iraq,” <http://www.bulatlat.com/news/4-26/4-26-barangay.html>, 1-7 Aug 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Pei-Chia Lan, “Remapping Identities across Borders and at Home: Filipina Migrant Domestic Workers and Taiwanese Employers,” presented at the Fifth Annual Conference on the History and Culture of Taiwan, UCLA (Oct 2000), manuscript, 2.



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- <sup>3</sup> Quoted in E. San Juan Jr. "Trajectories of the Filipino Diaspora," [http://www.planetphilippines.com/current/features\\_current/feature8.html](http://www.planetphilippines.com/current/features_current/feature8.html), viewed 24 Mar 2005.
- <sup>4</sup> National Alliance of Philippine Women in Canada/SIKLAB (Overseas Filipino Workers Group), "Philippine government pushing to get US\$9 billion in remittances from overseas workers," media statement, 24 Mar 2005. For a discussion of Canada's caregiver program, see "Trafficking in Women in Canada: A Critical Analysis of the Legal Framework Governing Immigrant Live-in Caregivers and Mail-Order Brides," [http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/066231252X/index\\_e.html](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/pubs/pubspr/066231252X/index_e.html) , viewed Mar 2003.
- <sup>5</sup> San Juan, *ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup> National Alliance of Philippine Women in Canada, *ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> From POEA, in Lan, *ibid.*, 3.
- <sup>8</sup> Arlie Hochschild, "The Nanny Chain," <http://www.prospect.org/print-friendly/print/V11/4/hochschild-a.html>, viewed 24 Mar 2005.
- <sup>9</sup> From Stella Go, (is this quoted by Barber or is this an article by Go? If it is an article provide title) in Pauline Gardiner Barber, "Agency in Philippine Women's Labour Migration and Provisional Diaspora," *Women's Studies International Forum* 23:4 (2000), 400.
- <sup>10</sup> Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, "The Challenges and Opportunities in the Philippine Services Sector," [http://www.ey.com/GLOBAL/content.nsf/Philippines/The\\_challenges\\_and\\_opportunities\\_in\\_the\\_Philippines\\_services\\_sector](http://www.ey.com/GLOBAL/content.nsf/Philippines/The_challenges_and_opportunities_in_the_Philippines_services_sector) .
- <sup>11</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *For they know now what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002, second edition), xci.
- <sup>12</sup> Linda Hutcheon, "Rethinking the National Model," *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 24.
- <sup>13</sup> Maria Teresa Trinidad Tinio, "Revisiting Autonomous History," unpublished paper, 2006. The quotes from Eagleton were mentioned in this essay.
- <sup>14</sup> Žižek, *ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> Gilles Chouraqui, "Opening Address," *Literature of Voice: Epics in the Philippines*, ed. by Nicole Revel (Quezon City: Office of the President, Ateneo de Manila University, 2005), xxiii.
- <sup>16</sup> Nicole Revel, "The Teaching of the Ancestors," in *Literature of Voice*, 4.

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<sup>17</sup> Isagani R. Cruz, “Si Lam-ang, si Fernando Poe Jr., at si Aquino: Ilang kuro-kuro tungkol sa epikong Pilipino,” *Diliman Review* 33:1 (Jan-Feb 1985).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Pati Poblete, “The Price of Remittances,” 26 Dec 2005, forwarded by Sarah Maxim, 10 Jan 2006.

<sup>20</sup> The Rex Navarette segments of his stand-up comedy can be downloaded from free sites.

<sup>21</sup> Jose Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere*, translation from Spanish by Jovita Ventura Castro (Manila: ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information, 1989), 67.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 66-67.

<sup>23</sup> Zizek, *ibid*, xxxix

<sup>24</sup> Karl Marx, “Poetry of the Future” (from the Eighteenth Brumaire), *The Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Terry Eagleton and Drew Milne (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 37.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond Williams, “Literature,” *The Marxist Literary Theory*, 268.

<sup>26</sup> This is a take-off from Marx, “In order to arrive at its own content the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. Previously the phrase transcended the content; here the content transcends the phrase.” *Ibid*, 38.