

Abrogation and Appropriation in Selected Pre-war Philippine Short Stories in English

Edward Jay Mansarate Quinto

ejmquinto@mapua.edu.ph

Mapua Institute of Technology, Philippines

Juan Carlos Santos

jcsantos@mapua.edu.ph

Mapua Institute of Technology, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Postcolonial literature is characterized by abrogation and appropriation, in which writers take the language of the former imperial power and re-place it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place. Studies on literary traditions of former colonies have shown how native writers advance local collective sentiments. In this paper, the short stories of Manuel Arguilla, a literary icon of Philippine short stories in English, were analyzed using Ashcroft et al.'s (1989) textual strategies in postcolonial writing to unearth the strategies used by the writer in valorizing the use of an abrogated and appropriated "english" in expressing native sentiments. Qualitative content analysis of Arguilla's four short stories suggests that the use of untranslated words and glossing were the most abundant strategies used to abrogate and appropriate the colonizer's language. Further, thematic analysis of the stories point to four themes relating to how the author valorized the use of an english in expressing native sentiments: expression of an authentic self, expression of an authentic place, subtle form of subversion and advancement of Filipino identities and ideologies. These findings suggest that, like in other postcolonial literary traditions, postcolonial Philippine short stories, as seen from the writing of Manuel Arguilla, are typical of what Ashcroft et al. (1989) advance as a paradigmatic tension between the colonizer and the colonized, but are unique in that they serve as medium through which to voice out local Filipino sentiments and aspirations. Some implications for postcolonial literature are discussed.

Keywords: abrogation and appropriation; textual strategies; postcolonial literature; Manuel Arguilla; Philippine short stories

INTRODUCTION

Linguistic turn refers to the 20th century Western philosophy of which the central characteristic is its focusing of philosophy and other humanities on the relationship between philosophy and language. Movements, like structuralism, poststructuralism and philosophy of language, following the tradition of linguistic turn often point to the notion that language constitutes a 'reality,' a claim that contrasts sharply with intuition and most Western traditions of philosophy. The traditional view of linguistic turn considers words as labels attached to concepts. Following this view, there must be a concrete object which exists in some external reality and roughly corresponds with a concept in human thought to which a linguistic word refers.

However, in his much celebrated and critically acclaimed 'Course in General Linguistics,' De Saussure (1916) asserted that concepts cannot exist independently from a linguistic system. The very first thing that needs to be considered is that linguistic turn as initiated by De Saussure (1916) was initially and primarily a purely linguistic concept formulated specifically to underscore the idea that language is a structured system, and dealing particularly with the nature of the linguistic sign (the signified) and the sound-image

(the signifier). For him, the referent is excluded from the equation since linguistics is not concerned with the referent; it is interested only in the signifier, the signified, and their relation.

Moreover, language as a structured system deals not with the particularity or specificity of languages, but with the generality trying to find that basic unit which De Saussure (1916) later conceived to be the 'linguistic sign.' From a semantic lens, De Saussure (1916) argued that the referent of a word is insignificant. For him, there is nothing 'real' in some external reality except that this reality might just be a convention of naming and characterizing. The reality of a concept is identified not because people are able to simultaneously distinguish it from everything else that exists but because it possesses certain specific characteristics, themselves identifiable, that people are able to distinguish.

Central to the argument of the linguistic turn is the denial of a standard or normative use of language. Postcolonial literatures richly exhibit this characteristic of the linguistic turn in that they possess the distinctive notion of denying colonial languages the privilege of the center. Postcolonial literatures respond to the intellectual discourse of colonization and address the problems and consequences of the decolonization of a country and of a nation, especially the political and cultural independence of formerly subjugated peoples. In the course of decolonizing a country or a nation, different forms of literature were used by literary artists to free themselves and the nation from the impositions of the colonizers of a standard or of a norm.

Pivotal in this process of decolonizing a country through language is the use of textual strategies which take the language of the colonizers and re-place it in a discourse that contrasts with the colonizers' ideas and concepts. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) present a compelling framework in understanding textual strategies that literary artists utilize in replacing language. In this study, the researchers used Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) textual strategies in postcolonial-writing in examining how the Philippine literary icon Manuel Arguilla utilized such strategies in expressing native identities and ideologies.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Philippine short stories in English during the pre-war years, like other formations and products of colonization such as painting, sculpture and other art forms, are a hybrid in terms of form and content. This hybridity is most eloquently suggested by Rao (1938, p. vii) in the statement, "to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own."

The first American teachers in the Philippines, known as the Thomasites, made use of the Western literary canon and its attendant standards of the form and structure of the Western literary arts (poetry, short story, novel and the essay) as vehicles for language learning (Dimalanta, 1988). This process occurred during the period in the development of Philippine literature in English most Philippine literature book anthologists call the period of imitation and apprenticeship (Vinuya, 2011; Dula & Croghan, 1972; Cahayon & Zulueta, 2000) or tutelage.

The introduction of English as the medium of instruction in Philippine schools (Lumbera & Lumbera, 1997) and as the medium of communication in the government (Dimalanta, 1988), and the workplace, facilitated the colonizing efforts of the United States of America, and has as a consequence redefined and resituated the Filipino sense of self and place. This did not only establish the place of the Received Standard English, but also secured the hegemony of the same over the native lingua franca and the other languages of the archipelago.

In an invaded colony, where the colonizers impose their language and try to secure hegemony through cultural and artistic productions, members of the community are

marginalized in terms of determining what may be said or written using the colonizers' language, i.e., English.

Hence, short story writers and novelists among other literary artists in postcolonial art resort to the use of abrogation and appropriation in order to challenge the marginalization of local sentiments. Abrogation is the denial of the imperial culture's imposition of a standard, be it culture, aesthetic, illusory standard of normative or correct usage, or assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning inscribed in the words. In this process of abrogation, literary artists appropriate English to express sentiments which are rather difficult to express using the Received Standard English.

In this paper, the writing of a form of literature is seen from the lens of postcolonial writing looking into how, in postcolonial Philippines, the use of an abrogated and appropriated language that demands a kind of questioning and subversion of the previously inarticulate and therefore unheard political subjects was used to deny the colonial language privileged status through the use of a re-placed English that conveys the experiences, longings, aspirations, and outcries of the marginalized sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Postcolonial literatures are paradigmatic of what Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) describe as a tension between the colonizer and the colonized. Each postcolonial literature may be distinguished by the authentic experiences and contexts that each colony has. This section looks at how linguistic abrogation and appropriation were used by postcolonial literary artists, e.g., short story writers and novelists, to convey sentiments that are authentic to the place where the literature resides.

Dutta and Hossain (2012) looked at abrogation and appropriation in "Petals of Blood," a celebrated African literary work written by Ngugi o Thiong'o. The study commences with a meaningful categorization of instances of abrogation and appropriation then proceeds with an analysis of how Ngugi uses the same to produce a counter-discourse and take on an active stand on the politics of power in his novel, thus challenging the power structure imposed by the colonial regime in the polyglossic linguistic context of Kenya.

Likewise, Awan and Ali (2012) analyzed strategies of language appropriation in Khaled Hosseini's "A Thousand Splendid Suns." They found that code-switching is the most common strategy of appropriating the language. Moreover, they explain that Hosseini's extensive and intensive use of language appropriation in the novel established himself as a postcolonial writer, who has come up with indigenous cultural assertiveness through a fitting use of language.

Further, Kapadia (2008) analyzed appropriations in Salman Rushdie's "Yorick" and "The Moor's Last Sigh." In her study, she found that through appropriations, adaptations and retellings of Shakespeare's texts, Rushdie blurs the categories of the vanquished and the dominant, the indigenous and the colonizers, and the West and the rest.

In another study of postcolonial literature, Al-Ma-amari, Yusof and Vengadasamy (2014) looked into the process of decolonization in Nābulūn fī al-Azhar's "Napoleon in Al-Azhar," which depicts Egyptian resistance, against French subjugation and humiliation, and sacrifices to gain freedom from the colonizers. Using Frantz Fanon's theory of resistance and revolution, the authors analyzed how the events in the novel embodied three stages of decolonization as follows: assimilation to the colonizer's culture, rediscovery of their own culture and identity, and finally the confrontation with the colonialists.

Alwadhaf and Omar (2011) looked into Ghassan Kanafani's "Men in the Sun" as a literary piece aimed at creating a 'nation in words' and constructing a 'country in books.' By highlighting Edward Said's theory on resistance literature, the authors argued that Kanafani's

novel represents the Palestinian dream of giving expression to the national longing for a literary form of resistance.

In the Philippines, Daroy (1993) explored textual strategies in re-placing English used by some Philippine writers in English. In his analysis of Severino Montano's "Sabina" (1945), Nick Joaquin's "Summer Solstice" (1950), Juan T. Gatbonton's "Clay" (1951), and F. Sionil Jose's "The God Stealer" (1960), he found an extensive use of metonymic representations of the colonizer, the colonized, the tension between and other tangent issues. In "Sabina" for example, he posits that "Mr. George" serves as the metonym for white society and its values, which deprive the marginalized persons of control as exemplified by Sabina, metonym of the indigenous society, culture and values.

The literary pieces of postcolonial Philippine literature in English analyzed in Daroy (1993) exemplify how writers abrogate and appropriate English to circumscribe the imposition of a Western way of doing things. It is the aim of this paper then to explore the same instantiations of abrogation and appropriation in the short stories of Manuel Arguilla, a leading figure in postcolonial Philippine short stories in English.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aims of this paper are two-fold. First, this paper aimed to identify abrogation and appropriation in the use of textual strategies in the postcolonial short stories of Manuel Arguilla. Second, it also aimed to analyze how the textual strategies of abrogation and appropriation were used to valorize the use of an English in expressing native sentiments. Specifically, this paper zeroed in on the following questions:

1. What strategies of abrogation and appropriation were used in the short stories of Manuel Arguilla?
2. How does the process of abrogation and appropriation in the short stories of Manuel Arguilla valorize the use of an English in expressing native Filipino sentiments?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) textual strategies in postcolonial writing serve as the framework on which the present study is anchored. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) contend that postcolonial countries share the same paradigmatic tension between them, the former colonial country, and the former imperial power. This paradigmatic tension brings together different experiences of different colonized countries to form a tapestry of an art form that dismantles the notion of a center of power and in its place establish a nexus of power that comes from the perceived marginalized or peripheral power.

In their seminal work on textual strategies in postcolonial writing, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) identify textual strategies which allow the literary artist to seize the language of the center and re-place it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place. Textual strategies refer to the writer's use of linguistic structure of the borrowed language, in this case English, and his manipulation of syntactical structure and its semantics to convey his stance against the colonizer (Ashcroft, Griffith & Tiffin, 1989). Among these textual strategies are abrogation and appropriation.

The literary artist abrogates language to challenge the power structure that the imperial language imposes on the colonized country. This process of abrogation, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) explain, is vital in decolonizing the language and the writing of English. Moreover, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) explain that abrogation is the deliberate play of English, remodeling it to reflect the rhythms and syntax of indigenous languages. In order for abrogation to reach a point of reversing the assumptions of a privileged language, appropriation is necessary. Appropriation is a process in which the language is adapted as a

tool and utilized in various ways to express widely differing cultural experiences. It seizes the language of the center and utilizes it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) identify at least five language appropriation strategies: glossing, untranslated words, syntactic fusion, interlanguage and code-switching and vernacular transcription.

The first appropriation strategy, glossing, is the explanatory comment attached to a text. It can be a word, a sentence, or a clause, qualifying the non-English word. Second, the use of untranslated words or leaving words unglossed allows the selection of certain untranslated lexical items to keep the cultural distinctiveness intact. Third, syntactic fusion is the combination of two different linguistic structures mixing the syntax of local language with the lexical forms of English, or vice versa. Fourth, interlanguage is the refusal to translate words, so it would appear even more profitable to attempt to generate what might be called an “interculture” by the fusion of the linguistic structures of the two languages, which is deemed not a mistake but an integration of two genuine linguistic systems. Finally, code-switching as a language appropriation strategy is the technique of shifting between two or more codes in the process of appropriation thereby bringing change in the modes of expression.

Following Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) framework on postcolonial writing, this paper examines textual strategies found in the four short stories of Manuel Arguilla and analyzed how an abrogated and appropriated form of English is used to express native Filipino sentiments.

ENGLISH AND FORMS OF ENGLISHES

English is the received standard form of the language of colonization during the American occupation in Philippine history. The Philippine colonial experience, specifically that with the Americans, is characterized by the use of state apparatuses, like education, that brought a foreign language and was systematically used as a medium of instruction in schools, means of communication in workplaces and a symbol of an elevated status in society as well as the measure of intellectual and cultural superiority.

Western literary, legal and business correspondences were first made as models for compositions and guides for language learning, language drills were conducted in classrooms to train students in reading and pronunciation, and reading and writing activities were given to train the Filipino tongue in the use of the English language as a medium of communication; but the Philippines is home to multiple languages and dialects (Lewis, Simons & Fennig, 2014), which is a common feature of invaded colonies (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, 1989). As the received standard form of the language comes into contact with the indigenous languages and dialects the processes of appropriation and abrogation sets in and the development and burgeoning of variants of the received standard form begin resulting in englishes. Literary productions of Filipino writers, even those who were schooled in the American public school system and who by today’s standards may be classified as near-native speakers of English, exhibit forms of remodeling of the standard to accommodate untranslatable concepts and indigenous forms of expressions. It is in the light of this distinction that the difference between English and ‘english’ must be viewed.

MANUEL ARGUILLA

Manuel Arguilla is the author of the highly anthologized “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife,” the main story of the collection “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories.” This collection won the first prize award in the first Commonwealth literary contest in the year 1940 and has secured for Arguilla his place in Philippine literature.

His stories, which are imbued with local color, are very descriptive to the point of being the worthy literary counterparts of Fernando Amorsolo's masterpieces in the visual art of painting.

Most of Arguilla's stories depict scenes in Barrio Nagrebcan, Bauang, La Union, where he was born. The bond with his birthplace, forged by his dealings with the peasant folk of Ilocos, remained strong even after he moved to Manila.

Abraham Van Heyningen Hartendorp, the editor of *Philippine Magazine* during the pre-war period, observed how Arguilla, with his skill in the use of English as a medium, used the language "almost as if it were a Philippine dialect – so adequate he finds it for his purpose" (Valeros & Gruenberg, 1987).

With the accolades and acclamation given to his literary pieces, Manuel Arguilla is a fitting literary icon, whose literary works could be considered a window to the best of postcolonial short story writing in the Philippines. Hence, his works potentially provide a window through which the valorization of the adaption of an English in expressing native Filipino sentiments can be seen.

CORPUS OF THE STUDY

The present study investigates four short stories, which are part of the collection "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Short Stories" (Arguilla, 1998). The four short stories are "Midsummer," "Morning in Nagrebcan," "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," and "Rice." These stories operate on three levels of expression as forms of literary productions and materials for postcolonial counter discourse.

First, as forms of literature and based on what are explicitly stated in the texts, the stories are charming descriptions of barrio life and the rustic landscapes of the Ilocos region in the northern part of the Philippines. They are vignettes of the everyday experiences of simple country folks and nostalgic remembrances of things past. In terms of literary style and use of literary devices they are exemplars of the author's unquestionable facility with the use of language, skill in description and his masterful handling of the local color.

On the second level, as artistic expressions of human nature and significant human experiences, the stories present discourses on social, cultural and political issues in the context of their time and place. "Midsummer," the first of the short stories, is an implicit and subtle representation of the prelude to the lifelong commitment people make in a marriage and the enumeration of the psychological, material and physical requisites both the man and the woman must bring into marriage. "Morning in Nagrebcan" is a sad portrayal of the power relations within the basic unit of society, which is the family. It is therefore by extension, the depiction by scale or the microcosm of the Philippine society and the power relations that operate in it. "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," the main story in the collection, is an analysis by comparison and contrasts between the life in the city and the life in the country. The story is also a discourse on non-verbal forms of communication and the reading of non-verbal significations. The fourth short story "Rice" is a socio-political commentary on social justice, landlord-tenant relations, labor and pay, and agrarian reform. A more radical approach to the stories, however, is to extend the microcosmic views of life to the macrocosmic levels. Gaze must go beyond the relations of man and woman in marriage; of the father, the mother and the children relationships within the family; and of the social hierarchical systems within the scope of the hacienda.

In the third level of expression, challenge is posed to interrogate power relations between the colonizers and the colonized, between the center and the peripheral; the binary oppositions at play within a given postcolonial set-up and lastly even the linguistic, gestural and symbolic utterances that imbed culturally shared and context specific meanings in the short stories.

Given the levels of expression that operate in the short stories, it could be expected that strategies of abrogation and appropriation might have been extensively used to valorize an adapted English to express native Filipino sentiments. Such meaningful exploration calls for a sound analytic framework.

ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

Qualitative content analysis (Silverman, 2006) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) make up the framework on which analysis of the texts was carried out.

For the first research question, the study makes use of Silverman's (2006) qualitative content analysis. It is a relatively simple process of describing the data set identifying connections and patterns across parts of the data. This data analytic tool suits well with the first research question since categories related to appropriation and abrogations exist. Hence, the analysis proceeds having clearly in mind Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) textual strategies of abrogation and appropriation

For the second research question, the present study operates without any previous categories or types; hence, the analysis of data follows a bottom up approach. Therefore, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis serves the purpose of identifying themes that emerge from the data. Attride-Stirling (2001) says that thematic analysis seeks to unearth the themes salient in a text. It is a qualitative analytic method used for identifying, analyzing and reporting recurring patterns (themes) within the data set.

ANALYSIS

STRATEGIES OF ABROGATION AND APPROPRIATION USED IN THE SHORT STORIES

Qualitative content analysis of data reveals that, of the five strategies of abrogation and appropriation, the author made most extensive use of untranslated words as a strategy of appropriating English. It is also worth mentioning that the untranslated words are either kinship terms or cultural items. Untranslated kinship terms are highlighted in (1-4).

- 1) "Won't you join me, **Ading**?" (Arguilla, 1998, p. 7).
- 2) "God reward you, **Manong**" (Arguilla, 1998, p. 7).
- 3) "**Itay**, I am hungry" (Arguilla, 1998, p. 195).
- 4) "After the fields is home – **Manang**" (Arguilla, 1998, p. 73).

It could be that Arguilla's deliberate use of kinship terms is an attempt to contrast the family institution in the Philippines and in the United States of America. The Filipino kinship terms reflect the elaborate family relation system and strong family ties in the Philippines. They may also be indicative of the profound respect and reverence present in the indigenous Filipino context and of the extended and multigenerational characteristics of the Filipino family. The use of *ading* 'sibling,' *manong* 'older brother,' *itay* 'father' and *manang* 'older sister,' illustrates this.

Another category of untranslated words widely found in the short stories of Manuel Arguilla is that of Filipino cultural items as seen in (5-8).

- 5) "The opening of the **sawali** door, its uneven bottom dragging nosily against the bamboo floor in..." (Arguilla, 1998, p. 12)
- 6) "He was a carpenter. Now and then he drank great quantities of **basi** and came home at night and beat his wife and children." (Arguilla, 1998, p. 16)
- 7) "She stepped down from the **carretela** of Ca Celin with a quick, delicate grace" (Arguilla, 1998, p. 69).
- 8) "He saw the sagging **nipa** walls, the shutterless windows..." (Arguilla, 1998, p. 190)

His use of *sawali* ‘woven bamboo mats,’ *basi* ‘fermented alcoholic beverage,’ *carretela* ‘carabao-drawn carriage,’ and *nipa* ‘indigenous palm’ is potent in appropriating English not only because it highlights the difference between the Philippine and American cultures but also because it points to the effectiveness of discourse in explaining cultural concepts thus actively engaging the readers to make sense of the meaning through context clues. Not providing gloss in these untranslated words makes the cultural distinctiveness of this items intact as explained by Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989).

Aside from the use of untranslated words, there are also tokens that point to the author’s use of glossing as a strategy of appropriating English as seen in (9-12).

- 9) “**Nana** Elang, the mother of Baldo, now appeared in the doorway with a handful of rice straw, she called Baldo and told him to get some hot coals from their neighbors” (Arguilla, 1998, p. 13).
- 10) “We have always borrowed **tersiohan** – four cavanés become six...” (Arguilla, 1998, p. 191)
- 11) “...the rotting floor of the shaky **batalan**, the roofless shed over the low ladder...” (Arguilla, 1998, p. 190)
- 12) “Slowly Pablo unhitched the **carabao** from the empty sled. He laid a horny palm on the back of the tired animal; the thick coarse-haired skin was warm and dry-like sun-heated earth” (Arguilla, 1998, p. 189).

The analysis revealed that glossing is another textual strategy used by Manuel Arguilla. His qualification of *Nana* ‘mother,’ *tersiohan* ‘a payment scheme in which four cavanés (sack) of borrowed rice becomes six,’ *batalan* ‘roofless shed over the low ladder,’ *carabao* ‘a beast of burden with thick coarse-haired skin’ is a manifestation of cultural distance between the Philippines and the United States of America.

Arguilla, by glossing words of indigenous meaning, seems to have wanted the readers to understand a Filipino concept as another form of engaging them in a discourse that centers on the indigenous culture. Meanwhile, no significant examples of syntactic fusion, interlanguage and code-switching were found in the corpus.

The appropriation strategies of using untranslated words and glossing appear to work well in the short stories of Manuel Arguilla. His rich description of indigenous concepts through the use of kinship terms and cultural items can only be aptly described by the use of untranslated terms. Translation could have made the words lose their indigenous meaning. Through these strategies, the writer engages the readers in a discourse that advances local identities and ideologies.

After identifying the strategies of appropriation in the four short stories of Manuel Arguilla, the tokens are seen from a thematic lens to analyze how the strategies of abrogation and appropriation valorize the adaption of an English in expressing native sentiments.

ABROGATION AND APPROPRIATION AND THE VALORIZATION OF AN ENGLISH IN EXPRESSING NATIVE SENTIMENTS

Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guidelines in doing thematic analysis, four themes relating to how the use of abrogation and appropriation aided in the expression of native Filipino sentiments emerged from the data: expression of an authentic self, expression of an authentic place, subtle form of subversion and tool in advancing Filipino identities and ideologies.

ABROGATION AND APPROPRIATION AS AN EXPRESSION OF AN AUTHENTIC SELF

In a postcolonial set-up, because of the configurations of the makeup of a society, and that of the relations that exist between the colonizers, on one hand and the colonized, on the other,

there is a systematic degradation of the beliefs, traditions and practices of the indigenous people. In the stories of Manuel Arguilla one can sense that manifest attempts were made to assert cultural integrity by elevating the richness of the local culture and the validity of indigenous customs and traditions.

In “Midsummer”, for example, the young man, whose role as a future husband, should manifest traits of industry, strength and sense of responsibility. The young woman, on the other hand, should manifest virtues of modesty, propriety and obedience. For their marriage to work, both characters must take with them psychological, physical as well as material readiness to take on the challenges of married life.

In “Morning in Nagrebcan”, what is questioned is the centrality of the father who is depicted as the roaring king of his domain in relation to his muted wife and frightened sons: Ambo and Baldo. From here, the sense of self may again be gleaned from the meanings culturally ascribed to the members of the Filipino family and the roles they play, as well as the duties and responsibilities they perform. The detailed descriptions of local landscapes, cultural practices and people, with all their characteristics, mannerisms and quirks or idiosyncrasies, all serve to counteract the dominant gaze perpetuated by the colonizers by means of the educational, political, cultural and even religious texts and thereby are considered forms of struggles to break from the stereotypes, forms of generalizations and inaccurate descriptions.

ABROGATION AND APPROPRIATION AS AN EXPRESSION OF AN AUTHENTIC PLACE

In terms of spatial orientation, attention may be called to the fact that Arguilla, in relation to the spaces his characters occupy, always situates “Nagrebcan” or the end of the journey to the “West,” so the characters’ visions are always from “East” to the “West”. In the case of “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife”, for example, the city is placed in the east whereas Nagrebcan is in the west, “There is Nagrebcan Maria,” my brother Leon said, gesturing widely towards the west” (Arguilla, 1998, p. 70).

The Philippines, in terms of its colonial experience, is an invaded territory and as opposed to settler colony, the elements and traces of exploitation of indigenous peoples, natural resources and land resources prominently figure in the process of colonialism. The concept of authentic sense of ‘place’ and ‘home’ then becomes, for the enslaved native, a cosmic form of alienation. The acts of writing back by means of vivid descriptions of local color, incorporations into the texts of idealized experiences of the common folk which are unfettered by the effects of mechanization and industrializations in rural areas and the dramatizations of scenes from the typical ‘barrio’ life serve to restore that connection between the indigenous people and the places and spaces lost to the colonial experience and in the process counteract the resulting alienation and ambiguity in the indigenous people’s sense of ‘home.’

Through the extensive use and rich description of the typical barrio life in the Ilocos region, Arguilla engages the readers in a discourse that expresses an authentic sense of place.

ABROGATION AND APPROPRIATION AS A SUBTLE FORM OF SUBVERSION

It almost seems to be a cliché to say that ‘history is written by the victors,’ but the colonial experience has successfully determined and shaped for the colonized country its history by privileging the role of the colonial power and marginalizing all the efforts of the colonized at self-determination and expressions of authenticity. Postcolonial writing, which in this paper is seen from the works of Arguilla, seeks to subvert this configuration by shifting through the use of language the gaze from which history is viewed and telling the tales from the point of view of the colonized.

In the story, “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife”, Leon brings home the city girl Maria to his barrio home, where the newlyweds would try to win the approval of a provincial father. A schematization of the symbolisms and significations of the characters will reveal the equation where Maria stands for the city and therefore centrality, the father stands for the barrio and therefore marginalized and Leon stands in between, for he straddles between the city and the barrio and therefore ambivalent in terms of positioning. The scheme however is reversed as the father is actually the dominant character and, although he only appears quite late in the story, it is from him that the two seek approval. Curiously, however, the accepted configurations of centrality in terms of the binaries at play in the story are all reversed in favor of the commonly perceived marginalized sector. Hence, the brutish name Leon, which is associated with the king of the jungle, was unceremoniously changed to the more socially acceptable Christian name Noel: “‘Yes Noel.’ Now where did she get that name? I pondered the matter quietly to myself, thinking father might not like it” (Arguilla, 1998, p. 70).

The description of Labang the Philippine water Buffalo and its call as against that of the more western cow was given emphasis,

“Labang’s white coat which I had washed and brushed that morning with coconut husk, glistened like beaten cotton under the lamp-light and his horns appeared tipped with fire. He face the sun and from his mouth came a call so load and vibrant that the earth seemed to tremble underfoot. And far away in the middle of the fields a cow lowed softly in answer”

(Arguilla, 1998, p. 70-71).

All the foregoing are forms of subversions against and reversals of the standards of the hierarchic center. They are in very conclusive terms forms of valorizations of previously prejudiced and discriminated cultural concepts through the use of abrogated and appropriated language.

ABROGATION AND APPROPRIATION AS A TOOL IN ADVANCING FILIPINO IDENTITIES AND IDEOLOGIES

Expressions of Filipino identities and ideologies are also most effectively depicted through the use of various uses of untranslated and glossed terms. In “Midsummer”, for example, when the young man in the story offered the young woman to partake of the modest lunch he was having and when she modestly declined the invitation by shaking her head coupled with the statement, “‘God reward you Manong,’ the young man answered, ‘Perhaps the poor food I have is not fit you?’” (Arguilla, 1998, p. 87). This exchange literally speaks of two characters that are psychologically ready for whatever hardships married life may bring. English here is abrogated and appropriated not only to speak of the distinct Filipino traits of hospitality and the often misplaced sense of humility, but also to express that both characters are quite used to the simple life in the periphery and the frugal character of the Ilocano. This may signify and justify the Filipino psyche that romanticizes the simple happy life. Interrogating the foregoing, however, will reveal the disturbing question: *Who will profit from the Filipinos’ contentment with the simple happy life in the barrio?*

There is a kind of deconstruction at work in the process whereby the hegemony of the Received Standard English is questioned and subverted and its opposite, the Philippine variety of English is recognized, utilized and ultimately valorized as a means of writing back to the center, such as in the case of the short stories of Manuel Arguilla, transpositions and substitutions of characters from specific persons to the extended notions of the colonizers and the colonized, the setting from the specific towns of the Ilocos region to the more encompassing notions of the nations involved in the colonial set-up and ultimately from the specific concepts of self and roles, duties or obligations within the relationships in the community to the greater concepts of roles within the colonial set-up.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study is two-fold. First, it aimed to unearth from a corpus of four short stories written by Manuel Arguilla salient textual strategies that abrogate and appropriate English and adapt it in a discourse fully adapted in the colonized place, the Philippines. Second, it aimed to discuss how abrogation and appropriation valorize the use of an English in expressing native sentiments.

Following the framework of Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989), the study found that the two most common textual strategies of language appropriation in the short stories of Manuel Arguilla are the use of untranslated words and glossing. Both strategies seem to be very effective in advancing native sentiments. The use of untranslated words aids in keeping the cultural distinctiveness of a word intact. Kinship terms are also left unglossed to elaborate the extended and multigenerational characteristic of the Filipino family. The use of these textual strategies valorize the adaptation of the colonizer's language by using it to express a sense of authentic self, express a sense of authentic place, express subtle forms of subversion, and advance Filipino identities and ideologies.

The results point to the similarity of the Philippine short stories in English to other forms of postcolonial literature in that the former epitomizes what Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) call the paradigmatic tension between the colonizer and the colonized in postcolonial literatures. Moreover, it was found that the short stories of Manuel Arguilla provide an understanding of the local Filipino sentiments at the time of postcolonial Philippines. Local collective sentiments as seen from the literatures of former colonies are what makes studies on postcolonial literatures unique.

While Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) paradigmatic tension seems to be applicable in analyzing most postcolonial literatures, it is looking into the local collective sentiments of people from which a certain literature resides that facilitates an understanding and appreciation of the unique experiences of the colonized. The short stories of Manuel Arguilla do just this, through their rich description of local culture and indigenous culture and traditions and picturesque depiction of Barrio Nagrebcan in the Ilocos region.

This study investigated abrogation and appropriation as seen from the works of Manuel Arguilla. However, the present study does not account for all postcolonial Philippine short stories in English, much less for postcolonial Philippine literature in general. Hence, the findings of this paper on Manuel Arguilla's short stories warrant further investigations on postcolonial Philippine literature in order to establish a trend among the works from this period of Philippine literature.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Edward Jay Mansarate Quinto is Assistant Professor at Mapúa Institute of Technology, Manila, where he teaches English, Communication, and Research. He currently writes his dissertation for the degree PhD Applied Linguistics at De La Salle University. He is vice president of the Speech Communication Organization of the Philippines.

Juan Carlos Santos is Assistant Professor at Mapúa Institute of Technology, Manila, where he teaches English and Humanities courses. He holds a Master of Arts in Literature from the University of Santo Tomas, and currently takes up PhD Literature in the same university.