

GRASPING THE HEROIC:
SITUATING PANAGHOY SA ISANG BAYANING PINASLANG
(LAMENTATION FOR A SLAIN HERO), MUSIC OF
RAMON P. SANTOS FROM 1983

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“...modernity is the attitude that makes it possible to grasp the ‘heroic’ aspect of the present moment”¹

Abstract

The article situates *PanaghoY sa Isang Bayaning Pinaslang (Lamentation for a Slain Hero)* within the social drama of the momentous year of 1983 when historical processes unfolding on the national stage converged with exigent personal circumstances in the life of the composer. The piece, composed by Ramon Santos in honor of Ninoy Aquino² a week after the latter’s assassination, frames the poetry of the late Senator entitled *Faith*. It was performed at the Abelardo Hall in the College of Music of the University of the Philippines later that year, attended by no less than Cory Aquino³ and Noynoy Aquino⁴ - the two future unlikely Presidents of the Republic. Noynoy takes part in its performance as the reader, taking the place of the fallen poet. The paper presents a study in liminality.

¹Santos quoting Foucault 1972 (Santos 257).

²Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, Jr. (November 27, 1932 – August 21, 1983) was a Filipino Senator (1967–1972) and a former Governor of Tarlac. He was arrested in 1972 along with other dissidents of the opposition to the government of former President Ferdinand Marcos. In 1980, he was permitted to travel to the United States for medical treatment following a heart attack. He was assassinated at the Manila International Airport in 1983 upon returning from his self-imposed exile.

³Corazon “Cory” Aquino (January 25, 1933 – August 1, 2009) was the self-proclaimed “plain housewife” widow of Benigno Aquino, Jr. and served as the 11th President of the Philippines, becoming the first woman to hold that office.

⁴Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III, born February 8, 1960, is the son of the late Ninoy Aquino and Cory Aquino and has been the 15th President of the Philippines since June 2010.