

Disavowal of Acknowledged Truths': Ideology, Symbol and Culture in The Filipino Text, *Morning in Nagrebcan*

The paper analyzed the text, *Morning in Nagrebcan* by Manuel E. Arguilla, a man considered as one of the unsung heroes during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines for being a guerilla himself and for using the power of the pen. Unknown to the enemies, he hid in the comfort of his riveting stories in English to disclose the maneuverings done to the poor Filipinos during the 1940s. The study looked into various types of issues that fundamentally hinged on class, gender, and power relations, among many others. In examining these issues, an ideological, symbolical, and cultural reading of the text was employed in the contexts of Louis Althusser, Matthew Arnold, and Jacques Lacan, respectively. The Derridean method of deconstruction was also used to examine some major portions of the story. In addition, the notions of absence and presence, whether in the literal and figurative sense were also examined, and that the concept that the absence of the actual author must be rejected was likewise introduced. The Freudian speculation that the very spirit of presence is actually shaped by absence, and one's writing also formed part of the analyses. Consequently, this work came up with conceptions of the real and transcendent sense of distinct philosophical ideas and similarly used that of Derrida's *sous rature* – a technique which meant knowing “under erasure”.

Introduction

The researcher reveres places that have their exclusive folklore or country story that they can claim exclusively as their own. As an Ilocana, thus, she put it upon herself to search for stories that originated from the Ilocandia region (Region 1 or Ilocos Region, Region 2 or Cagayan Valley and Region 3 or Central Luzon). In this way, she can connect better with her roots, understand her own people somehow, be exposed to their stories and way of living. And probably, as a result of which, she can get a better understanding of the past which will then connect her to the present. In the future, the researcher plans to tell these stories to her children and grandchildren in order to enrich their bond with something that can they can trace back to a past that is distinctively theirs, free from confusion and mindset that is controlled by philosophies of another race or culture.

Synopsis

This story told about a remarkable day in the life of two brothers, ten-year old, Baldo and his younger brother, Ambo. One beautiful sunny day at a farm land in Nagrebcan, the older brother, Baldo, was playing with a cute black-spotted puppy. He liked it so much that he lovingly played with it. Meanwhile, the younger one, Ambo, about seven years old woke up and he also wanted to play with the puppy that his older brother Baldo was playing with yet he was not allowed due to a certain reason. This resulted in a fracas between the two

brothers until the fight became physical. Tang Ciaco, their father, heard the two boys and he immediately came to resolve their dispute. His solution was to badly beat his sons Baldo and Ambo with firewood. Then strike at the puppy with the same firewood and throw it up high in thin air that when it dropped, it already seemed lifeless. While the boys were being hit, their mother, Nana Elang attempted to rescue them. But in futility since Tang Ciaco simply shouted invectives at her and she could not do anything but cry before the family and the onlooker-neighbors.

Still in horrified shock, the two brothers went to the poor lifeless puppy. They buried him elsewhere at the cornfields and returned home, until —the sun had risen high above the Katayaghan hills, and warm, golden sunlight filled Nagrebcan.

The Author: Manuel E. Arguilla (1911-1944)

The critic Leopoldo Y. Yabes cited Manuel E. Arguilla as —*the best craftsman among Filipino fictionists in English, (whose voice) is the only really authentic voice. He is shamelessly Filipino.* Until now, critics consider Arguilla's short stories unrivalled in his depiction of the life of the Ilocano farmer. He is known for his popular short story collection, *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Short Stories*. This won 1st prize in the 1940 Commonwealth Literary Competition. A good number of his stories portray scenes in Barrio Nagrebcan and Bauang, La Union, where he was born. Even when he studied and graduated at the University of the Philippines, where he majored in Education, his link to the barrio environment remained manifest in his stories.

On August 5, 1944, he was captured and tortured by the Japanese army at Fort Santiago for having been known to have organized a secret guerilla intelligence unit against the Japanese. Some records revealed that he was later transferred to the Manila Chinese Cemetery with other guerrilla leaders. There, they were commanded to dig their own graves, after which, the Japanese soldiers beheaded them.

On June 12, 1972, Arguilla was honored with a posthumous award, the republic Cultural Heritage Award for producing literary works that have —*continued to influence Filipino fiction writing... and literary scholarship.* A marker was installed in his hometown on August 25, 1983 in his honor. (sources: https://www.reddit.com/r/Philippines/comments/372pgn/as_filipinos_what_are_your_feelings_towards_japan/ and <http://pantasprojectphils.net84.net/lit-elib/arguilla.html>)

Historical Background

Morning in Nagrebcan was written sometime during the Second Philippine Republic, more formally known as the Republic of the Philippines. It is also otherwise known as the —Japanese-Sponsored Philippine Republic after the Philippines had been established as a —puppet state during the

Japanese occupation on October 14, 1943. The Japanese entered Manila, then declared as an —open city on January 2, 1942. Afterward, they established it as the capital. Japan fully captured the Philippines on May 6, 1942, after the Battle of Corregidor.

The third president of the Philippines, during his term, Jose P. Laurel was faced with various issues such as shortages of food, clothing, oil, and other necessities, heavy Japanese military presence throughout the entire region, and Japanese control of transportation, media, and communications. Laurel attempted to show that the independence of the republic was genuine by addressing these problems.

On September 21, 1944, Laurel put the Republic under Martial Law. On September 23, 1944, the Republic officially declared war against the United States and United Kingdom. Following the return of the Americans, the government of the Second Republic evacuated Manila to Baguio. The republic was formally dissolved by Laurel in Tokyo on August 17, 1945. In one anonymous account regarding feelings of Filipinos toward Japan, one recounted:

My late grandfather was alive during this time and I remember him telling me stories of how those days were dark and they had to live in fear everyday. How they would dig a hole in the ground or find a cave just to escape being beaten by some Japanese soldiers. They were afraid for the women because they would get captured and raped. They were afraid for the innocent children whose futures were unsure back then. I remember feeling sick hearing this and seeing my grandpa looking dazed while he told this. (source: <http://pantasprojectphils.net84.net/lit-elib/arguilla.html>)

Analysis

Culture and Anarchy

Culture is to Desire What Right Reasons Commands

Matthew Arnold, in his famous essay *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) gives an insightful thought to people aspiring certain goals. Here he says: Now, if culture, which means trying to perfect oneself, and one's mind as part of oneself, brings us light, and if light shows us that there is nothing so very blessed in merely doing as one likes, that the worship of mere freedom to do as one likes, is worship of machinery, that the really blessed thing is to like what right reasons ordain and to follow her authority, then we have got a practical benefit out of culture. We have got a much wanted principle, a principle of authority, to counteract the tendency to anarchy. These are very moving words from an intellectual like Arnold. This rhetoric on culture serves as a good starter and an eye-opener to view this text of Arguilla more openly, and with a perceived purpose at the end. According to Arnold, culture is not just freely doing what one desires nor purely wanting to perfect oneself but all this must bow down before right reason and good cause. Otherwise, we run the risk of creating disorder within our own selves and possibly to that of others. This

story by Arguilla who was part of the intelligence unit of the guerilla movement serves as a shocking revelation of the horrors experienced by the peasant Filipino during Japanese regime. This story was not written only for the proliferation of aesthetic writing, which no doubt, Arguilla has already mastered. But beneath this fine work of art is the mirror image of the working class Ilocanos, who goes through their routinary lives, debased, abused, prostituted by the Japanese colonizers. This story serves as an arousal for Filipinos to realize that type of government that led them during Japanese regime: the puppet government headed by the dummy president, Laurel.

Culture as an Agent to Stop Human Error

Consequently, Arnold also opens our eyes to another angle of culture: —There is a view in which all the love of our neighbor, the impulses towards action, help and beneficence, the desire for stopping human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing the sum of human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it, --motives eminently such as are called social,--come in as part of the grounds of culture. . (Arnold, 1869). Arnold seemed prophetic when he said this as this particular text probably achieved its goal, *i.e.* to liberate the Filipinos from enemy shackle. Since after having written this story, the author Manuel Arguilla, was held as prisoner by the Japanese and as mentioned, commanded to dig his own grave immediately prior to being beheaded.

Morning in Nagrebcan significantly ends itself with somewhat a hopeful tone, a purging, a cleansing spirit when it stated: —The mist (highlighting supplied) on the tobacco fields had completely dissolved (highlighting supplied). And if this is to be compared with one of the opening lines: —In the grey shadow of the hills, the barrio was gradually awaking, the words —grey shadow gives the impression that something has to be unveiled and cleared. As Arnold aptly posits in his concept of culture, culture is something that clears confusion and probably unrest and in the course of the act of clearing out disorder, human misery is reduced and this is supposed to produce a situation where one is more happily disposed into leaving the world, knowing that somehow a better place is left behind. This definition of culture by Arnold is manifest in this story, *Morning in Nagrebcan*. The gradual turn of events, through the effective operation of its setting, characters, theme, plot and dialogue would lead an enlightened reader many clues about the disparate practices of the colonizers hiding beyond the shroud of —benevolent assimilation (a strategy of the colonizers, specifically the Americans, in order for them to lay claim over a certain territory).

The text itself breathes of injustices, deaths and the cyclical flow of inequity that governs the Filipino people's lives during the Japanese regime. The text makes one realize the recurring condition of oppression that the Filipinos then experienced. This is best evidenced in the scene when after the brothers had jointly buried the black-spotted puppy, brothers Baldo and Ambo renew their good relations: —Then they covered the dog with soft earth and stamped on the grave until the disturbed ground was flat and hard. With difficulty they rolled a big stone on top of the grave. Then Baldo wound an arm

1 around the shoulders of Ambo and without a word they hurried up to the house.
 2 As earlier pointed out, one aspect of culture is leaving the world or dying with
 3 the —noble aspiration that it will become better and happier than before.
 4 Though in the story, no human life was actually taken, the death of the black-
 5 spotted puppy may be a metaphor of one's departure from the world. For after
 6 the puppy's death, the former enemies, Baldo and Ambo, already have become
 7 comrades.

8 Moving forward, Edward Said, in a 1993 published book, *Culture and*
 9 *Imperialism*, identified two main types of culture. First, —it means all those
 10 practices like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that
 11 have relative autonomy from the economic, social and political realms and that
 12 often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure.

13 Second: —. . . and almost imperceptibly, culture is a concept that includes
 14 a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has
 15 been known and thought, as Matthew Arnold put it in the 1960s¹¹. Logically,
 16 this text forms part of the second definition of culture since *Morning in*
 17 *Nagrebcan* is now considered as a treasure in the portals of Filipino literature.
 18 Although it has aesthetic qualities as well, but the end goal of this story is to
 19 refine and elevate consciousness of the Filipinos *en masse*, as a nation.
 20

21 *Ideology*

23 Arguilla as an Intellectual

24 In Althusser's book, *For Marx* (1969), the term —'intellectuals' denotes a
 25 very specific type of militant intellectual, a type unprecedented in many
 26 respects. . . armed with the most authentic scientific and theoretical culture
 27 forwarned of the crushing reality and manifold mechanisms of all forms of the
 28 ruling ideology and constantly on the watch for them . . . Moreover, the
 29 intellectual that is perceived in this definition is one with clear confidence in
 30 the working class —and direct participation in its struggles. Looking at the text
 31 more closely, one can see the how carefully the characters were depicted that
 32 every detail of the working class' way of living is made evident. Just in the
 33 case of Tang Ciaco, Arguilla described him as: —. . . a big gaunt man with
 34 thick bony wrists and stoop shoulders. A short sleeved cotton shirt revealed his
 35 sinewy arms on which the blood vessels stood out like roots. His short pants
 36 showed his bony-kneed, hard-muscled legs covered with black hair. He was a
 37 carpenter. He had come home drunk the night before. On the other hand, Tang
 38 Ciaco's wife is described as: —Nana Elang must have been thirty but she
 39 looked at least fifty. She was a thin, wispy woman, with bony hands and arms.
 40 She had scanty, straight graying hair which she gathered behind her head in a
 41 small tight knot. It made her look thinner than ever. Her cheekbones seemed on
 42 the point of bursting through the dry, yellowish-brown skin. Above a gray-
 43 checkered skirt, she wore a single widesleeved cotton blouse that ended below
 44 her flat breasts. . . Such descriptions of Tang Ciaco and Nana Elang are so
 45 explicit that only a person who has lived in a similar or at the exact same
 46 environment can make such vivid illustrations. These are barrio folks that are
 47 being portrayed and the hard life and struggles that these people experience are

1 shown through the way they look, the type of skin they have and the clothes
2 they wore, among others.

3 The archetypal male and female are also observed in such descriptions.
4 Notice that for Tang Ciaco, descriptors such as —big, —thick, —sinewy,
5 —muscled, —drunk are used to exemplify characteristics common to the tough
6 Filipino macho man while Nana Elang's are: —thin, —wispy, —smallll, —dry,
7 —flat which are expected of the emblematic barrio woman or the —manang (a
8 woman who looks relatively older than her age and does not take care of her
9 looks). Below are images of the rural men and woman from the Ilocos region
10 during the early 20th century, which more or less matches Arguilla's description
11 of Nana Elang and Tang Ciaco.

12
13 Ilocano woman smoking cigar. (circa 1940) Credit: pinoykollektor.Blogspot. com



1

2 Ilocano men in Nueva Ecija held as first prisoners of the Philippine revolution
 3 in 1896. Credit:<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/i/image/image->



4

5

6 The working class Filipino's way of life is also illustrated in the other
 7 characters in the text during the 1940s: —Several fishermen wearing coffee-
 8 colored shirts and trousers and hats made from the shell of white pumpkins. . .
 9 the smoke of their home-made cigars floated behind them . . . While their
 10 women are portrayed as: — carrying big baskets . . . going to the tobacco field.
 11 They walked fast, talking among themselves. Each morning in Nagrebcan, this
 12 seemed to be the commonplace state of things. Divest of all things imperial,
 13 theirs was simply the plain, labor-driven, without frills lifestyle. Their trade,
 14 though, never really pointed out in the story, seemed to belong to those of the
 15 tobacco farmers'.

16 In Pierre Macherey's *A Theory of Literary Production* (1978), we are
 17 introduced to the notion that before we conduct a study of a literary text, —we
 18 must ask: From what new centre is the work of fiction carried out? From here,
 19 we are introduced to the concept of . . . _symptomatic reading which enables us
 20 to identify those gaps and silences, contradictions and absences, which deforms
 21 the text and reveal the repressed presence of those ideological materials, mentioned
 22 in the translator's preface of Pierre Macherey's above-mentioned
 23 book (Geoffrey Wall, 1978). If we are then to apply a symptomatic reading of
 24 this text, one may realize concepts about labor, the working class, hardships of
 25 the common Filipino but the attitude of resiliency despite difficult times is
 26 likewise apparent.

27

28 *Symbol*

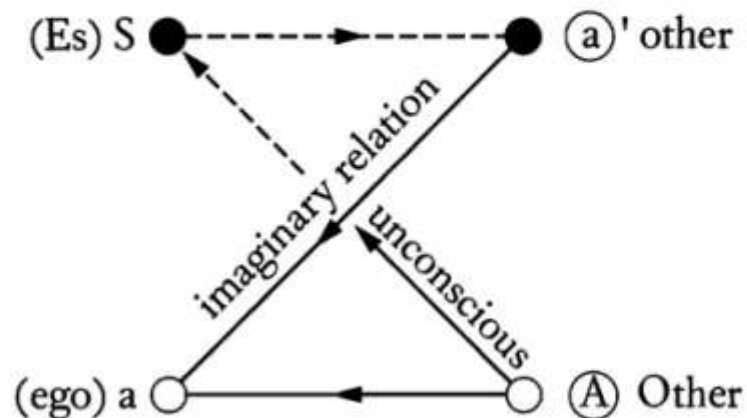
29

30 —Thus, if man comes to think about the symbolic order [the symbolic,
 31 the imaginary and the real], it is because he is first caught in it in his being.

The illusion that he has formed this order through his consciousness stems from the fact that it is through the path way of a specific gap in his imaginary relationship with his semblable that he has been able to enter this order as a subject (Lacan, 1977). The —imaginary in the image below speaks of the —other while the —unconscious refers to the unconscious past and the experiential objects —present and future incarnating it (Lacan, 1977).

Figure 1. *The L Schema from Lacan's, Ecrits (1977)*

L SCHEMA



The image above image of the L Schema is taken from Lacan's book, *Ecrits* (1977).

Note that Lacan has several other Schemas such as the Schemas R and L. Schema L serves a guide in analyzing intersubjective relations and has its foundation in Freud's theory on psychoanalysis, which basically concerns itself with the study of the interaction of the conscious and the unconscious in the human psyche (OED Online, Oxford University Press). In my novice attempt to simplify this work of Lacan on the —symbolic, —real and —imaginary, the —symbolic and the —real create a certain sense resemblance brought about by the unconscious or the —imaginary mind of a person. In this study, it will appear that the —symbolic is the story itself or the language used therein and the —real is, according to Lacan (1977) speaks of an absolute fullness . . . devoid of the negativities of absences, antagonisms, gaps, lacks, splits, etc.

Below are some aspects of the story where the interplay the —imaginary, the —symbolic and the —real are somehow observed.

Accordingly, the black-spotted puppy caressed by two boys seemingly symbolize the Filipinos trying to be won over by the Americans and the Japanese colonizers. Note that during the 1940s, the American made a promise through Gen. Douglas Mc Arthur that they —shall return. Hence, it was the Japanese which was the ruling administration when this story was written. The

puppy signifies the Filipino people trying to find security in either brothers who have the same goal—to merely pet and play with it. In the same vain that the puppy's going mad is a representation of the reality of the Filipinos' sudden awakening from the tyrannical shackles of the American and Japanese colonizers. And when this happened, the erstwhile docile and submissive Filipinos would strike back at the very —hand that fed them, *i.e.* the alien invaders.

After having gone through the —Schema image of Lacan above, it dawned on me that the puppy may be a semblance of the author, Arguilla, himself. Note that he was described by renown Filipino writer, F. Sionil Jose since he often saw him at the National Library before:

- you couldn't miss him, because he had this black patch on his cheek, a birthmark or an overgrown mole. (Sionil, 2005).

Further, as depicted in the text, after the fight of brothers Baldo and Ambo over the black-spotted puppy: —He [Ambo] grabbed the tail of the puppy and jerked hard as the dog fell to the ground. It turned around and snapped at the hand holding its tail. Its sharp little teeth sank into the fleshy edge of Ambo's palm. The charming puppy had now apparently gone mad. This image of the formerly cuddly puppy can be a semblance or a mirror as well of the attitude of

Arguilla himself against the colonizers since through his membership in the guerilla movement and his short stories, through these little deeds, he is able to attack and strike at the Japanese armed forces.

Nanang Elang being called a —prostitute by Tang Ciaco, her husband, whenever he gets angry, is also a symbolical mechanism given the public knowledge that Filipinas during Japanese regime had to succumb as —comfort women to serve the Japanese army's masculine relief. This can be Arguilla's mirror as well of the Filipino people's prostitution as a nation by acquiescing to be part of the puppet government.

It is also note worthy that the words —black spotted puppy, in reference to the puppy subject of the boys playfulness and Tang Ciaco's anger, were mentioned about 11 times all throughout the text and the word —puppy was mentioned even more frequently due to its 48 times appearance in the text. In Merriam Webster, the term —puppy is defined as —a young domestic dog, specifically less than a year old. Another definition is —used in a playful way to refer to a thing or to a person. This may be a conscious or unconscious strategy of Arguilla's mind for the repetitive mention of the words puppy and black-spotted puppy may be like a siren or alarm, ringing to the ears non-stop, until the listener's attention is caught and they are brought to reality.

Accordingly, the telling of the story successfully serves as a split image of a reality that is set to open the minds of its readers. This is how these symbols are used in order to unearth hidden meanings, sometimes, of the author's knowing or unknowing mind. —Thus a fable is as appropriate as any other story for shedding light on it—provided we are willing to put the fable's coherence to the test said Jacques Lacan in his *Ecrits* (1977, p. 12). In addition, he said of the significant portions of the story that: —We quickly perceive,

moreover, what makes these components necessary and realize that their composer could not have created them unintentionally. For the narration effectively doubles the drama with a commentary without which no *mise-en-scène* (direction or staging as in theater) would be possible.

Reflection/Conclusion

Truths are only truths if we have done our part to ascertain the status of something as indeed free from falsity. Truth has to deal with both genuineness and precision. This paper on *Morning in Nagrebcan* by Arguilla has gone through layers of investigation. I had to view it using different angles and perspectives in order for me to come up with an objective finding as to the message of the author, the text itself and the consequent message of the text to me as receiver of the author's message. There is no perfect interpretation but the one I made using the lenses of Lacan, Arnold and Althusser, among others, cultivated greater maturity in me as a reader. It also developed within me the skill of discernment, where I learned not to only focus on the text itself alone but in the component parts that constitute it and this includes the author, the prevailing conditions during the time the text was written and the possible implication of each and every word, character, symbol, and setting used in the story. Through these lenses I have mentioned above, decoding and recognizing textual representations made it somehow less complicated in exploring the contextual meaning of *Morning in Nagrebcan*.

Further, as I went through the short story, I realized that I was able to segment it into four (4) significant parts and in the course thereof, I also discovered some aspects of the Derridean concept of *absence* and *presence* in it. According to Jacques Derrida, also known as the father of deconstruction, in his book of *Grammatology* (as translated by G.C. Spivak, 1976), —. . . “*trace*” (the French word that carries strong implications of track, footprint, imprint), a word that cannot be a master word, that presents itself as the mark of an anterior *presence*, origin, master. . . Derrida also says in the same book that it is a human need to be comforted with —notions of presence, writing in the —literal sense, signifying the absence of the actual author, must be —rejected. . . In fact Freud speculates that the very mansion of presence, the perceiving self, is shaped by absence, and —writing. Thus, one may plausibly conclude that what is so called —absent is not missing in the real sense of it in the text for the author himself is pervadingly present in the material. And this can be a technique of *sous rature* or —_knowing_ under erasure, as Nietzsche says (cited in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, 1976). Moreover, these erasures may also be present in the text but attempting to mirror or double as something equivalent to what is —literally and presently stated. In brief, what may metaphorically be present may essentially be absent and vice versa.

Below are three (3) of the aforesaid instances where the Derridean notion of absence and presence are somewhat observable:

1. The scenic and glorious depiction of the beautiful Katyaghan Hills in Barrio Nagrebcan during sunrise. —*The fine bluish mist, low over the tobacco fields was lifting and thinning moment by moment.*” This line may signify the presence of hope and expectation of brighter turn around of events due to the —lifting of the mist in the story which seem like a cinematic effect in theaters when a much expected show is about to begin. But to the reader’s aghast, he will later on discover that anticipation of something good and better will never develop into reality. For the story gradually presents the raucous scuffle between the brothers, Baldo and Ambo. Which will later on result into the miserable death of the favorite black spotted puppy. If one will look at this closely, the pleasant day that was at hand and —present is in truth and in fact —absentl. As the story closes, —”The mist on the tobacco fields had completely dissolved.” The word —”dissolved” signified a vanishing act, a melting into oblivion. Yet the cunning reader very well knew that the conflict may not yet be fully dissolved at that moment. And that instance of the mist completely dissolving itself in the tobacco fields is just temporarily relief, promising of a repetition of what just recently transpired—the fight between the brother, the raging anger of Tang Ciaco, the sobbing of Nana Elang, the beating of the children and probably the subsequent death of any of the four other remaining puppies—the entire spectacle being witnessed by the neighbors once again.
2. The seemingly innocent and playful introduction of the brothers, young boys Baldo and Ambo, ten and seven years old, respectively. Baldo’s (the older brother), remark may signify presence of culture and traces of being civilized as he cautioned his younger brother, Ambo, not to eat the banana with its peel. Baldo retorted to his brother: —You foolish boy, remove the skin. Note that colonizers then wanted the Filipinos to be civilized for according to them, the Filipinos are in want of culture. While Ambo in the scene may be a depiction of the *indios* (Filipino native; belonging to the lower class of society), in whose very being, the manifestation of culture and taste is absent. This is portrayed in the following scene: —Ambo begged to be allowed to hold the black-spotted puppy. But Baldo said he would not let him hold the blackspotted puppy because he would not peel the banana. . .
3. The archetypal Filipino mother, the domesticated, submissive and repressed Nana Elang, who rarely spoke in the text nearly appeared absent through her lack of —voice in the significant scenes—especially during the *mêlée* between the brothers. In the story, after the fight, she was depicted: —Nana Elang knelt by her children and dusted their clothes and —Nana Elang put one arm around Ambo. She sucked the wound on his hand. She was crying silently. But never was it mentioned that she tried to shield nor defend her children against the fiery anger of Tang Ciaco. Moreover, the text reveals that —If Nana Elang ventured to remonstrate, he would beat them harder and curse her for being an interfering whore. Earlier in the scene Tang Ciaco heatedly screams at

his wife: —"You are a prostitute" and he will later refer to the children: —. . . "you bastards". Interestingly, the metaphoric absence of Nana Elang was countered by the strong and brooding presence of Tang Ciaco. As he himself declared — "I am king in my house." He sees himself superior above anyone else, his ears closed to any justification that his children like to provide to prove that the puppy has not really gone mad. Instead, he said to them: —"Fools! Don't you see it is mad?" Tang Ciaco loosely concluded this even if he did not have any idea on what earlier transcribed.

Analyzing *Morning in Nagrebcan* never appealed to the author as interesting until the author dug down deeply into its opulent text. The author then realized that there were various moments in my own life that I had probably experienced such undue formation from my own home, my family, my school my relationships, my employment, my faith, and in nearly all aspects of my life. But the author grateful that through this study, she was introduced to these various helpful literary devices which she could utilize in studying other texts or objects in the future. In addition, the author now was more aware that she have to be clear with her own end goal, specifically her life philosophy. As Matthew Arnold wrote in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), it is not enough that we wanted to perfect something, that one has great passion . . . Because such want must be coupled with the longing to help or to serve others—until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with [one's] sweetness and light.

To conclude, the author had a rekindling that as a literature teacher, it is her responsibility not only to introduce remarkable literary pieces to her classes, those that have stood time's test and has the element of universality. But to stimulate her students' creativity and inquisitiveness as well. For in so doing, she can lead them into discovering their deepest passions and desires—their own realities and truth.

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https://www.reddit.com/r/Philippines/comments/372pgn/as_filipinos_what_are_your_feelings_towards_japan/

Appendix. Original Text of Morning in Nagrebcan by Manuel Arguilla



compactly built, and he stood straight on his long legs. He wore one of his father's discarded cotton undershirts.

The boy descended the ladder, leaning heavily on the single ladder railing that served as a banister. He sat on the lowest step of the ladder, yawning and rubbing his eyes one after the other. Bending down, he reached between his legs for the black-spotted puppy. He held it to him, stroking its soft, warm body. He blew on its nose. The puppy stuck out a small red tongue, licking the air. It whined eagerly. Baldo laughed—a low gurgle.

He rubbed his face against that of the dog. He said softly, "My puppy. My puppy." He said it many times. The puppy licked his ears, his cheeks. When it licked his mouth, Baldo straightened up, raised the puppy on a level with his eyes. "You are a foolish puppy," he said, laughing. "Foolish, foolish, foolish," he said, rubbing the puppy on his leg as that it howled.

The four other puppies woke and came scrambling about Baldo's legs. He put down the black-spotted puppy and ran to the narrow foot bridge of seven split-bamboo spanning the roadside ditch. When it rained, water from the roadway flowed under the makeshift bridge, but it had not rained for a long time and the ground was dry and sandy. Baldo sat on the bridge, digging his bare feet into the sand, feeling the cool particles sweeping between his toes. He whistled, a toothless whistle with a curious trilling to it produced by placing the tongue against the lower teeth and then curving it up and down. The whistle excited the puppies; they ran to the dog as fast as their unsteady legs could carry them, barking chirpy little barks.

Nana Elang, the mother of Baldo, now appeared in the doorway with a handful of rice straw. She called Baldo and told him to get some live coals from their neighbor.

"Get two or three burning coals and bring them home on the rice straw," she said. "Do not wave the straw in the wind. If you do, it will catch fire before you get home." She watched him run toward Ka Kuo's house where already smoke was rising through the slips roofing into the misty air. One or two empty cigarettes drawn by sleepy little parties curled along the jibbly street, blown for the railroad station.

Nana Elang must have been thirty, but she looked at least fifty. She was a thin, wiry woman, with long hands and arms. She had wavy, straight, graying hair which she gathered behind her head in a small,

tight knot. It made her look thinner than soon. Her cheekbones seemed on the point of bursting through the dry, yellowish-brown skin. Above a gray-checked skirt, she wore a single wide-sleeved cotton blouse that ended below her flat breasts. Sometimes when she stooped or reached up for anything, a glimpse of the flesh at her waist showed in a dark, purplish band where the skirt had been tied so often.

She turned from the doorway into the small, untidy kitchen. She washed the rice and put it in a pot which she placed on the coal stove. She made ready the other pot for the mass of vegetables and dried fish. When Baldo came back with the rice straw and burning coals, she told him to start a fire in the stove, while she cut the armpitless trousers and sliced the eggplants. When the fire finally flamed inside the clay stove, Baldo's eyes were watering from the smoke of the rice straw.

"There is the fire, mother," he said. "Is father awake already?"

Nana Elang shook her head. Baldo went out slowly as light.

There were already many people going out. Several fishermen wearing coffee-colored shirts and trousers and hats made from the shell of white pumpkins passed by. The smoke of their home-made cigars flamed behind them like clouds of the morning mist. Women carrying big empty baskets were going to the tobacco fields. They walked fast, talking among themselves. Each woman had gathered the loose folds of her skirt in front and, twisting the end two or three times, passed it between her legs, pulling it up at the back, and slipping it inside her waist. The women seemed to be wearing trousers that reached only to their knees and flared at the thighs.

Day was quickly growing older. The sun flamed redly and Baldo called to his mother, "Look, mother, God also cooks his breakfast."

He went to play with the puppies. He sat on the bridge and took them on his lap one by one. He searched for fleas which he crushed between his thumbnails. "You, puppy. You, puppy," he murmured softly. When he held the black-spotted puppy, he said, "My puppy. My puppy."

Andie, his seven-year old brother, awoke crying. Nana Elang could be heard patiently calling him to the kitchen. Later he came down with a ripe banana in his hand. Andie was almost as tall as his older brother and he had stout husky legs. Baldo often called him the son of an ape. The home-made cotton shirt he wore was variously stained. The pocket was torn, and it flapped down. He ate the banana without peeling it.

"You Jewish boy, remove the skin," Baldo said.

"I will not," Ambo said. "It is not your business." He took a big bite and swallowed it with exaggerated relish.

"But the skin is tart. It tastes bad."

"You are not eating it," Ambo said. The rest of the banana vanished in his mouth.

He sat beside Baldo and both played with the puppies. The mother dog had not yet returned and the puppies were becoming hungry and restless. They sniffed the hands of Ambo, licked his fingers. They tried to scramble up his breast to lick his mouth, but he brushed them down. Baldo laughed. He held the black-spotted puppy closely, fondled it lovingly. "My puppy," he said. "My puppy."

Ambo played with the other puppies, but he soon grew tired of them. He wanted the black-spotted one. He sidled close to Baldo and put out a hand to caress the puppy resting contentedly in the crook of his brother's arm. But Baldo struck the hand away. "Don't touch my puppy," he said. "My puppy."

Ambo begged to be allowed to hold the black-spotted puppy. But Baldo said he would not let him hold the black-spotted puppy because he would not pet the banana. Ambo then said that he would obey his older brother next time, for all time. Baldo would not believe him; he refused to let him touch the puppy.

Ambo rose to his feet. He looked longingly at the black-spotted puppy in Baldo's arm. Suddenly he bent down and tried to snatch the puppy away. But Baldo sent him sprawling in the dust with a dull pain. Ambo did not cry. He came up with a facial of mud which he flung in his brother's face. But as he started to run away, Baldo thrust out his leg and tripped him. In complete silence, Ambo slowly got up from the dust, getting to his feet with both hands full of mud which again he cast at his older brother. Baldo put down the puppy and leaped upon Ambo.

Seeing the black-spotted puppy waddling away, Ambo turned around and made a dive for it. Baldo saw his intention in time and both fell on the puppy which began to howl loudly, struggling to get away. Baldo cursed Ambo and screamed at him as they grappled and rolled in the sand. Ambo kicked and hit and scratched without a sound. He got hold of Baldo's ear and hair and tugged with all his might. They rolled over and over and then Baldo was sitting on Ambo's back, pounding

him with his feet. He accompanied every blow with a curse. "I hate you, you little demon," he said between sobs, for he was crying and he could hardly see. Ambo wriggled and struggled and tried to bite Baldo's legs. Failing, he buried his face in the sand and howled hoarsely.

Baldo now left him and ran to the black-spotted puppy which he caught up in his arms, holding it against his throat. Ambo followed, crying wet threats and curses. He grabbed the tail of the puppy and jerked hard. The puppy howled shrilly and Baldo let it go, but Ambo kept hold of the tail as the dog fell to the ground. It turned around and snapped at the hand holding its tail. Its sharp little teeth sank into the fleshy edge of Ambo's palm. With a cry, Ambo snatched away his hand from the mouth of the enraged puppy. At that moment the window of the house facing the street was pushed violently open and the boys' father, Yang Ciano, looked out. He saw the blood from the toothmarks on Ambo's hand. He called out immediately and the two brothers looked up in surprise and fear. Ambo hid his bitten hand behind him. Baldo stopped to pick up the black-spotted puppy, but Yang Ciano shouted hoarsely to him not to touch the dog. At Yang Ciano's angry voice, the puppy had crouched back snarling, its pink lips drawn back, the hair on its back rising. "The dog has gone mad," the man cried, coming down hurriedly. By the stove in the kitchen, he stopped to get a sizeable piece of firewood, throwing an angry look and a curse at Nana Elang for letting her sons play with the dogs. He removed a splinter or two, then hurried down the ladder, raving in a loud angry voice. Nana Elang ran to the doorway and stood there silently fingering her skirt.

Baldo and Ambo awaited the coming of their father with fear written on their faces. Baldo hated his father as much as he feared him. He watched him now with half a mind to flee as Yang Ciano approached with the piece of firewood held firmly in one hand. He a big, gaunt man with thick bushy brows and stoop shoulders. A short-sleeved cotton shirt revealed his shaggy arms on which the blood-veins stood out like roots. His short pants showed his lumpy-kneed, hard-muscle legs covered with black hair. He was a carpenter. He had come home drunk the night before. He was not an habitual drunkard, but now and then he drank great quantities of beer and came home and beat his wife and children. He would blame them for their hard life and poverty. "You are a prostitute," he would roar at his wife, and as he beat his children, he would shout, "I

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breakfast dishes. Later she came down and fed the mother dog. The two brothers were entirely hidden by the tall corn plants. As they moved about among the slender stalks, the corn-flowers shook agitatedly. Pollen scattered like gold dust in the sun, falling on the fuzzy green leaves.

When they found the dead dog, they buried it in one corner of the field. Baldo dug the grave with a sharp-pointed stake. Ambo stood silently by, holding the dead puppy.

When Baldo finished his work, he and his brother gently placed the puppy in the hole. Then they covered the dog with soft earth and stamped on the grave until the disturbed ground was flat and hard again. With difficulty they rolled a big stone on top of the grave. Then Baldo wound an arm around the shoulders of Ambo and without a word they hurried up to the house.

The sun had risen high above the Katayaghan hills, and warm, golden sunlight filled Nagrebcan. The mist on the tobacco fields had completely dissolved.

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