

From The Sacred To The Defiled: The Oblation Ritualized

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(in Memoriam)¹¹

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Abstract

The sacralizing narrative of the pasyon is linked to the Oblation as both the monument to heroism and the sacred symbol of sacrificial passion. First, the Oblation on its pedestal and plaza in Padre Faura and later in Diliman is analogous to a crucifix enshrined on a Catholic Church altar that, in pre-Vatican II days, was physically separated from the public of parokyans via a railing or wrought iron gate to denote the inviolable division between "profane space" (the congregation) and "sacred space." It was an "inviolable space" fit only for proper rituals that interpellated the UP public (the "congregation") with its sacred symbol (the Oblation as a "Crucifix") through the intermediary organization of UP's administration and faculty (the "priesthood and its acolytes").

Second, then UP president Bocobo's uses of pasyon phrases and terms like "light," "dark," "sacred," and "martyr" to exhort readers to action is relocated from a marginal folk culture to a developing national bourgeois culture. This indicates not only Bocobo's appropriation of the pasyon language as a foundation for his heroic poetics, but also that the bourgeois and elite members of Philippine colonial society themselves were aware of and felt the effects of the pasyon discourse just as the "lower classes" did. Third, the "secular-as-sacred ceremonies" held since inauguration to later anniversary celebrations of the Oblation have asserted the symbol of sacrificial passion that the monument represents for the subsequent decades.

¹¹ **In Memoriam**, Dr. Reuben Cañete, professor and curator of the UP Asian Center, who died last February. This article is part of the second chapter of his dissertation, "Sacrificial Bodies: The Oblation and the Political Aesthetics of Masculine Representations in Philippine Visual Cultures" (2009), UP. He had sent the article to me [aaflucero] with an email which reads, "Please find attached the relevant sections dealing with the narration and ritualization of nationalist patriotism within UP, the genealogy of the Oblation, and its sources from the mindset and biography of President Jorge C. Bocobo, as found in Chapter 2 of my dissertation titled "Sacrificial Bodies." I hope that this meets with your satisfaction."

Reprinting this article is our way of honoring our esteemed colleague, former associate editor of the *NRCP Research Journal*, and officer of Division XI, the Humanities.