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Phases of Filipino Proletarianism in the 20th Century *Dagling* Tagalog: A Critique Using Pierre Macherey's Theory of Gaps and Silences

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Abstract

Self-image is deeply rooted in one's place in society, as manifested in one's involvement in its facets and realities which are spoken of in literature, and yet it is the "unspoken" or the "unsaid"—the gaps and silences in the texts—that exposes the 'unconscious' of the work where lies a text's repressed historical narrative and discourse. Accordingly, this study was targeted toward the deep understanding of how Filipinos see themselves and each other as Filipinos (self-image and self-identity) during the American colonization in the Philippines in the 20th century, specifically as proletarians, through the examination of the textual gaps and silences in *dagling* Tagalog texts written and published in the early 20th century. Using the post-structuralist Marxist theory of gaps and silences by Pierre Macherey, this paper discusses the subject formation of Filipino characters into the image of a proletarian and the phases of Filipino proletarianism. The results indicate that there are three phases to which Filipino proletarians are subjected: from False Consciousness to Recognition of Oppression, and finally to Revolution or Self-emancipation through carrying the "duty." The study concludes that the texts are propagandist literature, with anti-government, anti-capitalist, and anti-colonial sentiments hiding behind the mask of fiction and satire, emerging through the gaps and silences. Additionally, the portrayal of the Filipino proletariat in the texts is shaped by Marxist ideals of revolution, hence the inclination of the literary production of the texts towards the communist ideology.

Keywords: *dagli*, post-structural Marxism, proletarianism, ideology, Philippine literature

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The Filipino identity was formed concertedly during the triumph of “Americanization” in the first half of the 20th century; it was then that the country experienced the “golden age” for the arts (Mojares, 2006). With this paradox of the growing introspection of the Filipinos against colonial powers, arts may have benefitted those who could afford it— the Filipino elites and the American occupants— but how it influenced the different facets and realities of the Filipino identity, particularly the Filipino proletariat, is still subject to scrutiny. Colonial literature, in contrast to postcolonial literature, has a pristine sense of revelation about how the subjugated see themselves and each other. As a cultural product, one of the roles of literature is to express the transcending hegemonic influences of the ruling class of society, and in this study, to center the self-image of the Filipino as a proletariat, as well as give a glimpse of the proletarian revolutionary politics in *dagling* Tagalog texts written and published in the early 20th century. *Dagling* Tagalog is an intermittent literary form following the prose tradition that emerged in Tagalog and Spanish-Tagalog newspapers in the early 20th century. It was often subject to censorship by the colonial government, being generally branded by its depth, sarcasm, and satire. The dearth of studies on these texts as colonial literature and forerunners in the evolution of short prose also fueled the production of this study.

In the Philippines, “terrorism” is foremost associated with the armed struggle or political wars waged by rebel groups of the New People’s Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist People of the Philippines (CPP). The group is known for its extreme acts of proletarian revolution anchored on Marxist-Leninist communist ideals. Jose Maria Sison, also known as Amado Guerrero, wrote, as one of the groups “Urgent Tasks”, “To carry forward the anti-fascist, anti-feudal and anti-imperialist movement by directing” against the US-Marcos dictatorship (Guerrero, 1980). The proletariat, joined by the Filipino youth, shows their anger through radical activities, marches, and demonstrations while performing protest singing and drama (Hussin, 2006, 1996 & 1995). Recently, in his last State of the Nation Address, former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte expressed his final statement on the support for the CPP-NPA. Throughout his presidency, Duterte’s administration initiated peace talks with the group. However, at the end of his term, he concluded that support for the group “will continue to erode in the next few months” with the help of the enforcers of his “anti-surgency program” (RTVMalacanang, 2021). Twenty-first-century proletarianism is as national a concern as it was in the 20th century. As a literary text emerging in a time when American imperialism flourished, *dagling* Tagalog may well contribute to the body of knowledge as a record of the beginnings of communist ideologies in the country as well as answer the question of whys and hows of proletarian revolution through indicating the phases of Filipino proletarianism.

Silence, as Parry (1996) asserted, “has been read as a many-accented signifier of disempowerment and resistance, of the denial of a subject position and its appropriation” (p. 152). In the study of language in literature, approaching the “unsaid” gaps and silences is key to revealing the repressed historical narratives and discourse of the Filipino proletariat in the early 20th century during the American regime. Echoing Nichols, only through social terms can we define ourselves (cited by Cormack, 1992). Thus, the role of the author is not as the originator of meaning but as the producer of a narrative that is only a strand among the many existing writings. All texts are interpretations and re-interpretations of a language and culture ‘always already written’ (Ralan, 2000).

Accordingly, the theory of the multiplicity of meanings asserts that the words of a literary text are signs (language) that point to a certain reality, which is the reality of meanings in a literary work (Barthes, 1990). This language does not explicitly reveal these realities; instead, the reality is revealed by the ideology embedded in the texts, which makes a complex process out of the literary production. These hidden meanings are what modern critics call the “unconscious” of the work. Jameson (1981) emphasized that focusing on interpretation, that a literary creation cannot be isolated from its political context for a narrative, is a socially symbolic act.

Approaching literary texts using this theory provides profound insights into the literary production of short literary pieces such as the *dagling* Tagalog, especially on its repressed historical narrative and discourse. In Rhodora S. Rananal's dissertation, "Image of Women in the Poetry and Fiction of Tita Ayala-Lacambra" (2000), the researcher intended to uncover the way female experiences are portrayed (by female characters/speakers) in the poetry and fiction of Ayala-Lacambra as well as the ideology that influenced the production the texts using Macherey's theory of textual gaps and silences and Roland Barthes' theory of the roles of author and reader in the text. Similarly, Billy Bin Feng Huang's 2016 dissertation "Say the Unsaid, Repair the Fractures— On the Narrative Ruptures in Edgar Alan Poe's Detective Stories" examines the narrative ruptures (a variety of the Machereyan gaps and silences) of Poe's texts, which are 'what the author could have said'. The study was adapted by Huang in his succeeding dissertation titled "Some Things Must Be Left Unsaid!"— On How Macherey Is Dialogically Engaged with Post-Marxism", which examines how Macherey is dialogically engaged with post-Marxism in formulating his reading strategy. The theory proves to be most significantly fitting of an exhaustive analysis of short prose.

Dagling Tagalog is an original literary form of short prose published in Tagalog newspapers (*diaryong* Tagalog) in the 1900s, used as an expression of romantic love and, principally, of nationalistic, patriotic, and anti-colonial/anti-capitalist sentiments (Tolentino, 2009). Contemporary Tagalog short prose finds its roots in this sporadic literary form (Duque, 2004). One of the main functions of *dagling* Tagalog as short prose during the American period in the Philippines is as a filler in Tagalog newspapers. Abadilla et al. (1954) claimed that the brevity of its texts made it popular as the readers, especially Filipinos, during this period desired to sway from reading lengthy novels without compromising the entertainment and didacticism of reading.

One distinct characteristic of *dagli* is its deliberate fictionalization (Tolentino, 2009). As a subversion due to the vehement censorship in this colonial period in the Philippines, the *dagli* text was written and was to be treated as a fictive work. Nonetheless, its mimetic feature still prevails in its parodic and satirical compositions. On this ground, most of the *dagli* authors who wrote during the American colonial period used a pen name or a pseudonym, such as Tengkeleng, Puso, and Matanglawin. As an editorial intervention (essayistic), *dagli* is discursive in nature as it gathers significant supporting ideas to prove its point, accentuating the role of its author as a social critic. With these characteristics, the *dagling* Tagalog written and published in the early 20th century found its place in Philippine literature as what Abdillah (2023) termed as the 'Story of a Nation'— "a common tale shared by members of a community" (p. 2), which is vital to the formation of a nation and for its people to realize the national consciousness.

While *dagling* Tagalog lost its popularity decades after the colonial wars, it was revived in anthologies and literary collections during contemporary times. *Sakit ng Kalingkingan: 100 Dagli sa Edad ng Krisis* by Rolando Tolentino surfaced in the mainstream in 2005. The following year, *Pagluwas* by Zosimo Quibilan, Jr., and *Taguan-Pung (at Manwal ng mga Napapagal)* by Eros Atalia were published. This paved the way for more literary patrons to come to the fore of Philippine literature, and now in online spaces, encompassing kindred themes with the 20th century *dagling* Tagalog.

The selected *dagling* Tagalog texts, the first of their kind, are living proof of how Filipinos found means to express their sorrows and gratitude upon having been subjugated by their colonizers and capitalist oppressors through literature.

Materials and Methods

The researchers used the collected *dagling* Tagalog texts anthologized in *Ang Dagling Tagalog: 1903-1936* by Rolando B. Tolentino and Aristotle Atienza. All of the texts in this anthology were published in different Tagalog newspapers in the early 20th century in the Philippines, which was then under the American colonial government. The researchers chose seven texts (subjects of the study) from the collection after a thematic reading.

The following are short descriptions of each of the selected texts:

“Ang Lakas ng Pagkakaisa” (*The Power of Unity*) by Francisco Laksamana, published in *Balagtas* on March 17, 1907, tells the story of an impoverished barn worker, Ventura, and his struggle to feed his family of 5. While expecting a raise from the barn owner one day, Ventura and his co-workers end up thwarted by an announcement, which leads them to a cry for unity.

Laksamana, under the pseudonym FiDeL, wrote another *dagli* called “Alipustang Ama” (*Abused Father*), published in *Renacimiento Filipino* on July 14, 1910. The tale is about a maddened worker named Pablo who murders his boss, Don Mariano, and then tries to take his unpaid wage from the dead body after saying goodbye to his lover and her children.

In “Sa Harap ng Hukuman” (*Before the Court*), penned under the pseudonym Palaspas and published in *Muling Pagsilang* on September 28, 1909, Precioso Palma used allegorical names for the main character, Matiisin, and Kayamanan, the protagonist’s homicide victim. The story opens with the trial of this criminal case and ends with the court’s final verdict.

The fourth tale in the selection is Antonio K. Abad’s “Ang Nagagawa ng Pagkakaisa” (*What Unity Can Do*), published in *Muling Pagsilang* on June 8, 1908. This *dagli* details the exchange of opinions between a young man, Andong, and the father of the girl he is courting, Kapitan Pedro, about Filipino workers and the economy of the country.

“Ang Pilipino ay Hindi Hayop” (*Filipinos Are Not Animals*), published in *Muling Pagsilang*, April 27, 1907 and written under the pseudonym Malay, contains a steaming dispute between an unnamed Filipino personnel and a manager who habitually discriminates against Filipino workers. The wrathful tone of this story parallels “Bisig and Salapi” (Labor and Money) (*Muling Pagsilang*, March 20, 1909), which details the conversation between two subtly named characters referred to as “puhunan” (*capital*) and “paggawa” (*work*). In this story, the two argue about their value and power over each other. This power relation motif is also mirrored in the author’s “Alay sa Bayang Manggagawa” (*An Offering to the Working People*) (*Muling Pagsilang*, May 1, 1908). As its title and date of publication suggest, the story is centered on the conflict between Filipino laborers who plead to their employer, here named Don Basilio, to take the day off to celebrate Labor Day and the employer’s tyrannous rejection of their plea.

The researchers identified the proletarian characters after a thematic reading focusing on Marxist overtones. The premise of the identification of the characters as “proletarian” and the basis of “proletarianism” in this study is grounded on Karl Marx’s (1998) classic definition of the proletariat: (1) “modern working class” is identical to the proletariat, (2) proletarians have no other means of support than selling their labor power, (3) the position of the proletarians make them dependent on capital, (4) the defining role of the proletariat is not the servicing of the administrative nor the personal needs of the capitalists but the expansion of capital (5) proletarians trade themselves (labor power) in contrast with petty-bourgeoisie and capitalists (selling products), (6) unlike the enslaved people who can be sold whole and become the property of someone entirely, the proletarians trade

themselves as “piecemeal”, (7) as Marx clarifies, “laborer” refers not only to those who render manual labor but also those who use their mind or pure intellect as capital, and lastly, the proletariat is a class.

The researchers then used Pierre Macherey’s theory of gaps and silences to examine the gaps, silences, absences, omissions, contradictions, incoherencies, and oscillations in the texts. Pierre Macherey (1938), a major philosophical figure of the French deconstructionist/Marxist movement, advocated this reading strategy. His masterwork, *A Theory of Literary Production* (1978), further defended the importance of the ‘unsaid’ in literature. In his theory, Macherey follows the post-structuralist approach in literary criticism in his developed notion called “structuring absence,” fundamentally deconstructive and reconstructive, which explains how elements that are ‘avoided’ can have a major causal effect on a text.

The speech of a literary work or a book emerges from a certain silence, and it is the form that fills this and from which it traces its figure. The book would not exist unless accompanied by necessity by a certain absence because it is not self-sufficient; its knowledge is dependent on this absence (Macherey, 1978). One problem in this evaluative judgment, which is in itself ideological, is the certitude of the found ‘avoidances’ or ‘absences’ upon whether it can be generally agreed. This ‘absence’, relatively termed ‘gaps’, ‘silences’, or ‘contradictions’, is vital to the literary text’s ideological structure. Correspondingly, a ‘structuring absence’ is a vital element in any cultural product and is virtually the *raison d’être* of the text.

Additionally, in Macherey’s (1978) essay, “The Spoken and the Unspoken”, he emphasizes the importance of ‘silences’; what is important in the work is what it does not say (p. 87). This is not the same as the careless notation ‘what it refuses to say’, although that would be interesting: a method might be built on it, with the task of measuring silences, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. However, rather than this, what the work cannot say is important because the elaboration of the utterance is acted out in a sort of journey to silence.

In sum, Macherey supposes that the absence/silence/unsaid is the true essence of a literary text. Thus, any comprehensive reading must originate from examining these ‘gaps’ since it informs the reader and the critic of the prior condition in which the text is created. In light of examining the absence of speech, Macherey goes on to elucidate this ‘prior condition’ by quoting the “insidious questions” from Nietzsche’s *The Dawn of Day* (1881):

Insidious Questions: When we are confronted with any manifestation which someone has permitted us to see, we may ask: What is it meant to conceal? What is it meant to draw our attention from? What prejudice does it seek to raise? And again, how far does the subtlety of the dissimulation go? And in what respect is the man mistaken? (Section 523, p. 313)

These “insidious questions” are the general case of a literary production about the writing process of the writer. For Macherey, these questions expose an inconvenient truth: In the production of the text, the writer positions in the contents only what the writer consents us to see, which somehow shows his or her prejudice on the matter. Meanwhile, the writer also hides something as he or she sporadically feels the need to dissuade us from something (the ‘unsaid’). Macherey (1978) concludes:

Therefore, everything happens as though the accent had been shifted: the work is revealed to itself and others on two different levels: it is made visible and invisible... because attention is diverted from the very thing shown. This is the superposition of utterance and statement...: if the author does not always say what he states, he does not necessarily state what he says (p. 88).

Here, the difference between the “visible” and “invisible” in the text is emphasized. Respectively,

the “visible” pertains to what is said or stated by the author, that is, what is present in the contents of a text. On the other hand, the “invisible”— “the unsaid”, “the absence”, “the silence”, “the margin”, or the “discontinuity” of a text— indicates its actual “decentered-ness” and “incompleteness” (p. 90), as well as its “plurality of voices” and “diversity and multiplicity” (p. 26).

Macherey’s theory of gaps and silences is an appropriate critical tool to exhaust the significant details in brief texts such as the *dagling* Tagalog. The Marxist background of the theory also fits the study’s theme: *proletarianism*. After establishing a new interpretation of how the Filipino characters were portrayed as proletarians based on the gaps and silences found in the texts, the researchers categorized each finding into the three phases of Filipino proletarianism as it was apparent in the reading that the proletariat, as depicted, integrally advances towards proletarian revolution.

Results and Discussion

The selected texts portray the Filipino proletariat in the early 20th century as a community of laborers under the capitalist regime of American colonial rule. As observed in the prevailing class conflict, the capitalistic influences in the politics and socio-economic aspects of the lives of the Filipino proletarian characters are latent in the texts’ discourse. As Constantino (cited in Velasco, 2022) reported, it was during the dawn of the Spanish colonial period when the increasing movement of capitalist development gave birth to the first generation of workers. The findings of this study show a certain design— an ideology— which grounds the development of the characters as proletarian.

From False Consciousness to Revolution: The Filipino as a Proletarian in 20th Century *Dagling* Tagalog in Three Phases

The proletarian in *dagling* Tagalog’s socio-cultural domain is a slave of labor— one that is recognizing or has already recognized the unjust and unlawful treatment of those who own the means of production. However, until the treatment worsens, the proletarian continues to work under the worst circumstances, clutching the hope for a wage that is appallingly discrepant with the pains of their labors, thinking that less is better than none. Hence, the researchers’ finding is that there are three phases of proletarianism depicted in the texts.

First Phase: False Consciousness

The Filipino proletarian is portrayed as an enduring laborer who is, at first, revealed in the submerged meanings of the texts, living with a false hope (false consciousness) that “winning” in life means being able to do hard labor despite the dreadful conditions in the workplace. Having been ideologically taught that “labor is life”, the proletarian can only attain humanistic fulfilments outside work. According to Engels (1983), false consciousness is a state of mind in which an individual’s “real motive impelling him remains unknown to him”. This consciousness is part of the capitalist ideological process, which aims to maintain the status quo of the ruling class and its economic-political subordinates, the working class (proletarian). While this false consciousness serves the bourgeois, it endangers the proletariats’ welfare and affects aspects of their life.

In “Ang Lakas ng Pagkakaisa” (*The Power of Unity*), the gap between the feelings and the actions of the workers entails the suppression of the workers’ exhaustion over a 10-hour worth of labor with only less than half an hour of break for both meal and rest. The story opens with an elaborate image of warehouse workers dampened by their sweat, stepping on burning stones and sand as they carry heavy logs on their shoulders under the scorching, moving back and forth the warehouse. During this backbreaking task, none of them waver. None of the laborers speak of fatigue. None utter a single complaint. There is only exaltation among them. For every heat and pain that strikes them, they strike back with cheerful yelling and even harder work. The more discomfort they feel, the more vigorous they work, for this discomfort symbolizes hope.

Silang lahat ay maliliiksi, lahat ay magagaang katawan at ang pagpapasan ng mabibigat na kahon ay itinatakbo't madalas pang sabayan ng paghihiyawan, noong pagsasayang wari'y pangalis ng pagod at pangpalubay sa matitinding bigat, o kaya'y pagpapasalamat ng malaki dahil sa igti ng pagwawaging natatamo sa harap ng gayong pakikibaka sa kabuhayan (p. 96).

[TRANSLATION]

They all are agile, all have light bodies, and carrying heavy boxes is done with a run and often accompanied by shouts as if it were a way to dispel fatigue and endure intense weights, or perhaps a great gratitude for the victory achieved in the face of such a struggle for livelihood.

Despite the horrible conditions in the workplace and the lack of consideration from the owners, the workers endure to finish as much work as possible through rejoicing with one another. What drives the celebratory expression among the workers, through laughing and yelling, is the gratitude they feel for their “pagwawaging natatamo” (victory gained or winning) through their labors. The use of the word “pagwawagi” (from the root word “wagi” which means victory) in the face of unjust, hard labor despite the insertion that “kapos man at di nakakatumbas ng pagod at pawis ang sa kanila’y binabayad” (even if what they are paid is meager and does not equal their fatigue and effort) (p. 96) is contradictory to what it actually means for the workers. “Victory” and “win” are terms used to imply a positive outcome after overcoming a difficulty. If winning means they gain however much their efforts deserve, then it is a contradiction in the case of the proletarians in this tale. The only triumph they gain is hope, which also fails them at the end of the day. In the conflict of using the word “pagwawagi” in the context of labor lies the truth that the proletarians become slaves of labor because they are slaves of false hope. They believe they win against exhaustion by doing hard labor, which is, ironically, a losing game for them. They exhaust themselves of unjust volume of vitality only to gain compensation that can barely feed themselves and their families. This situation exemplifies what Marx implied as the “alienation” of one’s labor. The farmers in the tale “Ang Lakas ng Pagkakaisa” (*The Power of Unity*) put their labor-power into action only to sell it to the capitalist. Marx (2009) posits that the worker “does not count the labor itself as a part of his life; it is rather a sacrifice of his life,” which he further argues to be the contrary of life because, for the laborer, life begins when the activity of labor ceases (p. 6).

In the narrative of “Alay sa Bayang Manggagawa” (*An Offering to the Working People*), the laborers plead to their employer to take a day off to celebrate Labor Day on the first Saturday of May despite their employer’s prior rejection of such an idea and the consequence of not getting a single penny for a day:

“Tunay nga po,” ang sagot ng isang manggagawang nagngangalang Juan, “na kundi kami kikilos ay walang mangyayari pagkat ang nakakahalintulad naming ay iyang mga manok na kundi kumahig ay wala namang tutukain, datapwa ugali na pong sinusunod ng mga gaya naming manggagawa na ipangilin ang unang Sabado ng Mayo.”

[TRANSLATION]

“Indeed,” replied a laborer named Juan, “it is true that if we do not act, nothing will happen because we are similar to chickens that, if they don’t scratch, will find nothing to eat. However, the custom followed by workers like us is to set aside the first Saturday of May.”

“Siya nga naman po, Don Basilio, payagan na nga naman ninyong kami ay magpahingalay bukas; ang unang Sabado po ng Mayo ay totoong dakila sa manggagawa, pagkat sa pakahulugan namin ay iyan ang araw ng aming Katubusan” (p. 107).

“Yes, indeed, Don Basilio, please allow us to rest tomorrow. The first Saturday of May is truly significant for the laborers, for in our interpretation, that is the day of our Redemption.”

The unspoken aspect of this dialogue sheds light on the mentality of the proletariat. The word “katubusan” generally translates to “redemption” or “salvation”. What is then redeemed or salvaged in this celebration of labor by the laborers? What is lost that is redeemed? The laborers are willing to sacrifice a day’s salary, which is essential for them and their families to live, for short-lived happiness

driven by unity and harmony among themselves. This disparity for a celebration of their labors implicitly indicates their desire to be acknowledged as citizens and individuals in their society. For them, what is lost that must be redeemed upon the celebration of Labor Day is freedom—for even just a day. This unspoken aspect of the story paints an image of the proletariat, body chained with and by labor, who can salvage themselves from such slavery only during this day (Labor Day) of celebration.

Given their lack of personal means of production, the proletarians have only their labor to offer to sustain their basic needs and provide for their families. Hard labor is an essential requirement to gain the minimum wage, barely sufficient to build a healthy family. In “Alipustang Ama” (*Abused Father*), this condition is illustrated.

Siya’y si Pablo.

Isang bayaning kawal ng paggawa, isang dukhang di maaaring mabuhay, at di nabuhay, ni lumaki, ni tumanda, at hindi nakapag-asawa, ni nagkaanak, kundi sa walang puknat na pagbabanat ng buto, sa walang tilang pagpapatulo nang kanyang pawis (p. 114).

[TRANSLATION]

He is Pablo.

A hero of labor, a poor man who could neither live nor die, neither grow old nor marry nor have children, except through ceaseless toil, through the unending trickle of his sweat.

This parade of negations furtively emphasizes the idea that there is literally no life for the proletarians without suffering through hard labor and that life will never be easy for them from womb to tomb, no right to enjoy their basic human right to love and be loved unless they constantly work laboriously. These negations highlight the idea that the permanence of slavery through labor does not end in one worker’s death but continues towards the next generation. The protagonist, expressing his loathing towards slavery, reminisces about his past experience under a tyrannical master. Pablo’s former employer, Kabesang Ariston, hired him and his wife for them to pay off their debts to the wealthy couple. With the hope that they would eventually settle their debts by becoming servants to the wealthy family, they served for 10 years. Through these years, his wife was not paid a single penny, while Pablo worked for Kabesang Ariston in his house and farm. Absurdly, their labors only increased their debt.

Api-apihan ako at ikaw ay alipustang gayon na lamang; ang lahat ng ito’y hindi nagiging pangbawas sa utang, kundi may banta pa ang asawa ni Kabesang Ariston, sa pati ang malakilaki nating anak ay gawing busabos. Nalalaman mong ang ating kahirapan ay sinamantala ng naging kasama, ipinagagawa sa akin ang lahat, pati pagkukumpuni sa kanyang bahay, at sa munting pagkukulang sa bukid, sa pagsasaka o sa pagtatanim ng tubo ay minumura pati aking kanunu-nunuan. Ganito rin ang ginagawa sa iyo ng asawa ni Kabesang Ariston, sa kanilang bahay ay ikaw ang sa lahat ng gawain, ngunit hindi ka inuupahan, maliban sa matatalim na tungyaw ng babaeng yaong sakdal sa taras (p. 117).

[TRANSLATION]

I am being oppressed, and you are insulted in such a manner. All of this does not reduce our debt but poses a threat even to Kabesang Ariston’s wife, who might reduce our grown child to servitude. You know that our poverty has been taken advantage of by our companions. They make me do everything, even repairs to their house, and for the minor shortcomings in the field, in farming or planting sugarcane, they curse even my ancestors. The same is done to you by Kabesang Ariston’s wife; in their house, you do all the work, but you are not paid, except for the sharp words of that woman who is utterly shameless.

In essence, there is ostensibly no escaping from slavery for the couple, and looming is the possibility of their children becoming one of them. They are left with no choice but to continue to work with false hopes.

On the other hand, in “Ang Pilipino Ay Hindi Hayop” (*Filipinos Are Not Animals*), to hear that his kin (native Filipinos, or so-called “Indios” then) are compared to an animal is what finally pushes

the main character to respond with violence.

Nagdilim ang mga mata ng pinagsabihan sa gayong mga mahahayop na pananalita kaya't sinambilat ang dingsulang kaharap at inihagos sa nangungayaw.

"Ayan ang iyo," ang nangangatal na sinabi ng personero, "hayop nga ang mga Pilipino kapag itinulad sa hayop, sa iyong kasamaan narapat ngayon ikaw ay mamatay!" (p. 188).

[TRANSLATION]

The eyes of those who uttered such vile words darkened, so the whip was raised and lashed against the offender.

"There you go," said the trembling overseer, "Filipinos are indeed like animals when compared to animals. For your wickedness, it is fitting that you die now!"

Here, it is apparent that the main character accepts the judgment of his employer—that Filipinos are like animals, like a carabao sitting inside a pen. However, this is contradicted by his statement after confessing the "murder" to the authorities (police).

"At bakit niya niyurakan ang dangal ng Pilipino? Bakit at pulos na kalaswaan na lamang ang kanyang iniukol sa aking lahi? Oh! Ang Pilipino ay hindi hayop, gaya ng kanyang patunay" (p. 188).

[TRANSLATION]

"Why did he trample upon the honor of the Filipino? Why is all he dedicates to my race pure depravity? Oh! The Filipino is not an animal, as his evidence shows."

Underlying this contradiction is the main character's true judgment of his kin, the native Filipinos. In the face of his abuser, the character is accepting of his "fate" despite his choice to respond violently. Also, the unheard-of response from the other workers is a palpable sign that the majority is tolerant of their employer's treatment. Still, they obediently respond to elitist and classist calls such as *uno*, *muchacho*, and boy and impolite approaches such as pointing fingers like how one may call a pet. In a word, they allow themselves to be subject to the power of the bourgeois.

Equally important to point out, in the tale "Sa Harap ng Hukuman" (*Before the Court*), the image of the proletarian as an enduring slave of labor hides behind the main character's name "Matiisin". The Tagalog word "*matiisin*" roughly translates to "patient" and "long-suffering" in English, an implication of false consciousness within the character. The story begins and ends in the court trial for the murder of Kayamanan, whom Matiisin has killed. Furthermore, the trial commences with the judge's questioning:

"Tunay nga bang pinatay mo si Kayamanan?"

"Opo."

"At sa anong kadahilanan?"

"Sapagkat lagi po niyang ginagaya ang aking lakas, at sa pagkatapos ay ako pa ang masama at laging inaapi" (p. 224).

[TRANSLATION]

"Did you really kill Wealth?"

"Yes."

"And for what reason?"

"Because he always mocked my strength, and afterward, I was the one who was portrayed as the villain and constantly oppressed."

The contradiction between the character's name and the character's deed indicates how severe the cruelty of labor one has experienced, and even the epitome of patience resorts to violence. Matiisin, a representation of the proletarian's long-suffering labor under the spiteful bourgeois, who is guised in the tale as Kayamanan, is led by despair and acted on it despite the foreseeable consequences.

In "Ang Nagagawa ng Pagkakaisa" (*What Unity Can Do*), the workers are generalized as ignorant and helpless without the laboring demands of the owners of the means of production. Insisting on the importance of foreign business owners in their town, Kapitang Pedro argues:

“Aba, bata ka pa nga, Andong!” ang naiputol agad ni Kapitang Pedro. “Kung walang puhunang dayo rito sa ating bayan, saan makakikita ng trabaho ang ating mga manggagawa? Di namatay na lahat ng gutom ang mga mangmang dito sa atin” (p. 202).

[TRANSLATION]

“Stop it, you’re still a child, Andong!” Captain Pedro immediately interrupted. “If there are no foreign visitors coming to our town, where will our workers find jobs? All the ignorant here would die of hunger.”

This question is indicative of his belief that Filipino workers are “ignorant” and can only feed themselves if they serve foreign visitors. Additionally, the word “mangmang” or ignorant is used here as a contrasting to people who have formal education and is an implication of discrimination. The word “ignorant”, in this context, is used to describe the people from the working class who do not have the privilege to get a university education yet have laboring skills.

In capitalism, the bourgeoisie imposes its superiority in a manner that the proletariat naturally accepts because, according to the political system, “that is just how things are”. That is, since, in the first place, the bourgeoisie’s superiority— whether they are Americans, Filipino elites, or other foreign nationalities— has been imposed by the state by prioritizing their economic and political endeavors. Through this casual imposition of superiority, the ideological process culminates in its next phase: false consciousness or the proletariat’s willful participation in their own oppression. Their state of mind compels them to overlook the injustice of their social situation. This concept was echoed by Marx (2010) in the preface of his 1859 pamphlet “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”: “The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness” (p. 2).

By placing a low value on human labor as opposed to the value of production, which largely profits the owners of the means of production, the bourgeois reproduces the relations of the modes of production, thus maintaining the status quo, compromising the rights of the laborers towards just compensation and working conditions in the process. This social formation, therefore, is sustained, putting the working class at the mercy of those who pay them for their labor.

Second Phase: Recognition of Oppression

After recognizing their unestablished human rights as workers, the enduring proletarians attempt to confront their employers. In *dagling* Tagalog, the proletariat never fails to ascend from oppression to revolt after the inevitable rejection of their plea. This revolt is then empowered in unity; only through unity can they revolt. This individual awareness is crucial to materializing a revolution, as fire starts with a spark. In “Alay sa Bayang Manggagawa”, this awareness is shown.

“Karahanan po kayo Don Basilio, pagka’t kayo’y nagkakamali; kung doon po ay ginagamit na ang karahasan ay upang ipakilala ang mga matwid na nilalabag at dinudusta ng mga mapangduhagi. Dito nga po lamang sa Pilipinas nangyayari ang pagyuyukod ng ulo sa mga diyus-diyosan, datapwa pagdating ng araw ay aywan ko”, ang hindi na natapos pang pagsasalita ni Kulas (p. 108).”

[TRANSLATION]

“You’re mistaken, Don Basilio, for in that place, violence is used to enforce what is just and to resist the oppressors. It is only here in the Philippines that we bow our heads to false gods, but one day, I don’t know when,” Kulas spoke, his words left unfinished.

After Don Basilio likens the Filipinos’ “violent” festivities to that of Europe, Kulas, his worker, counters his analogy by contrasting the use of violence in the two racial domains. According to the worker, in Europe, violence is used to straighten up those who oppress and bring justice to the

oppressed, while only in the Philippines can one witness how the oppressed fear and respect their oppressors like gods. The restrained dialogue indicates how the latter is applied to Filipino workers. The message, not explicitly spoken yet silently delivered here, is Kulas' awareness that Don Basilio is one of those oppressors and that, upon recognizing their oppression, their maltreatment must be paid with aggression by the oppressed.

"Bisig at Salapi" (*Labor and Money*) is an allegorical *dagling* Tagalog that tackles the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeois. The allegorical characters "paggawa" and "puhunan" (both represented using common nouns) symbolize the laborers and the capitalists, respectively. The entire narrative is driven by a dialogue between the two, which exposition is the resignation of "paggawa" from work.

At nagkapanubukan ng lakas. Hindi masabi kung sino sa dalawa ang susuko. Ang paggawa ay walang kibo. Siya ay umaklas, pagka't hinihiling ng kanyang dangal. Ang katwirang dinuduhagi ay dapat ipagsanggalang, kinakailangang ipagtanggol ng di lusakin sa habang panahon (p.110)

[TRANSLATION]

And they tested their strength. It couldn't be said which of the two would give up. Paggawa is without movement. He resisted because his honor demanded it. The right that is violated must be defended, and it should be safeguarded perpetually.

The confrontation between the two allegorical characters is heated by the contradiction of their appeals. "Paggawa" stops working after being denied of a just compensation while "puhunan" (symbolical of capitalism or the bourgeois) claims that it does not need the labor of "paggawa", boasting its wealth. Both claim that without itself, the other cannot prosper and deny the opposing claim of the other. The word "susuko" (give up) implies that if one of the two gives up on its claim, it loses its dignity to the other.

In the middle of the conflict between the two characters in "Bisig at Salapi" (*Labor and Money*), "paggawa" declares:

"Marangal ang mamatay kung dahil sa dakilang layon, kaysa mabuhay na lagi na lamang hinahagkan ang tanikala ng pagkaalipin. Mataas na ang araw at ang pagyuyurak ng ulo ay nagagawa lamang noong panahon ng kamulalaan" (p.111).

[TRANSLATION]

"It is honorable to die for a noble cause than to live perpetually under the chains of oppression. The sun is already high, and the bowing of heads only happened during times of utter disgrace."

Here, "paggawa" expresses its desire to die for a noble cause rather than live embracing the chains of slavery. Unspoken here is the "dakilang layon" (*noble cause*), which roughly translates to "aim" or "purpose". What, then, is the aim of "paggawa," which can be taken from the context of labor? The second line provides an answer. "Paggawa" delivers its message of premeditated revolt by a metaphor. "Mataas na ang araw" (directly translates to "the sun is already high"; in Tagalog, this is an idiomatic expression for "it is already late" or "it is about time") connotes the emergence of a new consciousness among the oppressed— the proletarians must fight against the bourgeois' abuse of their labor. The urgency of revolution has entered the consciousness of the proletariat. The finality of the conflict is expressed as "paggawa" screams at "puhunan": "Kami'y nangangagutom!" (*We are starving!*) (p. 112).

The questioning of one's experienced latent oppression as a laborer is also portrayed in "Ang Pilipino Ay Hindi Hayop" (*Filipinos Are Not Animals*). The main character, a worker, begins to feel offended by the condescending treatment of his employer and questions the appropriateness of this treatment.

“Kay saklap nga naman ng makitunggali sa pamumuhay, lalung-lalo na kung gaya nitong niyuyurakan at nililigis ng puhunan at binabata ang lahat na ng mga pag-ayop at pagdusta sa halaga lamang na sampu o labinlimang piso. Kay hirap nga naman ng mabuhay rito sa ibabaw ng lupa, babatakin at titiisin ang lahat may mapakain lamang sa mga anak at asawa huwag lamang mangamatay sa gutom, datapwa katwiran kaya na alipustain pati pa dangal ng isang tao? Ito ang di mawawaan” (p. 187).

Underlying the question posed in this monologue results from the dichotomy between the proletarian and the bourgeois, who can be assumed to be a foreigner or a Filipino hybrid in this text. Equally important to emphasize in this consideration is the displacement of the native workers from their own country as they are subjugated by settling foreign traders. This displacement is an unspoken aspect of the story and indicates the capitalism that rules over the Filipinos in this social milieu.

The oppression that one experiences in slavery through labor is dealt with in the same fashion in the allegorical tale “Sa Harap ng Hukuman” (*Before the Court*). The allegorical character, Matiisin (literally means “patient” or “long-suffering”), who represents the oppressed proletariat, asks the court to sentence the character to death:

“Sa bagay na ito mahal na hukom, ako’y makapagbibigay ng isang halimbawa. Ang isang may salapi po ba na akyatin ng isang magnanakaw, at sa panananggal na ginawa ng ibig pagnakawan ay napatay ang tulisang iyan, ay nalalapatan po ba ng dusang kamatayan? Sa wari ko po’y hindi, sa kadahilanang ang pagkakapatay ay nasa matwid na ipagtanggol ang kanyang buhay na masasawi at sa kayamanang ibig agawin” (p. 225).

This silent questioning of the higher authority’s ability to set aside its bias toward the bourgeoisie using such an analogy indicates two things: (1) The proletarian recognizes the inequality of rights between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the society, and (2) The government has little to no power to eradicate this inequality, given its bias towards the bourgeoisie. In essence, the proletarians cannot guarantee help from anyone of authoritarian power and only have themselves through their fight for justice. The revolution commences as the proletarians unite.

Third Phase: Revolution or Self-emancipation through Carrying the “Duty”

In “Alay sa Bayang Manggagawa”, the concept of “duty” in the context of proletarian revolt is portrayed with vagueness. Witnessing the crumbling of the warehouse (through fire) of Don Basilio, the tyrannical bourgeois in the story, a supporting character comments on the cause of such arson, as evident in the following text:

“Sa ikapagtagumpay ng alin mang layon, sa ikabibihis ng katauhang dinudusta at sa pagwawagi ng Katwiran laban sa Lakas, kailangan ng dugo, kailangan ang buhay, kailangan ang luha, ang apoy na panunog” (p. 110).

The use of violence in defeating Lakas (directly translates to “power”, representing the bourgeois) is, as implied in the text, imperative. One omitted aspect in the story is why violence is needed in the

[TRANSLATION]

“How bitter it is to contend with life, especially when it crushes and exploits everything, subjecting all forms of dissent and indignity for the sake of a mere 10 or 15 pesos. Living on this Earth is already difficult enough, enduring and tolerating everything just to provide for one’s children and spouse, trying not to die of hunger. But can one’s dignity and honor be stripped away as well? That’s something that should never be taken away.”

[TRANSLATION]

In this matter, esteemed judge, I can provide an example. Is a person with money who is climbed by a thief, and in the act of self-defense against the attempted robbery, that thief is killed, subject to the penalty of death? In my opinion, no, because the killing is in the righteous defense of one’s life that is at risk and against the wealth one intends to steal.

[TRANSLATION]

“For the success of any goal, for the dignity of a scorned person, and for the triumph of Justice against Power, blood is needed, life is needed, tears are needed, the burning fire is needed.”

proletarian revolt. This can be answered by analyzing the function of the story's title. In the inexplicit elaboration of the function of the word "Alay", as part of the title, is a throbbing silence that discusses the very meaning of the narrative. "Alay", considering the context upon which the story was written, can be translated to two closely interrelated concepts: sacrifice and benefaction. First, the burning of Don Basilio's property (by arson) is a symbol of benefaction. Whom the proletarians are offering to is in the title: "Alay sa Bayang Manggagawa"— to all the workers. There is no way for the workers to receive the compensation they deserve after pleading with Don Basilio. Also, resignation from work will only aggravate them and will not give them satisfaction at the least. The due credit can only be paid, not materialistically, but a sense of justice. Yet, to obtain this, their only power over the powerful is joint physical strength, which is only through violence and extreme use. Moreover, this sense of justice is their benefaction to those who suffer with them under the slavery of labor—the proletariat.

The narrative "Ang Lakas ng Pagkakaisa" (*The Power of Unity*) also has an ambiguous resolution, which leaves the question of how the workers carry out their "duty" as laborers together.

Sapagkat naturuan siya [Ventura] ng karalitaan din at ng kasagwaan ng puhunan, kung ano at kung paano ang pagtupad sa katungkulan ng isang manggagawa (p. 100).

[TRANSLATION]

Because he [Ventura] was also taught about poverty and the value of capital, what and how fulfilling the duties of a laborer entails.

After receiving the disheartening news that their employer will not increase their wage, the workers have come to a consensus which outcome is omitted from the story.

"Magsabi", anya, "ang sino mang nakakaalam sa inyo, kung ano ang mabuti at katungkulan nating gawin!"

[TRANSLATION]

"Let anyone among you who knows," he said, "what is good and our duty, speak!"

At nang wala ring umiimik ay nagpatuloy ang nagsalita.

And when no one spoke, the speaker continued.

"Sa ganang akin", anya, "ay isa lamang matibay na bigkis ang kailangan: magpisan-pisan tayo, magpulong at mag-usap-usap; sa mapagkasunduang magaling ay magkaisa-isa tayo ng loob, isa ma'y walang titiwalag sukdang mamatay. Manumpa tayo."

"For me," he said, "only one strong bond is needed: let us come together, meet and talk; in the agreed consensus, let us unite our hearts, none will withdraw even unto death. Let us swear."

"Sang-ayon kaming lahat! Isinusumpa naming!" ang no'oy nagkasabay-sabay at malakas na isinagot ng lahat.

"We all agree! We swear!" they all responded simultaneously and loudly.

At ng dugtong ng unang namungkahi: "Mabuhay ang Pagkakaisa ng mga Manggagawa" (pp. 99-100).

And the continuation of the first proposal: "Long live the Unity of Workers."

The ambiguity of the resolution in this narrative calls out the reader. This cliffhanger determines which of the two classes the readers identify. Do the readers identify with the proletariat or the bourgeoisie? If the readers identify with the latter, their reaction will be like that of the bourgeois in the story— "ikinagulumihan ng may salapi" (*confused the rich*) (p. 100)— baffled.

In "Bisig at Salapi" (*Labor and Money*), the character "paggawa" (proletarian) plans to revolt against "puhunan" (capitalist) as its noble cause is realized. However, suffering is inevitable, for in the revolution of the oppressed, sacrifices must be made.

Magkakapanunggaban na sana kundi isang malakas na hagulhol at isang matinding tili ang siyang naulinigan.

“Kami’y nangagugutom!”

Ang ganitong sigaw ay ikinayanig ng sanlibutan pagkat di umano ay taghoy ng mga nahihirap, daing at himutok ng bayang maralita, sigaw ng asa-asawa’t mga anak ng mga anak-pawis na walang mapasukan (p. 112).

Unspoken in this resolution are the ill consequences that await the proletariat who attempts to revolt. The capitalists lost nothing at the beginning of the revolt imposed against them, for there were still tons of workers desperate to be employed by them. As a result, they still prosper, for they still have the means of production. As for the proletarians, the beginning of the revolution entails hunger, even to the point of death. Their lack of occupancy deprives them of shelter and food.

The aftermath of the carrying of the “duty” is faced differently by the characters in the texts; some are eager to carry it toward the eradication of the bourgeoisie and its oppressive system of production, while others are doubtful as the task risks the welfare and safety of their loved ones.

After being declared guilty of murder and sentenced to death, Matiisin rises to exclaim their sentiments in “Sa Harap ng Hukuman” (*Before the Court*):

“Ang nagwagi rin ay kadiliman. Oh, samantalahin ninyo sa kadahilanang napapanahon ang inyong lakas! Ngunit, huwag kayong manatili sa pagmamataas na iyan at baka maging maalingasngas ang lagapak ninyo, at kung dumating ang araw ng pagtutuos ay pawa ninyong pagagutan ang lahat ng inyong masamang ginawa, at sa paghahari ng isang lubos na pagdadamayang at pagkatutong gumanap sa mga tungkulin ng mga kapatid ko sa karalitaan, ay siyang pagsapit ng araw nang pagkakatantay-pantay, walang mayaman at walang dukha” (p. 226).

Through this fit of violent anger, Matiisin silently calls out fellow proletarians to revolt against the oppression of those who use their power to gain profit. The threatening tone in Matiisin’s sentiment reeks of hope that the time will come when the proletariat will become equal with the bourgeoisie.

“Alipustang Ama” (*Abused Father*) depicts a different attitude towards carrying this duty. While Pablo reminisces his past experience of abuse and slavery through labor, he recounts his first murder (of his master for ten years before Don Matias) to his wife.

Nalalaman mo ring dahil sa ang pagpapakalabis ng ating kasama’y sumagwa nang totoo ay hindi na ako nakatiis at isang araw ay inutangan ko rin ng buhay si [Kabesang] Ariston, at tayo’y umalis, nakibalita at dito sa siyudad na umano’y mapilak at maginhawa tayo nakarating (p.117).

[TRANSLATION]

It would have been a peaceful gathering if not for a loud wail and an intense scream that echoed.

“We are hungry!”

Such a cry reverberated throughout the area, as it was supposedly the lament of the impoverished, the plea and lament of the poor town, the cry of the husbands and children of the peasants who had no means of livelihood.

[TRANSLATION]

“The darkness has also triumphed. Oh, seize the opportunity while your strength is timely! But do not linger in that arrogance, for your downfall may become deafening, and when the day of reckoning comes, you will have to answer for all your wrongdoings, and in the reign of complete solidarity and understanding of your duty to my brethren in poverty, that will be the day of equality, with no rich and no poor.”

[TRANSLATION]

“You also know that because our comrade’s excesses became too much to bear, I couldn’t endure it any longer. One day, I borrowed life from [Kabesang] Ariston, and we left, heard news, and here in the city that was said to be prosperous and comfortable, we arrived.”

Pablo's confession reveals that the reason why he murdered his previous master is because of the maltreatment that he experienced. His conviction also strengthens this justification that he no longer wants to become a slave of labor.

"Hindi lamang ito, kung ang kaayawan kong sa habang panahoy tawaging alipin at maging alimurang busabos pati ng mga anak ta kung magsilalaki" (p. 117).

[TRANSLATION]

"Not only that, but what I detest is to be called a slave and even the lowliest of beggars by my own children if they ever grow up."

The murders that Pablo committed are emblematic of his revolt against the tyranny of labor. However, what comes next after his victory against slavery? Before fleeing from the authority, Pablo advises his wife and children:

"Kaya narito ang huling bilin ko sa iyo at sa ating mga anak. Paglaki-laki nila'y turuan mong maghanapbuhay ng di sa pamamanginoon sa ibang tao. Umuwi kayo sa Taluray at doon sa atin ay kumita ng isang payapang lugal na walang makikialam sa inyo. Magtanim kayo ng halaman, at sa pangasiwaan ang sariling buhay ng di sa pamamagitan ng iba, upang ang pagkaalipusta'y huwag mamulatan ng iyong mga anak. Ako'y nagsawa sa kaalipnan, kayo at sila'y matuto namang umiwas sa ganyang palad. Ako'y aalis. Patutungo ako kahit saang lupa, kahit saan hindi ko na ikatatagpo ng saliwang kapalaran" (p. 118).

[TRANSLATION]

"So here is my final advice to you and our children. As they grow up, teach them to make a living without being subservient to others. Return to Taluray and find a peaceful place where no one will interfere with you. Plant crops and manage your own lives without depending on others, so that the cycle of oppression won't befall your children. I have grown weary of servitude; may you and they learn to avoid such a fate. I will leave. I will go wherever the land takes me, wherever destiny doesn't lead me astray."

What is unspoken in this act of aggression is Pablo's *hubris* (pride) and *hamartia* (fatal downfall) as the hero of the story, possibly a subtle homage to the tragic hero of Greek drama. His excessive pride has turned him into a criminal who does not only risk his own life but also the lives of his wife and children, who are helpless without him. Here, questions are posed— is violence an essential element for the kind of justice that Pablo thinks he needs? Does the death of his oppressors help him in any way? This can be answered by analyzing the long-term and short-term effects of his acts.

In his first murder, Pablo is only triggered to kill when his master, for ten long years, voices out his want to have Pablo's children as servants like their parents. As for his second, it is because of Don Matias' threat to "kill" Pablo's wife and children. Therefore, he sacrifices himself for his family. He only ever wants for them to survive, and by surviving, he means to become free from slavery, which, for a servant like him in the economy that he is trapped in, is inescapable. He believes that the only way to divert his children's path away from labor slavery is to stop them from becoming a servant like him. In line with this thought, Marx (1867) posits that the seller of labor-power (Pablo) is subject to perpetuate himself as a laborer through procreation as "his appearance in the market is to be continuous", which means treating the children as the laborer's life-long substitutes (p. 121). Don Matias' character fits Marx's description of a capitalist, the buyer of labor-power or the owner of the means of production. To maintain the status quo (perpetuation of labor), the capitalist reduces the labor-power rendered into wage needed for subsistence. With this subsistent wage and status quo, the only alternative for the laborer is death through starvation.

Conclusion

The early 20th century *dagling* Tagalog is a social critique masquerading as fictional, narrative prose. As an intermittent literary form, deep-seated in its stories are nationalistic, anti-imperialistic, and anti-capitalistic sentiments, which were then subject to censorship due to the political threat it entailed towards the American colonial administration. The researchers chose to study its gaps and

silences and eventually uncovered Filipino proletarianism and its phases during the 20th century Philippines as reflected in the chosen texts considered as cultural products of the time. Equally important to note is the unearthing of the “why” and “how” of the Filipino proletarian revolution. Through examining the texts, the researchers exhausted the reasons behind the extremity of carrying the “duty” among the Filipino proletariat now and then.

The study also concludes that Filipino proletarianism, as portrayed in *dagling* Tagalog texts written and published during the American regime, indeed has a pattern; hence, the three phases indicated. These three phases show how Filipino proletarianism tends to lean towards the communist ideology.

Centuries of oppression formed the self-image that the Filipinos have now. The political, economic, and social struggles that constitute this oppression are chronicled in every epochal period of Philippine history, hence the vital role of the literature of the past to one’s present and future.

People can only define themselves through social terms; therefore, they must be critical of the ideology that governs their society. This way, they can snap out of their oppressive false consciousness or ideology and realize their humanistic rights as individuals. Accordingly, the importance of the early 20th century *dagling* Tagalog lies in its social critique of the economic, political, and social struggles of the Filipino in its period of emergence, which are still prevalent in the present Philippine society. All of these are tied to the history of the nation, and *dagling* Tagalog, therefore, is a ‘story of a nation’.

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