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THE "CHINAMAN" QUESTION: A CONUNDRUM IN US IMPERIAL POLICY IN THE PACIFIC

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Abstract
When the US took over the Philippines from Spain in 1898, it faced the dilemma of how to deal with the "Chinaman" question. While it applied the same Chinese exclusion law in the Philippines as it did in the mainland, the situation in the colony differed in a significant way—the Chinese had long been part of the Philippine economy and society. Faced with the task of constructing a "Filipino" nation in its own image, the US therefore had to find ways to separate the Chinese from the rest of the population. One of the ways by which it accomplished this was to curtail the long-standing and intimate unions between them and the local women of the Philippines, thereby helping create the "Chinese"-"Filipino" binary found in Philippine society today.

Keywords
Chinese diaspora, Chinese Filipinos, US Policy in the Philippines

About the Author
Richard Chu is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. His main research focuses on the Chinese and the Chinese mestizos in the Philippines in 19th and 20th century Philippines. Through the investigation of their social practices, business, and religious practices, he implicates the hegemonic practices of the US empire and Chinese and Filipino nationalisms in effacing the Chinese from the nationalist historiography of the Philippines. His publications include "Rethinking the Chinese Mestizos of the Philippines" (Centre for the Study of the Chinese Southern Diaspora, The Australian National University 2002), "The 'Chinese' and 'Mestizos' of the Philippines: Towards a New Interpretation" (Philippine Studies Journal 2002), and "Guilt Trip to China" (University of California Press 2001). He currently holds a Five-College post in Pacific Empires, and his teaching fields are Pacific Empires history, Philippine history, Asian American history, Chinese history, and Chinese diasporic history.

INTRODUCTION

After it took possession of the Philippine Islands from Spain with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in December 1898, the United States suddenly found itself at a loss as to how to deal with the heterogeneous population found in the Islands. Thus, two months later, President William McKinley appointed the Schurman Commission to gather information regarding the different "races" in the newly acquired colony, including the "Negritos," the "Moros," the "Chinese," and "Chinese and European mestizos." The task the Commission faced was a daunting one, especially in a place where, quoting the Commission, "all the races are represented in these islands" (*Report* Vol. III 331). Its concern for being able to identify, describe, classify, or categorize the various indigenous groups of people in the Philippines stemmed from the aim of the new imperial masters to subjugate

and control them. To that end, Major-General Elwell S. Otis, commander of the US Army in the Philippines, was a step ahead of Washington D.C. Two months before the Treaty of Paris was even signed, he ordered the application of the Chinese Exclusion Act in the Philippines. This act had been in effect in the United States since 1882, and was designed to restrict the entry of both skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers. The application of the Chinese exclusion law in the Philippines became official in 1902, and in 1904, Chinese laborers *from* the Philippines were also barred from coming to the United States.

This paper is an examination of that hitherto largely unexplored topic of the historical relationship between the way the United States dealt with the "Chinese" question in the mainland and the way it dealt with it in the Philippines.[1] Specifically, it will compare how the Chinese in the United States and in the Philippines were depicted and described in order to justify the discriminatory laws against the Chinese. Some of the questions that this essay seeks to pose and answer are: Did the experience of the US with regard to the Chinese in the metropole influence their policies on the Chinese in the colony? What were the similarities and differences in the ways the Americans treated the Chinese in these two places, and if there were differences or variegations, how can we explain these?

The period of this study roughly covers the period from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, and spans two geographical sites, the United States and the Philippines.[2]

OVERVIEW ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES

Images of the Chinese in the US

The first significant wave of Chinese immigrants to arrive in the United States started around 1850, when large numbers of Chinese joined the gold rush in California. When the mines dried up, many shifted to work on the railroads and in agricultural farmlands. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Chinese could also be found in manufacturing, washing, domestic service, and other low-skilled occupations. Heavily concentrated in Hawaii and on the West Coast, their numbers expanded from a few thousands in the 1850s to as many as 107,000 in 1890. Women also came, but they only constituted a fraction of the total Chinese population. As for their native origins in China, most of them came from the area surrounding the Pearl River Delta in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong.

The anti-Chinese racist thought at the time was reflected in some newspaper articles.

A young printer and journalist, Henry George, who later became a politician, wrote that the Chinese, like Africans, were "an infusible element," and were "utter heathens, treacherous, sensual, cowardly and cruel" (qtd. in Saxton 102). An article that appeared in 1856 in a gazetteer in San Francisco stated that their appearances "made people wonder that nature and custom should so combine to manufacture so much individual ugliness" (18).[3] The article further described their women as the "most degraded and beastly of all human creatures."[4]

Apart from journalists, members of the government, churches, military, business community, and medical profession contributed to the perpetuation of negative perceptions of the Chinese. They constructed and spread an image of the Chinese as a "yellow peril" that would contaminate and destroy the social, moral, and economic fabric of American society. For instance, some American doctors argued for the expulsion of the Chinese due to their habit of opium smoking. But it was not what opium smoking did to the Chinese per se that they were concerned about, but what this practice did to the sexual and moral behavior of American men and women. These doctors regarded sexual activity, whether with oneself or with others, as depleting men's energies, and therefore should be limited. However, opium smoking was considered an aphrodisiac that led to "abnormal sensibility to stimulation, as well as delayed completion of the sexual act for men" (Ahmad 58). American women who smoked opium supposedly lost their modesty, with their sexual appetite approaching a frenzied state, instead of being "pure, pious, domestic, and submissive" (58).

Another component of the opposition to opium smoking was racism, related to fears of miscegenation. Chinese opium smokers were having children with Anglo-American prostitutes, who themselves used opium. The creation of "degenerate hybrids" thus posed dangers to the purity of the Caucasian race. Issues of masculinity and femininity also filled some of these doctors' writings, in that opium smokers would develop "Chinese" and feminine characteristics of "introspection, indifference, defeatism, and silence" (55). Thus, if the habit of opium smoking were to spread widely among the Americans, it would threaten the very moral fiber and existence of the nation, just as China had become weak and dominated by Western powers due to its inability to control the widespread use of opium among its people.

Church and government leaders also pointed to their "heathen" ways as reasons to discriminate against or exclude the Chinese. For instance, in 1877 a committee formed by the California Senate to ascertain the extent to which Chinese immigrants threatened the welfare of the state issued a report describing them as "(a)n indigestible mass in the

community, distinct in language, pagan in religion, [and] inferior in mental and moral qualities" (44th Congress). Missionaries, whether in China or in the United States, worked zealously to convert the Chinese from their "pagan" ways.

Consequently, several discriminatory laws were passed aimed at the Chinese. For instance, there was the Laundry Ordinance of 1873 that targeted Chinese laundry business owners by levying the most taxes on those that did not own a horse for delivering laundries (mostly the Chinese). Then there was the Page Law of 1875 that prohibited the importation of Chinese women working as prostitutes, which subsequently contributed to a negative image of Chinese women.

Discriminatory acts and economic hardships notwithstanding, the Chinese continued to migrate to the United States in substantial numbers. However, the economic depression that hit the United States in the late 1870s added fuel to the fire of anti-Chinese sentiments. White labor unions accused the Chinese, who were paid lower wages and did not unionize, of taking away jobs from white laborers. They also were the most vocal supporters of anti-Chinese legislation, pressuring government officials to interfere. Thus, in 1880, the United States government signed the Treaty of Burlingame with China. The agreement provided the United States the unilateral right to regulate the entry of the Chinese. In 1882, the US Congress enacted the Chinese Exclusion Act that prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the United States for a period of ten years. In 1892, the Chinese Exclusion Act was renewed, and again in 1902. In 1904, it was extended indefinitely.[5]

The United States and the Chinese in the Philippines

At the turn of the 20th century, the United States found itself having to deal with the "Chinaman" problem not only in the mainland, but also thousands of miles away—in its first major colony in the Pacific, the Philippines. After the Americans defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War, Major-General Otis ordered the application of the Chinese Exclusion Law to the Philippines in September 1898.

The Otis order had the following provisions:

- Chinese persons who left the islands between December 31, 1895 and the date of the promulgation of the order of exclusion (September 26, 1898) were permitted to return on the production of satisfactory evidence of former residence.
- Chinese subjects who left the islands subsequent to the promulgation of the order were enjoined to procure from the collector of customs certificates of

> residence, and only upon the presentation of such a certificate were they allowed to land when they came back.

However, confusion arose about the validity of the ordinance, since the US State Department was apparently unaware that Otis had ordered the application of the exclusion laws in the Philippines (Fonacier 9).

In order to resolve this issue, the US government mandated the Schurman Commission to look into the "Chinese" question. The Commission was tasked to find out more about the Chinese in the Philippines, and whether their immigration should be restricted or not. Arriving in early 1899**,** members of the Commission spent a year gathering information regarding the Chinese. They interviewed various prominent people in Manila, ranging from foreign merchants, local residents, and Chinese merchants. Based on the interviews, the Commission noted that the "Chinese take out of the country everything they can … spend little in the country, because they live on little" (*Report* Vol. I 154).

Furthermore, the Commission report described the Chinese as being "notorious gamblers" and "criminals" (154). At the conclusion of the report, the Commission recommended the application of the exclusion laws in the Philippines. President McKinley was in favor of giving the Philippine Commission or the legislative body of the islands power and authority to settle the Chinese labor question (Fonacier 21). However, the United States Congress thought otherwise. Instead, it deliberated upon a bill that would extend the exclusion law to the Philippines. The bill was passed on April 7, 1902, thus making the application of the exclusion law of the Chinese in the Philippines official.

Articles from newspapers in Manila that were published after the Commission gave its report either confirmed or validated the negative image of the Chinese presented by the Commission. In my own research, I examined the headlines and front-page articles found in a pro-American newspaper called *The Manila American* from February to December 1901. I counted forty-five (45) articles pertaining to the Chinese in the Philippines, and based on their content, classified them according to the following themes/topics:

- Crimes (often violent) committed against or by a Chinese – 18
- Illegal business activities and regulation of such (smuggling of goods, operation of opium and gambling dens; etc.) – 12
- Chinese labor question (smuggling of Chinese laborers) – 12
- Other matters – 3

Examples of the headlines pertaining to the Chinese include: "Loco Chino Runs Amuck: Tried to Run Uli Uli District with a Knife" (February 1, 1901); "Crazy Chino Heart-broken Cuts His Throat" (March 19, 1901); "Dishonest Binondo Chinese" (May 8, 1901); "Chinese Gamblers Convicted and Fined: Taisee Club San Fernando Pulled: Strong Battle Made to Legalize Fake Chinese Gambling Clubs" (June 12, 1901); and "A Chino Accused of Stealing Old Junk" (November 18, 1901).

From these examples of images used by different groups of people to describe the Chinese in the United States and the Philippines, we can say that there was a similarity in the way the Chinese were depicted: as undesirables. As mentioned above, one reason for this discriminatory view was the economic competition the Chinese provided: in the United States, the "Chinaman" threatened the jobs of white American laborers; in the Philippines, of its "natives," and thus needed to be excluded. However, the difference in the case of the Philippines was that the exclusion of the Chinese would also adversely affect the Philippine economy. Those interviewed by the Philippine Commission and who were against the exclusion law argued that the Chinese had been contributing significantly to the development of the Philippine economy for centuries. Thus, to prohibit their immigration would "slow down development" (Fonacier 22; cf. Jensen 49-51).[6]

However, the United States felt that it was their "duty" to "preserve the islands for the natives. The new colonizers wanted to make good their "promise" of creating a sovereign and independent Philippines to be ruled by "Filipinos". Governor Taft, for example, declared that "the American Government should do nothing [to] arouse the enmity of the people [i.e., the Filipinos] and induce them to a belief that the American Government would exploit the islands by admitting generally Chinese labor" (qtd. in Fonacier 21). Thus, American colonial policies on the Chinese in the Philippines were influenced or shaped by a need to prove to the "Filipinos" and to the world that the United States intended to rule by "benevolent assimilation." However, it was to be an "assimilation" that excluded the Chinese.

Another related issue to the Chinese was the opium problem. In 1843, the Spanish colonial government started to regulate the importation, sale, and distribution of opium in the Philippines by establishing a government monopoly that awarded tax-farming contracts to the highest bidders (Wickberg *The Chinese Mestizo* 114-116). Thus, when the Americans took over the Philippines, they faced a conundrum in the Islands: how to control, regulate, prohibit, and eventually abolish a long-standing practice of opium smoking that had been state-sanctioned. In the United States, the Treaty of Burlingame of 1880 banned the importation of opium, although what it succeeded in doing was not to

prevent opium from entering the country but to exclude the Chinese as importers and place the import business in the hands of white American companies (Sinn 31). Nevertheless, it was easier to regulate opium smoking back in the metropole than it was in the colony. Furthermore, the income that was collected from opium tax-farming was not insignificant. But when the new government in the Philippines recommended the continuation of this farming system, it met widespread opposition from American missionaries (Baumler). Thus, in 1903, the Philippine Commission formed a committee to come up with alternative proposals. Members of the committee traveled to different places in Asia, including Japan, Taiwan, and Java, to examine the different ways other imperial masters regulated opium smoking in their colonies. In 1905, the committee presented its report, "Opium in the Orient," that outlined various alternatives for opium control, including the continuation of the former system; the adoption of the Formosan model in which the Japanese were totally forbidden to smoke while the Formosans were not; or for its total prohibition. In the end, it chose to favor the "Java" solution, which provided for the continuation of the monopoly system, but with modifications. It is interesting to note that while prohibition, which was partly the solution in Formosa, might have seemed the more logical choice where the end goal of the whole opium issue was for its total abolition, the committee cited this option as impractical in the Philippines. Its report stated that in Formosa,

> (w)here tribal relations exist so as to put different sections of a community in direct antagonism one to another, where peoples under one government are separated from one another by the conformation of the country, or where permanent social barriers between various nationalities exist, a law discriminating between people and people might work**.** *But where, as in the Philippines, Chinese and natives live in many parts of the archipelago side by side, where there is constant social intercourse, and where intermarriage is not uncommon, there is no reason to suppose that prohibition would be effective among the Filipinos, if permission should be the rule among the Chinese*. The process of contamination might be slow, but it would be unerring. No further guide is needed to reach this conclusion than that of common sense. (italics mine; "Opium in the Orient" 20)

From the statement of the committee we see another conundrum faced by American policy makers in the Philippines. How do you exclude a group of people who had been part of the social and economic fabric of Philippine society for centuries? Unlike the Chinese in the United States, the Chinese in the Philippines (predominantly from the

southeastern region of Fujian) had for centuries established close commercial and personal ties with the inhabitants of the Philippines. The Chinese minister in Washington D.C. Wu Ting-fang, for example, in arguing against the application of the Chinese Exclusion Act in the Philippines, pointed out that

> many of [the Chinese] were native born (in the Philippines) and intermingled by marriage with the Philippine races, yet maintaining extensive social and commercial relations and intercourse with the southern provinces and ports of China. (qtd. in Fonacier 9)

Proponents of the law interviewed by the Commission, however, used the same argument to emphasize the danger posed by the Chinese. One of them said

> [the Chinese] intermarry with the Filipino women, and … they produce a race which does not furnish good citizens … [and] many of the great troubles of the islands are caused by Chinese and their descendants. (*Report* Vol. I 154)

These descendants were—to use the word of the Commission—the "half-breeds," or known more commonly as the "Chinese mestizos".[7] Three decades before, these mestizos were mainly responsible for organizing the Reform Movement that clamored for socio-political and economic changes under Spanish colonial rule. Later on, mestizos like Mariano Limjap, Apolinario Mabini, and Emilio Aguinaldo would lead the resistance movement against American colonization. Interestingly, the Commission attributed the "dangerous" element in the mestizos to their "Chinese-ness." It reported that "the crossing of the Chinese with the Indians the Chinese blood is so potent that a small proportion suffices to produce a wide variation from the primitive type of native" (*Report* Vol. III 360). It also argued that if such mixing continued, the Chinese blood "might eventually … take the place of the Malayan blood" (360).[8] Thus, the mixing of the Chinese race with the different ethnic groups of the Philippines might produce a race predominantly "Chinese," a development that would not augur well for the long-term imperial plans of the United States in Asia-Pacific, and for the safety and security of its own nation against an invasion of the "yellow race."

As more and more Asians migrated into the United States, starting with the Chinese, then later on the Japanese, Indians, Koreans, and Filipinos, measures were taken to discourage, if not outright prohibit, the unions between these people and their white

women. At first, only "Mongol" race people were not allowed to intermarry; later on "Malays" were included. This racist attitude that resulted in various anti-miscegenation laws was based on the ideology of "Anglo-Saxonism," an ideology used by British colonialists to justify their colonization of various territories such as India, Burma, and Malaysia. Simply stated, "Anglo-Saxonism" regards the "white" race as superior and therefore should not be diluted by the mixing with other races.[9] Members of the "white" race also were expected to rule over other people of different colors.

In the Philippines, however, this concept of "Anglo-Saxonism" was transformed from "racial-exceptionalism" to "nationalist-exceptionalism." Paul Kramer explains this transformation as arising from the different agenda that the United States had in the Philippines, that is, to create a state that would suit Filipino nationalist aspirations and counter American anti-imperialist oppositions (45). British colonial rhetoric did not apply anymore, because the US was trying "something entirely new to human history—not empire but 'expansive republicanism'; not colonial rule but 'tutelage in self-government'; not oppression but 'benevolent assimilation'" (75). The United States wanted to teach the "world how to govern 'dependencies' on the basis of unprecedented selflessness, uplift, benevolence, assimilation, and the promise of eventual self-government" (76). Thus, it was important to the Americans to "bring law and order to the archipelago, a mission that they considered central to the colonial enterprise" (Wilson 191).

THE RACE FOR RACIAL PURITY: CONSTRUCTING THE FILIPINO

Chinese and Local Women Unions During the Spanish Colonial Period

To this end, the Americans had to first construct, in the words of Benedict Anderson (1983), an "imagined community," and, in this case, a "Filipino" nation. One of the ways by which it set about doing this was to define who a "Filipino" was. Or was not. During the Spanish colonial period, a three-way ethno-legal classificatory system of "*sangley*-mestizo-*indio*" was found in many urban centers. However, upon colonizing the Philippines, the American colonial regime nationalized citizenship, creating a two-way classificatory system of "Filipinos" and "aliens." Mestizos and indios were subsumed under the category "Filipino," while the Chinese became "aliens." First-generation mestizos born to "alien" Chinese fathers and mestizo or indio mothers were also considered "aliens" but could later on opt for "Filipino" citizenship at the age of maturity. In order to create a homogeneous "Filipino" population that would fulfill the construction of this imagined community, the

Americans also had to find ways to prevent the further mixing of the Chinese race with the indigenous races of the Philippines. This could be achieved not by officially prohibiting intermarriages between races as was the case in the United States, but by *discouraging* such unions. For instance, by denying Chinese men Filipino citizenship and making it difficult for them to acquire it, the US colonial regime discouraged local women from marrying Chinese men, for this would produce children who would also be regarded as "aliens."[10] Consequently, such policies helped to gradually create a homogeneous and divided "Chinese" and "Filipino" population. Church marriage records from the Archdiocese of Manila show that in the early twentieth-century, the number of intermarriages between the Chinese and local women decreased. In the 1870s and 1880s, the number of intermarriages in Manila as recorded registered double-digits. But the first two decades of American colonial rule saw a decline to less than ten per year (*Informaciones*).[11]

Changing Family Laws to Create further "Chinese-Filipino" Divide

Another way in which American colonial policy succeeded in further dividing the Chinese and the Filipinos was by controlling and changing the family laws of the Philippines. Intent on creating a "Filipino" society that reflected American ideals of what constituted a marriage and a family, the American colonial regime legislated a family code that prohibited bigamy (or polygamy). To be sure, the family code used by the American colonial regime was basically based on the Spanish one. However, the difference lay on the manner of implementation, and on the objectives of each colonial regime.

For centuries before the coming of the Americans, many Chinese in the Philippines practiced bigamy or polygamy, that is, the practice of having a wife in China and another one in the Philippines. For the Chinese, such an arrangement was convenient for the kind of itinerant lifestyle that they led. Records from the Sung and Ming dynasties show that Fujianese families used to adopt sons even when they had children of their own.

The adopted sons would be sent abroad on commercial enterprises after they grew up [while the true sons were generally kept at home] (Ng 29).

But as many Chinese started to settle in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial period, the practice of marrying local women and producing male children replaced or complemented this system of adoption. The mestizo offspring from such unions were often considered part of the family (as in the case of Mariano Limjap), and were expected to help out in the family commercial enterprise. Thus, for many Chinese-mestizo families in Manila and in other parts of the Philippines, this arrangement of sharing the family wealth and patrimony with their counterpart in China became acceptable, as it was for the families

in China. Testaments left behind by wealthy Chinese merchants in the Philippines often recognized both families and divided the inheritance equally between the two (Chu).

Early 16th century Spanish missionary accounts already recorded such bigamous or polygamous arrangements being practiced in the Philippines, much to the chagrin of the writers. However, as time went on, this practice seemed to have been condoned, even if Spanish colonial government policy and Church teachings officially forbade it. Prominent Chinese merchants were allowed to convert to Catholicism and marry local women even though they had wives and families in China. One of the reasons why the Spanish Catholic Church condoned such practice was that it did not recognize marriages contracted in China, and thus permitted Chinese converts to marry local Catholic women. Another reason was that it wanted to increase the number of Catholic conversion among the Chinese, who, and whose children, could later on be relied upon to help convert China.

Under American colonial rule, however, such arrangements became increasingly uncommon. There were several reasons that contributed to this decrease in intermarriages between the Chinese and the local women. Among them were the rising nationalisms in China and the Philippines, as well as the anti-Chinese citizenship law mentioned previously. But one major factor that had a profound and long-lasting impact on unions between Chinese men and Filipino women was the way the United States used its judicial and legal apparatuses to make sure that its new colonial subjects started living the "American" way. This meant teaching them, directly and indirectly, practices that were considered socially, morally, and legally acceptable to the Americans. However, how did the Americans manage to change the familial and domestic practices of their new colonial subjects, so that the long tradition of intermarriages between the Chinese and the Filipinos, as well as their practice of polygamy, could be controlled, sanctioned, or abolished? What follows below is a description of a landmark case involving the heirs of Sy Quia, a.k.a. Vicente Romero Sy Quia. In bringing this case to the readers' attention, I am proposing a way by which the Americans succeeded in their objective.

On 9 January 1894, Sy Quia died intestate, leaving behind personal and real property worth one million pesos. Two weeks later, the Court of First Instance of the district of Quiapo ruled that his local wife Petronila Encarnacion and their four children were the "heirs abinstestate" (*Sy Joc Lieng*, as found in Felix 120). However, a complaint was filed in 1905 contesting the inheritance. This complaint came from the descendants of a Chinese woman named Yap Puan Niu. The plaintiffs claimed that Sy Quia married Puan Niu in China in 1847, six years before he married Petronila Encarnacion in the Philippines. On the other hand, the defendants insisted that Sy Quia's Philippine marriage was the legal

one and that he never contracted any other marriage. Thus, both parties argued that they were the sole legitimate heirs. Upon receiving the complaints, rebuttals, and testimonies and counter-testimonies of witnesses from both parties, the court on 26 February 1908 rendered a judgment declaring that both the descendants of Yap Puan Niu and Petronila Encarnacion (who had died in 1906) were the legal heirs of the property of the estate of Sy Quia. However, both parties appealed and brought their case to the Philippine Supreme Court. As before, each one tried to question the paternity and status of the other party, and continued to claim to be the sole legal heirs of Sy Quia. The principal question that the court tried to establish was whether there was enough proof to sufficiently establish the Chinese marriage.

On 19 March 1910, the five justices of the Philippine Supreme Court ruled, with one justice dissenting, that the Chinese marriage was not adequately proved, on the grounds that the Chinese family failed to produce documentary evidence that Sy Quia was legally married to Yap. The justices pointed out that the testimonies given by the witnesses on the Chinese side with regard to the actual occurrence of the wedding were often contradictory. Moreover, they found the testimonies as not reliable, since they were made in Chinese, as well as in a place far away, that is, in Xiamen. Given this distance, one concurring justice, an American, opined that the Chinese party's witnesses could have easily "invent(ed) as they pleased and color(ed) (their testimonies) as they would … [and] fabricate(d) and falsif(ied) with utter impunity" (159). Also, the justices dismissed the books that the Chinese side brought to the court. The books were supposed to have contained specific laws and provisions on citizenship, marriage, and inheritance in China. The information contained therein would have strengthened the argument of the Chinese party that Sy Quia was "a subject of the Chinese Empire and that his estate [therefore] should be distributed in accordance with the laws of China" (147). However, the books were in Chinese and had no Spanish translation. Thus, their authenticity was questioned, and they were judged by the justices to be "useless and of no value" (154). Furthermore, they ruled that Sy Quia, having lived in the Philippines for more than fifty years, should be considered a Spanish subject, even though there was no documentary evidence to show that he had actually applied for Spanish naturalization. Lastly, they stated that even if the Chinese marriage was valid, the inheritance rightly belonged to the Petronila and her descendants, for they argued that Petronila had brought 5,000 pesos into the marriage, and from this amount, Sy Quia made his fortune. Following Spanish law which provided that a spouse had a right to conjugal property, particularly if that particular spouse had brought money into the marriage, the justices decided that only Petronila Encarnacion and, subsequently, her children were the

rightful heirs to Sy Quia's estate.

The Chinese party appealed to the United States Supreme Court. However, on 14 April 1913 the US Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Philippine Supreme Court. It is interesting to note that one of the reasons given by the Supreme Court for its decision was that it questioned the long lapse of time (11 years) that it took the Chinese party from the time of Sy Quia's death to bring the matter to the court.

But upon close reading of the reasons given by the Philippine and US Supreme Court justices, one can sense a discriminatory attitude against the Chinese party. For example, one of the justices, as I pointed out in the preceding paragraph, expressed suspicion over the testimonies of the witnesses produced by the Chinese party, on the basis that these testimonies were made in Chinese and with an interpreter before the US consul in Xiamen. Furthermore, they considered the absence of documentary evidence of the Chinese marriage as a strong case against the Chinese party, thus putting into question the validity of its claims. However, the judge of the Court of the First Instance in Quiapo and one dissenting justice of the Philippine Supreme Court accepted the testimonies of its witnesses. The dissenting justice argued that among people aged 50 and above there was probably no one who could actually "prove by documentary evidence, in the absence of public record, the marriage of their parents" (167). Furthermore, he stated that there was no proof "that the Chinese Government had a system of public records of marriage at the time of the marriage of Sy Quia with his first wife Yap Pua Nui, or that they have any such system now" (167). Lastly, he said that he believed that it was not the intention of the

> wise legislators of the Spanish Government, where a man having a legal wife and children marries another woman and has children by such other woman, that the effect of the second marriage was to turn over to the second wife and children all of the property belonging to him, to the prejudice of the first wife and legitimate children. (195)

Thus, we can infer from this case that during the American colonial period, the judicial system introduced by the Americans, carrying with it the American notion of "family," "kinship," and "marriage," worked against the continuation of the kind of diasporic and border-crossing family arrangement that existed before. By insisting on proper documentation to prove a marriage, the justices who ruled in favor of Petronila and her family undermined a long-standing acceptance of the local inhabitants of the Philippines of Chinese men maintaining two wives and families, one in China and another

locally. In fact, the descendants of Sy Quia's Chinese and local wives knew each other. It was shown in court that Petronila even gave Sy Joc Lieng and Sy Yoc Chay, two grandsons of Sy Quia from the Chinese line, an amount of 4,000 pesos. Joc Lieng and Yoc Chay claimed that this amount was given as part of their inheritance. This amount was even entered in the accounting books of Sy Quia's brother. However, the justices dismissed this piece of evidence since the accounting entry did not explicitly specify that this money was given as part of the inheritance (137).

On the other hand, other inheritance cases that I have collected and analyzed in past research show that declarations made by the testators of having another family in China went unquestioned by the Philippine kin (Chu). I suspect that one reason why it took the Chinese party 11 years to bring their case to the court was that they thought that Petronila and her children recognized them also as rightful heirs and would apportion their share accordingly. Unfortunately for the Chinese party, Sy Quia died intestate, that is, without leaving a will as the other testators in this study had done. With the introduction of an American judicial system that was prejudiced against the familial practices of the Chinese in the Philippines and in China, the intermingling and interaction that these two sets of families might have initially enjoyed diminished, and over time, might have become hostile. Later on in the 1930s, when Chinese men were allowed to bring in their Chinese wives and children to the Philippines as political and socio-economic conditions in China worsened, the stage was set for the creation of more distinct "Chinese" and "Filipino" communities.[12]

CONCLUSION

When the Americans colonized the Philippines, the historical realities and existence of various groups of people in the Philippines, from the "lowly, gentle, and noble savage" to the "cunning and dangerous 'Chinaman'" provided them with a dilemma: How to create a sympathetic and pliant national "Filipino" leadership that was easily identifiable and controllable. Who was a "Filipino," who could be trusted to form a national government that would, in turn, usher their colony toward the path of American-style "democracy" and American way of life? If one were to observe contemporary Philippine society in all of its aspects—political, economic, socio-cultural—one can see the great extent to which the Americans managed to transplant many of their institutions and values. However, as Wilson points out,

> This experiment in the self-replication of American society … was more often than not an exercise in self-deception and was occasionally counterproductive. (191)

I argue that one example of this counterproductive effort was how they dealt with the "Chinaman" question. Instead of recognizing and adopting laws that would respect the long-standing historical relationship between the Chinese and the Filipinos, the American imperialists, carrying their anti-Chinese prejudice to the Philippines, decided to create laws similar to those in the metropole that placed the Chinese outside of mainstream society. In so doing, they contributed to the segregation of the Chinese from the Filipino, and the Filipino from the Chinese. This process took several decades, and involved the continued "demonization" of the Chinese, as can be seen from these various political cartoons that appeared in newspapers and magazines from 1910 to the 1930s.[13] In time, and with the aid of Filipino and Chinese nationalisms, a reified "Chinese-Filipino" binary was created in Philippine society. It is a binary that continues to be a source of ethnic tension and division in Philippine society today.

NOTES

1 Wilson alludes to this connection when he writes, "The chinos' [i.e., of the Chinese in the Philippines] visibility and vigor caused many Americans to compare Manila to the major centers of Chinese residence in the United States and to assume that the same dangers to social order lurked in the streets of Tondo and Binondo. Insular officials were very conscious of the tong wars and the Chinese 'highbinders' back home and constantly made reference to them. Even the threat of Chinese criminal activity in the islands evoked explicit comparisons to San Francisco, Chicago, and New York" (191).

2 Portions of this essay have been discussed in a panel presentation during the "Performing Ethnicity" Conference held in the City College of the City University of New York, 15-17 October 2004.

3 Apart from newspaper articles, trade cards that were popular in the 1870s often carried these negative images of the Chinese. See Matsukawa.

4 American historian Alexander Saxton and other Asian American Studies scholars have written about the discrimination with which the Chinese were met when they arrived in the United States. For more information regarding the violence suffered by the Chinese, especially from the 1870s to the 1890s, see Chan; Takaki; Barth; Sandmeyer; and Salyer.

5 Teachers, students, merchants, travelers, and diplomats were exempted, along with those who had already been living in the United States, provided they obtain special certificates known as Section 6 certificates that would allow them to come and go freely. The law was not repealed until 1943.

6 Outside observers, whether Spanish or American, often regarded the Chinese in the Philippines as more "skilled," "industrious," "disciplined," and "hard-working" than the "natives" of the Philippines, who were described as "indolent," "unskilled," etc. For example, A. Burlingame Johnson, ex-US consul to Xiamen, made this observation in 1902, "As a race the Philippino [sic] is indolent. He is not a success as a field laborer. He cannot be induced to toil a given number of hours each day and for months at a time as do the laborers in all civilized countries." The Chinese, on the other hand, "is a superior man. He demands double the wages of a native, dresses better, lives on more substantial food, occupies a better house, is more solicitous as to the education of his children, and in every way tends to uplift the native" (6-8). One reason therefore why the Chinese should not be immediately excluded was that he was needed to teach the Filipinos that the skills that they possessed.

7 "Mestizo" as an ethno-legal classification was created in the 17th century, when their numbers grew bigger as more unions between Chinese men and local women occurred. For more information regarding the history of the mestizos, see Wickberg "The Chinese Mestizo"; Tan; and Chu.

8 It must be pointed out that Spanish views expressed the same opinion.

9 See Ahmad (62) for a discussion on how "hybrids" were also viewed in a negative way in the United States.

10 Barring the Chinese from obtaining Filipino citizenship was also a means to prevent them from coming to the United States. Many of those who were for the restricted entry of the Chinese were afraid that the Philippines would be used as a stepping-stone by members of the "yellow horde" to enter the United States. As American colonial subjects, Filipinos were US nationals who had unrestricted entry into the United States (i.e. until the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1935 changed their status). In effect, the Chinese had to be barred from gaining Filipino citizenship at all cost.

11 A caveat should be stated here. The number of intermarriages registered in the Archdiocese of Manila for the decade of the 1890s also registered low numbers. Factors or reasons for this phenomenon need to be investigated.

12 The Philippine Commonwealth government allowed more than 7,000 Chinese to enter the country from 1937 to 1940 as refugees from war-torn China. See Cariño (145).

13 See for example the political cartoons in newspapers such as *The Independent* as collected in McCoy and Roces.

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ENEMIES AND FRIENDS: A CONSIDERATION OF THE BURNHAM KIDNAPPING

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Abstract
The relationships between the political and the spiritual, hostage-taker and victim, friends and enemies, the US and the Philippines are shaped and contested in the light of journalistic accounts of the Burnhams' hostage crisis in 2001, and in particular Gracia Burnham's reconstruction of it in her memoir. The following four distinct but related contexts are used as lens to explore the binarisms: 1) the psychosocial dynamics and literary traditions of captivity; 2) what used to be billed the "special" but has more recently and perhaps more accurately been called the "entangled" relationship between the United States and the Philippines; 3) the geopolitics of the "War (of and on) Terror" that broke out with full force during the Burnhams' hostage days, and/or of the longer-term "clash of civilizations," as it is sometimes called, between militant Islam and the globalizing Judeo-Christian West; and 4) the historic resurgence, in many areas of the world, of religion in personal and public life.

Keywords
Abu Sayyaf, *In the Presence of My Enemies,* religion, terrorism, US-Philippines relations

About the Author
Gerald T. Burns holds a PhD in American Studies from Yale University. He taught at Wesleyan University and in the Philippines prior to coming to Franklin Pierce College. His research interests include the history of education, representation of the Vietnam War in popular culture, Philippine literature, and current topic of place and community studies. From early in his career, he was struck by the cogency of much feminist analysis and by the promise of Women's Studies as a field.

Many people in the United States and the Philippines remember it still. True, for most the episode is little more than a small bubble in the backwash of yesterday's-turning-yesteryear's media coverage. But with a little prompting it will rise with an audible pop to the surface of recognition. The names of the kidnapped couple, Martin and Gracia Burnham, are not likely to do the trick. Nor will the name of the group that abducted them, the Abu Sayyaf, party to so many high-profile cases in recent years and especially at the beginning of the current decade when this particular drama played out. One helpful cue might be the Burnhams' occupation, missionaries; another might be the sheer length of their ordeal, over a year and many months after the release of all the other hostages but one. Then there is the historical event, 9-11, that erupted in the middle of their captivity and hovered in the global air over the remainder of it. For others the historical button to push might be the "Balikatan" exercises which brought US troops back to Philippine soil for the

first time since the bases' closure in the early 1990s, in part to help with the rescue of the Burnhams; or perhaps it will be the controversies generated over the role of the Philippine military in the affair. Bookish types and pop culture watchers may have marked the 2003 publication of Gracia Burnham's memoir, *In the Presence of My Enemies*, serialized in *Good Housekeeping*, launched with an author interview on *Dateline NBC* with Katie Couric, and climbing onto to the *New York Times* bestseller list. The surest key to unlocking memory, though, and one which usually doesn't need to be supplied but springs out from some recess in the interlocutor's own awareness, is the narrative bottom line of the affair: "Oh, was that where, after all that time, the one survived but the other was killed when they tried to rescue them?" Aristotle defines tragedy as a sequence of events the bare recitation of which is enough to produce the emotions of pity and fear, and it surely seems that the tragic resonance of the Burnhams' fate produces the deepest chime of recognition for their story. Finally, there is one more feature of this story that tends to get preserved as well, usually as an afterthought and perhaps with more national selectivity, although it has come up on both sides of the Pacific where I've lately been holding the kinds of conversations alluded to here: "Wasn't a Filipino hostage also killed?"

Although it was only one in a series of similarly sensational events in recent years, the Burnham kidnapping is the one that seems destined to leave the boldest imprint on public memory in the United States and the Philippines. What's more, behind the headlines, the special reports, and the controversies, within the classically tragic outlines of the event, and beneath the stark moral simplicity of the title of Gracia Burnham's memoir, lies the record of an unexpectedly complex human experience. It is an experience that illuminates deeply if uncertainly relations between hostages and captors, Americans and Filipinos, terror and anti-terror, individual interest and political imperative, believers and their God, believers of different faiths, and, through all of these, the wavering distinction between "enemies" and friends. It is also an experience that raises profound questions about the possibilities and limits of change, within existing structures power, loyalty, and belief. These questions in turn bear on the ultimate significance of the Burnham kidnapping: whether it will weigh on the scale of mistrust and conflict that gave rise to it, or whether it will lift up new possibilities of understanding and behaving that may help to avert tragedies like theirs in the future.

In what follows, I seek to analyze the Burnhams' experience, and in particular Gracia Burnham's reconstruction of it in her memoir, within four distinct but related contexts: 1) the psychosocial dynamics and literary traditions of captivity; 2) what used to be billed the "special" but has more recently and perhaps more accurately been called the

"entangled" relationship between the United States and the Philippines; 3) the geopolitics of the "War (of and on) Terror" that broke out with full force during the Burnhams' hostage days, and/or of the longer-term "clash of civilizations," as it is sometimes called, between militant Islam and the globalizing Judeo-Christian West[1] and 4) the historic resurgence, in many areas of the world, of religion in personal and public life. An additional, concluding section will attempt to contextualize patterns appearing within the four main dimensions of the analysis, making use of theory from cultural and religious anthropology. Throughout the treatment, the thematic focus will be on the dialectic, denied by the memoir's title but plentifully evident in its pages, between "enemies" and friends. And the effort will be made to address, in particular within the concluding section, those larger questions having to do with the possibilities and limits of change and the implications of the kidnapping experience.

Before beginning on this consideration, let me offer three things by way of preliminaries. The first is a fuller narrative of the Burnham kidnapping than the summary that appeared obliquely in the essay's opening; this is provided outside the text.[2] The second is a personal word on what might be called my "subject position" on this event. I was initially drawn to the Burnhams' story as an American who has, as they did have, personal and career connections to the Philippines, and as an American or Westerner who feels some degree of vulnerability to the abduction and captivity scenario to which they were subjected. To be sure, Americans or Westerners or foreigners have not been the only targets of the Abu Sayyaf and other groups perpetrating kidnapping and related forms of violence in the Philippines. Still, that hasn't kept me from learning about the Burnhams' experience with the question "What if … that were me or my family?" very much in mind. While I like to think I've moved on to more sophisticated, analytical questions, there can be little doubt that my original personal and national perspective has continued to shape my understanding—to take a simple but perhaps not trivial example, in following the common practice of referring to this as the "Burnham kidnapping," when a Filipino victim, Ediborah Yap, was with them at the end.

The third preliminary consists of some characterizations of Gracia Burnham's memoir. Although I have gathered some additional information on the kidnapping, this text remains the primary source for what is the ultimate focus here, the subjective experience of the event. In this initial assessment I wish to identify the aspect of the memoir that suggests my (play on her) title, and that more than any other defines the complexity of her experience and gives substance to the larger questions that it raises. This point will then become the theme or thread pursued through the different "contexts" for understanding, in the main body of the essay.

In many respects, *In the Presence of My Enemies* is not an especially literary, or even effective narrative. The language is flattened by the recurrence of such middle-American stock terms as "amazing," "cool," "weird," and "guys" (although this last one grows on a reader). There are no memorable descriptive passages, at least of the natural landscape. The spectacular scenery and the formidably difficult terrain of the southern Philippines are hidden behind the all-purpose label, "jungle" (sometimes "mountains"). Deft character sketches are likewise not Ms. Burnham's forte, and her analysis of situations at times lacks a sense of proportion. Take one example of this last. In response to a question asked frequently by Americans after her return, as to whether the Abu Sayyaf were ever cruel to her personally, Gracia relates, in an indignant tone, the story of a night when she developed LBM and her captors turned a deaf ear to her pleas to be unchained so she could do her business in the woods. For a woman who was neither tortured nor beaten nor given unwanted sexual attention during more than a year in captivity, it is difficult to see how being left to dirty herself can qualify as cruelty. She does, however, have a point when she prefaces this account with the observation, "Of course, the whole kidnapping was cruel" (130).

In the book's favor, both from a literary standpoint and as a source, is its command of concrete detail. This is especially remarkable in that Ms. Burnham did not come by any scrap of paper on which to make notes or keep a rough journal until December, 2001, halfway into the captivity. It also attests that she was vividly reliving the experience as she wrote (even with the benefit of a professional co-author) her memoir. What's more, if her descriptions of the external environment fail to register, her descriptions of the inner landscape of emotion, especially as they are riveted to these discrete details, are often hard to forget. We learn how much it hurts to sleep on the ground, or chained to a tree, night after night, how vexatious to the spirit as well as the body it can be to ordered abruptly from a long-sought resting place to go "mobiling" (as the Abu Sayyaf called it) through the jungle, especially when one's pack includes live mortar rounds. We feel how profoundly disorienting it is to be stripped of life's accustomed appurtenances, not only bed, eyeglasses, toilet paper, toothbrush, hot water (and sometimes water itself), but also, in the Burnhams' case, their Bible and their to-do lists and their career identities. We know what it means when a person, having endured through these adversities, is suddenly set upon by a swarm of bees and gives it all up ("I can't go on!"), or when reviewing life choices, affirms them all but the choice to be born. We sense how deeply demoralizing it is for a person raised as a strict Christian to give way to this kind of despair, or to blaze with hate at the captors, or to steal from the common stock of rice to palliate a gnawing hunger.

Furthermore, the book has the merit of honesty, I believe. At least if we reverse George Orwell's dictum that "Any many who gives a good account of himself … is probably a liar," then the author of this memoir is an honest woman, for she comes across in it as no paragon of endurance or virtue. Her husband Martin, whose story she says she wants principally to tell here, does embody these qualities, but not Gracia, who is the bearer of all the foibles and failings that have been mentioned so far, and a good many others as well. When admonished by an Abu Sayyaf leader to show a little emotion, for effect, in an upcoming interview for television, she shoots back, "How many days recently have I *not* cried" (211)? Later, after gaining her freedom, she responds to her daughter's asking whether she's going to have a "nervous breakdown" with the assurance, "I had [all] my breakdowns in the jungle" (296). How many there were is never quite said, but Gracia counts seventeen firefights between the AFP and Abu Sayyaf in which she and Martin were involved, and an alert reader can come up with at least that many instances in which the author, by her own account, totally loses it.

At the same time, it may be that Ms. Burnham leaves her ingenuousness behind in the jungle along with her breakdowns. From the moment in the memoir that she is lifted out of the jungle and begins speaking to military officers, presidents, and the press, the former hostage adopts a more politic tone, saying what she regards to be "nice" (301), i.e., what seems to be expected by the powers protecting her. The title of the book, actually, may be the premier case of this revisionism. *In the Presence of My Enemies*, a phrase taken from the famous Psalm 23 ("Yea, though I walk through the valley of death"), flashes a vivid signal of Old-Testament-style righteousness and certitude. But the actual memoir is not so Old Testament in its sensibilities, and clearly not so secure in its moral judgments, as this. If there are elements of an us-versus-them worldview in it, there are also bewildering complexities of experience that deconstruct the stark opposition implied in the title between "enemies" and "friends." In fact, the instability of this distinction, the way enemies and friends get defined and redefined over the course of a hostage experience in which unexpected intimacies and distances are established between them and the parties with whom they have to deal, and in which powerful, shifting forces come to bear on their fate, constitutes a recurrent theme in the body of the memoir. It also constitutes the recurrent point of focus in the following exploration of four contexts of the Burnham kidnapping: captivity, Philippine-American relations, global political and cultural conflict, and religion.

The literature on kidnapping, in particular the hostage experience, is growing exponentially with the nature of conflict in the contemporary world. To take the

contemporary scholar's shortcut and key these terms into an Amazon.com search is to be inundated with titles of narrative accounts—*A True Hostage Story of Terror, Torture, and Ultimate Survival* (Joseph)—of studies of the psychological and political aspects of the phenomenon—*Hostage! Kidnapping and Terrorism in Our Time* (Taylor)—and even of self-help manuals—*How to Avoid, Prepare For, and Survive Being Taken Hostage: A Guide for Executives and Travellers*. To zoom in on the specific setting and time period of interest to this treatment, Gracia Burnham's is one of three accounts of captivity at the hands of the Abu Sayyaf published in a three-year span; during that time, also, another of the group's former hostages became well-known as an inspirational speaker in her country.[3]

Given all this material near to hand, it may occasion some surprise that this section reaches to a precedent more than three hundred years and thousands of miles distant in order to establish the captivity context of Burnham's memoir. Yet Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God … Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, a frontier settler's account of abduction by native peoples in colonial New England, published in 1682, presages with an almost eerie exactness many of the specific features of the more recent work. It also helps to situate Burnham's text within an American literary and cultural context, the "captivity narrative" (headed by Rowlandson's example), the earliest-emergent and longest-extant genre of New World writing.[4]

The parallels between Burnham's and Rowlandson's narratives include an unfamiliar wilderness setting for the captivity; frequent and arduous movements (including carrying unwonted loads) within this setting; flight from a pursuing force with which the captive is identified; pointed criticism of the tactics of the "friendly" force; severe physical privation and hunger, together with a progressive adaptation to the local and even "natural" diet (which in the Burnhams' case extended to boiled carabao hide, eels, fish eaten raw from streams, and fresh-plucked jungle vegetation); loss of a loved one (for Gracia, her husband, for Mary, an eight-year-old child shot in the initial attack who later died in her arms); and lingering psychological effects from the ordeal (Rowlandson is one of the earliest recorded cases of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, Burnham one of the more recent). Not least of the points of connection across time is the role of religion in the two accounts. Both women quote from the Bible frequently, favoring the Book of Job as a source of analogies to their situations. And as we shall see, Burnham too effectively gives God the leading role in her narrative that is clearly implied in Rowlandson's title.

But the parallel most relevant to this exploration is one involving a confusion between "enemies" and "friends." For Rowlandson, at the outset of her experience (and narrative), there could be no doubt that her Indian captors represented a hated, feared,

and dangerous other: a "merciless Heathen" (69), spiritual as well as military enemy. However, over the course of months she received many individual acts of kindness from these people, "common mercies" (101), as she refers to them at one point. She was given food (including at one point a "Pancake" especially prepared to her taste), a comfortable place to sleep, condolences on the death of her child, even a Bible at one point. She also came to form personal relationships with a number of the tribespeople, putting her talents as seamstress at their disposal, inviting them to dinner, conversing with them familiarly. At the same time, she continued to be subjected to harsh and even malicious treatment: blows, threats of killing, being forced out into the cold, ashes from a fire flung into eyes, verbal and psychological abuse. "Sometimes I met with favour," she writes, the shaking of her head almost visible on the page, "and sometimes with nothing but frowns" (85).

In the Presence of My Enemies, its black-and-white title notwithstanding, manifests a similar pattern. For Burnham, at the outset, the captors are "bad guys" and bad news. When she and Martin realize that it is the "dreaded Abu Sayyaf" conducting the kidnapping at Dos Palmas, their hearts sink; they immediately apprehend both a physical and a spiritual enmity. And yet, as with Rowlandson, time, proximity, dependence on the kidnappers for the necessities of their existence, and the human qualities of these men and the community behind them produce a more realistic but less consistent picture. The Burnhams cannot but admire the Abu Sayyaf's endurance and courage, in alternately outrunning and facing up to the superior AFP pursuing forces. What's more, the captives become the beneficiaries of numerous kindnesses: special foods (in one case a pancake made for Gracia, whose stomach has rebelled against rice, that seems almost a duplicate of one given by the Indians to Mary Rowlandson), assistance in "mobiling" at night (when both their defective visions slow them down), eventually a hammock for sleeping, and time for Gracia to talk, woman-to-woman, with a visiting TV reporter. As one Filipino reviewer of the memoir commented, citing these instances of generosity, Ms. Burnham has "even given the Abu Sayyaf a heart, for all we care" (Zamora). Yet the opposite behavior is plentifully evident, as well. It begins with the beheadings of four hostages and credible threats to do the same to Martin and Gracia. It extends to excessive chaining and handcuffing aimed to prevent their escape, confiscation of eyeglasses sent to Martin to remedy his seriously blurred sight, and forceful reminders that as Christians the couple has no protection of any kind under the Abu Sayyaf's interpretation of Islamic law. The result of this mixed bag of treatment is predictable: confusion. "Of all the random things," Gracia comments on a gift of Green Cross rubbing alcohol from one of the group's leaders, Solaiman (132). Later, face-to-face with that leader, and faced with the prospect of his

departure, she acknowledges the complexity of the relationship: "You are an enemy, but at least you have been an enemy we could connect with … Now you're leaving, and we're going to have nobody" (185).

Nevertheless, it's "enemy" and that other label, "bad guy" (a term resurrected into American public discourse, it seems, from a pre-Vietnam moral universe of Westerns and cops and robbers) that Gracia sticks with in the end. For one thing, she proves able to keep the "random" acts of kindness at a psychological distance by the theological maneuver of chalking them up to God's rather than human goodness. For example, the appearance of that pancake is attributed directly to divine intervention—*"Thank you, Lord. You knew I truly couldn't handle any more rice, and you sent me a pancake!"* (158)—while a care package received from the Burnhams' own missionary organization calls forth a tribute to human generosity. This happens to be a maneuver also used by Rowlandson vis-à-vis the Indians. In any case, Burnham has apparently little difficulty, especially after being released from captivity, reasserting her original judgment of the Abu Sayyaf. "We never forgot who the bad guys were and who the good guys were" (285), she says to the lieutenant in charge of the rescue force. She repeats the same assessment in her televised interview with President Arroyo, and embellishes it the next day in a statement to the press, charging that the hostages had been "repeatedly lied to by the Abu Sayyaf" (although deceit does not appear in the earlier portions of the memoir a major concern), who are "not men of honor … and [who should be] treated as common criminals" (301, 304). So, in spite of the mixed experience of the captivity itself, there was to be no Stockholm Syndrome for Gracia (referring to the tendency observed in certain cases for hostages to form loyalties to captors extending beyond the time of their release). The eventual title of her book was already falling into place.

Equally if not more critical to an understanding of the Burnham kidnapping is its Philippine-American context. This is of course obvious in one sense. The Burnhams were Americans who, even though they had lived for many years in the Philippines, carried with them much cultural baggage from their homeland (apparently including, like a generic imprint, the conventions of the captivity narrative). At the same time, the hostage drama was largely a Philippine event, played out on Philippine soil and seas. Indeed, the vast majority of hostages were Filipino; this only became the "Burnham kidnapping" as the others were ransomed out, leaving only Martin and Gracia (and eventually Ediborah Yap, who was taken after the hostage group had been transferred to Basilan). What's more, it took place against an immediate background of other similar incidents in the same general setting, and against a longer background of Mindanao and specifically Basilan politics and

unrest. Marites Vitug and Glenda Gloria, in their book *Crescent Moon: Rebellion in Mindanao*, document scores of kidnapping incidents in Basilan alone, preceding the flurry after the turn of the century, incidents whose targets included Catholic priests, Chinese business people, and even some Muslims (291-3).

Yet in a deeper sense, as well, this event proved ineluctably a part of what historian Sharon Delmendo has recently called the "entangled" relationship between the two countries. The more than century-long history of what Delmendo characterizes as the mutually determinative interaction of American and Filipino governments, militaries, peoples, and cultures framed the perceptions and motivations of actors at every level of the Burnham situation from beginning to end. It also shaped the dialectic of enemies and friends.

These perceptions and motivations were, on the one hand, very immediate, practical ones. For example, the Abu Sayyaf were on record about their desire to capture Americans; this may have been what led them to make an unlikely victim of Jeffrey Schilling, an African-American and a devout Muslim, married to a Filipina Muslim cousin of one of the group's leaders (Mydans). When they discover Martin and Gracia have been swept into the net at Dos Palmas, they quickly see opportunity. "Yours will be a political ransom," Solaiman tells them in those first hours. "We will make demands, and we will deal with you last" (13). On the other hand, the weight of practical considerations can easily shift the other way in what has always been an unbalanced power relationship. Later in the course of the event, when one of the remaining Filipino hostages (Ediborah Yap, as it happens) learns that the Burnhams have not mentioned them in an audiotape about to be released to the public, she lashes out: "Well, then, you know what's going to happen, don't you? You'll be ransomed out, and we'll be left here, and everyone will forget about us, because Filipinos don't matter. You are the ones the world cares about" (170).

When the "entangled" relationship is mediated by culture, however, the effects tend to be more subtle. Take first the degree to which all parties to the kidnapping shared elements of culture. This is something easily taken for granted by Filipinos and Americans who are used to dealing with each other, but it is surely exceptional by world standards, and it represents a major determining factor in the conduct of the crisis and in the Burnhams' experience of it. That they could communicate freely in English with their fellow hostages and with the leaders and some others among their captors, while it obviously did not ensure a happy outcome, eased tension, uncertainty, and isolation considerably over the course of their captivity. The communication extended from language per se to the idiom of popular culture: games, jokes, and especially music. At

one point early in the ordeal, out at sea in transit to an unknown destination, the hostages join in a medley of Beatles' songs, with even the Abu Sayyaf joining in a little, "although such music was technically forbidden by their faith." When the group comes to John Lennon's "Imagine" and the line "Imagine all the people, living life in peace," tears stream down Gracia Burnham's face for the first time since the abduction. "As we lay there in that moment," she writes, "a bond began to form, connecting us with one another, even our captors" (21). Finally, religious traditions form a bridge, primarily of course with the Christian Filipinos with whom the Burnhams can share Biblical references and hymns. And even though faith operates chiefly as a barrier between them and the captors, the couple is surprised to learn that, owing to some prior spillover in religious training, a few among the Abu Sayyaf can accompany them in their favorite sacred music.

Perceived differences in culture play a salient role, as well. Martin and Gracia find themselves amused, in otherwise dire circumstances, when in the middle of a firefight with AFP troops a brawny Abu Sayyaf fighter displays classic Filipino politeness, murmuring "Excuse me … excuse me" each time he steps over hostages' legs to move to a new firing position (89). Other perceptions carry criticism rather than appreciation. Predictably, lack of planning and efficiency are sore points. Gracia comes down hard even on the Abu Sayyaf on this score, complaining that they seem to have no plan, are "mak[ing] it up as they [go] along" (165) and conveying the ironic impression that, if she were in charge, this kidnapping would get results.

More serious still is a critique advanced of Filipino ethical values, or the want of them. This view first comes out in the open at Lamitan hospital, when the other hostages ransack patients' rooms, taking what they need by way of clothing and personal supplies. Gracia voices disapproval of the behavior, which does nothing to deter it, then sits down to reflect on it: "Up to this point I had assumed we hostages were the 'good guys.' Now I had to admit … .that [the others] had suddenly become as unscrupulous as our captors" (88). She resumes the thread months later with Ediborah (in another context, where it is the Abu Sayyaf doing the misappropriating of others' property) and receives the explanation, "If we need it, it's not really stealing" (206). Faithful to her code of honesty within the memoir, Burnham acknowledges her own ventures into theft when personal need supervenes. But she presents these as lapses from a strict standard, while implying that for Filipinos moral laxity is a way of life.[5]

So, invidious distinctions begin to emerge within these perceptions, and with them the possibility that presumably "allied" Filipinos in the situation could take on the role of "bad guys," "enemies" with respect to the Americans' well being. It appears to work the

other way around, as well, although of course we do not get a first-hand account of the perceptions. Gracia does report a certain amount of prejudice against her simply for being "not Filipino" and a good deal of contempt on the part of fellow hostages and captors alike for lacking fundamental elements of Filipino cultural knowledge, for instance, how to build a fire, relieve oneself without benefit of a bathroom, and gracefully cadge little items and favors from others (*langaw*, as the practice is known locally). "I got tired," she writes, "of being viewed as incompetent and stupid—a lower life-form" (159).

Many of the cultural perceptions that have now been touched on play into a most practical aspect of the "entangled" relationship, one that presents the friend/enemy dialectic in its most life-or-death form: the Burnhams' position vis-à-vis the Philippine military. From the first, the AFP's efforts in the situation seem to the couple misguided—far less likely to rescue than to do them in. The troops come in with guns blazing, from a distance. Later, the tactics escalate to artillery barrages, then to air attacks using helicopters and A-10 gunships. The Americans are uncomprehending, and terrified for their lives. In a live radio interview, Martin asks the AFP to "please stop" the rescue attempts. "[You] cannot rescue [us] with … artillery … and [you] cannot rescue [us] with an air strike. We will only be killed, and our children will only be orphans" (199-200).

The plea has little effect, and the couple is left to wonder about the reasons for such a reckless approach. Their speculations gravitate toward the "Filipino inefficiency" hypothesis, especially since the reliance on long-range firepower is matched by an apparent inability or unwillingness to conduct follow-up attacks or mount operations at night or in inclement weather. They also entertain a version of the "no-account foreigner/lowest life-form" view, when they reason that the government in Manila is using the army to "squash" the Abu Sayyaf. "The fact that they held innocent bystanders as hostages was a complicating factor…. But the battle had to go on" (108).[6]

One other line of inquiry that Martin and Gracia pursue leads into the area of ethical values, the perception that in a Philippine context self-interest can easily take precedence over principle. At one point Solaiman tells them that the Abu Sayyaf orders its weapons and ammunition from the army, through back channels. "We pay a lot more than it should cost," the narrative quotes him as saying, "so somebody is making a lot of money. But at least we get what we need" (160). Along the same lines, television reporter Arlyn de la Cruz warns Gracia that any consideration of a negotiated ransom for their release will be complicated by the need for Philippine generals and government officials to get their cut. Still later, the group's food supply improves notably, and the Abu Sayyaf report this is because they have entered into active negotiations with the local military commander,

who is demanding 50% of a possible ransom payment. But the two parties cannot agree, and the army attacks resume. In short, by this testimony from the midst of the captivity experience, it appears that the Philippine military (or elements within it) either a) illustrates the proposition that with "friendly" forces like these, the Burnhams didn't need enemies, or b) had entered into some sort of complicity with the designated "bad guys" in the affair, the Abu Sayyaf. Once again, the lines become as blurred as Martin Burnham's uncorrected vision.

Once again, too, though, upon emerging from the captivity, Gracia's clarity returns to her. Her statement to the Ranger lieutenant, "We never forgot who the bad guys were and who the good guys were," must have required some effort to make, given the fear and suspicion of the preceding months, and the fact that the dreaded outcome of the rescue strategy had in good part occurred. But she follows up, eliminating ambiguity if not offering praise: "I don't think of you as the bad guys" (285). The next day, in Manila, a mentally rehearsed speech to President Arroyo, letting the leader of the country know that "her military was on the take," dies in her throat when the TV cameras are rolling (301). The following day's press statement comes close to promoting the AFP to full "good guy" status, "especially thanking the military men … who risked and even gave their lives to rescue us" (304). And a statement issued in 2003, after the publication of the memoir containing the various allegations concerning military conduct had re-stirred a hornet's nest in the Philippine press and politics, completed the rehabilitation: "I was only reporting what I was told [about military collusion] by the Abu Sayyaf … The soldiers were doing their best to get us out of there. Their agenda was to get us out of there safely" (Olsen, "Gracia Burnham Book"). Thus an episode that threatened to produce another snarl or two in an already "entangled" bi-national relationship ends, if Ms. Burnham's after-action reports are to be believed over her dispatches from the lived experience of the event, with something like that Abu Sayyaf fighter's exaggerated politeness—except of course toward him and his fellow "common criminals."

From a binational we move to an international context, the seemingly global confrontation between militant, fundamentalist Islam and what is often perceived by the fundamentalists to be a secular (although nominally Judeo-Christian), modernizing West. Gracia Burnham shows herself to have been aware of this context when she writes, shortly after the identity of their abductors has become clear, as they shout "*Allah Akbar!*" (Allah is supreme), "I didn't know a lot about the Abu Sayyaf, other than that they were terrorists." "Terrorists" from then on becomes a synonym of "bad guys" and "enemies," to be used whenever she wants a term less dispassionate than "captors." Now this characterization

raises a lot of questions, as to whether the Abu Sayyaf ought really to be considered an agent of international jihad (as opposed to a local group with roots in traditional Muslim separatism in the Southern Philippines, and roots as well in local traditions of banditry—which is the view of *Under the Crescent Moon* authors Vitug and Gloria), and whether its brand of violence satisfies the definition of "religious terrorism" put forward by Jessica Stern in her recent book, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. It is interesting to note in this regard that the group's stated intention to seek a "political" ransom for the Burnhams never materialized; a monetary figure of $1M emerged early on and remained on the table to the end.[7] But the questions became moot in the actual event, because the operative perception of the most powerful players in the situation, the Philippine and American governments, construed the group as part and parcel of the Terror War.

This held particularly true, of course, after September 11, 2001, which as Gracia learns from reporter Arlyn de la Cruz, has changed the nature of the landscape in which the kidnapping drama is being played out and brought the United States much more forcefully into the picture. These developments, the Filipina journalist warns, "will really hurt [your] chances," and at least in the short-term she is proven right. The magnification of the US role also has a major impact on the Burnhams' calculations of friendship and hostility in the situation.

For one thing, the Bush Administration's "no negotiation" policy in hostage situations, reinforced by the mood in Washington and in the country post 9-11, steeled the resolve of Manila to stick by its own stated similar policy and heightened tension in the affair, inevitably putting a greater premium on a military solution. Then, too, the arrival of the American "advisers" in the South, in addition to opening a new chapter in the "entangled" relationship, lent a new edge of planning and coordination, technology, and peering-over-the-shoulder pressure, to the AFP's pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf and their hostages. The Burnhams' reaction to these developments was one of fresh alarm. They had already, before September 11, willingly signed on to an Abu Sayyaf petition for ransom money to the Muammar Qadhafi Foundation in Libya, the agency that had intervened on behalf of the Sipadan hostages the year before. This in itself represented another reversal on the enemy/friend spectrum, a rogue state and ostensible national antagonist turned potential savior from the ordeal of captivity. Nothing had come of that overture, but now, in early 2002, they renew their appeal for a ransom to be paid to the captors, and in so doing set themselves up to challenge their own government.[8]

It is Gracia who makes this appeal, and the challenge, in a letter to her sister, who

has traveled to Zamboanga to work for the couple's release:

> The whole situation is so difficult. *Everyone* is being stubborn … we are caught in the middle … the Abu Sayyaf will not let us go without ransom … the governments say "no ransom." This is an endless circle, and to be honest, we do not want to be rescued, as they come in shooting at *us*. If someone can't give somewhere, we will die. Thank you for coming here and reminding the world that we are *people* … we are being treated as only political pawns and it is very sad. (237)

It appears from this message that the US government has joined the ranks of "*everyone*" arrayed against the Burnhams' interests, and even survival, in the situation. The category of potential or actual enemies, treating them as "pawns," has expanded by (a big) one.

In fact, it seems that Gracia's plea, which became public when it was read on Zamboanga City's Radyo Agong, might have had an effect. Not long after, $330,000 is put up for the Burnhams' release by a US philanthropist and, in accordance with a simultaneous shift in Bush administration policy, allowing case-by-case consideration of ransom in civilian hostage situations, paid to the Abu Sayyaf (Olsen, "Did Martin…?"). However, the captors, proving themselves more "stubborn" than the other parties to the situation, hold out for the remainder of the million demanded. American military advisers then apparently nix any further payments, and the drama from then on moves inexorably toward its conclusion, with the US continuing to play a quietly active role. It is FBI agents who manage to plant an electronic homing device in a backpack used by Sabaya, the Abu Sayyaf leader at that time.[9] Following that signal, a detachment of Scout Rangers arrives at the edge of the rebel group's camp and, in a pouring rain (a detail that may bespeak American advising pressure; Ms. Burnham cannot bring herself to believe that the AFP is launching an attack in this kind of weather) fires the shots that kill Martin and Ediborah and that wound, but also liberate, Gracia.

But if the survivor bears any suspicion or resentment of her government's role in this Pyrrhic outcome, it quickly dissipates. When being lifted off by helicopter, she cranes her neck to see whether the pilot is American. She can't tell, but she is impressed by the first view she has of American troops, and highly impressed by the level of planning the Embassy in Manila has put into arrangements for her stay there. Once back in the States, there is no hint of the criticism of intransigence and the reliance on military options that animated the letter to her sister in Zamboanga. Actually, that's not quite true. In a 2003

Kansas television interview, Gracia expresses her "one regret" about choices made during the captivity. "We should have appealed directly to you guys (meaning, probably, the public, or the Christian public) to get a ransom together," in contradiction of government policy at the time ("Gracia Burnham Talks"). At the same time, though, there is a new patriotic bravado. The American military, which wanted to launch a special operation for us … would of course have done the job far differently. They would have moved into action at, say, two in the morning instead of two in the afternoon, wearing night-vision goggles and all the rest to snatch us out safely (325).

Finally, reconciliation with America appears to include enlistment in the War on Terror. Meeting with President Bush in the Oval Office, Gracia listens with evident approval as he vows that the only way to make America safe for its children is to "fight terrorism now" (334). Later she would echo his words, in a 2004 statement made in the Philippines, where she had traveled to testify in court against a number of her Abu Sayyaf captors: "I'm not out to get these men, only to combat terrorism in the Philippines" (Philippine news story). Thus in this international context, too, with the slight exception of that unregenerate remark on a private ransom effort, all the lines that had been rubbed out in the memoir have now been re-drawn, and all enemies and friends are back in their assigned places.

This brings us to religion, arguably the heart of Gracia Burnham's memoir and the most fundamental context for understanding her and her husband's experience of captivity at the hands of the Abu Sayyaf.[10] Religion figures in two critical respects in the story of the Burnhams. The first is their faith and the practice of it. The second has to do with the relation of that practice to the very different faith of their captors.

As to the Burnhams' religious commitment, a word of background is in order; that they were "missionaries" does not sufficiently explain them. By virtue of their respective family histories, their educations, and the culture or subculture that surrounded this nexus of family and education, the Burnhams were evangelical Protestant Christians. Evangelicals, sometimes also known as Fundamentalists, have surged back into prominence in American public life over the past several decades, after a half-century's retreat into their own institutions—congregations, Bible institutes, mission societies and the like—following the apparent triumph of the forces of religious liberalism and secularism in the Scopes Trial on the teaching of evolution in 1925 (Butler, Wacker, and Balmer 347-418). A map of the contemporary evangelical belief system might well be found in Rick Warren's bestselling *The Purpose Driven Life*, with its premise that the "purpose" driving an individual believer's life is not his or her own but God's, and with its emphasis on

spreading the good news of Christianity, after the manner of the original "evangelists."

Whether Martin and Gracia were in any way influenced by the new evangelicalism, or whether their spiritual formation took place more in the earlier environment of retreat and marginalization, is not certain. But the beliefs they carried with them to the Philippines were of a solidly evangelical cast, and the choice of a career with the New Tribes Missions demonstrates how earnestly they held those beliefs. NTM seeks to bring Christianity to some of the most remote peoples and areas of the world, and the organization demands a great deal of its field workers, who must not only accept these far-off postings for long stretches of time, but must themselves raise funds for all costs of their mission (*New Tribes Missions)*. So tight was the Burnhams' budget that Gracia almost canceled the couple's fateful one-night reservation at the Dos Palmas resort, for fear they might not be able to absorb the expense of the room. As it happens, the two were not engaged in direct pastoral contact with tribal villagers. Rather, Martin flew aviation support for those pastoral efforts within a given region in the Philippines, and Gracia coordinated communications and logistics for the regional network. Nevertheless, the work they did and the lifestyle they and their three children led, give ample evidence of the strength of their commitment to evangelical principles and to their religious faith generally.

This commitment is severely tested by the captivity ordeal. Gracia, in particular, suffers bouts of depression and undergoes at least one pronounced crisis of her belief in a benevolent and protective God. The crisis takes a specifically evangelical form, reflecting the conviction that the Supreme Being's purposes work directly into all earthly life. "I was really mad at God" (151), Gracia writes of that moment, and in her more recent book, *To Fly Again*, explains:

> I blamed the terrorists; I blamed the Philippine military for their ineptness; I blamed the American government for not waving some magic wand to free us; I even blamed God because … well, he's in control of everything, isn't he? (43)

In other words, God becomes one more power, certainly the most important in her world, to go over to the other side, join the enemies list. With Martin's help, however, Gracia is able to surmount this crisis. She accepts that God's purpose, if not her own (or not one she can immediately appreciate), is being served in this situation, and she then surrenders to that larger will.

For his part, Martin, undergoes a "struggle" (268) with his faith, as well, although the cause of it seems less despairing thoughts, such as those that trouble Gracia, and more

sheer physical strain. He undergoes radical weight loss due to his exertions on the trail, and struggles with poor vision during the first part of the captivity and fickle bowels during the second. The most intense struggle takes place near the end, as the group is pursued through the unfamiliar mountains of Zamboanga. There is no meal per se for nine days. Captors and hostages alike eat raw rice and jungle foliage to survive. Yet on the last day, a few hours before the fatal rescue, with the rain pouring down, Martin rouses himself to reflect to his wife:

> I really don't know why this has happened to us. I've been thinking a lot lately about Psalm 100—what it says about serving the Lord with gladness. This may not seem much like serving the Lord, but that's what we're doing, you know? We may not leave this jungle alive, but we can leave this world serving the Lord "with gladness." (280)

Gracia then joins him in prayer and in commitment to this vision of Christian living, in extremis. It is a moment of extraordinary triumph of the human spirit—or, as they would understand it, of extraordinary yielding of the human spirit before the grace and strength of the divine. God remains with them and they with him; the end of captivity is not required to affirm that relationship.

Yet this climax does not end matters of religion in the memoir. For the Burnhams are in contact with the practitioners of a different faith, a faith which these people have likewise come to via family, education, and culture, and which, although their interpretation of its doctrines may be extreme, they practice devoutly. It is also a faith that has recently surged to public prominence, as the Burnhams' evangelicalism has, in context of a worldwide revival of religious fervor. At the same time, of course, this contact is a highly problematic one. Their Muslim counterparts are also their kidnappers, subjecting them to the unquestionable "cruelty" of captivity, to physical privation, mental anguish, and a good deal of capricious and malicious treatment, leavened of course by acts of "common mercy." A huge question for them is how to comport themselves toward these captors.

Predictably, Martin takes the lead, and, just as predictably, the answer he arrives at constitutes a deep, uncompromising embrace of Christ's literal teachings. He begins this conversation indirectly: "You know, here in the mountains I've seen hatred; I've seen bitterness; I've seen greed; I've seen covetousness; I've seen wrongdoing" (228). Gracia nods vigorously, thinking back to incidents in which the Abu Sayyaf have displayed these

behaviors, only to be surprised to discover that her husband is not talking about the Abu Sayyaf but himself, and by extension her. Acknowledging the sinfulness in their own disposition toward their captors, Martin then draws the rectifying lesson:

> But Jesus said to love your enemies … do good to those who hate you … pray for those who despitefully use you…. He said we were to be he servants of all—and he didn't add any exception clause like, except for terrorists, whom you have every right to hate. (229)

Once again, Gracia joins him in this commitment, and they begin to put it into practice with greater kindness to even the most ill-disposed of their captors—which has the result, in one case, of melting harsh into gentle treatment.

Later, when she is in the US reflecting on events, Gracia goes through her own thought process similar to Martin's. She begins with a self-assessment:

> When you stop and think about it, the Abu Sayyaf are not the only "bad guys," are they? We all have pockets of darkness inside ourselves. Recognizing how much I carry inside me was one of the most difficult parts of my entire ordeal in the jungle…. I knew, for example, that I was supposed to forgive my captors, but the truth is that I often hated them. I despised them not only for snatching me away from my family and the simple comforts of a life I loved, but also for forcing me to see a side of myself I didn't like. (328)

And when, like Martin, she finds a corrective to this flawed attitude in Christ's commandment to replace hate with forgiveness and love, she extends the principle beyond her Abu Sayyaf captors to the larger, militant Islamic world.

> My experiences in captivity have made me think long and hard about an appropriate response to the challenge of the aggressive wing of Islam. I wouldn't presume to make any recommendations about public policy, but to my fellow Christians I feel compelled to say: We need to find ways to defuse the raging resentment and hatred that fuel "holy war" and introduce a God who does more than demand rituals—he truly loves us…. They need to know what it feels like to be forgiven…. What will impress them is the genuine love in our hearts (326-7).

These reflections would seem to signal a breakthrough. We can mark a shift, first of all, from an Old Testament approach to dealing with enemies, evoked by the memoir's title, to the spirit of the New, defined by Jesus' teachings.[11] More than that, this appears to be a response to the captivity experience that goes beyond a redrawing of original lines in the sand. By identifying themselves as sinners—in effect, enemies ("bad guy[s]," in Gracia's revealing phrase)—and by directing toward their perceived antagonists in the situation an emotion and a behavior ordinarily reserved for friends, the Burnhams would seem to be dissolving the two categories, or at least any necessary opposition between them. In addition to illustrating their own fidelity to radically literal Christian principles, this position appears to exemplify what Jessica Stern refers to as the "spiritual and universalist" potential of religious belief generally (xxvii). As such, it suggests that some new vision of reconciliation may have emerged from the violence, hatred, and tragedy of the kidnapping episode.

But before celebrating it as an outcome of the experience, it will be well to consider whether this "position" is the final one, or whether this statement of it is complete. Certainly we have observed Ms. Burnham, in other contexts, finding ways to re-embrace the distinction between enemy and friend and initial loyalties within it, lost for a time in the heat of the experience. In fact, something of the kind does appear to take place around her appeal for Christian love to be extended to Muslim extremists. I want to tread lightly here. The critique that follows is not intended dismiss the authenticity or significance of the "breakthrough," the Burnhams' realization of a degree of spiritual democracy existing between themselves and their captors, and their resolve to return kindness for harsh treatment. Nevertheless, a close reading of the memoir suggests that the transformative effect Gracia Burnham holds out as a possibility of Christians' "showing their love" and "acting their love" toward Muslims includes more than "defus[ing] … resentment and hatred." It also includes, even presumes, as a necessary first step, an additional transformative effect: the conversion of Islamic believers to Christianity. True to her missionary vocation and her evangelical colors, she quite literally hopes that Muslims will, individually and perhaps collectively, "turn to Jesus" (Bagby).[12]

Indications of this hope crop up at intervals throughout the memoir, but two from near the end (actually one of them from outside the text), and after the gracious initial reflections on meeting the challenge of the "aggressive wing of Islam," are especially telling. Speaking of the new life she and her children are trying to make for themselves back in the States, Gracia notes that their routine will include one special objective.

> Inside our home, we've declared a little jihad—on our knees. The kids and I continue to pray for the Abu Sayyaf … we ask that each of them would have the chance just once to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ in an understandable manner in his own language, so he can make an intelligent choice…. A dream [has been] born in my heart … *What if someday one of my kids would get to stand beside an Abu Sayyaf member who had come to know the Lord?* … I don't know if that will ever come to pass. But we can pray about it (339-40).

Then, in the back matter of the book, appears a prospectus for the newly launched Martin and Gracia Burnham Foundation, containing a detail that gives a practical turn to the "dream" shared with the children. In addition to providing funding for missionary aviation and tribal mission work, the focus of the Burnhams' previous efforts with New Tribes Missions in the Philippines, the foundation looks to support "Christian ministries to Muslims."

What are the implications of this evangelical impulse, toward the captors and apparently toward larger segments of the Muslim population, as well? Does it contain the "breakthrough," reconstitute after all the original opposition on the basis of faith? The answer to that question depends on the answer to another: Theologically speaking—or psychologically or politically—is conversion a hostile or a benevolent act, something wished upon one's friends or one's enemies? No doubt it can go either way, with the determination resting on actual motives in a given situation. The memoir does not offer a good deal of direct evidence on the Burnhams', especially Gracia's, orientation on this score, but a couple of oblique inferences may be possible. For one, the couple find themselves under occasional pressure from their captors to convert to Islam. These efforts make them acutely uncomfortable, and they find ways to resist or evade them. It is clear they range the overtures under the heading of harsh treatment rather than "common mercies." Secondly, there is Gracia's choice of terms for her and her children's (and her foundation's) spiritual initiative: "jihad." It is a term she chooses even while expressing the hope, in the earlier passage quoted, that the "aggressive wing of Islam" may be deterred from waging their "holy war." Nor does her insistence that this jihad will be conducted "on our knees," through prayer, offer complete reassurance that it will be different, purer or more innocent than the one that the Abu Sayyaf and similar groups feel themselves to be waging. For prayer and earthly power have often been linked, in the history of imperialisms as well as in the current (counter-) clash of civilizations. No less a religious spokesperson than Rick Warren appears to realize this, when he urges evangelicals to

follow literally the Christian injunction to make disciples of all nations, considering prayer to be their most important weapon: "People may refuse our love or reject our message, but they are defenseless against our prayers. Like an intercontinental missile, you can aim a prayer at a person's heart whether you are ten feet or 10,000 miles away" (298-300).

Now, it is unlikely that Ms. Burnham would be drawn to such an indelicate simile as Warren's.[13] But the logic of her "jihad" (and that of her children and of other Christians who may be inspired by her message) is not so very different. It appears that she has indeed enlisted in the "War on Terror," not only in offering polite support for the strategic objectives of the American and Philippine governments but in taking up, with a will, the weapon of her choice in the struggle. From this angle, it appears that Gracia comes to stand, in the end, on the "side" of religion that Jessica Stern characterizes as "particularist and sectarian" rather than "universalist." And, in this as in the other contexts within which it has now been explored, the memoir would seem ultimately to reaffirm—if more tentatively and after an especially earnest reach toward a position beyond enemies and friends—the divided moral universe implied in its title.

It seems clear that the first task of any final reflection on the Burnham kidnapping must be to provide additional "context" for the pattern, of temporary relinquishment and eventual reaffirmation of familiar value orientations that assert itself in all the preceding categories of analysis. For if we take the pattern at face value, the two overarching questions proposed for consideration at the outset—the one asking about the possibilities and limits of change within existing structures of power, loyalty, and belief, and the second looking to chart the trajectory of the kidnapping experience, whether toward further mistrust and conflict or toward new ways of relating—have already been answered. The prospects for such change are indeed severely limited, or Gracia Burnham has proved personally incapable of realizing them; and the Burnhams' kidnapping is big with the seeds of future tragedies like theirs. If, however, some deeper or more complete understanding of the pattern should be available, then the inquiry remains open.

Such a potentially rich perspective can be found, I believe, in the anthropologist Victor Turner's concept of the "ritual process."[14] It is a context that highlights spirituality and religion, again arguably the most fundamental dimension of the kidnapping experience. Turner distinguishes three phases in traditional rites of passage and other of what he terms "transitional" experiences: separation (of the subject[s] from the society of origin), marginalization (or "liminality"), and reincorporation into the social order. He pays special attention to the liminal phase, an ambiguous state characterized by seclusion, often in a "wilderness" environment, a stripping away of known comforts and resources, threats

of either or both infantilization and death, and a suspension of customary social structures and status markers in favor of more fluid, egalitarian, and intimate relations that Turner characterizes as "communitas" (94-6). In the liminal state the subjects experience their own "weakness" and behave in a "passive or humble" manner, accepting arbitrary treatment and punishment. "It is as though they are being ground down to a uniform condition," Turner writes, "to be fashioned anew … [for] their new station in life" (96, 99, 103).

This description, both of the overall arc of the transitional "process" and of the specific characteristics of the liminal state, match well with Gracia Burnham's account of her and her husband Martin's captivity ordeal. Even the anecdote she tells of the group huddled together on the deck of the speeding getaway boat, connecting emotionally with each other through the words and music of the Beatles' song, "Imagine," takes on additional significance in light of the idea of "communitas." The particulars of "reincorporation" likewise fit this record. Returned to a relatively stable social environment once more, the subjects have "rights and obligations of a defined, 'structural' type," and are "expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social positions … in a system of such positions" (95). Here, it appears, is the immediate post-captivity Gracia Burnham: saying what seems "expected" to military officers, presidents, and the general publics (Philippine and American), playing the role of the grateful rescued hostage, and restoring the "positions," most particularly of enemies and friends, "in a system of such positions."

The profoundly conservative implications of this view of reincorporation, which reflect an important part of Turner's understanding of the ritual process and its social function, do add depth to the pattern observable in context after context of the kidnapping experience. From this perspective, Gracia does not appear to have been moved to her re-embrace of the status quo ante so much by any religious or political conservatism she may have espoused, or by weak-mindedness in the face of unconformable information,[15] as by a viscerally human need to recommit to a known social order upon rejoining it.

But this is not the whole of Turner's understanding of ritual process, or the extent of his theory's relevance to the Burnhams' captivity and its aftermath. For he insists as well on the possibility of an alternative, potentially progressive, even emancipatory outcome to the ritual scenario. Liminality in particular represents an "extreme yet high-potential state" ("Excerpts") which not only endows subjects with "additional powers" (95) to perform in the higher social stations for which ritual process is intended to prepare them, but can generate unpredictable powers and clear the way for "stations" for which no definite precedents exist.

A commentator observes that, through this insistence on its possible role in social change as well as on its long-acknowledged function in maintaining an existing order, Turner's thought altered the way in which ritual is viewed by social scientists ("Description"). Turner himself explored this dynamic potential of transitional experiences primarily through study of the lives of "religious heroes" ("Victor Turner"), such as the Buddha, St. Francis, Tolstoy, and Gandhi. Figures like these attempt to carry aspects of their liminal experience back, or rather forward with them, into their reintegration with the ordinary world. The effort can spark profoundly creative, often revolutionary consequences. In stark contrast to the majority of reincorporated subjects, they "strive with a passionate sincerity to rid themselves of the clichés associated with status incumbency and role-playing, and to enter into vital relations with other men in fact or imagination" ("Excerpts"). According to Turner, the revolutionary energy in these cases is not ideological in nature and is not aimed at toppling specific social or political structures. Instead, and in keeping with his or her essentially religious animus, the spiritual activist seeks more simply to "create or identify instances of communitas [that key aspect of liminality] and provide them with increased force or intensity" ("Excerpts").

Could this bold corollary to Turner's thesis possibly apply in some measure to the post-captivity reincorporation of Gracia Burnham? Certainly we observed, and took a note not to discount it, her affirmation when already back in the United States of two Christian principles seemingly surfaced from the depths of the liminal experience, and emblematic specifically of "communitas." These were the acknowledgement of her own sinfulness ("bad guy" status) and the determination to meet with forgiveness and love even the treatment that would seem to identify their captors as "enemies." However, we also saw that apparent breakthrough contained, within the memoir, by a linking of the turn-the-other-cheek principle with an evangelical conversion project, and by a connection of that project in turn with a perhaps lightly offered but (against the background of a worldwide "clash of civilizations") metaphorically belligerent notion of Christian "jihad."

In fact, in order to see a more faithful adherence to the "extreme but high-potential" spiritual lessons of the liminal phase of captivity, and to see Gracia Burnham assume something of the role of "religious hero," it is necessary to look further into the post-captivity period: specifically to her second book, *To Fly Again*, published in 2005. This is not an obvious proposition. Given the evidence in the original memoir of a dramatically swift pattern of reincorporation, and given the conservative nature of the overall process in the majority of cases, we might expect the author to be pulling into a still more "particular and sectarian" posture in this second foray into print: a stiffer salute thrown to the leaders of

the "War on Terror," a more defiant fist shaken toward the "terrorists" and the "aggressive wing of Islam," and a stouter appeal voiced to fellow Christians to enlist in "jihad," at least through their prayers and evangelical activities. And it does happen that certain of the positions taken in the memoir remain operative in the more recent book, most especially the ardent hope for conversion, of Abu Sayyaf members and Muslims generally.[16]

But in other respects, *To Fly Again* is a subtly different kind of book from *In the Presence of My Enemies*, and one indicative of the continuity with the liminal experience that Turner regards as indispensable to generating a creative rather than simply a restorative spiritual outcome. To begin with, the new book is primarily a work of religious inspiration and guidance. The kidnapping and the various maneuverings of enemies and friends do not constitute the focus here, but figure rather as a springboard for meditations on principles applicable to the author's and her readers' everyday lives. What's more, those lessons are of a decidedly less ideological and more spiritual—and markedly gentler—cast. While conversion remains a theme, there is no renewal of the call to even a prayerful jihad. Ms. Burnham devotes many of her pages to exploring the spiritual opportunities of the state of "weakness" that she experienced in captivity. Acknowledging the chagrin that she, who once prided herself on her strength and self-sufficiency, felt upon discovering herself to be the "weakest person, at least physically, in [that] whole ragged brigade" (80) of hostages and captors, she also reports on the value she found in this quality: "God is attracted to it … Our weakness, in fact, makes room for his power" (Cymbala qtd. 82). This insight links her with a prominent theme in what is coming to be known as "emergent" theology (Crouch 34); it has also apparently created a bond between Gracia and the many cancer patients before whom she has spoken.

Another prominent theme in the later book is forgiveness and reconciliation. The most fully developed instance of this takes place in connection with a temporary "enemy," in the heat of the captivity experience: the Philippine military. Gracia reports speaking, back in the States, with Captain Oliver Almonarez, leader of the Scout Ranger detachment which had staged the controversial rescue operation. He explains some things about the efforts he and his men made, volunteers that he is himself a devout Christian, and apologizes for the outcome. At the end of their conversation, she "realize[s] once again that forgiveness is a choice," and decides to forgive the captain once and for all, even if it should turn out that his was the bullet that struck Martin (45-7).

With respect to the more fundamental enemies who figure in the memoir, the Abu Sayyaf and militant Islam generally, the opportunity has not yet presented itself for this kind of after-the-fact personal reconciliation. Nor of course would these others bring to

such an encounter, as Capt. Almonarez does, the assurance of a common commitment to the Christian faith. Still, Gracia records an impressive gesture of forgiveness to them. She recounts being asked to speak before a citywide observance in Wichita, Kansas, of the first anniversary of the 9-11 attacks. "What should I say on such a solemn occasion?" she recalls asking herself (51), and indeed the question is of interest to a reader who has followed her varying positions on the War on Terror and relations between Christians and Muslims. It is of interest additionally because, as Thomas Frank has recently shown, Kansas lies in the heartland of the religious right in America. The audience for her talk that day would likely include many who, by Gracia's own account, were openly calling for Martin Burnham to be recognized as a "martyr for Christ" (26), and who according to Frank have proved eager consumers of much culturally conservative and patriotic rhetoric.

When her turn comes to speak, she reaches back to the captivity to retell a story (not mentioned in the memoir) that she once shared with other hostages. This is a story from the Bible which illustrates the theme, as the title of this chapter of *To Fly Again* puts it, "Rising Above Revenge." She follows this with an anecdote that does make the memoir, the one involving Martin's and her kindness to an especially surly Abu Sayyaf captor, and the resulting turnaround in his attitude toward them. She leaves the Wichita audience with Christ's words, partially quoted by Martin in a key juncture during the kidnapping—"love your enemies … do good to those who hate you…turn the other cheek…If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also" (55). In the book, she adds her own thoughts: "How much better [than taking revenge] to do something truly radical…to return good for evil, and to watch the surprise on people's faces. It frees them up to think in new and healthier ways. It keeps our own spirit clean" (56).

This is the message Gracia Burnham offered, on this charged occasion and in that charged venue. It is a message of forgiveness, remarkable first of all, coming from a woman known from the closing chapters of her memoir to say publicly only what her auditors expect to hear, for the radical challenge it issues to fellow Christians. In this moment Gracia appears to stand as one of those "liminal and marginal people" Victor Turner writes about, still resonating with the lessons of their time of crisis, "who strive with a passionate sincerity to rid themselves of the clichés associated with status incumbency and role-playing, and enter into vital relations with other men in fact or imagination." The statement is also noteworthy for its resolutely non-ideological character. Not only is there no reference to the War on Terror, nor any call to jihad, there is no promise held out here of conversion as the reward for the extension of forgiveness and love to an enemy (only immediate psychological and spiritual benefits for both parties). Here would seem

to be what Turner refers to as an activism aimed not at specific social or political ends but "seek[ing] to create or identify instances of communitas and to provide them with increased force or intensity."

Whether Gracia went on to extend the reach of communitas from this one individual to a presumed collective enemy, she does not say, but given the nature of the occasion her listeners surely could have made the inference that groups like the Abu Sayyaf and al-Qaeda and the forces of militant Islam generally were to be included. Ms. Burnham's readers will recall that the most powerful and direct invocation of communitas in the memoir does so extend to her "enemies": "As we lay there in that moment [listening to John Lennon's "Imagine"], a bond began to form, connecting us with one another, even our captors."

Out of Gracia and Martin Burnham's "liminal" experience of captivity, then, a genuinely religious vision appears to be emerging. "Spiritual and universal," in Jessica Stern's terms, the vision is one that would reach over the oppositions between enemies and friends as these operated in the situation. And it is one that could possibly counter the cycle of "jihad" whose emotional logic is so palpable in Gracia's initial attempt to make sense of the kidnapping. At the same time, the vision appears to be a tentative one, only coming into focus in a second book, and very much contested by the more conventional pattern of Turnerian reincorporation that dominated Ms. Burnham's early post-captivity responses and has by no means lost all its sway over her. In short, the "struggle" that Martin referred to continues for Gracia, if on different terms. The ultimate significance of the Burnham kidnapping, like the ultimate part its survivor will take in the political and spiritual crisis in which she has been caught up—"role player" bound to the familiar definitions of enemies and friends, or "religious hero" drawing new visions of transcendence from the depths of the crisis itself—is still in process of determination.

NOTES

1 The term "clash of civilizations" derives from Samuel F. Huntington's 1993 article of that title. A more recent commentator, Tariq Ali, notes that Huntington appears to have distanced himself from the more popular notion of "Terror War" (307-8). However, the two usages would seem to remain functionally compatible.

2 In a span of just over two years early in the current decade, the Abu Sayyaf, a group based in the southern Philippines, espousing a radical separatist Muslim ideology, and alleged to have links with the international Islamist militant organization, al Qaeda, conducted a series of high-visibility kidnappings. In March of 2000, 53 students and teachers of a Catholic mission school in Basilan were abducted. The majority of them were held (with six killed, apparently by the captors) until rescued a month and a half later by Philippine troops, in a military action which left a number of hostages wounded. In April of 2000, the Abu Sayyaf took 21 mainly international hostages from a resort in Sipadan, Malaysia, and brought them to Sulu. By September of that year all had been released, through the intervention of the Malaysian and Libyan governments, including payment of an estimated total of $17.5M in ransom monies. African-American Muslim Jeffrey Schilling passed into the hands of the Abu Sayyaf in August 2000 and, after being held for a stated ransom of $10M for eight months, was safely rescued by Philippine Marines (Various media sources, most helpful Whitmore, "Jolo Diary," "US Hostage").

The fourth of these episodes began in the early morning hours of May 27, 2001, when members of the Abu Sayyaf group swept up 22 people from the Dos Palmas Resort near Puerto Princesa, Palawan. The hostages included American missionaries Martin and Gracia Burnham, who were spending one night at the resort to celebrate their wedding anniversary, one other (naturalized) American citizen, and 18 Filipinos. The hostages were conveyed by sea to the Abu Sayyaf stronghold of Basilan Island. Within two weeks of landing on Basilan, 3 Filipino employees of the resort and the other American were beheaded. The other Filipinos all arranged for ransoms and were either immediately or eventually released; the Burnhams were regarded as "political" hostages for whom $1M ransom was demanded.

In the meantime, the Abu Sayyaf, under pursuit by the AFP, temporarily occupied then escaped from a hospital in Lamitan, Basilan, taking with them four additional (Filipino) hostages, one of whom, Ms. Ediborah Yap, remained in captivity with the Burnhams until the end. Philippine ground and air forces made numerous attacks on the group over the next ten months, while it moved around in remote locations on Basilan. On September 11, 2001, the allegedly al-Qaeda-sponsored attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon took place, eventually drawing increased attention from the US government to the Burnhams' situation. In January of 2002, 660 American troops arrived in the Southern Philippines, to provide additional training to Philippine forces in anti-terrorism operations and assistance in the rescue effort. In March the Abu

Sayyaf, in response to a partial ransom payment, crossed over to the Zamboanga peninsula. There, separated from their home base, and enduring worsening survival conditions in mountainous areas, on June 7, 2002, the group was surprised by a US-assisted Philippine Scout Ranger detachment. Martin Burnham and Ediborah Yap were killed, and Gracia Burnham was wounded, in the initial volley of fire.

Ms. Burnham was evacuated to Manila, where she was briefly housed in the US Embassy, participated in a televised interview with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, and then was flown to the US to join her children and other family members near Witchita, Kansas. She and the children eventually met with President George Bush in the White House. Her memoir of the event, *In the Presence of my Enemies*, co-authored with Dean Merrill, was published in 2003. Its account of the role of the Philippine military in the pursuit and rescue operation sparked political controversy in the country. A subsequent book, *To Fly Again*, viewing the captivity episode from greater distance and offering spiritual reflections on it and on Burnham's subsequent life in the US, came out in 2005 (Burnham, *Enemies*; Olsen, "Did Martin Die Needlessly?" Capulong; "Tragic End"; "Between Hostage and Captor").

3 The other published accounts include Sipadan hostage Werner Wallert's German-language memoir and American Greg Williams' *Thirteen Days of Terror: Held Hostage by al Qaeda Linked Extremists*. Questions exist, in my view, concerning the authenticity of Williams' narrative, which purports to relate a brief captivity in 1996 that began when he was kidnapped from Cebu City by Abu Sayyaf members. Monique Strydom, also a Sipadan captive, reportedly became one of South Africa's most popular inspirational speakers, drawing lessons from her "life-changing" experience as a hostage ("Monique Strydom").

4 Of the scholarly literature devoted to the captivity narrative, the most directly relevant to the links between Rowlandson's and Burnham's memoirs may be Michelle Burnham (no apparent relation), *Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861*.

5 In a statement quoted in a magazine article, Burnham emphasizes the deliberateness of this critique. Referring to the episode in Lamitan hospital, she reflects, "Part of my goal [in writing the book] was to get them [Filipinos] to think through their culture … We [Americans] have this Judeo-Christian culture that says certain things are wrong and certain things are right. In their culture, you can explain anything away, and it's not wrong any more" (Olsen, "Gracia Burnham Book"). Perhaps some perspective on this matter may be found in a study of notions of justice in two Filipino barrios. Researcher Fernando Zialcita (28-30) asked respondents in both settings whether stealing in cases of extreme need ought to be considered an offense (*basol*/*sala*), and/or a breach of "honor." Most respondents did answer no, but the survey revealed differences by class and social position. Nearly all in precarious economic circumstances said the action would be justified, but propertied people and those in positions of authority within the barangay government tended

to hold that it would be wrong. The size of the survey sample was too small to offer any conclusive result, but a suggestion possible from it is that Gracia Burnham's view reflects a relatively privileged American perspective, and Ediborah Yap's "If we really need it, it isn't stealing," reflects a Filipino perspective conditioned by scarcity and oppression.

Perhaps a Gemino Abad poem, "Balikbayan," makes the same point, without the social science but more eloquently.

> O, I exaggerate to stress a different logic,
> for laws and rules have less sway with us
> than an instinct for decency which like a volcano
> lies dormant—in our hearts, where we know
> that laws, such as they are in our history, bear
> more oppression than justice, serving the interests
> of those who have the power and the wealth
> and so much more to lose (128).

It is also true, however, that those helping themselves to patients' belongings in the hospital came by and large from more affluent backgrounds than did the Burnhams, who were in the Philippines on a shoestring missionary budget.

6 Additional information lends possible support to each of these explanations. The Philippine Army at the time appears to have been either committed to or only capable of big-unit tactics, involving heavy weaponry and ponderous movements, which not only put hostages at risk but generated substantial numbers of civilian refugees. Only recently have changes in approach been initiated (*Wall Street Journal*, qtd. in Burnham, *Enemies* 249; Morgan and Symonds; "Military Scales Down") In addition, President Joseph Estrada's handling of the Sipadan hostage crisis the year before, in which large sums were paid (by the Libyan government, primarily) to free international hostages, had outraged a considerable portion of press and public opinion in the country, columnist Max Soliven, for example, proffering this advice for similar scenarios in the future: "No tears for the hostages—go in and blast the Abu Sayyaf" ("Philippines: Lucrative Hostage Trade"). When the Burnham kidnapping unfolded, the Arroyo administration adopted a conspicuously hardline stance: "No ransom. No deal. No suspension of the military operation" (Morgan and Symonds). However, it happens that in the interim the Philippine military had staged a successful shooting rescue of Jeffrey Schilling—who had likewise voiced urgent pleas against armed action—and it may be that this outcome encouraged the planners to persist with their strategy.

7 The Abu Sayyaf's actions in this kidnapping do meet Stern's definition of "terrorism": violence aimed at noncombatants and intended for dramatic effect, presumed to be more important than the actual physical damage. Whether the goals they sought were religious or "political" ones is far less certain. In the earlier case of the hostages abducted from the Basilan school, the group did at one point demand the release of three men convicted of the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 ("Two Hostage Dramas"); but, as noted, the monetary ransom appears to have been the principal consideration in the Burnhams' case almost from the start. On the other hand, Stern concedes that a mix of abstract and material goals is often present in the motives of "religious terrorists" (xx).

8 With respect to the issue of ransom, it is worth noting that not only the US and RP administrations, but the Burnhams' own New Tribes Mission organization maintained a "no negotiation" policy, which the couple subscribed to, for reason that the precedent of paying ransom could "endanger others" in the field. But, as Gracia explained in an interview given in 2003 to a Kansas TV station, "when you are a hostage yourself, things look different" ("Gracia Burnham Talks"). While one hesitates to pass judgment on individuals in such an extreme situation, it may be remembered that Gracia passed some judgments herself, on Filipino ethical choices under duress, and it is hard to see how the principle she invokes here is different from the one explained to her by Ediborah. To paraphrase: "If we need it, it isn't really paying ransom."

9 This is an understanding given to Gracia Burnham some time after her rescue, by the officer in charge of the Scout Ranger detachment that conducted it (*To Fly Again* 47).

10 Religion is thus central to this inquiry, but at the same time problematic for it. In fact, this is probably another point at which my personal relationship to the subject deserves to be brought into view. First off, I have no formal expertise in theology or the study of religion. Moreover, I have given the area a generally wide berth in my previous academic experience for roughly the same reason I have, in my life, kept at arm's length overtly religious people like the Burnhams, pushing copies of *The Watchtower* in my face or, with more subtlety, earnestly recommending Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life* as a transformative book. Not interested. Yet recently I have been becoming more open to spirituality, not as a result of the conversion efforts of these kinds of people, but to the effect of a new respect for and curiosity about them. Undoubtedly this development helps explain my attraction to the Burnhams' story, as does the common connection with the Philippines. Equally surely, this transitional personal state, as well as the lack of formal academic training in religious matters, will be reflected in the treatment that follows.

11 A sample of the Old Testament "approach" can be located in a psalm (#3) not far distant from the famed #23 from which the memoir's title is drawn; the New Testatment notion of turning the other cheek is

nowhere in view: "Arise, O Lord!/Deliver me, O my God!/For thou dost smite all my enemies on the cheek,/ Thou dost break the teeth of the wicked" (*New Oxford Bible*, 657). That Gracia subscribes to this understanding of divine retribution, at least at times over the course of her captivity, can be seen in a memo she writes to herself at one point: "Vengeance is God's. He'll repay" (198).

12 This quotation is taken from a later source, an interview conducted at the time of the publication of Burnham's second book (in 2005). However, similar language can be found in the memoir itself, as will be evident from material cited below in the text.

13 Nor is it likely she would descend to pronouncing the kind of *fatwah* the noted televangelist Pat Robertson recently issued, calling for the assassination of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. A widely circulated political cartoon by Thomas Boldt depicts Robertson making his call from a pulpit, followed by the cry of "JIHAAAD!!" while a figure representing a lady parishioner asks from the congregation, "Does that mean Saturday's bake sale is off?" ("In Pat Robertson"). Still, as with the Warren ICBM simile, the logic of Burnham's intent to conduct jihad, discussed below in the text, touches on the same buttons of overcoming the other in a spiritual struggle.

14 A significant obstacle to applying the notion of "ritual process" to the Burnham kidnapping lies in the fact that Turner derived his concept from and addressed it primarily to formal, controlled ritual events. Of the categories of such events that he distinguishes, the Burnhams' ordeal perhaps fits most closely under "life-crisis rituals" or "rituals of affliction" (Deflem). Of course, they were not going through the paces of a ritual scenario, no matter how demanding, but an unpredictable actual experience. However, it appears that others and even Turner himself have addressed, under the heading of "ritual process" and a related term, "social drama," various types of unscripted experiences. That the Burnhams' kidnapping ordeal fits within the overall umbrella will, I hope, be clear from the discussion below in the text.

15 Both of these are explanations which the treatment in earlier sections, much of which was drafted before the Turner model had come to my mind, may still imply.

16 It is also the case that "Christian ministries to Muslims" remains a mission area in the prospectus for the Martin and Gracia Burnham Foundation included in the back matter of *To Fly Again*. There has been an addition, as well, which might seem to sound the note of jihad: the "persecuted church around the world." However, in the text Gracia distances herself from what she notes as a widespread inclination to regard Martin as a "martyr for Christ," countering that "neither he nor I was targeted *because* we were Christians; we just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time as a band of kidnappers were [sic] rounding up their bargaining chips" (26).

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ALLIED FORCES, FORCED ALLIANCES: A REACTION TO GERALD T. BURNS' S "ENEMIES AND FRIENDS: A CONSIDERATION OF THE BURNHAM KIDNAPPING"

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J. P. Jacobo teaches at the Department of Filipino of the Ateneo de Manila University where he graduated with an AB-MA in Literature. His critical essays on Philippine Culture, especially on the Literature of the 19th Century, Contemporary Fiction and Poetry, and Recent Cinema has appeared in publications like *Bulawan*, *Ideya*, *The Loyola Schools Review*, *Sine-siyasat*, and *Unitas*. He is President of the Film Desk of the Young Critics Circle (YCC), a group of scholars of Philippine Cinema based in the University of the Philippines at Diliman. A recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship, he is pursuing his PhD in Comparative Literature at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook.

Contrary to customary opinion, area studies covers a vast zone of knowledge. While Philippine Studies, for example, may initially be local in orientation, it is subsequently regional, and global in its trajectory. For archipelagic/islandic issues must involve, although with difficulty, the rest of Southeast Asia, and geopolitical concerns can only be addressed when connected with, for good or for ill, America. Since the study focuses on points and moments of encounter, the matrix of history, society, culture, and politics that area studies can lay out is limitless, depending of course on the inquiry. With a geographic turn in the humanities, there lies a most welcome shift from the preponderance of topics to a pondering on (the) tropics. Gerald Burns' talk presents an interesting view of the Philippines primarily because it avoids a kind of critique that so far only reaches the frontiers of convention, ending up in descriptions of this part of the globe as an underground, a backwater, or a peripheral vision of American cross-cultural ambitions. What is ultimately significant in Burns' ruminations is his reading of the problematic of encounter along "enmity" and "friendship"—tropes that could only manifest in a hostage's recollection of seizure, detention, abandonment, and ransom.

My reaction to Gerald Burns' lecture will consist of four parts, each focusing on the horizons of interpretation that Burns himself proposes in looking at the tension between animosity and affection in Gracia Burnham's memoir. My critique will therefore try to articulate 1) the post-exotic moment as announced by the captivity narrative; 2) the loose

(and the losing) ends of the entangled relations between the Philippines and the United States as they are laid out in the hostage crisis; 3) the neo-orientalism that the War on Terror in Burnham's experience launches and perpetuates; 4) and the ideology of evangelization as prefigured by Gracia Burnham's testimonial rhetoric.

Before I touch on each of the four topics, I would like to dwell briefly on the complex binarism between "enemies and friends" that Burns employs in providing us an intense dialectic of struggle in the context of a hostage crisis. Such dilemma becomes easier to grasp because Gracia Burnham documents the conception, furtherance, resolution, and undoing of the said conflict. But because Burnham's writing is far from being assured, her rapturous self becomes a scapegoat of sorts, the object of our allegorizing. We say allegory, because enemies and friends here are not just anonymous individuals embroiled in petty quarrels of the fleeting and parochial everyday. Instead they are social subjects trapped in the web of conspiracy that deploys both local and global practices of capture, maneuver, resistance, as well as capitulation.

EXHAUSTING THE POST-EXOTIC

Burns begins his reading of Gracia Burnham's *In The Presence of the Enemies* by summoning the form of the memoir, the captivity narrative (8), which is a subgenre of the travel essay. As a species of the latter, Gracia's story emphasizes the post-exotic. Because of the experience of confinement, the Westerner ceases to be enamored with the East, which has lost its mystical allure to the Tourist Gaze.

In Gracia's eyes, paradise is not only lost, she is also lost *in* it. Proof of this is the apparent absence of descriptions of the terrain and the latter's reduction to "jungle" or "mountains" (4), generic labels that tell of the visitor's falling *out* of place. The minutiae no longer refers to the travels but to the travails of the hostage, the tone changing from one that entices to one that dissuades, for the sojourner realizes that it has become the most unfortunate of visits. In naming the generic tradition to which Gracia Burnham appends her writing, Burns helps the reader recall intertexts which make the narrative more immediate—accounts of the *tides* of change in post-tsunami Phuket, chronicles of a Bali in the aftermath of bombings.

But how does the captivity narrative breed the tentative categories of friends and enemies? Is it the trauma of enclosure and displacement that inevitably causes the writer to lose distinctions between the two? Or is it the mere loss of a sense of place? If gender is one marker of subjectivity, how does Gracia's womanhood influence her rehearsal of the

genre? Conversely, how does the gendering *replace* her position on subjection, say, from victimhood to survival to transcendence? In short, how does the writing of the entrapment necessarily encode a history of conciousness, of a self-in-transit?

THE PHILIPPINES AND THE U.S.: UNKNOTTING THE ENTANGLEMENT

Needless to say, it is unavoidable to see the hostage situation outside the "entangled" bilateral politics between the United States and the Philippines, a filial bond wrought in the histories of colonial rule and neocolonial intervention; linked in destinies of political apprenticeship, economic dependence, and cultural affinity; broken by discourses of nationalism, independence, competition, difference; but restored in a beatific vision of globalization and the devils that predict and live out its fall, like terrorism.

Unknotting the entanglement can be tricky, for isolating the strands may prevent us from truly comprehending the problematic of encounter. But an instance in Burnham's account can instruct us on how tight (and loose) the bond has become. In the middle of the sea, hostages both local and foreign burst into longing for their freedom by singing Beatles classics, making them all friends amid the catastrophe, like the comrades in Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat." But in a moment of macabre irony, the perceived enemies would join in the lyrical cry of let's say "Let It Be" (13). With that kind of music, is there still room for the malady?

An event like the Burnham hostage demands the implication of friends and their enemies in issues of renewed allegiances or eventual realignment. Both parties are made to reexamine the entanglements among their kith and kin, across and down the ranks, beyond all distances and intimacies. A hostage crisis tests the ties that bind "friendly states." Regardless of the outcome, observations and judgments may herald international cooperation on the one hand, or proclaim a continuing patronage politics. But Burns insists on the nuance of it all, pointing out how the hostage herself poses her own reservations on the filial bond between nations, having been thrown not only along the lines of the dangerous liaison but in the center of its violent trysts (14-18). Hence, we cannot help but ask: How stable and reliable are these alliances? Or are they only for convenience's sake, to create a simulacrum of both war and peace?

The hostage experiences the entanglement in its most horrifying convolutions. But beyond the undeniable familiarity with the enemy, she still experiences an apparent estrangement from him. This distance of course does not allow her to develop full objectivity, but a proto-racism, a cultural condescension that is not entirely unfounded.

Victim and survivor, Gracia can only desire to break loose from the entanglement. This makes her neither adversarial nor affectionate to the romance that is the US and the Philippines. Because of this undecidability, we nonetheless ask how Gracia Burnham figures in that relation? As the informer and herself an informant in her own autoethnography, does she employ the character of friend? Or does she unwittingly *write* herself *off* as *the* enemy?

ANTI-TERRORIST: NEO-ORIENTALIST

There are two instances that Burns cites where we see the problem of Burnham's alliance and allegiance to her native country. First, when she writes to her sister that the scenario has become "so difficult. [And] *everyone* is being stubborn," (20) including the American government. Second, in a post-hostage interview in Kansas City, where she says that should have appealed directly to the American public "to get ransom together" (21).

Burns is quick in observing that while the first statement somehow dismisses the whole paradigm of a War on Terror that is spearheaded by the American leadership, the second, in reconciling with the rest of America, includes "reenlistment" in the anti-terrorism programmatic (Ibid.). Thus Burns surmises that "all lines that had been rubbed out in the memoir have been re-drawn, and all enemies and friends are back in the assigned places" (22). This means that even though the post-exotic has already been declared, the racism that was once latent threatens to get full-blown, and the neo-orientalist, along with all its systems of silencing, reverberates. All because, after the writing, Burnham has to realign herself to a nationalist project.

THE IDEOLOGY OF EVANGELIZATION

This return to orthodoxy is somehow masked by the ideology of evangelization that is prefigured by Gracia Burnham's testimonial rhetoric. In the end, Burns utilizes the Burnhams' missionary context to ultimately pinpoint Gracia's discernment of the hostage by conjecturing that "it seems as if the heritage of her missionary commitment points her inexorably to this position: that the outcome most to be desired from Christians 'showing their love' and 'acting their love' toward Muslims is the *conversion* of the latter."

While this judgment may seem to be unfair to some, Burns has carefully and convincingly founded his claim. Burns subtly tells us that while Gracia's captivity hovers above her narrative; her conversion deeper into the Faith is embedded within it. And others

will have to be part of this freedom, for the inner war to be waged and won, completely.

I can only agree with his sharp insight into a human character, one that Burns sees as tragic on the one hand, because of a pride that seems to exempt itself from all manner of self-awareness, but redeemed on the other, because of a heart that is unashamed to reveal both its selfless desires and selfish wishes.

It is in being an evangelist that Gracia Burnham can resonate with an unlikely counterpart like Francisco Balagtas, who at the end of *Florante at Laura*, falls prey to his own proselytizing motives by converting Aladin and Flerida from Islam to Catholicism, after they save Florante at Laura from the machinations of Adolfo, the usurer. How religion can play out the dramatic irony among the most unlikely of allies and their forces!

To many, war can only be understood in terms of who wins and who loses, and on whose side one is with after the truce. In the end, either one is an ally or an adversary, a friend or an enemy. Nevertheless, Gerald Burns does not limit himself to merely identifying the dramatis personae that stages the battle in Gracia Burnham's *In The Presence of My Enemies*. In reading the said memoir of a hostage, Burns convinces us that even the most enduring of battles is not exempt from unscrupulous choices and compromising tactics, for politics is indeed riddled with the shifting of alliances. He tells us that while war can be understood by way of the subtle gestures of allegory, one cannot reduce the strategies to the crude movements in a morality play. In short, cultural politics cannot find in didacticism a ground in which it can thrive, if not bear fruit, nor flourish. If only for reminding us what things may sell our souls to the enemy, we have found in Burns a friend worth saving.

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BENDING ENGLISH FOR THE FILIPINO STAGE

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Abstract
Through representative examples of Filipino plays in English that were written during the American colonial regime, the article traces how playwriting and the theater were instrumental in teaching the English language to Filipinos educated in the American educational project. To make the transition from the local languages to the newly acquired English easier to contextualize, the English in the colonial-period plays was consciously stylized to sound "as though [the characters] were speaking in their own tongues"—thus the phrase 'bending English'. Having "bent English" indeed does make reading easier for Filipinos, however the performances of plays with "bent English" provide a rich field of discussion on incongruities and disjunctions of linguistic experimentation.

Keywords
colonial education, English language, Philippine theater

About the Author
Bienvenido Lumbera is among the country's most multi-awarded Filipinos today. He was Ateneo's Tanglaw ng Lahi Awardee in 2000, recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1993, and winner of prestigious literary awards like the Centennial Literary Awards in Playwriting in 1998. He is among the country's most respected literary and cultural critics who has published books of poems, plays, librettos, essays, translation, criticism and literary history, and continues to mentor the country's best writers, teachers, and scholars. Detained during the Marcos dictatorship, he continues to be active in the movement for nationalism, freedom, and democracy. He was Irwin Chair Professor of Literature in the English Department of the Ateneo de Manila, and now Professor Emeritus of the University of the Philippines. He is a national council member of the multi-sectoral Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) and chair or the Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP) and an active member of other groups clamoring for nationalism and social justice. He is the country's National Artist for Literature in 2006 for outstanding contributions to the development of Philippine arts and culture.

English-language playwriting in the Philippines is a colonial heritage born of a project conceived in the matrix of the system of education designed to pacify a people from whom revolutionary victory over Spanish colonialism was wrested at the Treaty of Paris in 1898. With English decreed by the American colonial administration as the medium of instruction, an English-language theater offered itself as a useful vehicle for the dissemination of English. Dramatic performances would expose young Filipinos to spoken English outside the classroom, and along with the language, "modern" values from America could be introduced by plays infused with the culture of the new colonial masters. Thus, the first play in English, written by two students of the Philippine Normal College,

was a product of the classroom in a teacher-training institution founded by the Americans. The title of the play was *A Modern Filipina* and it was about a young woman determined to chart out her own future all by herself, just like any modern American girl.

Writing about Philippine theater under the American colonial regime, Doreen Fernandez notes examples of "textbook plays" which were "aimed at teaching the language, at practicing the students in the speaking of it" and concludes that "plays, staged in classrooms as language exercises, came to be many a student's first (and lasting) impression of theater." Such beginnings for English-language plays help us appreciate the early thrust of playwriting which sought to craft English dialogue correct in grammar and syntax and yet approximating the manner of Filipinos speaking in their native language. The creative effort exerted to achieve the effect of making Filipino characters talk as though they were speaking in their native tongue, even as the words coming out of their mouth are in English, is what this essay refers to as "bending English."

Jean Garrot Edades gathered early Filipino plays in English in her anthology *Short Plays of the Philippines* (1950). *Educating Josefina* (1939), a one-act play by Lilia A. Villa, is about a peasant couple who had sent their daughter Josefina to the city for a university education. Ingo, the father, is complaining to his wife Tonia about the expense of maintaining their daughter in the university. Tonia, however, is unperturbed for she is anticipating the prestige the family will enjoy in their town when Josefina graduates with a degree in pharmacy, and for that the financial sacrifice she and her husband are making will be rewarded. Josefina comes home with expensive gifts for her parents, but her father and mother note that she has been transformed and spoiled by her stay in the university. Her looks and her manner of dressing are those of a "modern girl." And worse of all, she has become rude and headstrong, announcing to her shocked parents that she has, all by herself, decided to quit school and is preparing to marry a rich young man from the city.

The playwright calls her work a "satirical comedy," but it is really more of a cautionary tale for parents who, at a great sacrifice, send children to live away in the city to study, only to realize that the sacrifice is for naught. The speech of the peasant couple is simple and believable in keeping with their back country origins. When Josefina unwraps her presents, Ingo tells her "Your mother and I don't care to be *postura*." The recourse to the use of a native expression is necessary, imposed by the inadequacy of any English word or expression conveying the peasant's sense of preening for public appreciation. Josefina no longer wants to be called by her wonted name Pinang, and tells her mother "How many times must I tell you not to call me Pinang?" In response Tonia calls her by her full name but mispronounces it as a woman of the countryside would, "Diosepin." In this play,

"bending English" means the introduction of a native word or expression to communicate the tone that best replicates an ethnically determined experience.

In the same year that *Educating Josefina* was first performed, *Sa Pula, Sa Puti* (1929) by Francisco Rodrigo took up the widely popular Filipino vice of cockfighting. Another peasant couple is at the center of the play, the husband Kulas, a habitué of the cockpit, and the patient wife Celing who is waiting for the day when by some miracle Kulas would tire of cockfighting. Celing has devised a way of winning back the money her husband loses when the latter's cock is struck down – she sends the old servant Teban to bet on the opponent's cock. Her trick fails when Kulas's friend Castor introduces the latter to his way of cheating at the game. Castor teaches Kulas to weaken his cock's striking leg by piercing it with a needle, and then to bet on the opponent's cock. As things turned out, both Kulas and Celing lost their bets because on that occasion Kulas's cock won by default when the opposing cock ran away.

Rodrigo's "comedy of the cockpit" illustrates a freer way of "bending English" and delivers a more vivid impression of "native" speech. The dialogues have been liberally flavored with Tagalog expressions in near-literal English translation. Castor comes upon a woebegone Kulas and chides: "Why do you wear a funeral parlor on your face?" Celing expresses her disgust at the amounts Kulas has been gambling away at the cockpit: "I'm sure someday we'll be eating just rice and salt." To her friend Sioning's remark that Celing thinks too far ahead in imagining the evil consequences of Kulas's fondness for cockfighting, Celing retorts "shall we wait for the fire to start before we prepare the water?" And to the prospect of Kulas making good his promise to quit cockfighting, Celing's rejoinder is "You may just as well write that promise on water."

Educating Josefina and *Sa Pula, Sa Puti* may be cited as indicators for the young playwrights of the beginning years of English-language theater the paths open to them when they use English to dramatize subject matter that might be more effectively written in any of the native languages. The two plays are early experiments to be sure, classroom exercises that test the students' ability to handle English in talking about commonplace life situations in those years before playwriting, on the basis of printed dramas from abroad, began to demand a more complex understanding of Philippine society. *Educating Josefina* hints at a more serious problem confronting parents, that of urbanization and the revolution of values that accompanies it. To be certain, tackling that problem would require from the writer a sophisticated outlook on social relations and a corresponding English style capable of expressiveness and nuances that the young Villa's prose could not yet deliver. It is the comic genre that *Sa Pula, Sa Puti* exemplifies, which could successfully

reach out to audiences with English words and phrases that distill the native and the foreign in lines redolent of folk and colloquial speech such as "Follow soon, ha?" (Sunod ka agad, ha?). As subsequent developments in English-language playwriting would show, it was Rodrigo's "bent English" that would take.

Wanted: A Chaperon (1940) by Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero is a lively comedy that makes audiences almost forget that the characters are talking in English, a sign that the playwright has succeeded very well in "bending English" for his middleclass characters. Ostensibly about the standard subject of parents seeing to the moral welfare of their children who have entered period of young adulthood, Guerrero presents his audience with two societies represented by parents who come from the Hispanized past and the children who belong to the emerging Americanized present, the two societies in contention in the world of "pre-war" Philippines. There is confusion in the home of Don Francisco, who has just acquired a new servant who wants to be designated "mayordomo" on the very day that he and his wife Doña Dolores want to look into the previous night's dates of their daughter Nena and of their son Roberting. Here the playwright has constructed a metaphor about a society caught up in a socio-cultural crisis. The language is a mixture of formal English and snatches of Spanish, with hints of the vernacular, the language of a society in transition. Forty years after the introduction of English into the country, Guerrero is writing about Filipinos as though his Filipinos were born using the language. The playwright, however, proves himself a stranger to certain idiomatic English phrases as when he allows Don Francisco the unintended gaffe of saying to his son in recalling his courtship of his wife "When I was making love to your mother I would give her only mani or balut."

In 1950, Philippine writing was to receive a boost when La Tondeña instituted the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature, with the short story being the only category in the initial year of the awards. In 1954, however, the one-act play was added to the categories of the awards. The years that followed were to yield more one-acters although many of these were to remain unperformed. The first playwright to be awarded First Prize was Alberto Florentino, and in him the English-language play was to find an exponent of socially conscious writing at a time when literary critics were leery about what was thought to be "propagandistic" literature. Florentino in his plays preferred to dramatize the grim lives of urban poor characters whose revolt against an unjust social system was dramatized in stark English dialogue. *Cadaver* (1954) tells about a graveyard plunderer who robbed the dead of whatever valuables had been buried with them. A cut sustained while robbing a tomb has spread fatal contagion in his system. In his hovel at the edge of a cemetery, Torio is dying and his wife Marina and fellow grave robber Carding

are helplessly keeping vigil at his bedside, with no doctor to minister to him. Torio in his delirious state accuses Marina of having a secret liaison with Carding. In response to his wife's vehement denials, he begins to blurt out the desperation with which he had been eking a livelihood in a society where the dead are often materially better off than the living poor. Marina is horrified that she has been living on resources that Torio's sacrilegious plundering of tombs has yielded.

The sordid subject matter of *Cadaver* and the realism with which Florentino treats the theme of society's indifference to the plight of the poor somehow prods an audience to raise the question of appropriate language for such a play. Realism calls for language that would allow the three characters to plumb the deepest recesses of their emotive power. Such language, given the social origins of Torio, Marina and Carding, cannot be English.

Florentino's English in *Cadaver* has shown the limitation of English as a medium for realistic Filipino drama. In the 1950s, Filipino authors had begun to gain access to the plays of Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, William Inge and other realist playwrights from America and Europe. Drama in that decade was as yet an occasional cultural form, available mainly in print, hardly in performance at all. As literary pieces entered in the Palanca contest, English-language plays had lost much innocence through their authors' contact with Western fiction in creative writing classes in college. The cardboard representation of the clash between urban and city cultures in *Educating Josefina*, and the adequacy of English for such a simplification of the conflict, could no longer stand up to critical scrutiny. Even the charming folk-flavored English of *Sa Pula, Sa Puti* was to prove to be of limited utility in a literary scene where peasant problems were shown to have dimensions that "a comedy of the cockpit" could not foreshadow.

In the 1960s, drama would cease to be regarded as reading matter alongside the short story and the novel. Midway during the decade, amateur stage companies and play production outside campuses began to be more frequent and more easily accessible cultural fare. It was then that a crucial shortcoming of English-language plays became more obvious. Actors mouthing lines of Filipino characters in English show up incongruities in the culture of playwriting and the culture of day-to-day living and disjunctions between what we see and what we hear. As long as we encounter characters only on the printed page, the incongruities and disjunctions do not exist. But once our encounter with them takes place onstage, in the theater, the incongruities and disjunctions crowd out our willingness to believe and to feel.

NEW SCHOLARS FORUM

EN-GENDERING DESIRE IN AIDA SANTOS'S LESBIAN POETRY

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Abstract
Lesbian feminist literary criticism seeks to deconstruct the essential categories of male and female and their "natural" link to the production of desire, enabling an insightful criticism that formalism and feminism alone cannot fully venture in. Thus, this lesbian feminist literary reading of Aida Santos's poetry critiques heteropatriarchy in language, desire and gender by questioning the binary assumption operative in them. A binary logic defines women and men by what each are not, highlighting one sex over the other, and presenting them as in need each other. This patriarchal assumption intersects with compulsory heterosexuality to marginalize lesbian existence in the world and in the word. This self-same logic operative in language and discourse naturalizes rape by presenting women actively searching for the desire of men. The poetry of Aida Santos exposes this blunder and presents a version of desire that goes beyond phallocentrism by presenting lesbian existence in the world and in texts.

Keywords
deconstruction, Lacan, lesbian feminist criticism

About the Author
Danicar Mariano has successfully defended her thesis on "Reading Spaces: Heteropatriarchal Critique in Aida Santos's Lesbian Poetry" to complete her MA in Literary and Cultural Studies at Ateneo de Manila University. She graduated top of her Ateneo Interdisciplinary Studies batch in 2003, and was also a fellow in the 3rd Ateneo National Writers Workshop. She is currently the Media Liaisons officer of the Ang Ladlad Political Party and an avid feminist and LGBT human rights activist. She is also part of the Women in Bliss (WIB) Writer's Circle which produced the anthology "Unveiling Pieces from Bliss."

PATRIARCHY RESTS IN WOMEN WHO BELIEVE THEIR OPPRESSION IS "NATURAL"

More and more, feminists are seeing the importance of exposing gender as something "we do" rather than what "we are" as key to a liberating gender dynamism. This is because the reduction of femininity, including feminine domesticity and silence, into a "natural biological fact" is what slipped this social injustice into the mind of many as an unquestioned discourse for many years. Women are the ones in charge of upholding the traditional roles between men and women for as long as there "is no women's struggle, there is no conflict between men and women" (Wittig 3). Women, therefore, should believe that it is their fate to "to perform three-quarters of the work of society, (in the public as well

as in the private domain)" as well as believe in the inevitability of being objectified, as well as raped, mutilated, and abused. This fate "supposedly cannot be changed" (Wittig 8). It is therefore crucial that women are kept ignorant of this 'ideology' in order to perpetuate the status quo.

One crucial tool which naturalizes gender oppression is found in language. Language perpetuates the convention that the inherent inferiority of femininity is a biological destiny. It is heavily charged and immersed in discourse. Patriarchy's power rests on this notion remaining subliminal and unquestioned. The ensuing compulsory heterosexuality that comes from the logic of patriarchy, as 'universal norm,' moreover, is not only what orders all human relationships but "the very production of concepts and all the processes which escape consciousness as well" (Wittig 8). The apprehension of these underground assumptions is crucial since psychoanalysis tells us that the more we "deny an ideology's grip on us, the greater we are in its grasp." The more women say "I can hardly believe it" in reference to their debased condition, the more likely they are to be subjected to it. Hence, the revelation that patriarchy is in fact a social construction and not an inevitable fact is the main pursuit not only of feminist literary criticism, but also of women's liberation in general.

This is why the paper aims to analyze dangerous assumptions imbedded in language and see how lesbian Filipina poets like Aida Santos are trying to critique and reinvent it as a matter of advocacy and survival. It looks at the highly contested terrain of language and literature to see how gender norms are perpetuated and/or questioned through it. Can texts liberate just as they oppress? This study goes into how Aida Santos's lesbian poetry attempts to accomplish just that by blurring binary opposition and presenting a radical lesbian subjectivity and desire.

LACAN AND THE CASTRATING BINARY OPPOSITION

Before this paper goes into its critique of Aida Santos poems, however, one must first understand the notion of binary opposition. Binary oppositions govern both language as well as gender relations. Man is logical, rational, strong, and political, while consequently, women are illogical, emotional, weak, and domestic. "Men and women are entirely dependent on each other for definition and existence," a claim that feminists like Cixous, Butler, Wittig and many others are trying to dispute.

This binary definition is perpetuated by Lacan's revision of Freud's Oedipus complex. The man is seeking to return to that blissful yet castrating primordial unity

with the mother, which all children once experienced. This is simulated in heterosexual relationships. Men, however, are simultaneously urged to renounce this union even as they seek it, since a successful "return" would amount to a castrating femininity that would destroy his masculine subjectivity (that is why men with strong maternal complexes act out this compulsion by doing violence to women so that they can, in the hostile separation this assures them, feel more male). Hence, desire in a hetero-patriarchal paradigm would continually need to renounce itself since "the fulfillment of desire would be its radical self-cancellation" (Butler, "Desire" 381). This "desire for an impossible return" is why women are always presented as a void or a mirror, projecting men's fantasies, desires, and fears.

The notion of a "broken binary union" as the cause of a "desire for an impossible return," as forwarded by Freud, Plato, and Lacan, thus leads to the notion that women are dependent on men to be whole – and are therefore inevitable subjects of male conquest and the male gaze. This "Other-ing" and exoticism of women is extremely damaging since the desire that is projected onto them, for which they are expected to succumb, is not a desire to recognize their "Otherness" but rather, one that seeks to efface it so that it can continue with its illusion of desire (Butler, "Desire" 383). (Many have also argued, however, that the woman as "mystery" or "enigma" have helped save "woman" from the dangerous labeling and classifying of patriarchy.) "To put this another way, the subject can only know itself through another, but in the process of recognizing itself and constituting its own self-consciousness it must overcome or annihilate the Other, otherwise it places its own existence at risk. Desire, in other words, is tantamount to the *consumption* of the other" (Butler, "Desire" 384).

Women by assuming a male-identified stance, accomplished by mirroring and assimilating a male mindset in order to appropriate male power and operate in male structures, therefore sacrifice their own unique subjectivity and agency. Here in this discourse, however, is also where the logic of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic lies –"The desire for destruction is thwarted by the sudden realization that the Other, who mirrors the subject, wields the power to destroy him in return" (Butler, "Desire" 379). Hence, the power of women rests in their rejection of being this empty space for which male desires are projected upon. As Virginia Woolf has long realized "Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size … That is why Napoleon and Mussolini both insist so emphatically on the inferiority of women; for if they were not inferior they would cease to enlarge" (Woolf 21).

COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY AND THE "VALUE OF DYKE-CONSTRUCTION"

Compulsory heterosexuality which states that the man/woman dialectic is what must prevail as sure as "the ruler" must come with the 'ruled' is a necessary institution of patriarchy in so far as this will ensure that men will always have women to serve them emotionally, psychologically, and sexually. This enforced system is what places men and women in a one to one correspondence with each other in a hierarchical relation.

Herein lies the effective resistance that "queering" the subject offers. "Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the 'normal,' the 'legitimate,' the dominant. *There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers*" (italics mine, Butler, "Gender as Performance"). In pronouncing the subject as inassimilable, the subject regains agency as he/she refuses to reduplicate the binary system. Butler believes that the liberation of "woman" from a normative and stable category is also parallel to the questioning of her sexuality as that which must be necessarily directed to the opposite sex.

The lesbian represents a unique form of patriarchal resistance that renounces the idea of this binary-union as the one ideal choice. It questions the assumptions of heterosexuality as "an unconscious which looks too comfortably after the interests of the masters." Sex (male, female) is seen to cause gender (masculine, feminine) which is seen to cause desire (towards the other gender) in what is seen as a continuum. Butler's believes that denaturalizing, proliferating and unfixing identities are important in order to reveal the constructed nature of heterosexuality.

Judith Butler takes one step further from Jehlen's essay and says that gender is not performance but *performativity*. Performance assumes that there is doer of the act while performativity questions if there is a person beyond the deed. "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; … identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 25). In other words, gender is a performance; it's what you *do* at particular times, rather than a universal *who you are* (Wittig xii).

SIGNIFICANCE AND METHODOLOGY: A QUESTION OF LIFE AND DEATH

When Judith Butler said that the discourse of desire "precipitates into a life and death struggle" (Butler, "Desire" 384), she meant it more than figuratively. For women and lesbians immersed in the lure of male-identification and subjected to male-gaze and ideology, not to recreate the world and word is to disappear. To be a lesbian, to have a

desire for another woman in a society ruled by compulsory heterosexuality, is to be a contradiction. Not to voice out this opposition, is to be engulfed by it. "Lying is done by words but it can also be done by silence," Adrienne Rich says.

This paper will look into lesbian poetry as a critique of unquestioned and compulsory heterosexuality and desire. In doing this, it necessarily looks at language and literature where the antagonisms of the dominant and the disruptive are played out. The analysis supplies a crucial re-visioning and reexamination of not just patriarchal culture, but also of heterosexist feminism, a feminism that assumes that all female sexuality and energy is directed only to men.

Lesbian poetry, more than contenting itself in being an "alternative" or a "minority," seeks to effect change into how language is used re-examining the parameters which "universal thought" is founded on. The methodology is premised on the feminist view point that: (1) everything about the subject is important for a total understanding and analysis of her life and work; (2) the proper scholarly stance is engaged rather than "objective" (3) the personal (both the subject and the critic's) research/criticism is not an academic/intellectual game, but a pursuit with social meanings rooted in the "real world" (Rich 92).

The study will also particularize these questions and apply it to the practical end of Philippine Feminist Literary Criticism in the works of Aida Santos. In what way does Aida Santos, as a Lesbian poet, question the heterosexual foundations of desire? How does she present this desire for women in her poetry? How does she relate to a language heavily invested in the discourse of hetero-patriarchy?

RADICAL DESIRE AND PERFORMATIVITY IN AIDA SANTOS'S POETRY

In this section, the paper now explores how Aida Santos's poem, "Spaces," is better explicated through a lesbian feminist criticism. The paper looks at how this particular poem by Aida Santos troubles hetero-patriarchal language and assumptions by blurring the binary oppositions of space/language, meaning/gaps, submission/revolt, absence/presence.

Spaces

spaces

are not gaps

you say

I have yet

to find a word

to describe

the creeping

emptiness

inside.

In the poem, we see an "Other" addressing a persona, telling him or her that "Spaces are not gaps" (Santos, *Spaces* 20). This causes the persona to conclude that s/he has "yet to find a word/ to describe/ the creeping/ emptiness/ inside." We do not have any clue whether the persona will ever find what s/he is looking for. We also do not know if the persona is going on the search because s/he is agreeing to or rebelling against the one who is speaking. The poem's structure –also full of spaces and gaps – makes the words stand out. If one reads it vertically, it gives the impression of staggered speech. "Spaces" again become personified, and as it is enabled to speak so as to describe that the persona has yet to find the creeping emptiness inside.

The poem, literally and figuratively juxtaposing spaces with words, also invokes a crucial paradox – the dramatic situation in the poem – that once you describe emptiness with a word, it will cease to be emptiness.

LESBIAN CRITICISM: READING "SPACES"

The poem is representative of the poet's enduring search for that word beyond patriarchal language. The poet wants to find a word to describe the creeping emptiness inside – but she can't seem to be able to do so until she settles what is the place of spaces in language, of gaps in meaning, of descriptions in emptiness, of words in silence, of absences in presences – binary oppositions which hetero-patriarchal language functions upon.

The poem asserts that there is something ungraspable about the author of the

poem – a woman and a lesbian – because she has yet to be labeled by language. She has yet to "find a word to describe the creeping emptiness inside." Even though an Other is saying that "spaces are not gaps," the poet still wants to find that word to describe the emptiness inside; or, even though an Other is saying that the poet has yet to find a word for the emptiness, the poet is arguing that this emptiness, this space is not a gap – it is not something people usually assume it to be. Either way, it breaks people's common sense notions regarding space and subjectivity as mere products of binary oppositions.

This kind of deconstruction reveals itself, not as a kind of destruction or erasure, but a process of revealing the open spaces and gaps beneath seemingly solid foundations for argument. These holes and gaps are seen as an opportunity to deepen inquiry. Because of the poem's structure and the spaces in it, as well as its lack of punctuation, we can literally read the poem in many ways, choosing to pause where we want, choosing to read it vertically or horizontally, thus always forcing us to refer again to the text to ask what it really means, not knowing anything for certain.

Because the text is constantly calling us to stop and pay attention to the pauses, it also asks us to look at the margins, the unarticulated, the unquestioned discourse that the "you" that interpellates our "I" is telling us.

The poem, by saying that "spaces are not gaps," alludes to space as not a mere absence but as a strategic discourse. The poet can be revolting against the fact that the other knows that "spaces/are not gaps," that the other knows that spaces can be a breeding ground of hegemony, that spaces can represent the common sense discourses, the "needless-to-say." This is why the poet concludes that she has to find her own words to describe this creeping emptiness inside so that the other does not speak for her through controlling the discourse of these silences, these "spaces."

SPACES AS REVOLT

Spaces can both be read as a sign of submission and revolt. Even as it suggests being under the unquestioned discourse of the dominant order wherein the woman simply constructs her subjectivity and consciousness by mirroring another's discourse towards her, it can also represent a dangerous questioning, a pause with which to retaliate against this dominant discourse. The poem subtly sides with the conception of spaces as leaning towards revolt by saying that the search is not finished nor would it be likely that it would ever be. The poem asserts this by presenting the fundamental paradox of emptiness – that once it is filled with a word, it would cease to be emptiness. Consequently, how can

emptiness be filled when spaces are not gaps, if emptiness is so palpable it is 'creeping?' Because the search for the word to describe the creeping emptiness inside would never cease, moreover, the poem enforces that the poet's subjectivity is inassimilable. She therefore corresponds to Butler's conception of the queer – she is without essence, at odds with the normal, the legitimate and the dominant, thus refusing to reduplicate the binary system (Butler, "Gender as Performance").

In the same vein, we could say that the fact that a woman is inconceivable, invisible, or a void in language and discourse represents both her downfall and her strength. On one hand she has been marginalized by it, but on the other, it has enabled her to resist labels, to digress and transgress the written word – possessing the secret to her fluidity and mystery.

Through the poem, Aida Santos, like Butler, is arguing that woman, as with space, is an "unstable and unfixed term" and herein likens their potential to revolt and make "trouble." "I have yet/ to find/ a word/ to describe/ the creeping/ emptiness inside" – reflects an awareness that even just searching for a new language to describe a lesbian's non-signified ["empty"] position is to trouble the foundation of hetero-patriarchal language. This is similar to what Adrienne Rich is saying, that to be conscious of oppression is itself a very revolt against oppression. By understanding the need to search for a language and a subjectivity that is beyond binary oppositions and poeticizing about it, one is already contributing to a widening of that discourse.

SUBJECTIVITY IN "THE CREEPING EMPTINESS"

The knowledge of spaces as not being gaps is what makes the persona conclude that she has yet to find the creeping emptiness inside. The poem, however, by presenting the spaces as giving way and being transformed into language and action ("Spaces, you say, I have yet to find, the creeping emptiness inside") asserts the recognition of spaces as an act of self-revelation as well. As the poet/persona discovers that there is a creeping emptiness inside her, and that this emptiness is not a gap – thus, she begins to search for a new word to describe it. This notion of loss that is also a presence, this indescribable creeping emptiness inside, is what propels her towards a quest for subjectivity. Indeed, if we read the poem in psychoanalytic terms, we see how one comes to writing and language because one feels a loss. The poet is made to find the word for the creeping emptiness inside by the "you," just as the child is made to come to language by the father or the phallic order. This initiation into the symbolic stage is marked by a separation and a loss, a loss that signals the start of his desire.

Learning how to speak signals the child's separation from the Mother in the mirror stage. One learns, painfully, that he or she is a different person from the mother. From a child's experience, everything is lost except words – and for that moment, for the person who has lost everything, whether that is a being or a country or a certainty of discourse, language becomes the country. According to Cixous, "One enters the country of languages" (qtd. in Sellers xxvi). Language therefore is literally marked by the beginning of an insatiable desire to "return."

The "I" in the poem, only becomes an "I" as she is addressed by a "you." This tells us that "the speaking subject emerges as part of the linguistic chain of intelligibility by virtue of founding differentiation" (Butler, "Desire" 380). Thus, the "I" and the "you" talking to each other in the poem can only speak to each other in so far as they are separated from each other by a gap that cannot be closed. The poem is conveying the irony that in learning how to communicate, we have forever marked our difference, making it impossible to return to that illusory oneness. Speaking and addressing another presupposes a condition of separation from one another. (Butler, "Desire" 379.) A subject can never recognize himself in an Other but remains in a permanent relation of misrecognition. As much as one tries to achieve "metaphysical oneness" with that very other that is defined precisely through his difference, "it is thwarted from that recovery by a primary separation or loss" (Butler, "Desire" 379).

THE UNENDING SEARCH FOR THE WORD

The search for the word to describe the emptiness inside is unceasing precisely because language itself is marked by loss. This is why Aida Santos's poetry is marked by the tension of conceiving language as one that produces the need and desire for subjectivity, propelling the poet to go on the quest to find a language to describe this subjectivity ("I have yet to find a word to describe the creeping emptiness inside"), on one hand, and language as precisely the very medium why this subjectivity is always inapprehensible to her, the reason why the self is always displaced (because to name the emptiness is to have it disappear) on the other. Language, therefore, always flounders in every attempt to communicate subjectivity.

Language, as Butler believes, creates the very thing it also displaces. It enables and produces desire (as desire for return, and as desire for the other) but it is also "the vehicle through which desire is displaced," that flounders in every effort to present and communicate desire (Butler, "Desire" 380).

According to Butler, language and writing always seek to represent what is beyond themselves, "to capture or present a referent," but are also founded on the push toward their necessary failure. The search is infinite because to the extent that "writing cannot reach beyond itself, it is condemned to figure that beyond again and again within its own terms" ("Desire" 374). We see this in the lament regarding language in Aida Santos's poem. She grieves, moreover, that there is no other medium to use to communicate but language and silence, spaces and words – binary oppositions set up by a hierarchical hetero-patriarchy that she has to negotiate and hold together even as she seeks to escape them.

The binary oppositions she presents and blurs in the poem are Separation/Unity, Loss/Desire, Writing/Silence and Author/Reader. She blurs author/reader delineation by using the first person, and involving the reader in the self-same quest for a private and public language. She blurs the dichotomy of language and silence by proposing that writing itself is the symptom of that very thing which it seeks to cure. Silence, similarly is both a passivity and an activity, it can be both submission and revolt.

ELUDING BINARY OPPOSITIONS

The short poem critiques and blurs binary oppositions in many ways. One, it puts the dominant order in the background (the dominant discourse is merely reduced to a briefly speaking 'you' as opposed to the actively searching "I" of the poem) and instead foregrounds a marginal voice, that of the persona, a lesbian poet.

Moreover, one does not really know if the poet is continuing to search for "the word to describe the creeping emptiness inside" because she agrees or disagrees with the "you" she is referring to in the poem. This form of negotiation with the dominant order is necessary and characteristic of marginal and lesbian texts – to function in the within and without of language, just as it traverses the within and without of heterosexist society.

As part of holding the tension, Aida Santos is also not agreeing that silence is the solution to the problem of phallocentric language – a binary discourse. Her decision to *poeticize* the dilemma presents a negotiation between the binary of using patriarchal language and staying silent – a passivity which many feminists (like Cixous and Lorde) equate to death. That she puts the struggle into a poem represents the continuing fight, despite the emptiness, to find the word for "the *void,*" to break a silence that has yet to be overcome. She presents language as a way to cope with this emptiness, even though it is often inadequate – the words yet to be found, a closure not given.

We can see another instance of Santos's struggle in "Memories III." But before we

can go into it, we must first look at the subsequent poem, "Memories II":

You took off your pants
I could only see the shadow of your lean body.
I felt the table
and my fingers
groped through the gun.
I could have grabbed it
but I didn't, I couldn't
immobilized by my own disbelief.
I didn't touch you
your body touched me
no emotions, simply motions:
I am being punished
for not cooperating
with the enemy
But fucking is not punishment
we were taught.
I lay there thinking
after this, I'll ask him
to tell me where my husband
is detained.

With just the first line "You took off your pants" (Santos, *Spaces* 67) the poet is already introducing that she is referring to contemporary reality by the use of the one gendered cultural artifact: pants. The description of the scene is slow, almost sensual – describing the undressing and the nature of the body as well as the sensations of the table through the fingers until we reach the word – gun. This translates to the fact that, in the start where the man was removing his pants, there was time to grab the gun. There was a moment before she could actually have stopped it, but she hesitated. Instead, she became a passive and detached observer. It was as if she became dissociated with the scene – as she started describing what happened – no emotions, simply motions. She did not feel a thing, and to further prove this dissociation, she goes into an intellectual discourse – a logical reason for why this is happening. "I am being punished."

Here, one can infer that an act of violence, of rape, is being done to a woman, the persona narrating the poem in the first person. At first, it seems to comply with the patriarchal view of rape: with the woman "asking" for it because she could not and did not do anything to stop it. There is a small justification of why she did not do it—"she was immobilized by her own disbelief," a commentary on what was mentioned earlier that women "who can hardly believe" the truth of the reality of male violence are the ones most prone to it. It is women's naivete and kindness that eventually win out, leaving them defenseless against men who have been taught to dominate and assume that they own women. Eventually, the narration, though still objective and stoic, becomes more vivid – the motions start –"she is being punished for cooperating with the enemy" setting the context at a time of "struggle" where a woman is caught in between the wars of two opposing (male) sides. The man who rapes her, we concede, is doing it in part, to harm the other man who is his enemy, turning out to be the woman's husband. This act is synonymous to soldiers destroying property of the opposite side as war tactic. Under this logic, it is not so much that the dignity of the wife that is being destroyed – what matters more, rather, is that *the property* of a man is being vandalized. She is punished, but for reasons she does not understand. She does not understand, moreover, how sex with a man, which has been "taught" to her as the fulfillment of her being as a woman, could be a punishment the way that is being done to her now ("fucking is not punishment/we were taught"). In other words, she begins to realize, suddenly, violently, how the ideology that has been taught to her and the truth of the reality are painfully contradictory. In "Memories I," the persona remembers this experience with her "mind confused/by the fallacy of violence:/I am enjoying it, men say."

A similar line of reasoning is at work, Butler explains, in discourses on rape when the "sex" of a woman is claimed as "that which establishes the responsibility for her own violation." The victim is often accused of "running around getting raped" (Butler, *Feminists Theorize the Political* 18).

"Rape as a passive acquisition then becomes precisely the object of an active search." Rape and violence then, as Butler and Santos maintain, are built in to the very concept of 'woman' as patriarchy defines it. The poem does this by suggesting that the woman belongs at home as a property of the man, while being in the streets or in sites of struggle, or in this case, a prison, establishes her as "open season" (Butler, *Feminists Theorize the Political* 18). She is "enjoying" it, suggesting that it is the desire of her being, as a woman, to be fucked by a man. Butler explains:

> "[R]ape" is figured as an act of willful self-expropriation. Since becoming the property of a man is the objective of her "sex," articulated in and through her sexual desire, and rape is the way in which that appropriation occurs "on the street" [a logic that implies that rape is to marriage as the streets are to the home, that is, that rape is street marriage, a marriage without a home, a marriage for homeless girls, and that marriage is domesticated rape], then "rape" is the logical consequence of this enactment of her sex and sexuality outside domesticity. (*Feminists Theorize the Political* 18-9)

The fact that the rape, as contextualized in "Memories I," occur in a prison cell make it all the more justified that the jailers or the authorities rape this incarcerated woman. Here, Butler, will say, is where we can see sex as not just a mere representation but one which enforces "violence and rationalizes it after the fact." "The very terms by which the violation is explained *enact* the violation, and concede that the violation was under way before it takes the empirical form of a criminal act…." Sex here works its silent violence in regulating what is and is not designatable (Butler, *Feminists Theorize the Political* 18-9). By presenting the persona as a "wife" we see her position as generalized – that she is not a deplorable exception – that the persona's experience is in fact a universal experience in that violence against women is inscribed in the very nature of her sex which is always doomed to be accused of "asking for it" and "enjoying it."

Santos thus conveys that this experience of violation, which we are made to mimetically identify with through the poet's use of the first person, is one which *all women* are under a threat to. It is not something that happens "out there" but an ever-present and looming reality in a place where women are sexualized and objectified as they are. It is from this context that the persona presents her lamentation against language in "Memory III":

> I've lost the images
> the ink from my pen dries up
> in the wind, I look out the window:
> metaphors elude me
> I cannot capture them
> I cannot write my poetry.
> Words are all I have
> Flowing through the beta of my brain

Gushing out like a rampaging river
Voiceless in its anger.

The pain, for this violated persona, is relived multiple times, first, as the instance of the actual violence that has happened to her, second, as she relives it in her mind, and third, as she writes it down using a language that comes from a tradition of phallocentricity that first violated her. The contradictory experience of writing as exorcism and at the same time a re-experiencing of the trauma is presented. This very language that the poet is using is also the self-same language that materialized the definition of her sex as a call to do violence. And yet she clings to language ("words are all I have") even as she cannot write her poetry. The draining act of recollecting violence has left her with words that are worn out: so that as she looks in the window, metaphors elude her and she recognizes things without really seeing them. Because in literature one reads the words in their materiality – what this does is it empties words of their meaning so that the writer can work on it in its neutral form – the basic images "flowing through the beta of the brain."

Wittig says that this act of wearing out words from a highly charged dominant discourse into a raw material is crucial for women. "A writer must first reduce language to be as meaningless as possible in order to turn it into a neutral material – that is a raw material. Only then is one able to work the words into a form. A writer must take a word and despoil it of its everyday meaning in order to be able to work with words, on words" (Wittig 73). This is precisely what Santos does when she presents the very existence of her poem as a negation to its meaning. She writes "she cannot write poetry" as she writes a poem, and words "gush out like a rampaging river" though metaphors elude her. In showing the materiality of a language as opposite to its abstract meaning – she presents a way in which the oppressive structures can be subverted. This frees the meaning of language from its traditional form. Language does not have to mean what it signifies, and it will not always serve the dominant discourse from where it comes. "A voiceless anger," voiced out through words, through poems, presents us with the similar technique that the persona used in "Spaces" to bridge the contradiction of using words to protest against the silencing discourse of male language. By making every word create the effect as if it was being understood or read for the first time, the writer deals a blow with words.

Here we also see the reason for the poet's self-reflexivity: since poetry is a field which can question the very medium it uses, she can use it to question language as an exercise of dominant power, at the same time giving her an opportunity to turn that power against itself.

The poem also reflects the poet's belief that "for any woman to write, she has to confront a life that breathes violence with a rhythm so pervasive [it could] immobilize: rape, incest, prostitution, trafficking of women, wife battering, child abuse" (Santos, *Spaces* ii).

As Aida Santos narrates:

> Writing, I once thought, was a form of cleansing, a way of crystallizing emotions and facts, a private act of self-examination that eventually was offered as a gift of sharing in the public arena of publishing and readings. Writing now is a terror of recognition of the madness in our humanity, a confrontation with one's belief in life itself. (*Spaces* ii)

The poet often has an ambiguous and traumatic relationship with language in "Spaces" and "Memories II & III." Expression, which for the poet, seemed to be a way to create closure, to communicate and even to create a community of lesbians, offering them healing from their violent lives, is also very much a double edged sword. When you get down to the discourse of power structures within it, within also lies "a terror of recognition of humanity's madness" – a language that has often been used or withheld to oppress rather than to liberate.

That is why it is important for Aida Santos to activate the poem in its own way. We see echoed in Aida Santos's poetry, the idea of *performativity* in language—it is by uttering the words in the poem itself that one can perform the "search" for "a word to describe/the creeping/ emptiness inside" in "Spaces." It is also words itself that create the materiality of sex that *does* the violence in Memories II & III. We now go into how Aida Santos relates that performativity to the construction of her subjectivity in a new poem entitled *"ISANG TANONG, ISANG SAGOT (paumanhin kay Pablo Neruda)"* (Santos, *Isang Tanong Isang Sagot*).

Isang Tanong, Isang Sagot

Bakit tayo umiibig?
Sapagkat umaalis ang puso sa ating dibdib
At naglalayag ayon sa kanyang tadhana.

Bakit may sakit ang pag-ibig?
Sapagkat may iiwang langit

Na may alaala ng masayang nakalipas.

Bakit isa lamang ang maaaring ibigin?
Sapagkat may nagturo sa atin na ang puso
Ay masikip na silungan.

Bakit maaaring umibig nang higit sa isa?
Sapagkat may espasyong
Nakalaan sa bawat tibok.

Bakit ako lumuluha sa paglalakbay?
Sapagkat may maiiwang bakas sa aplaya
At bakas mo iyon, mahal ko.

Bakit hindi ko maunawaan ang tunay kong nasa?
Sapagkat ang nasa ko'y wala sa utak
Ito'y nasa pagitan ng puso't hita.

Bakit kailangang sisirin ang pagkamangha?
Sapagkat ito ang nagkukulay ng bahaghari
Matapos ang malakas na bagyo.

Bakit ako ay ako?
Sapagkat ang ako ng iba'y hindi ko
Maisuot, hindi iba ang ako.

In this poem, we can see many sensibilities that coincide with Judith Butler's ideas in "Desire." Aida Santos questions the male, western idea of the "desire for the impossible return" when she says, in the first line, that the heart journeys according to its own course and not through a predestined psychological or metaphysical line. Desire, in this case, corresponds with its definition as that of an eternal process of deferral, an endless quest that cannot be completed, a proverbial itch that cannot be scratched. The second stanza, however, alludes to the 'primordial loss or separation' that Lacan and Freud refer to when the subject is first taken out of the mirror stage. Santos asks: "Why does love hurt?" – and answers that it is because of a remembered happiness or a union. Lacan and Freud also

agree that a present pain is painful precisely because it conjures a primordial sense of loss and separation that can be traced back to the break in the mirror stage. We feel the loss all the more because we can imagine or recall this experience of a primary unity or happiness (as we felt one with the world and the mother.) Aida Santos troubles the theory however by claiming that women can also feel this primordial desire and that the experience of loss is not just limited to men who feel "castrated" from the mother—an experience that Freud's Electra Complex, admittedly, could never fully supply or grasp. Women, therefore, can also long for a primary care-giver, which is the mother—troubling the heterosexual premise of this psychoanalytic assumption.

Aida Santos also exposes the singularity of desire as constructed in the third stanza. "*Bakit isa lamang ang maaaring ibigin?/Sapagkat may nagturo sa atin na ang puso/Ay masikip na silungan*" (Santos, *Isang Tanong, Isang Sagot* 25). This is an echo of Helene Cixous's stand that men and women could both benefit from a difference-cultivating "bisexuality" that releases men from the impossible high horse ideal of a glorious monosexuality:

> By insisting on the primacy of the phallus and implementing it, phallocentric ideology has produced more than one victim. As a woman, I could be obsessed by the scepter's great shadow, and they told me: adore it, that thing you don't wield. But at the same time, man has been given the grotesque and unenviable fate of being reduced to a single idol with clay balls. And terrified of homosexuality, as Freud and his followers remark. Why does man fear being a woman? Why this refusal of femininity? The question that stumps Freud. The "bare rock" of castration. (Cixous 38)

By arguing that this singular desire *has to be* enforced, the text renounces the *narrowing* of desire into a hetero-monosexuality. It rejects "creating a monarchy of body or desire" (38). As Cixous says, "Let masculine sexuality gravitate around the penis, engendering this centralized body (political anatomy) under party dictatorship. Woman does not perform on herself this regionalization that profits the couple-head sex, that only inscribed itself within frontiers" (38).

That is why by the fourth stanza, Santos argues that it is possible to have multiple desires, to love more than one—"*Sapagkat may espasyong/Nakalaan sa bawat tibok.*" Each heartbeat, each irregularity has a fluidity that enables the plurality of desire. The woman, because of her capacity to depropriate herself without self-interest is, is an "endless body" – "a cosmos where eros never stops travelling, [a]vast astral space" (Cixous 38). This

vastness that characterizes woman's eros also characterizes her subjectivity and writing, the reason why the lines are spaced apart from each other in the poem.

> [Woman's] libido is cosmic, just as her unconscious is world-wide: her writing can go on and on without ever inscribing or distinguishing contours … she goes and goes on infinitely. She alone dares and wants to know from which she, the one excluded, has never ceased to hear what-comes-before-language reverberating. She lets the other tongue of a thousand tongues speak –the tongue, sound without barrier or death. (Cixous 38)

As the poet continues on her journey however, on the fifth stanza, she is reminded of loss once again when she discovers the tracks of the beloved that came before her, now lost to her, even as she tries in vain to reach her hearing. Again, this echoes the Cixourian view that the discovery of writing comes from mourning and a reparation of mourning:

> In the beginning the gesture of writing is linked to the experience of disappearance to the feeling of having lost the key to the world, of having been thrown outside. Of having suddenly acquired the precious sense of the rare, of the mortal … Everything is lost except words. This is a child's experience: words are our doors to all other worlds. At a certain moment for the person who has lost everything, whether that is … a being or country, language becomes the country. One enters the country of languages. (Cixous 44)

After lamenting a loss she cannot recover, the poet then asks in the sixth stanza: "*Bakit hindi ko maunawaan ang tunay kong nasa*?" Desire fails not because satisfaction is impossible but because "there is always someone else in the way, someone whose place cannot be fully appropriated" (Butler, "Desire" 383). Desire is ruled by absence. Language, moreover, is structured by this failure: "if language were to reach the object it desires, it would undo itself as language" (Butler, "Desire" 380). Discourse and thought cannot solve the problem of desire – the poet answers – because "desire is not found in the mind." *("Ang nasa ko'y wala sa utak/ Ito'y nasa pagitan ng puso't hita.")* The question therefore begs itself and is unanswerable in so far as it is *this self-same* discourse and language that had made the unrepressed reality of emotional and sexual desire impossible to know in the first place. This is because discourse and language are what had *executed* this repression in the first place.

> To the extent to that we seek to recollect ourselves in the aims of such desires … are we not blocked from that recovery precisely because the discourses through which our desires are formed are never fully ours to own? … It may be that precisely by virtue of the historicity and sociality of those desire-producing discourses that we are, in words, never fully recoverable to ourselves. (Butler, "Desire" 385)

That is why Santos asserts the importance of immersing oneself in wonder in the seventh stanza, in so far as *wonder* is the act of stepping back and seeing things as if they have just been discovered, removing the misleading and blasé lenses of the dominant order. ("*Bakit kailangang sisirin ang pagkamangha?/Sapagkat ito ang nagkukulay ng bahaghari/ Matapos ang malakas na bagyo*.") Desire, moreover, is always self-conscious. To reflect on desire is to increase it, in so far as it increases the distance from the other being desired. In other words, "wonder" is a solution to the problem of negating or consuming the other through desire. It involves disciplining oneself from pleasure and desiring the other from a distance to increase desire and to increase the fascination of an other as truly an Other, not as mere reflection of oneself (like in the paralyzing, subsuming male gaze). Wonder and awe is what colors diversity, what nurtures difference in the full vibrating range of colors, after a violent (stormy) tradition of desire as consumption and narcissistic reflection. Santos uses the image of a rainbow for this—an image constantly employed by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) communities to represent their ideal of sexual diversity. A rainbow also mirrors a *monolithic, dominant* sun through a *fluid mist* to refract the full array of colors it contains – saying that mirroring the other [through desire] does not mean destroying him/her by reflecting his/her duplicability and non-singularity. It can also be a kind of mirroring that invokes wonder in the Other person, giving insights about himself/ herself that would otherwise not be discovered.

Finally, in the last stanza Santos asks, "*Bakit ako ay ako*?" This is a commentary that desire is a major component of subjectivity and indeed what prompts the subject to ask who he or she really is. The answer, as the previous stanza shows however, is not singular (i.e. one is a man if he desires *only* women, and one is a woman *only* if she desires a man) but multiple and fluid.

Although the line "*Sapagkat ang ako ng iba'y hindi ko/ Maisuot, hindi iba ang ako*" may seem essentialist at first glance, it coincides with Butler's idea of performativity in that identity is put on or worn. One can only wear what one decides to wear, considering the constraints and choices of others, whether to go along or against them.

> To describe gender as "doing" and a corporeal style might lead you to think of it as an activity that resembles choosing an outfit from an already existing wardrobe of clothes … To start with, we will clearly have to do a way with freedom of choice: since you are living within a law or within a given culture, there is no sense that the choice is entirely "free." (Salih 50)

Under this analogy, if we were to choose to ignore the expectation and constraints offered by peers by "putting on" a gender that would upset them for one reason or another, this will involve altering the clothes one originally has in order to signal unconventionality. This may involve tearing them or adding sequins, or wearing them reversed, but it is still limited to what is already offered in stores or in the closet. The choice is curtailed. This may make it seem that what one is doing is not "choosing" or "subverting" gender at all (Salih 50). As Sara Salih argued:

> You cannot go out and get a whole new gender wardrobe for yourself, since, as Butler puts it, "There is only taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tools lying there." So you have to make do with the tools … or the clothes you already have, radically modifying them in ways which will reveal the unnatural nature of gender. (Salih 67)

The last stanza of *"ISANG TANONG, ISANG SAGOT"* also entails the concept of performativity as parody and drag, an imitation for which there is really no original which displaces heterocentric assumptions by revealing that heterosexual identities are as constructed and "unoriginal" as the imitations of them. In other words, heterosexuality is, in itself, also a kind of drag (Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" 306).

The last lines also argue that all people put on performances—what displaces or subverts notions of gender is not whether one performs or not, but *how* one performs. "Identity is intrinsically political and construction and deconstruction (note that they are not antithetical) are the necessary –and in fact the *only*—scenes of agency. Subversion must take place within the existing discourse since that is all there is" (68). More than succumbing to enslavement, recognizing and being self-aware that one operates in a certain discourse allows one to move about it and to exercise agency, just as Aida Santos does by using the decisions of others to enable her to choose what identity *not* to wear.

CONCLUSION

In the study, we saw how Aida Santos negotiates the dilemma of using hetero-patriarchal language versus debilitating silence by her recourse to a self-reflexive poetry that questions the dominant order and creates room for lesbian discourse as in "Spaces" and "Memories III." We also saw how the idea of performativity operates in the language of the poems and her construction of subjectivity. This exposition of performativity functions in two ways – by showing how language is performative, Aida Santos shows us how we can turn language around, to empty it from dominant ideology, and convey the contradictions of male discourse from female experience (as in Memories II). As Aida Santos's poetry shows, this experience can be traumatic and wounding, as language itself performs the multiple-violence – one, in creating societal notions of "sex" and "gender" that is damaging and repressive; and two, by allowing one to relive those experiences in writing. The relation of a lesbian poet and hetero-patriarchal language is therefore, one of ambiguity, but not without promise of agency and transformation.

We also read Aida Santos's vision of desire as liberated from coerced singularity in *"ISANG TANONG, ISANG SAGOT."* Desire, as we found in the poem, may also reflect a primary loss or separation but not necessarily one that is heterocentric or signaling a "desire for an impossible return." She also believes that there is a possibility for desire that does not consume but rather highlights diversity. Through her poetry, we see a clear illustration of why "desire is never fully recoverable to ourselves because of discourse and language."

"What do women want?" is one of Freud's major questions which he never got to answer in his lifetime. Through Judith Butler, Aida Santos, and other feminist theorists, at least we're several steps closer to answering this, first, by knowing how this desire functions, and second, by understanding the reasons why we can't understand what we desire.

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KOLUM KRITIKA

GOING TO YALE

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About the Author
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I had ready responses to statements that came my way as soon as I received the news of my admission to Yale. There were the requisite congratulations. But as soon as these were done with, there came the reminder: "Come back before you enjoy America too much." I would nod my head, flash a smile, or say a conclusive yes as a response. Surely these people did not mean harm. But after listening to the same old refrain, it became upsetting.

I understand where such reminders come from. In a country where close to 5,000 Filipinos in search of better fortunes leave everyday, only the heartless can miss the point. What will happen, for instance, if we leave the country to warmongering politicians? Who will take care of the sick if nurses pack their bags and dash to New York?

Two years ago, my own brother left for Saudi Arabia. He turned 20 at the time. He was so young yet so bold. It said on his passport that he was going to work as a plumber, but he was actually there as a fashion designer. The minute my brother's plane took off, I began to know how tragic the country was. Her children, as young as twenty, would rather leave the familiarity of home to face the uncertainty of foreign shores.

When people like my brother return, they are usually honored in state celebrations. During her presidency, Corazon Aquino declared overseas contract workers as the nation's new heroes. The state finally recognized the worth of those who had left and returned.

This is not to say that the recognition has done anything to stop the national exodus. What I rather want to stress is the kind of respect and admiration given to overseas workers

who return. The honor may prove useless in the end, but for whatever its worth, it is symbolic.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of my own recent departure. When friends congratulate and remind me to return, I get this odd feeling that it is not felicitation that is being expressed, but suspicion. Those who have the good fortune to go to America are always doubted: they will not return until proven otherwise. I think it is an undeserved judgment of character.

Let me say why. When I arrived at Yale, its neo-gothic buildings, beautiful courtyards, tree-lined streets, and magical rooftops and spires welcomed me. One night, I was looking for food and my search brought me to Broadway Street. I marched past a group of white undergraduates waiting outside Toad's Place for the night's concert. As I walked in their midst, it became painfully obvious to me that brown was the color of my skin. And for the very first time, I felt my brownness. For Yale is indeed a white man's haven. The blacks and the yellows and the browns are hard to spot. And it is easy to think that they have no business being here.

But things changed when a friend brought me to the heart of Yale called Beinecke Plaza—a square marked out by two neoclassical buildings, one of which houses the president's office. In the open space at the center, a towering flagpole stands as a memorial. Its base has sculptured flowers and an inscription that reads: "Augustus Canfield Ledyard, 1st Class Lieutenant, US Army Killed in Action on the Island of Negros, Philippines, December 8, 1899." Not too far from the flagpole lies another memorare bearing these words: "In memory of all the men of Yale, who true to her Traditions, gave their Lives that Freedom might not perish from the Earth, 1914-1918."

And I thought of Ledyard who fell in battle on the island of Negros. Was it really a fight for freedom when the Filipinos that he encountered merely defended their own? What were the traditions to which Ledyard proved true? Then I came to know that the campus was full of memorials to men whose names evoked the turbulent years following the Filipino-American War. There is, for example, a commemorative plaque in memory of William Howard Taft, the chief civil administrator of the occupied Philippines who ensured the pacification of Filipinos so that American freedom might endure. The irony is not so subtle. The memorial that stands at the heart of Yale—a testament to its gilded traditions—is for the most part a memorial to forgetting. For Ledyard's fight for freedom is the loss of another's liberty. A memorial for him is the mockery of another's history. Who will tell this?

More than a hundred years after Ledyard fell on the island of Negros, I have come to

take part in the same traditions that had molded the fallen hero into an American immortal. Perhaps it is time that somebody went to America to narrate the other tale that is in need of memorials. It may not save the Philippines from bankruptcy nor earn recognition from its demagogues, but it will make the people remember more fully and authentically.

LITERARY SECTION

THREE POEMS

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THE TORMENT OF PHOEBUS

Blazes ripple off
burnished beams of gold,
the atrium is spackled
with splendor, columns

shafts of sunlight are. Such
storm of light the boy had
strained to look straight
into and unbridled in him

awe of a father,
an affection
he would steer to blunder.

Shards of a light (day and night)
smite him awake long after
his boy's every black limb has been retrieved.

A VISITATION

Of that perhaps— To begin with, a lie.
A misdeed the child, to his father's delight,
simpered and yessed to and bettered the surprise,
a heap of tricks, a trip to the circus,

his father had said when it was done,
We're not yet done—they snuck in
and in the dark strained and tottered to find
where was kept this seething fierce magnificent.

There. Circling inside tight metal ribs,
this thick black fanged lumbering bulk
grumbling its large resentment the boy
wanted to step back from. The stink
of his fear it smelled in the dark, knew where
to charge. There: where he was held in place.

PRAYER

My senses are dim, I cannot tell
if ill intents are furred with love;
under soft coat if wounds dwell
there tight and hid I cannot prove.

Nor is my tired soul keen to sight
shape of his affection, if otherwise: stoop
that fits ill I feel on one's might,
an eagle nature that must bend to a coop.

That again these eyes turn bleary, blind:
the dark bottom of this river stirred
so to the surface which long ago sank

weary and washed of its rank;
That this creature sees no reason not to bend
as a son would from your cup to drink.