

# **ANG FILIPINA/THE FILIPINA, KALIKASAN AT/ENVIRONMENT AND KAUNLARAN/DEVELOPMENT\***

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## **Colonial History and Development**

The Philippines and its people have been the target of foreign development advocates since the 16th century. The first were the Spaniards who advocated development through the Catholic religion (Phelan 1959). Three and a half centuries of Hispanic Christianization, however, downgraded, not upgraded, the quality of life of the Filipinos. A perception of this experience led to the Revolution of 1896. Wrote Dr. Jose Rizal, the most articulate critic of Spanish 'development':

Filipinos have remained faithful during three centuries, giving up their liberty and their independence sometimes dazzled by the hope of the Paradise promised....

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The people no longer has confidence in its former protectors, now its exploiters and executioners. The masks have fallen. It has been that the love and piety of the past have come to resemble the devotion of a nurse, who unable to live elsewhere, desires the eternal infancy, eternal weakness, for the child in order to go on drawing her wages and existing at its expense; it has seen

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not only that she does not nourish it to make it grow but that she poisons it to stunt its growth....  
(Rizal 1989-90:10-11).

Just as the Filipinos were about to rout the *conquistadores* in 1898, the Americans came marching in. Through treaty and conquest the United States of America took over the Philippines (Storey and Lichauco 1926; Le Roy 1914; Agoncillo 1956). The Filipinos were told by the new comers that their coming was to help them 'develop.' The Philippines was to be America's 'show window of democracy in the Far East.'<sup>2</sup>

American tutelage in democracy, however, did not bring the Filipino people to their historic goal of freedom and the good life, for while the theory of liberal democracy was being promoted its practice was undermined by an economic policy aimed at developing underdevelopment (Jenkins 1954). Special trade relations saw to it that the economic, and consequently, the political life of the Philippines would depend on the United States.<sup>3</sup>

The status of colony and later neo-colony, naturally prevented true development. The promise of a democratic and prosperous life did not materialize for the majority of Filipinos. On the eve of World War II a class war symptomized the failure of the American experiment in development (Friend 1965; Kerkvliet 1977; Sturtevant 1976; Saulo 1969).

In 1941 the Americans who promised to develop the Philippines into 'America's show window of democracy in the Far East,' were driven out by the Japanese who promised to develop the Philippines and its people under the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Filipinos, the Japanese High Command said, would only develop if they turned their backs against the West and western developmental strategies. What Filipinos ought to do is to look to the East where they geographically, culturally and politically belong.<sup>4</sup>

The Japanese, to promote their 'development' plan for the Philippines, 'gave' the Philippines its independence in 1943. To make the Filipinos forget Americans and the West, Tagalog was declared and promoted as the national language; an anti-American propaganda was waged in media and the schools; and self-help and discipline was instilled in the people (Recto 1946; Agoncillo 1965).

In 1945 the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered and the Americans returned to the Philippines to resume where they left off.

## **Post World War II Development Strategies**

*Katatapos lang ng giyera. Ang pamilya ni Maria Dolores ay ligtas. Kahit paano, sila ay hindi nagutom. Hindi rin naman sila nawalan ng damit. At ang mga sakit ay hindi nagpagupo sa kanila. Dahil mapamaraang babae si Maria: nagtanim ang kanyang luntiang mga kamay ng mga puno at gulay at naghanap sa paligid ang kanyang matatalas na mata ng anumang makakain; dinamitan ang kanyang pamilya ng kasuotang yari sa sako o kurtina at mga parachute na hinulog ng langit; ginamot ang mga sakit at karamdaman ng pamilya sa pamamagitan ng paghilot at paggamit ng gamot na galing sa mga halaman.*

*Samantalang ang pamilya ni Maria ay nagsumikap mabuhay sa sariling kaalaman at kakayahan, sa ibang parte ng mundo ay may mga taong nagpa-planong tulungan ang mga katulad nila sa pamamagitan ng 'development.'*

(The war had just ended. The family of Maria Dolores survived the war. Somehow they did not starve. Neither did they go naked. And sickness did not triumph over them. Maria Dolores was a resourceful woman: her green thumb raised trees and vegetables and her sharp eyes were on the look-out for anything edible in her environment; she garbed her family in clothes made of sack or curtains or the parachute heaven dropped; she cured sickness with traditional massage and herbal medicine.

While the family of Maria Dolores managed to survive through its own knowledge, skills and industry, in another part of the world there were those planning to help her family and others like it through development.)

## **The First Development Decade**

On January 20, 1949 the newly elected president of the United States of America, Harry S. Truman delivered the post war discourse on development that would change the lives of many people like Maria. Said he on his inaugural:

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas (Quoted in Ullrich 1992:275).

Truman's pronouncement on the American intention to develop the underdeveloped produced underdevelopment. The western concept of development was used to gauge the condition of non-western societies like the Philippines. Maria Dolores was told that her country was underdeveloped. Consider: many Filipino families were like hers. All were outside progress. Farming was done without commercial fertilizers, insecticides and machinery. Their houses were made of bamboo and nipa, not cement and steel. Their food was natural, not commercially processed. They used carabaos, not tractors for ploughing the fields. They did not use motor vehicles for travel but instead walked or rode animal-driven carriages.

The development program pursued by the United Nations under the aegis of the United States succeeded in creating not development but underdevelopment. Maria Dolores and her ilk felt awfully underdeveloped. And poor.

While before there was no poverty because there were no measurements for poverty, now there was poverty.<sup>5</sup>

*Ay, kawawang Maria Dolores. Siya ay 'underdeveloped' daw. Siya ay pobre. Upang makatakas sa karalitaan, ang kanyang asawa ay pumasok sa development stream. Sumunod siya sa mga payo ng mga tagatangilik ng scientific farming: gumamit siya ng pesticide, fungicide at abonong komersyal at binhing dinebelop ng International Rice Research Institute ang kanyang itinanim. Dumami nga ang ani ngunit unti-unting nawala ang mga palaka, isda, kulisap at iba pang makakain sa kanayunan. At hindi lamang iyon. Nag-umpisa na ang pag-utang ni Maria Dolores. Dahil siya ay hindi ang kinikilala ng batas na pinuno ng pamilya hindi siya maaaring umutang sa mga bangko (Romero 1976). Bukod pa rito, kahit mapapasagot niyang umutang ang kanyang asawa hindi rin sila maaaring umutang: ang pag-utang sa bangko ay hindi para sa walang salapi kundi para sa mayayaman. Sinumang hindi makakapagpakita ng ari-arian na maaring gamiting kolateral at patunayan ang kakayahang makakabayad sa*

*utang ay hindi pinapa-utang ng bangko. Sa kadahilanang ito si Maria Dolores ay napilitang bumagsak sa kamay ng mga usurero.*

(Poor Maria Dolores! She was underdeveloped. She was poverty stricken. To escape from poverty her husband entered the development stream. He followed the advice of advocates of scientific farming: he used pesticides, fungicides and planted rice seeds developed by the International Research Institute. No doubt, his harvests improved considerably but the frogs, fish, insects and other edibles that went into the family's diet were becoming more and more scarce. And that was not just the problem. Additionally, Maria Dolores had to go borrowing. Banks, however, were out of her reach: banks are not for the poor but for the rich. Whoever can not produce property for collateral and demonstrate paying capacity cannot possibly get a loan. Because of this nature of the banking system Maria Dolores fell into the jaws of loan sharks.<sup>6</sup>)

The development guidelines of Truman's Point Four which called for raising the level of the Gross National Product of underdeveloped economies through increased production was seen for what it was by the intellectuals of the then so-called Third World. In Latin America, the likes of Andre Gunder Frank came out with the dependencia theory which explains the economic underdevelopment of the South as a function of the development of the North. The North's development rests on the South's underdevelopment; the North sucks the South and the more the South is made to develop through Northern strategies the more it gets sucked (Gunder Frank 1969). To concretize the dependency theory is the experience with the Green Revolution. The likes of Maria Dolores' family who used to subsist on their land prior to the call for development, were pushed down the development scale when they started to use Northern farm inputs. The long arm of capital accumulation had finally reached them and now hooked to the global market they became truly marginalized.<sup>7</sup>

The dependencia theory sensitized the advocates of development to develop a new strategy. In 1962 the *Proposals for Action* of the First United Nations Development Decade established that:

The problem of the underdeveloped countries is not just growth, but development... Development is growth plus change... Change, in turn, is social and

cultural as well as economic, and qualitative as well as quantitative... The key concept must be improved quality of people's life (Quoted in Esteva 1992:13).

*Si Maria Dolores at ang kanyang pamilya ay tinamaan na naman ng debelopment. Idiniin sa kanila ng iba't ibang institusyong panlipunan ang diskurso ng bagong konsepto ng debelopment. Sinabi sa kanila na sila'y malayo sa progreso. Ang pamantayan ng kanilang pamumuhay o 'standard of living' sa wikang Ingles, ay mababa. Wala ng Amerikanong namumuhay pang katulad nina Maria Dolores. Kahit ang mga Negro sa mga ghetto.*

*Hindi tumataas ang 'standard of living' nina Maria Dolores kahit anong ibigay na saklolo o limos ng Amerika sa Republika ng Pilipinas. Kasi naman si Maria Dolores at ang kapwa ginang ng tahanan ay palaanak daw. Sabi nga ng mga dalubhasa sa populasyon, namimiligro na ang carrying capacity ng bansa at palapit na sa Pilipinas ang doomsday scenario ni Malthus.*

*Ang USAID, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, Asia Foundation at iba pang mga pundasyon ay nag-donate ng salapi para sa family planning sa Pilipinas.*

*Mabuti na lang si Maria Dolores ay hindi na nireregla. Wala siyang sabit sa kanyang pagiging Katoliko. Ang kanyang mga anak na may asawa ang may sabit. Sila'y lumunok ng mga pil-doras o di kaya'y nagpalagay ng IUD. Pagod na ang kanilang katawan sa panganganak at sangkatutak na trabaho sa loob at labas ng bahay. Wika ng panganay na si Rosing, 'Ang gusto ng Papa ay ayaw ng mama.'*

(Maria Dolores and her family were again hit by development. The discourse of the new concept of development was rammed into their ears by the different social institutions. They were told that they were far from progress. Their standard of living was low. No American family lived any longer like that of Maria Dolores.' Not even the Negroes in the ghettos.

The standard of living of families like Maria Dolores' did not improve no matter what aid or alms America gave to the Republic of the Philippines. Maria Dolores and her ilk, so they were told, were far too fecund for their own good. According to population

experts, the carrying capacity of the country was nearing the danger point and the Philippines was approaching the Malthusian doomsday scenario.

Maria Dolores was lucky because she was no longer menstruating. She was beyond the clutches of the Catholic Church which considers control over one's fertility a mortal sin. Not equally lucky were her daughters who were forced to sin and face eternal damnation by taking pills and wearing IUDs. Their bodies were tired from too many childbirths and too much work in and out of the house. The eldest among them, Rosing, said, 'What the Pope (*Papa*) wants mama does not want.'<sup>8</sup>)

## **The Second Development Decade**

While the First Decade considered the economic and social aspects of development separately, the Second Development Decade involved the merging of the two. The International Development Strategy proclaimed on October 24, 1970 called for a global strategy based on the unified approach. Then almost simultaneously a resolution of the United Nations establishing a project for the 'identification of a unified approach to development and planning, which would fully integrate the economic and social components in the formulation of policies and programmes' was passed.

The Second Decade's unified approach, however, evolved in the opposite direction: dispersion. In 1974 the Declaration of Cocoyoc emphasized that the purpose of development is not to develop things but to develop man. Enlarging on the ideas of the declaration the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation suggested another development, human-centered development in 1975. Then in 1976 the ILO came out with the *Basic Needs Approach* which aimed at the 'achievement of a certain minimum standard of living before the end of the century.' In 1978 UNESCO came out with the concept of *endogenous development* or development to suit the needs of a particular country so that development need not become a mechanical imitation of industrial societies. This particular development concept promoted appropriate technology (Esteva:14-17).

*Tinamaan na naman si Maria Dolores ng makabagong konsepto ng debelopment. Hindi raw siya nag-de-debelop dahil ang kanyang kultura ay palpak. Mantakin mo nga naman: ang kulturang Pilipino ay kinulong sa kumbento sa mahabang panahon — tatlo at kalahating dantaon — at pagkatapos pinalabas dito at tinapon sa isang Hollywood bordello. Tunay ngang kawayya si Maria Dolores, ayon sa UNESCO. Siya'y may identity crisis. Ano nga ba siya talaga?*

*Sabi ng mga development experts ang magpapa-debelop daw sa Pilipinas ay appropriate technology. At ang payo sa kababaihan ay pumasok sa development mainstream. Idineklara ang 1975 bilang International Women's Year at ang 1976-1986 bilang 'Decade of Women.'*

*Si Maria Dolores, tulad ng dati ay nagbabanat ng buto. Tumutulung siya sa pagtanim, pagbunot ng damo, paglagay ng abono, at paggapas. Ngunit sabi sa kanya ng lipunan hindi raw siya magsasaka. Bagama't mas marami ang kanyang oras ng binubuhos sa bukid kaysa kay mister, si mister ang magsasaka.*

*Ang gawain sa bahay ay walang katapusan: si Maria Dolores ay taga-luto, taga-laba, taga-linis ng bahay, taga-alaga ng bata, taga-tahi ng damit, atbp. Bukod pa rito, upang dugtungan ang mababang kita ng kanyang kabiyak sa buhay, kadalasan siya'y tumatanggap ng labada o di kaya'y gumagawa ng mga kakaning itinitinda sa palengke. Nag-aalaga rin siya ng mga baboy at manok at patuloy na nagtatanin ng mga gulay sa bakuran. Hindi raw ito trabaho anang opisyal na istadistika. Hindi ito isinasama sa Gross National Product ng Pilipinas.*

*Dahil hindi kinikilala ng lipunan ang mga gawain ni Maria Dolores siya'y burado sa kasaysayan. Sino bang istoryador na sumulat tungkol sa kabayanihan ni Maria Dolores? May mababasa ka ba tungkol sa kanyang mga dinanas na kahirapan sa pag-sisilang at pag-aaruga ng mga bata na silang inaasahan ng lipunan bilang tagalikha ng kayamanan? Sa kanyang malasakit na buhayin ang mga anak habang ang kanilang ama ay nakikipagdigma bilang isang gerilyero noong nakaraang giyera? Sa kanyang paghihirap bilang ama at ina ng tahanan nang ang kanyang asawa ay sumama sa mga namundok na nagnanais na palayain ang masang Pilipino sa opresyon ng mga maniniil na*



*kolonisador at ang kanilang kabagang na uring nag-aari kung kaya't naghahari?*

*Hindi lang burado si Maria Dolores sa kasaysayan. Siya ay binibiktima pa ng mga pumapapel na taga-sulong ng kasaysayan tulad ng mga kanluraning 'development advocates.' Mantakin mo ang sinasabi nila kay Maria Dolores: 'Maria Dolores, ikaw ay walang trabaho dahil ang mga gawain mo ay produksyon lamang na may use value. Hindi ka 'producer' o tagalikha ng mga produktong may exchange value. Wala ka sa 'development mainstream.' Dapát kang magtrabaho sa pagawaan upang maging 'mainstream producer.'*

*Gusto sana ni Maria Dolores ang pagiging 'producer.' Isa sa kanyang mga tinatanging panaginip ang pagpasok sa opisina o pabrika. Ngunit laspag na ang kanyang katawan. Ang kanya namang 'consciousness' daw, anang mga dalubhasa sa development, ay lubog.*

*Kawawang Maria Dolores! Kulubot na siya at ang kanyang kaalaman tungkol sa produksyon at reproduksyon ng buhay ay walang demand sa job market. Ang tanging hinahanap ng mga nag-e-emploo ay ang mga dalagang may pinag-aralan, mura sa gulang, maganda at marunong mag-Ingles.*

(Maria Dolores was once more hit by a new concept of development. She was not developing because her culture was an anomaly. Consider: Philippine culture was locked up in a Spanish convent for three-and-a-half centuries and later made to stay inside a Hollywood bordello for half a century. Truly Maria Dolores is to be pitied. According to UNESCO, she has an identity crisis. Indeed, who is she?

According to development experts, what would develop the Philippines was appropriate technology. And the advice to women was to enter the development mainstream. 1975 was declared by the United Nations as 'International Year of Women' and 1976-1986 as the 'Decade of Women.'

Maria Dolores continued to struggle for existence. She helped in the planting, weeding, fertilization and harvesting of the crops. But according to society she was not a farmer. Although she put in more hours on the farm than her husband, it was the latter who was considered a farmer.

Work on the domestic front was endless. Maria Dolores was cook, janitress, child carer, seamstress, etc. Additionally, in order to augment the meager earnings of the head of the family, most times she had to take in laundry or cook native delicacies to sell in the market. She also raised pigs and chickens and planted vegetables in the backyard. Again, all these did not constitute work according to official statistics. It was not reflected in the Gross National Product.

Because society does not recognize Maria Dolores' work she is erased from history. What historian has ever written about her heroism? Has anyone ever written about her hardship in giving birth to children and caring for them so that society can have the workers to create wealth? What of her valiant efforts to preserve the life of her family while the head of the family fought as a guerilla during the last world war? How about her courage and fortitude in being both father and mother of the family while her husband went to the hills to join those who desired the liberation of the masses from colonial and class oppression?

Not only is Maria Dolores erased from history. She is also victimized by those who want to make history, such as those advocates of western development. Consider what these people tell her: 'Maria Dolores, you are out of work because what you produce has only use value. You are not a worker because what you produce has no exchange value. You are outside the development mainstream. You should become a wage worker in order to be a mainstream producer.'

Maria Dolores would like nothing better than to join the employed sector. One of her cherished dreams is to work in an office or factory. But who will take her? Her body has deteriorated considerably. Her consciousness is submerged, according to development experts.

Poor Maria Dolores! She is already wrinkled and her knowledge regarding the production and reproduction of life has no demand in the job market. What employers seek are single women with education, young in years, good-looking and fluent speakers of English.)

## **The Lost Decade for Development**

The next decade, the 1980s, was called 'the lost decade for development.' During this time countries that pursued development made their respective adjustments. Some went for further economic development while others deliberately slowed down (*Ibid.*:16). In the Philippines, the stage was set for the dismantling of the martial law regime of Marcos. Indeed, the strong man was not joking when he said that he would use government as the instrument of a revolution (Marcos 1971, 1988). By 1980, capitalists, especially the Americans, were imperilled by crony capitalism and state capitalism. Capital that used to be in the hands of Americans fell one by one into the hands of cronies or the state. The oil cartel, composed of the Seven Sisters, for example, lost its clout in the Philippines with the emergence of the state-owned Philippine National Oil Company. The drug industry, long a preserve of Americans, faced stiff competition from United Drug, a crony capitalist enterprise that cornered most of the market. Crony capitalists like Danding Cojuangco were forming cartels, notably in the coconut and sugar industries. It is no surprise therefore that the move to oust Marcos materialized.

*Paniwalang-paniwala si Maria Dolores sa 'EDSA Revolution.' Bagama't hindi siya nagmartsa sa EDSA tulad ng mga ibang naganais na ibalik ang demokrasya, nagtirik naman siya ng kandila bilang kasagutan sa hamon ng Radyo Veritas: 'Don't curse the darkness. Light a candle.' Nang malamang wala na sa Malacañang ang diktador na si Ferdinand Marcos natuwa ang matanda. 'Ay,' wika niya, 'sa wakas gaganda na ang buhay sa Pilipinas.'*

(Maria Dolores truly believed in the 'EDSA Revolution.' Although she did not march at EDSA like the others who desired the return of democracy to the Philippines, she lighted a candle in response to the call of Radio Veritas: 'Don't curse the darkness. Light a candle.' When she heard that the dictator Ferdinand Marcos was no longer in Malacañang, the old woman rejoiced. 'Ay,' said she, 'at last life in the Philippines will improve.')

## **Sustainable Development**

In the 1990s a new development ethos emerged. In the North, it took the form of a call for *redevelopment*. That which has been maldeveloped or has become obsolete must undergo redevelopment. Industrialized countries like the US and Germany realized how overdeveloped they had become. Science and technology had been used to produce not only deadly war weapons with the fire power to blow up the world many times over but also industrial inputs that were killing rivers, polluting the air, poisoning the land and contributing to the greenhouse effect. The new name of the game was *sustainable development*.

The call for redevelopment in the South assumes this form according to development critic Gustavo Esteva:

In the South, redevelopment ... requires dismantling what was left by the 'adjustment process' of the 80s in order to make room for the leftovers from the North (atomic waste, obsolete or polluting manufacturing plants, unsellable or prohibited commodities...) and for the *maquiladoras*, those fragmented and temporary pseudo-factories that the North will keep in operation during the transitional period. The obsession with competitiveness, for fear of being left out of the race, compels acceptance of the destruction of whole sections of what was 'developed' over the last 30 years. Sacrificed on the altar of redevelopment, these will instead be inserted in transnational designs consistent with world market demand.

In the South, however, the emphasis on redevelopment will not be on such ventures, existing in the form of technological and socio-political enclaves. Rather, redevelopment implies the colonization of the so-called informal sector. In the name of modernization and under the banner of the war on poverty — pitting as always the waged against the poor, not a war against poverty itself — redeveloping the South involves

launching the last and definitive assault against organized resistance to development and the economy.

Conceptually and politically, redevelopment is now taking the shape of sustainable development, for our common future, as prescribed by the Brundtland Commission. Or else, it is being actively promoted as green and democratic redevelopment .... But in its mainstream interpretation, sustainable development has been explicitly conceived as a strategy for sustaining 'development,' not for supporting the flourishing and enduring of an infinitely diverse natural and social life (p.16).

*Ang pamahalaan ni Pangulong Corazon Aquino ay para daw sa pagbabalik ng demokrasya sa Pilipinas. Batay sa narinig ni Maria Dolores mula sa radyo at balitang kumakalat sa kanayunan, ang demokrasyang ito ay magpapababa ng presyo ng galunggong; mag-aalis ng graft and corruption; magbibigay ng trabaho sa mga tao; magpapalaya sa midya; magre-reporma ng lipunan — sa madaling sabi, magpapabuti sa pamumuhay ng lahat.*

*Walang katuparan ang pangako. Tumaas pa nga ang presyo ng galunggong at iba pang bilihin. Kung graft and corruption naman ang pag-uusapan ang mga inatasan daw na humuli sa mga magnanakaw ay sila mismong nagnanakaw sa ninakaw daw ng mga magnanakaw. At may kudeta pa.<sup>1</sup> At brownout.<sup>2</sup> At kidnaping at holdap.<sup>3</sup> Ang naging tanging katanungan ni Maria Dolores ay ganito: 'Ano ba naman ang demokrasyang ito?'*

*Ang tatlong anak at limang apo ni Maria Dolores ay tanggal na sa trabaho. Nagsara ang pagawaang pinapasukan dahil sa brownout.<sup>4</sup> Ang mga kumikita na lamang ay ang mga apong nasa abroad.<sup>4</sup> Si Neneng ay isang atsay sa Kuwait. Binabara ang tai-nga ng matanda kapag ang usapin ay dumadako sa pag-aabuso at panggagahasa sa mga Pinay sa mundo ng mga Arabo. Si Linda naman ay nasa Hapon. Kapag naririnig ng matanda ang salitang Japayuki at sakit na AIDS siya'y nagpapalunod na lamang sa malalim na katahimikan.*

*Hindi alam ng matanda ang mga pang-ekonomiya at pulitikal na laro na nangyayari sa Pilipinas. Paminsan-minsan nakikinig siya sa radyo. May mga balita tungkol sa plantang nukleyar sa Bataan. Nagbabayad ng limpak-limpak na salapi ang bayan para dito ngunit hindi naman nagbibigay ng kahit isa lamang sanang kilowatt ng koryente.<sup>15</sup> At nababalitaan din niya ang mga pagtutol ng mga taong bayan sa mga plantang itinatayo ng National Power Corporation.*

*Bagama't maraming binabalita tungkol sa peligro ng plantang nukleyar, patuloy naman ang pagbagsak ng mga produktong in-aayawan na ng mga environment-conscious na consumers sa Kanluranin. Sa katunayan, ang hindi nalalaman ni Maria Dolores ay siyang magpapatay sa kanya. Ang repolyo, Baguio beans, carrots at kinchay na kanyang kinagigiliwang i-chop-suey ay lunod sa lason.<sup>16</sup> Ganoon din naman ang hanging pumapasok sa kanyang бага.<sup>17</sup>*

*Malaki ang pagsalamat ni Maria Dolores na may milagro sa Agoo, La Union.<sup>18</sup> Araw-araw siya ay nagdarasal ng rosaryo sa Mahal na Birhen upang bigyan siya at ang kanyang pamilya ng kaginhawaan sa buhay. Sayang, hindi siya makakapunta sa Agoo. Wala siyang pamasaha. Ngunit naroroon naman ang milagro ng sumasayaw na araw. Nakita na niya ito. Paniwalang-paniwala siya na ito ay himala. Pinindot niya ang tainga ng kanyang apong si Kardong namamasukan sa mataas na paaralan nang kanyang sabihin sa kanyang lola ang ganito: Hindi sumasayaw at nagpapalit ng kulay ang araw dahil sa milagro. Nangyayari ito dahil sa mataas na lebel ng pollution sa Pilipinas!*

*Naghihintay si Maria Dolores sa isang magandang kinabukasan. Hindi siya nawawalan ng pagasa.*

(The government of President Corazon Aquino was purportedly for the return of democracy to the Philippines. Based on what Maria Dolores heard on the radio and the news circulating in the community, democracy would lower the price of galunggong; eradicate graft and corruption; give jobs to people; free media; reform society — in short, improve the quality of life of the people.

The promise was not fulfilled. The price of galunggong and other commodities even increased; as for graft and corruption, it was said that those tasked with going after the thieves were the

very ones who were stealing what had been stolen by those who stole from the people. And there were coups d'etat.<sup>11</sup> And brownouts.<sup>12</sup> And kidnappings and hold-ups.<sup>13</sup> The question Maria Dolores continues to ask is: 'What kind of democracy is this?'

The three children and five grandchildren of Maria Dolores are out of work. The firms employing them have ceased operation due to the power outages and the bad investment climate. The only ones earning are the grandchildren working abroad.<sup>14</sup> Neneng is a domestic helper in Kuwait. Whenever talk would dwell on the abuse and rape of women in the Arab world, the old woman plays deaf. As for Linda, there she is in Japan. Whenever the old woman hears the words 'Japayuki' and 'AIDS' she just allows herself to sink into a bottomless silence.

The old woman does not understand the economic and political games played in the Philippines. Once in a while she listens to the radio. There is news about the nuclear plant in Bataan. Thousands of dollars are paid by the people for that plant daily but it is not generating even just a kilowatt of electricity.<sup>15</sup> And she also hears about the protests of people against power plants constructed by the National Power Corporation.

Although news abound regarding the danger of nuclear power plants, the dumping of products rejected by the environment-conscious consumers of the West continues. As a matter of fact, what Maria Dolores does not know is what will kill her. The cabbages, Baguio beans, carrots and celery she likes to turn into chop suey are laced with poison.<sup>16</sup> Poisoned, too, is the air that she ingests in her lungs.<sup>17</sup>

Great is the gratitude of Maria Dolores for the miracle in Agoo, La Union.<sup>18</sup> Every day she prays the rosary to the Blessed Virgin that she and her family will be blessed with a good life. It is a pity she can not go to Agoo. She has no fare money. Nevertheless, there is the consolation of the dancing sun. She had witnessed this herself. She believes it to be a miracle. She pinched the ears of her grandson, Kardo, who goes to high school, when he told his grandmother that the sun was not dancing and changing color because of a miracle. This was happening because air pollution in the Philippines had reached maximum levels!

Maria Dolores is waiting for a better tomorrow. She does not lose hope.)

### **Ecofeminism: A Challenge to Development**

Is the new call, the call for sustainable development, the answer to the quest for the good life? Is this what Maria Dolores is waiting for?

At this point, I would like to bring in ecofeminism which is the most promising philosophy and movement as far as sustainable development is concerned.

Ecofeminism differs from *shallow environmentalism* which works for minor reforms to the industrial system, and conservation of resources for man's use.

Ecofeminism is more attuned to *deep environmentalism* which challenges anthropocentrism and its notions of conservation and stewardship. Opposed to all human attempts to dominate and exploit nature, deep ecology sees wilderness as existing for its own sake, not as a recreational space for humans or as the place to find species that might be useful to humans. Deep ecology also avers that all forms of life have their place in nature. What human beings consider as pests are functional and must be respected. Furthermore, deep ecology asserts that humans should try to become integrated into nature, fitting themselves into it and living in harmony with it. Believing in holism, deep ecology insists on the indivisibility of a living earth and that all species, humans and non-humans, have the right to exist and survive.

Both shallow environmentalism and deep environmentalism are gender blind. They do not see that what has degraded the environment is not only capitalist ideology in practice but more so, the ideological practice of patriarchy. Both ideological practices have submerged the feminine principle. It is this feminine principle which ecofeminism wants to retrieve from the past.

Ecofeminism draws from women's movement towards a spirituality that no longer finds comfort and inspiration in the traditional religion of a male God administered by male priests. The discovery of the Goddess in cultures that value a people's oneness and respect for Mother Nature has proven to be of more value to ecofeminists than the male God who in Genesis tells



Adam that nature exists for him to exploit and master in order to produce and reproduce life.<sup>19</sup>

Ecofeminism also draws from the feminist analysis of man and woman's relation to nature. It has been found by feminist studies that it is man's object relation to nature that has made him exploit and degrade both women and nature. Maria Mies creditably validates this feminist assertion in her work, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (1986). Using for data the findings of anthropologists like Martin and Voorhies (1975), she theorizes that it is woman-the-gatherer, and not man-the-hunter, who is the real producer.

Mies builds her case by starting with the popularly accepted definition of production given wide circulation in the works of Marx as the active use of nature's resource by humans for the purpose of producing and reproducing life. Production is of two kinds. One is production with use value or natural production and the other is production with exchange value or social production. Production with use value is associated with women and production with exchange value with men.

The invention of categorizing production into two kinds has worked against women. Their appropriation of their own nature in reproduction work has been marginalized: childbirth, nursing babies with one's own milk, providing food for the family, caring for members of the family, are considered without social value while men's appropriation of nature, though not necessarily for the production of life as in the case of hunting for game or making atom bombs, is privileged.

Mies overthrows the considered superiority of man's production work by examining man-the-hunter's relation to nature vis-a-vis woman-the-gatherer's relation to nature. She writes:

Women's productivity is the precondition of all other human productivity, not only in the sense that they are *always* the producers of new men and women, but also in the sense that the first social division of labour, that between female gatherers (later also cultivators) and predominantly male hunters, could take place only on the basis of a developed female productivity.

**Female productivity consisted, above all, in the ability to provide the daily subsistence, the guarantee of survival, for the members of the clan or band. Women necessarily had to secure the 'daily bread,' not only for themselves and their children, but also for the men if they had no luck on their hunting expeditions, because hunting is an 'economy of risk.' (Mies:58)**

**In summary., Mies describes women's object relation to nature thus:**

- **Their interaction with nature, with their own body as well as with the external nature, is a reciprocal process. They conceive of their own bodies as being productive and creative in the same way as they conceive of external nature as being productive and creative.**
- **Though they appropriate nature, this appropriation does not constitute a relationship of dominance or property relation. They are not owners of their own bodies or of the earth, but they co-operate with their bodies and with the earth in order 'to let grow and to make grow.'**
- **As producers of new life they also become the first subsistence producers and the inventors of the first productive economy. This implies from the beginning, social production and the creation of social relations, that is, of society and history (p. 65).**

**In contrast, men's object relation to nature is characterized thus:**

- **The hunter's main tools are not instruments to produce life but to destroy life. Their tools are not basically means of production, but means of destruction, and they can only be used as means of coercion also against fellow human beings.**
- **This gives hunters a power over living beings, both animals and human beings, which does not arise out of**

their own productive work. They can appropriate not only fruits and plants (like the gatherers) and animals, but also other (female) producers by virtue of their arms.

- The object-relation mediated through arms, therefore, is basically a *predatory* or *exploitative* one: Hunters *appropriate* life but they cannot produce life. It is an antagonistic and non-reciprocal relationship. All later exploitative relations between production and appropriation are, in the last analysis, upheld by arms as means of coercion.
- The object-relation to nature mediated through arms constitutes a relationship of dominance and not of cooperation. This relationship of dominance has become an integral element in all further production relations which men have established. It has become, in fact, the main paradigm of their productivity. Without dominance and control over nature, men cannot conceive of themselves as being productive.
- 'Appropriation of natural substances' (Marx) now becomes a process of one-sided appropriation, in the sense of establishing property relations, not in the sense of humanization, but in the sense of exploitation of nature.
- By means of arms, hunters could not only hunt animals, but they could also raid communities of other subsistence producers, kidnap their unarmed young and female workers, and appropriate them. It can be assumed that the first forms of private property were not cattle or other foods, but *female slaves who had been kidnapped* (p.62).

Mies' discussion of men and women's differing praxis provides the basic idea of why men degrade and exploit women and nature. Bandana Shiva begins where Mies takes off in order to plead the cause of ecofeminism. In her book *Staying Alive* (1989), she critiques the development paradigms hatched by patriarchal capitalists. These are marred by:

- The propensity of man to dichotomize;
- Man's theory and practice of reductionism; and
- Man's desire to colonize.

### **The Propensity to Dichotomize**

Man becomes man only if he has someone or something as his object. Marx's concept of praxis as elaborated by Mies discusses this. Man separates himself from nature and sees nature as existing for him to exploit and master in order to produce and reproduce life. He does likewise to women. In order to define himself man has to have woman as an object. He becomes the 'one' while woman is the 'other' (Beauvoir, 1976). Thus man becomes strong because woman is weak, rational because woman is irrational, dynamic because woman is passive, etc..<sup>20</sup>

The propensity to dominate and master the 'other' (nature and woman) makes man lose respect for life. Consequently, to him science becomes a tool of death, not life. Says Shiva:

Modern science was a consciously gendered, patriarchal activity. As nature came to be seen more like a woman to be raped, gender too was recreated. Science as a male venture, based on the subjugation of female nature and female sex provided support for the polarisation of gender. Patriarchy as the new scientific and technological power was a political need of emerging industrial capitalism. While on the one hand the ideology of science sanctioned the denudation of nature, on the other it legitimised the dependency of women and the authority of men. Science and masculinity were associated in domination over nature and femininity, and the ideology of science and gender reinforced each other (p.18).

## **Reductionism**

The western patriarchal epistemological tradition of the scientific revolution is considered reductionist by Shiva because it 'reduced the capacity of humans to know nature both by excluding other knowers and other ways of knowing, and it reduced the capacity of nature to creatively regenerate and renew itself by manipulating it as inert and fragmented matter' (p.22). Shiva's considered opinion is illustrated by the experience of women tried for witchcraft at a time when the scientific revolution was showing great promise for capital accumulation.

The interrogation of witches as a symbol for the interrogation of nature, the courtroom as model for its inquisition, and torture through mechanical devices as a tool for the subjugation of disorder were fundamental to the scientific method as power. For Bacon, as for Harvey, sexual politics helped to structure the nature of the empirical method that would produce a new form of knowledge and a new ideology of objectivity seemingly devoid of cultural and political assumptions (p. 18).

The reductionism of scientists is what is responsible for the rape of forests. Scientific forestry sees forests as merely places where trees are and trees mean wood products and wood products mean money. Scientific forestry does not see or refuses to see that forests are the habitat of a good number of species of life and it is the place where 'non-scientific people,' the natives of the place, produce and reproduce life by cooperating with the forest and the life therein. Commercial loggers backed up by science (consider their power saws, unsuitable species of plants for reforestation, etc.), not indigenous peoples, ravage forests.<sup>21</sup>

## **Desire for Colonies**

By dismissing as unscientific the knowledge about nature outside of western patriarchal science and thereby marginalizing it, monopolization of science is made possible. This is accessed by capitalists who use it mainly for the accumulation of capital on a

global scale. Today the lag in science between the North and the South has become so great that while, for example, America is awash with energy to run millions of factories and energize countless homes, in the Philippines long hours of brownouts are daily occurrences; while American farmers that comprise only 10 percent of the population overproduce so much that to maintain a respectable price for agricultural products the state pays some farmers not to plant while in Somalia where the population is largely agricultural people have nothing to eat.

### **Retrieval of the Feminine Principle**

Psychoanalytic theory in the hands of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan posits the view that all human beings begin as bisexuals. During the oedipal moment entry into consciousness or the symbolic order necessitates the submergence of the unconscious or the imaginary, that state where there exists oneness with the mother and the cosmos.

All human beings are not totally free from the unconscious. It is this unconscious, the moment of oneness with the mother and the cosmos, that French feminist Julia Kristeva has explored in order to uncover what human beings have submerged, the maternal semiotic (1974).<sup>22</sup>

To retrieve the feminine principle is to remember what we have lost. For men, then, the agenda is for them to liberate themselves from Lacan's the Law of the Father by ridding themselves of the 'masculine mystique.' Ariel Kay Salleh does not lose hope that one day men will become the 'gentlemen,' who will throw off the shackles of 'machismo,' the need to compete with each other and the fearful need to control, dominate and 'own' not only each other, but women, children, animals, plants and all of Mother Nature' (Pietilla, 1989:28).

Women themselves have a painful job to do. They must shake off their personalities as men's women or in other words, men's colonies. Being the colonies of men, women are no longer aware of the value and importance of the culture they represent consciously and unconsciously. 'Only after they become aware of their womanhood and of the intrinsic value of being women will

they be able to make their indigenous contribution toward a change in politics and culture.' (*ibid.*:27).

Together, men and women can still save themselves and the earth if they developed their full potential as human beings. But this will not happen, says Ariel Kay Salleh. 'until men are brave enough to rediscover and to love the women inside themselves. And we women, too, have to be allowed to love what we are, if we are to make a better world' (*ibid.*:28).

*Mabuhay ka, Maria Dolores!* (Long may you live, Maria Dolores!)

## ENDNOTES

1. Dr. Jose Rizal's annotation of Dr. Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609) is a critique of the concept of Western 'development.' The natives of the Philippines, according to Morga's text, enjoyed peace and prosperity. They had a civilization of their own: there was a functional government; industries like mining and weaving flourished; trading with neighboring countries existed; literacy was universal; women enjoyed a high status; and there was a high sense of justice and morality amongst the populace. At the turn of the 19th century, what Morga saw no longer existed: the natives of the Philippines had become poor, corrupt and indolent; women were downgraded; literacy level was at a low of 4%; and government was dysfunctional to the governed (Rizal 1889).
2. American motives in 'developing' the Philippines become transparent in what Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana said before the U.S. Senate on January 9, 1900:

The Philippines are ours forever.... And just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets. We will not retreat from either. We will not repudiate our duty in the archipelago. We will not abandon our opportunity in the Orient....

Our largest trade henceforth must be with Asia. The Pacific is our ocean. More and more Europe will manufacture the most it needs, secure from its colonies the most it consumes. Where shall we turn for consumers for our surplus? Geography answers the question. China is our natural customer.... The Philippines give us a base at the door of all the East (Quoted in Jenkins:31).

3. Special trade relations with the United States did not redound to the benefit of the Philippines: free trade enabled the United States to dump its finished products in the colony thus preventing the growth of a native manufacturing sector; the quota system of tariff-free exports like sugar opened Philippine politics to manipulation and created the *comprador* class that acted as a conveyor belt of colonialism, instead of the national bourgeoisie, the logical historical movers for nationalism; free trade enabled Americans to extract parity rights as well as the securing of parts of Philippine territory without rent for American military bases. For more on the subject, see Luzviminda Bartolome Francisco and Jonathan Shepard Fast. *Conspiracy for Empire*. Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1985.
4. Dr. Jose Rizal enunciated this sentiment in his novel, *El Filibusterismo* (1891). A third novel, "Makamasa," which he did not finish concerned itself with the Filipinos' return to their roots — the Orient.
5. For an excellent discussion on how 'poverty' as a construct has created poverty and underdevelopment, see Majid Rahnema, "Poverty." In *The Development Dictionary*. Wolfgang Sachs (ed.). London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1992:158-176.
6. The most common form of usury in contemporary Philippines is called '5-6.' For each P5 borrowed, P6 will have to be returned to the lender on a daily basis.
7. For an excellent discussion on how capitalism has continuously marginalized the work of Southern women, see Maria Mies, Veronika Benholdt-Thomsen and Claudia von Werlhof. *Women: The Last Colony*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1988.
8. This is an excellent *double entendre*. In Filipino the word 'Papa' refers to the Pope and father.
9. The concept of 'identity crisis' has its politics. If a people is told that it has to look for its identity first before anything else, the differential between those who have an identity (colonizers/westerners) and those without (colonized/non-westerners) becomes bigger. While the former moves ahead the latter is forced to backtrack first before it can even make the first step.
10. 'Farmer' as label is very important. How can one become a member of farmers' cooperatives and avail of benefits or become a beneficiary of the government's Comprehensive Land Reform Program if one is not a 'farmer'?



11. The series of coups d'etat staged by a sector of the military purportedly for 'development' purposes (to 'reform Philippine society') during the time of President Corazon Aquino set back the Philippine economy. The signals were clear to foreign as well as domestic investors: why invest in the Philippines where there is political instability?
12. The daily long hours of brownouts (technically blackouts) are taking its toll on the economy. In Metro Manila alone the number of private employees laid off due to power outages has increased from 71,000 last February to 122,000 in May (*The Philippine Star*, June 18, 1993:1, 2). Senator Francisco Tatad, chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy, has proposed to President Fidel Ramos the punishment of those responsible for the outages. The 'crime of the Aquino government,' he said, 'is not less serious than the crimes we have accused the Marcos regime of.... If the government could sequester and confiscate the asset of Marcos and his cronies on unproved charges, it should have no difficulty going after those whose criminal incompetence in the energy sector drove the country back to the stone age.' *Manila Standard* (June 16, 1993):5.
13. The spate of kidnappings and bank hold-ups reported by media to be mostly perpetrated by members or ex-members of the police and the military undoubtedly contribute to the perception that the Philippines is not the place for investment.
14. \$3 billion were reported remitted by overseas workers for 1992. It would seem that the chief export of the Philippines now is its people.
15. The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant was mothballed by the Aquino administration on the ground that it was conceived in sin (Westinghouse got the contract to build it because it paid Marcos a tidy sum of bribe money); sits on a fault and has structural defects. The government filed a case against Westinghouse for bribing Marcos but lost its case in May 1993. This has raised many questions: why did the Aquino government sue in New Jersey and not in Manila? Why did the government lawyers spend around \$40 million when the claim was only for \$26 million? Who made money by not agreeing to a compromise deal offered by Westinghouse that would have favored the Philippines with \$100 million and the use of the facility to solve the energy crisis?
16. Vegetable farmers in the Mountain Province, the salad bowl of the Philippines, have been reported by consumer and environment groups to be using pesticides and fungicides which already have been declared unsafe in the North. Hoechst Phil., a multinational corporation, continues to inform the public that the pesticides and fungicides

it sells to users are safe. Government, on its part, tells consumers that it lacks the necessary funds to monitor all the farmers, but that there is in place an information campaign to dissuade them from using these chemicals indiscriminately.

17. According to a UNDP report air pollution in Metro Manila has reached maximum levels.
18. The Blessed Virgin Mary has been reported since late last year to appear to teenager Judiel Nieva in Agoo, La Union, the hometown of Jose Aspiras, the martial law regime's Minister of Tourism. Today pilgrims, curiosity seekers and tourists flock to Agoo.
19. For basic information on ecofeminism, see Cat Cox. *Ecofeminism*. Highbury Grove, London: Women's Environment Network, 1991.
20. Beauvoir relies heavily on Sartre's existentialist philosophy. In Sartrean existentialism, construction of a subject uses the paradigm of 'two enemy soldiers, each threatening the other's life, each trying to subdue the other' according to Andrea Nye (1989). Nye explains this thus: 'The existence of other consciousnesses is a contingent feature of human existence... When another human being appears before me, or 'surges up,' as Sartre puts it, I am suddenly vulnerable, fearful, threatened. The danger that the other poses for me is expressed in 'the Look.' When another consciousness looks at me, he radically disturbs the ordering of objects in the world around the centre of my consciousness; he represents, as a consciousness, another perspective that I can never grasp. Most threatening of all, he turns me into an object for his gaze, jeopardizing my very being as subject. My only recourse is to attempt to assert my subjectivity, dominate his gaze, and in turn reduce him to an object' (p.80-81).

This paradigm depicting war is not any different from those used by Freud and Lacan: in the construction of subject the feminine and the masculine fight it out to the death of one or the other.

21. Senator Heherson Alvarez who heads the Senate Committee on Environment reacted to my paper thus: 'According to our data, it is not licensed commercial loggers but women who ravage the forests of the Philippines. The former cut down only trees ready for harvesting while women cut down young trees for firewood and charcoal-making.'

I told the senator that it is not the point of my paper to remove the blame of destroying the environment from women. Women do help in the destruction of the environment because they are caught in the web of patriarchy and capitalism. First of all, having been colonized by men, most women have lost the feminine principle: they are mas-

culine men. Secondly, most women in the Philippines have no access to other forms of fuel for cooking the family meals. Where the choice is between cutting a tree for firewood and being cut up by an angry husband, most women would rather choose the former. At any rate, what is most important for women is the retrieval of the feminist principle of caring, nurturing and preserving life, that resides in their authentic selves.

22. For an excellent discussion of psychoanalytic theories on the construction of gender, see Nye, *op. cit.*:115-171.

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