A READING ON WOMEN AND THE ARTS IN AND OUT OF BLANK SPACE

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Reading is not only about the printed page but also the blank space that surrounds every inked letter of a text. A wedding of the two begets meanings which makes reading truly an act of creation/recreation/re-creation.

Let us now read this passage from Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere:*

> As the Virgin passed before Capitan Tiago's house, a heavenly song greeted her with the words of the archangel. It was a tender voice, melodious, pleading, crying out Gounod's *Ave Maria,* accompanied by the piano which prayed with her. The music of the procession ceased, the prayers stopped and even Padre Salvi paused. The voice trembled and drew tears: it expressed more than a greeting, it was a prayer, a protest.
>
> x x x
>
> Tonight, either because of the proximity of Capitan Tiago's house she heard Maria Clara's sad song or that other tunes recalled her old songs, whatever the cause, Sisa also began to sing in her sweet and melancholy voice the *kundiman* of her youth. The soldiers heard her and kept quiet: *ay!* those songs recalled old memories, memories of the time when they were not yet corrupted.
>
> Doña Consolacion heard her too in her boredom and asked about the person who was singing.
>
> "Bring her up at once!" she commanded . . . .
>
> x x x
>
> The lieutenant's wife coughed, made a sign to the soldiers to leave, and unhooking her husband's whip, said in a sinister voice to the madwoman:

"Vámos, magcantar icau!"

x x x

Sisa then had the misfortune of not understanding her . . . Aide, tell this one in Tagalog to sing! she does not understand me, she doesn't know Spanish.

The madwoman understood the aide and she sang the Night's Song.

Doña Consolacion listened at first with mocking laughter but the laughter gradually disappeared, she became attentive, then serious and somewhat thoughtful . . . .

"No, don't sing!" exclaimed the lieutenant's wife in perfect Tagalog, standing agitated: "don't sing! these verses hurt me!"

The madwoman became silent; the aide exclaimed: "*Aba*! she knows *pala* Tagalog!" and he stood looking full of admiration at the señora.

This one understood that she gave herself away: she was ashamed of it and, as her nature was not that of a woman, shame took the aspect of rage and hate. She showed the door to the impudent aide and, with a kick, closed it behind him. She took a few turns around the room twisting the whip in her nervous hands, and suddenly stopping before the madwoman, told her in Spanish: "Dance!"

Sisa did not move.

"Dance, dance!" she repeated in a sinister voice.

The madwoman looked at her with vague, expressionless eyes: the lieutenant's wife lifted one of her arms, then the other, shaking them: it was useless, Sisa did not understand.

She started to jump, to move about, encouraging the other to imitate her. The music of the procession was heard from a distance playing the grave and majestic march, but the Señora jumped furiously following another rhythm, another music, the one that was playing inside her. Sisa looked immobile at her: something like curiosity showed in her eyes and a weak smile moved her pale lips: the Señora's dance amused her.

This one stopped as if ashamed, raised the whip, this terrible whip known by thieves and soldiers, made in Ulango and made perfect with twisted wires by the lieutenant, and said:

"Now it is your turn to dance . . . dance!"

And she began to strike lightly the bare feet of the madwoman whose face contracted with pain, obliging her to defend herself with her hands.

"Aha! now you're starting!" she exclaimed with savage glee, passing from *lento* to *allegro vivace.*

The unfortunate woman moaned painfully and quickly raised her foot.

"You have to dance, you Indian wh---!" the Señora said and the whip vibrated and whistled.

Sisa let herself fall to the floor placing both hands on her legs and looking at her tormentor with wild eyes. Two strong blows of the whip on her shoulder made her stand: it was no longer a moan but two howls that the unfortunate woman emitted. Her thin blouse was torn, the skin opened and blood spurted.

The sight of blood arouses the tiger; the blood of her victim exalted Doña Consolacion.

"Dance, dance, you damned woman! Woe to your mother who bore you!" she screamed; "dance or I'll beat you to death!"

And catching her by one hand and whipping her by the other, she began to jump and dance.

The madwoman understood her at last and followed, moving her arms unrhytmically. A smile of satisfaction thinned the lips of the teacher, the smile of a female Mephistopheles who has made a great pupil; it contained hate, disdain, mockery and cruelty . . . .

And absorbed in the joy of her spectacle, she did not hear the arrival of her husband until he suddenly opened the door with a kick.

The lieutenant appeared pale and gloomy; he saw what was going on and gave his wife a terrible look. This one did not move from her place and stood smiling cynically (*Noli*:239, 244, 245-246).[1]

The printed text tells how Jose Rizal connects Maria Clara's song to Sisa's *kundiman* and Sisa's *kundiman* in turn to Doña Consolacion's dance against the backdrop of the "grave and majestic music" of the religious procession. The connection has stories to tell which are suppressed in the

printed page. I, a feminist reader, must retrieve them from the blank space of the pages so that those, who read with me, will be brought before their own presence as gendered beings grappling with sexual/textual politics, and hopefully get directed toward the road leading to emancipation.

Let Creation/Recreation/Re-creation Begin!

Remember that Rizal was in Europe at a time when the "First Wave" of the women's movement was peaking. His exposure to the women's movement[2] made him very aware of the "Woman Question" (Fernandez 1996) and this awareness can be documented by the truths his works say and do not say when intertexted with other texts and placed in context.

Before discussing the stories thrown out of the printed pages, let us see what Rizal's works say regarding the three women in question.

Maria Clara leads the privileged life of the native elite: She is sent to a convent school for girls, Santa Isabel; gets pampered with jewelry and finery by a doting Capitan Tiago who shows her off as a daughter/prized possession to the high and the mighty in colonial society, e.g. the Governor General, the friars and visiting peninsulars. She is engaged to be married to the scion of a wealthy family, Ibarra, who is not only rich but also well traveled and highly educated. Her fiance earns the enmity of Padre Damaso, who cuckolds Capitan Tiago by impregnating Doña Pia Alba, Maria's mother after convincing her to dance the *turumba,* a fertility ritual. Padre Salvi, a friar with sexual intentions on Maria, shows Doña Pia Alba's incriminating letters which tell of her despicable sin with Padre Damaso and her intention to commit abortion, and informs Maria that her mother's letters will be given

to her only in exchange for a letter of Ibarra to her. Maria exchanges Ibarra's letter for her mother's. Ibarra's letter is used to incriminate him as a *filibustero*. This compels Capitan Tiago to decide on marrying off Maria to the peninsular, Señor Linares. Maria, at first, is willing to make the sacrifice, but after her conversation with Ibarra, she tells her father: "To the nunnery or death!"

In the nunnery, the convent of Santa Clara, she does not realize her objective of living a celibate life because she is raped by Padre Salvi. One stormy night she appears on the ledge of the convent's roof, her hands raised to the heavens asking for mercy. Two soldiers see her, and one of them inquires about her from the convent's Mother Superior the next day. So does another gentleman who is told about the apparition on the convent's roof. All are told by the abbess that there is no such nun in the convent. Maria Clara stays in the convent as a prisoner and dies broken-hearted.

Sisa represents another picture of the life of women. She comes from a well-to-do family. She falls in love with Pedro who dissipates her paraphernal properties through gambling. A good-for-nothing husband, Pedro has nothing to do with earning a living even after he has sired Basilio and Crispin. He comes home to eat the food Sisa prepares for her working sons, have sex with her, gets her hard-earned money for gambling and then leaves home. To support the family, Sisa works as a seamstress and raises vegetables and chickens in her backyard. To augment the family income, her two sons work as bell ringers in the church. A tragedy strikes. Crispin is accused of stealing money from the church and is killed by the priest while Basilio, who manages to escape from his brother's tormentors, comes home, only to leave again to hide from his pursuers. Members of the *guardia civil* are sent to

look for the two brothers, branded as criminals by the *padre paroco.* Not finding the "culprits," they take Sisa to the barracks for questioning. She is later released. For her sons' sake, she goes to the *convento* to seek the clemency of the *padre paroco,* bringing with her a basket of fruits and vegetables from her garden, only to be told by the women working for the friar that the friar hates to be disturbed. Sisa goes home and looks everywhere for her children. Not finding them, she becomes insane and once, looking out of the window cries: "The night is dark and children are getting lost!" When at last Basilio comes back to visit her and after he introduces himself as her long lost son, she manages to recognize him in one fleeting moment of sanity. Then she expires in her son's loving embrace.

Doña Consolacion is described as a woman who has a "masculine face" with "a forehead lined with thick veins, conductors... not of blood but of vinegar and gall" who could be easily mistaken for a *mangkukulam.* Chapter XXXIX of the *Noli* chronicles her life history: She comes from a remote town and works as a *lavandera* for a Spanish soldier who later marries her. On her wedding day, she is instructed by her husband, then already the *alferez,* on how to call her "d--- country." At first Doña Consolacion is obedient to her husband. Gradually she asserts herself and soon she is known to the town as "the Medusa" or the "Muse of the Civil Guards." One of her significant assertions of self was her junking of Spanish and Tagalog in favor of a "language of gestures." An astute player in the power game, she becomes frightening to men. No less than the learned Pilosopong Tasio warns the equally learned Ibarra to beware of this daughter of Eve. Unlike Maria Clara and Sisa Doña Consolacion is not killed by Rizal. He allows her to live but is prevented from entering the pages of the *Noli*'s sequel, the *Fili.*

How does Rizal connect the three women? Why does he connect them?

My reading as a feminist asserts that Rizal connects the three women in order to articulate what he could not manifestly say in the printed pages of his novels. When intertexted with his *Letter to the Young Women of Malolos* (1889), and placed in the context of the "Woman Question" what has been silenced can be made to speak (i.e., a different text can emerge from the novels).

In Rizal's letter is advanced his theory on the Filipino women's oppression. Their oppression, the letter says, is rooted in their minds. Prevented by the frailocracy from becoming rational or in possession of true consciousness, women who are expected to be "the lights of home" or in Tagalog, *mga ilaw ng tahanan,* are actually disseminators of darkness instead of light because they have become burnt out bulbs or *mga pundidong ilaw ng tahanan.* To the women of Malolos, he wrote that the friars are responsible for what women in the Philippines have become. The friars, the letter asserts, are purveyors of false consciousness, extractors of blind obedience, and falsifiers of the true God by turning religion into a commerce of men.

A believer in the power of texts to empower or disempower people, Rizal says in his letter that women have become disempowered because they have been deprived of the correct texts and supplied with wrong ones.

> What kind of offspring will a woman have whose kindness of character is expressed by mumbled prayers (texts in Latin or Spanish that most women in the Philippines could not understand), who knows nothing by heart except *awits* (escapist literature), novenas (again, prayers), and fake miracles .... (Collas 1957:75. Insertions in parenthesis mine).

In truth, what has disempowered women so much is their lack of access to correct texts. The Church which considers herself (the Church fathers refer to the institution as feminine) the sole source of information and wisdom (like men) has practiced censorship. Only publications approved by the Church can be read, and judging from the long list of proscribed books,[3] few text, if any at all, that can liberate the mind from the shackles of dogmatism and ignorance are included. Furthermore, even if texts were available these were written in Spanish, a language the friars did not want Indios to learn for reasons expressed thus by Pardo de Tavera who quotes a friar:

> "They assert (the friars) that to teach the Indians Castillian would be to furnish them the means - which at present they lack, on account of the diversity of their dialects - to revolt against the Spanish authority; that from the moment when they can readily understand the laws and measures of the government they will discuss these and comment upon them, from the standpoint of their local interests, and therefore in opposition to those of the metropolis; that to give these natives an idea of their own rights is to innoculate them with the spirit of rebellion" and that, the foundation of race superiority, which now aggrandizes the Europeans, being thus destroyed, it would be impossible to govern these provinces without material force, as now (Blair and Robertson, quoting Pardo de Tavera, note 28:87-90).

Considering the importance of Spanish in colonial/textual politics, Rizal was elated upon hearing that his countrywomen in Malolos struggled to get what they wanted: a school where they could learn Spanish at night.[4] Shortly after receiving a request from Marcelo H. del Pilar to write the women to congratulate them for their success in getting what they wanted, Rizal did so. In a letter written in London and dated February 22, 1889 he wrote del Pilar:

> Enclosed is my long epistle to the Malolos women. Read it and correct it, because, as I have no one here to talk Tagalog with I am beginning to forget a little. I believe that I owe them more than a simple letter and so there it is. Be careful that it does not fall into the hands of the friars and get lost, for that is my first draft and I have no copy of it (*Epistolario Rizalino II*: 106).

By then he was already convinced that he must produce texts that would serve as countertexts to those produced by purveyors of false consciousness, and for this reason, his text must be written in Tagalog. Firstly, he was not too sure that the twenty-one women who fought their parish priest and wrote to Governor General Weyler in order to have a night school where they could learn Spanish, could understand Spanish.[5] Secondly, Tagalog then was the language of the oppressed because Spanish, the language of the oppressors, was made the language of power. It was the official language of government; it was also the language of the friars. In view of these reasons, Rizal thought of engaging the women in textual politics. His letter written in Tagalog aimed at telling the women how they had been enslaved by false consciousness cultivated by the friars and how they can liberate themselves by cultivating, on their own, true consciousness. Moreover, his letter also demonstrated an act of liberation on his part—the liberation of his pen from the prison house of the colonizer's language, Spanish.[6]

He tells the women:

> You already know that God's will is different and distinct from the will of a priest; that righteousness does not consist in bending one's knees for a long time, much less in mumbling kilometric prayers, counting the beads of big rosaries, and wearing grimy scapularies. It consists rather in spotless conduct, in the purity of one's intention and the uprightness of one's judgment or criterion. You know that prudence does not mean blind

obedience to whatever whims may strike the fancy of the godlings. It means doing what is reasonable and just, because blind obedience is itself the cause of such whims, and hence those who provoke them are the real sinners.

Officials or friars can no longer assert that they alone are responsible for their unjust orders, because God has endowed each person with reason and a will of his or her own, and that reason enables its possessor to distinguish what is just from what is unjust. All of us were born free, unshackled, and nobody has the right to subjugate the will and the spirit of another. And why should one submit one's thoughts, free and noble, to another?

It is cowardice and a mistake to believe that saintliness is blind obedience and that prudence and the ability to think are signs of arrogance. Ignorance has ever been ignorance; it has never been prudence and honor. God, the primal source of all wisdom, does not demand that man, created in his own image, allow himself to be deceived or hoodwinked. He wants us to use and let shine the light of reason with which He has so mercifully endowed us. He is like the father who handed a torch to each of his sons to light their way in the darkness, bidding them keep its flame ever bright and not to trust to the light of others, but to help and advise one another to find the right path. Fools would they be if they fell headlong for following the light of another; and the father would be right in reproaching them, thus: 'Did I not give a torch to each of you?' But he would have no reason to chide them if they fell due to the light of their respective torches because then the light might have been dim and the road extremely bad (Collas 1957:72-73).

Rizal also impressed the idea on the women that it is women, not the men, who can make or break the nation.

People who respect women, like the people of the Philippines, must know the truth of the situation in order to be able to do what is expected of them. It seems an established fact that when a young student falls in love, he throws everything overboard: learning, honor, money, as if a girl could not do anything but sow misfortune. The bravest youth becomes a

> coward when he marries, and the born coward becomes shameless, as if he had been waiting to get married in order to show his cowardice. To hide his pusillanimity, the son appeals to the teachings and memory of his mother, swallows his pride, suffers himself to be slapped, obeys the most foolish order, and becomes an accomplice to his own dishonor. One should remember that where nobody flees, there is no pursuer; that where there are no little fishes, there can be no big ones. Why does not the girl require of her lover a noble and honored name, a manly heart to protect her weakness, and a resolute spirit which will not be satisfied with engendering slaves? Let her discard her fear, behave nobly and yield not her youth to the weak and faint-hearted. When she is married, she must aid her husband, inspire him with courage, share his perils, refrain from causing him worry, and sweeten his moments of affliction, always remembering that there is no grief that a stout heart cannot bear and there is no worse inheritance than that of infamy and slavery.
>
> Open your children's eyes so that they may jealously guard their honor, love their fellowmen and their native land, and do their duty. Always impress upon them that it is better to die with honor than to live in dishonor. The women of Sparta should serve as an object of emulation on this (*Ibid.*:84-85).

The letter to the women of Malolos put in the context of the "Woman Question" will also enable us to retrieve the silenced reason why Rizal connects Maria Clara and Sisa to Doña Consolacion.

The three women have different experiences concerning the friars: Maria Clara is the most influenced and manipulated by the friars. She is sired by a friar who has taken advantage of another man's wife and who ruins his daughter's life by preventing her from marrying the man she loves. She is also raped by a friar. Sisa, who is not close to the friars although her sons work in their convent, is victimized by the friars. She loses her sons to death and departure from home because of a friar's false accusation and as a consequence, she

becomes a madwoman. Doña Consolacion is not at all close to the friars. Because she is married to the *alferez* and because she has seen a friar engaged in unpriestly acts and lets the priest know about what she knows, the friars dare not victimize her.

How these women are made to connect with one another directs our sleuthing for textual gaps. The work says that Sisa "heard Maria Clara's sad song" that song of Gounod, *Ave Maria,* which Capitan Tiago's daughter sings when the religious procession passes by her house. The "sad song" triggers memories of "old songs" in Sisa. She sings a *kundiman* which the soldiers in the barracks hear and makes them recall "old memories, memories of the time when they were not yet corrupted." Doña Consolacion also hears Sisa's song and asks the soldiers regarding her identity and, would they bring her up to her? The soldiers bring Sisa before Doña Consolacion (shades of Jesus Christ being brought before Pontius Pilate for interrogation). She asks Sisa to sing in her broken Spanish. Sisa does not comprehend the Muse. The Muse asks a soldier to tell Sisa to sing. He asks Sisa, in Tagalog, to sing and Sisa does sing. Her song is a *kundiman* that tells the sadness of a flower who by day enjoys an existence of pomp and splendor and by nighttime implores the skies for mercy and a bit of shade to hide her wilting petals and for permission to die without being subjected to the taunt of light that witnessed its vain-glorious existence during the day. Doña Consolacion is so touched by Sisa's song and to the amazement of the soldiers, the Muse starts to speak in Tagalog, which she stops at once when she sees that the soldiers are taking notice of her lapse into the language of the oppressed. She tells Sisa to stop singing and to dance with her instead. Meanwhile the religious procession passes by the barracks.

Doña Consolacion drowns the music coming from the procession and listens to her own music which she uses to accompany her dance, the dance she wants Sisa to learn — the dance of the Medusa.

The narrative of the text, while trying to validate Rizal's thesis on the "Woman Question", instead succeeds in invalidating what it seeks to validate. At this point, some intertexting and contextualizing is again called for.

Why does Maria Clara sing Gounod's *Ave Maria* in so sad a manner when the song ought to be sung in joy, considering that its lyrics hail Mary as the blessed of all women for the Father has selected her to be the mother of His Son, and through her all of mankind (sexist language intended) will be redeemed from the original sin Eve committed?

This passage can be read as providing the answer:

> Maria was as good and pious a Christian as she was a loving daughter. Not only was she frightened by the excommunication (of Ibarra for striking Padre Damaso and threatening the friar with death): the order and the threatened tranquility of her father demand now the sacrifice of her love. She felt the whole force of this affection that until then she had not suspected . . . She wanted to pray, but who in despair can pray? One prays when one has hope, and when one does not, and we turn to God, we can only moan complaints. "My God," her heart cried out, "why separate a man, why deny him the love of others? You do not deny him your sun, nor your air, nor hide from him the sight of the sky, why do you deny him love, when without the sky, air and sun one can live, but without love never?"
>
> Would these cries that men do not hear be heard in the throne of God? Would the Mother of the unfortunate hear them?
>
> Ah, the poor girl who had not known a mother dared to confide these sorrows that is caused by earthly love to this pure heart that had only known filial and motherly love: in her sor-

> row she turned to this divine image of the woman, the most beautiful idealization of the most ideal of creatures, to this poetic creation of Christianity that unites in her the two most beautiful status of the woman, virgin and mother, without having their miseries, that we call Mary (*Noli*:228).

Maria appropriates the Mother of the Son of God as her own. She has no problem doing this. In trouble, a woman always finds it more comfortable to pour her heart out to another woman than to a man, though He may be God, Father or Son. Furthermore, having been orphaned at birth, Maria has always been looking for a mother. The Blessed Mother can easily be the mother for Maria. The pictures and statues representing the Blessed Virgin Mary make her look like Maria: fair complexioned, with beautiful curly and long golden hair, pointed nose and large eyes. Besides, text after text telling the virtues and promises of this lady is made accessible to Maria. Her exposure to the Virgin is overwhelming. Capitan Tiago always orders Tia Isabel to offer masses to this Virgin called by various names. Because Maria has appropriated the Mother of the Son of God as her own, it becomes now easy for her to appropriate the text of *Ave Maria* in Latin. As for the tune that Gounod[7] produces for the text, she finds it also easy to appropriate. Maria Clara is a musician trained in western musicology, having studied music in convent school run by European nuns.

On the other hand, Sisa is not really reacting to the song's text (how could she? she does not understand Latin[8]). What she is reacting to is the way Maria sings the song. So sad does Maria sing it that Sisa, who is herself sad, appropriates Maria's mode of singing, not Gounod's *Ave Maria.* The western song to the Mother of God cannot be appropriated by Sisa even if she wanted to. Its text and tune are beyond her reach. But Maria's plaintive singing is something else. It is

woman-to-woman communication. Sisa is brought before her own presence as she listens to Maria's mode of singing and so Sisa appropriates it. It becomes the starting point for her own singing, that of a *kundiman.*[9] Her song is equally sad. The tune is sad; so are the lyrics. The song's text as translated by Guerrero runs thus:

> The cheerless clammy cold
> That night-time skies enfold
> In their descending cloak
> The sear and withered flower
> That in the daytime bower
> Made wanton with her beauty
> And thought that all had duty
> To give her their applause.
>
> Contrite and broken-hearted
> Now that evening's started
> Her wilted petals raise
> And on the heavens gazes
> For pity on her cause:
>
> She asks the dark to hide her
> That sunlight might not chide her
> As pride's pretentious daughter,
> And asks the dew to water
> Her lonely grave with tears . . . .
> (Guerrero:249-250)[10]

While Maria's song exalts a woman chosen to become the Mother of God and the instrument of the redemption of all mankind (sexist language intended), Sisa's *kundiman* laments a flower's (symbol of woman) fading and impending death. By connecting the two songs Rizal brings us to a favorite topic of his: the downgrading of the status of women in the Philippines through the Spanish friars' theory and practice of Catholicism. Like St. Agustine, the friars considered women occasions of sins because they are all daughters of Eve, the

source of the original sin. An excerpt from his unfinished novel entitled "The Ancient Tagalog Nobility" is herein inserted to buttress the position of my reading:

> . . ."I prefer to die single than marry and entrust my happiness to the hands of a slave" (said Sinagtala).
>
> "And when you die," Maligaya asked, "who will hold your hand to cross the narrow bridge that leads to heaven? Katipuna says that those who die single have no one to help them go to heaven because they were useless in this life. Woman, she says, is a flower that ought not to be sterile but to give fruit."
>
> "Yes, that is what our ancient religion says; but the white priests prefer the virtue of virginity to that of maternity. That is why they always extol the young women who close themselves up in that convent in Manila they call Santa Clara!"
>
> "Is that what they say?" asked Maligaya in admiration.
>
> "Yes, according to them it is a little less than sin to procreate. It seems that their God has created man and woman only to run around a beautiful garden that they call paradise. Well now, the devil induced them to sin and men were born . . ."
>
> "So that men are the work of the devil and not of God."
>
> " Perhaps," according to them.
>
> "How strange! And whom do you believe, Katipuna or the priests?"
>
> " How do I know? But . . ."
>
> "But?"
>
> "Must I tell you everything that I am thinking of?" she asked, looking at her sister from head to foot.
>
> "And what do you think?"
>
> "That it is advisable for us to believe what the white priests say. It's a horrible sin to bring forth beings whom we know will become unhappy slaves. But let us set aside their questions and we are going to water our plants."
>
> "It's useless," replied Maligaya, looking towards the garden; it was already beginning to rain.

> Sinagtala put away her work and began to tidy up the house.
>
> In the meantime night was approaching; the bell of Maalat Church sounded the *Ave Maria.* Upon hearing it Sinagtala stopped her chores and prayed as her mother had taught her, while Maligaya lighted up the lamps . . . . (*Rizal's Prose* 1990:159-160).

Structurally (i.e., content and form, to use traditional dichotomy) Maria Clara's song is connected to that of Sisa's. Sisa's *kundiman* takes us to a song form that is quite removed from the western song of Gounod. As music scholars Hila and Santos, citing music historian Antonio J. Molina, point out: the *kundiman* is closely related to its predecessors, the *kumintang*[11] and *awit*[12].

> The *kundiman* is characterized by the "accent on the second beat of every second bar of the melodic phrase." The accent is similar to that of the second beat of the second bar of the *kumintang* and the second beat of the sixth bar of the *awit* (Hila and Santos 1994:93).

Sisa's song attracts Doña Consolacion, who reverts to her native language upon hearing the *kundiman.* She tells Sisa to stop singing because the song, lyrics and tune, and her manner of singing makes the Muse of the Civil Guards very sad and stirs sad memories of her beginnings and her past. Unlike Sisa, Doña Consolacion is not an appropriator. She takes nothing from Sisa, neither the tune and text of her *kundiman,* nor Sisa's manner of singing. In other words, Doña Consolacion, instead of connecting to the song, cuts and cuts cleanly. She breaks the cycle of the song for these reasons: firstly, she despises Sisa for this madwoman represents women who allow themselves to be victimized by oppressors; secondly, she latently wants to slay the phallus and retrieve the maternal semiotics from the unconscious; and thirdly, she wants to smash canonized forms of expression by assailing them with her own art form—the Dance of the Medusa.

Taking the First Step of the Journey toward the Dark Continent

My reading of Doña Consolacion is part and parcel of the discourses of theoreticians who see the function of language in the colonization of women by men. Reading the passages on Doña Consolacion, while intertexting them with these theoretical/critical texts and situating this reading in the context of the "Woman Question", enabled me to see many suppressed meanings.

Suppressed in Rizals works are the answers to these questions: Why do women accept their subordination to men? Are they born masochists? Or lovers of tyranny? Or such great lovers of men that they would do anything at all cost, anytime, for the man/men they love even if this would be at their own expense?

Jacques Lacan (1977) tried to answer these questions with his theory on language and the gendering of human beings. He theorized that the Oedipal complex, contrary to what Sigmund Freud said, does not take place at that moment when the individual sees the absence or presence of the penis and the effects the absence or presence has on relations to one's father and mother. To Lacan, it is not the sight of the absence or presence of the penis that constructs the corresponding gender, but the functioning of language. During the Oedipal moment, which Lacan equates with the individual's entry into the symbolic order, the individual either feels referred to or not by the master signifier, the phallus or the "Law of the Father". For the one who can, becomes masculine. Language exists for him. It provides him the tool so necessary for the construction of himself as a subject. Through language he can objectify. He can become an "I" because the symbolic order provides him with a "non-I". The "I" engages

the "non-I" in combat, seeing to it that the "non-I" gets annihilated at every confrontation. A series of this process constructs a masculine subject. What is true for the male, however, is not true for the female. The female, because of the master signifier that is the "Law of the Father", can only construct an identity that is the "non-I" of the "I" who is man. Through language then man becomes the "One" and woman, "the Other" as Simone de Beauvoir says in her *The Second Sex* (1946).

The French feminists, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous reworked Lacanian theory for addressing the "Woman Question" (Nye 1988, Donovan 1985). Working on the Lacanian assumption that the primary site of the gender war is in the realm of language, they discussed how through language, with language and in language, men appropriate women's bodies and their voices, make them mute, marginalize them in literature and make them invisible in history. For women to recover what they have lost, they have, to paraphrase Cixous, to "write/rite themselves with their ink/blood." And how is this to be done? Kristeva suggests the return to the unconscious where the maternal semiotics lies waiting to be retrieved by victims of sexual/textual oppression. Does this mean rejecting the existing language which is in the service of patriarchy and creating a new language based on maternal semiotics? The French feminist theoreticians say "Yes!"

So does Rizal if the third eye produced by the French feminists is allowed to surface buried meanings.

A popular reading of Doña Consolacion tells the story of a native woman who tries to forget Tagalog and learn Spanish in her effort to become an *orofea.* In her efforts to accomplish this manifest objective she mangles Tagalog as well as Spanish, and ends up being incomprehensible in both lan-

guages. Her husband sees in her linguistic predicament the loss of the power to speak.

Has Doña Consolacion Indeed Lost the Power of Speech?

Unrecognized and unintended by Doña Consolacion and her father/Rizal is the junking of men's language in favor of women's language. As a native Tagalog speaker, the doña knows from experience that this language discriminates against her as a woman. Though less sexist than Spanish, Tagalog nevertheless also has for its master signifier the phallus. Doña Consolacion may not have had training in psycholinguistics, but she does know that Tagalog is easier on men than on women. For example, cuss words are at the expense of women. While working as a washerwoman and a camp follower she must have heard *putang ina mo!* hurled at her many times over. In fact, her own husband, the *alferez* calls her "You whore!" This is not to mention customers' likely inquiry if she is free of *sakit babae* or venereal disease. It is not preposterous to advance the idea that Doña Consolacion, after being "used" by her customers, sometimes had asked why venereal diseases were referred to as *sakit babae* when such diseases are transmitted to women by men, to begin with. Surely Doña Consolacion also knows that women, to be acceptable as good women, must avoid calling a spade a spade by using euphemism, for culture demands that women be more refined than men in their speech. Women who say what they mean and mean what they say in Tagalog do get into trouble. She knows this only too well as the wife of the *alferez.* Furthermore, she knows that in Philippine society the ideal woman is the quiet woman. The reason why the *alferez* beats her up is her propensity to answer him back. This refusal to be speechless or silenced is what sets her apart from the rest of the women in her community, with the exception of Doña

Victorina, and makes her an object of fear and revulsion. To underscore the cultural configuration of the ideal woman as a quiet woman, Rizal pits Doña Consolacion with Doña Victorina in a talking match designed to make readers see how women can abuse language, on one hand, and, on the other, how right it is for men to take language away from them.

"What's the matter with you, Doña?" she asks.

"Can you tell me, Señora, why you are looking at me that way? Are you envious?" Doña Victorina could finally say.

"I, envious of you?" says the Muse scornfully; "yes, I envy those curls!"

"Come, woman," says the doctor; "don't me . . . mind her!"

"Let me teach this shameless commoner a lesson!" replies the woman shoving aside her husband who almost kissed the ground, and turning to Doña Consolacion,

"Remember who you're dealing with!" she says; "don't think that I'm a provincial or a soldier's mistress! In my house in Manila lieutenants do not enter; they wait at the door."

"I say, most excellent Señora Puput! lieutenants do not enter; they wait at the door."

"I say, most excellent Señora Puput! lieutenants do not enter; they wait at the door," but the disabled do, like this one, ha! ha! ha!

x x x

"Listen, I lower myself talking to you; people with class . . . Do you want to wash my clothes? I'll pay you well! Do you think I don't know that you were a laundrywoman!"

Doña Consolacion furiously straightened up: being called a laundrywoman hurt her.

"Do you think we don't know who you are and the kind of people you bring? Never mind, my husband already told me! Señora, at least I have belonged only to one, but you? One must be dying of hunger to take the leftovers, the rags of everybody."

The shot was right on its mark; she rolled up her sleeves, clenched her fists and gritting her teeth, began to say:

"Come down, old sow, I'm going to smash your dirty mouth! Mistress of a battalion, prostitute from birth!"

> The Muse quickly disappeared from the window and was soon seen running down, brandishing her husband's whip.
>
> Don Tiburcio intervened pleading, but they would have come to blows had the lieutenant not arrived.
>
> "But, ladies . . . Don Tiburcio!"
>
> "Educate your wife better, buy her better clothes and if you don't have money, rob the town, that's what you soldiers are for! screamed Doña Victorina.
>
> "Here I am, Señora, why doesn't Your Excellency smash my mouth. You only have a tongue and saliva, Doña Excellencies! (*Noli*:289-290).

Let us now examine Doña Consolacion's predicament with Spanish. Rizal's text tells us that she murders the language. This is to be expected. The doña, born and bred in Tagalog that does not have gender in the pronominals, naturally cannot handle Spanish pronouns, not to mention the appropriate gender of each noun. And since she cannot use this language to communicate with her own kind, lower-class *Indios* like soldiers and Sisa, and uses it only with the *alferez* who abuses her in this language, the doña progressively realizes that Spanish is not really for her. Thus

> The corporal who watched over her linguistic progress, sorrowfully calculated that in ten years his mate would have completely lost the use of words. This, indeed, was what happened. When they married, she still understood Tagalog and could make herself understood in Spanish; now, at the time of our narration, she no longer spoke any language: she became so partial to the language of gestures and of these, she chose the noisiest and the most impressive . . . . (*Noli*:244)

From my symptomatic reading, I can assert that Doña Consolacion's inability to communicate in Tagalog and Spanish makes her resort to the "language of gestures". However, this does not mean that she has lost the power to speak, as her husband suspects. On the contrary, her "linguistic development" is in keeping with the French feminists' strategy of

liberating women through language: through a rejection of the symbolic order of language where the master signifier is the phallus; through the excursion into the unconscious where the maternal semiotics lies waiting to be retrieved by the daughters of Eve. Her rejection of Tagalog and Spanish, no doubt sexist languages, and resort to the "language of gestures" can be considered as a concrete step towards the creation of a language that will enable her to speak to herself as a woman who is not "the other" of men but as a woman who is "the one". The doña, the text says, has a rhythm "playing inside her" which does not match in any way the music of a religious procession passing by the barracks. This description is so reminiscent of Ferdinand de Saussure's description of language as a chain of signs where meaning is rooted in the position of the sign in the chain (Saussure 1970). What Saussure is saying about language can also be said of the religious procession (also a chain of signs; also a "language") with its particular music passing by the barracks where Doña Consolacion and Sisa are situated. Doña Consolacion hears the "grave and majestic music played in the procession and jumps furiously following another rhythm, another music, the one that was playing inside her" (*Noli*:245). The scene can be interpreted as Doña Consolacion's attempt to look for a subject-position in the language of the procession but she could not find any. The procession's language is not of service to her. There is this rhythm inside her which she wants to release from the prison house of men's language and she must do it outside the procession which is also a male-produced ritual. Significantly enough, Rizal's work situates Doña Consolacion's experiment with wordless communication in a military barracks. Indeed, women speaking phallocentric languages are imprisoned in military barracks! To liberate themselves from this military establishment, they have to call on

the Mother who will bring them to the pre-Oedipal moment, that primeval time when all are in union, on the micro level, with the biological mother, and on the macro level, with Mother Nature. Doña Consolacion tries to do this when she discards the post-Oedipal moment's symbolic discourses (Tagalog and Spanish) and goes from wordless communication to the dance. This dance is not dictated by structure. It is free-flowing and spontaneous; it comes from "another rhythm, another music, the one that is playing inside her". When Sisa sees the lieutenant's wife (an appropriate name for a woman who collaborates with her own enemy) jump furiously to the tune that the former does not hear, she, to quote the passage verbatim, "looked immobile at her: something like curiosity showed in her eyes and a weak smile moved her pale lips: the Señora's dance amused her" (*Noli*:245).

Sisa is amused by the Señora's dance because its movements do not follow the rhythm of the procession. It looks like the dance of madness. This dance of madness provides Sisa the opportunity to check her own subjectivity. By watching it, she is able to find out what has become of her. Is she mad like the woman before her? Or is she mad because she cannot dance like *this* woman before her? If she danced the dance of this other woman's dance, will she be healed of her madness? Will she?

Undoubtedly, the Medusa ruptures the song chain because of her desire to liberate herself as a woman from the prison house of man's language. What we now have to find out is why Doña Consolacion forces Sisa to dance the Dance of the Medusa with the Medusa herself. The Medusa does so, not to torture the madwoman as generally believed by nearly all readers, but to heal her.[13] Sisa's madness is a woman's disease. It is caused by sexual/textual oppression. And so,

Doña Consolacion, driven by the unconscious which she retrieves from the pre-Oedipal-moment-world (that the Phallus has forced her to forget) in her Medusa dance, listens to the Mother she and all women as well as all men have lost. Instinctively, she feels that what Sisa needs is to have the care of a therapist who uses a medium of communication that is purged of the "Law of the Father." The Medusa, availing now of the knowledge of the Foremother who is residing in the unconscious, discovers what feminists of the twentieth century would bring up as a woman's issue: that therapists are actually the/rapists because man's language used on women, rather than serve as medium of healing, actually rape female patients. Thus Doña Consolacion, no longer the wife of the *alferez* nor Muse of the Civil Guards, becomes the Medusa who uses the *alferez's* whip, "known by thieves and soldiers" as a symbol of *the* symbol to exorcise the Word of the Father. The *alferez,* upon seeing the ritual, naturally becomes very agitated. He is not prepared to see what he is made to see—the symbolic castration/decapitation of himself and his *fellowmen* (here the non-generic use of the italicized word is intended).

Smashing Patriarchal/Colonial Aesthetic Canons

Gounod's *Ave Maria* is one of those canonized compositions which when sang would have a ready appreciative audience because it is the song admired by the "cultured," the cognicetti whose aesthetic judgment is unassailable. If these arbiters of aesthetics say that it is a good song, it must be a good song. For this reason, it is this song in Latin (a dead language chosen by the almighty Catholic Church in whose name colonization of the Philippines by the Spanish crown was justified), sang by the daughter of the *principalia,* not the *kundiman* in Tagalog (the language of the colonized)

that is sung by a member of the working class, nor the Dance of the Medusa, that is performed by an ex-washerwoman and camp follower, a member of the lumpen proletariat, that is rendered as a main highlight of the religious procession.

Doña Consolacion is not a participant in the procession. She stays in the barracks, a fitting place, indeed, for one girding for war. When she hears Sisa's *kundiman,* Doña Consolacion's memory addresses her. Yes, she is Sisa's flower, the barrio lass who climbs the social ladder: from washerwoman to mistress of the *alferez* to the Muse of the Civil Guards and now Medusa. But, no, the song's words are all wrong. She does not feel like she should apologize for what she has become; she does not feel that heaven should give her a place to hide her wilted petals. Whatever for? And the tune? It must have sounded too sentimental and too mushy to give comfort/enjoyment to her. Or it may not have sounded like anything or nothing at all. Doña Consolacion subjects Sisa's song to her "gaze" as the former undergoes the dialectical process of becoming. Rizal as father/author names and without the benefit of clergy (just like his taking to wife Josephine) baptizes this being as the Muse of the Civil Guards. Considering the very low opinion the father/author had of the Civil Guards[14], to name/baptize a daughter as their "Muse" shows contempt and rejection for what he as male/father has given birth to: a defective woman. Had Doña Consolacion been born of a woman-centered author surely she would be named/baptized with another name.

But Doña Consolacion is not woman-born. Her father, Rizal-as-man, must have thought that the name of "Muse of the Civil Guards" did not really fit her. This subversive daughter is not only a defective woman. She is in fact a monster. She is Medusa, one of the Gorgons, from whose heads grew

snakes. Anyone looking at these snakes would turn into stone. Legend has it that in far away Greece, of the three daughters of the primordial marine deities, Phorcys and Ceto, only Medusa was mortal. She was slain by Perseus with the help of Athene, the Grecian goddess, who did not come as a baby from a mother's womb but as a full-grown and armed woman from the head of her father Zeus. This unique form of birth is the result of a male god's quest for supremacy. To forestall a prophecy that his supremacy would be threatened by an offspring who would be infinitely wise, Zeus swallowed his wife Metis (Good Counsel) when she was with child. Thus was Athena sprung from her father's head already fully grown and armed (*New Caxton Encyclopedia*: IX-2774; II-433).

From the text one can read Greek mythology. And so Doña Consolacion, as the Medusa re-incarnate, laughs for she has turned the tables against her own father and the goddess who slew her. And her Medusa laughter is inscribed in another time and another place—in the twentieth century in the land of Joan of Arc by a woman named Helene Cixous (1975). How true is what they say when they are being truthful: There is no past or present or future; there is only a continuum.

The Medusa laughs at the singer and the song. And why not? Here they are, inside the barracks where the Law of the Father is everywhere. Wouldn't it be really thrilling to exorcise the place with the Dance of the Medusa? The Dance of the Medusa does not need any approval from the Father, and for that matter, anyone and all who obey his Law. The Medusa's dance is a dance. It is for Athene that daughter of Metis, the Good Counsel, to see. What matters is that it is the Medusa's dance attuned to the music inside the woman slain long ago by the Phallus represented by Perseus. The Dance of the

Medusa is Doña Consolacion's, and Sisa's, too, if this madwoman can heal herself through it.

Doña Consolacion's dance of the Medusa re-articulates and radicalizes Rizal's call to return to the Golden Past of our ancestors which he sounded in his annotations to Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* and found in the discourses of Maligaya in the unfinished novel on the Tagalog nobility. Her dance goes beyond Rizal's works to say that *that* past is not golden enough for women and women-as-artists. Gold can be made purer by subjecting it to the fire of the Dance of the Medusa. The real Golden Past is during primordial times. Men believe that that time is guarded by snakes. Whoever looks at them turn into stone. But that is only what men's mythologies say. The French feminists, Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva, say otherwise. (Did Rizal meet them in another time and clime?). The thing to do is to look at the snakes, risk the danger (?) of turning into stone, be stony speechless for as long as it takes to look for a suitable medium and then make the stone speak.[15] What is important, as Cixous puts it so aptly, is for women to "write/rite" with their "ink/blood" so that they may recover the body that they have lost, *that* body which men have appropriated for themselves for their own use in language and through language.

Art Connects the Disconnected

Another silence in the work when made to speak, tells how women separated from other women somehow get connected through the arts. Recall that the work does not record any meeting of Doña Consolacion and Maria Clara. What it does record is how these two women get connected through Sisa's song, a connection neither one nor the other is aware of, and for that matter, neither does Sisa, their connecting link.

Women's realities separate them from one another. Sisterhood is hard to come by because of the patriarchal private/public divide, the familial ideology and the competition fostered by the ideology of romantic love.

Women get assigned by patriarchy to the private sphere to become reproduction workers. The basis for this assignment is the acceptance as truth of the thesis that "biology is destiny," since not men but women have the womb and the mammary glands, not men but women give birth to children, nurture them with their milk and human, nay, woman kindness, and take care of them until they can fend for themselves. The period of dependence of human beings is somewhat long and this necessitates the woman's presence in the home. So that women will find joy and fulfillment as kept women in the home, the ideology of glorious motherhood was invented and used to interpellate women so that they can readily accept their subjugated states. This is a consequence of the interpellative power of language.

Called the "lights of home," the women consigned to the domestic sphere are incapacitated from meeting their sisters who are also playing their respective roles of "lights of home" in their own domiciles.

Also contributing to the isolation of women from other women is the ideology of romantic love. Accepted by women for the same reason as the first, this value system pits women against each other. Women are encouraged to dress up, decorate and paint themselves (lipstick, rouge and mascara indeed constitute war paint!) in order to make them competitive in the romance market. A woman is told by this ideology to best all others in attracting males so that in the end she will meet her Prince Charming who will marry her and, in the end, they will live happily ever after.

Yet another consideration vis-a-vis the atomization of women is the ideology of the family (Barrett 1994). In this ideology individualism is made a fetish. Consequently, the capacity to love others gets limited. Individuals who are not part of the family are not taught to family members as objects of love. Emphasis on family solidarity also develops the we-against-them attitude which prevents the formation of larger social networks.

It is also in the family where class is perpetuated. At birth, a person is already socialized into the class system. The rich teach their children the ways of the rich: how to stay rich by marrying someone who is equally rich; not associating with those who are not rich; etc. The poor also teach their children the ways of the poor: act with humility; accept your fate; etc.

In view of the imperatives of culture to atomize women, Doña Consolacion and Maria Clara are disconnected until Sisa's song connects them. The connecting power of Sisa's song reveals to us what the text knows but hides. Art, as mimesis and manipulation, has the power to connect people. Maria Clara was broken into small pieces with Ibarra's excommunication but when she sang *Ave Maria,* even if the song was produced by a man in another time and another place, not to mention for another occasion, the song sang as a prayer enabled the distressed maiden to mend herself, to make herself whole again, even if only momentarily; Sisa gets separated from herself by madness and the *kundiman* helps her to survive her torment by connecting to whatever pleasant memory she can access in her mind; Doña Consolacion gets connected to her social better, Maria Clara, because Sisa, the doña's social inferior, gets inspired by the latter's singing of a foreign song to sing a Tagalog *kundiman* which in turn

inspires Doña Consolacion to produce the Dance of the Medusa. Indeed, what the song does for the three women focuses on the integrative power of art.

ENDNOTES

[1] I chose Jovita Castro's translation of Rizal's novels (1989, 1991) for two reasons: Firstly, I want to highlight women's work; secondly, I am aware of the translator-traitor predicament, thus my choice over the translations of Charles Derbyshire ([1912] 1956) and Leon Ma Guerrero (1965) who "mastered/fathered" Rizal's work by disciplining errant tenses and making the text conform to their respective translation paradigm. In contrast, Castro respects Rizal's text: "I have tried to respect the structure of the sentences and paragraphs and faithfully reproduced the punctuation marks. I did not add nor delete any word nor expression (*Noli*:16). Had she "mastered" Rizal's text, so much meaning would be lost. For one, the mixed tenses' contribution to the realization that indeed there is no past, present nor future: there is only a continuum. Though her work has its merits, it however, has demerits. Very obvious are the misspellings, e.g. "inspite" for "in spite", "majestous" for "majestic" and misuse of words, e.g. "I will revenge my father's death" instead of "I will avenge my father's death."

[2] There is no doubt that JR followed developments in the women's movement. An entry in his diary dated January 3, 1884 runs thus: "This morning we gathered at the Cafe de Madrid . . . They spoke about the Circulo . . . As to the book (which JR proposed should be published by the Circulo) Graciano would write on the Filipino Women" (*Reminiscences and Travels*:83). Several entries take note of prostitution in Spain, advertisements for mail order brides and traveling companions in German newspapers, etc. He also entered in his diary his meeting with a "Madam de Bloch (?) [who] is attracting attention for her beauty" (*Ibid.*:159). "I had a long conversation with the lady in question bearing on medicine, people, women writers, artists, sentiments on literature. She is going to India to study Indian women" (*Ibid.*:173). Of course, it should not be left unsaid that his *Noli* was printed by the Berliner Buchdrukerein Aktiengesselschaft which was run by women trained in the Typographesche Institut run by the Zetzerinnen-Schule des Lete-Verein, a vocational school that somehow created space for the feminist demand to empower women through the same training for paid jobs extended to men. (Fernandez 1990-1991:24-25, Romeyke 1996).

[3] The *Index* is the official list of all books the Roman Catholic Church forbade the faithful to possess or read except in special exceptional cases.

The object was to safeguard the faithful from ideas injurious to the Catholic faith. Though the first official *Index* appeared in 1557 upon the instruction of Pope Paul IV, examples of ecclesiastical prohibitions can be cited from the 5th century.

[4] One of the reasons why the parish priest of Malolos objected to the granting of a permit to open a night school where the young women of his town could learn Spanish was his reading of the women's letter in the sexual context. Left in the company of young women at night, the friar must have thought, unnecessarily subjected the male tutor to spiritual dangers. No less than the great doctor of the Church, St. Agustine, warned that women are occasions of sin and that their company must be avoided at all cost.

The women of Malolos, on the other hand, could be construed as early proponents of the feminist demand for making the night safe for them. The "Take Back the Night Movement" of present day feminists would have cheered them no end.

The "Take Back the Night Movement" of women started in Italy. In the autumn of 1976, an estimated 100,000 women from all over Italy marched in different cities. The following year in springtime, German women held a similar march (Anderson and Zinsser 1988, II:422-423). The movement has spread to other parts of the world. The idea is to call attention to the fact that since the night is not safe for women, considering the commission of crimes against women like rape and mugging happen at night, women have to be home before dark. Consequently, women lose opportunities for empowering themselves: they cannot attend night schools (for mothers with small children being the only option); they cannot take graveyard-shift jobs that pay more; they cannot earn more by taking overtime jobs; etc. The 'Take back the night' movement therefore demands making the night safe for women

The most empowered woman character, Doña Consolacion, has taken back the night, a feat for her time because of the prevailing patriarchal dictum that "women should be home before dark." Note that because she has appropriated the night she manages to seize an opportunity that can happen only at night: catching a priest in an unpriestly act which comes in handy for blackmail purposes.

[5] Though JR was feeling insecure about his ability to use Tagalog as a medium of communication, he did use it in his letter to the young women of Malolos. Was it because they were only women and not at all expected to discern mastery or non-mastery of a language? Was it his desire to talk to the women directly and without the use of a translator? Note that the women's letter to Governor-General Valeriano Weyler was written in Spanish by Teodoro Sandiko.

[6] This is another *double entendre*. Not only was he an exile in terms of geography but also in terms of language. Tagalog, Rizal's native tongue, has

become like Calamba, Laguna, the birthplace where Rizal could no longer come home to.

[7] Charles Francois Gounod (1818-1893) was a French musician whose early piano lessons were given by his mother, a professional musician. He wrote twelve operas the most famous of which is *Faust.* Another popular work is the *Funeral March of the Marionette.* In his later years he specialized in religious music (*New Caxton Encyclopedia,* Vol. IX:2786-2787).

[8] Latin is not only phallocentric, it is also a dead language. The Roman Catholic Church herself has recognized the inadequacy of a dead language for faith renewal that Vatican II reforms included its replacement with the living language of the community as the medium of the Holy Mass.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, being gender-blind, sees language as a prisonhouse for its speakers. It failed to see that for women this means being prisoners twice-over: as prisoners in the language and prisoners in men's language.

[9] Rizal believed that it is the *kundiman,* not foreign songs, that is for the Filipino. The most popular *kundiman* is "Kundiman de 1800". Emilia Reysio-Cruz's collection of folk songs carry the following text: First quatrain: *"Doon po sa aming maralitang bayan/Nagpatay ng hayop "nik-nik' ang pangalan;/Ang taba po nito ay pinatunaw,/Lumabas na langis, siyam na tapayan.* Second quatrain: *Doon po sa aming bayan ng Malabon,/May nakita akong nagsaing ng apoy;/Palayok ay papel gayon din ang tuntong,/Tubig na malamig ang iginatong.* Third quatrain: *Doon po sa aming bayan ng San Roque/May nagkatuwaan apat na pulubi;/Nagsayaw ang pilay, kumanta ang pipi/Nanood ang bulag, nakinig ang bingi."* Translated in English it runs thus: First quatrain: "In our poor town/An animal was killed named 'nik-nik';/Its fat was extracted/And the oil that poured out filled nine jars." Second quatrain: "In our town of Malabon,/I saw someone cooking fire;/The pot was made of paper, so was the stand,/Cold water was used as fuel." Third quatrain: "In our town of San Roque/Four beggars had some fun/The lame danced, the mute sang/The blind watched, the deaf listened" (Hila and Santos 1994:94-95).

Music historian Antonio Molina avers that what could have been the true lyrics as "recalled by older persons" are: First quatrain: *"Sa dalampasigan ng dagat Maynila,/Luneta ang tawag ng mga Kastila,/Ay doon binaril ang kaawa-awa/Pobreng Pilipino, martir nitong lupa."* Second quatrain: *"Naramay sa dusa ang ating tanggulan,/Panganay na Burgos at bunsong si Rizal,/Sa inggit at takot ng prayleng sukaban/Pinatay at sukat walang kasalanan."* The English translation runs thus: First quatrain: "On the shores of Manila Bay,/ Called Luneta by the Spaniards/There the miserable was shot/Poor Filipino, martyr of the land." Second quatrain: "Our defenders fell into agony/Burgos, the eldest, and the youngest, Rizal/Wicked friars consumed by envy and fear/Had them killed, though they were innocent." (*Ibid.*:94).

The "Kundiman ng Himagsikan" (Kundiman of the Revolution) was originally dedicated to Jocelyna Tiongson of Baliuag, Bulacan and hence called "Jocelynang Baliwag". When the katipuneros heard or sang this, it was not only a beautiful woman that inspired them to fight but more so the bigger muse that was Inang Bayan" (Motherland). The lyrics run thus: First quatrain: *"Pinopoong sinta,/Niring kaluluwa,/Nakakawangis mo,/ Mabangong sampaga."* Second quatrain: *"Dalisay sa linis,/Dakila sa ganda/ Matimyas na bukal/Ng madlang ligaya."* Third quatrain: *"Edeng maligayang/ kinalulуklukan/Ng galak at tuwang/Katamis-tamisan."* Fourth quatrain: *"Ada kang maningning/Na ang matunghaya'y/Masamyong bulaklak/Agad sumisikal."* The English translations runs thus: First quatrain: "Beloved goddess/Of my soul,/You are like/The fragrant *sampaga."* Second quatrain: "Pure and clean,/Of noble beauty,/The genuine spring/From which flows complete joy." Third quatrain: "Happy Eden/The throne/Of the sweetest/Joy and happiness." Fourth quatrain: "You are the dazzling nymph/Whose gaze makes/The fragrant flower/Grow instantly" (*Ibid.*:95).

A *kundiman* attributed to Rizal was used by the Spanish authorities during Rizal's trial. Palma doubted the attributed authorship of this *kundiman* to JR. At the time it was supposed to have been written, September 12, 1891, JR was in Ghent, Belgium. He arrived in Manila only on June 26, 1892. Written in Tagalog, the *kundiman* was translated into Spanish by Epifanio de los Santos Cristobal, who kept the original copy. A copy in Tagalog appears on page 15 of *El Dia Filipino,* a Spanish paper, in its December 30, 1921 issue. Used as part of the evidence in the trial of Rizal, its English translation runs thus: "In the Orient beautiful/Where the sun is born,/In a land of beauty/Full of enchantments/But bound in chains,/Where the despot reigns,/Ah! that is my country,? The land dearest to me./She is a slave oppressed/Groaning in the tyrant's grips;/Lucky shall he be/Who can give her liberty" (Palma:267; Abeto 1976:158).

JR did write *kundimans,* the most famous of which is "Maria Clara's Song." The lyrics run thus: First quatrain: "Sweet are the hours on one's own country/Where all that the sun illuminates is friend,/Life is the breeze that in the fields blow,/Where death is sweet and more tender is love." Second quatrain: "Ardent kisses on the lips play,/Of a mother on whose breast awaken,/Arms searching to encircle her neck,/And eyes that smile as they meet." Third quatrain: "Sweet is death for one's country/Where all that the sun illuminates is friend/Dead is the breeze for those who have not/A country, a mother and a beloved" (*Noli*:142).

Another is entitled "Kundiman" taken from the collection of Epifanio de los Santos. Written in Tagalog it was published in the December 30, 1921 edition of the *El Dia Filipino.* The lyrics run thus: First quatrain: *"Tunay ngang umid yaring dila't puso/Sinta'y umiilag, tua'y lumalayo/Bayan*

palibhasa'y lupii at sumuko/Sa kapabayaan ng nagturong puno." Second quatrain: *"Datapuwa't muling sisikat ang araw/Pilit maliligtas ang inaping bayan/Magbabalik mandin at muling iiral/Ang ngalang tagalog sa sangdaigdig.* Third quatrain: *Ibubuhos namin ang dugo't babaha/Matubos nga lamang ang sa amang lupa/Hanggang di sumapit panahong taghana'y/Sinta'y tatahimik, tutulog ang nasa'*.(Abeto, *op. cit*:328-329). The English translation of Abeto breaks the three lines into six and runs thus: First quatrain: "Truly hushed today/Are my tongue and heart./Harm's made out of love/ And joy flies apart/As the Country was/Vanquished and did yield/Through the negligence of/One who the leadership held." Second quatrain: "But the submerged sun/Will return to dawn;/And the people subdued/Will come to their own;/The Filipino name/Will perhaps return/And again around/The world will churn." Third quatrain: "Only to emancipate,/The native land, our blood/Profusely we'll shed,/Everywhere will flood;/While the opportune time/Does not as yet come,/Love will rest and desire/Asleep will become" (*Ibid.*:128-129).

[10] Guerrero's translation is in the masculine mode for it "masters" what it had to translate. Note how asymmetrical in form is the translation of Castro who did not "father" but "mother" the text.

[11] The *kumintang* called "the national song and dance of the Philippines" by chroniclers of the 1800s, was originally a *canto guerrero* (war song) that inflamed combatants, according to Manuel Walls y Merino (1892). Transformed into a love dance commonly encountered in Batangas, chroniclers of the 1800s described it as "a seductive love dance performed to a melancholy song accompanied by a guitar and *bajo de unas*" (Dioquino 1994:92). Mallat described how the art form was performed: "While the musicians are playing and singing it an Indian and an Indian woman execute a pantomine which agrees with the words. It is a lover who is trying to inflame the heart of a young girl, about whom he runs while making innumerable amorous movements and greetings in the fashion of the country, accompanied by movements of the arms and of the body, which are not the most decent, but which cause the spectators to break out into loud and joyous laughter. Finally, the lover not being able to succeed, feigns to be sick and falls into a chair prepared for him. The young girl, frightened, flies to his aid but he rises again very soon cured, and begins to dance and turn about with her in all directions, to the great applause of those present" (Blair and Robertson, Vol. 45:276).

[12] The *awit* is an adaptation of the western metrical romance. See Damiana Eugenio (1987) *Awit and Corrido — Philippine Metrical Romances.*

[13] Even self-proclaimed and self-anointed feminist Lilia Santiago gets this impression. See "Pepay, the Revolutionary". This paper was revised, translated into Filipino and delivered on March 1, 1996 at the Pulungang Claro

M. Recto, Bulwagang Rizal, University of the Philippines, during a national conference of Rizal teachers and scholars, "Si Rizal at ang Kilusang Kababaihan".

[14] JR's texts that show his low regard for the Civil Guards abound. In his novels he presents members of this military group as ignorant, poor and cruel. Take for example those who were sent to look for Sisa's sons and arrest them for thievery. Not finding any of her sons, they did the next best thing as far as they were concerned. They "arrested" Sisa's chickens and took the "prisoners" with them.

[15] Doña Consolacion's "language of gestures" is eloquent. Note how she uses the phallic symbol, the alferez's whip, to turn against what it symbolizes; how she returns the greetings of a feared friar with "a yawn and aaah"; how she shows her power over everyone else in town by sitting on a chair right under the picture of "His Majesty, the King of Spain". How much more eloquent can anyone contemptuous of foreign colonizers get? Yet, the *alferez* and even Rizal thought her to have lost the power of speech.

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