

21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World

First Quarter – Module 2
Elements and Contexts of 21st
Century Philippine Literature from the Regions



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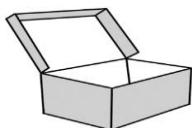
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What I Need to Know

This module gives you samples of literary pieces from the different regions. The samples vary from poetry, short story, to essay. It is in the mind of the author to give you some insight on how the way people raised reflects on their work. The region where a particular author grew, especially the language and traditions were taken into consideration.

At the end of the lesson, the students are expected to compare and contrast the various 21st century literary genres and the ones from the earlier genres/periods citing their elements, structures, and traditions (EN12Lit-Id-25).

Specific Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will learn to:

1. analyze selected literary works by writers from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao;
2. identify the context of a given literary text;
3. relate the context of a literary text to its meaning; and
4. situate the literary text in the context of the region where the writer is from and of the nation.



What I Know

Choose the letter of the best answer. Write the chosen letter on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What do you call the sound device that refers to words or phrases with harsh sounds that create disturbing tone?
 - a. Alliteration
 - b. Assonance
 - c. Cacophony
 - d. Euphony
2. What do you call the sound device that refers to words or phrases with melodic sounds that create calming tone?
 - a. Alliteration
 - b. Assonance
 - c. Cacophony
 - d. Euphony



3. What is the literary element that talks about a unique way of expressing oneself?
 - a. Humor
 - b. Image
 - c. Style
 - d. Tone
4. What is the literary element that talks about an attitude being conveyed by the language used by the writer?
 - a. Humor
 - b. Meter
 - c. Style
 - d. Tone
5. What is the literary element that talks about a general idea, often about human experience, which in the end wants to share to the audience?
 - a. Image
 - b. Meter
 - c. Sense
 - d. theme

Lesson 1

Elements and Contexts of 21st Century Philippine Literature from the Regions

The Philippines has a unique cultural landscape, one shaped by many dialects and traditions determined by their geographical location and linguistic formation. It cannot be rightly said that there is just one Filipino culture because there are so many different cultures in our country. These different cultures brought about by their differences in origin come together to create a colorful Filipino culture.



What's In

What goes around in the mind of the author while this module is being crafted is to let the reader be aware of the different wonderful pieces of literature all throughout the nation. Lest that we know, there are numerous literary pieces that are world-class but not able to reach the comfort of each Filipino reader. Each region has entries in this module. Each reader will be given the chance to have a taste of what the selected region has to offer. The ones that are printed here may not be the best but surely will suffice the reader's literary cravings.



What's New

Bicol Literature

A good number of Bikolanos are multilingual and are normally proficient not only in their native tongue but also in English and Filipino. Prominent writers such as screen writer Ricky Lee and poet Marne Kilates are both natives of Bicol.

As of this time, there are proverbs, riddles, and sayings that have remained in use, such as “An matakot sa doron, Daing aanihon” in English, “Those afraid of locusts, Will not harvest anything”. There is also a tradition of **Tigsikan**, or a game of creating witty, versified extemporaneous toasts during a round of drinking.

Bicol writers have adopted forms of literature for their own enjoyment. There are many corridos and religious works, coming from the press owned by Mariano Perfecto. These eventually led to the creation and enjoyment of other forms of entertainment, such as comedia and the zarzuela, in the 1800’s and early 1900’s. There are works in Bicol during this time, as there were Bicol-based publications, and the production of poems and fiction grew. Literary production continued via varied publications until the 1960s when the last Bicol magazine stopped production.

MAYON

By: Kristian Sendon Cordero
Camarines Sur

Ayon sa alamat, lason ng pana ni Pagtuga,
Ang lumikha sa bulkan – libingan ito
Ng dalagang namatay sa isang digmaan.

Ngayon, ano ang tutubo sa paanan ng Mayon
Gayong nagiging malawak na itong sementeryo
Ng abo, ng tao. Manganganak na kaya ito?

Tinitigan ko ang nakangangang bulkan – binabalot
Ng ulap at ng sariling usok ang tuktok, gatas sa labi,
Baka sakali, magpakita, nang may silbi ang kamera.

Sa ilang retrato na ibenebenta ng mga bata sa Cagsawa
Lusaw na tae ang nagliliyab na lava, dumadaloy pababa.
Matandang nag-nganganga ayon naman sa isang makata.

Sa isang lumang postcard na nakita ko sa isang antigong Merkado-
Kapag sa malayo, isa siyang magandang sekyung nakatanod,
Handa sa pagkapkap, naghihintay sa iyong pagpasok.



Activity: Respond critically to the following questions.

1. According to the poem, what led to the creation of the volcano?
2. In the second stanza, how is the area around the foot of Mayon being described?
3. What is the persona in the poem waiting for in the third stanza?
4. List at least three images found in the poem. Cite the lines where they appear.
5. State the dominant physical sense being used by the poem to create images you listed in the previous question.
6. Examine the images in the poem and determine whether the impression being conveyed by the image is positive or negative.
7. The first stanza of the poem showcases the death of Magayon as the cause of the birth of the volcano. Carrying this reasoning through to the second stanza, what is the persona implying with his use of the image of a graveyard?
8. The fourth stanza presents an image of the poem which was viewed differently by two different people – the persona and the unnamed poet, or makata – who gave a very different interpretation of the image. Defend the choices of both poets in light of how Mount Mayon is seen in the poem.

Discuss why the author used a security guard as the final image of the poem. What does this seem to imply about how security personnel are viewed?



What is It

Meter is a unit of rhythm in poetry, the pattern of the beats. It is also called a foot. Each foot has a certain number of syllables in it, usually two or three syllables. The difference in types of meter is which syllables are accented and which are not. A poem requires that there be an **image** presented to the reader. Images need to be visual. A poem will not limit itself only to visual images but will use other **senses**. The presence of figurative language such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, metonymy, etc. should be present. Poems possesses dramatic situation which calls for the audience to relate to the poem emotionally. Poems possess a **theme**, a general idea, often about human experience, which in the end, it wants to share to the audience.



Pampango Literature

Pampango literature is perhaps a case in point where the writers are indeed struggling. Pampanga was the first province in Luzon to be declared by the Spaniards, who quickly befriended the Kapampangan tribal chieftains and gave them political and financial benefits. Kapampangan culture became heavily influenced by Spain. With the arrival of the Americans, who established military bases in the region, the Kapampangan again embrace foreign influences.

The effect of these influences on the literature was that, there were plenty of Spanish works translated into Pampango, the local language; but there also was a continuing oral tradition, one which was critical of the elite Pampango. These two traditions existed and comingled, creating a literary landscape that used the influences of Spain and America as well as the traditional Pampango. For example, Lino G. Dizon's ***Pasyon Ding Talapagobra*** used the traditional pasyon but also used the vernacular to discuss the injustices suffered by the working-class farmers.

The initial flourishing of Kapampangan literature in the early twentieth century would fade, as publications dedicated to this literature never seemed to take hold. Lourdes Vidal, who discussed Kapampangan literature in **Filipino Writing: Philippine Literature from the Regions**, expressed pessimism that the region would be able to produce new work unless it sees new writers step in with a clear notion of their own regionalism and are able to speak with clear voices to contribute to the country.

Read the essay below.

HOME OF THE ASHFALL

By: John Jack Wigley

The eruption of Mt. Pinatubo was recorded as the second largest terrestrial eruption of the 20th Century, and the second largest eruption to affect a densely populated area. Ash Fall, which formed a weighty, rain-drenched snow-like film, affected almost the entire island of Luzon, and even reached the neighbouring countries like Malaysia and Vietnam. It was further aggravated because of typhoon Yunya, which brought with it heavy rains and strong winds. To the Kapampangans and to the people affected by the tragedy, it would serve as a testament in their irrepressible attribute of rising above their plight and predicament.



I was no longer living in Angeles City when Mt. Pinatubo erupted on June 15, 1991. I was promoted from being a crew member at Pizza Hut Dau to management trainee at Pizza Hut Harrison Plaza in December 1990. After being a service crew member for more than four years and graduating from college in 1989, I had to say goodbye to my hometown where I lived for more than two decades. It was my first time to work in Manila. I asked the assistance of Ed Calupitan, a fellow Pizza Hut crew member now based in Manila to help me find a place to stay. He was living in two-bedroom apartment and gladly offered the other room for me.

Weeks before the eruption, I read several news and warning about Mt. Pinatubo. Frankly, I never knew that there was a volcano in the Zambales mountain range. Nobody among my Kapampangan friends did. I guess we were all clueless about the impending danger this would cause in our lives. Later on, I realized that the summit of the volcano was just fourteen kilometres away from the extent of Clark Air Base. I thought that volcanoes were conspicuous mountains and had fierce-looking summits like Mayon's and Halcon's. But this one was deeply hidden among the several mountains called the "Cabusilan Mountains" of Zambales. How a volcano would manage to hide among the mountains and be covered with a dense forest was something I couldn't comprehend. If it was bound to erupt, I guess it would be just like a firecracker.

Hell, I thought that if there was a mountain near us which I imagined would erupt anytime, it would be the Arayat, which was located at the heart of Pampanga, with its open mouth and forbidding countenance. Not this obscure mountain whose native inhabitants, the Aetas, never even knew about.

I paid no more attention to the warnings.

I had only been in Manila for barely six months and was enjoying my new-found independence. I would sometimes go to Angeles City to see mother during days-off, which usually fell on a weekday since management people did not have the luxury of day-off during weekends because it was the time when more people would go out and eat. Pizza Hut Harrison Plaza was a high-volume unit.

That fateful day, after my opening shift, I went to see a film, it was "Hihintayin Kita sa Langit", a film adaptation of Bronte's "Wuthering Heights" directed by Carlos Siguion Reyna. The film started erstwhile lovers by Richard Gomez and Dawn Zulueta. I was feeling all mushy and melodramatic after watching the film when, once outside, I saw parked cars covered with what seemed like a whitish-gray blanket. And so were the streets. Is finally snowing in Manila? I thought, as I felt some of the particles on my hand and smudge my shirt. When I looked closely and touched them, they were grainy. It was the ash from an ashtray.



"What has happened?" I asked the guard on duty.

"Di kop o alam ser, pero kanina pa iyan." He apologetically said.

I went back to Pizza Hut and asked my colleagues about it.

"Naku, pumutok na yung Pinatubo. Hanggang dito nakarating yung ashfall." said the assistant manager.

I got worried. I wanted to go to Angeles City that instant but I realized that my day-off wouldn't be until Monday. Classes had only just begun and we were undermanned. Besides, I didn't know the extent of the eruption at that time so I presumed it was not really a big deal. We don't have a telephone and so I didn't have any way of knowing how my family was doing. Mother lived with my brother and his three kids at that time. I planned to go to Angeles City that Monday.

But the month staff meeting of the pizza outlet was scheduled on that day. Thus, I failed to go to the province again. I was in charge of the weekly marketing activities of the store. We have thorough back-to school promo for the students so I had to reset my plan for the following week. I specifically requested the store manager that I be excused next week so I could see my family in the province.

That Monday morning, I went to the Philippine Rabbit bus terminal station. I learned that they didn't have trips the past week because the roads were covered with lahar and were therefore impassable.

I heard Kapampangan passengers converse with one another about the gravity of the calamity. "Ken Bacolor, mengalabunan la kanu deng bale alang mitagan. Houses are said to be buried deep in Bacolor. And only the bell tower of the church is visible because the whole structure is sunk deep in the lahar. Everything had been washed out."

"Pity the residents. Makalunus la rugu deng tau. Until now, there is still no electricity in many areas." cried the other.

The third guy exclaimed, "A lot of them have now evacuated in elementary schools and public basketball courts. They are waiting for food and assistance from the government. Pero asneng kabagal kanu deng daratang a saup keng gubyerno. Makalukami."

I wanted to butt in and engage in their conversation too, but I felt I had nothing to share with them. I was guilty for not having responded immediately. I hope that nothing like this had happened to my family. In the bus, I prayed hard, harder than I ever did before.

The bus would have gone as far as the Angeles City terminal but the driver said that the Albacan bridge has collapsed a few days ago. "Hangga namu keni ing saken.



Deng bisang munta Angeles, tipa kayu keng sapa at loumakad na kayu kanin. This is as far as we could take you. Those who are bound for Angeles, you have to go down the river and cross the other side."

I got off the bus and my legs shook upon seeing the devastated city I had lived-in for twenty-one years – the city I have always called the city of angels. Now, it was like a ghost town. The houses were covered with gray ash and the trees looked like folded umbrellas at the onset of storm. The streets were muddy all over and cars were abandoned everywhere, very much like in a horror film where people were nowhere because the zombies had taken over the place. Aetas and beggars with ragged clothes wrapped around their heads were holding out their hands for alms. I wanted to cry. I imagined how Scarlet O'Hara must have felt the first time she went home to Tara after the war and seeing that her place was all in shambles. It was painful to witness what had become of my city.

The strong Abacan bridge had really collapsed, some of its boulders blocking the river's path. Two of the columns were still mightily standing but the rest probably been washed away by the current. I shook in disbelief. This mighty bridge had been witness to some of my remarkable experiences in the city. This was the bridge where mother found me when I was lost at six. It's all gone now.

I saw farther down the riverbank people were lining up to cross the river by stepping on coconut trunks and wooden poles attached from one end to the other. The gaunt shirtless boy who was juggling coins and walking to and fro shouted, "Pesus mu, Deng bisang lumakad papunta Angeles, keni na kayo bang ali la mabasa deng bitis yu. For one peso, take this trail and your feet won't get wet in the river." I was about to fall in line but I realized that there was a long queue of people already as far as the bend, waiting for their turn to get across the river.

It would take me forever to get to other side if I fall in line, I thought. I talked to the person behind me. "Malalam ya pu ing danum. Is the water deep?"

"Tabalu. Bala mu, malalam pin. I don't know. It's deep I guess." He immediately re-joined. "Lawen me itang tau, angga ne keng atyan na. look at the guy crossing, the water is up to his tummy," he said, pointing to the man.

It was deep, I contemplated. I didn't want to take the risk of getting my clothes wet. I was also thinking that perhaps the water that flowed down the river was contaminated because of the volcanic ash and the sulphuric content of the water.



Just then I saw about four bankers holding wooden chairs, inviting people to cross the river on these chairs. They explained that people would be sitting on the chair and the bankers themselves would carry the chair to the other side for a fee of ten pesos. Despite the horrible sight before me, I forced a smile. I was thinking about how indestructible humans are. These people were still struggling to live even if catastrophes like typhoon and volcanic eruption had struck. Catastrophes constantly plagued their lives. I felt deep admiration for them.

One barker thought my smile was an indication that I wanted to ride in the chair. “Bisa keng sake. Would you like to take a ride?” he asked.

I was meaning to say no but I was speechless, still taking everything in. Besides, I wanted to see my family. I nodded my head.

“Koya padgdag naku mu keka ne. Kase lupa kang mabayad. I’ll charge you extra. You look heavy.” The barker smiled fully revealing he had no teeth.

For a moment, I wanted to pull his hair and drown his head in the river. This impudent one, I thought. He had to subtly insult my chubby body. But I surmised that he meant well. It was not going to be easy carrying me to the other side of the river. I just simply agreed.

I sat on the chair and put the bag on my lap. The barker clasped an improvised rope seatbelt from one end to the other. Yeah, like I would experience a terrible accident by forgetting to use the seatbelt, I thought sarcastically.

“Just hold the chair’s handle, sir. It’s good that you came this early. Potang galganapun, ali tana makapunta Karin uling malalam na ang danum. Later in the afternoon, we won’t be able to cross because of the deep water,” the barker enthusiastically said.

As he started lifting the chair, I felt that I was sliding down. The fabric of my pants was slippery. “Saguli. Kala-kalale. Wait, careful! Mananabu ku! I’m falling” I cried.



The barker halted for a second and adjusted the weight of his arms. I wiggled momentarily and alter a while. I instructed him to carry on. He looked at me and then smiled blissfully.

First, it was my body weight. Then I sensed that he was mocking me because he thought I was a sissy. I turned back to the other barkers, and they were all carrying passengers, all of whom were women. One was carrying an older woman with a cane. I saw the men and they were braving the river. Oh dear, now all these bankers could regard me as the only man in the Abacan river who did not want to get his feet wet. Why didn't I decide early on to just cross the river? Now, guilty that I had to subject this cadaver-looking barker to such pain and suffering by carrying me, the queen, all of my 160-pound royalty for a measly 15 pesos. I shook my head of all this guilt away. Well, too bad, I thought. I had the money which you hadn't, Sorry. Even in ancient times, slaves laboriously carried their obese masters. History repeats itself. I tried to reason out in my thoughts.

When we got to the middle of the river, I closed my eyes, not because I was afraid of the water, but because I was worried that the barker wouldn't be able to cross it, with me as his burden. The water was already knee-deep. He wasn't even wearing any footwear. What if he slid down because he stepped on a rock or a hole under the water?

But he was very much focused. His steps were slow but cautious. I wanted to talk to him so that my mind would be distracted from worrying, but I felt that he needed full concentration to get us through. I just held on to the armrest of the chair.

I imagined that poor people have always exhibited their resilience this way. When calamities happen, they are the first ones to suffer that initial blows. Yet, they survived and eventually thrived. They just need to go slow and sure. The rich and the middle class are alienated from this kind of survival strategy. That is why much is lost in them when things go down. But not the poor, they are like fungi. They don't die. They morph after a catastrophe.

We got to the other end of the river. The barker found a coarse spot where he could put down the chair. He was panting heavily, beads of sweat dripping from his temples. I thanked him and handed a twenty-peso bill. He looked grateful and smiled. I



was waiting for him to utter an insulting remark so I could give him the sermon of the day. But he didn't.

"Dacal a salamat pu, Koya. Thank you. Pantunan mo naku mu potang bisa nakang maibalik kang sumangid. Hata daka. Just look for me when you want to cross the river going back. I'll take you." He said as he nodded his head approvingly, once again showing his toothless mouth.

"Sige pu, salamat mu rin," I replied.

There was hardly any roving jeepney at all when I climbed up to the gully. Tricycles were waiting at the corner, but I chose not to ride in one. I decided to walk. The house was only five minutes away anyway.

As I was walking, I thought about what the future would hold for this city I loved. Kapampangans are known to be proud people. I only wished that they would get past all this soon. I was hoping that I would also see my family complete and in the best of health. My steps got quicker. I started to run.

At the threshold of the house, I saw mother carrying a bundle of laundry. When she saw me, she smiled and patted my arm.

I was puzzled to see her carrying a load. "Where are you going? I just got here. I was so worried about you. Where is ate and her family? Are they okay? I asked.

Mother placed the bundle on the table and tightened it. "They're all okay. Thank God. I'm going to Dau to give this to your ate."

"What, are you serious?" I was shocked by Mother's retort. "The Abacan bridge has collapsed, didn't you know? How are you going to get to Dau?"

"I know that the Abacan bridge is no more," Mother said pensively. "I've been to Dau and back twice already. There are still barkers that lift chairs down there in the river, aren't there?" she looked at me.



I was aghast to hear this from her. “You mean you want to go down the river? You are not afraid?”

“Why should I be afraid?” Mother interrupted. “Only the old ones are afraid to cross the river. I am not that old. Besides, you’re here to keep me company, right? I’ll cook your favorite ginataang kamansi.”

I was dumbfounded. Mother was unbelievable.

“Hurry up! The river gets deeper in the afternoon,” Mother shouted. “Let’s go.”

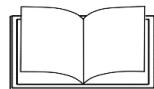
Activity: Respond critically to the following questions.

1. Where did the author hail from?
2. What volcano that author thought would most likely erupt?
3. Why did the author shake his legs at the river?
4. Why the author did feel embarrassed at being carried?
5. Discuss what the author means by this line: “But not the poor; they are like fungi. They don’t die. They morph after a catastrophe.”
6. What effect does Wigley’s humorous tone have on an essay? Imagine yourself in the situations being described. Would you be able to see the humor there?
7. Would a more serious tone have added more meaning to the story? Why or why not?
8. Does the Kapampangan dialogue confuse or enrich the story? Defend your answer.
9. In the end, how does the author’s mother composure reflect on Wigley’s own style of writing about the events in the essay?

One of the most important things to consider in writing an essay is the author’s unique **style** of writing. The essay is written in very simple, almost conversational language. The **tone** of the essay has clear **humor** in it, as can be seen in the retelling of the author’s crossing of the river carried by a “cadaver-looking” banker, as well as his description of his mother, who is happy to see him but is also seemingly unaffected by all the chaos surrounding her.



Wigley's essay makes use of **scenes**, which are divisions in written works where an action takes place without a break or separation in time. He presents his essays in several major scenes, one in Manila, one at the Abacan river when he arrives in Pampanga, and the final one when he finally arrives at his mother's house. In this way, the essay becomes more **contextualized** in the presentation of events.



What's More

Literary Works by Writers from Luzon

Mikael de Lara Co is a writer and musician. He was born in Makati City and graduated with a degree in Environmental Science from Ateneo de Manila University. His English and Filipino poetry collections have received awards including Palanca Awards and the Meritage Press Holiday Poetry Prize. He was also a member of the Los Chupacabras band.

KUNDIMAN

(An Excerpt)

By: Mikael de Lara Co

I ate alone. I grew old. I grew older.
I said hold in my own language
Again and again, hawak, kapit,
Tahan na, uwi na. Then strained
To hear all the engines in this city
Droning in A minor. A knife
Scraped against marble. A stick
Rattled towards stillness. A minor.
All lullabies ever hummed
Coming together to vibrate
In the saddest of frequencies.
Your keys dangled by the sink.
Somewhere a chord is diminished
To static. Kundiman means
The opposite of if ever.



The poet used **diction** to create a specific tone for “Kundiman”. He used Tagalog words and phrases: kundiman, hawak, kapit, tahan na, and uwi na. These words, which have an emotional ring, create a mood reminiscent of a Filipino sentimentality. Also, the mention of A minor chord evokes sad, longing feelings that contribute to the sentimental; tone of the poem.

Catherine Batac Walder hails from Pampanga. She graduated from the university of the Philippines and moved to Europe in 2005 to pursue a Master of Philosophy degree. Her works have been featured in Local Publications including Inquirer’s Youngblood, Philippines Free Press, and Philippine Speculative Fiction. Her letters have been published in international magazines like Reader’s Digest and Time.

THE KAMBUBULAG

(An Excerpt)

By: Catherine Batac Walder

“I can’t believe that woman,” Delia said.

“What woman?” Odessa asked.

“Oh, one I met while smoking just now. Kept asking if we passed Kambubulag Road on the way here. “Never heard of the road,” I told her. She said it’s four kilometres from the hotel and mentioned how we should be careful because we might encounter the kambubulag. Most residents here have resigned themselves to the fact that they have more chances of dying on that road than any other non-resident. But as anyone would say, if it’s your time, then it is,’ she said [.....]”

The writer used cultural symbol of bad luck, the kambubulag, to create the fictional urban legend of the Kambubulag Road. Old folk legends of the moth being a harbinger of death are prevalent in Luzon. It signals the reader to regard the woman and her superstition as out of ordinary.

This work of fiction employed context and diction as dominant elements. **Context** is the background of the text which may have been influenced by the author’s life, language, society, and culture. **Diction** is the choice of words that suit the writer’s intended purpose.



Literary Works by Writers from Visayas and Mindanao

Merlie M. Alunan was born in Dingle, Iloilo and graduated with Creative Writing degree from Siliman University. He is a Professor Emeritus at the University of the Philippines and promotes writing in the mother tongue. Her poems are in English, Cebuano, Waray. At present, she resides in Tacloban City.

OLD WOMEN IN OUR VILLAGE

By: Merlie M. Alunan

Old women in my village say
the sea is always hungry, they say,
that's why it comes without fail
to lick the edges of the barrier sand,
rolling through rafts of mangrove,
smashing its salt-steeped flood
on guardian cliffs, breaking itself
against rock faces, landlocks, hills,
reaching through to fields, forests,
grazelands, villages by the water,
country lanes, towns, cities where
people walk about in a dream,
deaf to the wind shushing
the sea's sibilant sighing

someday we come
someday we come
someday....

Only the old women hear
the ceaseless warning, watching
the grain drying in the sun,
or tending the boiling pot
or gutting a fish for the fire, their fingers
bloody, their clothes stained,
breathing the ocean brine rising



from the mangled flesh into their lungs.

Nights, as they sit on their mats
rubbing their knees, waiting for ease
to come and sleep, they hear the sea
muttering endlessly as in a dream
someday someday someday....

Nudging the old men beside them, their mates,
fisherman, empty-eyed seafarer, survivors
of storms and the sea's vast loneliness,
half-lost amid the household clutter,
the old women in my village
nod to themselves and say,
one uncharted day, the sea
will open its mouth and swallow
anything it could find—

a child playing on the sand,
a fisherman with his nets,
great ships laden with cargo,
and still unsated, they say,
it will gulp in cities towns villages—
one huge gulp to slake its hunger.

As to when or how it would happen,
who knows, the women say, but this much
is true--no plea for kindness can stop it—
nodding their heads this way and that,
tuning their ears to the endless mumbling....

someday we come we come we come
someday we come we come we come
someday someday someday



The **imagery** in “Old Women in Our Village” is heightened through the use of sound devices. For instance, the **cacophony** in the first stanza implies strong feelings, like in the line “against rock faces, land locks, hills.” Then **euphony** in the next stanza evokes pleasant feelings as in the line “the sea’s sibilant sighing.” This suggests an impending disaster, which is echoed in the rest of the poem.

Gutierrez Mangansakan II, an advocate of the Moro culture, is a filmmaker and writer from Pagalungan, Maguindanao. In 2001, his film House Under the Crescent Moon won the grand prize for video documentary from the Cultural Center of the Philippines Prize for independent Film and Video. Since then, he has made films that focus on the plight of women and children. Also, he was the editor of children of the Ever-Changing Moon (2007), a collection of essays by young Moro writers. He became a fellow at the University of Iowa’s International Program in 2008.

He wrote a short story entitled “A Harvest of Sorrows” for the collection Peace Mindanao. The story features a narrator whose experience mirrors Mangansakan’s experience in relief work. For him, the issue and images of refugees and displacement have always been a consistent element in both his films and writings.

Activity: Story Search

Search for the story entitled “A Harvest of Sorrows” and do a close reading of the text. Pay close attention to the history and culture of its place of origin. Then narrate the story. Record your narration then submit it to the teacher for checking.





What I Have Learned

Now that you have finished the lesson, you may have learned that:

- There are different regional literary practices via poetry, short story, essay and other forms that we can explore. Through their writings, we are able to mirror the kind of life that they have in each region.
- Every literary piece made in each region contributed in shaping the so-called Filipino poetry. We cannot just attribute what we have now in a certain region or place because it must be a combination of what we have acquired in every literary produce.
- It is a long way to go before we can make pieces of literature that are comparable to what the world has. For one, it is because the literary pieces of our regional writers are not very much being recognized in our literary classes. Another is, not all Filipinos love to read literature. With these in mind, we should start to hone our skills in close reading of literature in order for us to appreciate what we have on the shelves.



What I Can Do

Millions of Filipinos have left the Philippines in order to look for greener pastures abroad. It is startling to discover that the biggest segment of Asian-American in the United States is composed of Filipino-Americans. There are also Filipinos going as far as the Middle East and Australia, working as healthcare workers, teachers, entertainers, accountants, engineers, electricians, mechanics, chefs, and domestic helpers. This trend will continue on into the future, unless there are better job opportunities here in the country. This reality has been called the Philippine diaspora, and comes with societal consequences.



Turban Legend

[Excerpt from Leche]

By: R. Zamora Linmark

By the time Vince arrives at the Philippine Airlines departures terminal, it is already bustling with restless souls who, with their balikbayan boxes, have transformed the terminal into a warehouse, as if they're returning to the motherland on a cargo ship rather than Asia's first airline carrier. Comedians use these durable cardboard boxes as materials for their Filipino-flavored jokes. "How is the balikbayan box like American Express to Filipinos? Because they never leave home without it."

Everywhere Vince turns are boxes, boxes, and more boxes. Boxes secured by electrical tape and ropes. Boxes with drawstring covers made from canvas or tarp. Boxes lined up like a fortified wall behind check-in counters or convoying on squeaky conveyor belts of x-ray machines. Boxes blocking the Mabuhay Express lane for first-and business-class passengers. Boxes stacked up on carts right beside coach passengers standing in queues that are straight only at their starting points before branching out to form more-or converge with other-lines, bottlenecking as they near the ticket counter.

Boxes that ought to be the Philippines' exhibit at the next World's Fair, Vince tells himself as he navigates his cartload of Louis Vuitton bags in and out of the maze. An exhibit that should take place none other than here, at the Honolulu International Airport, he laughs, as he imagines an entire terminal buried in the Filipinos' most popular-and preferred-pieces of luggage.

With a balikbayan box Filipinos can pack cans of Hormel corned beef, Libby's Vienna sausage, Folgers, and SPAM; perfume samples; new or hand-me-down designer jeans; travel-sized bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and body lotion gleaned from Las Vegas hotels; and appliances marked with first-world labels that, as anyone who's been to the Philippines knows, can easily be purchased at Duty Free right outside the airport or from any of the crypt-like malls that are so gargantuan they're a metropolis unto themselves.

Filipinos will even throw themselves into these boxes, as was the case of the overseas contract worker in Dubai. The man, an engineer was so homesick that, unable to afford the ticket-most of his earnings went to cover his living expenses and the rest



to his wife and children—he talked his roommate, who was homebound for the holidays, into checking him in. He paid for the excess baggage fee, which still came out cheaper than a round-trip airfare. En route to Manila, he died from hypothermia.

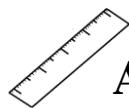
Vince, who had heard the story from his older sister Jing, didn't buy it. There were too many loopholes, too many unanswered questions, like wouldn't an x-ray machine in the Middle East detect a Filipino man curled up inside a box? He simply dismissed it as a “turban legend.”

“You’re missing the point brother,” Jing said. “It’s not the mechanics that matter. It’s about drama. The extremes a Filipino will go to just to be back home for Christmas with his family.”

Activity: Read and answer the following questions:

1. Why do Filipinos love balikbayan boxes?
2. What do you think the boxes symbolize? Why do they seem to be more important than their content?
3. When the narrator notes the Filipino-ness of balikbayan boxes, what does he feel toward his fellow Filipino?
4. What does the airport symbolize?
5. What do you think is the real message behind “Turban Legend”?
6. Do you think that Filipinos who work abroad suffer from homesickness? Explain your answer.
7. The author’s luggage is Louis Vuitton. How does that help characterize the narrator?
8. Do you think that when Filipinos are abroad; they are proud of being a Filipino? Why or why not?
9. What is the significance of the story?





Assessment

Identify the literary terms that is mentioned in each of the following numbers.

- _____ 1. These are works which are seen to be well written and are seen to have a lasting value.
- _____ 2. It is the collection of interrelated conditions in which something occurs.
- _____ 3. It is the unique way of expressing oneself.
- _____ 4. It is the visual representation of something in a poem.
- _____ 5. It is the act of missing one's native land because he/she lives or work abroad.



Additional Activities

Make a compilation of “literary terms”. List as many terms as possible. Discuss the meaning of each term and give example. You can also make some illustrations for aesthetic purposes.





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