Humanities Diliman (January-June 2014) 11:1, 85-108

Waráy Beauty: Writing at the Margins and the Poems in Oyzon's *An Maupay ha mga Waráy*

Efmer E. Agustin
University of the Philippines Tacloban

ABSTRACT

Voltaire Q. Oyzon's first Waráy poetry collection, *An Maupay ha mga Waray* (Our Virtue as Warays), bears the marks of protest and affirmation characteristic of postcolonial literatures. Though the poems in the collection may often be read as expressions and views of love and life, they also talk about the collective experience of the Waráy people, the trauma brought about by foreign colonization, and the imposition of the culture and language of "imperial Manila." The collection asserts in several ways the magnificence of the Waráy language, dispelling the widely-accepted notion (among its own speakers included) of the "natural" inferiority of this tongue. It is an embodiment both of its author's consciousness of the peripheral station given the Waráy language and literature and of its author's efforts to undermine this station. The collection also offers itself as proof against the definition of "regional" literature as a depiction of "specific" life experiences seen from a "narrower" context, as opposed to "national" literature, which conveys "larger" issues and "broader" viewpoints— distinctions that Oyzon scoffs at. The collection, written in a "regional" language, demonstrates Waráy's capacity to comprehend reality with lucidity and to articulate the universe with profundity and extensiveness similar to any other "national" literature. Solely through its publication, it also contradicts the proclamation once made that Waráy literature is dead. The poems provide an optimistic vision for the future of Waráy literature and bear the hope that the Waray-Waray people will be proud again of their own tongue and culture.

Keywords: Postcolonial literature, vernacular, regional languages, regional writing, language politics, national literature

Literary writing in Waráy has a history that went through many years of nil production. When looking into the literatures from the Waráy speakers of Eastern Visayas, one will encounter a weak body of works—weak not because it can barely be called literature (in terms of aesthetics), but weak in a sense that literary pieces produced in this Philippine language are few, barely extant, and/or unavailable to

ISSN 1655-1524 Print / ISSN 2012-0796 Online

the public. This rather moribund state of Waráy literature has been, more or less, the result of the marginal status conferred to the Waráy language. Sensitive to this marginality, Voltaire Oyzon's first collection of poems in the Waráy language, aptly titled *An Maupay ha mga Waray* (Our Virtue as Warays),[1] envoices out the consciousness of a postcolonial subject.

"Postcolonial" means "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2). Postcolonial discourses include "those 'imaginative' or 'creative' and theoretical and/or critical writings that seek to establish alternative objects of knowledge in cultural studies" and "articulate the oppositional/interventionary as well as re-defined consciousness of peoples whose identities have been fragmented, whose cultures have been deracinated by the physical and epistemic violence of imperialist incursions and colonialist systems of knowledge" (Patajo-Legasto, "Discourses" 8). Postcolonial discourse is also a literature of "resistance" (9).

An Maupay gathers from Leyte-Samar's history of colonial and imperial experiences, both from foreign countries and from Manila, to subtly address and resist the dichotomous pairings of terms (and the primacy given to the first terms over the second)—such as "national" and "vernacular" languages, "national" and "regional" literatures, center (Manila) and periphery (Eastern Visayas)—where *An Maupay* positions itself in the context of the latter in each dichotomy. The poems offer a different way of knowing the Waráy people by presenting the side of the Waráys themselves and not that of outsiders (especially those from Manila), who characterize the Waráys with an alien gaze. While certainly challenging the aforementioned pairings, *An Maupay* positively utilizes its marginal position as "a locus of resistance to socially imposed standards and coercive norms" (Huggan 20). *An Maupay*, being a piece of "regional" literature, is both an artistic expression and a critical view from a Waráy standpoint of the political ("*Hi Salvador Magsusundalo*" [Salvador will Enter the Army]), educational, and literary ("*Nagbalyo-balyo ako hin Nanay*" [Changing Mothers]) trends in the country, as well as popular culture ("*An Maupay ha mga Waray*" [Our Virtue as Warays]) that have pushed Waráy writing into the "margins, whose growth has been marked by stagnation, discontinuity and neglect" (Sugbo 200). Here, Oyzon uses his marginal position as a "central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse . . . [where] one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist" (Hooks 341).

In fact, Oyzon is aware of his postcoloniality—whether he calls it that himself or not—as people who know him may well be aware of. To some extent, this awareness saturates his literary advocacy and his writing. Merlie Alunan, in her introduction to

An Maupay, points this out (9-10). For instance, the use of his local language is a primary consideration for Oyzon. It was also due to this awareness that he confronted Bienvenido Lumbera's classification of "national" and "regional" literatures—Lumbera, in his attempt to negotiate the "national" and "regional" classifications of Philippine literatures said that, "The categories 'regional literature' and 'national literature' ought to be kept separate, with 'regional literature' continuing to depict the specificities of life experienced and viewed within a narrower framework, and 'national literature' expressing larger concerns and broader perspectives" (Lumbera). It was this classification that elicited adverse responses from some writers from the regions, including Oyzon.

As a reaction to Lumbera's definitions of national and regional literatures, Oyzon, on his personal blog, posted an essay titled "On the Separation of Regional and National Literatures" that questions both the natures of national literature, which expresses "larger concerns and broader perspectives," and of regional literature, which gives a view of life and experiences in a narrower perspective. By definition, for Oyzon, there is no such thing as regional literature or literature that depicts "the specificities of life experienced and viewed within a narrower framework" because for him, any work of literature is "a valid interpretation of human condition." Issues and human concerns—such as a sense of history ("*An Nahabilin ha Nasunogan*" [What was Left of Nasunogan]), esteem for freedom ("*Buklara an Imo mga Palad*" [Open Your Hands]), poverty ("*Saad*" [Vow]), immigration ("*Didto ha Amon*" [Back Home]), and nostalgia ("*Hi Uday*" [Uday])—perceived in a Waráy consciousness, are issues of national, and even universal, concerns. Cited below are two of the collection's poems to show the variety of its concerns. "*Hiagi*" (Fortune) talks about poverty:

inin kawarayan	This poverty
kay iya ka	will
rarayandayanan	adorn
ngan pagbabadoan hin	and clothe you
kaalo	in shame
basi tamdon,	that you may look down upon,
basi hangdon	or look up to
an nahingalimtan	the beginning you've
nga tinikangan.	forgotten.

The poem encapsulates the vitiation that comes with scarcity and the power of poverty to degrade one's self-worth and even one's origins and identity. Oyzon would maintain that "[o]ne would not think it is a 'narrow' view of life" in poverty

and that the shame it entails is "a universal human experience." "Any poor man . . . can identify with its message whether he is in the Katagalogan, in Mindanao, in Palawan, or even in Colombia or India," and Oyzon would continue, "How can [it] be said to reflect a 'narrow' view or a 'narrow' experience of life?" ("On the Separation").

Meanwhile, "*Ini nga Dalan*" (This Pathway) speaks of (the universal phenomenon of) forgetting that, from a postcolonial lens, can be very much apposite to historical and linguistic forgetting—historical amnesia and language disuse and/or extinction. This obscuration of a memory, whether of a past or a language will initially be lamented upon, but will ultimately still be completely silenced by time:

kun di ta na pag-aagian—	if we nevermore shall pass—
wawad-on, paparaon	it will be lost, erased
han mga banwa	by foliage
nga dinhi maturok	growing here
kada adlaw	each day
hin tag-usa-usa.	one by one.
An agi han at'	We will grieve
gin-upod-uporan	for a while
at' anay pagbabakhoan—	over the tracks
	of our companionship
kataliwan	
iguguos,	and then
igagaod,	the overgrowth will bind them,
ngan paghahangkopan	tie them down, embraced they will be
han mga balagon	by the vines
han kawad-an.	of oblivion.

Thus, Oyzon's poems are illustrations of his argument that literature from the regions and written in a local language can definitely carry the weight of various issues and concerns and "does not express a limited view of human experience" ("On the Separation"). Oyzon and his poems resist an attempt to give them a definition coming from the "center."

Oyzon's awareness of his postcolonial position becomes clear even to those who do not know him just by reading his poetry collection that embodies a postcolonial work in the Philippines: 1) it comes from the fringes of literary and critical discourse, 2) it uses a "regional" language instead of English or "Filipino," 3) it is a work in a literary tradition that was once proclaimed dead, 4) it tackles historical events that forced the Waráy people and their literatures into the margins, and 5) as a piece that originates from the regions and employs a vernacular language, it resists conforming to the description of a "regional" work of literature as one that presents specific

experiences observed from a narrower framework vis-à-vis a "national" work of literature that expresses big issues and far-reaching viewpoints. In taking up varied issues with breadth and depth through poetry in a regional language, the collection is in itself a testament that excellent works of literature can come from the regions, especially the Waráy people.

According to Patajo-Legasto's classification of Philippine literatures in "Literatures from the Margins: Reterritorializing Philippine Literary Studies," Oyzon's collection of poems is one of the so-called "minority" literatures in the country. Philippine minority literatures is defined as consisting of writings that are not included in the Philippine literary canon for reasons that are not always "aesthetic" in nature but political and economic. The very existence of a minority literature exposes the downsides of the established assumptions and beliefs of Philippine literary/cultural practices ("Literatures from the Margins" 49). *An Maupay*, as fitting into the definition of a work of literature from the margins—another name for minority literatures—is an articulation of the varied experiences, feelings, and thoughts of Waray-Waray speakers whose identities have been deformed by the imposition of a "common norm" (Western and/or Manila-centric) of identity that has unfortunately politically and culturally identified the Waráy people as "underdeveloped/immature" and incapable of representing themselves. Additionally and importantly, as a work of literature from the margins, *An Maupay* speaks in the language of the "minoritized" people it tries to represent (49).

In studying a work of literature from the margins, I would like to view this paper as but a meek attempt at a response to Patajo-Legasto's suggestion of "reterritorializing" Philippine literary studies—the "remapping of literary studies in the Philippines to capture spaces for marginalized literatures" (51)—a suggestion that appropriates the concept of reterritorialization by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and is also informed by Caren Kaplan's own adoption of the concept in the field of Western feminist writing.

WARÁY LITERATURE AS REGIONAL

To understand better the marginality of Waráy literature and to set the background for the analyses of Oyzon's poems, there is a need to review a little history. Waráy literature was once vigorous but it dwindled and then, later, laboriously forced its way to survival. Survive it did, however emaciated it had become, but given its condition, Waráy literature was barely felt. When National Artist for Literature Lumbera said that, "Waray literature no longer exists. It is dead," many Waráy speakers became enraged (Alunan, "Mga Siday" 6). Nevertheless, those who were angered by

the statement could not sufficiently refute it and the illustrations they gave were all from the glorious past of Waráy writing—such as those works of literature mentioned by Alcina in his accounts from the seventeenth century and those written during the early part of the twentieth century—and not from the contemporary period, which Lumbera was referring to. Alunan admitted, rather painfully, that such a statement from a learned critic was not irresponsible (207). Perhaps Waráy literature, through the sporadic emergence of some of its forms (primarily poetry), is alive, but is not kicking yet.

The decline in Waráy writing, however, did not come completely naturally. It was a combination of many circumstances in the general history of the Philippines. According to Victor N. Sugbo, the development of regional literatures (e.g., Waráy) has always been parallel to the statuses of our languages (201). Of the many languages in the country, only Tagalog attained a position of "high prestige" together with English, while the others became classified as "low prestige" languages, a classification reinforced by the constitution and the law (201). Alongside these classifications of languages came the classifications of Philippine literatures as well.

Classifying "Philippine national literature" has long been hotly debated. The contention is partly due to the identification of works as either "national" or "regional," which are politically value-laden terms—the former being privileged and the latter existing in the margins. Lumbera, in "Harnessing Regional Literature for National Literature," implies that "national" literature is composed of works written in Tagalog, English and Spanish, which now comprise the canon of Philippine literature. On the other hand, "regional" literature is ought to only be those works written in the "vernacular" and excludes those written in Tagalog, English or Spanish by writers from the regions as these are, by virtue of the language used, classified as "national." Sugbo additionally ascribes to "regional" literature "communities, histories and cultures in subaltern positions. Most of the time, it refers to the literatures of the Philippines at the margins, whose growth has been marked by stagnation, discontinuity and neglect" (200). With this kind of labeling given to both the languages and literatures in the country, one can already get a sense of why such classification has been a factor in the slow growth and the marginalization of Waráy literature—literature that uses a language that is "regional" and of "low prestige."

During the early part of the twentieth century, the dominant languages in the country were Spanish and the local languages (Sugbo 201). It was during this time, in 1909, that Waráy writers founded the *Sanghiran san Binisaya* (Academy of the

Bisayan Language) which, patterned after the Spanish Academy of Language, aimed to standardize the Waráy language (Luangco 62). However, English, the language of the new colonial masters, eventually replaced both languages, and Waráy started to have no other legitimate place outside the community, not even on print (Sugbo 201). Following suit, *Sanghiran* eventually disintegrated.

Reading an English or Tagalog print eventually became regarded as an indication of high education and culture. In the 1950s, local newspapers were fully Anglicized. Tagalog, which was once just struggling to survive like all the other local languages, became a language of "high prestige" when it was employed as the national language of the Philippines when English superseded Spanish and the "vernaculars." (Tagalog was later repacked as "Pilipino" and, eventually, as "Filipino"). In the process, says Sugbo, Tagalog went through intellectualization and became a medium of discourse and of mass communication, thus becoming the language of millions of speakers and writers across the country (201).

Regional languages like Waráy, however, remain non-standardized. Waráy language is not something officially used or studied in school.[2] Its usage in formal and scholarly ways has been unimaginable. Indeed, as Macario D. Tiu says, "We speakers of the local languages have become ashamed of our tongue and with it, of ourselves. We have tried to eradicate our own identity, punishing ourselves for speaking our own language, separating home life and school life" (Tiu). For a long time, there was no place for Waray-Waray within school premises starting from elementary years onwards. Pupils were expected to speak English or Filipino by the teachers. Otherwise, a pupil-monitor will collect a peso for every vernacular word uttered by a pupil, who will drop the fines into a collection can. He/she will then have to wear like a necklace after committing the "sin." Such practice has inculcated in Waráy speakers the illegitimacy of the language of their homes.

However, it must also be borne in mind that the eventual marginalization of the regional languages is the fault of no one in particular. Tagalogs and non-Tagalogs are both victims of the historical state of affairs. For example, when (largely Tagalog-based) P/Filipino was declared the national language of the Philippines, it was because the need to establish a unifying national language was seen as paramount to the development of a Filipino identity and to nation-building. Tagalog, the language of the country's economic and administrative center, was the primary candidate for being the (base of the) national language.[3]

This eagerness to form a national identity, no matter how well-meaning, good-intentioned, and noble, has, however, glossed over the cultural differences among

the many Filipino communities—cultural differences that Tiu calls the "vertical social splits" in our society, the "geosocial faults defined along ethnokinship lines and specific homelands" (Tiu). The Philippines is a country with many communities—the Ilocano, the Tagalog, the Manuvu, etc. (Tiu). Indeed, the country was never ruled under a single government in ancient times and each tribe, even in an island shared by many others, was usually deemed a different nation from the rest. It just so happened that the Spaniards made us into a single colonial administrative unit (Tiu), which has since been accepted as "natural" and now defines the borders of the Philippines. The Spaniards and the Americans have gone, and what endures is the formation of the Filipino nation grounded on the colonial experiences of the country.

The vertical social splits remain. The country may have undergone Western colonization as a whole but the colonial experiences of each of the original communities differ. Despite this, many of the original communities rose from the ruins of colonization and united, using the collective colonial experience, regardless of differences, as their source of cooperation and national identity. The common history, Stuart Hall claims, has thus been profoundly formative, unifying communities across differences ("Cultural Identity" 114). National identity is a way of unifying cultural diversity, where national cultures function as a discursive device which represents difference as unity or identity, but are still cross-cut by deep internal divisions and differences (akin to Tiu's vertical social splits) (Hall, "The Question" 297). This also concurs with Benedict Anderson's claim that the nation is imagined as a "community" because, despite the differences and inequality within the nation, it is still perceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship (15-16).

So to achieve a common direction to be taken by the country, there is a need to project a union within the archipelago, considering that the construction of a national unity is done through the narrative of the nation by which stories, images, symbols, and rituals represent "shared" meanings of nationhood and where national identities are strongly linked with forms of communication, i.e., language (Bhabha 1-7). Indeed, national consciousness is created by the rise of "print capitalism," the production and commodification of books, which "fixed," standardized, and disseminated languages (Anderson 122). The need for a unifying Philippine national language, therefore, was crucial to the creation of a national consciousness and to nation-building—concepts viewed as highly significant if cooperation and (economic) progress are the ultimate goals of the country. Anderson's idea that print capitalism has the capacity to "fix" vernacular languages did its magic to Tagalog, but not really with the other Philippine languages.

Though there were already publications in Waray-Waray in the early years of the twentieth century, printing in Waráy has almost entirely ceased. The last place for Waráy poetry has been in the local radio stations, most notably DYVL Tacloban, which sponsors daily poetry contests in the language. If not for these radio stations and for the poems occasionally published in newspapers and journals, Waráy literature would have completely disappeared by now. Lumbera's statement could have been true, without further contestations.

POSTCOLONIALISM AND *AN MAUPAY HA MGA WARAY*

In recent years, there have been efforts in the regions to assert the glory and dignity of the local languages and to revitalize the literatures produced in these tongues. In Tacloban, the center of Eastern Visayas, the University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College (UPVTC) Creative Writing Workshop, spearheaded by Sugbo, Alunan, and David Genotiva, has been instrumental in this rekindling of interest in writing in the Eastern Visayan languages—Waráy, Cebuano, and Abaknon, the language in the island of Capul, Northern Samar. The program has also partnered with other programs and seminars all over the region, most notable of which are the workshops in Tiburcio Tancinco Memorial Institute of Science and Technology (now Northwest Samar State University) in Calbayog City, Samar and in the Naval Institute of Technology (now Naval State University) in Naval, Biliran (Alunan, *Claiming Home*). Adding to this is the support given by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts to such efforts.

Promising writers have emerged from these workshops, giving Waráy literature in particular a hope for the future. Among these "young" writers is the poet Voltaire Q. Oyzon who, in 2008, came up with his first collection of poems that is both an embodiment of the glory denied to Waráy literature for using a vernacular language and an evidence of the beauty of this marginalized tongue. In this regard, his collection bears the two traits common among postcolonial literatures—that of *protest* (against marginalization) and of *affirmation* (of the beauty of the local language and culture). Indeed, Oyzon's *An Maupay ha mga Waray*, though can be read as poems of love and life, in many points also talks explicitly about the experiences of being peripheral, of being postcolonial.

As a collection that bears postcolonial characteristics of protest and affirmation, the highlight of the poems in *An Maupay* is the use of a "regional" language: Waráy. With the use of the language alone, one may say that the future of Waráy literature

is already in sight. The very first poem in the collection, "*An Pagsidlit han Adlaw ha Kankabatok: Usa ka Aga*" (Sun Rise at Kankabatok: One Morning), seems to express this anticipation—a bright new day for Waráy literature has dawned:

Samtang ginkikinulawan ko	Looking at the sun
an adlaw nga nagsasaklang	climbing
han langit nga namumuhaypuhay,	the awakened sky,
ha akon hunahuna	in my mind I saw
umagi an imo ngaran...	your name passing by...

This poem is followed by "*An Gugma*" (Love), which says that, despite efforts to eradicate the special bond stated in the title, such a bond will persist no matter what—a reference to all the travails the relationship between the Waráy language and its speakers have gone through over the years:

bisan paghadson	if, like the grass
ngan bisan pagsunogon	and the soil,
kun hira—sugad han kugon	they are content with each other,
ngan han tuna—	they will grow and be growing still.
nagkakaayon,	Even if cut
maturok nga maturok	and burned.
la gihapon.	

The poems in this "regional" collection also talk about many other human concerns. "*An Nahabilin ha Nasunogan*" (What was Left of Nasunogan) exhibits that sense of history and acknowledges the importance of knowing things from the past and learning from them:

harigi nga	a post made of
bagangbang,	corral, [*sic*]
hinahawiran	gripped
han mga gamot	by the vines'
han balagon	roots
agud di mapokan,	so it doesn't fall,
ini kay basi hulton	this is to wait
ngan pasabton	and make known
an nagkauurhi	to all those still to come
bahin han mga agi nga ginbasolan	the ways regretted
han namag-una	by those who came first
ngan han mga pagbabasolan pa...	and the ways yet to be regretted...

"*Buklara an Imo mga Palad*" (Open Your Hands) presents the beauty of freedom as well as its vulnerability, as represented by the white dove needing to rest in someone's hands:

para han matugdon	to catch
nga ogis nga sarapati	the white dove
nga mapakadto,	in its coming
mapakanhi	and going
sugad han pagpatugdon	the way the palm tree
han puno han lubi	receives the tired bird seeking refuge
ha pagal nga tamsi	in its wide-flung fronds.
ha iya idinudupa nga mga palwa.	
Abata an iya kagaan,	Feel its lightness,
an iya kabug-at.	its weight.
Pamatia an iya ighuhuni,	Hear what it has to sing,
an iya ig-aaraba.	what it is pleading for.
Kulawi an iya kaanyag,	Enjoy its loveliness,
ngan ha takna	and when the time comes
nga iya na bubuklaron	for it to stretch
an iya nakapahuway na	its wings that have rested,
nga mga pako,	lift up your arms
alsaha an imo butkon,	and toss it
ig-undong hiya	to the skies,
nga't ha langit,	
ngan hinumdomi	and remember
paglimot.	to forget.

Human issues such as poverty and migration to search for a living are the themes in pieces like "*Saad*" (Vow), "*Didto ha Amon*" (Back Home), and "*Hiagi*" (Fortune). Oyzon's poems portray different facets of the economic struggle common among many Filipinos. "*Saad*" captures the familiar trend among Filipinos of going abroad, specifically to Dubai, for pecuniary purposes, also illustrating the common picture of separation among loved ones and the menace of oblivion brought by this separation:

Han akon paglaspay	When I fled
para han dolyar nga't ha Dubai—	for the dollars to Dubai,
nagsaad kita nga duha	we two pledged
nga diri ta palalakton an gugma	to let love stay put
dinhi hinin portahan	within the doors
hinin aton mga dughan.	of our hearts.

Magsasaad kita	This vow we shall keep
tubtob ini nga mga pulong	until the words
diri na tinuod.	lose their truth.

"Hi Salvador Magsusundalo" (Salvador will Join the Army), on the other hand, presents poverty in a different light. In some parts of the country, including areas in Eastern Visayas, life does not give many options to some people—live in poverty or join the revolutionists up in the mountains. This is a fact the poem talks about, laying down the ironic reality that, for some people, hope is found amidst battle and that only by endangering one's life is one assured of survival:

Diri para han nasod.	Not for country,
Diri para hin kun ano pa man—	not for anything else—
tungod kay han tiyan.	for his belly.
An pag-awayan—ha Cordillera,	The fighting—in Cordillera,
ha Mindoro, o an ha Sulu,	in Mindoro, or that in Sulu,
o man ngani dinhi ha Samar—	or even here in Samar—
asya an paglaom.	that's for hope.
Didto, upod han kamatayon,	There, along with death
pagbibilngon han akon puto	my youngest will seek
an kinabuhi.	life.
Kay dinhi hini nga dapit	For in these parts
mapili ka la han	the only two choices open—
an bala,	bullet,
o an kawarayan.	or poverty.

Progress has been people's aim and progress for many means moving from one point to the next, whether in status or, for some others, in spaces. However, yearning for the past and for tradition, more often than not, comes with that moving. This longing for the precedents is also among the subjects of the poems in the collection. This nostalgia can be viewed as the desire to go back to the roots and the origins of ancestry, and to find solace in its identity. This theme of going back is also an idea behind the entire poetry collection itself—the going back to the neglected Waráy. "*Didto ha Amon*" (Back Home) tells the story of someone running away from home to seek better conditions somewhere else only to run back because of nostalgia:

Didto ha amon,	Back home
ginilitan	my throat
an akon malonbalonan	slit
han kawarayan—	by poverty—

ako nagbalotan	I bundled up
ngan tipahirayo nagdinalagan.	and ran away.
Dinhi ha hirayo,	In this far country
ginigilitan	my heart slit
an akon kasingkasing	by deep sadness
han kamingaw—	bundled up again
ako magbabalotan	running for home.
ngan tiuli magdidinalagan.	

"*Hi Uday*" (Uday), on the other hand, is about a woman named Uday who decides to leave home, not giving worth to the nuances of home life and even despising some aspects of it:

"Na diri ak' han langsa...	"I hate the stench of the fish...
Na diri ak' han lusak...	I don't like the mud...
An sálog han Himanglos?	And what about Himanglos River?
An dagat han Carigara?	Carigara Bay?
An bukid han Biliran?	The mountain of Panamaw?
Si ahh! di ko pag-iiliwon,	Si ahh! I won't miss them,
di ko pamimilngon,	I won't look for them,
di ko paglilioton!"	I won't long for them!"

In the end, however, she takes back everything she said and feels the hunger to be connected with her homeland again, even going to extremes such as climbing a tall coconut tree just to be able to see the island of Leyte from afar.

Meanwhile, in "*Nakausa*" (Once), there is a conflict of modernity and tradition. The poem's presentation of images that represent the modern times and the traditional—to chop firewood in spite of the availability of gas fuel, to fetch water despite the presence of faucets in the house, to watch over the rice cooking even though the rice cooker does not burn rice—reflects a romantic view of the past and, again, the longing to return to old practices, albeit in little ways.

Ay' pagpinakurii it' im' ulo	Don't trouble your mind
waray na gad yana nagbabasa hin siday,	no one reads poetry these days,
ngan waray sapayan kun ito maraksot o maupay.	and neither does it matter whether they are bad or good.
-Nicanor Parra	-Nicanor Parra

Nakausa, dida han akon panhayhay	Once, as I was reminiscing the past
han mga naglabay,	I chanced to mention poetry at
ha balay ako naghingaday bahin hin	home:
mga paaliday:	
Hi Timothy nagtaklos han umal.	Timothy tied the rusty bolo on his
Nga laong,	side. He said:
"Magtitiak ako hin sungo."	"I'm off to chop wood."
Intoy, kay may gas pa man.	But Intoy, we still have gas.
Hi Athena manmamaribi kuno	Athena thought she would go off
hiya han mga orchids niya nanay.	to water her Nanay's orchids.
Umuran pa la udog kanina.	Well, it was raining a while ago.
Hi Alexious nagbitbit han baldi	Alexious carried a pail
kay maalog kuno hiya.	to fetch some water, he said.
Di ba, nagpataod na kita hin gripo?	But we have a faucet, don't we?
Hi Lyra nagpakusina, babantayan	Lyra went to kitchen to watch over
kuno niya an tinuon.	the rice cooking.
Pastilan, iton rice cooker di gad	Pastilan, the rice cooker doesn't
tinutokagan.	burn rice.
Nakausa, dida han akon panhayhay	Once, reminiscing the past
han mga naglabay	
naghinangad, nagpinungko, nagkinita	I looked up, sat down, and gazed
ha hirayo.	afar.

Tackling such national and universal subjects as the importance of history, the value of liberty, penury, spatial mobility, and wistfulness, *An Maupay* attests against Lumbera's definition of regional literature as narrowly and specifically focused.

One of the most compelling poems in the collection is "*Pagbarol*" (Drying Fish). The process of preserving fish referred to in the title is likened to the rape of a woman and, ultimately, to the colonization of the islands. The poem, in its earlier parts, presents a seemingly innocent narration of how to make *barol* out of fish:

Idinaitol an tadtaran	She lays the buraw
ngan pinahigda an buraw.	on the chopping board.
Ha may ikog han isda,	Working from the tail,
ipinadulot	she makes a slit
an nag-iinggat han kamatarom	with the shiny sharp metal.
nga salsalon.	From the tail, the blade

Tikang ha ikog, susubayon han katarom	carefully traces
an balidbid han isda, basi	the dorsal side of the fish
gumimaw an duason nga unod.	showing the pale flesh.
Pag-abot ha may tangkugo,	She works it close to the head,
mabalik an kutsilyo ngada	and then, works the knife
ha butnga han lawas	back again
ngan iduduot tibalik ha siyahan	to mid-body, back to where
nga dinultan, pagbibitaron	she made the first cut,
an hiniwa nga unod han isda	forcing open the flesh
ha bawbaw han tadtaran,	there on the chopping board.
dudon-an han dugoon nga tudlo	And then Binyang's bloody hands
ni Binyang an kutsilyo ha ulo han isda	bring the knife again to the head
agud tibwayon an pagbuka.	to finish splitting it,
Naragunot.	you could hear the bones crunch.

However, these images are made powerfully dark and grim when, in the following stanza, foreigners arrive and exploit the woman Binyang, the one making the *barol*, as if turning her into *barol* herself:

Waray mag-iha, may dumaraon,	Soon after, some arrivals,
hira Joe, an mga di-sugad-ha-aton	Joe and company—they're none of our kind
nga nagkaabot nganhi ha bungto	—who'd come to town
pira pa la ka semana an pumiktaw.	some few weeks back.
Didto han bato	There on that rock
nga sugad han bungkog	as wide as a carabao's back
han karabaw an kahilapad,	Binyang meets her misfortune.
didto kadisgrasya hi Binyang.	There she was pierced. Opened.
Ginbuka. Gintasikan. Ginbarol.	Like dried fish.

Indeed, the images portray the oppression of the colonized subjects, their falling into disgrace, and the ruptures done to their societies and peoples. The clash of cultures is further punctuated in the last part of the poem when it talks of the whirlpools created when the salt water from the shorelines of Cansuguran invades the freshwater of Amanlara River, where Binyang was doing the *pagbarol*.

Aside from the images of rape and of colonization, one can note here as well that the poem also speaks of the colonizers' disruption of customary ways—that is, when Binyang is gruesomely disturbed while doing the traditional practice of *pagbarol*. Similarly, one can also notice that the poem has a woman for a main character who, violated and penetrated, is a reminder that during the age of

exploration (exploitation), new territories and uncharted lands were more often than not given feminine images and names.

Moreover, some poems in *An Maupay* have for a theme a different kind of colonization—not geographical and physical, but the colonization of the mind and cultural orientation, exercised through the imposition and use of the national and official languages in the academia. Poems such as "*Nagbalyo-balyo ako hin Nanay*" (Changing Mothers), "*Para han mga Pulong ha Waray nga Pinamatay*" (For the Murdered Words in Waray), and "*Paghimaya*" (Glory Be) tackle the issue of language politics present in the country. "*Nagbalyo-balyo ako hin Nanay*" uses three languages—Waráy, Tagalog, and English—and the translations of the word "mother" in each of these languages to talk about how Waráy speakers transform their cultural orientation through the use of language, largely because of our educational system and its practices in the country. The poem also utilizes the lines from the first stanza of the famous poem of Iluminado Lucente, "*An Iroy nga Tuna*" (Motherland), with each borrowed line appearing after every original (Oyzon's) stanza, to accentuate the beauty and serenity of being close to the motherland. The fourth and last line in the series of supposedly borrowed lines from Lucente's poem, however, is an ironical reworking of the original Lucente line, giving an oppositional twist to the message of Lucente's poem but presenting an all-encompassing theme to Oyzon's own poem—that is, the alienation of Waráy speakers from their own cultural background.

The first three-line stanza is in Waráy, imparting at the same time that Waráy is the language of home. The first line from Lucente's poem follows it, implying that home is where one's heart is:

Ha balay	At home
An pulong nga nanay	the word "nanay"
An syahan ko nga nabaroan.	is the first one I learned.
An iroy nga tuna matam-is pagpuy-an.	It is sweet to live in one's motherland.

The next stanza is in Tagalog and talks about the persona's first experience in school. Lucente's line comes next which, as a continuation of the first borrowed line, describes that at home, everyone is a friend. This is followed by the stanza that mentions the encounter with the English language in school:

Pag-grade one ko	During Grade One
mama ang turo	"mama" is what I learned

ng mga classmates ko.	from my classmates.
Bisan diin siplat puros kasangkayan	I have friends wherever I look.
Siring liwat ni Ma'am Sabel	Ma'am Sabel,
nga amon English teacher—	our English teacher,
mother.	also taught us "mother".
Aanhi an hingpit nga ak' kalipayan.	This is where my entire happiness lies.

Because of such education, the Waráy persona has become well-acquainted with the foreign culture, an acculturation brought about primarily by the English language and with the side effect of the persona's distancing from the local culture. Thus, the penultimate three-line stanza implies the Waráys' favoring of foreign popular culture, preferring to use the informal and popular "mommy" to the local and closer to heart "nanay." True enough, the last single-line stanza that follows the series of borrowed Lucente lines is a twist on the original done by Oyzon himself, wherein the persona finally confesses that "nanay" is already ironically foreign-sounding to him/her. The original line from Lucente is "*Hahani hira nanay pati kabugtuan*," meaning "This is where mother and siblings live."

Yana,	Now,
Well...	Well…
I call her mommy.	I call her "mommy."
Banyaga hira nanay, pati kabugtoan.	Nanay and siblings are foreign to me.

"*Paghimaya*" (Glory Be) is a mock prayer patterned after a combination of Hail Mary and The Lord's Prayer. It follows the pattern of the Waráy version of the original prayers but it changes many words to relay a message regarding the lost brilliance of Waráy and the preference of its native speakers to use Tagalog instead. It also implies the standpoint that with language comes culture and, consequently, the loss of language is the disintegration of the culture that speaks it as well. The poem starts with a mockery of the words simultaneously uttered by Waráy speakers, the invocation of the Holy Trinity, as they make the sign of the cross before prayer. Instead of "*Ha ngaran han Amay, han Anak, ug ha Diyos Ispiritu Santo*" (In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit), the poem starts with "*Ha ngaran han pagka-urosa, pagdukwag ug pagkauripon*" (In the name of progress, unity and slavery), laying out from the beginning what the poem will talk about later on—that with the imposition of a national language for unity and progress comes, conversely, a form of slavery on the part of the other languages (and their speakers).

The main body of the mock prayer starts with "*Paghimayaon ka Polano, Polana…*" (Glory be to you Polano, Polana…) instead of "*Maghimaya ka Maria…*" (Hail, Mary…), sarcastically implying that the persona is grateful to the unnamed people[4] responsible for the Waráys' inclination to speaking Tagalog over Waráy. Following its version of the Hail Mary, the poem continues, saying that these unnamed people are very much blessed by the Waráy. And the youth, who are just as blessed because of their preference for Tagalog, will, however, go out of their minds:

Gindadayaw kamo nga labi	Blessed are you
han mga Waray nga tanan	among Waray people
ngan gindadayaw man	and blessed
an amon mga anak	are our children
nga magkakakukutang.	who will go insane.

The poem then segues to the pattern of The Lord's Prayer. Instead of "*Tagan mo kami niyan hin karan-on ha ikinaadlaw…*" (Give us today our daily bread…), it goes, "*Papagtinag-alogon mo kami niyan ha amon hirohimangraw ha ikina-adlaw…*" (You will make us speak Tagalog in our everyday speech…). The succeeding lines, which are patterned after the part of The Lord's Prayer that asks for the "forgiveness of sins" (*Pagwad-on mo an am' mga sala*), serve as affirmation of the fact that when a language disappears, the culture that speaks it and that culture's memory cease to exist as well. Here, instead of "banishing the sins," the poem talks of the banishment of local memory:

Pagwad-on mo	You will banish
an amon panumdoman	our memory
sugad han pagwara niyo	the way you banished
han amon pinulongan.	our language.

This is, of course, the fate of Waráy language and culture that the persona does not want to ever happen. The last stanza of the poem, composed of the two-word Tagalog line of "*Siya nawa*" (So be it), is the sarcastic presentation of such a hope, a sarcasm intensified by the use of the language it sees as somehow responsible for the decline of the glory of Waráy.

The analyses of Oyzon's collection show that the poems do tackle the marginality of the Waráy language—and, consequently, its people and culture—and how it has been a subject of both Western colonialism and internal colonialism (Manila-Tagalog). Furthermore, the collection also serves as a prayer and a hope for Waráy literature to fully recuperate from the ghastly condition it has fallen into.

On another note, some Waráys, especially those in academic circles, have frowned upon the fact that the local song "Waray-Waray," which illustrates the happy and friendly disposition of the Waráys and the beauty and abundance of their surroundings that never leave them wanting, was turned into a Tagalog song about the Waráys being hot-headed, drunkards, and bullies, helping propagate and popularize the notion that they are a violent people. Below is the original version of "Waray-Waray" and its English translation. (No reliable English translation can be found for the Tagalog version. The latter, however, can be found online.)

Waray-Waray, pirme may upay.	The Waray-Waray is never without.
May 'da lubi, may 'da pa humay.	He's got coconuts aplenty, and also rice.
Ton dagat damo it' isda.	The seas around are teeming with fish.
Ha bungto han mga Waray.	This is the land of the Warays.
Waray-Waray, pirme malipay,	The Waray-Waray is always happy,
Di makuri igkasarangkay.	He's easy to befriend.
Nag-iinom kon nagkikita	Drink is always ready when you meet
Bas' kamingaw mawara!	To drive loneliness away!
Lugar han mga Waray-Waray	Let's make a visit, take a trip
Kadto-a naton, pasyadaha.	To the land of the Waray-Warays.
Diri birilngon an kalipay,	Joy is easy to find there,
Labi na gud kon may fiesta.	especially on fiesta time.
Mga tawo nga Waray-Waray,	The people known as Waray-Waray,
Basta magkita, may 'da upay.	When you meet them, they're always ready.
Diri kabos hit pakig-angay,	Open-handed and hospitable,
ayod kamo basta Waray!	You got to know, that's the Waray![5]

In contrast, the collection's title poem displays another kind of resistance to the negative ethnic branding of the Tagalog version of the song. The poem exhibits an "owning," an embracing of the identity of a strong-willed, brave people who are not content with doing nothing and only drink to somehow fill, temporarily, the void of an empty heart. Here, Oyzon mixes the happy and carefree mood of the original "Waray-Waray" song and the hardiness of the Tagalog adaptation:

Kun hinuhobsan inin akon dughan,	When my feelings dry up,
sugad hiton medyahan,	empty as this half-gallon jug here,
dayon ko ini inaalgan	quickly I rush off to Mana Semang's to fill it
didto kanda Mana Semang	(Mana Semang, put it on my list, please.)
(Mana Semang, ilista la anay.)	

Di ak' nagpipinanuyangko	I just don't sit on my ass doing nothing
kay inin kasingkasing,	because when one feels dry,
kun hubas—tinataro-tangwayan,	one needs to get his gills wet quickly,
ngan pagtinagay-tagayan;	to have generous refills;
kun puno—binabaru-basyahan	and when one's had enough, fill up some more
ngan pagtinagay-tagayan,	until one gets really all soaked up,
tubtob nga mamagsul-ay	full to his gullet, barely able to stand up
manlunay ngan mangayat hin away	and yet spoiling for a fight
ngan ha prisinto huronan	in which case he ends up sleeping in jail
upod han hubas nga medyahan.	with the empty half-gallon jug by his side.

Additionally, it must also be noted that the terms "Waray" and "Waray-Waray" were looked down upon by the members of the *Sanghiran san Binisaya*, the "masters" themselves of Eastern Visayan language and literature. Since the word "waray" means "nothing" (or "no" or "none"),[6] they found "Waray" rather pejorative as it seems to refer to a people who are or have "nothing"—and this "nothingness" is doubled in the term "Waray-Waray." The *Sanghiran* members were also wary of the terms' negative connotations among other Filipinos so they suggested calling the Waráy people "Bisaya" and their tongue "Binisaya" instead—hence the academy's name (Makabenta vii). Through time, however, this Visayan people themselves have come to "own" and "appropriate" these "negative" terms and now confidently call themselves Waráy or Waray-Waray. Also, the term Bisaya is all-encompassing of the people from the Visayan regions as well as many people from Mindanao and some from southern Luzon. In fact, nowadays, to say "Bisaya" or "Binisaya" is usually understood by some as referring to the Cebuano people and language (or a particular dialect of it).

With all these in mind, Oyzon's utilization of the term "Waray" and his decision to name his first poetry collection with it can be interpreted as a bold act of embracing the once derogatory term or as an official affirmation that the term is now a source of identity and pride. The title even takes this boldness further by alluding to the things beautiful about the Waráys. As a postcolonial work, *An Maupay* asserts a voice that has been put into a secondary position and speaks of a consciousness of a minoritized people. It stands as proof to the potentialities of Waráy literature, seemingly saying that despite all the repression history has brought to the Waray-Waray, they are resilient enough to stubbornly keep on building and rebuilding their grounds—a persistence reflected in the poem "*Lawa-lawa*" (Spider):

Nagsusulsi ako	I was mending
han akon balay	my house when

han dagpason mo ini	you swept it off
han siphid.	with your brush.
Nagtatahi ako	I was sewing
han akon balay	my house when
han dukdokon mo ini	you knocked it off
han silhig.	with your broom.
Naghihibwan ako	I was weaving
han akon balay	my house when
han imo ini sinalibay	your slipper flew
hin tsinelas.	and hit it down.
Maghihibwan ako	I shall build
hit' akon balay;	my house.
Magsusulsi ako	I shall mend
hit' akon balay;	my house.
Magtatahi ako	I shall sew me
hit' akon balay;	a house
ha kada takna	every time
nga ini imo rinuruba.	you destroy it.

Surely, *An Maupay* sees positivity in separation or, in the case of Waráy literature, of its near-death experience. As stated in the last poem in the collection, "*Yana*" (Now), when in such a state (of separation), the desire to be together again is only further ignited—a hope for the resurgence of pride and being at home in the Waráy language of the Waray-Waray people after several years of alienation from each other:

kinahanglan ta magkabulag	we need to go on our separate ways
basi utro nga pamilngon an kada tagsa.	that we may find each other again.

Finally, being a postcolonial work, *An Maupay* disrupts the many negative tags attached to Waráy language and literature, showing that: one, it is an evident lifeline to this Philippine "regional" literature once given a death warrant; two, Waráy language can absolutely be literary; three, this collection (through its author) is aware of the peripheral position it has been forcedly given—several years before its conception simply by virtue of it being in a regional language—which it now is subverting; and four, the collection emphasizes the Waráys' ability to perceive the world in an illumined consciousness and to express life experiences with great insight, profundity, and extensiveness, paralleling any other "national" literature there is.

ENDNOTES

[1] English translations of the original Waray-Waray materials taken from *An Maupay ha mga Waray* are provided by the book. The title can be translated as "What is Good about the Warays."

Voltaire Q. Oyzon is a poet from Barugo, Leyte. He has attended various writing workshops in the country, such as the Cornelio Faigao Creative Writing Workshop, UP National Writers Workshop, and the Iligan National Writers Workshop. He was awarded the Jimmy Balacuit Literary Award for Poetry by the Iligan National Creative Writing Workshop in 2003 and the *Gawad Komisyon 2007* by the Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino. He teaches literature and social science courses at the Leyte Normal University. (From the back cover of *An Maupay ha mga Waray*)

[2] The use of "mother tongues" in Philippine elementary education was only implemented in 2012. Even so, the teachers themselves are finding it hard to use the local languages in their classes and, more so, to teach these languages to the children because of their lack of pedagogical training in these languages and the unavailability of any module in and about the local languages. Some of these teachers are, sadly, not even fluent in their own local languages, given that they themselves were taught in the same educational system that has long disenfranchised the local languages.

Lifelong English teacher and Palanca Award Hall of Fame recipient Leoncio P. Deriada admonishes people to not teach little children to use English if they themselves do not know how (150). The idea there is that when the teaching adult does not know the language well, he/she will only be teaching the young ones illiteracies that may be difficult to correct later on as these children have already become used to what they believe are proper usages of the English language when these are actually pure linguistic errors. The same idea can also be applied to teaching any other language, including Philippine regional languages, to the children. For example, if taught improperly, children may grow up believing that certain words are truly part of their local vocabularies when these words, for instance, are actually of Tagalog origin.

The phenomenon of Tagalizing the Visayan languages is, in fact, happening nowadays wherein Visayans, while speaking and casually conversing in Visayan, have started inserting (rather excessively at that) the words "po" and "opo" in their sentences. Moreover, Tagalog words such as "kasi," "parang," "dapat," "sarili," "kailangan," "gusto" (Though not Tagalog per se, the word is highly associated with the Tagalog language. It has also long become part of the Cebuano language, but not of Waray.), "nangyayari," "dati," and "'di ba," to name but a few, are also now becoming part of the Visayan lexicon and on their way to replacing these words' Visayan counterparts. On another consideration, recently filed is a bill that stipulates that English alone should be taught in the Philippine educational system. This has the potential to truly kill the local languages of the Philippines.

[3] Interestingly, two prominent Waray-Warays, who themselves were ardent advocates of the Waráy language and were members of *Sanghiran san Binisaya*, were part of the committee that studied the languages in the Philippines and endorsed the declaration of Tagalog as the national language.

[4] Polano and Polana are the names usually given by Waráy speakers to whomever they talk about but whose names they do not know or have forgotten.

[5] Translation by Merlie Alunan.

[6] The title of this article, "Waray Beauty," can then be interpreted (if understood in the Waray language) as "no beauty"—in reference to the language's supposed marginal position—or (if understood in English) as "the beauty of Waray"—in reference to the assertion (reterritorialization) that Waray, even if it comes from the regions, is beautiful and worthwhile.

WORKS CITED

Alunan, Merlie M. Introduction. *An Maupay ha mga Waray*. By Voltaire Q. Oyzon. Tacloban City: Tres Niñas, 2008. 6-11. Print.

---. Introduction. *Claiming Home. Compilation of Works from the University of the Philippines Visayas Creative Writing Workshop*. Tacloban: 2008 UPV Creative Writing Workshop Fellows, 2008. Print.

---. Introduction. *Mga Siday han dyVL*. Ed. Merlie M. Alunan, Evelina M. Acebedo, Francisca S. Custodio, and Rosemarie P. Agner. Tacloban City: Tres Niñas, 2005. 1-18. Print.

---. *Sa Atong Dila: Compilation of Poetry and Fiction in the Visayan Languages*. 2005. TS. Collection of Efmer E. Agustin, Leyte.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983. Print.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print.

Bhabha, Homi, ed. *Nation and Narration*. USA and Canada: Routledge, 1990. Print.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986. Print.

Deriada, Leoncio P. *Little Lessons, Little Lectures*. Iloilo City: Seguiban Printers and Publishing House, 2001. Print.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. London: Arnold, 1996. 110-121. Print.

---. "The Question of Cultural Identity." *Modernity and Its Futures*. Ed. Stuart Hall, David Held, and Anthony McGrew. Cambridge: Polity P, 1992. 273-326. Print.

Hidalgo, Cristina Pantoja, and Priscelina Patajo-Legasto. *Philippine Postcolonial Studies: Essays on Language and Literature*. Quezon City: U of the Philippines P, 2004. Print.

Hooks, Bell. "Marginality as Site of Resistance." *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. Ed. Russell Ferguson, et al. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology P, 1990. 341-344. Print.

Huggan, Graham. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

Kaplan, Caren. "Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse." *Cultural Critique* 6 (Spring 1987): 187-198. Print.

Luangco, Gregorio C., ed. *Waray Literature: An Anthology of Leyte-Samar Writings*. Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University, 1982. Print.

Lumbera, Bienvenido. "Harnessing Regional Literature for National Literature." *Panitikan.com*. Likhaan - University of the Philippines Institute of Creative Writing, n.d. Web. 17 Sept. 2010.

Makabenta, Eduardo A. *Binisaya-English, English-Binisaya Dictionary*. Quezon City: Emandsonz, 1979. Print.

Oyzon, Voltaire Q. *An Maupay ha mga Waray*. Tacloban City: Tres Niñas, 2008. Print.

---. "Re: On the Separation of Regional and National Literatures." Group message to the Defenders of the Indigenous Languages of the Archipelago *Yahoo! Group*. 5 Jul. 2006. Group e-mail. 9 Apr. 2014.

Patajo-Legasto, Priscelina. Introduction. "Discourses of 'Worlding' and Philippine Postcolonial Studies." *Philippine Postcolonial Studies: Essays on Language and Literature*. 2nd ed. Eds. Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo and Priscelina Patajo-Legasto. Quezon City: U of the Philippines P, 2004. 3-17. Print.

---. "Literatures from the Margins: Reterritorializing Philippine Literary Studies." *Philippine Post-colonial Studies*. Eds. Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo and Priscelina Patajo-Legasto. Quezon City: U of the Philippines P, 1993. 38-53. Print.

Sugbo, Victorio N. "Something Weird Happened on the Way to Nationhood: Revitalizing Regional Literatures." *Sa Atong Dila: Compilation of Poetry and Fiction in the Visayan Languages*. Ed. Merle Alunan. TS. Collection of Efmer E. Agustin, Leyte.

Tiu, Macario D. "Return to Community." *Our Own Voice*. N.p., Dec. 2001. Web. 17 Sept. 2010.

Efmer E. Agustin (pseudonym Remef E. A.) <eanimee@hotmail.com> of Abuyog, Leyte teaches literature at the University of the Philippines Tacloban. He is currently a graduate student of comparative literature at UP Diliman. He produces creative works and criticisms in Waray-Waray, Cebuano, English, and Tagalog.