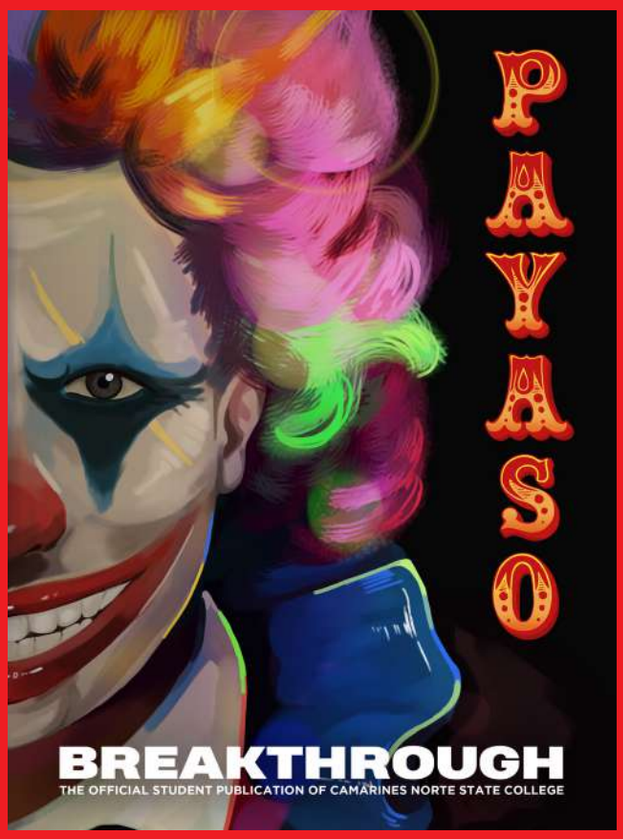
BREAKTHROUGH

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT PUBLICATION OF CAMARINES NORTE STATE COLLEGE

ABOUT THE COVER



Abracadabra!

Sa kabila ng kagila-gilalas na palabas at mahika ay nakakubli ang hindi matukoy na pandaraya. Kakaibang salamangka ang sangkap upang tayo'y tuluyang mapaniwala. Gamit ang makukulay na pinta sa kanyang mukha ay tinatakpan nito ang tunay na kulay ng kanyang pagkatao. Gayunpaman ay binibigyan niya tayo ng panandaliang halakhak sa pamamagitan ng kanyang mga taktika at panloloko.

Siya ang hari sa karnabal na itinuturing niyang palasyo. Isang lugar na puno ng mga lar ng mga sasakyan na paiikutin ka't pababaligtarin ang sikmura mo't kaluluwa. Ngunit kahit gaano man ito nakakasuka at nakakalula ay hindi ka pa maaaring bumaba dahil patuloy ka niyang paglalaruan gamit ang kanyang kapangyarihan.

Maligayang pagdating sa Palasyo na ang haring nakaupo sa trono ay isang Payaso.

WORDS
Kim H. Hillera

ART
Rose Shelly Marie E. Barrameda

LAYOUT
Marc Joseph A. Andaya

DISCLAIMER

Views expressed in this magazine do not represent the opinions of the whole publication and of the Camarines Norte Stare College.

BREAKTHROUGH

SEC Reg. CN 201433265

EDITORIAL BOARD AND STAFF
A.Y. 2023-2024

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ARNOLD B. AÑORA

INTERNAL ASSOCIATE EDITOR
TRISTAN PAOLO G. CLEMENTE

EXTERNAL ASSOCIATE EDITOR
HAZEL A. ALBALATE

MANAGING EDITOR FOR FINANCE
RUTH ANTONNETTE C. TRAPANE

MANAGING EDITOR FOR PUBLICATION
MARIEL R. GARCIA

SENIOR EDITORS
MARC JOSEPH A. ANDAYA
KIM H. HILLERA
EUGELYN VILLANUEVA
MARIE CRIST R. CONMIGO

FEATURE EDITOR
ELAINE L. YANELA

LITERARY EDITOR
APRIL JANE L. PAQUITA

NEWS EDITOR
BARON ROY R. LONGAZA

DEVCOMM EDITOR
FRANCISCO Q. RAVIZ JR.

CHIEF VIDEO EDITOR
FRANCIS BENEDIC JEMSON B. INCIONG

CHIEF PHOTOJOURNALIST
RAISAH KAMILAH D. DAYTO

BROADCASTING HEAD
JONALD JAY S. ABARCA

CHIEF VIDEO JOURNALIST
CLARENCE L. VELASCO

CHIEF LAYOUT ARTIST
MARC ANGELO M. DEL BARRIO

ART PRODUCTION HEAD
ROSE SHELLY MARIE E. BARRAMEDA

CHIEF ONLINE ADMINISTRATOR
CHRISTINE JEAN J. MADERA

CIRCULATION MANAGERS
NIÑALYN B. MALONG
KESSEL MAE FORMENTERA

GRAPHIC ARTISTS
PRINCESS JOY P. ABAN
KARL O. DELIVA
MARIAN JESSA O. SAN AGUSTIN
JOEWILL C. OBOG
NICOLE ANN L. SEVILLA

LAYOUT ARTISTS
RECHEL DANIELA JOY J. GUY
PAULINE KATE P. VILLAFUERTE
MARK ANTHONY D. YABA
JHADE DIANNE R. VICTA
JAYSON F. IBAÑEZ

PHOTOJOURNALIST
RAP JEUS A. BELARDO
JEEYAH GAIL G. ASIS

CARTOONISTS
BHEA CARMELA Z. ESCOTO
CESARIO ABUSTAN IV

NEWSCASTER
TIMOTHY U. VILLALUZ

JUNIOR WRITER
JAMAECA A. DE GUZMAN

COMICS PRODUCER
JESTER ALLAIN A. SALEN

VIDEO EDITOR
RUFFY MARCEL E. PANOTES

PUBLICATION ADVISER
DELMA JEAN V. ABAD, PhD

CAMARINES NORTE STATE COLLEGE

VISION

CNSC as a premier higher education institution in the Bicol Region.

MISSION

The Camarines Norte State College shall provide higher and advanced studies in the fields of education, arts and sciences, economics, health, engineering, management, finance, accounting, business and public administration, fisheries, agriculture, natural resources development and management and ladderized courses. It shall also respond to research extension and production services adherent to progressive leadership towards sustainable development.

QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

We, the Camarines Norte State College, aiming to become a Premier Higher Education Institution in the Bicol Region, are committed to providing excellent services in instruction, research and extension that are responsive to the satisfaction of our students and other stakeholders.

To achieve the College vision and mission, we shall implement an internationally recognized management system in our operations, processes and services. Through this, we shall:

- Comply with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, the mandates of the College and relevant needs and expectations of our students and other stakeholders, and the requisites of our quality management system.
- Delight our students and other stakeholders by providing value-adding experiences to become well-rounded and more competitive future leaders in the midst of global issues.
- Protect the environment and prevent pollution by optimizing the use of electricity, paper, water and other resources and adopt the safe and responsible method of reduction,reuse, recycling and proper disposal of wastes;
- Provide our employees support to grow and achieve their full potentials in their respective fields, thereby sustaining a competent, motivated, and engaging workforce.
- Develop and extend innovative technologies to our stakeholders contributing to the country's sustainable development and;
- Establish objectives aimed at improving the efficiency of our operations, processes and services for our College growth and development.

We shall make this policy an essential part of our instruction, research, extension and production services to ensure that it continuously provides us strategic directions in improving our overall quality and environmental performance, and of our integrated management system.

CONTENTS

6 EDITORIAL
BBM, Ano na?

8 NEWS
CNSC eyes launch of BS Marine...
OSAEC, CSAEM, pinag-usapan...
OP organizes free Civil Service Eligibility...
CNSC ME students triumph in the...
CoEng stuns with victory, secures 40 gold...
CNSC, muling ginawaran ng mga pagkilala...
CNSC finishes with 11 passers for 2023 LECPA...

12 DEVCOMM
CNSC FABMAN Lab: One of the Pioneers...
Entering a New Era

16 OPINION
Ring Master
Majority Over Minority
Extra Rise
Si Vis Pacem Para Bellum
Pasakalye o Pasa sa Kalye
Kalaban ng Bayan: Journo o Gobyerno
It's Never "Just"
Pambobola Para sa Bola

FEATURE

24

26

28

32

34

COVER STORY

30

36 REVIEWS
Movie: Oppenheimer
Movie: Ang mga Kaibigan ni Mama Susan
Book: Para Kay B
Book: The Night Circus
Anime: Attack on Titan
Game: Payday 3

48 SPORTS
Filipina Racer Bianca Bustamante:
Lumilikha ng pangalan sa mundo ng karera

50 COMICS
Hiram
Ghosting sa Malacañang
Intercol
Sari-sari
Faculty Room's Mystery
Designer
CNSC Secrets Have Been Filed

52 LITERARY
Welcome
Duff Carousel
Color Game
Cotton Candy
Payaso sa Palasyo
Horror Train
Sisiw for Sale

57 Types of CNSC Students During Intercollegiate Meet

58 Horoscope

EDITOR'S NOTE

Behind every laugher, there are tears.
Behind every answer, there are questions.
Behind every truth, there are lies.
Behind every success, there are failures.
Behind every person, there is a clown in them.
And behind every one of those clowns is a story.

No two people are the same. We are all unique and different from one another—from the way we look, the way we think and perceive things, the way we act, and the way we all adapt to various circumstances around us. Yet, we all have a common ground, a reason for everything that made us who we are and for anything that we will become, and it is our shared experiences. The stories behind every smile and tear, success and failure, pain and comfort collectively create the person we are at this moment in time.

No two clowns are the same. One may look like a fool. Some may be playful, clever, or tricky. Some could be soft, emotional, or kind-hearted. Each clown has a unique identity that allows for an exemplary performance, joy, and entertainment to audiences. But behind every clown lies a real person, an individual who can feel pain, embarrassment, joy, sadness, and all other sort of emotions we can feel. They are real people, with real stories and experiences hiding behind the mask of a clown.

We are all clowns in progress. We tend to put the real story behind our blushes and smiles. We tend to hide the pain and suffering by saying we are okay even if we are not.
We all tend to hide.

We all tend to hide our stories, and we all tend to conceal our real intentions—good and bad. As negative as it may seem, some of us do such things and make a lot of people fall for such kinds of deceptions, to the point that the clown made the audience as foolish as the act. Once we dig deep and see through the mask of deception, we can fully see their real objective. This year's magazine highlights the stories behind every success or failure and truth or deception.

I am grateful to be with the excellent team of writers, layout artists, and graphic artists—the Breakthrough Editorial Board and Staff. To the publication adviser, Dr. Delma Jean Abad, thank you for your guidance and never-ending support. To Maam Rhoda, thank you for extending to us your wisdom and bravery, allowing us to grow beyond the boundaries of our individuality.

As clowns in progress, we have a choice to make. Who will you be? A clown with good intentions or a clown that hides bad intentions behind every inch of deception? Today, there are no shoes to fill, but there are masks to wear. It is your choice which mask you will put on your face and which clown you will become.

It is my utmost privilege to present our 2024 magazine issue, PAYASO.

ARNOLD BAYANI AÑORA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

BBM, ANO NA?

Sa kabila ng pag-upo ni Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. bilang presidente ng Republika ng Pilipinas, mayroong ilang mga pag-aalinlangan at agam-agam na umusbong hinggil sa kanyang liderato. Sa isang banda, tila mas pinipili niyang ibalot ang kanyang administrasyon sa nakaraang anino ng kaniyang ama kaysa sa kinabukasan ng mga mamayang Pilipino.

Sa pagsasahimpapawid ng mga kinahaharap na pang-ekonomiko at sosyal na mga isyu ng bansa, mga pulitikong naka-ngiti ang sasalubong sa mukha ng mga Pilipino na nag-iiwan ng katanungan na: Paano sila umabot sa himpapawid nang wala man lang ni isang pakpak? Kahit ang naturalismong kakanyahan ng ating mundo ay nalinlang gamit ang kanilang mga monopolyo.

Habang ang presidente ay binabagtas ang himpapawid patungo sa iba't ibang bansa para sa napakaraming rason na hindi na madalumat, giit naman ng mga nagngangalit na boses na ibaling ang kaniyang atensiyon sa patuloy na pagkakalugmok ng bansa sa putik.

HIMPAPAWID

Sa unang pitong buwan ng kanyang termino, si Pangulong Marcos Jr. ay lumipad sa ibang bansa nang walong beses. Sa loob ng nakaraang labindalawang buwan, binisita niya ang Indonesia, Singapore, New York, Cambodia, Thailand, Belgium, China, Switzerland, Japan, Washington, at London. Ang mga paglalakbay na ito ay may pangunahing obhetibo na makaakit ng mas maraming mga negosiyo at multinational companies ang mamuhunan sa bansa na siyang lumikha ng samot saring lamentasiyon sa mga kritiko.

Ilan lamang sa mga isiniwalat ni Oscar P. Lagman Jr., isang mamamahayag at kolumnista, sa kaniyang opinyon, ay ayon naman daw sa Department of Trade and Industry, ang pagbisita ng pangulo sa Indonesia, Singapore, Estados Unidos, Cambodia, at Thailand ay nag-bunga ng magandang resulta kung saan halos $23.6 na bilyong investment pledges ang nakuha ng Pilipinas. Umalma ang ilang mga kritiko hinggil dito at ginawang halimbawa ang mga nagdaang state visits ni dating Pangulo Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa China kung saan ang mga investment pledges na ito ay dati nang umiiral para sa pagpapalawak ng mga multinational companies ng mga negosyo sa bansa o kaya naman ay para lamang sa pangkaraniwang paggalang mula sa bansang binibisita ng pangulo.

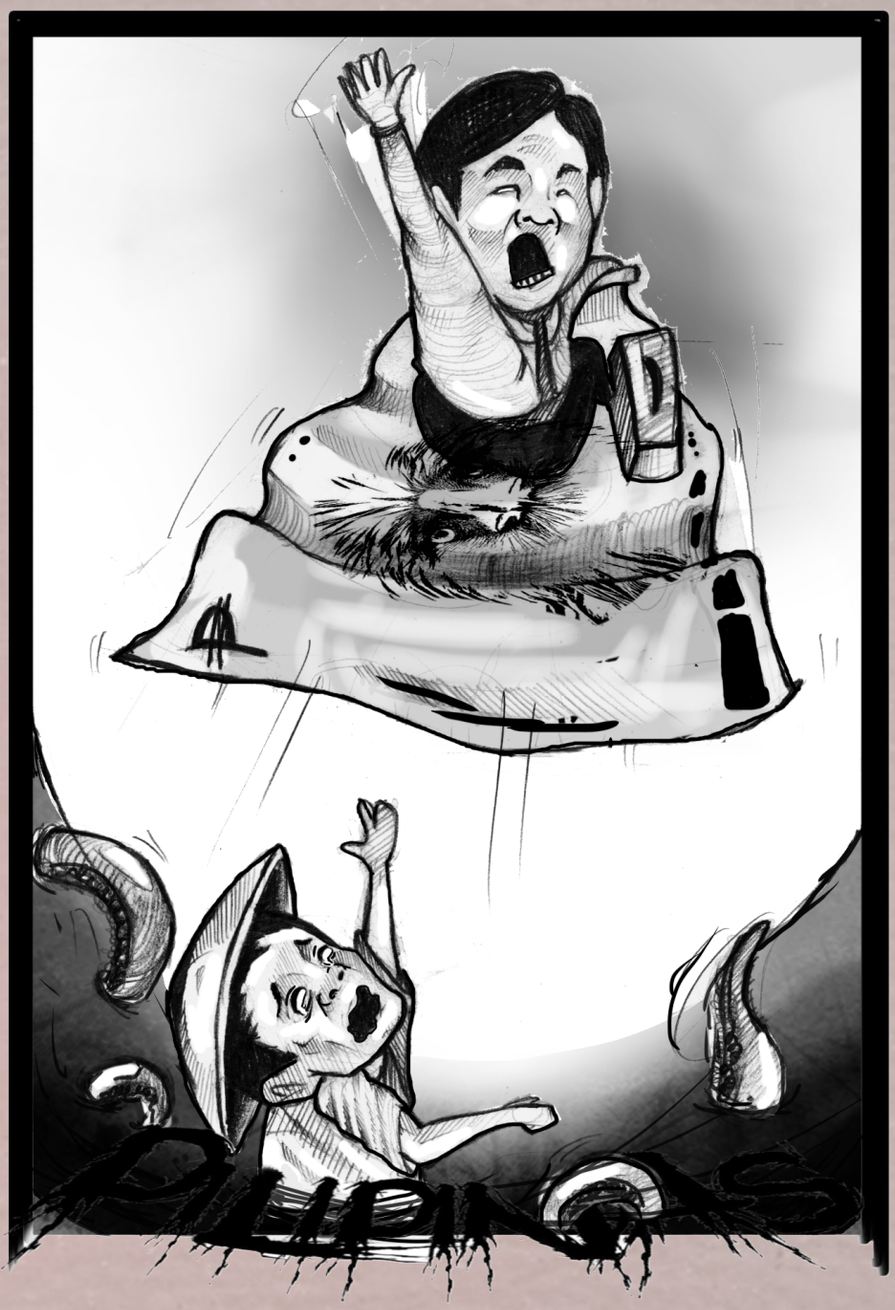
Hindi rin naman ma-apula ang isa sa mga pinakamalaking isyu na kinaharap ng administrasyon ni Marcos Jr., at ito ay ang kanyang pagdalo sa Formula One (F1) Grand Prix nang imbitahan siya ng Punong Ministro ng Singapore na si PM Lee Hsien Loong. Lulan ng isang military jet patungo sa Singapore, kasama niya sina First Lady, Liza Marcos, ang kanyang anak na si Kongresista Sandro Marcos, at ang kanyang first cousin na si Speaker Martin Romualdez na nagpapahiwatig ng patuloy na nagdulot ng kaukulang paggasta sa pagod, sigaw, at higit sa lahat, kaban ng mga mamamayan.

Ito ay nagdulot ng malalim na pagkadismaya sa maraming Pilipino, lalo na sa mga nasalanta ng Super Typhoon Karding. Asan ang pangulo? Masayang nanonood ng karera habang ang mga nasalanta ng bagyo ay nalulunod sa baha at nagtatagpi ng mga bahay na nasalanta. Sa halip na asikasuhin ang mga pangangailangan ng kanyang mga kababayan, mas pinili niyang maglibang at magpalamig sa ibang bansa. Halos P400 na milyon ang nagastos sa kaniyang mga travel noong 2022 pa lamang. At para sa papasok na taong 2024, humihiling ang kaniyang opisina ng P1.4 na bilyon para sa kaniyang mga susunod na biyahe at state visits. Ang malaking badyet na hiling na ito ay isang malaking pasanin para sa mga manggagawang Pilipino dagdag pa ang patuloy na paglobo ng utang ng bansa na umabot na sa P 14.27 na trilyon.

BINHI NG PANGAKO

Maaalala noong nakaraang Hulyo, binanggit ng ating pangulo ang kaniyang mga plano at mga pangakong nagbunga mula nang siya ay maupo bilang pagkapangulo. Ilan sa mga ito ay ang patuloy na pagsulong ng e-commmerce, kung saan ito'y nagpasok ng P2 trilyong piso, na katumbas ng 9.4% ng GDP. Binanggit din nya ang ilan sa mga pamumuhunan sa pampublikong imprastraktura para sa pagkain, edukasyon, at kalusugan ng mga mamayang Pilipino.

Ani pa niya, nais niyang mapalakas ang sektor ng agrikultura at tulungan ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda. Isa sa mga solusyon niya rito ay ang mga itinayong mahigit pitong libong KADIWA stores na muling binuhay at inilunsad na ang layunin ay pag-ugnayin ang mga



magsasaka at mamimili na walang ibang namamagitan. Ilan din sa mga ibinida ng pangulo ay ang mga bio-fertilizers na subok at gawa dito sa Pilipinas na kaakibat ng balanced fertilizer strategy nang sa gayon ay hindi na aasa ang mga magsasaka sa mas mahal at imported na fertilizer.

May mga programa ring nagsusulong ng paggamit ng renewable energy sources na naglalayong magbigay ng 35% pagdating ng taong 2030, at inaasahang lalaki pa ng 50% sa 2040. Mayroon ding naidagdag na 126 renewable energy contracts na may potensyal na kakayahang maglabas ng 31,000 megawatts. Ilan lamang ito sa mga pangako at mga ibinida ng pangulo sa kaniyang nagdaang SONA, na patuloy binabantayan at inaasahan ng mga mamayang Pilipino.

MALAKING DAGOK SA LIPUNAN, SA MGA PILIPINO

Ayon sa Reporters Without Borders (RSF), sa ilalim ng administrasyong Marcos Jr., mayroon lamang kakarampot na pag-atake laban sa mga mamamahayag sa bansa. Subalit, ang mga karahasan laban sa kanila ay nahalinhan naman ng walang habas na "red-tagging" ng mga awtoridad.

Ilan pa sa mga dagok na kinakaharap ng bansa ay nasalamin sa pag-aaral ng ASEAN Studies Centre at ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute sa kalalabas lamang na State of Southeast Asia survey. Ayon dito, hindi lang ang ating pagkakadapa sa COVID-19 ang nagpapabigat sa ating mga kababayan, kung hindi, pati na rin ang epekto ng climate change na sinasabing pangunahing banta sa bansa ng halos 76.8% ng mamamayan. Sumunod dito ay ang mataas na unemployment rate na umaabot sa 60.6%, at military tensions lalong higit sa West Philippine Sea na may 50.5%.

Ibinunyag din ng Pulse Asia Survey na bumaba ang approval rating ng mga mamamayan sa kasalukuyang lider ng bansa. Ayon sa kanilang tala noong September 10 hanggang 14, 2023, 65% sa 1,200 na mga respondente ay aprubado ang kaniyang pamamalakad, subalit, ito ay mas mababa sa 80% na isinagawang survey noong buwan ng Hunyo, 2023. Marahil ang dahilan sa kinalabasan ng resulta ay buhat sa pagkadismaya ng mga Pilipino sa kaniyang ipinangakong P20 pesos o dalawampung piso kada kilo ng bigas ay isang pangakong ipinako at patuloy na pagtaas ng mga bilihin na talaga namang bumubutas sa bulsa ng mga mamimili.

ISANG HAKBANG PAPALAYO

Ngunit ano ang kinalaman niya hinggil dito? Hindi ba at may mga sangay naman ang gobyerno para pangasiwaan ang mga problemang ito? Tama. Subalit, sa kabila ng kanyang mga pag-lalakbay, napakarami pang mga lokal na usapin at mga problema ng bansa ay patuloy na nakabinbin sa isang tabi na dapat ay inuna na. Sa bawat paglipad niya, isang hakbang papalayo rin ang kaniyang tinatahak sa mga tunay na isyu ng bansa. Sa bawat pag-alis, isang pagkakataon rin ang nawawala para harapin ang mga hamon dito sa ating bayan.

Sa kabila ng mga hamon at isyu na kinakaharap ni Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sa kaniyang pagiging pangulo, nananatiling matunog ang kaniyang pangalan. Ngunit, sa likod ng kanyang kasikatan, hindi maikakaila na may mga tanong na patuloy na bumabagabag sa isipan ng mga mamamayan: "BBM, ano na?" O kaya naman: "Nasaan na ang Bagong Pilipinas, Bagong Mukha? May Prinsipyo, May Isang Salita?"

"BBM, ano na?" Ang sigaw ng bayan dahil patuloy na nalulugmok ang mga maralita habang pinuputakti ng mga elitistang pabor sa labis na klasisismo at monopolyo. BBM, nasaan ka na? Pinipilit pa rin ng mga Pilipino ang umalpas sa napakaraming dagok sa ating bansa,

nasa himpapawid ka pa rin ba?

CNSC eyes launch of BS Marine Biology, BS Psychology for AY 2025-26

Baron Roy R. Longaza

Daet, Camarines Norte—With the Camarines Note State College's (CNSC) vision to extend its reach in the field of academe and intensify its ability to cater to its four major areas—instruction, production, research, and extension—the institution aims to offer Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology and Bachelor of Science in Psychology, slated for the academic year 2025-2026.

The institution has already secured Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) approval, marking the first phase in the process of offering these new programs. However, full implementation is contingent upon obtaining final approval from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED).

Accordingly, necessary documents (i.e., faculty profiles, library listings, sample syllabi, laboratory requirements, and details of available facilities), as indicated in CHED Memorandum (CMO) No. 34, Series of 2017 for BS Psychology and CMO No. 46, s. 2017 for BS Marine Biology, have been submitted to government authorities for evaluation.

The BS Marine Biology program will be offered at the Institute of Fisheries and Marine Sciences (IFMS) on the Mercedes Campus, while the BS Psychology program will be available at the Main Campus in Daet under the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

The administration, in parallel development, has opted to temporarily freeze the Bachelor of Arts in History (AB History) program. This decision will remain in effect until the college meets the minimum requirements set by CHED, as stipulated in CMO No. 38, s. 2017. This pause reflects CNSC's commitment to compliance and quality assurance in its academic offerings.

Concerning this, CAS and IFMS are currently in the process of recruiting permanent faculty members equipped with qualifications including a Master's degree and a research-oriented approach, aligning with the criteria set forth by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) under CMO No. 52, s. 2007.

Once the faculty recruitment is finalized, along with the construction of necessary facilities and the acquisition of required equipment, the aforementioned programs will be officially launched soon.

As CNSC prepares itself for university status, the plan of offering these new programs is another stride taken by the institution to foster excellence.

OSAEC, CSAEM, pinag-usapan; Proper Referral Pathways, tinalakay

Niñalyn B. Malong

Makabuluhang tinalakay ang layuning tuldukan ang laganap na krimen na Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) at Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) and Proper Referral Pathways sa ginanap na oryentasyon noong ika-16 ng Oktubre 2023 sa 3rd Floor Audio Visual Room Provincial Capitol, Daet, Camarines Norte.

Ibinahagi ni Atty. Kimberly A. Israel, resource speaker at Legal Officer ng Department of Education- Camarines Norte, ang kahalagahan ng pagkilala sa mga karapatan at pagbibigay ng proteksyon sa mga bata at kababaihan bilang pangunahing biktima ng human trafficking sa tulong ng RA 11930 Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act at RA Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012.

Dagdag pa ni Israel, dahil sa talamak at napapahon na panlipunang krimen na ito, tunay na kailangan ng Pilipinas ang mga kabataan. Pinokusan niya na ang pagkakaroon ng kaalaman ng kabataan tungkol sa batas, pag-kilala ng karapatan, at pagbibigay ng kaalaman sa iba ay tunay na makakatulong upang mabilis na matuldukan ang nasabing krimen.

Ang nasabing oryentasyon ay pinangunahan ng Camarines Norte Provincial Government, Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office at dinaluhan naman ng iba't ibang youth organizations tulad ng Camarines Norte Provincial Government College Education Assistance Program (CNPGCEAP) Scholars, CNSC Breakthrough, CNSC Student Assistant Organization, Youth for Christ Camarines Norte at marami pang iba.

OP organizes free Civil Service Eligibility Review

Baron Roy R. Longaza

Camarines Norte State College—Office of the President (CNSC-OP) took a pro active step in enhancing the knowledge and skills of its employees and students by organizing a Free Civil Service Eligibility Review in three different sessions exclusively on weekends, held at the CNSC Main Campus Student Center and Amphitheater, July 29-30, August 5-6, and August 12-13, 2023.

Ms. Nicole Anne G. Panotes, the Presidential Management Staff (PMS), warmly welcomed the attendees and emphasized the importance of the said program, which aligns with the priorities of the Office of the President and CNSC's President Dr. Marlo M. De La Cruz, PECE.

Subsequently, during the first session of lectures, Mr. Bryan M. Torres, a faculty member from the College of Education (CoEd) and the president of the CNSC Employees Association, took the podium to guide participants through the Numerical Ability section of the exam.

On the second day of the review, Ms. Elsa T. Manlangit, a faculty hailing from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), discussed the Analytical section of the exam covering word association, assumptions, and conclusions.

In Session 3 on August 5, 2023 Dr. Rosalie A. Almadrones, the Vice President for Research and Extension (VPRE), focused on the Verbal Ability section, including grammar, correct usage, and vocabulary.

Meanwhile, session 4 was graced again by Ms. Elsa T. Manlangit, who delved into Analytical Ability but this time covering logic and data interpretation.

Moreover, Dr. Delma Jean Abad, the Center for Equity, Inclusivity, and Diversity (CEID) Director and the Breakthrough Publication adviser led Session 5 last August 12, 2023, providing a discussion on Verbal Ability, which included paragraph organization and reading comprehension.

Lastly, Mr. Jefferson Dacer, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), concluded the series of sessions by offering insights into the General Information section of the exam.

"Attending the said review exceeded my expectations because it provided me with information that I did not previously know. I am satisfied with the CNSC's free review," said Ms. Niñalyn Malong, a fourth-year AB English Language Studies student who participated in the free review session and took the professional level of the exam held on August 20, 2023, at CNSC.

CNSC's Free Civil Service Eligibility Review, according to the OP, only took place during weekends so that it would not coincide with some of the lecturers' and reviewees' jobs and errands on weekdays.

Thus, this step taken by the office is a significant milestone in the institution's dedication to helping its students and employees by equipping them with skills necessary for their professional growth and securing job tenureships. This activity helped over 30 participants to pass the Civil Service Exam.

CNSC ME students triumph in the February 2023 MELE, paving for a cutting-edge success

Baron Roy R. Longaza

Camarines Norte State College (CNSC) triumphed after garnering an overall passing rate of 96.77% in the Mechanical Engineers Licensure Examination (MELE) held on February 26-27, 2023, from different testing centers in the Philippines.

Subsequently, the Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC) unveiled the board examination results just three days after the exam's conclusion highlighting a National Passing Rate of 62.17%, signifying that 3,774 individuals out of 6,070 have paved their way to a cutting-edge success.

On another note, the institution registered 31 examinees, with all but one reaching the passing score. First-takers displayed an impressive overall percentage rate of 96.67%, while the retakers achieved a flawless 100% passing rate.

Some of the subjects covered along with their relative weights, as outlined by the PRC-Board of Mechanical Engineers include Machine Design, Materials and Shop Practice (30%), Power Plant Engineering (35%), and Mathematics, Engineering Economics and Basic Engineering Sciences (35%).

Engr. Abaiz, Johnstone De Castro; Engr. Anacin, Jovie John Agna; Engr. Balane, Jay Mark Ramores; Engr. Base, Princess Frayna; Engr. Bautista, Joanna Marie Zamudio; Engr. Belleza, Pauline Arcillo; Engr. Beltran, Jessica Fe Obina; Engr. Calnea, Luke France Nual; Engr. Cardenas, Richmond Visitacion; Engr. Castillo, Christy Joy Nacario; Engr. De Vera, Carl Joshua Casingal; Engr. Defeo, France Elaysa Ibarrientos; Engr. Dela Cruz, Joyce Anne Bilawelo; Engr. Dela Cruz, Monica Idaloy; Engr. Gaulit, Carlo Jalimao; Engr. Jarapa, Dan Raffy Lallo; Engr. Labrador, Jerry Jardin; Engr. Mataro, Kristine Joy Malate; Engr. Nario, Lovely Espiritu; Engr. Obina, Rowell Lumbria; Engr. Odon, Maica Jalimao; Engr. Raña, Wilson Paday; Engr. Saet, Kurt Russel Cadag; Engr. Salazar, Christian Gomez; Engr. San Juan, Mark Angelo Buella; Engr. Sureta, Rey Mark Sarmiento; Engr. Tabor, Ivy Totanes; Engr. Tare, Shawn Minalabag; Engr. Teope, Jemuel Yanto; and Engr. Zantua, Julie Ann Ojena, are the passers who trumped the board exam and emerged triumphant.

As a further recognition of their success, the Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineers – CNSC Student Unit, spearheaded a testimonial ceremony on March 24, 2023, at the College of Engineering (CoEng) Audio-Visual Room.

CoEng stuns with victory, secures 40 gold medals

/// Christine Jean J. Madera

In a remarkable turn of events, the College of Engineering (COENG) emerged as the Overall Champion, garnering a total of 40 gold medals in the Intercollegiate Meet 2023, which was held at Camarines Norte State College on October 16-20, 2023.

The players from COENG obtained 11 gold medals in Soccer, 8 gold medals in Table Tennis (Men's and Women's Categories), 5 gold medals in Call of Duty: Mobile, 5 gold medals in Mobile Legends (Men's Category), 4 gold medals in Dance Sports (Latin and Standard Categories), 4 gold medals in Badminton (Men's Category), and 3 gold medals in Chess (Women's Category). They also acquired 8 silver and 3 bronze medals from other competitions.

On the other hand, the Institute of Computer Studies enthusiastically secured the position of First Runner Up, where they bagged 12 gold medals in Takraw (Men's Category) and 5 golds in Mobile Legends (Women's Category), while they got 3 silver medals and 14 bronze medals from various sports events.

With a close fight, the College of Education placed Second Runner Up with a total of 16 gold medals, all of which came from the Women's Category of Athletics. In addition, COED attained 32 silver and 34 bronze medals.

This year's Intercollegiate Meet, with the theme "CNSC: Moving Forward to a Resilient and Excellent State University through Fitness and Sports," served as a preparation for the 2024 Regional State Colleges and Universities Athletic Association Meet that will be held soon on CNSC. It also showcased the skills of student athletes from nine delivery units of the said institution.

The aforementioned event was also conducted as a healthy outlet for students to release stress, rest, and recharge after the stressful midterm examination week, according to the speech of the Sports Development Office Head, Rayvimart Mancenido, during the opening program.

CNSC, muling ginawaran ng mga pagkilala ng IPOPHL

Timothy Villaluz

Tumanggap ang CNSC Intellectual Property Management Office (IPMO) ng kabuoang bilang na 13 Intellectual Properties (IPs) na sertipiko kabilang ang walong Utility Models at limang Industrial Designs mula sa Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL).

Nagsumite ng aplikasyon ang institusyon noong nakaraang taon para sa nasabing IPs registration bilang parte ng isinagawang programa ng CNSC IPMO na "I.G.N.I.T.E" may kaugnayan sa pinondohang proyekto ng DOST-PCAARRD sa ilalim ng Program RAISE dito sa Bicol.

Matatandaan na nagsumite ang opisina ng kabuuan na 62 kahilingan para sa IPs kasama dito ang Utility Models, Industrial Designs at TMs sa IPHOPHL at 62 na copyrights naman sa National Library of the Philippines.

Samantala, naglunsad naman ng aktibidad na may temang, "**Basic Orientation on Intellectual Property with the theme: D.I.S.K.A.R.T.E Roll-out for Institutional Partners and Stake-holders.**" ang OVP for Research and Extension – Extension Services Division, sa pakikipagtulungan ng CNSC IPMO and IP TBM Office noong Agosto 24, 2023 na ginanap sa CNSC Main Campus, Amphitheatre. Ang pangunahing layunin ng nabanggit na gawain ay makapagbigay ng higit na kaalaman ukol sa Intelektuwal na pag-aari, karapatan at kung paano ito mapoprotektahan.

Ang mga nasabing bilang na sertipiko at programa ay nagsisilbing patunay sa nakikitang progresibong pag-unlad ng komunidad ng CNSC at ilan sa mga hakbang tungo sa pag-abot nito ng mga mandato at bisyon—na maging isang premier higher education institution sa buong rehiyon ng Bicol.

CNSC finishes with 11 passers for 2023 LECPA, clinches top 10 spot

Baron Roy R. Longaza

Camarines Norte State College has achieved remarkable success in the May and October 2023 Licensure Examination for Certified Public Accountants (LECPA), after aggregating an impressive overall passing rate of 41.67% and 46.15%, adding to the national passing rates of 30.36% and 31.37%, respectively.

As per the result released by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), CNSC had five CPAs among the 12 candidates who took the May 2023 LECPA and landed Top 10 out of the Top 20 performing schools, contributing to an overall success rate of 2,239 candidates out of 7,376 examinees.

Specifically, the May 2023 LECPA passers were Ckimsy Jade L. Cama, Venice L. Encinas, Judy Rose T. Gallardo, Michael O. Lalim Jr., and Fatima A. Ricalde.

"*1. Start with an end mind. Be specific with your goal. 2. Ask yourself and others what to do to achieve the end you want. 3. Know yourself, your strengths, and your weaknesses. And, 4. Pray when things get tough, and when you are grateful, "Nasa tao ang gawa, nasa Diyos ang awa,*" expressed by Ms. Venice Encinas, CPA, in retrospect with her tactics prior to taking the boards.

Additionally, CNSC produced six CPAs from a pool of 13 examinees who successfully passed the October LECPA, as also reported by the PRC, contributing to a total of 2,740 candidates who passed out of 8,734 hopefuls. Notably, no school met the criteria for inclusion among the Top Performing Schools in the recent board exam.

Among those who passed the October 2023 LECPA were John Harold M. Abejero, CPA; Maria Christelle C. Caparros, CPA; Maria Catherine I. Lacson, CPA; Kimberly C. Milante, CPA; Reka Joan D. Ogalisco, CPA; and Grace A. Opeda, CPA.

"*I struggled sa review just like any other CPA-aspirants. It was extra hard lang for me kasi I did not dream to be a CPA to begin with. Staying motivated is a big challenge, given na I was away from my family (except my sister), and so sometimes I was complacent with my review. What I did to manage my stress and overwhelming doubts was to surround myself with very understanding and supportive people in the person of my family, friends, the Review School of Accountancy (ReSA), and online community (Twitter and Discord). Praying to God and believing that He is sovereign above all, and that whatever happens He will still be glorified, also helped me a lot, especially on the week prior to the actual boards,*" said Ms. Christelle Caparros, CPA, on her recent feat.

LECPA comprises six subjects including Management Services, Auditing, Taxation, Regulatory Framework for Business Transactions (RFBT), Financial Accounting and Reporting (FAR), and Advanced Financial Accounting and Reporting (AFAR), which all these are divided to be taken in a span of three days.

While the board exam has long been known for its persistently low passing rates, there was a significant upturn in May 2023, with the passing rate climbing to 30.36% from 22.29% in May 2022, and a similar positive result was observed in October 2023, with the passing rate of 31.37%, rising from 25.84% in October 2022.

CNSC FABMAN LAB: ONE OF THE PIONEERS IN THE BICOL REGION

Francisco Q. Raviz Jr.

Starting something is hard, especially if you're beginning from scratch; you have to have all the resources needed to execute all the actions required as well as to give life to the plans you have in mind. Moreover, people's expectations and judgments will surely come your way. But the more challenging it is, the more it will be worth it once it becomes successful—just like Camarines Norte State College Manufacturing Fabrication Laboratory's (CNSC FabMan Lab) story. Providing a platform for co-invention and collaboration between academia, industry, and government and enabling Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to fabricate new products, add value to the ones that are already at hand, and produce new sources of income is the primary reason for the development of the CNSC FabMan Lab. Inaugurated on September 21, 2021, the establishment of this shared service facility was made possible through joint efforts and initiatives of the Department of Trade and Industry—Region

MAN

V (DTI ROV) and the Commission on Higher Education—Region V (CHED ROV) with CNSC as its confederate. This shows and proves that the institution is capable of being entrusted with something this big and is unfazed by potential troubles.

The lab is the first fabrication laboratory in the province and the third within the Bicol Region. Thirty-five (35) laboratories have already been built in the Philippines, but CNSC's lab is still among those that can be considered to be in its early stages of operation. While it's amazing to hear about this feat, what transpired before it finally reached the limelight also deserved to be known. Engr. Joselito A. Olalo, the Head of CNSC FabMan Lab, commemorates that its construction was a long process; the institution had to form a separate Memorandum of Agreement with both DTI and CHED to commence its activity. He also mentioned that the beginning stage of the operation was a tough row to hoe because the procurement of machinery and tools and office equipment and materials also took some time. Truly, everything is not easily given; patience and persistence are some of the ingredients for a better result.

With an eagerness to further appreciate the lab, I was granted the opportunity to interview the lab's head to be aware of the services they offer and their plans for the laboratory.

CURRENT SERVICES OFFERED

Laser cutting and engraving, large-format printing and cutting, 3D printing and scanning, CNC Milling, product logo and label design, as well as tours, partnerships, and/or training.

PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED

3D-printed items such as souvenirs, minor machine parts, models for academic projects, and boardgame pieces; customized rubber stamps; trophies (acrylic, wood, mixed); phone stands (acrylic, wood); custom engraved pencils, pens, hairbrushes, etc.; custom engraved coasters (Capiz shell, wood); engraved wooden displays like business signage; and cabinet and wall décor wood engraving.

SOON-TO-BE OFFERED SERVICES

Digital embroidery, large-scale laser engraving and cutting, and large-scale wood engraving.

With CNSC nearing its universityhood, having these innovations indicate that it is more than ready to become the first university in Camarines Norte. In addition, the rise of this FabMan Lab gives convenience not just for the MSMEs but also for the institution, especially students; thinking of where to have their academic projects modeled or have their custom engraved pencils or pens won't be an issue anymore because, just a few steps inside the campus, they can already have those things in their hands.

However, as a pioneer, it is expected that they're still in the process of improving their amenities, enhancing their sets of equipment, and planning to offer more quality services in the near future. So, except for profit, what they need is support—from business owners and, more importantly, from us, the whole CNSC community.

In a world where AI is becoming more and more prevalent, the lines separating what's real from artificial are getting more unclear.

From instantly generating images out of prompts, composing essays, and engaging in human-like conversations to making old-age pictures seem alive, the limits we once thought were insurmountable and only a subject of science fiction are continuously being developed and presented to the public.

We are being blown away by this wave of technology, and with the emergence of such tools, a new era—and a new dilemma—begins.

Artificial intelligence, or AI, is derived from the theory that human intelligence can be mimicked by a machine in performing the simplest and even the most complex tasks. Experts believe that AI will offer a significant amount of help to magnify human effectiveness but can also pose unimaginable threats to humanity. They theorized that machines might equal or even surpass human capacities in executing complex tasks like decision-making, language translation, logical reasoning, and identity and speech recognition. Moreover, the application of "smart" systems in gadgets, appliances, vehicles, buildings, and communities will be a great help in saving resources, time, and money and will offer a more convenient future that people will enjoy. With this, people have different insights and comments about the rise of AI in society—some are grateful and some are worried.

AI is the future

The term AI has been going around since 1956. It was coined by John McCarthy, based on Turing's description of intelligent machines. It has been here for a long time and there is no doubt that AI will be in our and our children's future.

People have focused their optimism on the thought that AI will provide significant development and change in many aspects of life. They see AI as a way of bringing progress in healthcare, saying that it will aid in diagnosing and curing patients more easily and will further senior citizens' lives by detecting diseases and providing effective medicine and means to cure them. Additionally, some experts view AI as expediting education reform in terms of personalized learning experiences for students, computer-based examinations and interviews, analysis of data, and virtual learning. As the world has finally entered the "new" normal because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education system has adapted to the situation and ensured that education will never stop, thus the implementation of online learning in academia. Moreover, AI can help in economic progress by predicting trends in the future, which business owners can make use of. Also, through the utilization of AI, the boost in e-commerce is evident, as people have used online platforms as means of selling goods and services.

On the other hand, some have looked at the AI phenomenon from the negative side. Given that it will make people's lives easier, it also poses dangers that might threaten and harm humanity in many ways. First on the list is the risk of unemployment; employees fear that the time might come when they will lose their jobs because AI will replace them. Second, it can disrupt the usual flow in healthcare facilities, particularly in making crucial decisions in life-and-death situations. Although AI has caused a great deal of change, human input and supervision are still needed and reliable when it comes to the diagnosis and treatment of diseases, for machines can't in any way empathize with humans' emotions and feelings. AI is vulnerable to security risks; as it collects huge amounts of data, the possibility of those data being mishandled or leaked is high, leading to sensitive information getting exposed that will eventually lead to identity theft, financial fraud, and the like. It also has the risk of being hacked and manipulated by malicious actors, allowing them to control AI systems for their own benefit and posing danger to people and the world as a whole. Furthermore, the creation of image-generator apps and websites alerts experts because AI can easily produce explicit content.

Ethical Considerations of AI-powered tools

The presence of AI and the absence of guardrails on its usage can be compared to a solution that could be worse than the problem. This was further expounded by UNESCO (2021) and stated that although AI has the potential to address some of the biggest challenges in education today, innovate teaching and learning practices, and accelerate progress towards SDG 4, these rapid technological developments inevitably bring multiple risks and challenges, which have so far outpaced policy debates and regulatory frameworks.

The integration of artificial intelligence in most of our activities is feared to be a blind-forward motion of humanity, as there is still no solid foundation and policies on its social and ethical implications. AI, when not coupled with ethical and conscientious considerations, can be used against its purpose of serving for good. One popular misuse of AI is the rise of deep fakes or swapping out faces in videos to make it appear as if a certain person has said or done something that they never actually did. That is only one example, but the list can go on.

From the perspective of education, many would question that when students, at their developmental stage, opt to rely heavily on AI and its tools, do we actually get real development or artificial learning? How can we ensure that there will be equal and inclusive use of AI and not widen the long-standing gap in learning?

Technology has made humanity's lives more convenient. From communication to all sorts of services—banking, selling, healthcare, and learning—almost every single thing in the world has become accessible and easier to use. This is further enhanced by the availability and leverage offered by AI-powered tools.

The rise of AI cannot be stopped, and to evade it would be an impractical choice. And thus, as the man behind the keyboard, the one who holds the plug, it is our responsibility to reflect on these things and ask ourselves this question: Am I ready to enter this new era?

ING A NEW ERA

Francisco Q. Raviz Jr.

RING MASTER

HAZEL A. ALBALATE
External Associate Editor • BSBA Business Economics

While freedom of religion is a fundamental right, it is crucial to recognize the dangers posed by certain organizations that manipulate and exploit their followers. The loss of individual autonomy and the potential for physical and psychological harm make it imperative to raise awareness about the risks posed by them. Education about these dangers can help protect vulnerable individuals from falling victim to manipulative leaders and destructive practices within these organizations.

THE POWER OF BELIEF

Truth occasionally gets lost in the shadows of vision in the wide view of human existence. There is a dark undersurface that is veiled in mystery in a society where spirituality and faith are intertwined with everyday lives.

The term "cult" carries a weighty connotation, revoking images of blind devotion and manipulation. Yet, we must be cautious not to succumb to hasty generalizations or sensationalism when discussing about this. It is crucial to approach this subject matter with discernment and open-mindedness.

Socorro Bayanihan Services, Inc. (SBSI) based on Socorro, Surigao Del Norte, Philippines, is a civic organization that has been labeled as a cult by many. Led by a 22-year-old "charismatic" leader named Jey Rence Quilario also known as "Senyor Agila" who claims to possess divine powers, said to be the "reincarnation of God".

Others believe that there is a story of social progress and community empowerment in SBSI concealed behind the curtain of controversy. It was established with the goal of uplifting underserved areas through programs for sustainable development and education. However, it is crucial to recognize that every organization might fall victim to internal conflicts of power that could distort its original purpose.

SBSI's true nature was eventually exposed when some of their minor victim-survivors came forward with harrowing accounts of physical and psychological abuse they endured during their time within the organization. These three minors named, "Jane," "Renz," and "Coco," who escaped from Socorro faced their alleged abusers during a Senate hearing who emotionally narrated their ordeal while inside the Surigao del Norte-based group, including being forced into marriage and trained as soldiers despite their young age, before the Senate Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs.

The senate is currently investigating into this organization for several violations including forced labor and sexual assault of minors. Senator Risa Hontiveros categorically classified SBSI as a "cult" due to the numerous abuses and deceptive tactics Quilario and other leaders used to maintain control over their followers. She also allegedly claimed that more than 1,000 minors were being sexually abused by the religious "cult".

Quilario, along with his Vice President Mamerto Galanida and other advisers including businesswoman Karren Sanico, and Sanico's secretary Janeth Ajoc, who also acts as Senior Aguila's aide had all taken part in the preliminary. They were charged with a number of violations by the Department of Justice (DOJ), including qualified trafficking, kidnapping, serious illegal detention, violating the law against child marriage, and violating the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act. They refute these accusations, asserting that it is a straightforward "people's community" that adheres to the "bayanihan" idea.

> "IT IS SIMPLE TO BE DRAWN TO A GROUP THAT CLAIMS TO TAKE CARE OF BOTH YOUR MATERIAL NEEDS AND YOUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS WHEN THERE ARE NO SOLID SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS TO RELY ON."

Renowned sociologist Janja Lalich, has extensively discussed how cults seek to directly control every aspect of their followers' lives, from their physical characteristics and financial resources to their living arrangements and interpersonal relationships. As Lalich pointed out that if someone asks you to compromise your morals or relationships for the benefit of society as a whole, they might be taking advantage of you.

Organized religion already occupies a prominent position, with faith in God serving as the main authority on morality for people from all walks of life. Yet, the difficulties brought about by poverty have made some communities more open to charismatic leaders who offer comfort and hope in return for unwavering faith.

Senyor Agila's rhetoric personality created an environment ripe for controlling. This enigmatic person, just like in a circus, have an unnatural ability to lure individuals into his appealing world. Like a ringmaster commanding his troupe, he tend to manipulate and exploit the vulnerabilities of his followers. With promises of enlightenment and belonging, he create an illusionary sense of purpose and community. But is he really the ringmaster, or is he merely a cover and who's the only one wearing a mask to conceal what lies behind the strange desires of the real ringmaster?

Beneath these surface-level accusations, they are nothing more than carefully crafted illusions designed to capture unsuspecting souls. The ringmaster may dazzle us with his grand spectacle, but behind the scenes lie hidden strings that control every movement. To protect ourselves from falling prey to such enthralling spectacles, we must remain vigilant against those who seek to exploit our deepest desires.

MAJORITY OVER MINORITY

EUGELYN VILLANUEVA
Senior Editor • BS Applied Mathematics

Year 1986 when Filipinos reclaimed democracy for the nth time, ending the dictatorship rule that lasted for more than two decades in the country. Ironically, through the system that the masses once fought for, the ousted regime is now back at Malacañan Palace. This shows how impactful democracy is—it is always the will of the majority that rules.

More than a year after the namesake son of the overthrown dictator was elected president of the Philippines, his promise of twenty pesos per kilo of rice was still far from reality. Going back to how he presents this platform, one may ask how people actually believe that this is attainable with the current economic status of the country. Is it because they are desperate enough for change? Or simply that they lack knowledge about it?

According to the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), about 83% of the total population of the Philippines are internet users. With this fact, it can be assumed that Filipinos are well informed of the societal issues of the country. However, that is not the case; it's the opposite. With the wide range of unfiltered information disseminated on social media, netizens tend to believe what they often see on their newsfeed, not minding whether it is fake news or not. It was then that these platforms were used as a tool not only to alter the current news but the history of the country as well. Just imagine how absurd it is that the "dictator who must not be named", with thousands of records of human rights violations, is now being remembered as the wise president behind the so-called "golden age."

> "TRICKING THE MINDS OF FILIPINOS INTO BELIEVING THESE DISTORTED FACTS ALONE IS ALARMING, BUT FOR PEOPLE TO PURPOSELY FORGET THE PAST IS ON ANOTHER LEVEL."

This rebranding of the image of the Marcoses is not all magic that happens in a snap. A few years ago, when Marcos was running for the position of vice president, their family was already starting to glamorize their names, from contesting that the history written in the books was biased to overshadowing the billions of pesos plundered by their family. With the demographic structure of the voters, 52% aged 41 and below (COMELEC), the attempt to distort history through social media platforms becomes possible since the youth have not witnessed martial law.

Tricking the minds of Filipinos into believing these distorted facts alone is alarming. But for people to purposely forget the past as well is on another level. And this act of forgetting, known as 'historical amnesia', is not new in the Philippines. In a study conducted by Banyan of The Economist (Asia), Filipinos were forgetting the horrors of martial law as early as 1995. Regardless of the disturbing experiences shared by the eyewitnesses of the said political system, from sexual assaults to the electrocution of genitals, people seem to move on and just leave it in the past. This is evident from the survey conducted by Social Weather Stations, wherein 60% of the respondents disagreed that Marcos Sr. is a brutal and oppressive leader, only a decade after he was overthrown.

In the eye of someone who sees the dictatorship as a system based on 'grand corruption', it is confusing as to how the majority seemingly disregards historical facts by bringing the Marcos dynasty back to power. In an article published by the Canadian International Council, historical amnesia may not be rooted solely in disinformation; there's a great chance that it is because the previous administrations failed to fulfill the aspirations of the people of a democratic country, opting to elect authoritarian types of leaders. This is reflected in the historic turn of events in the Philippines. While Marcos Jr. presidential opponent is a former human rights lawyer, her credentials were undermined as she did not fit with the first quality of the society's standard of a strong leader—a man. People really are unpredictable. They can stake on a man on a high wire, but not on a woman who does not even need to balance above the ground.

Currently, after thirteen months since Marcos Jr. was elected, there's no clear sign that he will be following in the footsteps of his father. While there's no certainty as to whether the decision of the masses is for the greater good or not, the power to vote should be given great importance. Enough with the mindset "kahit naman sinong maupo, *corrupt*", as there were still political aspirants who both had the capacity and heart to lead.

In a system where the majority rules over the minority, people should be careful when exercising the power to vote. Look at Juan de la Cruz; he yearns for good governance. Yet he put his hope in politicians with a history of corruption. Folks, don't be like Juan.

"Majority Rules"—both fundamental and a threat to democracy.

Inform a voter that his political bet has a history of graft and corruption, and there's a possibility of someone saying that these candidates are all the same. In a country where the power to elect a leader lies in the hands of its people, the level of interest of the majority in politics is a crucial factor. May the Filipinos be reminded of the significant impact of politics on the lives of the people through the history of dictatorship in the country.

May the "majority" be an informed citizen.

PARADOX OF DEMOCRACY

EXTRA RISE

KIM H. HILLERA
Senior Editor • BS Electrical Engineering

Magkaiba ang may magandang plano sa may konkretong plano. Ang konkretong plano ay naglalaman ng tiyak na mga hakbang na kinakailangan para sa implementasyon nito. Kung noong panahon nga ng kampanya ay wala pang malinaw na hakbang ang pangulo kung paano niya maisasakatuparan ang mga pangako niya sa mamamayan at pinagkatiwalaan siya ng mayorya, ngayon na nakaluklok na siya ay umaasa pa rin tayo ng matinong plano at gagalawin na niya ang mga nakabinbin niyang pangako. Bilang mamamayan na nagbigay sa kanya ng kapangyarihan at nagluklok sa kanya sa puwesto ay may karapatan tayong maghabol at pumuna.

PLATAPORMA

Isang linggo bago ang nakaraang presidential election, parang anghel na nagbitaw ng mahihiwagang salita ang kasalukuyang pangulo na si Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. Sabi niya, pababababain daw niya ang presyo ng bigas sa bente o trenta kada kilo. Hanep! Parang propeta. Tila isa itong propesiya na pinaniwalaan at tinanggap ng madla at marahil ito pa nga ang naging dahilan nang pagkapanalo niya. Maraming nagayuma, este maraming umasa. Sino ba naman ang hindi [mauuto] mananalig sa ganito kagandang pangako?

Pero mahigit isang taon nang nakaupo sa puwesto si Marcos Jr. bilang pangulo ay hindi pa rin bente pesos ang kilo ng bigas. Kulang pa yata ang trabaho ng pangulo at nagawa pa nga nitong magmultitasking bilang agriculture secretary, baka naman gusto niya nang trabahuhin ang trabaho ng kanyang buong gabinete. Kahit na masyado siyang busy, nakaisip naman ng plano ang pangulo slash agriculture secretary upang mapababa ang presyo ng bigas sa bente, ito ay sa pamamagitan daw ng pagtatakda ng 'price cap' o 'price ceiling'. Pero ito ay taliwas sa sinasabi ng mga eksperto na panandaliang remedyo lamang ito at hindi pangmatagalang solusyon. Dagdag pa nila, kung sakaling hindi rin daw ito mapapatupad ng maayos ay maaaring magdulot pa ito ng malaking dagok sa ating ekonomiya. Magkakaroon ng problema sa demand at supply chain, tataas ang demand sa bigas na maaaring magdulot naman ng pagbaba ng supply. Maliban pa rito, maaaring malugi ang maliliit na retailer dahil liliit ang kita nila at kapag maliit ang kita, mapipilitan na lamang silang hindi na magbenta. Sa madaling salita, isa itong padalos-dalos na desisyon. Nakaisip nga ng plano ang pangulo, pero parang hindi naman talaga ito pinag-isipan.

Sabagay, malapit nang maging bente pesos ang isang takal ng kanin baka naman iyon ang ibig niyang sabihin. Marahil hindi natin naintindihan ang pangulo. Pero naging taliwas talaga sa kanyang mga binitiwan na pangako noong panahon ng kampanya ang mga nangyari. Maliban kasi sa halos nadoble o tru-miple ang presyo ng bigas ngayon sa merkado ay tumaas rin ang presyo ng mga pangunahing bilihin at isama na rin natin pati presyo ng gasolina. Sabi pa nga ng iba, hindi na raw pangmahirap na ulam ang delata, ito na nga yata ang tinutukoy nilang pagbabalik ng golden era.

Sa kabilang banda, umamin naman ang pangulo na hindi raw talaga magiging madali ang daan patungo sa bente pesos na bigas. Sabi niya sa kanyang interview with Toni Gonzaga sa show na Toni Talks noong Setyembre 13, 2022, nang tanungin siya nito kung paano niya mapapababa ang presyo ng bigas, ito ang naging sagot ng pangulo, "It's a long road there. It's not gonna be easy." Tapos bumawi ulit ng pangakong, "I'm talking about maybe hopefully, if we do it right, then in a couple of three years that we'll get there."

Ngi.

Weh?

Andito na naman tayo sa mga pangakong nilalagyan ng deadlines kahit wala namang kongkretong plano. Parang pamilyar. Sino nga ulit 'yong nagsabing tatapusin niya ang drug war sa loob ng tatlo hanggang anim na buwan?

So back to the issue tayo, at least kahit papano naman maraming naiisip na plano ang pangulo, kumbaga may plan A at plan B, maliban kasi sa naisip niyang 'price cap' upang makamit ang bente pesos na bigas ay balak niya ring palakasin muli ang NFA at bumalik tayo sa lumang sistema. Gusto niyang ibalik ang NFA kahit nauna nang magbabala ang Fitch isang credit rating agency sa inilabas nitong pahayag noong Mayo 2022, na kung muling palalakasin ang NFA at babaliktarin ang reporma ng nakaraang administrasyon sa sektor ng bigas ay may posibilidad na lalo pang tumaas ang presyo ng bigas sa pamilihan at mas lumiit lalo ang kita ng gobyerno. Nagbanta rin ang Fitch na kung babaliktarin ang Rice Tarrification Law ay maaaring magdulot iyon ng "credit rating downgrade" na puwedeng magpasama sa imahe ng bansa na makakaapekto sa kakayahan nating mangutang mula sa labas ng bansa. Hay naku. Mapapatanong ka na lang talaga kung alam kaya ng pangulo ang pinasok niyang trabaho? Parang hindi kasi siya sigurado sa mga naiisip niyang plano.

Pangulo na mismo ang nagsabing malayo sa katotohanan ang kanyang binitiwang pangako na gawing bente pesos ang bigas pero gayunpaman malaki pa rin ang kumpiyansa niyang magagawa ito ng kanyang administrasyon. May tsansa pa rin daw na gawin itong bente, talagang gusto niyang ipilit ang ilusyong ito. Ang gulo ng pangulo.

Sa huli, hindi lang ito usapin patungkol sa kung paano tayo pinaasa ng pangulo na gawing bente pesos ang bigas. Ito ay usapin patungkol sa mga Pilipino partikular na iyong mga nasa laylayan na hanggang ngayon ay umaasa pa rin na matatamasa nila ang ginhawang maaaring idulot sana ng mga pangakong kung may konkretong plano, ay talagang posible. Hindi pa naman nangangalahati ang pangulo sa kanyang termino. Hindi pa nga nangangalahati ay marami na siyang nagawa, nagawang ikakadismaya natin, hindi natin alam kung ano pang kayang gawin ng pangulo. Parang ang pangakong bente pesos na bigas ni Marcos Jr. ay katulad lang din ng pangako mong hinding-hindi ka na mag-eextra rice. Parehong malayo sa katotohanan at isa lamang kalokohan.

> "AANHIN NATIN ANG PLATAPORMA KUNG GINAMIT LANG ITONG PANG-PORMA?"

"SI VIS PACEM PARA BELLUM"

BARON ROY R. LONGAZA
News Editor • BS Development Communication

Si Vis Pacem Para Bellum is a Latin Phrase which translates to "If you want peace, prepare for war" exemplifies the paradoxical nature of wars in the annals of our history. In order to attain peace, innocent lives must be at stake, artillery shells as the sound of mundane life, bloodshed as the water, and environment as the battleground will be destructed.

RAVAGING ARTILLERY SHELLS

Si Vis Pacem Para Bellum, a Latin phrase which translates to English as "If you want peace, prepare for war" takes a heavy toll akin to many armed conflicts around the world. From world wars in the past, to the contemporary conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine war where the latter country severed ties with each other, consequentially putting innocent lives between the crossfire, and the endless dispute between the bordering countries, Israel and Palestine, bringing us in the same excruciating direction.

Zionist Movement: An Introspection

Reading through the annals of time, there is so much to vilify such as the Zionist project that was established in the early 20th century to provide homes for the Jewish people in the lands of the uncaged Palestine. Since then, nearly millions of Palestinians were coerced to flee their homes perpetuated by the Zionist forces, hence aggression were imminent displacing them in many areas.

Retalliation Against Retalliation

We cannot also say that the recent barbaric bombing of Hamas, a Palestinian militant group, against Israel is necessary in aiming for freedom and full autonomy. However, the retaliation of the latter, bombing enormous times the Gaza strip does not eradicate the horrors of the past, of the long withstanding Zionist aggression, and of the memories of the innocents being killed inhumanly for any farce reason. You just don't oppose merciless conducts when in the first place your end posed atrocious deeds. This is the time when the oppressed fights back not in words but in assault. Basic fundamental rights become nonexistent.

> "TO THINK THAT THE CONFLICT IS GOING SOMEWHERE IS IDEALISTIC BUT HOPELESS. TO VIEW THE SITUATION AS GOING NOWHERE IS WHAT WE'RE HAVING."

Many decades have passed, it is as if, Palestinians are running endless, or should I say, fleeing unceasingly a battleground that's supposed to be their dwelling place. Even the Oslo Accord became trivial despite the agreement.

The Fourth Geneva Convention seems to have no effect for Israel as well as more than 10,000 children adding to almost more than 20,000 lives had been killed and 1.2 million civilians have been displaced since the early October 2023. Hospitals bombed causing the loss of lives of medical personnel, safe drinking water remains even elusive, and children lost their parents.

Would you desert a land you once sow, now you cannot reap? Would you like your child to grow up looking at that sun that don't shine yellow but a color of blood?

A Child Inside A Young Adult

Growing up in a Christian country, and a family that values religion, it was instilled in me that not only Israel is the promised land for Jews, but from our perspective, we view it as the holy land as Jesus' life and death occurred in the place. For many years, I dignified a country that I thought is holy and kind because of the experiences they had especially during the Second World War, but that uphold all rivets as the detrimental facts that are hard to swallow becomes my humane understanding of the true meaning of empathy for the people inside the unyielding genocide.

Where Is The Conflict Heading?

With the support coming from the United States when it comes to their national defense, Israel certainly will not easily put their guards down despite the call of the people, the United Nations (UN), and its neighboring countries for a ceasefire.

It is clearly a message of irony sent by Israel to the corners of the world that in order attain peace, one must go through war—to engage in hostility. Thus, it is easy for us to condemn atrocities in the past when brought up in the present, but it is hard to denounce it as it recurs in present time. What's happening is genocide, not a repatriation.

I hope the Philippines will not side with the oppressor. Note the modal verb.

INK-SKINNED MAYARI

PASAKALYE O PASA SA KALYE?

ELAINE L. YANELA
Feature Editor • BS Civil Engineering

Inilunsad ang Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) noong taong 2017, sa inisyatibo ng DOTr at LTFRB, na naglalayong maiangkop ang kalagayan ng pampublikong transportasyon ng ating bansa sa global na pamantayan. Binibigyang-diin sa programang ito ang pagkonsolida ng mga PUV, pag-phaseout ng mga lumang yunit ng jeep, at pagbigay ng daan sa mga modernized jeepney. Ayon sa PISTON, aabot sa 200,000 transport workers ang mawawalan ng hanapbuhay at 28.5 milyong komyuter ang maapektuhan ng transisyong ito.

IN FAVOR OF THE ODDS

Sa makipot na daan, ang sarili ay pilit na ipinagkakasya. Barya lamang sa umaga ang kanilang paalala. May pagkakataong nagsisiksikan o nag-uunahan, ngunit walang umaabante sa ganitong sistema.

Matagal nang suliranin sa ating bansa ang krisis sa pampublikong transportasyon lalong higit sa kalakhang Maynila. Hindi lingid sa nakararami ang tila zombie apocalypse na pakikipagsapalaran ng mga komyuter. Masikip. Mainit. Makarating ka man lamang ay tagaktak na ang malagkit mong pawis. Subalit higit pa rito, ang mas malaking implikasyon nito sa kabuuang lagay pang-ekonomiko, turismo, maging sa seguridad at galaw ng mamamayan na deka-dekada nang tinitiis na parang sirang makinang pilit binibigkis ng mga pansamantalang pagkukumpuni.

Noon pa mang taong 2017, isinusulong na ang Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP). Inilahad sa PUVMP ang pangangailangang matugunan ang magkakawing na problema sa sistema ng transportasyon at naglalayong mabago ito tungo sa pampublikong transportasyong marangal, makatao, at kapantay ng global standards. Masalimuot ang proseso ng pagpapatupad ng PUVMP sa loob ng nakalipas na anim na taon. Naging atras-abante ang pagi-implementa nito, dagdag pa rito ang maraming butas na nasilip sa programa na siyang dahilan ng marami at patuloy na mga pagtutol.

PASA (sa mamamayan)

Makatarungang transisyon ang sigaw sa mga transport strike. Kapalit kasi ng inaasam na modernisasyon ay ang dagdag pasanin sa mga transport groups at maging sa mga mamamayan. Sa pagsasakatuparan ng programang ito, nirerekomenda ang pag-operate ng mga modernized e-jeep na milyones ang halaga. Mas kombinyente naman daw. Sistematiko. May safety features at air conditioned. Ngunit kalakip nito, tataas ang singil na pasahe sa mga komyuter. Ang pamumuhunan sa mga modernized jeep na ito ay ipapasa sa mamamayan. Sino nga ba ang mga madalas na sumasakay sa ating mga jeep? Kaya kayang i-accomodate ng air conditioned e-jeep ang mga pasaherong may dalang ikinakarga sa jeep tulad ng mga paninda? Paano masisigurong hindi masasagasaan o maiiwan ang nakararami sa ating mga pasahero at tsuper sa programang ito? Ang barya-baryang kinikita ay lalo pang bababa ang halaga dahil sa taas ng presyo ng iminumungkahing e-jeep.

SAKAL (sa mga tsuper)

Mga tsuper at operator ng mga tradisyonal na jeep ang pangunahing naiipit ng polisiyang ito. Hindi na tutululutang bumiyahe ang mga PUV na hindi sumailalim sa konsolidasyon kaya ang tanging pamilian nila ay kooperatiba o mawalan ng prangkisa. Gayundin naman, ang mga nagmamay-ari ng jeep na lampas na ang serbisyo sa 15 taon ay mapipilitang kumuha ng bagong unit upang patuloy na makapagpasada. Ang higit dalawang milyon tinatantiyang halaga ng kada unit ng modernized jeepney ay napakalaking halaga para sa isang tipikal na tsuper o operator na masuwerte nang kumikita ng hanggang tatlong libong piso sa isang araw. Sa kitang iyon ay hindi pa nababawas ang kanilang gastusin tulad ng gasolina at boundary. Kung gayon pala ay ibabaon lamang natin sa utang ang mga tsuper na mapu-pwersang sumunod. Ipangungutang ang pagkakaroon ng hanapbuhay na araw-araw

> “ANG MINAMANEHONG SOLUSYON AY DAPAT NA LAGI’T LAGING BALANSENG NAGSASAALANG-ALANG NG KAPAKANAN NG MGA KABILANG DITO.“

nilang pagtatrabahunang mabayaran. Maging ang sinasabing subsidiya na nagkakahalaga ng hanggang ₱200,000 ay hindi makasasapat sa taas ng presyo ng mga modelo ng jeep na ibinibida ng gobyerno.

Isa pa sa dinaraing ng marami ukol sa polisiyang ito ay ang pagkiling sa mga foreign auto companies bilang supplier ng modernized jeep sa halip na buksan para sa mga local manufacturers. Kung tatangkilikin ang disenyo ng local manufacturers, magbubukas sana ito ng mas maraming trabaho, makukuha pa ang modernized jeep sa mas mababang halaga kumpara sa mga foreign companies.

KALYE (hindi phaseout)

Malaki ang pangangailangang matutukan ang isyu sa mass transport at hindi makatutulong ang pagphaseout ng tradisyonal na mga jeep, bagkus ay maaaring maging dahilan pa ito ng paglala ng transport crisis. Ang route rationalization, na isa ring bahagi ng PUVMP na tumutukoy naman sa pagaaral at pagtatakda ng planadong mga ruta na tumutugon sa mga demand ng mga pasahero, ang lalong mas dapat na pagtuunan ng pansin. Bilang ito ay komprehensibo at estratehikong pagtatasa ng ruta ng mga pampublikong sasakyan batay sa pangangailangan ng pasahero at lokasyon ng pangunahing paggalaw, ang route rationalization ang higit na dapat higpitan at hindi ang panggigipit sa kabuhayan ng mga tsuper. Kailangang ayusin ang mga kalye para maibsan ang dyahe sa byahe.

Ang totoo, isang matamis na pangarap para sa bawat Pilipino ang maranasang bumiyahe ng komportable. Iyon bang may katiyakan kang maginhawa ang iyong katawan at isip na maglakbay tungo sa nais mong marating. Gusto ng Pinoy ang pag-unlad. Sino naman ang aayaw sa komportableng pampublikong sasakyan, hindi ba? Ngunit hindi dapat na kapalit nito ang kabuhayan ng ating mga tsuper at operator.

Ang franchise consolidation stage ng PUVMP ay isa pa lamang pasakalye, panimula sa mga hakbanging isinusulong ng modernisasyon. Mahaba pa ang byahe. Ang usapin sa PUV modernization program at panukalang pag-phaseout ng tradisyonal na pampasaherong jeep ay hindi lamang ‘matter of keeping the tradition’. Hindi na lamang ito usapin ng pagpre-preserba ng nabuo nating kultura at identidad sa pag-arangkada at pagpara ng ating mga jeep. Nakasalalay rito ang kabuhayan ng libo-libong tsuper, maging ang kaginhawan ng mga komyuter. Ito ay matagal na proseso. Dapat lamang na unit-unti at hindi kaskasero. Sa pagsulong ng modernisasyon, ang minamanehong solusyon ay dapat na lagi’t laging balanseng nagsasaalang-alang ng kapakanan ng mga kabilang dito.

KALABAN NG BAYAN: JOURNO O GOBYERNO?

MARIEL R. GARCIA
Managing Editor-Publication • BEEd-General Education

Napakarami nang naging biktima ng bulok na sistema. Ilang inosenteng mamamayan pa ang hihintayin nating mawala para magising sa katotohanan? Huwag kang magbulag-bulagan. Hustisya para sa kapwa Pilipino, hustisya para sa bayan. Hindi ang media ang iyong kalaban dahil marahil minsan, ang akala mong magliligtas sayo, ay sila pa ang maglalagay sayo sa peligro.

SISTEMA

Noong bata pa ako, sabi ng lola ko huwag raw akong magsisinungaling dahil masama raw iyon. Ngunit bakit ngayong malaki na ako, kapag nagsabi ka ng totoo maaaring paputukan ka nalang ng bala sa ulo. Palagi kong inaalala noong bata pa ako ang nakagawian naming pagpunta sa perya o karnabal tuwing araw ng Sabado. Nakakatuwa at nakakamangha, ngunit habang lumalaki ako, nagbabago ang pananaw ko dito. Hindi pala masaya kundi puno ito ng panloloko kagaya ng katayuan ngayon ng ating gobyerno. Mala sirkus ang mga kaganapan ngayon pagdating sa usaping politika. Nakakatuwa, ngunit sa huli ay hindi mo na gugustuhing umulit pa.

Nagsisilitawan na naman ang mga balita ukol sa mga hindi kanais-nais na mga pangyayari sa ating gobyerno sangkot ang kasalukuyang administrasyon at isa na rito ang ilang pagpatay at panggigipit sa mga campus journalists at maging sa ibang bahagi ng media. Marahil ito ay ang simula ng unti unting pagbuhol sa dila ng katotohanan at pagkadena sa kalayaan ng mga mamamahayag sa bansa.

Kamakailan ay naging mainit ang usapin sa ilang mga journalists na pinatay at ginigipit dahil sa kanilang walang takot na pagsiwalat ng katotohanan. Isa na rito ay ang pamamaril sa isang radio anchor noong nakaraang Nobyembre sa Misamis Occidental habang nakaere ang kaniyang programa. Masasabing ito ang ika- 199 na pagpatay sa isang journalist mula sa taong 1986.

Kaugnay rin sa usapin na ito ay ang pakikiisa ng mga kabataang mamamahayag mula sa iba't ibang paaralan sa rehiyong Bicol sa muling pag-alaala sa ika-51 na anibersaryo nang pagdeklara ng Martial Law noong ika-21 ng Setyembre sa kasalukuyang taon. Ito ay upang sariwain ang mga bakas ng madugong karanasan sa ilalim ng administrasyong Marcos. Ang mga mamamahayag ay walang takot na nakiisa upang huwag hayaang mabaon sa limot ang tunay na nangyari sa ating kasaysayan. Ngunit ang kanilang pakikibahagi ay pinasimulan nang muling panggigipit ng ilang tropa ng militar. Hindi ito simpleng usapan, hindi lamang buhay ang nakataya kundi nakasalalay rin ang press freedom.

> **"HINDI MATATAPOS ANG PAKIKIPAGLABAN NATIN PARA SA BAYAN AT KATOTOHANAN KUNG PATULOY TAYONG NAPAPA- IKOT SA BULOK NA SISTEMA."**

Sa mga nagdaang kaganapan kaugnay ang mga mamamahayag partikular ang mga campus journalists sa Pilipinas, nararapat na maisaayos at marebisa ang Republic Act 7079 o ang Campus Journalism Act of 1991 sapagkat hindi ito komprehensibo at walang malinaw na detalye ukol sa pakikiisa ng mga campus journalists sa mga kilos protesta at walang sapat na pahayag paano sila mapoprotektahan. Ang nasabing batas ay nararapat na may nakapaloob na ibang saklaw lalo na sa mga panlabas na pakikibahagi ng mga campus journalist sapagkat hindi natatapos ang nalilimitahan sa loob ng kanya-kanya nilang mga institusyon ang pagpapahayag nila ng katotohanan. Sa pagkakataong ito, ang RA 7079 ay nararapat na marebisa at mabigyang linaw kung ano nga ba ang iba pang nararapat na maging bahagi ng nasabing batas. Nararapat na ito ay mas palalimin at palinawin nang sa ganoon ay alam ng bawat mamamahayag ang kanilang responsibilidad bilang tagapag-balita ng katotohanan. Ang journalism ay nararapat na maging tapat sa kung ano ang katotohanan at hindi kung kanino man. Sa pagkakataong ito, makikita nating parehong may butas sa panig ng gobyerno at ng mga journo. Ang mga mamamahayag ay hindi protektado sa ilalim ng Republic Act 7079 kaya't hindi kayang ipagtanggol sa kanilang pakikibaka sa mga kilos protesta upang magpahayag ng saloobin para sa Bayan. Ang gobyerno na mas pinipili ang paggamit ng dahas kahit walang matibay na ebidensya upang kumitil ng mga inosenteng buhay. Parehong may butas, parehong may pag-kukulang. Ngunit hindi sapat na rason ang mga butas na ito upang pumatay tayo ng tao.

Ngayon, sa mga mala-sirkus na pangyayari sa ating bansa, sino nga ba ang tunay na kalaban ng bayan? Para sa akin, ang tunay na kalaban ng bayan ay ang pinipiling pumatay mapagtakpan lang ang katotohan.

IT'S NEVER "JUST"

TRIGGER WARNING: SEXUAL ASSAULT, TRAUMA

RUTH ANTONNETTE C. TRAPANE
Managing Editor-Finance • BS Civil Engineering

When we focus too much – and only – on the victim rather than the offender, we are doubling the weight over women's shoulders as the abused, and the perpetually perceived. Subtracting the perpetrators out of the conversation makes it difficult for us to demand accountability. At times, it may feel like the world has turned its back on you and its "unwinnable", but know that you are not alone, and many are willing to fight and win this with you.

ALLIES > DEFENDERS

As a child who grew up with a limited safe space and comfort zone, I used to believe that safety is evident anywhere. I was enjoying life in and outside school, was learning things, and exploring life on my own. I can say that I excelled in everything I enjoyed doing. I was happily thriving in my safe space. No matter where I go, I assume I'll be well, unhurt, unscathed – not until I was 21.

I was on my way to school in a public vehicle when I was assaulted by a man almost thrice my size. He was a stranger to me. Some might wonder what I was wearing for that to happen, that maybe I was wearing something revealing as if I was pleasing the stranger beside me, but no. I was wearing my favorite go-to denim pants and gray knitted vest with a white shirt tucked underneath despite the scorching 32°C heat. I was covered in layers and yet the devil had the urge to touch me without my consent. His hand on the right-side of my chest, while his other hand was pointing something sharp at my waist which luckily (or I guess not?) was pointed at my denim pants. "Bakit hindi ka humingi ng tulong?" Easier said than done when there's a sharp object pointed right at your waist. Whenever I try to fight him, he would push the sharp object harder to my side. I only stopped when I felt it ruining my pants; knew that if I continued doing what I'm doing, I'd be gone for good. This unfortunate experience of mine is only one of the million sexual assault incidents experienced by women all over the world.

The thing about these encounters is it will slowly devour your system, gradually creeping taking parts of you. Healing from it may feel crazy, as it is never linear. It is a forever kind of suffering – a delicate blend of perpetual numbness while also always feeling pain. The endless train of "what-ifs" will make you feel regret, or rage, or oftentimes both. I think it quite weird that I still suffer from past encounters when, at that time, I did everything I could. I resisted, stayed resilient, and fought with all my might, but why does it feel like I didn't do enough? I could not easily tell anyone what had happened as I was scared that even though I never got to know his name, I was aware of who society would point fingers at if they found out. Disappointing truth, but at this time and age, with all the advancements that the world has, victim-blaming remains and is still rampant. I knew right after reporting the incident to the provincial police station I would be forced to adjust my lifestyle. I won't be allowed to leave or go places alone. I should be home at a certain specific time. I was told how to dress. People who knew would look at me with pity, as if it helps. Worse, I forced myself to feel and live normally like nothing tragic happened.

We are not damsels in distress

One odd aspect of people that I find frustrating is that when victims finally find the courage to speak out, they face questions about their clothing choices or actions, as if these could somehow justify or invite criminal behavior. The reminder that such factors do not equate to consent cannot be emphasized enough, especially in a country where the concept of sexual harassment is frequently distorted to control how women dress or act. However, we need to be careful and to resist in a way that doesn't cage women to being passive victims.

Giving women the identity of princesses who needs their knights in shining armors put us in a spotlight of being victims rather than the actions that made us victims. Instead of giving us this "identity", why don't we focus on the process? Why don't we focus on these predators and the crime they committed? We must be cautious not to convey the idea that women are passive individuals needing special attention.

Empathy more than sympathy

For survivors of sexual abuse, enduring victim-blaming is nowhere near half the battle. This is the very reason why whenever people look at these survivors, the least I want to see from people's eyes is pity. It is understandable to feel that way but, not to dictate over people's emotions, people must feel rage rather than pity – because to be sad is one thing, but to be mad over something that should've not happened in the first place is another. It is important not only to recognize the victims' emotions, but also to understand and share their feelings. It is at these crucial times that they must not feel alone.

Women are not individuals who need to be shielded; we don't necessarily need protection, but a collective force to smash the system that has forced women into a cage labeled "FRAGILE". Demanding justice and holding criminals accountable might seem a shot in the dark, but through collective efforts, it is attainable.

It's never "just"

It's never "just a touch".

It is an invisible tattoo imprinted on my body, same as other women's. It is a memory that lives on our minds, unwanted. It is a growing dark pit slowly absorbing every inch of our innocence, making us wary of our surroundings as if we're prey in a massive predator's den. It is a constant reminder that this systemic issue needs a strong justice system, that there's a strong sense of solidarity with women, and all people of different sexual orientations and gender identities who suffer from this inhumane crime.

It should've never happened in the first place – not to me, or anyone. Perhaps, I won't be struggling to find the right words to convey how sexual abuse affects a person. Perhaps, it won't be difficult for me to commute every single day. Perhaps, then, my parents won't be worried if I could still come home safe, whole, alive, unharmed. Then maybe, just maybe, survivors won't have to live with this trauma because, believe me, many of us really don't.

"MAY THIS BE A REMINDER TO EVERYONE THAT AN UNJUSTIFIABLE ACT IS NEVER 'JUST'."

PAMBOBOLA PARA SA BOLA

ARNOLD B. AÑORA
Editor-in-Chief • BS Civil Engineering

Tuwing eleksyon, hindi natin maitatanggi na inaabangan ng ilan sa atin ang kaliwa't kanang campaign jingle tangan ang mga pangalan ng mga kandidato at kanilang mga plataporma na nagsilbing alarm clock ng karamihan sa atin sa mga panahong iyon. Gasgas na sigurong maituturing ang mga pangakong pagbabago sa pamamahala o pagbibigay ng bagong mukha ng liderato sa ating bayan. Sa nakalipas na barangay at SK elections, humigit kumulang 24 na milyong kabataan ang nagpatala at nagparehistro sa ibat ibang lokal na opisina ng Comelec sa bansa at ang bilang rin na ito ang pipili sa mga susunod na kabataang lider ng kani -kanilang mga barangay. Ang bilang na ito ang magdidikta sa kung ano ang Sangguniang Kabataan natin sa susunod na tatlong taon.

Taong 1991, sa pamamagitan ng Republic Act 7160, ganap na itinatag ang Sangguniaang Kabataan mula sa istruktura ng kabataang barangay. Mula sa taong ito hanggang 2016, sumailalim ang batas sa ilang pagrebisa upang tugunan ang iba't ibang isyung kinaharap ng SK patungkol sa political dynasty, korapsyon, at nepotism pati na rin sa hindi epektibong pamamahala ng mga naunang naluklok na SK officials.

Hindi natin maikakaila na kailangan ng representasyon ng kabataan sa mga isyung panlipunan at mas lalong higit sa makataong pamamalakad ng pamahalaan. Ang Sangguniaang Kabataan ay isang manipestasyon na hindi lang binibigyan ng lugar ng pamahalaan ang kabataan sa mga diskurso patungkol sa mga isyung panlipunan, kundi binibigyan rin sila ng pagkakataon na maging katuwang ng pamahalaan at maglingkod sa kapwa nila kabataan. Ika nga, sino pa bang mas nakakaalam sa pangangailangan ng kabataan kung hindi ang mga kabataan mismo.

Pero teka lang, mistulang pambobola naman ang paulit-ulit na mga programang pinapangako at inilulunsad ng mga batang politiko. Sa katunayan, ang unang maiisip ng mga botante at kabataan pag pinag-uusapan ang SK ay ang naglalakihang arko at signages ng barangay, liga, pageant, clean-up drive na hindi naman nasusundan o di kaya'y mga mamahaling house number plate tangan ang mga litrato ng batang politiko. Nagmistulang tradisyonal na politiko na lamang sila na ang inihahatid sa publiko ay mga programa na libangan at pampalipas oras lamang sa karamihan o bagay na kaaksayahan lang ng pondo ng bayan.

> **"HINDI BOLA ANG SOLUSYON SA MGA PROBLEMANG KINAHAHARAP NG KABATAAN, PINAG-ARALANG PLANO AT KONKRETONG SOLUSYUN ANG KAILANGAN DITO."**

Tila napako na lamang sa mga liga at pageant ang mga programa ng Sangguniang Kabataan magmula ng maisabatas ang mga reporma sa nasabing institusyon. Wala na bang ibang progresibong programang naiisip ang mga kabataang lider ngayon? O sadyang wala pa silang sapat na kaalaman para matugunan ang mga tunay na problemang kinahaharap ng bawat isang kabataan sa kani-kanilang barangay?

Napakaraming isyu at problemang kinakaharap ang mga kabataan na mistulang ipinag-kikibit balikat lamang ng mga kabataang lider na nasa posisyon. Maagang pagbubuntis, tumataas na bilang ng mga kabataang hindi nakakapagtapos o nakakatungtong man lang sa kolehiyo, tumataas na bilang ng kriminalidad na ang may kagagawan ay mga menor-de-edad pa lamang at ang tumataas rin na bilang ng pagpapatiwakal ay ilan lamang sa mga problemang kinakailangan ng agarang solusyon na maaring tugunan ng SK gamit ang pondong kanilang nakukuha.

Hindi ko naman sinasabing walang kwenta ang mga liga at pageant, sa katunayan ang mga programang ito ay nakatutok sa pagpapaunlad ng pampalakasang pagkakakilanlan ng kabataan ngunit kung ikukumpara at babalansehin natin ang bigat ng pangangailangan sa dalawang magkaibang aspetong ito, tingin ko kahit sino kayang sabihin kung ano ang mas kailangan ng aksyon ng Sangguniang Kabataan.

Laos na plataporma at programa na ang mga liga at pageant lang. Napaglumaan na ito ng panahon at wala itong higit na maitutulong sa bawat kabataang pinag-lilingkuran ng SK. Ang mga kabataan ay hindi pang sports at pageant lang. Hindi sa bola umiikot ang gampanin at mandato ng sangguniang kabataan. Bumabagtas ito mula sa pagprotekta sa mga karapatan patungo sa pagpapaunlad sa intelektwal na buhay at pagkaka-kilanlan ng bawat isang kabataan. Mas lalong higit na hindi bola ang limitasyon ng mga programang dapat nilang ini-hahatid sa mga kapwa nila kabataan.

Taong 1991 nang unang itinatatag ang Sangguniang Kabataan hango mula sa kabataang barangay na inilunsad sa pamamagitan ng Presidential Decree 684. Taong 2016 naman ng nilagdaan ang Sangguniang kabataan Reform Act o RA 10742 at muli rito pinagtibay ang mga gampanin at proyektong dapat na inilulunsad ng SK na sumasaklaw sa mga aspeto ng Good Governance, Disaster Risk Reduction, Youth Empowerment and Livelihood, Health, Gender Sensitivity at Sports Development. Bilang isang yunit ng pamahalaan na may mandatong direktang maghatid ng progresibong pagbabago at programa na sumasaklaw sa anim na aspeto na ito, mukhang kulang ang baon-baon pang plano ng mga batang politiko upang mapaunlad ang mga kabataan—kulang, kapos, at napag-iwanan.

BATANG PULITIKO

HUMAN TOUCH

Eugelyn Villanueva

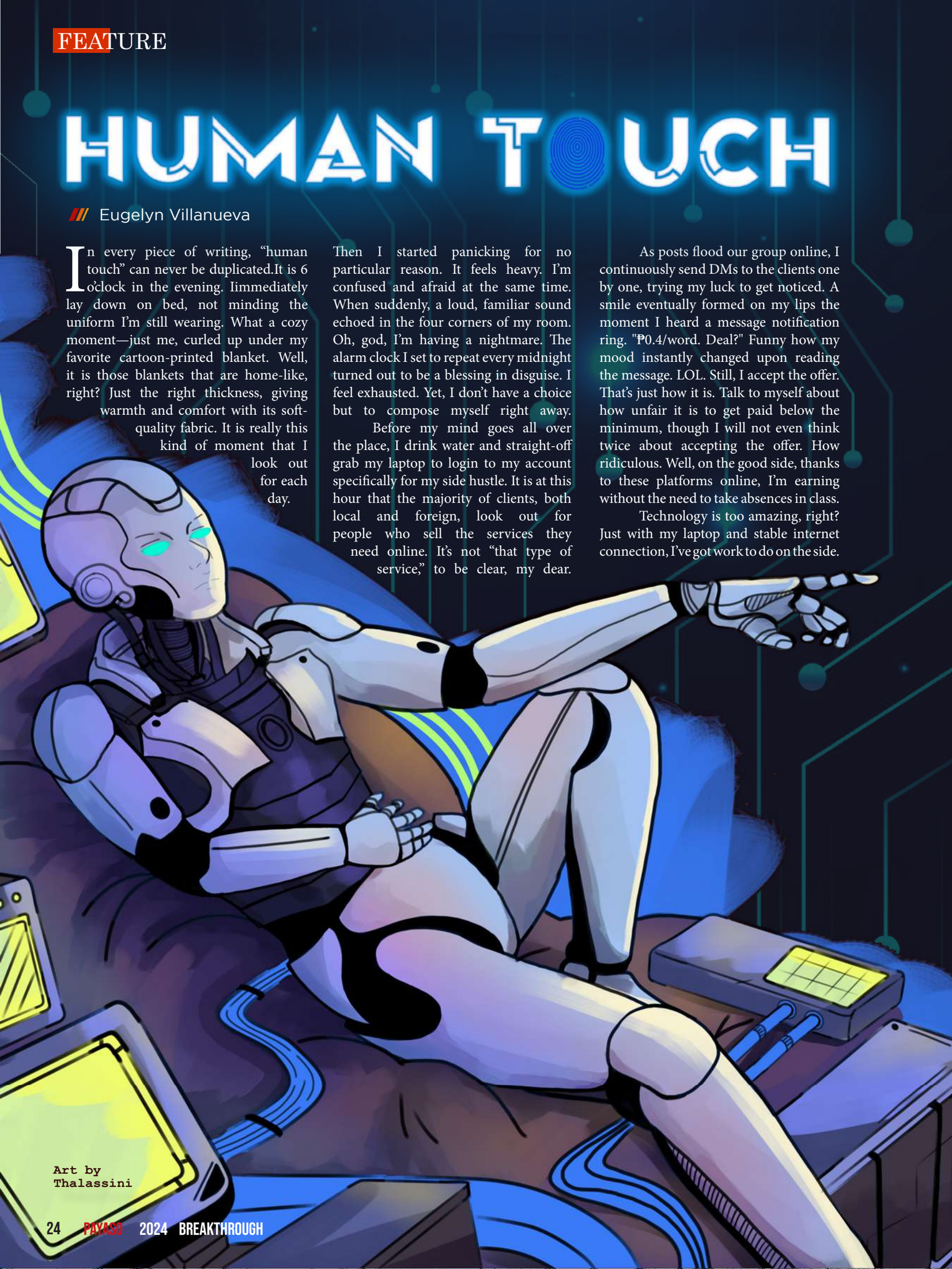
In every piece of writing, "human touch" can never be duplicated.It is 6 o'clock in the evening. Iimmediately lay down on bed, not minding the uniform I'm still wearing. What a cozy moment—just me, curled up under my favorite cartoon-printed blanket. Well, it is those blankets that are home-like, right? Just the right thickness, giving warmth and comfort with its soft-quality fabric. It is really this kind of moment that I look out for each day.

Then I started panicking for no particular reason. It feels heavy. I'm confused and afraid at the same time. When suddenly, a loud, familiar sound echoed in the four corners of my room. Oh, god, I'm having a nightmare. The alarm clock I set to repeat every midnight turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I feel exhausted. Yet, I don't have a choice but to compose myself right away.

Before my mind goes all over the place, I drink water and straight-off grab my laptop to login to my account specifically for my side hustle. It is at this hour that the majority of clients, both local and foreign, look out for people who sell the services they need online. It's not "that type of service," to be clear, my dear.

As posts flood our group online, I continuously send DMs to the clients one by one, trying my luck to get noticed. A smile eventually formed on my lips the moment I heard a message notification ring. "₱0.4/word. Deal?" Funny how my mood instantly changed upon reading the message. LOL. Still, I accept the offer. That's just how it is. Talk to myself about how unfair it is to get paid below the minimum, though I will not even think twice about accepting the offer. How ridiculous. Well, on the good side, thanks to these platforms online, I'm earning without the need to take absences in class.

Technology is too amazing, right? Just with my laptop and stable internet connection, I've got work to do on the side.



Art by Thalassini

I do not even need to get through the hassle of submitting my curriculum vitae and undergo the usual hiring process. Imagine not having the need to attend face-to-face interviews. Oh, chef's kiss. How I love the conveniences brought by the magic of technology! It's all fun and good, but not until news about artificial intelligence spreads like wildfire online.

While AI's, without a doubt, a beneficial tool, it's a different story for someone like me who is still a beginner in the industry of freelance writing. Since the popularity of AI such as ChatGPT, I feel like the number of clients posting projects online is decreasing. What's confusing is how there's been a sudden increase in the number of freelancers in our group. They even offer way below-market prices for their services, which is too good to be true. It makes me wonder why they would go that far just to have clients, right? Only to find out later on that there are complaints about receiving AI-generated outputs. (Funny how impostors are not only prevalent in the field of politics.)

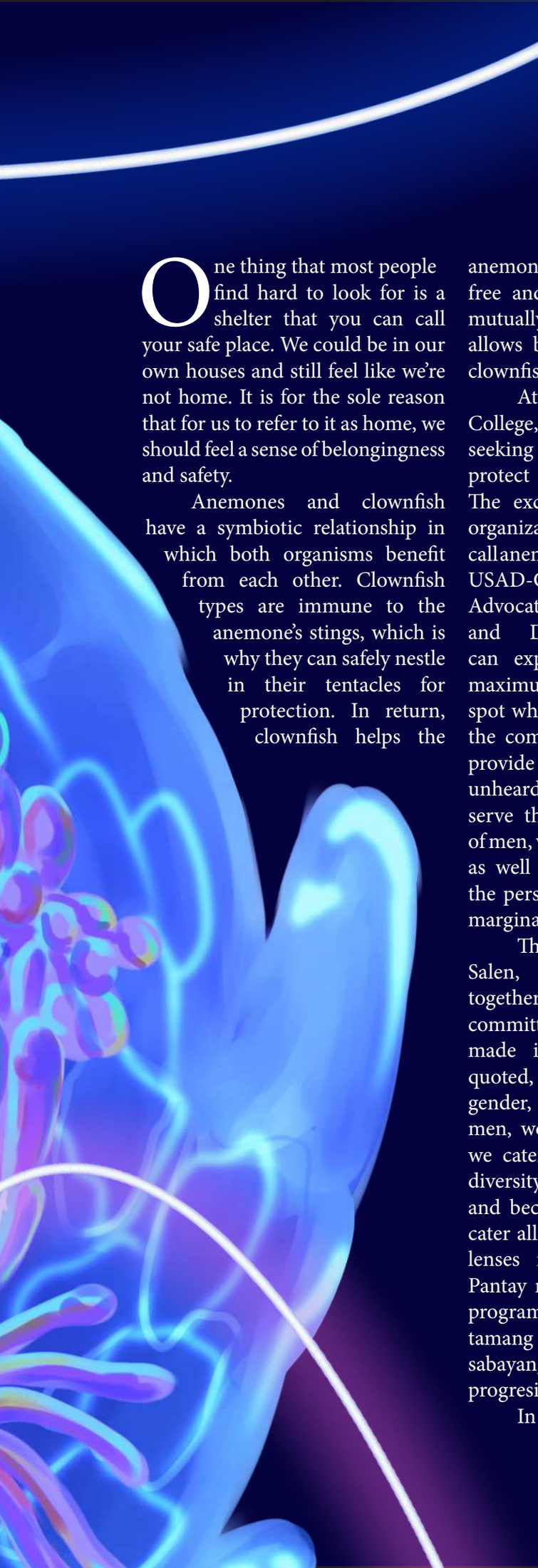
With the thought that the availability of AI detection tools will bring us—freelance writers—back to the market, I pull myself together and get motivated to do work. Still, it's concerning how technology just keeps on advancing and is fast-paced as well. Yesterday, there was ChatGPT, and now there's more AI writing tools and chatbots on the list. From giving quick responses to prompts to requiring low to no cost at all, who would not want to try these out? I, for one, actually checked it out of curiosity. And I'm glad I did! It is only then that I realized that there will always be writing projects awaiting us—freelancers. I may sound too confident, but if you have already tried these tools, I know for sure that you get what I mean. "Human touch" can never be duplicated, indeed. Since I'm in a good mood due to discovering the gap between artificial intelligence and human intelligence, I'll give you a wise tip.

Be careful not to add "as an AI language model" in your output from ChatGPT. So that there's only 99% of you getting caught using AI.

The Clownfish in the Anemone

Raisah Kamilah D. Dayto

Art by Joestar



One thing that most people find hard to look for is a shelter that you can call your safe place. We could be in our own houses and still feel like we're not home. It is for the sole reason that for us to refer to it as home, we should feel a sense of belongingness and safety.

Anemones and clownfish have a symbiotic relationship in which both organisms benefit from each other. Clownfish types are immune to the anemone's stings, which is why they can safely nestle in their tentacles for protection. In return, clownfish helps the anemone by keeping it parasite-free and potent of nutrients. This mutually beneficial relationship allows both the anemone and the clownfish to thrive.

At Camarines Norte State College, students are like clownfishes seeking anemones to rest at and protect them from possible harm. The exciting news is there is an organization that these students can call anemones inside the institution—USAD-GAD or the United Students Advocate and Defender for Gender and Diversity—where students can expand their skills to their maximum form and find their safe spot while providing concessions to the community back. They aim to provide space, a platform where the unheard will be heard and further serve the underserved community of men, women, and the LGBTQIA+, as well as the indigenous peoples, the persons with disability, and the marginalized sector of our society.

The founder, Mr. Adonis Salen, formed the organization together with the working committees with an identity that made it remarkably special. He quoted, "When we talk about gender, it is the community of men, women, and LGBTQIA+—so we cater all. When we talk about diversity, it is about our uniqueness, and because we are all unique, we cater all. USAD GAD uses different lenses in achieving its purpose: Pantay na pagtingin, angat na mga programa, polisiya at proyekto, tamang pakikitungo, alay sa lahat, sabayang pag-unlad tungo sa bayang progresibo: PATAS."

In the group's previous operations, they have conducted three outstanding projects that are significantly valuable to the institution and its people—HIRAYA, a concert for a cause that is a powerful testament to the power of music to unite and uplift, showcased their commitment to advocacy; Gender Fair Language Seminar and Training which equipped participants with the tools to foster a more inclusive environment; and PATAS: Policy Making and Program Development for Gender and Development that dismantled systemic barriers and pave the way for a fairer university experience.

In the future, USAD-GAD aspires to accomplish *AMARE ET SERVIRE*, an extension project on gift giving and literacy intervention for the tribe, and college visits to promote their advocacies. These projects highlight the organization's adequate functions in the present times and should hopefully persist in the future.

Mr. Salen challenges the forthcoming members and officers to embrace the spirit of '*pagkakaisa*' (unity) and 'pagiging isa' (becoming one), regardless of individual differences. Just as the anemone provides shelter for the clownfishes in the sea, USAD-GAD must continue to nurture its members and actively serve the wider community. Through upholding the dedication to inclusivity and empowerment, USAD-GAD can continue to be the bearer of reliance and belongingness for all Camarines Norte State College students.

THE UNWINGED:

A Weekly Drive from Aurora to Dusk

Niñalyn B. Malong

They are not Maleficent. Nor Maleficent is them.
These eager beavers strictly fly high unwinged.
These ordinary guardians are not your ordinary.

When the time hits, the run is at stake.
30-second brushes, 40- second pullers.
Off with his head is nothing but to see aurora.
Off with his head is nothing but to witness dusk.
I ran. I rode. I gasped for air.
Now, they opened the room. I am scared.
As I view the room, I can't help but be suspicious of everything and everyone. I noticed pink lenses, red tint, and wooden sticks as accessories.
Suit in white, bluish theme combined. They surely dressed to kill.
Above none else.

How did I know this? Simple. Their poise explained it all.

First Seconds

When aurora strikes, they ready themselves. Gun in hand, they come as a band. No veto can save me nor they will free me. With sweat, I submitted. With tears, I entered. Finally.

Many of them lived from faraway miles, yet they arrived first. Many of them have families to prioritize, yet they put me first. They didn't kill time as they guard the room. It is in my favor while having the whale of time. They guarded me, ironically they are living unguarded.

They start their work in the morning. Alone, in the light, usually unnoticed.

From a Single Task to an Overall Work

My guardians are identical to those who lived in the skies. They're both dressed in white. They both have keen eyes. They both protect me when my eyes are wide and closed. However, my guardian's memorable feature is that they execute all of this without wings. Danger and hazards that I come across with are prevented in a snap of time.

The code states that the fundamental duty of the guardian is to protect the lives and properties, to protect the vicinity within the place of duty, and to protect the stability of the government and the country without compromise and prejudice while also maintaining the safety and security of the body. I am dumbfounded. How did they do all of that in such a short time and did many more things out of the ordinary?

Risker of Life and Limb

When dusk falls, they are still not ready to go. Gun in hand, they come as a band. No veto can save me nor they will free me. With sweat, I waved goodbye. With tears, I left the room. With comfort, I promise to come back tomorrow. Still, they won't come home until all are safe and sound.

They continue to work at night. Alone, in the darkness, they are frequently unnoticed.

Aside from providing a sense of protection, safety, and security, their immediate assistance can be seen in the four corners of the room. It is not necessary, but guess what? They did it again, by heart. Their commitment is unrivaled. Nothing and no one can compare to what they have done and continue to achieve.

They are better than my CCTVs at home. Will this be enough to prove that no AI can replace humans? It is.

As my unwinged guardians march forward, these knights foresee and prevent potential hazards; the university and its studentry knew them as admirable security guards.

I cannot merely sit all day just to think of my security.

The sense of duty and integrity are immeasurable.

They are the campus security guard. Or CNSC's protector is them.

These eager beavers still strictly fly high unwinged. These ordinary guardians are extraordinary. As I view the room, I can't help but feel the comfort of everything and everyone.

Photos by Clarence Velasco

Ruminations in the Mirror

Elaine L. Yanela

Perhaps you have been holding out for far too long. Been carrying that weight in your shoulders for quite a while now that it has become part of your skin. You have grown too familiar with grief, yet will still fail to point exactly where it hurts and where it needs medicating.

An actor on a big stage. That is what you felt you were. And only once the curtains drew to a close, you let out all the heaviest sighs. Your shoulders loosen and your hands let go of its grip, a sign of a longed for relief... Off the stage you go. Taking slow unsteady steps. Just one at a time, as if all your energy was sucked out of your system in that unwanted performance of yours and all you seek for now is a moment of solitude.

Finally, you have reached your room. The door creaked as you turned the knob. You made sure to put on the lock like a person afraid of someone breaking in would. The room is not in any way grand. There is a bed with a tattered mattress, a nearly worn-out dresser, a table, and chair beside it. It offers just enough room. Enough room for you to sleep, think, and breathe in.

Like an almost subconscious thing, you sit on the chair facing the mirror. There is an image of a stranger staring back at you. His face is pale white, with a red protruding nose, and a painted big smile. The make-up he has been wearing for hours visibly smeared all-over. Reaching for a washcloth, you decide to slide out one of the drawers under the desk, but not without slowly bursting into tears.

The beaming wide grin turns into a dull frown with each stroke of the washcloth on his face. The always smiling figure now stares back with such great sadness in his eyes. A type of unexplainable sadness that pierce through the heart and whatever matter is beneath it. The water he has been keeping at bay continues to stream down from his eyes like a dam at a collapse finally surrendering with the surges inside.

There, the figure sat still. Bruised and broken. For how long? It does not matter. It is one of those questions one arrives at without a clear answer.

Do you ever wonder why clowns wear oversized pants and shoes? Another question. Those oversized pants and shoes are meant for them to look silly or

Art by Joestar

Ruminations in the Mirror

foolish. And what is a fool if not a person who tries to fit in something that is not cut out for them, you feel like saying between your sobs and tears.

There are clowns in the hiding and clowns calmly strolling in the streets. You are more of the former for sure. Before, clowns were a symbol of fun. Performing magic tricks. Giving precise stage presentation and improvisation. They are normal people who do strange acts. Nowadays, the term clown is used to refer to the image of your mirror, behaving all is well in the midst of chaos. The clown is you who keeps looking back in the mirror wanting a different you, like a reader reading the same book, expecting a different ending with each reading. Again, just normal people who sometimes do strange acts.

There is another breed of clown, one must not fail to mention. The clown that justifies strange acts as normal ones. Those that intentionally mislead others attention and is good at plotting deceptions. Clown that cheats their way out of life.

If we think about it, life is just a big school for clowns. In this case, we are all clowns-in-training and that there are far more important questions we should be asking. Are you a good clown? Or a bad one? Behind the facade you have tried so hard to put up, who are you really? Will your eyes reveal someone who can be trusted? Beneath the plastered smile in your face, does your mouth speak of the truth? After removing the layers of make-up, what will your scars and weaknesses reveal about yourself?

"The world is full of trickery" stated in one of the lines of the poem Desiderata. We grow older and only then, we realize that it is in fact true. The world circles around the deceits we are forced to believe and the deceits we tell ourselves. There is a clown in all of us and it is up to us to decide how we will paint ourselves.

For now, there is no better comfort or advice in the world than the one you could give to yourself. Give yourself a break. Rest and cry if you must. Let your body disintegrate in the arms of the comfort you need. Once ready, wipe off your tears and continue to seek the real image in the mirror.

We all have experienced, in one way or another, that strange and inexplicable sensation that our grades are in a dangerous position. Whenever examination week is at a looming distance or we have just survived it (fortunately), many are guilty of the following:

- *Shared a post that promises successful examination results*
- *Used the words "manifesting" and "cutie" for wishing luck*
- *Reposted an anti-bagsak story as protectionfrom all "Babagsak ka ngayong sem" posts*
- *Got angry at yourself for checking your phone instead of studying, but did it anyway and continued doing so*
- *Asked for a blessing from a senior student or did other forms of benediction in the hopes of acing your subject*

If none of these things resonated with you,clearly you have no business here. You may now turn to the next page.

Those who are guilty of any of the situations mentioned are not reading this by accident. Some unknown cosmic powers have willed you to be in this very moment.

Cutting off the ramblings, we read these seemingly absurd academic superstitions and words of advice on a daily basis. A scroll on different social media sites had made us susceptible to similar notions of predestinations and false connections. In a quick five-minute browse to your favorite app, without fail, you are sure to encounter posts on manifestation, comedic study hacks, and hoaxes, mostly in one of two forms: a promise of good luck or warnings of negative consquences if you fail to follow.

For students, these modern-day curses and spells are a circling popular belief. And if it were all true, we would have failed at almost every exam already, the same way we would have possibly claimed millions of pesos from all the prizes we were told we had won on nonexistent raffles from phishing texts. If you ask any student if they follow the practices mentioned, you will be met with rolling eyes, a flat denial, or laughter that hints a yes. We have gone from forwarding chain messages and using Eenie Meenie to answer multiple-choice questions to these new versions of made-up superstitions. Mainly humorous in nature, the resort to online manifestations and channeling our own inner Nostradamus ability are not without purpose or benefits. Whether you are a believer or a skeptic, these statements of blessing (or curse) have become a source of lighthearted jokes and a short break from stressing over our exams.

Shuffling our cards to make sense of what is there and not there

Seeking guidance and borrowing clarity from the external or the supernatural have been around since ancient times. To this day, we still shuffle the cards that lay before us in an attempt to understand things unknown to us. We make interpretations of what is presented in the table. If we are lucky enough, we might find the cards in favor of our circumstances. But once we take luck and random chances out of the equation, what remains is our capacity to be the ones to decide things on our own. To be the ones to develop and hold our own deck of cards.

An advice not from the cards but for your report card: Filter what you feed your mind. Nowadays, friends are no longer the primary factor affecting our area of influence. This role is also being filled in by the type of media we let inside our minds. “Tell me what media you consume, and I will tell you who you are” is becoming more like the case. With that, you have to play your cards right. Be keen to what media you consume. Decide what is yours to hold and when it is best to fold.

Bringing in luck by adding lines to your palm

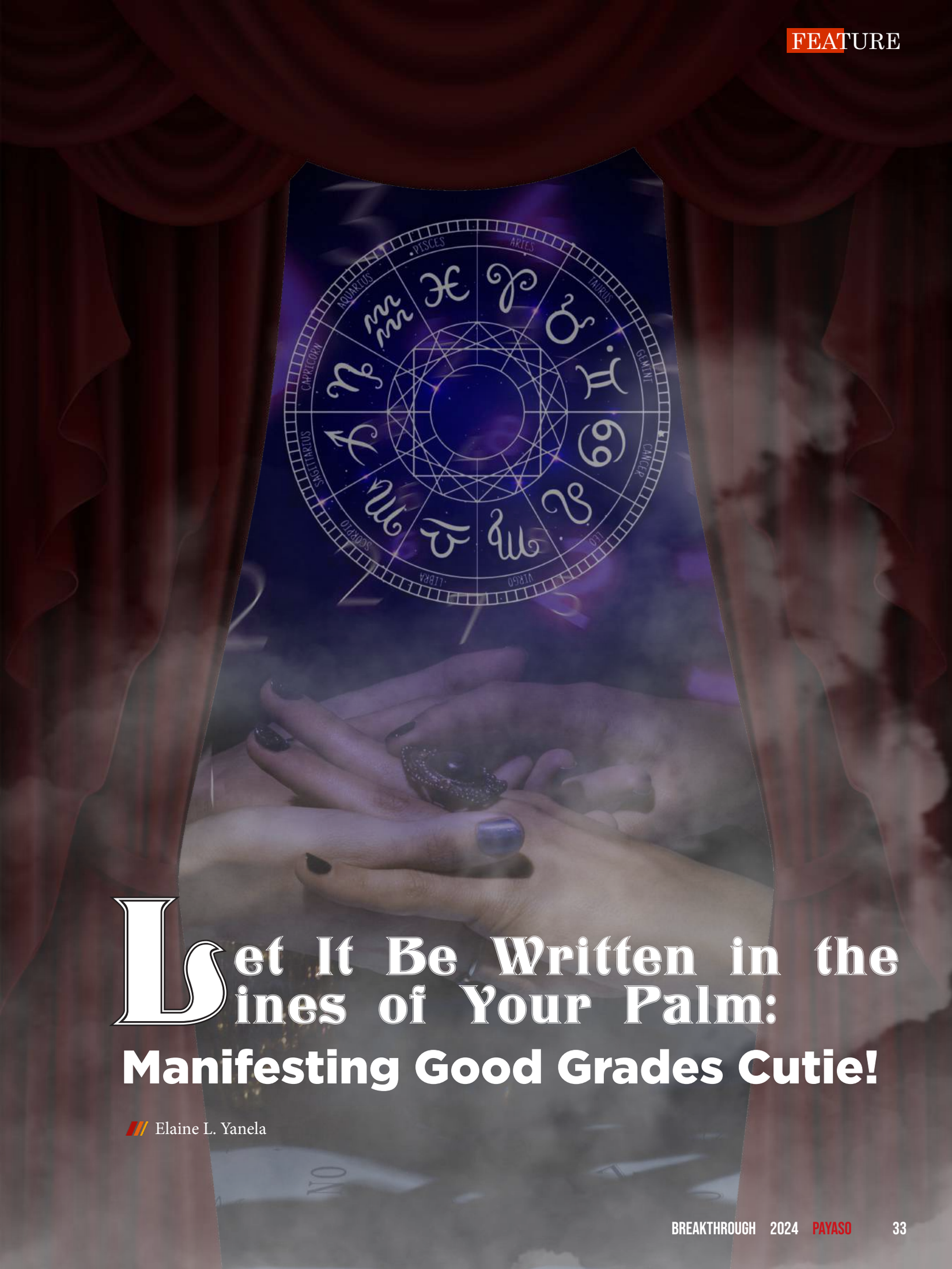
Why do we have lines in our palms, anyway? Do these lines really predetermine how our lives will traverse? That I do not know for certain.

Complete reliance on some cosmic guidance does not get anyone anywhere. One has to do the work. The best way to increase your chances of winning at anything is to put faith in what you do and coupling it with consistent efforts. In an academic setting, the most powerful and underrated anti-bagsak hack is:

Gulatin mo sila. Mag-review ka. Pull up your sleeves and add your own lines to your palm. Let the lines in your palm from working your way be the attestation of how much you can achieve and how badly you want to succeed.

In a tarot reading session, after all the cards have been laid out and the table is set, you are often asked what question you want answers. Same with life: there are questions we long to have answers to, and oftentimes the best way to get better answers is to ask better questions. If we said something out of carelessness, some would tell you to knock on the closest wood next to you. But be careful; knocking on wood has different purposes depending on the culture. Some believe that knocking on wood prevents whatever was said from happening, while in other cultures, knocking on wood would help something come true, like a form of wish from you. Confusing, right? And like always, whatever you believe to be true is all up to you.

In this time where fortune-tellers and deceitful practices are no longer confined behind velvet drapes and alluring crystal balls. It is imperative that we keep a constant watch over what we believe in. There are those whose sleight of hand is determined to deviate us from what is truly happening. Continue to enjoy the entertainment brought by magic shows and the amusement from funny posts, but grow up from the kid who is easily fooled by deceptions. Know that your life will not get one percent worse from not reposting a bad luck meme, but in the absence of awareness and when necessary actions remain unseen.



Let It Be Written in the Lines of Your Palm:

Manifesting Good Grades Cutie!

Elaine L. Yanela

A STORY OF TRIUMPH BEYOND LIMITS

Hazel A Albalate &
Elaine L. Yanela

The heat of the sun pierce through the skin. Your throat has run dry but drops of sweat can be felt in your forehead running down your face. With one knee bended on the tracks, everyone is in their positions.

Ready.

Set.

Bang.

A gunshot is heard, marking the start of a new match.

Like many popular ball games, the Athletics 100m High Hurdles is also a test of endurance, coordination, and determination. The challenge in this sport event is to successfully navigate through the variedly spaced hurdles in a 100-meter-long track in the least amount of time. Athletes engaged in this type of sport invest years of sweat and tears to have a taste of their cheers.

One such story is that of Jovilyn Villaflores, a national medalist from Camarines Norte State College and the front-runner of many more to come. Bagging a bronze medal in the Athletics 100m High Hurdles Women Category

at the 2023 National SCUAA Games, Jovilyn Lopega Villaflores, a Second Year Bachelor of Science in Physical Education student of CNSC Abaño Campus marked her name off the sidetracks and lined herself up among the more experienced national athletes. Geared with the motivation to go beyond her limits, her bubbly energy shined through the race proving she is someone to watch out for, one to keep an eye on.

A PAVEMENT OF DREAMS BUILT THROUGH THE YEARS

Growing up in a small neighborhood in Jose Panganiban, Villaflores recounts playing tag with her friends under the scorching heat of the sun as what sparked her interest in athletics. She was often referred to as the Cheetah and "Babaeng may bagwis" by her friends because she often won whenever they try to have a race against each other. Little did she know, what started as a subject of teasing during her childhood is what will accelerate her to lengths she never imagined for herself.

At a young age of 8, her potential in athletics was given a chance to grow into something more. Since elementary, she competed in various athletics competition, underwent rigorous training, and qualifying in bigger tracks each year. In her last year in elementary, she already qualified in Palarong Pambansa. To pursue her dreams, Villaflores then transferred to a high school in Basud where she got a silver medal in a National Open Entry for Athletics. However, being a student-athlete has its own trade-offs. Villaflores admitted that there were times that made her question the track that she chose to walk on. When she reached college, she felt like a beginner once again. There were hurdles that tested her resilience and determination. For Villaflores, self-training and balancing it with her academics became significant obstacles for her to overcome. On top of that, she experienced a knee injury during her competitions in the regionals and nationals. But that did not stop her into making her way out. As they say, nothing changes the matter that composes your heart. She bravely hopped over this another hurdle, balancing being a college student and training for athletics, and grabbing every opportunity in her way.

"Opportunities do not simply knock on your door. You have to find a way for yourself, and be the person who will open your own doors to triumph." said Villaflores in an interview. From being "Babaeng may bagwis", she gained her hard-earned full-fledged wings ready to make her fly in her every race.

ON BECOMING LIMITLESS

Rigorous training sessions to developing her mental fortitude, these are what comprise Villaflores' readiness. For her, discipline, self-care, and confidence are the three pillars that form the foundation upon which her success is built. With each stride, she defies gravity and transcends her physical boundaries during the competition. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, she overcomes every hurdle with grace and precision, embodying resilience in its purest form. Indeed, she is limitless; harnessing the power of her mind and her belief in her ability to conquer every obstacle that lies ahead.

After conquering the hurdles, she's now looking forward to aim for more. Given that her course is aligned with Physical Education, she harbors a burning desire to become an educator as well as an athlete coach someday. As a torchbearer, Villaflores story is a source of inspiration and motivation. A torch that lights up the path for future young athletes. Driven by her passion, there is no doubt in her capacity to nurture and shape those after her into future champions.

The victory of Villaflores is an inspiration for all who witness it. It reminds us that success does not come without sacrifice or hardships. It teaches us that true triumph lies not only in crossing the finish line, but also in pushing ourselves beyond our perceived limitations.

OPPENHEIMER: A TOUR DE FORCE

/// Francisco Q. Raviz Jr.

As a fervent fan of historical and mystery-thriller films and series, I always find mind-blowing, thought-provoking, and tight-grasping plots engrossing—those movies that will keep you on the edge of your seat, make you formulate your theories, and make you gasp for air now and then.

That, I believe, is what Christopher Nolan's latest cinematic masterpiece, "Oppenheimer", has to offer. Nolan is known for his complex way of storytelling, and in this movie, he impressively presented the complexities and underlying ideologies of J. Robert Oppenheimer (Cillian Murphy), who played a crucial role in the development of the atomic bomb during the Second World War.

The movie ran for three hours and showed different scenarios where the characters talk, like, A LOT. So, if your patience is as short as the academic break (if there's any), then this movie won't sit right for you. They talk about so much science and math-related stuff that my brain has almost lost its one remaining cell (which I just used during exams). And upon watching this movie, I finally, legitimately, and ultimately concluded that I will never be a science subject fanatic. Ever since I already had that hatred toward that subject, and this movie solidified it even more.

Anyway, going back to the film. There are parts when they get lost in their own thoughts, especially Oppenheimer, who oftentimes can be seen in the film staring into space, getting immersed in complete oblivion as images of fire embers, explosions of what seemed to be a galaxy, as well as streaks of blinding lights occur from time to time, plus a soundtrack that is so foreboding it sends shivers down my spine. Also, as someone who has a high interest in talks about galaxies, parallel universes, and quantum realms (shoutout to MCU fans out there!), I actually find this strategy of building the story a smart move. Not only does it help intensify the flow of events, but it also escalates the viewers' emotions.

The exciting part of the film starts when Oppenheimer learns of the threat concerning all humanity should the Nazis be the first to make a nuclear bomb. He then proceeded to a series of computations and discussions with his co-scientists, formulating theories that would eventually help in bringing the atomic bomb to life. This is when General Leslie Groves (Matt Damon) steps into the scene. And again, they talk a lot—sitting face-to-face and discussing the making of the bomb. In this part, the nuclear team of Los Alamos is formed, and the creation of the first atomic bomb takes place. They spent three years and a huge amount of money making the bomb while having with them the hope of its success. But the interesting part, is in between those years, a lot has transpired, allowing the viewers to see the other sides of Robert's life that contributed not just to the development of the bomb but also to shaping his character. From his marriage to Emily Blunt's character Katherine "Kitty" Oppenheimer (which is kind of annoying for me, by the way), to the death of his communist mistress, Jean Tatlock (Florence Pugh), which ignited the issue of him being a communist, and finally to the

successful actual detonation of the bomb, each played a crucial role in exposing Oppenheimer's underlying ideologies and own perspective about certain things.

As someone who's into action films too, I was expecting that there would be an actual war on a battlefield, with soldiers and tanks and bombs and a dying soldier on his mate's arm (because come on, this is about bombs, right?), my expectation failed me. This film is more than that. Way, way more than that. It doesn't just highlight the making of the atomic bomb but also depicts the multifaceted nature of humanity and the things we are willing to do to survive, even at the expense of others.

One perfect example is Lewis Strauss (Robert Downey, Jr.), the Atomic Energy Commission chair, who surely drinks from the glass of jealousy and hates Oppenheimer to the core. In the movie, most of his scenes are inside the court, where he answers questions and tells his own version of the truth that is evidently against Opie, as they would call him. His scenes are important because they explain the involvement of Oppenheimer in communism, claiming Opie to be a Soviet spy which eventually led to the stripping of his security clearance which allows him to fill a specific position and provides access to certain information and details in national security. He had one specific goal in mind: to pin down Oppenheimer by manipulating the course of the story and by playing the victim in front of the Senate and the media for political gain. He even created a group of individuals to interrogate Dr. Oppenheimer! However, with his evil intent to put dirt on Oppenheimer's name, in the latter part of the film, the real version of the truth through Rami Malek's character, Dr. David Hill, came out. This only proves that no secret can be hidden forever. This also shows another interesting thing about the film: that it does not solely depict the life of the main protagonist and his contributions to the field of science but also the effect of his existence on other people involved in the story. I must say, as someone who's not really a fan of Downey (though I cried when Iron Man died in the MCU's Endgame), his portrayal as the villain here in this movie is very effective and beyond excellent.

The ending showed a conversation between Oppenheimer and Tom Conti's Albert Einstein by a pond (this was already shown in the beginning part of the movie but what they're talking about wasn't revealed. Strauss was also seen standing from a distance and thought that he was the topic of the conversation that started his bitterness toward Dr. Oppenheimer). The conversation went on and I liked the part when Oppenheimer said to Einstein, "When I came to you with those calculations, we thought we might start a chain reaction that might destroy the entire world", to which Einstein replied, "What of it?", and finally the former answered, "I believe we did." What a way to end a film plus the background music! Phew!

Aside from its well-written plot and obvious purpose to rekindle a specific moment in our history, what I also liked about the movie is its overall production—from its visuals, sound scoring, how the script was written, to, of course, the casting—everything is a chef's kiss! Moreover, I also liked its superb cinematography because it made me feel as if I was also a character in the film. According to Filmmakers Academy, Nolan joined forces with Hoyte van Hoytema to pull off a no-barrier experience between the audience and the movie. Although one of the trickiest and hardest challenges they faced was to shoot a lot of close-up shots in a large format, they still championed against the struggles and gave us this masterpiece. Furthermore, I loved not just the whole story itself but Christopher Nolan's detailed and unique way of telling it. He once again crafted a piece of magical art and cemented his position as one of the most brilliant filmmakers out there. And just like the first time I saw his 2014 blockbuster film "Interstellar" (also a must-watch), I was in awe again because of his unparalleled skill in expressing art profoundly and excitingly.

CHRISTINE JEAN J. MADERA

Ang Mga Kaibigan Ni Mama Susan is a Philippine movie directed by Chito S. Roño and adapted from Bob Ong's novel. It is a horror thriller movie that premiered in 2023. The story revolves around the life of Gilberto "Galo" P. Manansala, a college student who lives with his Uncle Dindo and Aunt Auring. He writes about his everyday experiences in his journals, including his nightmares with the lady in black. After knowing that his father had died, he went back to San Ildefonso, the place where Mama Susan (his grandmother) lives. That's when things got really weird and eerie. While staying there, he met two children, Nico (Ynigo Delen) and Jezel (Jewel Milag), from whom he learned more about his late father and his strange grandmother.

Joshua Garcia, who served as the main character of the story, does passable work in an effort to strengthen the point for his character. He acted very naturally, playing the part with control and without going into hysteria. As he does have this certain innocence with him that is necessary for the fictitious character "Galo" he plays, he is perhaps one of the few that people would still naturally draw toward. Since it is evident in his expressions, gestures, and emotions, the horrors he experiences in the film feel real.

Angie Ferro was the ideal Mama Susan, with her petite features and tremulous tone. Mama Susan's lengthy, scary speech might make anyone shiver because of her unsettling delivery. The part where she wore a veil with black embroidered flowers was her most scary scene. Angie Ferro did an outstanding job in the role, and her acting truly contributed to the film's unsettling mood and setting. Chito S. Roño's flashy style often hides the subtle details that make the book effective as a horror story. But, in other aspects, Roño stays true to the book, following its narrative closely. His film aims to reveal more about the main mystery. Scenes were performed so vividly that the horrors seemed real, as one could anticipate from Roño's work.

The gloomy atmosphere and uplighting technique, which produced frightening shadows around eyes and facial features, gave an eerie

appearance to the movie. However, in my opinion, the suspense and thrill are not that felt since its intensity is subpar compared to other horror or thriller films. The whole experience was ruined by many scenes that seemed to lead nowhere, which was disappointing despite the movie's potential build-up of suspense. Additionally, the last part of the movie seemed to have been hurriedly edited, and it is so difficult to understand, which further diminished its performance.

When it comes to Chito's horror films, The Healing and Feng Shui evoke a heightened sense of fear and suspense compared to Ang Mga Kaibigan ni Mama Susan. Both The Healing and Feng Shui are known for their skillful execution of horror elements, utilizing atmospheric cinematography, scary sound effects, and well-crafted stories that tap into deeper fears. The Healing tackles the terrifying consequences of seeking supernatural healing, while Feng Shui delves into the horrific connotations of cursed objects, specifically a bagua mirror. On the other hand, Ang Mga Kaibigan ni Mama Susan takes a different approach, focusing more on psychological and suspenseful elements than traditional horror stereotypes. The fear in this movie is subtle, woven into the complicated relationships and mysterious occurrences surrounding Mama Susan. It relies on a slower build-up, allowing tension to simmer beneath the surface. While all three works showcase Chito Roño's versatility in storytelling, the fear induced by The Healing and Feng Shui may stem from their more immediate and vivid horror experiences, making them stand out in terms of intensity and impact.

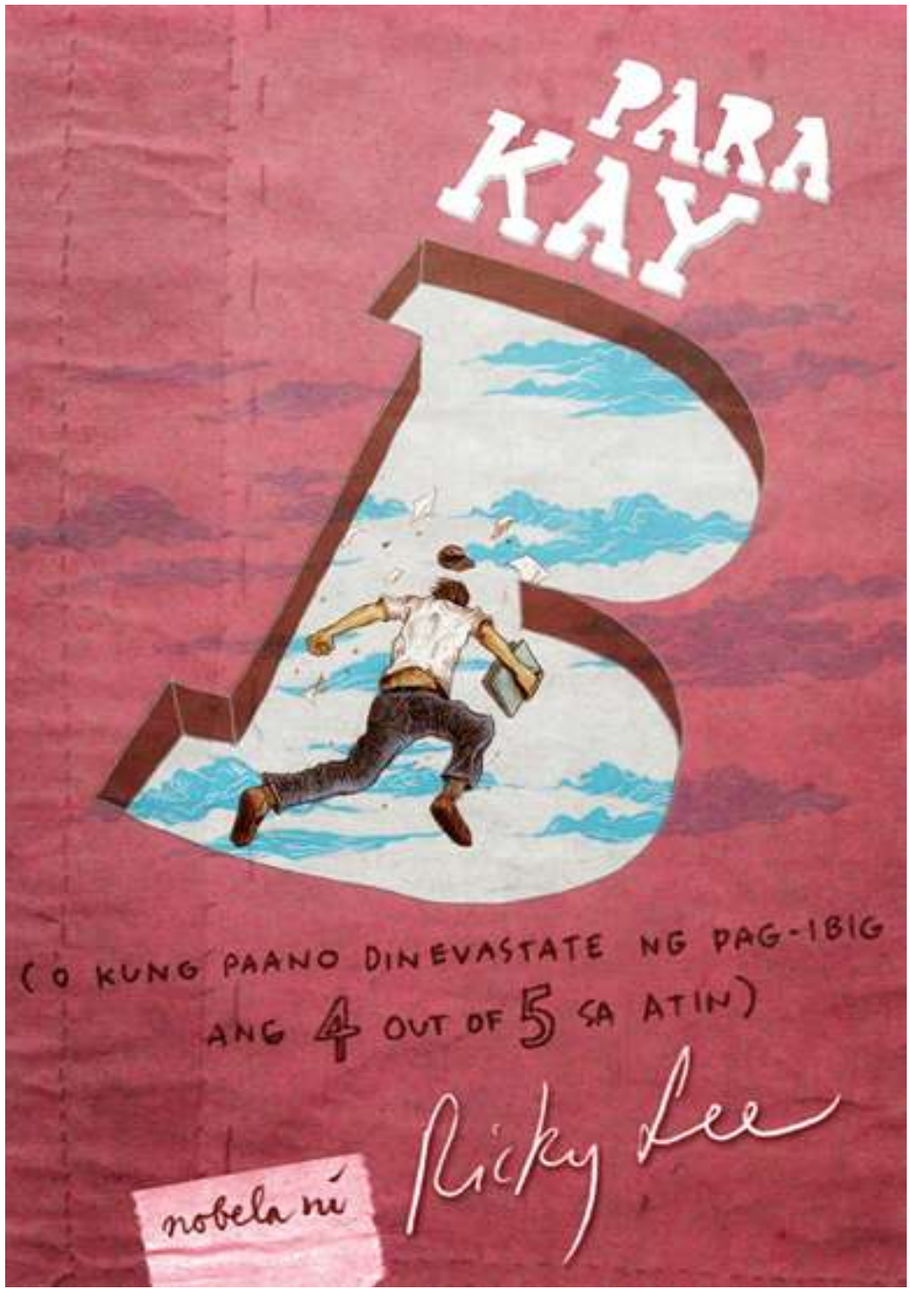
Despite the commendable effort of the film Ang Mga Kaibigan ni Mama Susan, it struggles with maintaining a clear narrative direction and often relies on intentional gaps that may overwhelm the audience. The story's subjective meaning becomes muddled, overshadowed by the weight of its own mystery. Ultimately, Ang Mga Kaibigan Ni Mama Susan excels in atmospheric elements and certain performances but falls short in sustaining a compelling and coherent storyline, leaving the viewer with a sense of ambiguity that may be more overwhelming than engaging.

PARA KAY B BOOK REVIEW: EVEN THE REVIEWER IS DEVASTATED, AT TIMES, CONFUSED

Baron Roy R. Longaza

With the release of Lahat ng B, a sequel to Ricky Lee's Para kay B 14 years later, we are giving you a look back at the National Artist for Literature awardee's highly acclaimed novel.

REFRAIN FROM READING IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE SPOILED, OTHERWISE, AN AMBIGUOUS HEARTACHE IS ALL YOU WILL BE GETTING, OR MAYBE NOT.



Para Kay B by Ricky Lee is an underrated novel that explores the intricacies of love from the perspective of five distinct characters: Irene, Sandra, Erica, Ester, and Bessie. This novel fathoms the multifaceted nature of love, including unrequited love, forbidden love, and the pain that often accompanies romantic relationships. It brings the readers to the realm of stereotypes and social issues, offering them a complex and thought-provoking narrative—we all know the author very well.

Almost every day, I pray that they make such book into a film where each frame is burned in the back of our memories.

IN THEIR EYES OR HIS EYES? WHOSE EYES?

Irene, the first character, is a young woman with a unique gift – a photograpic memory. Despite her remarkable ability, she struggles to find love due to a promise she made to Jordan, a boy she fell in love with as a child. Jordan's promise to marry Irene stayed with her, preventing her from forming meaningful connections with others. However, their paths cross unexpectedly, and they share an intimate moment in the most unexpected place.

The second character that was introduced was Sandra who was confronted with a different form of love. She harbors romantic feelings for her brother, Lupe. Their illicit love affair unfurled when an innocent touch consequentially leads to a passionate affair. The discovery of their relationship by their parents creates a situation of impasse—of being impeded by their draconic fates for a long time.

Erica, from a place called "Maldiaga" where the concept of love and falling in love is a farce, decided to forsake the status quo superimposed on her. Her path leads her to Jake, a playboy who enjoys playing with women's emotions. In her pursuit of love, Erica follows the examples set by romantic movies and uses various products advertised on television to win Jake's heart. Desperation clothed her. After a series of events, Jake realizes his true feelings for Erica, leading to a tumultuous relationship. The sad part is that their love is acquainted with inevitable complications.

A mother of five kids, Ester finds herself living with her son AJ, who encourages her to go after her longed happiness. She had a previous passionate love affair with Sara, a woman who mysteriously disappeared from her life. The discovery of a photograph of Sara on one of Ester's dresses prompts her son AJ to further investigate as this sparked a curiosity in his mind. This eventually leads to the revival of Ester and Sara's love affair, although it is destined to be short-lived.

Well, the turning of each page seemed to be hasty for me as I wanted to know who really was the "B" in the story. Bessie, the final character, is a free-spirited, and easy-go-lucky woman who is unapologetic about her romantic choices. Her presence captivated Lucas, a writer, who becomes infatuated with her. Lucas is drawn into Bessie's world, spending ime at her place, and even caught a series

of violence for her. Their connection is passionate and intense, but it is also transient. Hence, her sudden disappearance leaves Lucas longing for her.

Perhaps, this line in the story, partly defines her: "*Bata pa man ay hindi na bago sa kanya ang sex, o ang violence. Ito ang katotohanan ng kanyang buhay at maski hindi siya gumagalaw, sa kanyang silid noong bata pa siya, 9 years old at namimilog sa takot ang mga matang nakatingin sa pintong anytime ay bubukas, o noong dalagita na siya sa mga kalsada kung saan namimick-up siya ng ka-date nang-yayari ito sa kanya. Sanay na siya.*"

A REALITY OR A STORY WITHIN A STORY?

Lucas is later revealed as the writer of the novel who experiences a difficult struggle with his characters. He is visited by the five characters who express their discontent with the sad endings he has written for them. Lamenting all throughout, and since it was written by men—women written by men. "Eh kasi, lalaki ka! Paano mo malalaman ang nararamdaman naming mga babae?" They provide suggestions for happier endings in their stories by which Lucas eventually abided.

After finishing the manuscript of his story, Lucas succumbed to an unrelenting quest to find Bessie's presence, so that he could give it to her, and that he loves her. However, his reality ultimately inflicted him, eliciting a heart-wrenching series of events as the story concludes. Bessie is now engaged to Brigs—and she has not changed a thing despite her absence.

Lucas is disappointed, squeezed into crestfallen by the author.

THE SIDE CHARACTER THAT GOT ME HOOKED: WHAT WE DO, EVEN FALLING IN LOVE IS A POLITICAL ACT

We learned in our Filipino 2 the concept of Archetypes. Each character in the novel represents something and reflects someone. One of which is Charlie, a confidant of Lucas. An archetype of being an activist, and a love guru where every muttered word is not sugar-coated.

Despite his untimely exit and unprecedented fate in the book because of his relentless activism which pierced right through my heart, this line of his is something everyone will continue to envisage. "*Okay lang naman 'yun. So long as aware ka na in the end, love is inevitably connected with ideology. What we do, even falling in love is a political act.*"

A LOVE EXPLICATED: REVISITING

The characters in Para Kay B imbibe different facets of love, and their stories imbue an immense commentary on the complexities of human emotions. Irene represents the concept of unrequited love, as she holds onto a childhood promise that hinders her from forming new romantic connections. Her narrative tells us about nuances of love, turning into dangerous nuisances.

Sandra's forbidden love for her brother, Lupe, exemplifies the taboo aspects of romantic relationships. The novel raises implications about societal norms and the boundaries of love, demanding the readers to confront their own beliefs, or challenging the customary laws of their roots as a whole.

Erica's persistent pursuit of true love in the real world after she abandoned Maldiaga, a place where love is not believed in and is believed to be trivial, underscores the power of romantic narratives, and media as an external force influencing our life ideals. Her story traverses the influence of media and societal expectations and pressures on our expectations of love.

The love story of Ester with Sara tackles the perplexity of a same-sex relationship and the challenges that individuals face when trying to find love outside societal norms that we have been long caged in. It just teaches us to be more accepting, knowing that as obsolete as this might seem, love knows no boundaries, especially gender. Not unless in a strong heteronormative society.

At the same time, some experiences of Bessie made her who she was, and her methods in approaching love led her astray to what she really wanted. Her character serves as a reminder that love can be diverse and unconventional, and that there is no universal approach to romantic relationships. However, improvement in her character cannot be seen on the horizon, despite her experiences, qualifying her as a flat character.

The character of Lucas, the writer, embodies the struggle of creating and controlling the destinies of these characters—it is as if his own thoughts foray against him. He is a representation of the writer's power to mold the lives and experiences of their creations. His journey is a reflection of each of us.

The novel puts on the limelight of conversation some significant social issues as well. Some predicaments were interplaying the naturalistic world of the characters, such as some contexts of corruption, environmental problems, political movements, and societal struggles that certainly reflect the broader context in which the characters navigate. These issues accentuated the challenges of life in the Philippines, adding more depth and realness to the narrative.

DELVING LEE'S UNORTHODOXY

Ricky Lee's writing in "Para Kay B" is unconventional, allowing the characters to come to life in their idiosyncratic way. The novel brings the readers, from different walks of life, into various aspects of love, including its pain, joy, and ineffable substance. It challenges stereotypical notions of love and relationships, highlighting the different dimensions of human emotions and experiences.

In the Philippines where conversations about different forms of love are still taboo, Lee defies the idea of it—of telling very much raw stories, exploring his character archetypes, building connections between the readers and his characters, and also himself as a devoted writer, and lastly, by telling some parts hyperbolically.

Throughout the novel, there is a sense of blurred lines between fiction and reality, as Lucas becomes increasingly intertwined with the lives of his characters. We were given different layers of narratives, as he struggled with his own feelings of love and self-discovery, creating a complex narrative that challenges the boundaries between imagination and reality.

Furthermore, Lee weaves each story as if it is seamless, there is a moment of foreshadowing that feels confusing but all get intertwined as the story progresses. In his narrative, nothing is linear, and in fiction, reality radiates.

ARE WE UP FOR THE EPILOGUE?

Ricky Lee, a National Artist for Film and Broadcast Arts from Daet, Camarines Norte is known for his hundreds of screenplays of different dignified films in the Philippine cinema landscape such as "Himala" which still remains culturally immersive in any challenges of time.

When he branched out to writing novels into the late 2000s, publishing his first book, Para Kay B, made one hope and anticipate for the next. Over the years, Lee unceasingly has written remarkable stories and the most recent one is Lahat ng B, an epilogue of his devastating first novel. In the epilogue, will Lucas be getting the fate he rightfully deserves?

We will cling to the next one.

Note the modal verb.

THE NIGHT CIRCUS

Elaine L. Yanela

Imagine a circus popped up in your place completely out of nowhere. It just came. Yesterday, it was not even there at all. When you look at it during the day, it seems like a multitude of abandoned tents. You can try to tiptoe through the gate—gate whose main purpose is to separate the circus from the rest of the world, but there will be nothing else to see except the black and white tents. There is no sign of life. No hint of any other color.

If you are patient enough to wait till the sun is set, that is when the magic of the mysterious circus shows itself. One by one, the tents are set to light. The smell of chocolate and caramel linger in the air and an inviting tune starts to play. Letter by letter, like a welcoming ritual, the huge sign is slowly lit. Le Cirque des Rêves. The Circus of Dreams. Opens at nightfall. Closes at dawn. Would you allow me to hold your hand while we explore the circus together? What magic possibly awaits in the tents that aglow the evening?

Set in the 19th century, the book "The Night Circus" by Erin Morgenstern tells an immersive story about the wonders behind the curtains of a vanishing circus. The book mainly revolves around the two young magicians, Marco and Celia. Both are prodigies at illusion-making. They are cast into the circus for different reasons but with the same objective: to win against each other, unknowing what the rules are and completely clueless on what the game really is.

Slow-paced and beautifully written, the story opens with the young Celia. When her mother died, five-year-old Celia was left in the custody of her father, Prospero, a known magician whom she barely knew. They constantly moved from place to place since her father gave performances in different towns, and Celia was instructed to develop her own magical ability too. Then a man in a gray suit visited the circus. This man is her father's greatest rival, whom they refer to by the name Alexander. It is not his actual name, by the way, but we are going to leave it as that. They both agreed to a challenge: Prospero was to pit his own daughter, Celia, against an apprentice that Alexander would choose. As fate would have it, it was Marco, an orphan, who was chosen by Alexander to train against Celia. Marco and Celia, as instructed by their "fathers", both devoted their time to honing their skills in preparation for the challenge.

When they reached late adolescence, they both found themselves in the circus, the arena of their challenge, where more of their rivalry and sparks of romance unfolded.

The way the story is presented is similar to the workings of the circus. There were many forward-and-back time jumps that came off as confusing at times. It took me time to get used to it, but it all made sense in the second half of the book. Like a circus that comes out of nowhere and then changes location without notice, the story is also presented in that sort of way.

As someone who is not particularly into fantasy books, The Night Circus really stirred my imagination. It is not just a story, but an experience. Beguiling. Cinematic. Dream-like. I consider it a brain exercise because it asks you to picture yourself inside the universe created by the author. Parts of the book were written from a second-person point of view, which gives its readers the feeling as if they are really visiting the Night Circus themselves. I am not surprised why many compare the book to the vibe of the Harry Potter series, but there are some parts of it that I think are not on par with the said book.

The thing I like the most about this book is that every character is given their own truth. You will gain something from each of the characters. From time to time, I had to pause to re-read and savor their beautifully written sentences. For one, this statement by Marco in a conversation with Isobel about cards: "People are naïve about such things. And they would

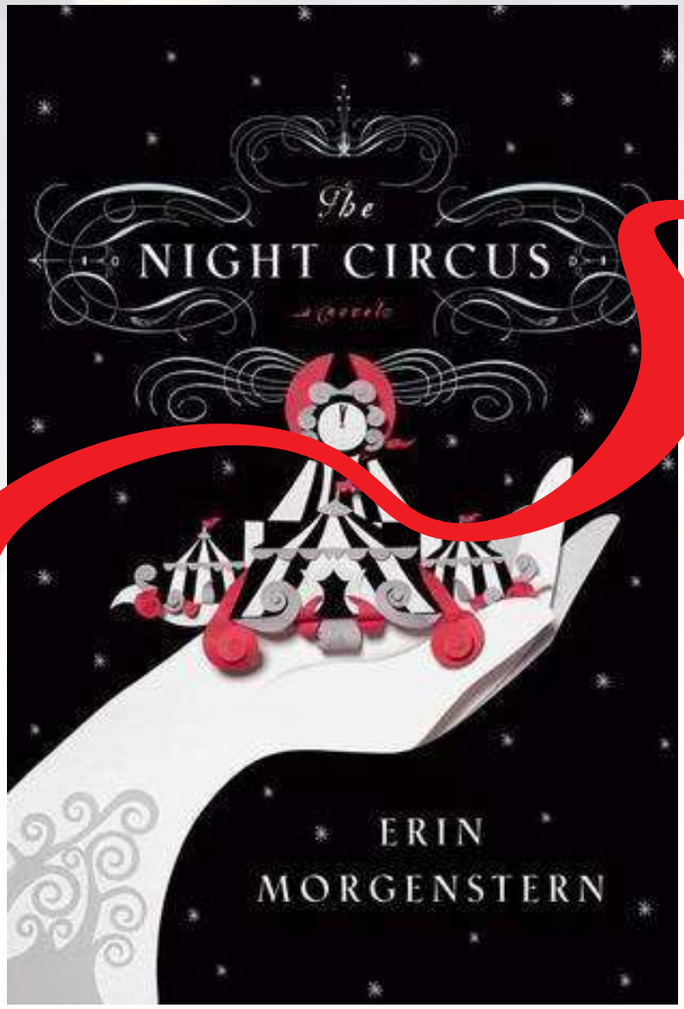
rather write them off as evil than attempt to understand them. An unfortunate truth, but a truth nonetheless." Many times in our lives, we are so quick to judge, putting labels and names without realizing our failure to understand things. This is a really unfortunate truth. Another quote I like is by Prospero, in which he said, "We must put effort and energy into anything we wish to change." This applies to many of the changes we wish to see. For us to bring them into reality, we have to have the courage to begin them.

So, what happened to the story then? The reason for the death of Celia's mother was brought to light. This part of the story explained why Celia has that kind of view of things. Tension among the members of the circus arose, and one of the founders of Le Cirque des Rêves died. The consequence of the challenge was also revealed. The challenge between Celia and Marco will only end if one of them dies or becomes incapable of going on. To win the game, the other has to lose. For one to lose, one has to die. How would they navigate through this dilemma? Who would sacrifice, and is it true that love conquers all? These are the questions I will leave for you to find out. Spoiler alert: it reminded me so much of Romeo and Juliet, only that Celia and Marco are a bit more mature version.

You may ask, "Oh, so basically it is a love story?" Yes, and "it-is-but-I-find-myself-drawn-to-the-other-characters-than-the-main-and-I-cared-more-to-the-circus-and-less-than-the-romance-parts." The ship between Celia and Marco was not really that compelling. They met. They learned that they were each other's rivals. Then they complicate the matter further by falling in love. Back when they were still preparing for the challenge, they were repeatedly reminded of the possible hardships that they might encounter. That it is going to be a heavy battle. I anticipated a magical clash between the main characters, with a lot of action and depth. Yet the chapters on the actual confrontations between Celia and Marco did not live up to that.

One of the circling conflicts in the book is the relationship between children and their guardians. Different styles of parenting are seen in the book. Even the whole premise of the battle is mainly due to generational rivalry. The story of Celia and Marco reminds us that sometimes we are bound to things not of our own accord, and surrendering is never on the cards. Be it within our personal lives, the authorities in the society we live in, or the world at large, we are in a constant battle within ourselves and our circumstances.

The Night Circus follows a simple story line. Though this book is not something that will change your life (believe me, a single book won't), between its pages you will find the meaning of "true magic" (however contradictory the words true and magic are). In a way, the circus serves as a metaphor for our lives. Like the circus, life gives us a myriad of experiences, and we never know when it will vanish. At times, it is very easy to dwarf the magic in all of us in the face ofur tragic realities. One tragic reality we all live in is that many associate power with the exercise of authoritative violence and cruelty. Regardless, let us be reminded that there is still no greater power; no other magic can equate to that of love. By the end of the book, I find myself questioning whether the name "The Circus of Dreams" still fits, which leads us to the truth that the stuff that makes up our dreams could be the same stuff that composes our grimmest nightmares.



Attack on Titan

/// Marie Crist R. Conmigo

"If there are humans who can bring change, they're those who are capable of abandoning everything. People who, when required surpass even monsters, are capable of tossing aside their very humanity." This is one of the iconic lines of Armin Arlet, one of the two childhood friends of Eren Yeager, the protagonist and the same antagonist of the anime "Attack on Titan". Amidst the chaos and crumbling world they lived in, people no longer distinguish who was more monstrous– humans or titans– as to fight monsters, one must become too.

"Attack on Titan" surpasses the usual countless empty-handed produced anime for decades that has repetitive genres, lousy character writing, main character's plot armor, similarities in title, lots of fan service, and a cliché plot. Beyond creativity lies a masterpiece due to its unexpected turn, thrilling sequence of events, and complexity of the plot and character writings. Hence, it is later found to be an anime that explicitly delves into the complexities of political conflicts, historical revisionism, and fragile social structures. And, as you go deeper and understand the message they are trying to relay, the darker the path gets.

The world where humanity is already on the brink of extinction, fighting for survival is on a daily basis against gigantic human-like creatures called "Titans." Amidst the fragile peace, the story unfolds within a society-confined realm surrounded by three different walls named after the three daughters of the ruler of their land: Maria, Rose, and Sina—a desperate measure to protect humanity from the monstrous Titans that lurk beyond. Little did they know, the true rogue hides in the face of who they thought comrades and those who hold power, and knowledge. And, this enclosed world serves the government as their mini political dynamic, where those in power use fear as a tool to take control of the civilian.

The civilization is epitomized by the monarchy and the military—ruled by the absolute authority of the royal family, military, and noblemen—dictating how normal citizens should live. For decades, they sustained a strong grip on power by forging a false perception of the world and used the ever–present threat of titan so the citizen would be controlled by fear. Despite this, one fact remained: soldiers are indeed an embodiment

of heroic deeds, as the villain is no ordinary human but a huge monster with a vast gap of strength.

The protagonist, Eren Yeager, together with his childhood friends Armin and Mikasa Ackerman, joined the survey corps, or the military in hopes of saving humanity from doom. However, as the story progresses, their journey leads to exposing the true political landscape they have, revealing the true nature, historical revisionism, and manipulation of information by those who know the truth, and willingness to sacrifice thousands of lives based on their idiotic beliefs, and own gains.

One of the conspicuous parts of the series is the dark complex themes such as oppression, moral ambiguity of war, deception, betrayal, and the repeated nature of violence, and power. Ever since immemorial, Eldians have been constantly

fighting not only the monsters, but also the prejudice, and persecution of Marleyans. Just when they learned the truth and decided to protect their freedom, and their homeland, once again they were treated as monsters. The story masterfully depicts the conflicts between different factions, and political interest, as well as give detailed, and clean character writing. The shows have an exceptional way of storytelling that perfectly captivates the emotions and resonates deeply with the viewers.

Every season is filled with heart-wrenching sacrifices and losses along with moments of profound courage. The war between human and titan seems to be endless as much as the inner battle each character has with himself and struggling to decide if what they are fighting for will soon bear fruitfully. Despite these, the undeniably effective bursting with complex plot twists is exactly why this show captivates the hearts of the viewers.

In every series, one of which we always seek is the development of the story or the character itself. This show faultlessly executed Eren's revolution from an impulsive, and emotional youth to a strong-minded leader, and warrior driven by the desire to change the situation they are currently experiencing even if it means abandoning humanity. Similarly, to the infamous side key character like Erwin, who in pursuit of goals grapple with the moral dilemma of his actions and decision. One remarkable decision he made is he willingly sacrifices his army and himself just to significantly accelerate the progress of their development of finding out the truth and what's beyond those walls. Mikasa who is known to have unwavering loyalty for Eren and exceptional skills as a soldier, along with Armin's intellectual ability on par with their late Captain Erwin adds spices to the rich flavors the show could ever offer. Moreover, the shows continue to have contradicting sentiments and consistently change events challenging the perceptions and expectations of the viewer beyond their creativity.

Taking a little glimpse of what this show has, did it ring a bell like the Philippine government? While there may not be a direct relationship between "Attack on Titan" and the Philippine government, surely those themes, and conflicts the character faces might draw a line to connect to the historical sentiments and government the Philippines have today. Starting from the prevalent historical revisionism, prejudice among each other, deception of the public masses, and corruption.

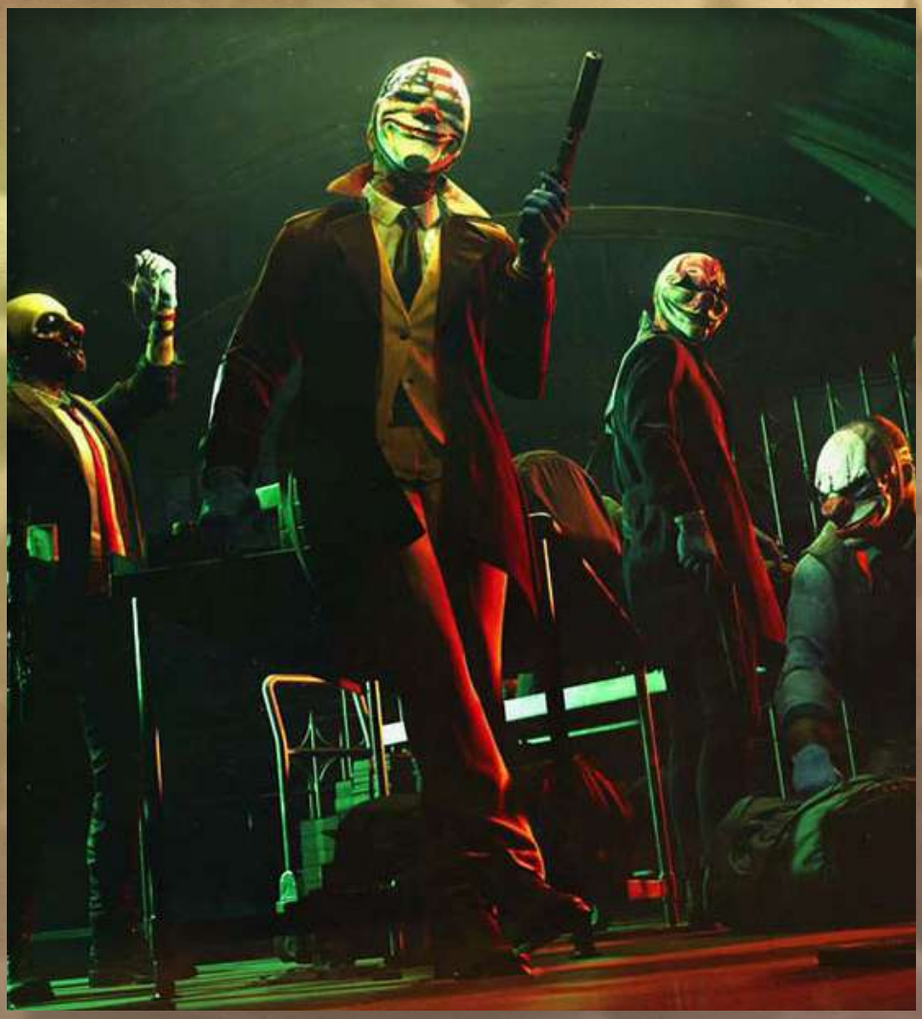
Fritz family, for instance, is depicted to be the royal family who has influence and power to take control over the Eldian's people, enforcing a system to overpower the masses to have a strong grip on authority lead. Anyone who did not fit into their races where brutally killed, turned into a titan, or became an experimental lab. Every other race loathed Fritz and Eldians. Similarly, that one notorious political family in the Philippines who controversial reigned during the martial law era, and delusionally branded it as the "golden age" of the Philippines. This family was known for its authoritarian rule and alleged human rights violations and continues to pester the Philippine society up until today.

The thought-provoking concept, stunning plot sequences, brilliant character writing, and politically intriguing story of the show are indeed beyond everyone's exception. But one must not forget that all of these are because of the outstanding technicalities the show possessed. Initially from the powerful visuals, the animation style, and framings that seamlessly blend fluid motion with meticulous attention to every detail, enticing the viewers to the flavorful plate. Not to mention its precisely detailed backgrounds, bringing Attack on Titan to the world to leave an impression of both awe-inspiring and stirring. Also, the show perfectly uses color grading, and choice of palette to arouse mood, tone, and emotional depth. Last but not the least is the exceptional and emotionally evocative musical score. All the series' opening and ending theme songs have catchy melodies and powerful vocals that further contribute to the overall sentiment of the series that captivates the hearts of viewers.

A successful masterpiece that continues to prosper for years because of its consistently excellent execution, as well as its elaborate plot, well-developed characters, and stunning visuals. In the age of transcending human expectation and traditional means, a variety of entertainment is being adored by many, but only a few are constantly challenging the ideologies, and perceptions many have. The series is solid proof and a testament to how powerful visual storytelling is to the world we have right now.

PAYDAY 3

Jonald Jay S. Abarca



From the urban shootout of Point Break and creepy clown masks reminiscent of the Dark Knight's opening scene, there are some enticing moments in the Hollywood bank heist fantasy. Fortunately, there are games that immerse us in these scenarios, one of which is the outstanding Payday series where we play as one of the bank robbers from the safety of our home and away from getting criminal records. The latest installment in this long-running burglary simulation, Payday 3, has finally made its debut. While it upholds the series' reputation for delivering one of the finest digital heist experiences available, the usual frustrating Payday glitches, a limited selection of heist opportunities, and a rather predictable storyline mean it falls short of the significant leap forward I had anticipated.

Where it all began

The series starts from the first game, PAYDAY: The Heist released back in 2011 where we follow the story of Dallas, Hoxton, Wolf, and Chains as they embark on a series of heists in Washington D.C. Payday 2, which was released in 2013, picks up where the first game left off, with the gang now operating out of a safehouse in Brooklyn. The game features a wide variety of heists, ranging from small-time robberies to large-scale assaults on banks and government facilities. Players can choose from a variety of different classes, each with their own unique skills and abilities. And now, Payday 3, released just this September, takes place several years after the events of Payday 2 with the original gang members returning to a life of crime after being double-crossed and losing all their money.

Always Online

Although the Payday series offers AI-controlled teammates so you can play solo, Payday 3 requires you to have a constant internet connection even when playing with bots. Unlike the previous games, you can enjoy the thrill of robbing banks even when your internet is down (especially here in the Philippines where the internet is as often down as power. It's more fun in the Philippines!). And, if not having a stable internet connection is enough hassle, the servers must be up and running before you can play.

However, it does have its advantages like dynamic gameplay since Payday 3 uses the crime.net system which is a feature that allows players to plan and execute their heists in a more dynamic way. Players can choose to accept heists from different clients, each with their own unique demands and objectives. Players can also customize their heists by choosing different entry points, escape routes, and equipment. The crime.net system requires an internet connection because it is constantly updating with new heists and contracts.

Stealth is Wealth

Payday 3's primary issue becomes evident in its fourth mission "Rock the Cradle". This mission stands out because it's the only one where being stealthy is nearly mandatory to secure worthy loads of cash. I spent a substantial amount of time struggling to covertly retrieve a USB drive with cryptocurrency from beneath a nightclub swarming with rich New Yorkers. Carefully blending in and navigating through the crowd searching for an entrance to the VIP areas without drawing the attention of security guards or surveillance cameras. On the radio, the handler instructed two options: create a fake VIP ticket or divert the attention of

the bouncer guarding the main entrance.

The game's objectives are pretty straightforward, but the specific steps to accomplish them require some exploration and are somewhat randomized, so you must spend an ample time scouting the location before you can initiate your plan. Security guards won't immediately open fire for trespassing; instead, they'll apprehend you and escort you out, unless you panic and make a run for it, hoping they lose track of you. Once you go loud in this mission, it's almost not worth continuing and you have to start over.

Playing stealthily can be satisfying and Payday 3 strongly encourages it as the most efficient way to make progress. A single mistake in this mission can result in missing out on a lot of money and a set of challenges that are essential for unlocking powerful gear to tackle Payday 3's more demanding missions on higher difficulty levels. These challenges constitute a significant portion of any Payday game.

Don't Panic!

Once you've blown your cover, enemies swarm you in all directions, and it's often unclear where your escape route should be. As a result, it's typical for the team to transport money bags from one hiding spot to another until you can make a break for it. The longer this takes, the more enemies the game throws at you, resulting in a relentless assault that is extremely hard to keep up with.

The weapons you choose to bring with you on every mission play a huge role in how you'll manage to get through the heist without necessarily needing to kill each wave of enemies. SMGs are good for running and gunning, shotguns excel in tight spaces, marksman rifles are better at taking out enemies on bigger maps, and assault rifles are overall the best gun pretty much in any game you play for their well-balanced accuracy in medium and long-range gunfights.

Contrary to the game's open-ended and fun gunfights, stealth heavily relies on your familiarity with the level and having specialized gear along with it, some taking hours to unlock. Being uncertain of how well a random teammate you get when playing online, most skills are designed to maintain quiet but aren't particularly useful unless you play with a coordinated group.

Should You Play?

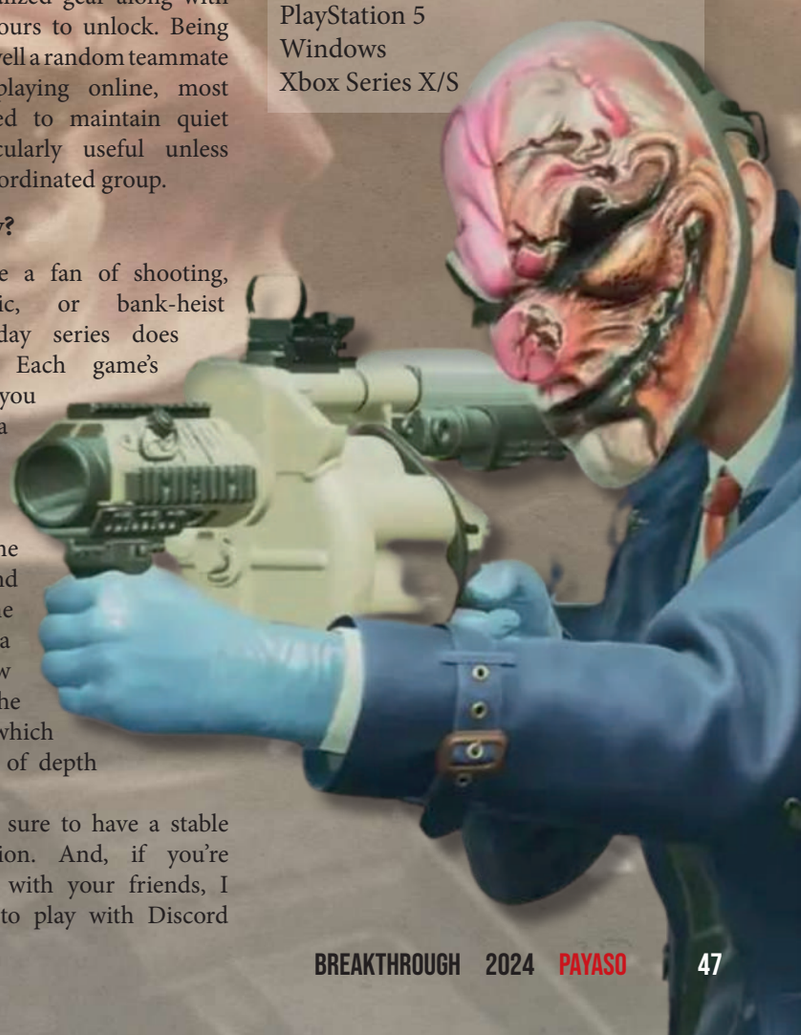
If you are a fan of shooting, tactical, strategic, or bank-heist games, the Payday series does not disappoint! Each game's level requires you to explore for a certain amount of time before mastering it, because it alone makes you spend hours. The game also includes a variety of new features such as the skill tree system which adds a new level of depth and replicability.

Just make sure to have a stable internet connection. And, if you're planning to play with your friends, I recommend you to play with Discord since the game still doesn't offer a voice chat.

It takes a lot of grinding but the game is often rewarding which makes it a value for your money.

Time to put the game face on, buddies.

Platforms
PlayStation 5
Windows
Xbox Series X/S



FILIPINA RACER BIANCA BUSTAMANTE:

LUMILIKHA NG PANGALAN SA MUNDO NG KARERA

/// Kim H. Hillera

Sa dinamiko at uma-atikabong bakbakan sa larangan ng motorsports, marahil maraming magsasabi na walang lugar ang isang babae sa ganito kadelikado at hindi birong isports. Ngunit isang Filipina Racer ang taas noong iwinawagayway ang bandera ng kababaihan bitbit din ang watawat ng Pilipinas. Patuloy na inuukit ang pangalan sa kasaysayan at lumilikha ng sariling istorya sa mundo ng racing.

Namamayagpag ngayon at lumilikha ng ingay ang pangalan ng isang 18 anyos na si Bianca Bustamante, kauna-unahang Filipina racer na nakapasok at sumabak sa prestihiyosong McLaren Driver Development Program at kamakailan lamang ay nag-uwi ng karangalan sa bansa matapos maselyuhan ang dalawang panalo at masungkit rin ang ika-pitong puwesto sa all-female single-seater formula racing championship, sa unang Formula 1 Academy season, nito lamang Oktubre, 2023.

Sinunggaban agad ni Bustamante ang second best podium position sa Race 1 pa lamang ng F1 Academy Round 1 na ginanap sa Spielberg, Austria, noong Abril 2023. Ngunit naging mailap sa kanya ang ikalawang sabak sa karera matapos ang ilang pagkakamali sa pagliko ay napako sya sa ikasiyam na puwesto habang hindi naman ito pinalad na makatakbo sa Race 3 dulot ng technical issue. Sa pagtatapos ng Race 1, nasa podium 5 position si Bustamante.

Agad namang nag-maniobra si Bustamante at bumawi sa F1 Academy Round 2 sa Valencia Spain, Mayo 6, 2023.Naging emosyonal para sa Filipina racer and makasaysayang pagpapatugtog ng Philippine national anthem sa kauna-unahang at pambihirang pagkakataon sa larangaran ng F1 racing matapos na walang prenong itakbo ang unang puwesto sa pagrehistro ng 18:49.969 at nakuha ang kanyang ikalawang podium finish. "It's been a long time since the anthem has been played in the world of motorsport, kaya to be the reason or to be the cause for the anthem to be played, especially in Valencia in Spain, was a surreal experience," sabi ni Bianca Bustamante.

Subalit katulad ng isang roller coaster ride ang naging kapalaran ni Bustamante sa karerang tinatahak niya. Sa muling pagsakay at pagsabak niya sa karera sa Montmelo Circuit, Barcelona Spain noong Mayo 19, sa kasamaang palad ay nasangkot sa isang aksidente sa kasagsagan ng karera ang race car na minamaneho ni Bustamante at nadamay din ang kanyang mga kasamahan sa Prema Team. Ngunit ayon sa determinadong racer na si Bustamante ay bahagi raw ito ng buhay ng isang racing driver. Sa kabilang banda, naging mabagal din ang takbo ng kanyang Round 4 na ginanap sa Zandvoort, Netherlands, ngunit nagawa pa rin niyang manatili sa puwesto ng karera matapos makuha ang P10, P8, at P5 na puwesto.

Matapos makarecover at makabangon sa nagdaang pagkakalugmok ay hindi doon natapos ang sinimulang karera ni Bustamante. Muli, sa pambihirang pagkakataon ay umalingawngaw at narinig ang Lupang Hinirang sa larangan ng F1 racing matapos siyang tanghaling pinakamatulin sa Race 3. Hindi nagpagitgit ang tila umuusok na gulong at nagmamadaling si Bustamante at habang nasa full-on attack mode ay na-ungusan niya ang pole sitter na si Abbi Pulling ng Rodin Carlin team sa wheel-to-wheel na bakbakan.

Gayunpaman, maiha-hambing sa takbo ng gulong ng mga race car na minamaneho ni Bustamante ang takbo ng kanyang karera. Tila isa siyang gulong na nawalan ng hangin matapos siyang mabigo sa Race 1, 2, at 3 ng F1 Academy Round 6 at nagresulta ang kanyang mga takbo sa P13, P10, at P14, ginanap ito sa Le Castelet, France noong Hulyo 29-30, 2023.

Sa huling pagsabak ni Bustamante sa F1 Academy Round 7 na ginanap sa Austin, Texas sa Estados Unidos noong Oktubre 20-22, sa Race 1 ay napromote siya sa P4 mula sa P5, naisabit rin niya ang P7 sa Race 2 ngunit dulot ng karambola sa mga huling minuto ng 12-lap Circuit of the Americas ay sumalpok siya sa P13 sa Race 3. Sa huli, sa overall standings ay itinaghal siya sa ika-pitong puwesto.

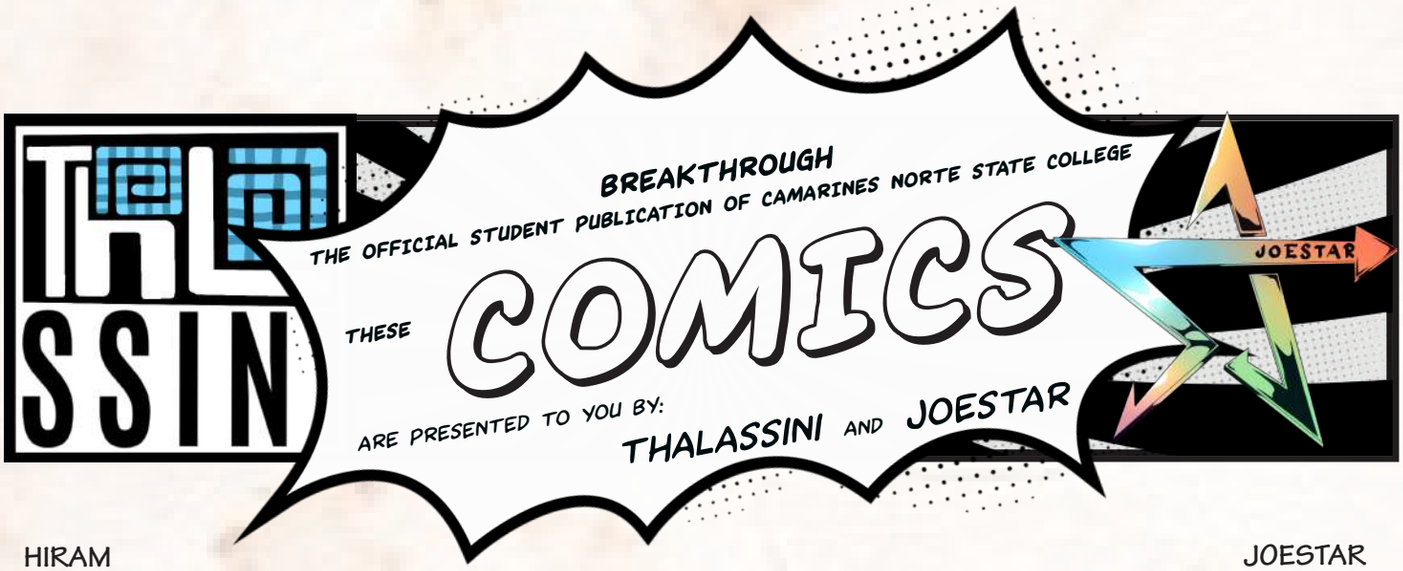
Bago pa man ang unang pagsakay at pag-arangkada ni Bustamante sa larangan ng motorsports, katulad ng iba pang mga Pilipinong atleta sa kanikanilang larangan ay hindi rin naging biro ang pinagdaanan niya upang makarating sa finish line ng inaasam-asam niyang tagumpay. Hindi rin nakatakas sa pinansiyal na hamon ang Filipina racer. Bagaman sobrang mahal ng karerang ito at siya ay kabilang sa middle-class family ay hindi ito naging hadlang upang takbuhin ang kanyang pangarap.

"So, I've used every tool I can to make it in racing. I've used every tool I have such as social media, endorsements, sponsorships, and about the business side of racing. Because it takes millions to race cars but most of the time, the money doesn't come from your own pocket. It comes from everything else and having to learn all of them," bahagi ni Bustamante.

"I GUESS RACE CAR SPORTS BREAKS BARRIERS AND THE STEREOTYPE THAT MOTORSPORT IS FOR THE RICH,"

- Bianca Bustamante

Inaasahang muling aarang-kada si Bustamante sa F1 Academy 2024 para irepresenta ang McLaren, ART Grand Prix at ang Pilipinas at muling ka kalampagin ang mundo ng karera.



HIRAM

JOESTAR

GHOSTING SA MALACAÑANG

THALASSINI

INTERCOL

JOESTAR

SARI-SARI

JOESTAR

FACULTY'S MYSTERY

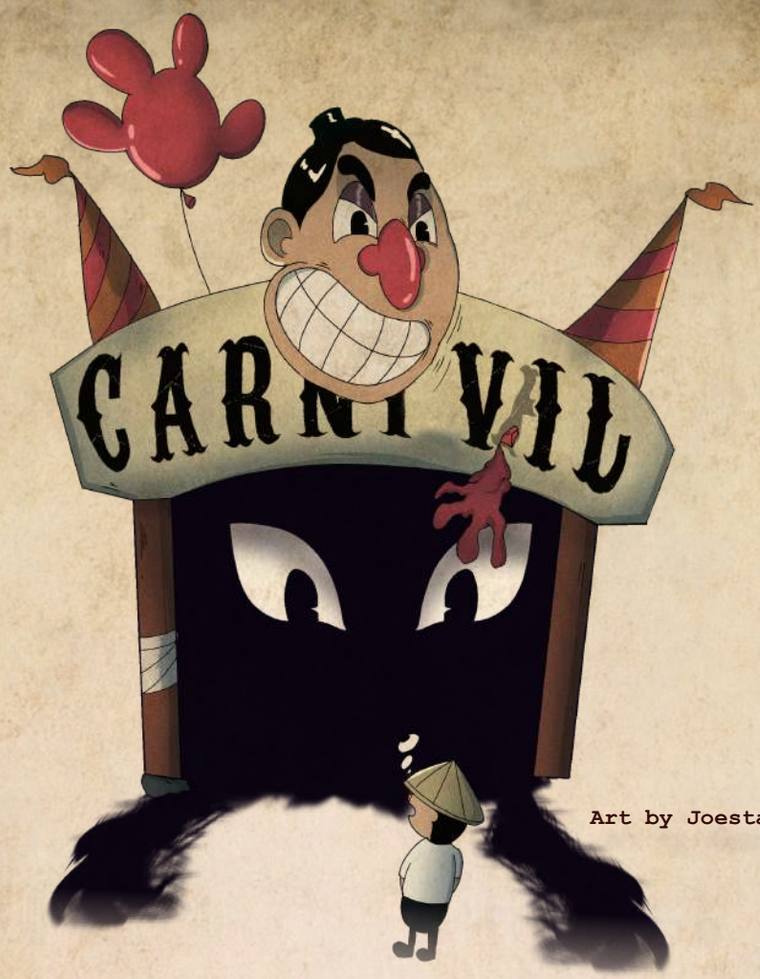
THALASSINI

DESIGNER

JOESTAR

CNSC SECRETS HAVE BEEN FILED

THALASSINI



Art by Joestar

WELCOME

April Jane L. Paquita

Sa hindi kalayuan ay tanaw na tanaw ko na ang masiglang sirkus. Naririnig ko na rin ang hiyawan na mula sa ferris wheel. Ang mga makukulay na ilaw ay malikot na naglalaro sa paligid at gumuguhit sa kalangitan. Hindi magkamayaw ang malalakas na tunog na nagmumula sa mga speaker.

Maya-maya ay bigla akong napatigil, nagdalawang-isip kung mag-papatuloy pa ba. Hindi naman talaga ako mahilig sa mga lugar na katulad nito ngunit hindi ko matanggihan ang pag-aaya ng barkada. Sadyang nakahahalina ang masasaya nilang kuwento sa loob ng sirkus. Kaya naman bumalik ako sa paglalakad.

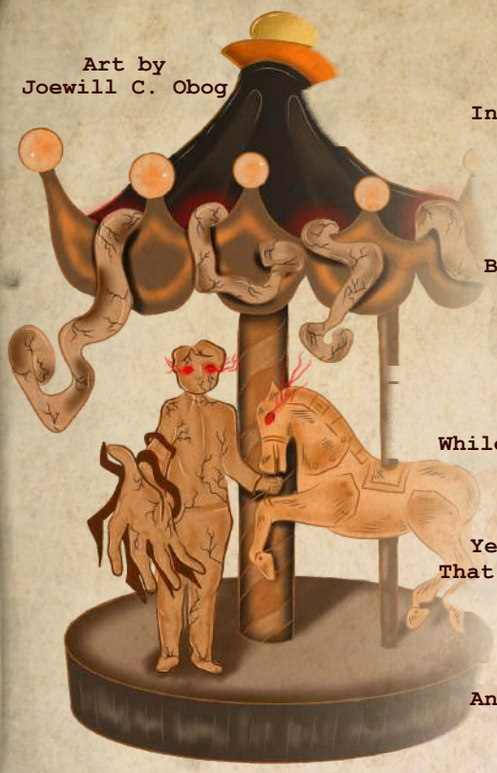
Mula rito sa may tarangkahan, sa gitnang bahagi ay naroon ang isang lalaking may hindi maipaliwanag na ngiti. Ang buhok niya ay maayos na sinuklay sa kabilang gilid. Siya siguro ang boss. Sa kaniyang harapan ay nakikinig ang grupo ng mga taong tulad niya ay nakasuot ng magarbong kasuotan habang siya ay nagsasalita gamit ang wikang Ingles. Minsan pa nga ay nabubulol ito at sabay-sabay silang tumatawa. Mukhang masaya naman.

Nang maihakbang ko ang isa kong paa papasok sa sirkus ay may walang habas na humablot sa akin kasabay ng mga katagang umalingawngaw sa aking likuran.

"Sinasabi ko na nga ba, hindi pa rin kayo natuto."

DUFF CAROUSEL

Joewill C. Obog



Art by
Joewill C. Obog

In the Pearl of the orient's land, a carousel spins,
An incumbent circus, where the story begins.
Round and round, the leaders change their place,
But the problems persist, a never-ending race.

Promises are like music, a sweet, tempting tune,
But the ride grows dizzy, beneath the shining moon.
Corruption, a painted horse, prances in the light,
While the people wait, hoping for what's right.

With each revolution, a new scandal unfolds,
A profligacy story that seldom gets told,
The ride of graft, they rise and they fall,
While the nation's future is the price, we all install.

The carousel turns, the same faces we see,
In a cycle of power, like a twisted decree.
Yet, the hope in our hearts, like children we cling,
That one day this circus will bring the change we sing.

So, the carousel of patronage keeps its pace,
In this grand spectacle, it's a lifelong chase.
We yearn for a day when it's a circus no more,
And our land finds the peace it's been searching for.

COLOR GAME

April Jane L. Paquita

LARO
Ito ang laro ng buhay
May anim na mga kulay
Tahimik na nakatunghay
Gumagawa na ng hukay

II. PULA
Pula katumbas ng dugo
Dumadanak, tumutulo
Kilala sa buong pulo
Nag-iinit, walang banto

III. DILAW
Kung umaga ay liwanag
Sa dilaw nababanaag
Ang tali ay kinakalag
Salamin na binabasag

IV. BERDE
Luntiang kapaligiran
Kayganda namang pagmasdan
Simbolo ay kalakasan
Kukumpleto ng tahanan

V. BUGHAW
Itong bughaw na malaya
Marami ring pumupuna
Ano kayang mga sakuna
Kahaharapin ng madla?

VI. ROSAS
Kulay na namumukadkad
Ang rikit ay ilalahad
Kaiba man sa lahat
Natatangi na may ugat

VII. PUTI
Malinis, wala ring bahid
Walang duming pinapahid
Kapayapaan ang hatid
Magsasalita, titindig

VIII. PAGPILI
Kahit alin, kahit ano
Natitira ay segundo
Bobola na ng panalo
Taong magtatalo-talo

IX. RESULTA
Karamihan na pinili
Umaasang magwawagi
Kakabigin na ang tali
"Dismayado," sabi ng labi

Art by
Nicole Ann Sevilla

COTTON CANDY

Marc Angelo M. Del Barrio

A sweet and fluffy confection
Seeks to always capture your attention.
Hypnotic is the taste
and spinning of promises,
You're drooling, failed by your senses.

Beneath converse noise on benches
in the outer display,
As cotton candy twist, they found their way.
Promises strung with sugary precision,
Will it dissolve,
like a sweet illusory beacon?

Threads of cotton candy spun,
swirl with sweetness,
Speeches of convince, beguiling,
your weakness.
Do not be deceived by the colors so bright,
Point so wise, for our choices
hold the light.

Feel all delight, let hues unfurl,
Mind you, essence is what bends the world.
In this bubble, aspirations reach higher,
Movement shapes the candy's heart,
not just fleeting desire.

Here in carnival empire, loud are music
and voices intersect,
Search who lead with boxes all checked,
Remolding words of sugar
into driven schemes,
For every dreamer's dream
on to a future in beam.

A hymn. In sugar and politics interplay,
Eye for a light that sets the path ablaze,
Leaders set with a grand vision
and an eye to surmise,
Reaching for cloud heights;
nations arise.

Art by
Thalassini

PAYASO SA PALASYO

Mariel R. Garcia

Maraming makukulay na pailaw
Mayroon ring mga nagsasayaw
Ngunit ang pumukaw sa aking atensyon
Ay ang isang payaso sa malayo

Marami ang kumukuha ng litrato sakanya
Nakangiti at naghihiyawan ang mga nasa harapan nya
Marami na siguro syang napasaya?
Sana kami ring mga nasa malayo sa entablado nya

Natutuwa ako sa mga abubot sa kanyang katawan
Kulay ginto na kumikining kahit sa malayuan
Gusto ko lumapit at maabot sya
Ngunit bago pa lamang ito ay hinarang na ako ng
mga gwardya

"Bawal ka dito, bata"
Sambit ng humila sa akin pababa
Gusto ko lang naman makilala sya
Ano ang nasa likod ng kanyang mga kolorete sa
mukha?

Huli na nang aking mapagtanto
Wala pala ako sa karnabal at hindi sya payaso
Ako pala ay nasa palasyo
At sya pala ang presidenteng inuuto lang kayo.

Art by
Princess Joy Aban

HORROR TRAIN

Marie Crist R. Conmigo

Salita't pangakong mahahalimuyak at mapanghikayat
Mukha't paligid, punong puno ng kolere't kulay
Sa tugtugan, lahat ay mapaiindak
Subalit sa bukanang aming kinatitirikan, bakit takot ang namamahay?

Doon kong napansing, tila may huwad na ipinapakita
Hagikhikang tila musika, naging nakasisindak
Mababangong salita'y naging nakasusulasok na hininga
Subalit tila ba ako lang ang may pag-aalinlangang nadarama?

Patuloy nilang binabagtas ang karimlan ng lagusan
Ngunit bakit ngiti sa kanilang labi'y nakapaskil pa rin?
Pilitin mang silipin ang hangganan nitong karimlan
Subalit walang mahapuhap na katapusan

Doon kong pinilit na umalis sa pila
Subalit ang agos ay sadyang nakadadala
Pwersa ng mas nakararami ang siyang nangibabaw
Huli na ang pagpumiglas, tuluyan nang napasok sa karimlan

Hagikhikan ay napalitan ng mga hikbi't pagsisisi
Napagtantong ang lahat ay pagpapanggap
Nilaro-laro lamang sila ng salita't pagbabalatkayo
Subalit ang nakaamba'y pagdurusa't pagbagsak

Dahas ang lulan ng tren na inakalang demokrasya
Patibong ng politikong malaro sa salita, wala pala sa gawa
Trapolitikong nagpapanggap na may magandang bukas
Subalit kapag naluklok, nagiging alipin ng salapi't kapangyarihan

Sa riles ng pangako, dumagundong ang pagmamakaawa
Ang bawat pag-abante, hudyat ng kapahamakan
Walang hanggangang sindakang may nakambang na pagbagsak
Walang magawa kundi humiling ng katapusan ng delubyong pinasok

Oras ay lumipas, nabatid na nang lahat
Sa kwentong ito, walang nalinlang
Dahil sa tarangkahan pa lamang ay batid na kalalagakan
Inuna lamang ng lahat na magbulag-bulagan

Sa kabila ng punong-punong kulay at kasiyahan,
Nasa pusod ng peryahan isang madilim na bukana
Subalit pinilit pa ring paa'y ito ang bagtasin
Dahil sa inakalang may pagbabagong magaganap

Balangkas ng batas, naging pugad lamang ng mga hungkag na aso
Tulad ng tren na ito, takot at hiyawan ang umaalingawngaw
Subalit sa peryahan, ay may lagusan
Sa pinasok ng sambayanang Pilipino ay malayo kundi man ay wala.

Art by
Thalassini

Art by Joestar

SISIW FOR SALE

April Jane L. Paquita

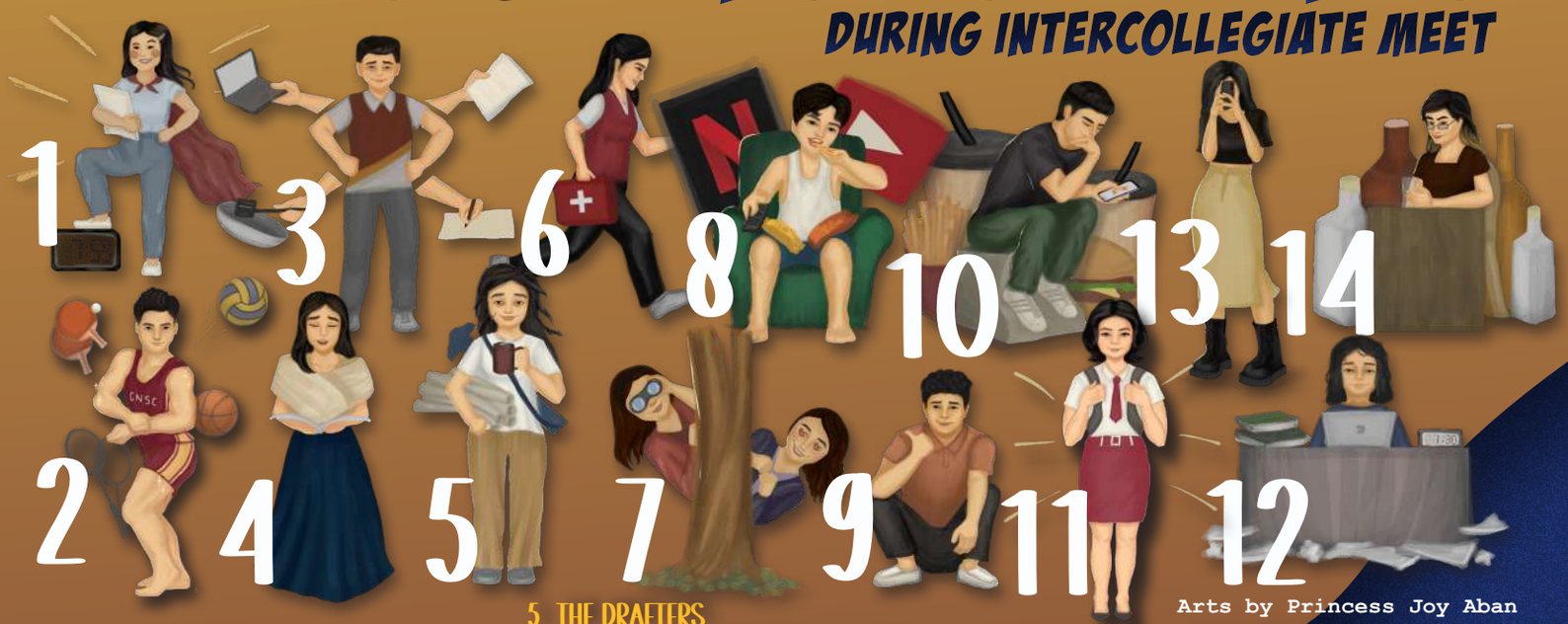
Nagbabadya ng pagbuhos ng malakas na ulan ang madilim at makapal na ulap nang mapagpasiyahan naming magbabarkada na tuluyan nang umuwi. Naglibot-libot muna kami nang ilang minuto upang makita ang kabuuan ng sirkus. Nadaanan namin ang mga taong may kakaibang bihis na gumagalaw lamang kapag hinuhulugan ng barya. Mayroon ding kubo kung saan malalaman mo raw ang iyong kapalaran sa pamamagitan ng pagpapaikot ng roleta. Malas na lang kung matapat sa iyo ang gatilyo ng baril—boom!

Ngunit ang pinaka-nakakuha ng atensiyon ko ay ang makukulay na sisiw na walang tigil sa pagsiyap. Tila ba inuubos nila ang lakas ng kanilang tinig upang marinig ng nawalay nilang ina. Bumili kami ng mga sisiw, kulay pula at berde ang pinili ko. Sabi pa nga ng tindera ay maganda raw maging alaga itong mga sisiw. Kailangan lamang daw naming maghati-hati sa isandaan at dalawampu't isang piso para maging malakas ang sisiw at hindi mamatay agad. Kung paano mapapalakas ang sisiw? Hindi namin alam.

Magbibigay na sana kami ng karagdagang bayad nang lumakas ang ugong ng kumusyon sa may entrada ng sirkus. Kayrami nilang may hawak ng mga sisiw na sabay-sabay sumisigaw ng "*Hustisya ang kailangan namin, hindi sisiw. Ibalik niyo ang pera namin!*"

TYPES OF CNSC STUDENTS

DURING INTERCOLLEGIATE MEET



Arts by Princess Joy Aban

1. THE EARLY BIRD

Despite the torrential rains and clogged tricycle lanes, these students of CNSC continue to defy the adage that "it is better late than never" because for them "the earlier the better". Their power is limitless as they lead the troupe to the best cheering spots, observe new faces from other satellite campuses, and form new relationships with one another.

2. THE ATHLETES

The Stars of the event, the darlings of the crowd and the faces of the week: The Athletes. Proving that academic tasks and extracurricular activities can be played in balance, showcasing their perseverance and athletic skills while achieving honor for both.

3. THE DYING STUDENT LEADER

"In the midst of the crowds, in the shapes of the clouds, I don't see nobody but you ooooOooooohh"

If the student athletes are the faces of the week, don't forget about the feet that keep this lively week moving. The bravest, loudest, freshest, yet dying student leaders of CNSC are the night owls who are as busy as a bee and as crazy as me. Please hug them as you walk through them; otherwise, "It's you. Hi. You're the problem. It's you." Let's help them earn the sleeping badge. ZzzzZzzz.

4. THE CPAU TRAINEES

CNSC Guard: 🤓
CPAU Member na naka training suit: 😊
CPAU Member na naka training suit: CPAU po.
CNSC Guard: 😎

Once upon a time, the devoted CNSC guards warmly welcomed CPAU probationary and regular members without regard for the dress code. And they live happily ever after.

Tugon ng CPAU: Ma'am Rhoda, salamat po sa yumburger!

5. THE DRAFTERS

It is surely na mag "draft" ka na dahil no one should underestimate CNSCeans eagerness to catch up with the mind-boggling deadlines. Procrastination certainly hunts up to Intercollegiate week! You can either draft it or drop it. Xoxo

6. THE FIRST AIDERS

🤕: Medic! Medic!
Don't 'ya worry! Immediate response is on its way!

Travelling with adrenaline rushes, gasping with tightened bandages and medical gloves are CNSC's ready-to-serve First Aiders! Trained with medical and practical skills, they surely and always served with the goal of providing first aid and life support to all!

Starter pack: Don't forget to include ABC, bandages, and other medical supplies.

7. THE POGI HUNTERS/ THE GANDA HUNTERS

Online or face-to-face, their eyes spectate any distance, their ears hear the silent fame and their feet walk nothing but speed. They hunt the most handsome and gorgeous faces of CNSC. Their never-ending search for the freshest faces is unparalleled.

8. ACAD BREAK MODE

This tunes up the inner peace and silent joys as these students "welcome a no academic tasks environment". Their loudest cheers can be heard in the four corners of their homes as they embody a free spirit nature for one whole week. These disney princes and princesses are now capable of sleeping for 8+hours. Yahoo.

9. FORDA BAON LANG

Ma, Pa, pahingi baon, may pasok po kami.
Yung pasok: 🏀⚾⚽🎈🎉

Not the trophy, or the attendance but the allowance! Allowance is what they are waiting for! This group of CNSCeans' only engine to attend the Intercollegiate week is their weekly allowance. Because their allowance is required, no excuse will suffice.

10. THE FOOD MASTERMIND/ THE FOOD THINKER/ THE MUKBANGER

No food vlogger can win a victory over the food buddies of CNSC. Recognized as a VVIP at every food stall—devouring all types of appetizers, meals, and beverages—that charge their inner energy to lift the hype of the week. Their ASMR crunch will undoubtedly fill your stomach. Yum!

11. THE GOOD STUDENT

"Ooooh tatlong bilyon, ikaw lang ang naka-uniform..." Believe it or not, the obedience of CNSCeans is unbeatable. Though anyone can wear and slay on their departmental jerseys and iconic OOTD, few students have fearlessly broken the fashion chain. Their devotion to the CNSC's official uniform is unfathomable.

12. THE DEFENSIVE

With 5-layered ream of ~~scratch papers~~ thesis paper and 4 bilaos of pancit bato are the CNSC students who fearlessly lead the pathway. The "Defensive" is what they are known for. Manifesting "Thesis Defended💅"—their eagerness to equate their panda eyes and financial contribution are greatly evident.

13. OUTFIT SLAYER

All hail to the unbothered and stunning fashion kings and queens of CNSC!

Pairing up with sporty jerseys are the online trendy iconic fashion outfits that anyone can ramp and slay with! Transforming and owning the campus into a run-way event! Hold your cameras tight and keep your smile as they gently take your breath away.

14. INUMAN INITIATOR

Anytime and definitely anywhere. After the nerve-racking Midterm Examination, sit back and relax as this group of students eagerly initiates the fun drinking session. With the simple twist of the bottle cap and the sound of blaring drink spirit, all you need to do is to call these students with oozing confidence to start the show while listening to their heartbreak stories.

HOROSCOPE

Sa pagtingin sa langit ating alamin ang hinaharap! Ako si Estrella isang alagad ng kapalaran at ang magsisilbi ninyong gabay na bituin sa pagtuklas ng inyong kapalaran ngayong sem. Handa ka na bang alamin at harapin ang kung ano mang naghihintay sa iyo?

Aries

Maligo ka naman kahit walang pasok, ang holidays at sem-break kasi ginagawa mo ring ligo break. Mag-ingat ka rin pala sa babaeng nakaputi dahil may binabalak siyang masama sa iyo, clue, classmate mo.

LUCKY ITEM: Expired na sardinas.
LUCKY COLOR: Medyo brown
LUCKY NUMBER: Cellphone number ng guard sa CNSC

Taurus

Ayon sa mga tala masuwerte ka raw ngayong taon, makakapulot ka ng bente pesos sa daan at sisikat ka rin dahil experiment pala ito ng isang vlogger. Mag-alay ng isang tray ng nilagang itlog sa likod ng bahay nyo para sa mga elementong nagambala mo nung nagvi-video ka para sa P.E.

LUCKY ITEM: Blind item
LUCKY COLOR: Maminkmink
LUCKY NUMBER: 0.2

Gemini

Magkakaroon ka ng karibal sa puso ng taong gusto mo. Kaya ano pang hinihintay mo? lumipad ka na ngayon at dukutin ang puso nito. Magpraktis ka rin pala ng tamang pagliko kapag lumilipad dahil sumabit ka sa kable ng kuryente kagabi.

LUCKY ITEM: Nailcutter na mapurol
LUCKY COLOR: colorless
LUCKY NUMBER: 09100210

Cancer

Magreview ka ng matindi dahil ikaw ang unang tatawagin sa recitation ng instructor mo. Kapag talagang hindi mo alam ang sagot sa tanong niya sabihin mo lang... 'di ko na po maalala your honor.

LUCKY ITEM: Helicopter
LUCKY COLOR: Black na black
LUCKY NUMBER: 5 + 7 + 9 (89 + 21) 2

Leo

Kung ano mang kasamaan ang ginawa mo ay panahon na para pagsisihan ito. Mag-ingat ka rin sa mga binibitiwan mong salita dahil may mga nakikinig sa'yong hindi mo nakikita. Iwasang makipag-usap sa mga lalaking may tatak na spiderman ang brief.

LUCKY ITEM: research paper na inabot ng sampung revision
LUCKY COLOR: yellow, kasing yellow ng ngipin mo
LUCKY NUMBER: square root of 123456

Virgo

Hindi lahat ng attention ay positive dahil baka attention ng instructor mo tuwing recitation ang makuha mo. Huwag ring kalimutang maglagay ng tawas sa loob ng medyas bago magsapatos.

LUCKY ITEM: Stand ng lion-tiger na katol
LUCKY COLOR: rgb(225, 50, 20)
LUCKY NUMBER: 3.00

Libra

Ililibre ka ng taong papakopyahin mo sa darating na quiz nyo kaso lang mas mataas ang score niya sayo. Mag-ingat sa mga taong gumagamit ng panda na bolpen na walang takip dahil sila ang magdadala ng kamalasan sa iyo.

LUCKY ITEM: lamesa ng isang five-star hotel
LUCKY COLOR: kulay ng salawal ni bespren
LUCKY NUMBER: 100 imultiply mo sa age mo

Scorpio

Tataas na ang allowance mo pero tataas rin ang mga bayarin mo sa school. Wala ka na ngang pambili ng pagkain makukuha ka pang singilin ng treasurer nyo. Para maiwasan ito huwag kayong mag-elect ng treasurer.

LUCKY ITEM: iPhone 14 pro max fully paid with earbuds and charger at kunting gasgas sa gilid
LUCKY COLOR: puti na may mantsa
LUCKY NUMBER: infinity

Sagittarius

Maipapasa mo lahat ng subjects mo ngayong sem pero hindi ka papasa sa puso ng crush mo kaya panahon na para i-uncrush mo sya. Huwag ka na ring magdala ng payong dahil maiwawala mo lang ito. Mag-ingat sa mga taong nakaitim.

LUCKY ITEM: good item
LUCKY COLOR: colorful
LUCKY NUMBER: derivative of x

Capricorn

Makakalimutan mo ang mga nireview mo pero hindi ka mangongopya dahil mabuti kang tao at tsaka one seat apart ang mga upuan nyo pag may quiz. Good news pasado ka pa rin, bad news ikaw pinakamababang score.

LUCKY ITEM: Takure sa kantang Upuan ni Gloc 9
LUCKY COLOR: charcoal black na may baga na
LUCKY NUMBER: 75 degrees Fahrenheit in Celsius

Aquarius

Huwag kang maging pabuhat sa mga group activities/projects/tasks nyo dahil next sem wala nang pipili sa iyo. Magdala ng extra t-shirt dahil magkakaroon kayo ng biglaang swimming kasama ang mga tropa mo.

LUCKY ITEM: Aquaflask na nayupi
LUCKY COLOR: water color
LUCKY NUMBER: H2O

Pisces

Magpakatino ka na ngayong sem dahil last chance mo na ito para magpakatino. May mga private assassin na nag-aabang sa gagawin mong pagkakamali at nakahanda kang itumba. Umiwas sa cafeteria dahil palagi silang nandoon.

LUCKY ITEM: kambal na lamok
LUCKY COLOR: C=25 M=50 Y=50 K=75
LUCKY NUMBER: average mo ngayong semester

Arts by Princess Joy Aban

Art by Thalassini

CAMARINES NORTE STATE COLLEGE
BREAKTHROUGH

© 2024 BREAKTHROUGH.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.