Article

Praxis in the Global South: The Worldliness of Literature and Theory

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Abstract: There is a proliferation of works on the Global South and decoloniality in contemporary scholarship, signaling an extension of Third World and postcolonial studies. What theoretical investments are at stake in the choice of terminology deployed in the study of colonial history, identity and nation formation, and globalization? In parsing these conceptual categories, the paper makes a case for Caroline S. Hau's *Necessary Fictions: Philippine Literature and the Nation: 1946-1980* and Neferti Xina M. Tadiar's *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization* as Philippine interventions in this burgeoning field. These critical works advance what Boaventura de Sousa Santos asserts is the Global South's rejoinder to Marx's eleventh thesis: "we must change the world while constantly reinterpreting it" (2018, viii). Hau's examination of the creative function of literature, both as artform and poiêsis, and Tadiar's inquiry into the supplementarity of literature as representation in imagining alternatives to the political generate a decolonial praxis in the Global South. The topoi of "excess" in Hau and "experience" in Tadiar serve as bases for the worldliness of literature, enabling the translation of theory into practice that is the persistent challenge to theory as critical-creative work.

Keywords: Global South, postcolonialism, decoloniality, worldliness, critical creativity/creative criticality

I. The Unfinished Work of Theory: From Postcolonialism to Decoloniality

Since 2003, following Terry Eagleton, we have been living in the period of "after theory." As is the nature of intellectual developments, cultural studies learned from high theory, which Eagleton dates from 1965 to 1980, then moved past it to a preoccupation with everyday life that is forgetful of experiences of collective

political action. Symptomatic of this amnesia, he argues, is the anti-nationalist orientation of postcolonial theorizing following Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978), an undermining of the revolutionary force of the nation and, concomitantly, class insofar as the former is a form of resistance to the globalization of capital and the continuing dominance of Western colonial powers. Identity politics gave analytic priority to ethnicity, what he sees as a deradicalization of postcolonialism. On a similar vector, Ella Shohat points to the absence of postcolonialism in discourses against the Gulf War. She asks: "is there something about the term "post-colonial" that does not lend itself to a geopolitical critique…?" (1992, 99).[1] Despite the politicization of culture by cultural studies, more broadly, through reframing culture as "a whole way of life" (Williams 1960, xvii), its affinity with postmodernism and suspicion of normativity weakens groupness as basis of solidarity even as it champions sub-cultures and minorities as agents of subversion. To Eagleton, postmodernism's pluralism that equates margins with minorities averts the various forms of community and modes of belonging demanded and engendered by the present.

This deferral of the political is evident in postcolonialism's displacement of the Third World denoting projects of nation-formation led by elites negotiating local demands and global forces. Shohat explains the problematics of the Third World as a conceptual category, leading to the emergence of postcolonialism, the developmental arc of which proceeded through the movement from nationalism, through nativism as oppositionality, to its critique in favor of hybridity and cosmopolitanism. The Third World is theoretically grounded in world-systems analysis and politically situated in decolonization particularly heralded by participating Asian and African countries in the 1955 Bandung Conference. The Afro-Asian conference held in Bandung, Indonesia under President Sukarno gathered newly independent nations committed to the continuing pursuit of political and economic independence. The stadial path to modernization from socialism to capitalism connoted by the Third World was negated by an alternative implication, that of the Third World as a way apart from socialism and capitalism (Dirlik 2007, 13-14). The Bandung Conference provided a model for South-South cooperation as a supplement to North-South dialogue that will be articulated in the Brandt Commission Report of 1980, enjoining developed countries in the North to help developing and undeveloped countries in the South rationalized by economic interdependence (Hoadley 1982, 22). The regionalism that first emerged in 1955 found compelling expression in the term the Global South that invoked the South's initiatives in confronting the challenges of globalization. The Global South, as Arif

[1] In this paper, I will use the unhyphenated postcolonial to signal that resistant practices against colonialism started at the very onset of the colonial encounter rather than after the end of colonialism as denoted by the prefix post. Furthermore, this temporality foregrounds that colonialism brought about transformations on the identities and histories of both the colonizers and colonized peoples, changes that are also objects of postcolonial analysis. See Hiddleston (2009, 3-4) for a concise discussion of the question of postcolonialism's typography.

Dirlik explains, "was largely equivalent to, but not identical with, the popular designation for such societies in the 1950s and 1960s ("Third World") to which it bore a contradictory relationship" (2007, 13). Indeed, its discursive formation foregrounded the contradictions riddling international relations in a globalizing world. Despite its capacious deployment as analytic lens in the study of colonial histories, migration and diaspora, national and cosmopolitan formations, and identity politics, the Global South is inescapably understood as a geographical marker, designating regions in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Yet citing the Global South in this way raises precisely its indeterminacy considering the differing status of countries therein, such as Australia and New Zealand, and the economic advancements of former colonies. These developments are commonly centered on urban areas, generating rural migration and increasing disparities along class, gender, and ethnic lines within the nation. All the while, migration and immigration from the Third World to the First World continue (Shohat 1992, 100-101). As the South, East Asia particularly, creates a space for itself at the center of transnational capitalism, "the issue is no longer overcoming colonialism or finding a "third way of development," but the inclusion of the voices of the formerly colonized and marginalized in a world that already has been shaped by a colonial modernity to which there is no alternative in sight—the world of global modernity" (Dirlik 2007, 19).

The Global South has supplanted the Third World as a spatial category, and postcolonialism has taken over "third worldist anticolonial critique" (Shohat 1992, 108) as theoretical framework in the study of colonial and neocolonial relations. Institutionalized with the publication of Said's *Orientalism* and in the period of the debt crisis and Structural Adjustment Programs that ensured the Third World's dependency on empire (Lazarus 2011, 7-10), postcolonialism problematized colonialism as a structure of knowledge production, making self-representation the emancipatory project of formerly colonized peoples. This distinguishes postcoloniality from anticoloniality that, as David Scott advances, critiqued colonialism as "a structure of material exploitation and profit" (2004, 12), giving urgency to liberationist politics instead. Postcolonialism has been criticized for its textuality, its orientation toward psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, and postmodernism seen as politically disabling. Shohat also points to postcolonialism's generalizing effect, its function as a temporal marker subsuming both former colonizers and colonized peoples under the rubric postcolonial existence or postcoloniality. Moreover, the beyond signified by the prefix post obscures neocolonialism and national hierarchies. Finally, the default postcolonial argument of hybridity that remains ever suspicious of an authentic pre-colonial past uncontaminated by colonial influence undervalues the necessity of essentialism as basis for collective action (3). Shohat argues: "A notion of the past might thus be negotiated differently; not as a static fetishized phase to be literally reproduced, but as fragmented sets of narrated memories and experiences on the basis of which to mobilize contemporary communities" (1992, 109). Not surprisingly and true to the

unfinishable work of theory, postcolonialism is being superseded by decoloniality. The lexical shift to decoloniality from postcolonialism, similar to the eclipse of the Third World by the Global South, in theory can be understood as a reinforcement of "this sense of a common project around which to mobilize that is missing from post(anti)colonial discussions" (111). For Shohat, rather than viewing conceptual categories hierarchically, we might consider them as different frames of understanding structures of power that must be deployed contingently in consideration of the object of analysis, its contexts and political aims.

Shohat's exposition allows an appreciation of the constant generation of categories and approaches in theory typically received as facile neologisms and the cause of theory's abstraction and irrelevance. Instead, we can see theory as critical practices of interrogation performed on other theories (Hunter 2007, 7). The critique of jargon and scholarly fads is understandable but these language-games or, more aptly, after Scott, "problem-spaces" of changing questions and answers serve an important and "strategic" (2004, 3, 4) purpose. A problem-space is a discursive context that arises from as well as gives rise to material realities, the ethical and political interventions of which vary over time in view of evolving social concerns. In other words, changing times demand new problem-spaces, new ways of thinking about what emerge as salient questions which entails self-reflexiveness toward our theoretical presuppositions.[2] Terminologies are necessary in that they function as conceptual markers, delimiting the scope of study and identifying areas of critique as well as positions of agency. In this light can we explore the Global South and decoloniality that are among a constellation of terms used in the problematization of the histories of colonialism and imperialism, modernity and modernization, identity and nation formation, migration and diaspora. This lexicon includes hybridity, mimicry, double consciousness, *créolité*, *vincularidad*, border thinking, BIPOC, and Global Majority. In many cases, the Global South, decoloniality, and postcolonialism are used interchangeably and continuously.[3] Nevertheless, terms are heuristic devices that exercise semantic claims in distinctive ways, as this section attempts to demonstrate. In other words, diction or the choice of conceptual categories in scholarly work is material, carrying theoretical investments through delineating problem-spaces of questions and answers. It is this horizon of argumentation of the Global South and decoloniality that this paper further explores.

[2] Theory is self-reflexive, as defined by Eagleton, "a reasonably systematic reflection on our guiding assumptions" (2003, 2).

[3] See Pérez (1999), especially Introduction and Chapter One.

II. Can the Global South Speak?: Decoloniality as Counter-Discourse

Arjun Appadurai reviews recent works on decoloniality—*On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, edited by Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, published in 2018, and *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* by Achille Mbembe published in 2021—and identifies two significant premises. The first is the geographical grounding of these works, the Global South generally. The second is "their common recognition that the heaviest price extracted by colonizers on the colonized in the past 500 years was not in the currency of labor and resource extraction but in the realm of knowledge, where colonial subjects were classified as the other in Europe's empire of reason" (Appadurai 2021). Conquest consisted in the elimination of native knowledges and to challenge what Mignolo and Walsh call "the colonial matrix of power" (2018, 10) is the aim of decoloniality, what is overlooked in Marxist-oriented analyses of empire. There is a difference between decolonization and decoloniality in their work. Decolonization, gaining momentum with the Bandung Conference, is the oppositional response to colonialism leading to the emergence of nation-states that have yet to fulfill their liberatory promise given the relentless march of capitalism. There are three Bandung generations: the first is the turn of the century intellectual-activists leading the movement for national independence; the second generation was born between the wars; and the third is formed in the radical post-war struggling for social justice, forming cultural nationalism, and fighting for economic independence (Scott 1999, 222). Charlie S. Veric's *Children of the Postcolony: Filipino Intellectuals and Decolonization, 1946-1972* studies the works and ideas of the third Bandung generation in the Philippines represented by Edith Tiempo, Fernando Zobel, Bienvenido Lumbera, E. San Juan, Jr., and Jose Maria Sison and whose works comprise "the cultural archive of Filipino decolonization" that remains an "unfinished task" (2020, 75, 74). Decoloniality responds to the limitations of decolonization, continues the unfinished work of decolonization, for Mignolo and Walsh, through its embrace of indigeneity as alternative model for politics that is rooted in conviviality among human beings and harmony between human beings and the environment. The independence of nation-states is the aim of decolonization while decoloniality is committed to undoing the epistemological and ontological structures of power, habits of mind that negate local identities, knowledge systems, and world visions.

In contrast to Mignolo and Walsh's framework of radical difference in arguing against "macronarratives" (2018, 107) through the retrieval of indigenous epistemologies as proper resources of freedom instead of Enlightenment ideas of modernity is the syncretism advanced by Mbembe. This is an alternative modernity that is formed out of Africa's particular experiences of decolonization as an "*active will to community*" and "*will to life*" that generate inventive forms of culture and ways of being informed by the past and that looks to a global, or planetary, future, what he calls "Afropolitanism" (Mbembe 2021, 2, 3, 6). The divergence of the two paradigms of decoloniality recalls postcolonialism's argumentative frames of a

return to a precolonial identity uncontaminated by colonialism, on one hand, and the resistant power of interstitial identity, on the other. Decoloniality's challenge to the hegemony of knowledge structures can be seen as consonant with the textual turn associated with poststructuralism in postcolonialism that directed its critique at the Eurocentrism underlining modernity (Allen 2016, 45-56). If there is a canonical triad in postcolonialism, namely Said, Gayatri C. Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha, the Holy Trinity of decoloniality is comprised of the Argentinian Mignolo, the Argentinian-Mexican Enrique Dussel, and the Peruvian Aníbal Quijano. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that they form the field's unholy trinity if we consider, as Mariana Ortega does, the invisibility of works on decoloniality particularly by women of color like Gloria Anzaldúa and Emma Pérez. Ortega calls this complicity with power by the very movement that resists it "decolonial woes" (2017). This is "a kind of affliction that is inherent in resistant academic practices that despite their being resistant, even radical and transformative, are at the same time immersed in what Pérez calls a 'colonial imaginary'" (1999, 505). Decoloniality requires "practices of un-knowing," for Ortega, a negation of decolonial practices that are themselves negation of discourses of empire. This is a deconstruction of the position of knowingness assumed by Orientalists and perpetuated in counter-discourses, a response to epistemological violence out of an awareness of the politics of representation. While the retrieval of indigenous knowledge systems and cross-cultural collaborations are projects taken up by postcolonialism, in the ongoing, unfinished, work of theory, what the emergence of decoloniality encourages is a reconsideration of the questions to which it provides itself as an answer. These questions arguably are the following: what are subjugated knowledges? And is essence defensible? What makes these questions not new certainly—we think of Michel Foucault and Spivak[4]—but newly relevant are historically constituted demands for their formulations. In the Philippine context, the precarity of indigenous peoples, the Lumad particularly, has been exacerbated under the present administration and in the face of the pandemic. This condition includes lack of access to basic social services, political disenfranchisement, resource exploitation, and effects of armed conflict.[5] If indigenous communities are, as they themselves attest, "'the most researched people in the world'" (qtd. in Smith 2021, 3), why do they, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith piercingly remarks:

> continue to live within political and social conditions that perpetuate extreme levels of poverty, chronic ill health and poor educational opportunities. Their children may be removed forcibly from their care, 'adopted' or

[4] On subjugated knowledges, see Foucault (1980, 81-83). On the silent subaltern, see Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1995, 24-28).

[5] See "Indigenous peoples in Philippines" and "Philippines police raid targets displaced Indigenous students."

> institutionalized. The adults may be as addicted to alcohol as their children are to glue, they may live in destructive relationships which are formed and shaped by their impoverished material conditions and structured by politically oppressive regimes. While they live like this they are constantly fed messages about their worthlessness, laziness, dependence and lack of 'higher' order human qualities. This applies as much to Indigenous communities in First World nations as it does to Indigenous communities in developing countries. Within these sorts of social realities, questions of imperialism and the effects of colonization may seem to be merely academic; sheer physical survival is far more pressing. The problem is that constant efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical formations of such conditions have simultaneously denied our claims to humanity, to having a history, and to all sense of hope. (2021, 4)

Smith's commentary highlights the risk of failure that is constitutive of representation. Who has the right to represent which group? How does one guarantee that subaltern groups, understood in postcolonial studies as minority groups based especially on gender and ethnicity, are speaking for themselves rather than being spoken for and to by discursive economies and regimes of representation in place? And does representation matter in matters of life and death, and quality of life? What decoloniality enables is a renewed understanding of the function of subjugated knowledges understood in two ways. Subjugated knowledges refer to texts and contents concealed through discursive formations and regimes of representation and the task is to bring them into unconcealment using the tools of research and scholarship. This requires academic training and expertise, part of which is canon-reconstitution. Subjugated knowledges are also tied to community involvement. They are embodied experiences and symptomatic of the relation of individuals to institutions. These embodied experiences can be self-represented or represented by others in a self-reflexive, ethically oriented manner. Representation, in this regard, is catalyzed by a subject with agency, positioned within a network of heterogenous institutions and influences that engender ruptures as well as continuities and capable of exercising positive freedom through reflection and action.[6] It is this tension between the academe or institutionalized spaces of and for

[6] This conceptualization of subjective agency in representation is modeled after Lawrence Venuti's translation theory. For Venuti, translation, whether it follows the model of foreignization or domestication, always already participates in ethnocentric reduction. Though epistemological violence is constitutive of the practice of translation, the translator can and must exert a deliberate and intentional effort to bring the source culture into a relation of difference with the target culture where what is reproduced resists the dominant, both socio-political and literary, in both source and target cultures. See Venuti (1995, 23-25).

knowledge production and the lived experiences of delegitimated and nonjuridical individuals that allows such dual perspective on subjugated knowledges to be an acute analysis of the mechanisms of power.

Decoloniality, seen in this light, responds to the politics of representation. The malady of representation is suffered in different ways by the subaltern and the intellectual whose institutional and discursive privileges are always already the former's loss, good intentions notwithstanding. For Eva Cherniavsky, what has been mistakenly received as Spivak's silencing of the subaltern in her commentary on the Subaltern Studies Project is rather a statement on the intellectual's condition, "*the incommensurability between the terms of the investigator's analytic and the subaltern as 'object' of investigation*" (2011, 157). Spivak's own strategic essentialism, which has been utilized in identity politics, signals the knowingness of the intellectual. She reformulates strategic essentialism as "'learning to learn from below'" (2000, 333), aimed at dialogue with the subalterns from a point of cognizance of one's limitations and the need for an ongoing education where the subalterns are the ones who teach. That representation is susceptible to the commission of violence renders the work unfinished, not futile. To reframe the work of theory as unfinishable is to acknowledge this complicity with power, for Ortega, this scholarly affliction, an act that becomes a generative condition, producing creative ways of conceptualizing more ethically oriented modes of representation adequate to present reality and imagined futures. Spivak's learning to learn from below is one example of this critical and creative impetus behind theory. On a similar vector and arising from the socio-historical context of the Philippines, this critical creativity or creative criticality of theoretical work is exemplified by Caroline S. Hau's *Necessary Fictions: Philippine Literature and the Nation: 1946-1980* (2000) and Neferti X. M. Tadiar's *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization* (2009).

III. Critical Creativity/Creative Criticality: Literary and Theoretical Worlding

That representation is an ineluctably violent practice necessitates a more precise understanding of theory. Long has it been critiqued for its abstraction and, given its highly obfuscatory language, irrelevance but what is presupposed in the preceding statement is that it has material effects on subaltern communities that do not have the same degree and kind of mobility across various spaces—epistemological, political, economic, cultural, geographical—as dominant groups based on given categories of identity.[7] The challenge is, rephrasing Marx's eleventh

[7] Not the same degree and kind of mobility for the subaltern possesses mobility as well but this is an overdetermined and constrained mobility. As Spivak argues: "the 'subaltern' must be rethought. S/he is no longer cut off from lines of access to the centre. The centre, as represented by the Bretton Woods agencies and the World Trade Organization, is altogether interested in the rural and

thesis, how theory can change the world, and change it for the better. Put another way, how can we emancipate subjugated knowledges? In *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (2018), Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues for interpretation as a response to this injunction of translating theory into politics, or praxis as Marxist critics put it (vii). The epistemologies of the South consist in this "twelfth thesis: we must change the world while constantly reinterpreting it" (viii). The inadequacy of paradigms of critical thinking, according to de Sousa Santos, coupled with the dominance of conservative thinking do not nullify resistance movements. What is called for is an "epistemological shift" (viii). As de Sousa Santos advances,

> …it is imperative to go beyond the truly magnificent and brilliant body of theories generated by such thinking and to question their epistemological foundations. The core problem is that the epistemological premises of both Eurocentric critical thinking and Eurocentric conservative thinking have strong (and fatal) elective affinities. They represent two different versions of what I call…the epistemologies of the North.
>
> An epistemological shift is necessary in order to recover the idea that there are alternatives and indeed to recognize, as the bearers of potential alternatives, the struggles against oppression that continue to be fought in the world. The argument of this book is that such a shift lies in what I call the epistemologies of the South…. we don't need another theory of revolution; we need rather to revolutionize theory. (viii)

The epistemologies of the South consist in this ongoing interpretation of the world as coextensive with its ethico-political transformation. Arising from struggles lived through by groups in both the geographical North and the geographical South, and in line with Spivak's point on the shifts in subaltern positionality, "the epistemological South" (de Sousa Santos 2018, 1) aims at self-representation. As "experiential epistemologies" (2), they are not bound by territory. Rather they deterritorialize what counts as proper knowledge produced by putatively proper subjects. Reinterpretation is resistant and collective, again resonating with Spivak's model of learning to learn from below. For de Sousa Santos, central to the imperative for reinterpretation is imagination. He writes: "The imagination of the end is being corrupted by the end of imagination" (ix). This recognition of the role of imaginative work in theory enables its conceptualization in both senses of interpretive

indigenous subaltern as source of trade-related intellectual property or TRIPS" (Spivak 2000, 326). She adds that the homeless in metropolitan cities as a result of the welfare state can also be considered subaltern (328).

framework and a mode of problematization or interrogation as critical creativity or creative criticality. To interpret is the task of literary and, through the application of literature's methods of production and reception, cultural studies. Interpretation in criticism as the application of theory is purposive, a critique that opens trajectories for subsequent creative and critical works and points to possible futures, a worlding that is true for theory as it is for literature. It is within this context that Hau's examination of the creative function of literature, both as artform and poiêsis, and Tadiar's inquiry into the supplementarity of literature as representation in imagining alternatives to the political can be said to generate a form of decolonial praxis in the Global South. The topoi of "excess" in Hau and "experience" in Tadiar serve as bases for the worldliness of literature, enabling radical reinterpretation and "the synthesis between theory and practice" (de Sousa Santos 2018, vii).

Hau's *Necessary Fictions* is widely recognized as a foundational text in the Philippine critical tradition and, specifically, postcolonial studies.[8] Here she incisively looks at imaginative writing as constitutive of nation formation, revealing of the constructedness of the historical nation in which literature plays a pivotal role as at once a representation and a making of the national culture. The 1956 Rizal Bill or Republic Act No. 1425 that mandated the inclusion of the study of the life and works of the national hero, José Rizal, in the curriculum of public and private schools exemplified this function of literature over which the state claimed surveillance or the power of regulation. The vicissitudes of history and the indeterminacies of language use, however, prevented a singular interpretation of Rizal's novels, indeed of literary texts generally, and a monolithic view of national culture. What emerges instead are figures of "'excess,' a term that will be used…to refer to the heterogenous elements—'the people,' 'the indigenous,' 'the Chinese,' 'the political,' and 'error'—that inform, but also exceed, nationalist attempts to grasp, intellectually and politically, the complex realities at work in Philippine society" (Hau 2000, 6). These are peripheralized groups and contradictory features of society represented in literature that point to the exclusions of nation formation, rendering the project of imagining community "always unfinished" (7) and demanding social transformation. In this way does literature perform as an "'ethical technology'" (9), restoring agency to the subject who through reflection on knowledge of the historical past and the lived present determined by colonial legacies, class and ethnic disparities, and political conflicts is called to action. Hau advances:

> Analyzing the social nature and function of Philippine literature forces us to attend to the ways in which truth and action are conceived, and by specific classes of people. It also traces the contours of various discursive regimes, and the procedures and institutions that regulate literature's mediating role in organizing the relationship between

[8] See Veric 2002, 101.

> knowledge and action. These determine, in crucial ways, the kinds of action and theorizing available to Filipinos at a given period of time. (13)

Hau's sustained engagement with subjugated knowledges—a project that she will take up in her succeeding books, especially *On the Subject of the Nation: Filipino Writings from the Margins, 1981-2004* (2004)—qualifies her work as decolonial in line with the definitional framework provided in the preceding section. She intervenes in the politics of representation by arguing that literature illumines the space of subjective agency as it calls for action based on knowledge, fulfilling nationalism's "pedagogical imperative toward ethical self-development" (2000, 16). Put another way, she foregrounds the ethics of representation as mediation in its politics. The reading subject, through the act of interpretation, becomes a "'model' citizen-subject who aids in the transformation of his or her society" (16). Individual development is analogized to and serves as condition of possibility of collective, or national, development.[9]

Hau's argument is premised on realism as a mode of literary production and reception. Exemplified by Rizal's novels, realist literature creates "the reality effect" (Barthes 1989) on the reader by representing everyday life and depicting characters whose behaviors and relations with one another are shaped by their socio-economic positions. The reality effect is precisely the notion that what is portrayed in the text may very well happen. The bildungsroman of characters—from Crisostomo Ibarra-cum-Simoun of Rizal's *Noli me tangere* (1887) and *El filibusterismo* (1891) to Andoy-cum-Mando Plaridel of Amado V. Hernandez' *Mga Ibong Mandaragit* (1969)—extends to the readers through literary education. Just as the characters undergo intellectual and emotional maturation through experiences of conflict, mobility, and loss, so too does the reader whose personal character development contributes to the progress and perfection of the society of which he/she is a part. This synecdochic understanding of self-cultivation forms the basis of the philosophical conceptualization of culture "as *Bildung* (Hegel) or *Kultur* (Kant), a process and state of social existence that has universal normative validity" (Cheah 2006, 1047-1048). Literature facilitates this teleological practice of culture and, as the Rizal Bill attests, is deployed by the state in nation formation, but the same principle, in a deconstructed mode, underlines the critique of state power and literary education as an ideological state apparatus, legislating what one ought to read and how one ought to read it. The aporias in literature, or excesses in Hau's work, enable a multiplicity of interpretations by readers living under diverse material conditions that impose constraints upon the project of self-fashioning and unified group identity. For Hau, reading is deconstructive in which the subject, through critical reflection, understands the forces that shape him/her and that he/she in turn shapes

[9] As Hau puts it, "The nation stands as a concrete embodiment of the will to self-determination and of the self-determining subject" (2000, 24).

through intentional activities and social relations. The reader recognizes what the nation is and what it can be, its past and potential futures. The reader is then an active force, possesses subjective agency, utilizing knowledge in staking a claim in the project of making the nation. Pheng Cheah calls this worlding, the power of literature to make and transform the world that capitalist globalization has at one and the same time scaled up and narrowed down (2016, 2). For Cheah, the worldliness of a literary text, which is a question of the relation between literature and the world it represents, is more adequately grasped through a rethinking of the world as a temporal rather than a spatial category. This is a departure from literary studies that bases literary history on exchange across national boundaries, mapping relations of influence and appropriation, dominance and subversion.[10] Dependency is replaced by the rhetoric of derivativeness of the Global South. The world imagined in a text remains a virtual possibility and literature has no causal agency, incapable of remaking this world dominated by capital. To understand the world in temporal terms as that which exists in and unfolds teleologically in time, however, enables us to see that literature exerts "normative force" and opens up an "ethicopolitical horizon" (5) in actually existing reality. This normative force has worked in the interest of power through colonial discourses or Orientalism as well as state-sponsored nationalist discourses, and this epistemological violence is as much an "unworlding" (8) as it is a worlding since it spatializes the world as homogenous and, through sameness and difference, divides the world into spaces inhabited by group identities. Cheah, drawing from Heideggerian phenomenology, locates subjective and counter-hegemonic agency in a temporal world that is always already situated and intersubjective. He writes: "We can only create normative value if we exist in a world with other beings and have access to them. The unifying power of temporalization is precisely a force of worlding, the precipitous ushering into a world, a meaningful whole that brings all beings into relation" (9).

The role of time in literary agency is foregrounded in Hau's reading of Carlos Bulosan's "incomplete novel" (Hau 2000, 215), *The Cry and the Dedication* (1995), about the Huk rebellion following the inauguration of the Third Philippine Republic in 1946.[11] The independence from American colonizers was the basis of the state's narrative of "the end of revolution" (215) that was belied by the insurgency. The unfinished work that is the novel mirrors the unfinished work of revolution, more precisely, "performed the *unfinishing* of the revolution by rethinking the perceived

[10] See Cheah's discussion of representative figures of this direction, such as Franco Moretti, in *What is a World?* (2016), especially Chapter One.

[11] Huk is derived from Hukbalahap or the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon that was formed in 1942 by the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, the old Communist Party of the Philippines. It became Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan after the Japanese Occupation and the Second World War and centered their struggle against collaboration and agrarian reform. It was tagged as a "'subversive'" organization but continued on as an underground movement, its members later comprising the new Communist Party of the Philippines and, its military arm, the New People's Army (Hau 2000, 218).

failures of popular struggle in terms of the necessity and difficulty of the task of perpetual critical re-vision (that is, correcting errors and learning to see things differently) and struggle" (216). In Bulosan, temporality is an "openness to time," the ongoing reflection and correction of political action, the author providing through literature "a kind of 'corrective' supplementary reading" to the problems, or errors, that resulted in the decline of the Huk rebellion, such as "the scarcity of couriers, lack of political education, and failure of the political missions to expand the mass base of the movement" (216, 218, 219). Hau considers Bulosan's discourse on the unfinished revolution as part of a genealogy from Spanish colonial rule to twentieth century popular movements, primarily represented by Apolinario Mabini's *La Revolución Filipina* (1931) written at the close of the nineteenth century and providing insight into the factionalism and elitism that impaired the revolutionary leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo. The continuity from Mabini to Bulosan, for Hau, lies in the emphasis on the role of "political education" (2000, 226), an ethicopolitical transformation of the leaders inasmuch as of the people. This transformation is directed at generalizing local and differing needs and aspirations, demands and ambitions that impact even familial and familiar relations. The unfinishability of this pedagogical work signals a "timelessness" alongside the "timeliness" (232) of struggle, powerfully dramatized in *The Cry and the Dedication* through the central subject of the Huk rebellion that originated in the resistance movement against the Japanese Occupation and carried on under the Third Philippine Republic. The "quality of timeliness-timelessness" (232) of the novel posits revolution as consisting of shifting moments in the march toward national liberation. It is in the concession to time, the ongoing praxis of reflection and action, that the promise of an egalitarian future becomes actualizable despite its failures.

The element of time points to the efficacy of literary resistance. The self-reflexivity necessitated by writing and reading translates into the play of signification in ongoing textual productions that facilitate the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of the nation. Bill Ashcroft raises cogent questions in this regard:

> How does literary 'resistance' operate in the absence of organized struggle? What, exactly, constitutes 'literary' resistance? What is the relationship between figurative language and the intention to resist? How 'real' must resistance literature be? The strangely untheorized yet ubiquitous use of the term means that it fails to address three critical problems: the extent to which centre/periphery notions of resistance can actually work to *re-inscribe* centre/periphery relations, trapping resistance in the binary established by imperial discourse; the question of exactly how resistance can be said to exist within the text; and the

> problem raised by Foucault that power itself inscribes its resistances, and thus seeks to contain them…(2001, 30)

The resistance to colonialism in the form of anticolonial independence movements, what can be called in the context of this discussion as political resistance to be distinguished from literary resistance, is temporal as it is spatial. As Hau demonstrates, this temporal structure of political resistance is both timely and timeless, necessitating revisions and dependent on contingency. Colonialism defined as an act of conquest involves the establishment of settlements in distant lands whereby colonizers directly exercise authority over the colonized. Anticoloniality is enacted by the immediacy of the action. According to Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Twentieth-century anticolonial democratic demands for self-rule…harped insistently on a 'now' as the temporal horizon of action. From about the time of First World War to the decolonization movements of the fifties and sixties, anticolonial nationalisms were predicated on this urgency of the 'now'" (2000, 8). This timeliness is a rejection of the "'not yet'" (8) of colonialism, the delay it projected onto the colonized in the teleological narrative of modernization and modernity arrogated by the colonizers. Colonialism is justified by the supposed temporal gap between development in the West and its introduction elsewhere through colonization as civilizing mission, reiterated in the temporal gap between progress in the capital of the colonies and its spread to various localities. If political resistance capitalizes on the now, literary resistance works on the principle of duration, which is enabled by the arbitrariness and instability of linguistic signification. Signification proceeds through the participation of members of a linguistic community, more precisely, through their submission to the sign system in place that precedes and exceeds individual will. These "inhuman conditions" (Cheah 2006) of intelligibility and sociality are constitutive of literature. Writing and reading are temporal processes, equally timely and timeless in that these are critical productions in time and within a history that serves as horizon of expectations, in the parlance of reader-response theory and criticism, for both practices. The duration, indeed protraction, of the reading experience—whether in the form of rereading favorite texts or entering into conversations about texts or formally studying texts and their various contexts of meaning—permits reflection and interrogation of existing conceptions, enabling unlearning and necessary revisions. Hau invites us to see the value of time in political resistance as well. Just as structures of power persist and persist through, among other reasons, the complicity of resistance movements, so too does opposition. And not in spite of but because of their fallibility, motivated by the will to critique the self and society and urged on by the value of reflexivity as the precondition for action, all durable steps toward the concretization of egalitarian aims. In other words, resistance is not only immanent to but also imminent to power.

The notion of immanence has been problematized in postcolonial studies "for its subtle determinism to which postcolonial orthodoxy is susceptible because

of its reliance on a concealed rhetoric of historical dialecticism in which the dissolution of colonial division is seen as in some ways inevitable: a matter of temporal unfolding" (Gandhi 2006, 5). For Leela Gandhi, this approach undervalues the intentional and urgent or immediate acts of resistance to colonial power by actors and cross-cultural collaborators rejecting hierarchization and forming alternative socialities or "affective communities" (2006). Hau's argument for the necessity of literature through a temporal understanding of its worldliness restores the subject to agency that in postcolonial hybridity is located in the colonial structure, positing "a kind of agency without a subject" (Young 2004, 188).

The subjective agency through reflection and action in Hau's work is similarly posited in Tadiar's analysis of the multiple crises that beset the Philippines in the late twentieth century: "the feminization of labor and the worldwide movements of this labor, rapid urbanization and the explosion of a surplus floating population, the deracination of the rural peasantry, and the waging and putative defeat of a revolutionary people's war" (2009, 2). The colonial legacies and the history of decolonization produce and reproduce "historical experiences that "fall away" from global capitalist and nation-state narratives of development as well as from social movement narratives of liberation" (5). Represented in literature, these experiences are themselves forms of excesses "to the extent that they exceed the valorized forms of political subjectivity defined by feminism, urban activism, and the revolutionary movement" (5), resulting in the subjugation of peoples who are the subjects of these experiences considered improper subjects in and by both institutional and oppositional politics. Instead of the referential function of literature, or its reality effect, Tadiar emphasizes literature's performative function. "Works of postcolonial literature," she writes, "are rather to be viewed as experiments in broader social projects, indeed, in the very imagining of modern political communities, most evidently of the nation but not exclusively so" (6). The transformative power of literature is made possible through the conceptualization of subalternized experiences as determined by objective conditions even as the very same are reconstructed through the individual and social practices of subjects, practices that in restructuring relations can then be described as "a form of creative or living labor" (11). This is labor that is commonly considered unproductive and attributed to subalterns, especially women, but has been shown to play an important role in the reproduction of economic and political structures (Tadiar 2009, 11; Rubin 1975, 160-164).

A paradigmatic example of literature's performativity, Tadiar's incisive reading demonstrates, is Fanny Garcia's "Pina, Pina, Saan Ka Pupunta?" (1982), a short story about an all-too-common reality of a lower-class Filipina who corresponds with an American through a pen pal magazine. She enters into a romantic relationship with him as encouraged and celebrated by her family and neighborhood, only to be abandoned by her lover amidst pregnancy that she chooses to end through abortion. Tadiar's analysis explains how the text is a

gendered allegory of Philippine-U.S. relations in both senses of the Philippines as a national economy reliant on and prostituted for foreign capital investment and as a former colony that continues to be subordinated through colonial mentality, a feminine passivity presupposed in anti-colonial nationalism. What Pina's actions reveal, however, is subjective agency that enables her to remake the structures that determine and objectify her existence as a Filipina. This subjective agency is "the energy…[women] expend in the practical decision, desire, and work to go on—a form of labor that exceeds the concept of both necessary and reproductive labor" (Tadiar 2009, 38). For Tadiar, Pina desires social and spatial mobility expressed by her refusal to marry someone from their neighborhood and attained through her being a desirable image for the white and male gaze. She derives pleasure from her sexual encounter and relishes this bodily experience, an individuation that ruptures the coextension of her being with her community, which participates in her marketability throughout Pina's courtship, and the nation. Her abortion is a refusal of the identity assigned to her by the national and transnational order of exchange. The short story asserts: "We Filipinas can transform Filipinas provided we seize our bodily beings, appropriate our feminine labor, in order to recompose our communities for ourselves. In this way can we realize our constitutive potential, our creative power, as producers of the world" (52).

Literature in itself is an instance of this creative or living labor in its performance or active construction, through representation of experiences as themselves creative or living labor, of alternatives to the present, reimagining and remaking the world. This creative act is indissociable from the critique of modes of domination in global capitalism, including the available forms of political agency. Conversant with Hau, central to this critical creativity or creative criticality is the element of time. The framework of critique from within of Tadiar advances an understanding of subalternity as a "missed temporal dimension subsisting within and yet different from the time of capital" (2009, 21), experiences that belie the simultaneity of economic and cultural capital.[12] Rather than contemporaneity, what becomes evident are time lags and temporal delays that advance the interests of dominant groups. The question is "not what time it is, or where we are in time, but whose time it is?" (qtd. in Burges and Elias 2016, 158) Worldliness is here tied to what Chakrabarty calls "heterotemporality" but of the kind that recognizes the mutual constitution of older and emergent practices, testaments to and embodiments of creativity.[13]

[12] See Burges and Elias (2016), especially Introduction.

[13] Cheah critiques Chakrabarty's heterotemporality as having a fixed gaze on the pre-capitalist past but resistance must also draw from actually existing practices. Further, to Cheah, Chakrabarty's framework rejects a teleology of Western modernity but local temporalities are themselves teleological, aimed at self-determination through practices of social transformation. See *What is a World?* (2016), especially Introduction.

Tadiar analogizes the subalternization of experiences and peoples in the Philippines and their capacity for creative or living labor to disenfranchised groups in other parts of the world, "the global undersides" (2009, 8). On a metacritical level, she acknowledges the "analytical resources generated out of other postcolonial or global south contexts" (20) from which she draws in emancipating subjugated knowledges and practices in the Philippine context. Such radicalism of the periphery multiply sited is based on a renewed understanding of space and time in literary and political/literary as political resistance. Their unfinishability is the precondition for creativity and criticality, now more urgent than ever in the face of the multiple crises that we live with. Critical creativity or creative criticality is praxis nurtured by an inexhaustible hope and conviction in the yet-to-come, more optimistically, in what is arriving.

IV. The Epistemological South: Critical Reterritorializations

The Global South may be understood as the epistemic space for the representation of the marginalized, including formerly colonized peoples and internal hierarchies along various categories of identity that are the colonial legacies in nation-formation, applicable to the Philippine nation's excesses and their experiences. The epistemological South, after de Sousa Santos, produces knowledge within this reality of interconnectedness and glocal flows. Philippine decoloniality as an example of the epistemologies of the Global South and represented by Hau and Tadiar intervenes in the fraught project of representation of subjugated and subalternized knowledges through a model of critical reflection as the condition of possibility of action, of individual development for national development. For both Hau and Tadiar, there is subjective agency in the representation of experience and in the reading of that representation. These are temporal processes, remaining unfinished but in such unfinishability lies representation's transformative potential.

The neo-phenomenological approach of both Hau and Tadiar that advance self-reflexivity as a viable critical position is indicative of theoretical entanglements with Western philosophy. This brings their work in closer proximity to Mbembe's syncretic position on decoloniality premised on the "worldwide circulation and translation of texts, a highly productive invention and reappropriation of concepts, and the denationalization of the great academic debates" (2021, 20). This is a critical standpoint explained by the country's colonial history and their subject position as arguably modern-day *ilustrados* who have experienced and enjoy the privilege of education and employment in metropolitan centers. That Hau and Tadiar theorize resistance and worldliness at a geographical distance from the national reality of marginalization raises the vexed question of the relationship between positionality and representation, the intellectual and the subaltern. What one learns from their works is that deconstruction and reconstruction that are constitutive of representation are conditioned upon positive freedom, a divergence from the

negative critique characteristic of poststructuralism and postcolonialism. Their works are practices of ongoing reflection and action and the commitment to study texts and experiences in the belief that these are valuable and worth analyzing with an openness to revisions but with conviction in imaginative interpretation.

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