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Book Reviews

Jung Festival 1995 Lecture Series: A Glimpse into the Collective Unconscious.

Edited by The Friends of Jung Society, Philippines. Quezon City: Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University. 77 pages.

In 1995, the Friends of Jung Society organized the country's first Jung Festival, a three-part event which spread out from June to October. The Festival was composed of three parts: (1) a Lecture Series which took a peek into the Filipino subconscious, (2) a Workshop Series which explored the path of individuation, and (3) an Asper Series which looked at the inner child.

According to its Foreword, *A Glimpse into the Collective Unconscious* "captures the first part of the Festival" and "presents a rich array of studies and observations on the Filipino psyche," mapping out "areas for further exploration." Thus *Glimpse* sketches out part of the Filipino mythical terrain: the volume contains transcripts of the proceedings from the Lecture Series: talks by the late Francisco Demetrio, SJ, Marian Rocas, and Rafael Ma. Guerrero as well as the brief Q&A segment sparked by the lecture.

The first of the troika of lecturers, Fr. Demetrio includes samples of myths concerning events such as the creation of the world, sacred marriages of gods and goddesses, the first man and woman, among others. Drawing from an entire lifetime of working with myths, Fr. Demetrio's "The Filipino Psyche in Myths and Epics" includes the creation story according to the Samal: God created the heavens and the earth, as well as Nur Mohammed (the preconception of the soul of the prophet Mohammed). Once Nur Mohammed realized that he was alone on the earth, he thought of himself as the supreme being—"I must be God"—after which he immediately disintegrated, and his scattered parts forming all the elements of sky and earth.

After his dissolution, God put him back together again and admonished him: "From now on do not consider (yourself as) God. That is blasphemy." Not only that, God played hide-and-seek with Nur Mohammed: "If I always see you and find you that means that I am God. If you cannot find me, that

means that you are not God." God asked an angel to form the body of the first man: take a ganta of rice, powder it, and mix it with water and use this mixture to bind the joints of Adam. God then asked Nur Mohammed to enter Adam: Nur, after all, was the light of God radiated.

In keeping with the theme of the Festival, Fr. Demetrio links his examples with aspects of Jungian thought: the myth of Manaul and Tubluck Laui is likened to the notion of twins (or in Jung's terms: syzygy). The vistas of Jungian thought and Philippine myth also find a meeting ground in the story of Ukunirot: a sky dweller who, attracted by the waters, trees, and grass down below, climbed down to the earth and inhabited it. Fr. Demetrio posits that "the coming down of Ukunirot and his companions represents coming to terms with the unconscious: they were able to get in touch with their unconscious life while at the same time remaining conscious of their origins."

Fr. Demetrio's lecture is characterized by simple erudition and a flair for storytelling: he easily talks about the myths and stories of different indigenous groups: the Visayan myth of Ukunirot, the Bukidnon creation myth, the story of Guman, from the Subanon. Fr. Demetrio's extensive work in Philippine myths grounds him well in his talk: his credits include *Encyclopedia of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs*, *Myths and Symbols of the Philippines*, and *Soul Book*, which he coauthored with Gilda Cordero-Fernando and Fernando Zalcita.

The second segment—"Insights into the Working of the Unconscious in Indigenous Weaving" by Marian Roces—starts with an introduction of technical details necessary for understanding and appreciating the latter stages of the talk. *Ikat*, a kind of resist dyeing, is defined as a "method which does not allow the dye to penetrate." This method is also known as "reserved dyeing" because parts of the cloth are "reserved" from discoloration.

Roces then explains the four categories of reserved / resist dyeing: *batik*, *plangi*, *tritik*, and *ikat*. Batik dyeing involves painting, with wax, a pattern on the cloth: the cloth is then plunged into the dye vat, and then boiled to make the wax dissolve. Like tie-dye, *plangi* is made by tying a string around the cloth before it is dyed. *Tritik* is similar to *plangi*, but instead of tying the string, it is sewn to the cloth.

In *ikat*, the threads are dyed instead of the cloth. There are four kinds—warp *ikat*, weft *ikat*, compound *ikat* and double *ikat*—and weavers dye "practically microns of cloth in a very precise order," the dyed parts sometimes ending up "as small and precise as only half a millimeter." Roces says that this process takes a month, and that "if you are dealing with 150 threads, then it takes virtually forever." She also explains other formal aspects of *ikat*: the precision and control over color saturation and gradation—"it's almost like pharmacology," she says—as well as the weaving itself: the alignment of complex diagonals, comprised of "interlocking diamonds, rhombus, and S-shapes."

These extensive explanations, however, are merely "entry points into profound layers of complexity," most notably, the insight that "the cloth was

conceived and executed with the integrated whole in mind." Roces says that the weavers "do not plan it, but they dream it." Compared with the western world where one comes up with templates, sketches or preliminary designs prior to the final piece, the "execution (of ikat) is almost impossible to imagine except in a trance, in a state where they (ikat weavers) cannot be bothered and where their concentration is at its peak."

Aside from the implications on the unconscious, Roces also touches on other matters such as the link between healing and textiles. In her research she notes that dyes and plants were used not just to change colors and shades, they were also used to cure. Roces posits that once "you start recognizing that the textiles used plants as medicine, you would have no trouble understanding why the babaylan was a healer, a dyer, and doctor and a weaver because she was handling the same knowledge."

Parts of the Roces section, however, lack accessibility. There's no denying that Roces is knowledgeable in her field; her essays have been included in *The Necessity of Craft: Critical Essays on Women's Craft Practices in the Asia-Pacific Region*. She can weave related information into her talk—she uses William Henry Scott typologies in one section, and the use of computers in another—but the language seems too opaque: how does a reader—newly introduced to Jungian thought used in a Filipino context—come to terms with observations such as "the precise calibrations of exchange are also interior and coastal"?

Still the reader must give Roces credit for her expertise, as well as her ability to integrate material from various disciplines. It's just that sometimes the language becomes too formidable and would require more patience to read.

In the third section ("Archetypal Images in Philippine Cinema"), Rafael Ma. Guerrero—who has published the anthology *Readings in Philippine Cinema* and coauthored the screenplays *Boatman* (with Alfred Yuson) and *Ang Pinakamagandang Hayop sa Balat ng Lupa* (with Ishko Lopez)—explores six archetypes according to their recognizable patterns of development. His talk also looks into their "significance and validity" as "recurring mythic motifs in our films and as prevalent moral icons in our popular culture."

Examples of the six archetypes include: the Mananandata (an individual—commonly male—who takes up arms to seek justice or to mete out retribution); Dolphy and the "Pinoy" comedy (Pinoy being "a term both endearing and pejorative, suggesting in equal measure a diminutive and assertive presence"); and Nora Aunor and how she "personifies the quintessential Filipino success story of our time."

Like an alchemist, Guerrero gathers material from the films' different aspects and angles—protagonists and antagonists, plot development, among others—and distills from these his own insights. For example, in the Mananandata myth, Guerrero proposes that the "necessity of retribution is occasioned . . . by some wrong committed against the hero's person, family, loved ones or community." Also, equally important, "forces of evil always

outnumber the lone gunman" and the audience is "made aware that he is an underdog."

A darker, more insidious variant of the noble Mananandata surfaces in films which "glorify the careers of notorious criminals, rationalizing their criminality in effect as a reflex action against the perfidy of their fellow outlaws or the tyranny of a stratified society." Case in point: the poster of Ramon Revilla's *Nardong Putik: Ang Kilabot ng Cavite* asks: "Was he a Robin Hood or a fugitive of the law?"

Guerrero's observations are surprising, astute, and deep: one passage in Guerrero's talk even suggests that a major archetype in Filipino films is neither hero nor villain, but rather setting. Guerrero considers the City "as much a protagonist as any other character in our movies"—a "living, breathing presence." A "polar opposite of the countryside," the City "fulfills dreams or dashes them:" a place of deception and depravity. The scene for "the experiences of the transplanted Filipino," the City is witness to "the passage from a rural to an urban existence"—what Guerrero observes as "a veritable loss of innocence"—the characters often ending up in prostitution or "the practice of criminality or the brutality of hard labor."

A Question and Answer portion caps off each of the three major segments. It's interesting to see how the audience grapples with the input provided by the speakers, and uses them as springboards for questions and their own observations. Responses range from the apologetic ("I don't know much about Carl Jung, but I've heard about the collective unconscious and archetypal imagery") to the profound ("There are positive and negative forces within you, and the creative process is primarily concerned with reconciling these forces."). Don't expect the responses to be developed into full-blown, in-depth answers; suffice to say that this segment points out other areas for exploration and research.

The series, though, has potential for further development: Jung Society can venture into multimedia—release conference proceedings on CD or video, aside from the traditional book format—à la the Bill Moyers / Joseph Campbell work *The Power of Myth*. Not only that, numerous subjects lend themselves for inquiry through a Jungian perspective: poetry, music, feasts of saints, among others.

On the whole, *Glimpse* provides the reader a threshold to the rich array of studies on the Filipino psyche, and the statements and questions by audience and panelist alike sketch out new ground for inquiry. *Glimpse* is a step towards the direction of self-awareness, towards the Campbellian notion that myths "inspire the realization of the possibility of your perfection, the fullness of your strength, and the bringing of solar light into the world."

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