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## **Political Regime and Public Policy in the Philippines**

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What is clearly essential for the Filipino theater at this point is the use of a language expressive of the Filipino psyche, a language that will bring the drama closer to its audience. Pilipino as a medium rings with immediacy, intimacy, and most important of all, authenticity. Using a foreign tongue, Demetillo's native characters startle the reader with their academic, almost poetic English. How can a reader or a theatergoer relate with the play as an entity designed to convey social and aesthetic, moral and spiritual values? How can one find meaning in it for his life? The experience may be Filipino, as earlier cited, but if the language alienates, the play half loses its impact.

As early as the 1960s, adaptations and translations of Western plays into Pilipino gave the Filipino theater then dormant or dying (because only plays in English were being written and staged) the much needed revival pill. Such were Rolando Tinio's translations of Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (Pahimakas ng Isang Ahente), William's *The Glass Menagerie* (Laruang Kristal), Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (Pagputi ng Uwak), the Teatro Pilipino's seasonal plays, Onofre Pagsanghan's adaptation of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* (Doon Po Sa Amin), and the plays put out by Cecille Guidote's PETA (Philippine Educational Theater Association).

These adaptations were followed by original plays in the vernacular, which have brought life to Philippine drama. Theater groups like Dulaang Sibol, Babaylan, Kalinangan ng Lahi, Palihan Aurelio Tolentino, Dulaang Banahaw, in addition to school dramatic guilds, have welded their commitments into giving direction to a theater that has long been in lethargy. It is therefore unfortunate that Demetillo strayed from this path of progress in Philippine theater by choosing to write in English.

Should *The Heart of Emptiness is Black* ever be translated into Pilipino or another Filipino vernacular, it should be performed by the community theater, the most significant development in Philippine drama today. An extremely meaningful play would emerge, much like Father Rodulfo M. Galenzoga's dance-drama *Maranatha* in Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte. Here, in ritual or ceremonial, the play is a communal effort where the drama is lived and experienced rather than merely read or watched. Here, Demetillo's work would breathe life.

*Visitacion R. de la Torre*

POLITICAL REGIME AND PUBLIC POLICY IN THE PHILIPPINES: A Comparison of Bacolod and Iloilo Cities. By Howard M. Leichter. (Special Report no. 11). DeKalb, Illinois: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 1975. vii, 163 pages. Paper \$7.

This monograph utilizes a comparative analysis of the politics of Iloilo and

Bacolod to illustrate the effects of the types of political regimes on the public policies that the regimes produce.

It seems to verge on the popular tendency to blame or praise politicians for the inferior or superior quality of public policies. What it has really done to this popular tendency is to elevate it to the level of a serious, scholarly investigation.

The approach employed in this investigation is a modification of the commonly used paradigm which emphasizes the effects of the socioeconomic structure on public policies more than the effects of the types of political regimes.

The study focuses on the political regime, and treats it as a variable affecting public policies more greatly than do economic, social, and demographic variables. It compares the political regimes and public policies of Iloilo and Bacolod over a span of 35 years. Until 1955, the politics of Iloilo were controlled by the economic-political elites. From 1955 on, political power has been divorced from economic power. Bacolod, on the other hand, did not undergo such a change — it has always been ruled by the economic-political elites.

Chapters 2 and 3 trace the origin of social and political changes to economic changes in these two cities. Specifically, it shows that the exodus of the economic elite of Iloilo, the expansion of the middle class, and the emergence of political leaders from its ranks resulted from the decline of the sugar trade. On the other hand, Bacolod's economic prosperity and the growth of the economic elite's political control is traced to the expansion of the city's sugar industry.

Analyzed in chapters 5, 6, and 7 is the impact on public policies of the middle-class dominated politics of Iloilo, and of the oligarchic politics of Bacolod. A correlation between the continuity of the type of political regime and the rate of policy change is also established, but perhaps it is only as valid as the data that can be presented in a monograph.

Leichter observes that the areas of public policy that have been predominantly influenced by the political regimes are: (1) content of regulations dealing with zoning, policing, and moral behavior; (2) public expenditures; and, (3) to a certain extent, tax collection. He also identifies areas of public policy influenced more by such factors as "urbanization, economic structure, and historical situation" (p. 97) than by the type of political regime. Some of these areas include traffic; economic activities; health and sanitation; and public safety, convenience, and comfort.

The author draws a parallelism between concentration of economic and political powers in the elites of Bacolod and the existence of a comprehensive zoning ordinance of this city on the one hand, and the fragmented elite structure of Iloilo and its lack of a long-range, detailed zoning plan, on the other. The parallelism seems impressive, but it is wanting in more solid proof, perhaps beyond the scope of one book.

The study notes that the unsatisfactory condition of peace and order in Iloilo necessitated passage of more laws on this aspect—something that was not necessary in Bacolod. It also notes that an Iloilo ordinance providing for citizen night patrols (*rondilla*) shows how the policy content of Iloilo differs from that of Bacolod. Bacolod has no *rondilla* system. It does not make clear, however, to which aspect of the Iloilo political regime is the decision to create a *rondilla* system traceable.

In the brief discussion of policies that aim to regulate moral behavior, a somewhat unconvincing relationship is established between Iloilo's middle-class politicians and the ordinances dealing with minors, beggars, and movies. It simply declares that the policies are a manifestation of the politicians' "concern with the dignity and protection of the common man" (p. 97).

Like other local governments in the Philippines, Iloilo and Bacolod have little independence with regard to revenue legislation. As a consequence, no significant relationship can be expected between local political regimes and revenue legislation. Leichter, however, hypothesizes that in areas of tax collection where autonomy can be exercised, the local political regimes wield an important influence. He also hypothesizes that a relationship exists between types of political regime and corruption in the administration of tax collection. In this connection, he hints that there is more corruption in Iloilo than in Bacolod.

In terms of public expenditure, the study observes differences between Iloilo and Bacolod. It shows that in general administration, especially in the filling up of bureaucratic posts, Bacolod spends less than Iloilo, whose politicians treat this area as a political investment.

On the whole, the monograph is a significant contribution to the limited literature on Philippine urban politics. The hypotheses presented here and the exposition of interesting cause-effect relationships offer a good starting point for studies that would employ a sophisticated methodology.

Lydia N. Yu

PHILIPPINE SHORT STORIES, 1925-1940. Selected and edited by Leopoldo Y. Yabes. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1975. xiv, 544 pages.

Before this book was published in 1975, it already had an interesting history. It was originally intended to be book two of *Readings in Philippine Literature*, a comprehensive anthology of Filipino writings in English scheduled for publication in 1940. The outbreak of the Pacific War aborted this plan. In 1946, Leopoldo Yabes was persuaded by Carlos Bulosan to prepare book two for separate publication by an American press. Bulosan accepted co-editorship of the volume. Apparently the manuscript was not marketed,