The Bloodless Head of Longinus: Political Interventions and the Decapitation of the Moriones Tradition in Marinduque

WILLIAM PETERSON
MONASH UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Carmencita O. Reyes, Governor until 2007 of the Island Province of Marinduque (172 kilometers south of Manila), has long played a part in the crafting, shaping, and promotion of the Marinduque Moriones Festival that, each year, from Holy Thursday through Easter Sunday, is mounted in Boac, the province capital. She is married to Edmundo Reyes who, under Ferdinand Marcos, was Commissioner of Immigration, although she herself comes from prominent Filipino stock.[1] Until constitutional term limits required her to stand down as Governor in 2007, her family, for about twenty years, administered her home province. Mrs. Reyes' multiple interventions into the Moriones Festival, along with those of the provincial government of which she long was the chief executive, will constitute the subject of this paper.[2]

The Moriones Festival coincides with multiple activities and events, culminating in the *salubong*, an elaborate religious procession held in the pre-dawn hours of Easter morning, just before Mass when,

[1]Carmencita Reyes is a member of the politically and economically influential Cojuangco family, based in San Juan, Metro Manila.

[2]Readers seeking detailed information on the structure and content of the Boac *Sinakulo* and Good Friday events are encouraged to consult my 2007 article: William Peterson, *Asian Theatre Journal*, "Holy Week in the 'Heart of the Philippines': Spirituality, Theatre and Community in Marinduque's Moriones Festival," *Asian Theatre Journal* 24/ 2 (Fall 2007), pp. 309-337.

to signal the dawning of Easter, a boy-angel lifts the veil of mourning from the visage of an effigy of the Blessed Mother. This event comes on the heels of various other activities, including civic parades, a trade development fair, and various entertainment events, at times bordering on kitsch.[3] A photographic record of a number of these events is contained in *The Coffee Table History Book of Marinduque* (the launch of which, in 2005, coincided with the "inauguration" of the provincial library), which features, in addition, a helpful retelling of the island's history; profiles of its principal towns, its holy sites, and main commercial establishments; even a recipe for *kare-kare*, an island specialty dish necessitating five cups of pig's blood, a kilo of ground internal pork organs (shown pre-cooked in a number of photos) – stuff the fainthearted would not be particularly interested in. Of particular interest is the book's photographic sketch of the Moriones Festival: its three-night dramatization of the Passion of Christ (coinciding with Holy Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday), and the *Sinakulo* or *Via Cruces* (Way of the Cross), conducted outdoors on Good Friday afternoon. Upon being "scourged," the penitent-performer playing Jesus is forced into a lachrymose procession through the streets of Boac, to trudge along with Gestas and Dimas, the two thieves with whom he will be crucified, until they get to "Calvary" where they are "crucified." From the moment Jesus is raised upon the cross, an uncanny silence descends upon the entire town that lasts well into the afternoon of the following day.

The Morions

In view of the fact that the Moriones Festival is the event for which Marinduque is uniquely known both locally and internationally, the provincial government, since the 1970s, has quite aggressively promoted it, as well as established throughout the island mechanisms for mopping up what tourist dollars may be generated from it. The government has installed, for instance, on the inside of the traffic circle in Balanacan – the point at which most visitors to the island

[3]In 2005, Gasan hosted a week-long Agro-Industrial Fair; Boac, a Butterfly Festival; and the Provincial Government, National, Provincial, Municipal, and Barangay Government Officials and Employees' Processions, which wound their way through Boac, Gasan, Mogpog, and Buenavista on Holy Monday and Holy Wednesday.

disembark from their boats – a huge cement sculpture depicting a pivotal *moriones* event, namely, the *pugutan* or the decapitation of the Roman soldier Longinus who, according to legend, was the earliest convert to Christianity. Around the traffic circle, and throughout the island, it has underwritten the proliferation of stores selling *moriones* memorabilia – *paper mache morions*, *morions* on banners, paintings, *morion* refrigerator magnets, etc. As early as Monday of Holy Week and every day succeeding, the *morions* themselves, the Festival's principal performers, go about the streets of Boac, Gasan, Mogpog, Santa Cruz, Marinduque's four largest towns, doffed in the requisite capes, breastplates, swords, shields, and wearing the masks and headgear that mark them out as "Roman soldiers," only to become scarce again on Easter Sunday afternoon. In Boac, these same *morions* perform in the city's three-day *Sinakulo,* which culminates in Jesus Christ's scourging and crucifixion on Good Friday afternoon.

In view of the tremendous physical challenges the *morions* must put up with – seven performance days, the intense heat of a Philippine summer, multiple layers of costuming, heatstroke-inducing headpieces and masks – anything less than a powerful motive would not be reason enough for them to commit themselves to it. At one time, the men who served as *morions* were the island's farmers and fisher folk. Today, *anyone* with a *panata* – a promise to God needing to be satisfied – may participate. It is these people, believes Marinduqueño Danny Mandia, who become *morions*; they "become renewed individuals at the end of the whole week of the *panata*."[4] To be sure, financial obstacles prevent some from addressing their *panata* in this way. Today's morion paraphernalia include the mask of a Roman soldier carved out of some soft wood. The mask, together with the headgear, and the rest of the outfit, would easily cost the *morion* an entire week's worth of wages – far more than the simple folk would be able to afford. There has occurred as a result a shift in the economic profile of today's *morion* – but more on this later.

To return to the subject of the masks, a range of "designs," from the stern to the playful, is considered "acceptable" for them. As a consequence, one watches "Roman thugs" raining down blows on Jesus on Good Friday, wearing masks permanently projecting a poker face, a smile, conventional attractiveness. I am told by Allen Madrigal who, through several seasons, has performed in the role of Christ, that in ex-President Joseph Estrada's time, even as he stood accused before the Philippine Senate for his role in the illegal numbers racket, people could not get enough of mask-effigies of him.[5]

The event verges upon the surreal in other ways. At the 2005 Maundy Thursday procession to "Calvary," for example, the *morions* marched to the music of "I Will Follow Him," a ditty that was popular in the 1950s. In addition, each year, during the Good Friday procession, here and there, every now and then, the *morions* would temporarily break away to give children frantic chase around town. By the procession's end, however, the children take their turn in taunting the *morions*, who are struggling to get home under the weight of their elaborate

[4]Danilo "Danny" Ledesma Mandia, Personal Interview. Quezon City, Philippines, 19 March 2005.

[5]Allen Madrigal, Personal Interview, Manila, Philippines, April 16, 2005.

costuming. Truly, the Festival combines the mundane with the sacred, solemnity with celebration and play.

Longinus and the Pugutan

Elsewhere than in the Philippines, if anyone thinks about Longinus at all, it would be as the unnamed Roman soldier who, according to Scripture, pierces Jesus in his side with a lance as he hangs upon the cross. Blinded by the blood that flows immediately out of the wound, runs down the length of his lance, and goes right into his eye, legend has it that his sight is restored by the Risen Lord, to whom he converts, and seeks to bring others to conversion to as well.[6] Hauled before Pontius Pilate to stand trial for these twin crimes, he is sentenced to death by beheading. Longinus' story is recounted in over seventeen pages of chanted text in the standard Tagalog *Pasyon,* and is dramatized in Boac each year in the chase of Longinus by the *morions*, his capture by them, and his public execution by beheading. Before Carmencita Reyes' became involved in it, the *pugutan* was always an Easter Sunday event. Reyes moved it to the evening of Holy Saturday, for reasons that shortly will be recounted.

My informants tell me that when they were children, in the 1950s and early 1960s, the performer who played Longinus would be chased after by the *morions*, not only through the town's streets, but up coconut trees, if that was where Longinus would desperately try to elude them, and into peoples' homes as well. They chased, not only Longinus,

[6]Eli Obligacion, Personal Interview, Bahaghari, Marinduque, Philippines, April 7, 2007.

recalls Peter Magturo, but "the children as well." "So scared were we of them [that we] would hide under our beds."[7] "They would thrust at us with their lances," adds Danny Mandia.[8] Today, in a reversal of practices, it is the children who "terrorize" the *morions,* raining down taunts on them such as: *"morion bungi may tae sa bindi"* ["toothless *morions*, legs smeared with shit"] – adverting to the fact that since their masks prevented them from inspecting their legs, should human crap appear on them, it would go unnoticed.[9] According to *Sinakulo* scholar Nicanor Tiongson, "the traditional *pugutan* was very simple, featuring the rambunctious search for Longinus through the town's streets, up coconut trees, on the seashore, climaxed by Longinus' prayer (from the *Pasyong* Genesis) asking Jesus to accept his soul before he is finally beheaded."[10] In the 1960s, however, the *pugutan* ceased being an obscure event, as accounts of it appeared increasingly in both local and international travel literature. Marinduque became "a hot spot for tourism internationally."[11] But that was before, Mandia observes. Today, local and international visitors to Marinduque have significantly dwindled in number. When they do come, it is usually not because they have the *pugutan,* but the outdoors Good Friday procession. Not as many tourists stay around until Saturday evening to watch occur onstage. From the rambunctious Easter Sunday event-about-town that it used to be, it has transformed into something stultified by its confinement to the stage. It appears to have lost much of the vibrancy that had earlier characterized it and, concomitantly, tourist enthusiasm for it, when it quite literally was "street theater."

[7]Pedro "Peter" Magturo, Personal Interview, Boac, Marinduque, Philippines, April 6, 2007. Eli Obligacion, who is close to Magturo in age, recalls this was the practice as well. Carmencita Reyes also says that children in the 1950s tended generally to be fearful of the *morions*.

[8]Danny Mandia, who has written an M.A. thesis on the *morions*, describes the *pugutan* as typically being held between 8am and noon following the Easter Sunday Mass. Others remember it as a two to three hour event. Given the somewhat improvisational nature of the chase, its duration may have varied from year to year.

[9]Allen Madrigal, Personal Interview, Manila, Philippines, 16 April 2005. Danny Mandia, who is older than Madrigal by a few years, believes the taunt is class-generated since the *morions* originally came from farmers' stock.

[10]Nicanor Tiongson, *Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of Philippine Art,* Volume VII, *Philippine Theatre*, (Manila: The Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), p. 95.

[11]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*

The *pugutan* originated in the 1880s, not in Boac, but in the nearby town of Mogpog. Indio priest, Father Dionisio Santiago, who "[built] the first church in Mogpog"[12] is identified in multiple sources[13] and by my own informants[14] as responsible for its establishment. In April 1881, Alfred Marche, a French naturalist who lived many months in Marinduque, wrote about the dangers of passing through Mogpog, which was "an old village of bandits and of pirates very much feared by their neighbors... who were at that time active smugglers."[15] There, therefore, was a kind of unquiet to Mogpog, in the teeth of which Father Dionisio Santiago had to attract the attention of the natives in order to convert them to Christianity.[16] He, therefore, established the *pugutan,* to signal to the people that the faith was admirable precisely because it was not cheap. Marche's account, additionally, lends support to the claim that the word, "*morion,*" is related to the word, "*moro,*" referring to the much-feared pirates from the south who, well into the 19th century, regularly pillaged Marinduque towns, but many other places as well, explaining why practices involving the *moriones* are not exclusive to Marinduque.[17]

In the early 1960s, Agustin Madrigal, Boac's Mayor's son, founded the *Samahan ng mga Moryon*, which became, in 1963 (at the suggestion of Provincial Governor Celso Preclaro), "The Order of the Moriones."[18] As soon as Madrigal "came up with the idea that a *morion* should look like a centurion," changes began to rock the practice. For while it was a "look" that conformed to cinematic fantasy, it presented a sharp contrast to the traditional *morion* "look," which was a composite of hand-sewn costumes – the materials for which barrio folk could plausibly assemble together – and helmets adorned with as many flowers as years of service to their *panata* to serve as a *morion*

[12]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

[13]Tiongson, 1994, *op. cit.*, and Dindo L. Asuncio (*Marinduque: The Heart of the Philippines,* Provincial Government of Marinduque, 2004).

[14]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*, and Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

[15]Alfred Marche, *Luzon and Palawan*, Carmen Ojeda and Jovita Castro, trans (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1970), p. 174.

[16]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

[17]Nicanor Tiongson, Personal Interview, Quezon City, Philippines, 20 April 2005. See also my 2007 article in which I discuss the possible origins of the term "*morion.*"

[18]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, Email Correspondence, February 6, 2008.

as individuals would have put in.[19] Eli Obligacion recalls it was also around this time that pressures began to surface for elements of theater to more explicitly be worked into the *pugutan*. This, too, brought about the marginalization of the *pugutan's* original stakeholders, the barrio-dwelling *morions*. As the "elite *morion*" increasingly became the norm, even veteran *morions*, so long as they did not possess the resources to assemble together for use increasingly elaborate and costly centurion masks and other gear, simply fell back, and then eventually disappeared, on the idea that their quite evidently "hand-made" garments and masks were somehow demeaning the tradition.

In the 1960s, recalls Eli Obligacion, Governor Preclaro, who "looked the part," performed in the "theater" part of the Moriones Festival, in the role of Pontius Pilate.[20] Carmencita Reyes recalls also that not only Preclaro, but also his officials took part: "[o]fficials of Pontius Pilate were officials of the [Preclaro] government."[21] This development resituated the Boac *pugutan* within a tradition stemming from the Spanish colonial era according to which the local power elite possessed the right to arrogate to itself the plum roles in community-based dramatic activity.[22] Alejandro Roces, President Diosdado Macapagal's Education Secretary, had previously expressed the thought that the "*moriones* is a dying tradition," on account of its "indigenous design" elements and "homemade costumes."[23] The Philippines at the time was seeking to establish before its local publics, as well as upon the global stage, a national identity that was self-assured and modern, incorporating, but not overwhelmed by, traditions from its cultural past. Roces' words provided the *Kapatiran* (formerly the "The Order of the Moriones"), with the go-ahead they felt they needed to implement the aforementioned changes.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were also a time when, increasingly, the nation's cultural policies were being decided by First Lady Imelda

[19]Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*

[20]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

[21]Carmencita O. Reyes, Personal Interview, Lupa, Marinduque, Philippines, April 5, 2007.

[22]Resil B. Mojares, *Theatre in Society, Society in Theatre; Social History of a Cebuano Village, 1840-1940* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1985).

[23]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*

Marcos, Reyes' friend,[24] who not long before had built the massive Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), and inaugurated it in 1969 as both an edifice and as the bearer of a mandate to promote regional performance traditions for showcasing to domestic and foreign tourists alike. These cultural policies continue to motivate communities around the nation to identify, refine, and promote local performance traditions that simultaneously reflect their unique local characteristics and culture and open up to those outside the home culture.

Carmencita Reyes and the Emerging Sinakulo

Among Imelda Marcos' most significant early attempts to bring the cultures at the periphery to the center in Manila was the Nayong Pilipino, a cultural village designed to replicate the Philippines in miniature, with replicas installed in it of traditional dwellings from the country's major regions, and of the country's world-renowned natural formations, such as Mount Mayon and the Cordillera Rice Terraces. Regularly scheduled at the Nayong Pilipino as well were cultural performances that, when I first visited the somewhat disused site in 2001, consisted mostly of dances from the Muslim south.[25] Reyes formal involvement with the *moriones* dates back to this time, specifically to the year 1972, which was when Imelda Marcos communicated to her the request that she bring the *moriones* to the Nayong Pilipino's formal opening, for showcasing. To transform the Boac *Sinakulo* into something she could deem travel-worthy, Mrs. Reyes incorporated into it two significant staging practices which have become its trademark: (1) its transformation into an evening performance that would be possible to perform under theatrical lighting, and (2) lip-synching. Mrs. Reyes recalls that in the early 1970's Governor Preclaro "was playing with the script already." He had provided her with the opening she needed to introduce visuals, and a soundtrack that

[24]Reyes was one of Imelda Marcos' leading "Blue Ladies," a coterie of influential women from the country's wealthiest and most powerful families who accompanied the First Lady on trips and who constituted a kind of extended, well-heeled group of "Ladies who lunch."

[25]Closed in 2002 due to the expansion of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, a portion of the Nayong Pilipino was relocated to a site within the Clark Free Port in Pampanga, formally opening in 2007.

included dubbing, into the *moriones* event. With these enhancements, it would become deserving of being broadcast on national TV (ABS/CBN). As for the theatrical lighting, Mandia recalls her telling him how delighted she was to see onstage "the lighted *moriones*"; "honestly she told me — she was very amused. They looked so beautiful onstage [bathed in] all this lighting!"[26]

A sequence of events in the 1970s reinforced Carmencita Reyes' determination to improve the *Sinakulo* by expanding it in form, content, and length. On September 21, 1972, Martial Rule was declared throughout the nation. In 1973, the following year, to give it stronger legal footing, Marcos organized a Constitutional Convention that would rewrite the Philippine Constitution, but taking the *de facto* Martial Rule into account. The Interim National Assembly (*Batasang Pambansa*) subsequently mandated by this Constitution, and estbalished in 1978, catapulted Carmencita Reyes (whose husband already held the powerful Commissioner of Immigration), into the political limelight, with her election as Representative from Marinduque.[27] Around this time, she and Edmundo, her husband, took strenuous exception to then-Provincial Governor Aristeo Lecaroz plan "to make the *moriones* very interesting for people to see, for the tourists," by regulating how, where, and when they could be deployed for performance purposes. As Mrs. Reyes recounts it, Governor Lecaroz had even railroaded the passage of an ordinance stipulating that henceforth the *moriones* would be staged in one municipality at a time. The first municipality would be Boac, insofar as it was the capital of the province. In 1974 that was. Then in 1975 [it was decreed that] the *moriones* would go to Gasan. That was when the authorities of Boac went to see my husband who was then Commissioner of Immigration, and they told him that according to the ordinance of the Governor there would be no *moriones* in any other municipality of Marinduque [than Gasan... And my husband said, 'you cannot legislate against tradition.'[28]

To ensure that Boac would be able to mount its own *Moriones* Festival that year, Mrs. Reyes recounts: "I stayed here, watching over them [the *morions*]; we were afraid the governor would sanction them

[26]Danilo Ledesma Mandia,, 2005, *op. cit.*

[27]The Batasang Pambansa replaced the bicameral Congress, which Marcos dissolved in 1972upon his declaration of Martial Law.

[28]Carmencita O. Reyes, 2007, *op. cit.*

for defying the ordinance."

Boac today is best known for its *Sinakulo*; Mogpog for its insistence upon traditional *moriones* attire and its resistance to dictation from the outside; Santa Cruz for its older women performing in grass skirts; Gasan, as Mandia puts it, for the fact that its inhabitants tend to be "more progressive because they entertain ideas." These towns' competing interests, on top of the fact that they often are at variance with the Provincial Government as to which elements of the tradition ought to be showcased, how much of them, and where, continue to imbue the Festival with a certain amount of tension. Reyes' critics complain about the fact that, to all intents and purposes, the *Moriones* Festival, and the *Sinakulo* in particular, have become "a project of the Provincial Government."[29] To register his objections to the Provincial Government's interference in their local affairs, the Mayor of Gasan, in 2007, suspended the lively Gasan Gasan, a street-theatre festival and competition.[30] 2007, however, was an election year, so, as Eli Obligacion sees it, the maneuver very likely was politically motivated. Whatever it was, the fact that a local Mayor had set himself on a collision course with Mrs. Reyes in the matter of local municipalities' ownership of their own *moriones*-related practices, is an index of the extent to which the tradition has been politicized.

Reyes' decision to become actively involved with the *moriones* was occasioned by a performance she remembers being at, in the time of Lecaroz as governor:

> [S]omewhere in the play, Longino says, *"Si Kristo ang isang Dios* [Christ is the true God]." And the children would repeat those [lines] and they would pray... and I asked myself, "What do these children know about Christ?... [T]hey are products of the public schools, in which there is no religious instruction. So I started becoming curious and I went to Malolos [in Bulacan] where the *Sinakulo* is very popular, and I invited them [to visit us] here.[31]

[29]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*
[30]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*
[31]Carmencita O. Reyes, 2007, *op. cit.*

In 1977 the Bulacan *sinakulistas* obliged. They performed at Boac's main covered court, taking "from Monday to Friday [to finish] because [the *Pasyon*] was too long to present in one sitting."[32] In Mrs. Reyes' estimation, they came across unbelievably "folklorish, really folklorish!" There was little in their performance that was appealing, least of all to youthful auditors. Although round the clock chanting of the *payson* in Tagalog is practiced throughout the Philippines during Holy Week, the chanters work in shifts, and no one is ever expected to sit through an entire reading. The objective is, get through with the chanting. It was not as important to the Bulacan *sinakulistas*, therefore, that they hold anyone's attention, as that they be able to chant the *Pasyon* in its entirety. Boac as yet possessed no *Sinakulo* tradition, only an expanded skit on Longinus – a lacuna Mrs. Reyes had hoped to fill by adapting the *Sinakulo* to Marinduque. In its adapted form, however, it would not be excessively long, or "folklorish." Rather, it would be adapted to the stage, broadly depict salvation history (from Genesis to Christ's passion), and be compact because "people who came to it would still have to work on Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday." She set it to start, therefore, not on Monday, but Wednesday. "Material from the Old Testament [would come] on Wednesday and, on Thursday, the baptism of Christ and the miracles of Christ... and, on Friday, the *Via Cruces*." To be sure, many were sceptical of the value of her idea. Mrs. Reyes' retort to them was that the *Via Cruces* had always been "depicted by the *morions*... the only thing I did [new] was to introduce Christ's burial, and anticipate that on the next day, Saturday, he would rise."[33]

To get her vision for a *Sinakulo* for Marinduque off the drawing board, Mrs. Reyes contracted professional writers to prepare an appropriate script for it. She also moved the staging of the *pugutan* from Sunday morning to the evening of the day before. What occasioned this specific change was the prospect of a visit from King Juan Carlos of Spain who, in 1977, "wrote the First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Marcos, that a group of Menorcan pilgrims [was making its way] to the Philippines," to Marinduque specifically, to begin the cause of "beatification [on behalf of] Fr. Diego de Saura, a Jesuit priest who had served [on the

[32]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

[33]Carmencita O. Reyes, 2007, *op. cit.*

island] in 1631."[34] One hundred and twenty pilgrims from the north of Spain subsequently made their way to Marinduque, bearing Father Saura's remains.[35] In 1979, the King Juan Carlos himself came, with a sizable retinue. The royal visitors were treated to a "twenty minute presentation of the *pugutan*" on Saturday night, in the glow of stage lighting provided by technicians from Manila's Folk Arts Theatre. All of it took place on the spacious grounds of Mrs. Reyes' Lupac residence, the seaside location of which, together with its easier-to-manage security features [in contrast to those of the very public Boac covered court], had made it the perfect site.[36] From that time on, the *pugutan* – now the highlight of Marinduque's three-night *Sinakulo* – has retained its spot on Saturday night. "I was criticized for changing the tradition," says Reyes, "[but] it was not me who wanted it in the evening." Experiencing from really close up "the beauty of an evening presentation," which carried with it the opportunity for dramatic stage lighting, the performers themselves requested it – they petitioned me to "change the time and put it on Saturday evening rather than on Sunday morning."[37]

Some say, however, that moving the *pugutan* from Easter Sunday to Holy Saturday is responsible for its decline as a Holy Week tourist draw, and they tacitly blame Mrs. Reye for it. Factors other than Mrs. Reyes' intervention precipitated the shift, however. In the mid-1970s, dignitaries from Manila arrived on special cruise ships, to witness the Easter Sunday *pugutan*, including Helen Elizabeth Morgan (UK), and

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] For the record, it should be noted that, in the end, Father Diego de Saura was not beatified. Essential to any cause of beatification is a demonstration of the fact that Fr. Saura had been martyred. Mrs. Reyes told me in a 2007 interview that she "argued Father Diego de Saura could not have been martyred here because the Moros were never able to come ashore because of the Virgin." Reyes is talking about the Virgin of Biglang Awa, venerated in Boac for scaring away marauding Moors by appearing miraculously at the site of the Boac Cathedral. Reyes tells me her husband was not pleased by the fact that she had talked an official delegation out of the beatification of one of Marinduque's own. Having spent time in her company on more than one occasion, I have gotten to know her well enough to know she could have persuaded King Carlos himself to change his mind on the matter. Any claim about Moro power in Marinduque would be contrary to her belief that Marinduque is one of the earliest, and remains one of the strongest, bastions of Philippine Catholicism.

[36] Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2008, *op. cit.*

[37] Carmencita O.Reyes, 2007, *op. cit.*

Amparo Munõz (Spain), the 1974 winners of the Miss World and Miss Universe Contests respectively; William McCormick Blair Jr., the then U.S. Ambassador to the country; and Doña Josefa Edralin Marcos, the mother of President Marcos.[38] Such important guests required protection from Sunday morning's scorching heat. Obligacion adds, "[Imelda Marcos'] Blue Ladies[39] came as well," although you could tell from their squeamishness that they did not much relish proceeding to the Boac riverbed upon their arrival to witness the *pugutan* in the sweltering summer sun.[40] Mrs. Reyes herself, Mandia reminds us, is notoriously fair complexioned. One may scoff at these as being flimsy excuses for shifting the *pugutan's* time slot from Easter Sunday morning to the evening of the day before, but in the regal Marcos era they had to be taken seriously.[41]

We mentioned earlier that, in 1978, Reyes became one of Region Four's, with 3.5 million voters (inclusive of Marinduque), electoral congressional representatives.[42] "There were 20 candidates for 20 positions," Mrs. Reyes reminisces, which assured her of a spot, but she was determined to rank decently in the electoral tabulation. Since election outcomes depend greatly on a candidate's ability to communicate with her constituents, Mrs. Reyes worked hard to improve her Tagalog, their language. Her efforts paid off: "I was #1 in Quezon because of the way I spoke; I was #2 in Batangas; I was #2 in Mindoro because of my Tagalog. They [Marcos' party, the KBL[43]] wanted me because of my Tagalog."[44] But Mrs. Reyes' newly developed skills in the language paid off in another way. It enabled her to develop, alongside of writer Celso Carunungan,[45] the *Sinakulo* script for deployment in her own province. While the exact nature of their

[38]Carmencita O.Reyes, Interview by Danilo Mandia, 5 December 2001, In Danilo Ledesma Mandia, *Moryon: Panata sa Likod ng Maskara,* M.A. Thesis, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, 2002, Appendix 1, 253-263.

[39]See footnote 23 above.

[40]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

[41]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*

[42]Carmencita O.Reyes, 2007, *op. cit.*

[43]KBL is an acronym for Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, or New Society Movement.

[44]Carmencita O. Reyes, 2007, *op. cit.*

[45]Carunungan's interest in the Marinduque *Sinakulo* dates back to the time he visited Marinduque in the company of Alejandro Roces, President Diosdado Macapagal's (1961-65) Education Secretary.

collaboration remains unclear,[46] it is certain Mrs. Reyes personally attended to significant portions of it.[47] She, however, graciously credits Carunungan for "[making] it more interesting," for adding to it a "human touch." She admits, for instance, that the story involving Claudia, was his idea. He wanted to project something of a romantic side to Longinus, and a Claudia who "at one time [was] infatuated with Longhino" [as Longinus is known in Tagalog], but whose destiny was at the same time tied to that of Pontius Pilate, just seemed perfect to him.[48] To this day, at every one of its performances, Carunungan is credited for having produced the script, although it must not be forgotten that, while Carunungan may have produced the words, Mrs. Reyes provided the drive and the wherewithal (not to mention its lead performers, supplied by the provincial government), in the absence of which not one word would have found its way into the *Sinakulo*.

Mrs. Reyes', additionally, brought in technical and dramatic personnel from Manila's Folk Arts Theater arrived as well, to train the performers, interjecting into their effots good dramatic technique. The people from the FAT supplied the voice tracks of God and Longinus, to be used in the performance. These booming, if rather wooden, voices, recorded a generation ago, remain a feature to this day of the Marinduque *Sinakulo*. They convey, not so much the melodrama of modern radio drama, as an intimation – by means of special effects reminiscent of Hollywood's *The Ten Commandments* – of the realm

[46]In the entry on the event in the *Encyclopedia of the Cultural Center of the Philippines,* Nicanor Tiongson says, "In the 1970s the playlet was replaced by a longer scripted play by Celso Al. Carunungan that 'uses the stage and adjacent grounds, taped dialogue and background music, mostly from the movie *The Ten Commandments*'" (1994:95).

[47]Reyes is in many ways the consummate theatre artist who performs a role but yet seems so comfortable in it that she does not appear to be performing at all. As her guest, I was given a formal welcoming ceremony or *putong* in Boac along with two additional guests. I learned later that the lyrics accompanying the sung portion of the presentation had been written by Reyes earlier in the day and transmitted to the singer by mobile phone. When the event was over, she apologized for not being able to offer the crowns with a morion crest that had been specifically designed for such welcoming ceremonies.

[48]*Ibid.*

of transcendence.[49] A number of Philippine cathedrals, notably the Baguio Cathedral in the mountainous province of Benguet, persist in deploying similar recordings to summon the faithful to church.

In the 1980s, the three-night *Sinakulo*, the Good Friday procession and Crucifixion, and other cognate events, became official projects of the Marinduque provincial government, giving Mrs. Reyes "the power to issue instructions to all government people for them to participate." No one, however, performs in it against his or her will.[50] People, in fact, participate in it avidly – their reason for doing so, their *panata* or need to make some recompense to God for some prayer they had been granted by him. Ten former and current *Sinakulo* performers told me this, including Marian Cunanan who, as a senior official in Mrs. Reyes' Provincial Government, played Claudia, Pilate's wife, for two years in succession. According to Cunanan, *panata* ranked high on her list, although she gives others, such as friendly companionship; the experience of working with others to establish community; the knowledge that your every gesture onstage, your bearing, your costuming, is a thing of interest to the viewers; the compliments you receive for simply having been part of the production. "After [Holy Week] when you walk on the streets... they call you Claudia."[51]

Setting and Preserving the Sinakulo as a New Tradition

In the 1980s a succession of performance directors pursued the development of the *Sinakulo* into what it is today.[52] Among other things, they brought the performances to a large outdoor amphitheatre built by the Provincial Government specifically with the staging of the event in mind, on the floodplain of the Boac River. Also, in 1990, they commissioned a Manila-based entertainment company renowned for its work in mime to engage the local actors, fix up their choreography, blocking, staging. The performers today still lip-synch a soundtrack

[49]Nicanor Tiongson, *Cultural Center of the Philippines Encyclopedia of Philippine Art,* Volume VII, Philippine Theatre (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), p. 95.

[50]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

[51]Cunanan, Marian, Personal Interview, Lupa, Marinduque, Philippines, 5 April 2007.

[52]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*

from this decade, creating in the auditor the odd feeling he is not so much gazing upon a theatrical production as viewing filmic stage pictures with a voice over. The action onstage consists in grand, sweeping gestures, overly melodramatic at times, creating in viewers a variety of effects, depending on their positionality *viz-a-viz* the stage. If they are looking out upon it from bleachers running all along one side of Morion Park, what they will see is beautifully composed, and colorful, theatrical tableaux crystallizing key moments in the dramatic action. If they are standing in the spaces immediately contiguous to the vast outdoor stage running along the theater's two axes, the mobile and mainly youthful audience likely to be found there, will experience the thrill of quite literally being *in* the performance – no small thing when, at the end of the second *Sinakulo,* Judas hangs himself, or when, at the conclusion of the third, Longinus is beheaded.

These developments, however, are not well regarded universally. One greatly respected director of theater, based at the University of the Philippines, advised me in 2005 not to bother with the event because it was "bad theater." In stark contrast to the delight that its amateur performers take in their annual participation in Marinduque's three-night *Sinakulo*, people professionally trained in theater generally view it as a kind of a creaky relic with limited appeal the masses.

Local Marinduqueños took over the direction of the event in the 1990s. J. R. Malitao, its present director, an employee of the provincial government, commenced directing the *Sinakulo* in 1994, following seven years of prior involvement in it in various capacities. While he admits he learned the ropes relating to its most basic blocking and acting protocols from professional director Ed Alcantara, "every year I change it." His own aim, he says, straddles the production of "realistic" action, and the utilization of "space as part of the actor." Because the action occurs outdoors, to appear realistic, it must be grandiose.[53] Under Malitao's directorial tenure, realism has also involved such a use of space as to achieve significantly more than merely suggest the location. The temple scenes, for instance, are staged within, but also out front, a large Roman-style temple or *scaenae frons,* with sufficient physical depth for up to fifty actors to be able to operate in it. Malitao

[53]Rufino "JR" Malitao, Jr., Personal Interview, Boac, Marinduque, Philippines, 5 April 2007.

has been able to do this because, following the destruction of the old *Sinakulo* stage in a typhoon that devastated the province in November 1987, an outdoors performance area was established on a massive mound of earth held in place by a retaining wall. Upon this area are situated Calvary, Jesus' Tomb, the Garden of Gethsemane, a waterfall and a pool for Jesus' Baptism scene with St. John the Baptist, the tree upon which Judas hangs himself, as well as a number of connecting spaces capable of being made to represent various outdoor locations. There is room upon this vast outdoors proscenium for 150 or so actor/participants to operate in. Numbers and realism are deemed important by Malitao, in relation especially to the betrayal and arrest of Christ, as well as to the "love triangle" between Longinus, Claudia, and Pontius Pilate, culminating in Longinus' execution.

Besides serving as its director, Malitao plays in the role of John the Baptist. In 2007, his co-actors were Marivic Lozada, in the role of Claudia, and Glenn Arevalo, in the role of Longinus. Others who play major parts in the *Sinakulo* tend to work for the Provincial Government, although the performer who plays in Christ's role is the notable exception, more often than not being recruited externally. Malitao estimates that of the *Sinakulo's* 150 or so yearly performers,

half are students – its "changing faces."[54]

In many respects, the *Sinakulo's* acting is reminiscent of that in Cebu's small-town *linambay* or *komedya,* circa the end of the Spanish Colonial era, which Resil Mojares describes in *Theatre in Society, Society in Theatre; Social History of a Cebuano Village,* 1840-1940. "[T]he actors' faces [in the *linambay* remain] generally immobile and expressionless" because, he writes,

> [i]n this type of play, the dissolution of personality into flat characters enhances the play's overall expressive power. It distances the action and invests it with the character of ritual. It also removes the static that may be caused by the personality of the actor (e.g. an oppressive landlord acting as the King or a petty tyrant dressed up as a duke). It is the play which is important.[55]

While actors in the *Sinakulo* are not typically "expressionless," their emotions are telegraphed, occurring without much nuance; and while their gestural body language is broad, they seem relatively rigid and static. They do not imbue their characters with the emotional intensity of "method acting," which of course makes it possible for a provincial governor to play in the notorious role of Pontius Pilate, as Governor Preclaro did in the 1960s. The words are what are meant to be heard; the actors are simply the mediators who navigate the space between audience and the word. Mojares also notes about the *linambay*: "the play does not seek to recreate language as it is actually spoken in the community, but aspires, rather, to heighten its material through the use of a formal abstracted idiom."[56] The booming hypermasculine, but at the same time, stiffly formal, tones of God and Longinus, along with the modulated words of wisdom lip-synched by Christ on his Cross, resemble such formal and abstract presentations as Mojares refers to.

[54]*Ibid.*

[55]Resil B. Mojares, *Theatre in Society, Society in Theatre; Social History of a Cebuano Village,* 1840-1940 (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1985), p. 84.

[56]*Ibid.*, p. 85.

Competing Morions

The impact upon what has developed into the principal event of the *Moriones Festival,* namely the three-night *Sinakulo*, of powerful local patroness Carmencita Reyes and of the Marinduque provincial government, is indisputable. But what of the *moriones* themselves? What is the nature of their relationship with the local power elite? We noted earlier that the members of "The Order of the Moriones," and then of the *Kapatiran*, its successor group, chose to closely model their festival appearances after those of the "Roman centurion" popularized in 1950s and early-1960s movies. We also noted that the *morions* originally came from the ranks of Marinduque's working poor, the farmers and fishermen who generally lived in the province's smaller barrios, but who chose to serve as *morions* at the appointed times in fulfillment of a deeply personal *panata*. These latter folk generally donned homemade outfits that today would be regarded as "folkloric." But from the 1960s on, *morion* demographics changed as those from the larger towns found cause to sign up as *morions*, and brought into the practice financial resources which enabled them to outfit themselves in relatively expensive costuming – expensive masks and accompanying headgear, pricey costumes complete with the cape, breastplate, leggings, sandals, accoutrements such as shields, manacles, and swords. The *morion* masks and costuming from an earlier time, pieced together from whatever was immediately available – which are still possible to find in Marinduque's smaller towns, such as Mogog – have mostly now been substituted with their more "Hollywoodised" counterparts. The merger of the *pugutan* with the larger Festival consisting of a decisively theatricalized *sinakulo* mounted at night upon a vast stage with professional lighting and a powerful sound system, has obviously influenced the government into favoring the more elitist forms of *morion* practice on account, precisely, of its unmistakably theatrical character. *The Kapatiran*, indeed, is impressive onstage in their resplendent costumes and attention grabbing masks. On Good Friday they present a fine picture as they trudge alongside of Jesus and the two thieves, but as a tight group, shoving, pushing, beating Christ up, but never losing control. On the third and final night of the *sinakulo*, they move to center stage just when Longinus, who had been one of their number, becomes the first Roman convert to Christianity. They

are subsequently put in charge of the pursuit and arrest of Longinus, and of his public execution by beheading. They put Longinus in a raised position upon a hillside so as to maximaize the impact of the mock beheading. The *Sinakulo* today is unthinkable without the active and organized participation of this elite unit of *morions*.

In 2003, however, a competing group called Mistah was established. Open to all who wish to fulfill a *panata* by participating in the event as a *morion*, Mistah claims no other objective than to "promote the real lessons of the tradition," in opposition to simple acquiescence to the "show-biz mentality" favored by the *Kapatiran*.[57] Affiliated with the BNP Movement, a Catholic charismatic organization,[58] Mistah seeks a return to the earlier practice by which penitents "provide their own costumes, in their own different way, in any capacity they can... regardless of whether it's expensive or not."[59] Mistah member Ricky Vergara asserts, "nobody can dictate what we do," and that everything is "done for the benefit of the group." This contrasts, he believes, with the Kapatiran's susceptibility to "government dictates" in relation to how they must present themselves.[60] Such is the case, asserts Pedro Magturo, because Kapatiran "funds come from government's coffers... from the personal funding of the provincial governor."[61] On the face of it, then, the distinction between the groups lies in the fact that one group gets funding from the government whereas the other does not. Indeed, many in Boac believe that because the Kapatiran is favored by the provincial government, it has become a mainstay of the *Sinakulo*, whereas the newer group, Mistah, although a strong presence in Boac during Holy Week, is largely left to its own devices.

In 2005 Mistah solicited and successfully obtained corporate sponsorship from the Globe Corporation, one of the Philippines' top mobile phone service providers. In consequence of Mistah's tie-up with Globe, tarpaulins of a fierce-looking *morion*, juxtaposed with the words "Globe" and "Mistah," waved from virtually every telephone pole in Boac, in time for the Holy Week observances of 2005. When I first caught sight of them, I assumed "Mistah" was the brand name of a

[57]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*
[58]Eli Obligacion, 2007, *op. cit.*
[59]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*
[60]Ricky Vergara, Personal Interview, Boac, Marinduque, Philippines, 7 April 2007.
[61]Pedro "Peter" Magturo, 2007, *op. cit.*

type of mobile phone service that would deliver enhanced receptivity to the inhabitants of this relatively remote island in a nation of text messaging addicts. Mandia tells me that the matter generated some controversy upon being taken up at a meeting of the Boac City Council.

The upshot of the meeting, however, was that Mistah would be allowed to maintain its partnership with the Globe Corporation, considering that the majority of its members were people from the barrios, without access to the resources that their more affluent counterparts in the Kapatiran would normally be able to count on. Besides, Mistah had obtained corporate funding for its mission

leaning on no one but itself.[62] So while there was some irony to Mistah partnering with a humongous business enterprise whose goals appeared to be diametrically opposite to Mistah's objective of returning people to earlier, unadorned *morion* practices, it was only right that the support Mistah received from the Globe Corporation would mostly be used to purchase food and bottled water for their members to use, given the fact that they already would have foregone an entire week's worth of work to become *morions* for that equivalent amount of time.

In 2007, the two groups faced off over Mistah's revival of the Sunday *pugutan*. While there was always some disagreement over the extent to which the Sunday *pugutan* disappeared from local practice, Mistah worked to reappropriate it, in the scale in which it existed prior to the mid-1970s. So in 2007, Mistah enacted the *pugutan* at the covered

[62]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*

court in central Boac. They began with the sentencing of Longinus, and then when he had made good his escape, chased after him through the streets of town for the better part of an hour, and when they had captured him, proceeded to behead him, despite the fact that on the previous night, his counterpart in the *Sinakulo* had already been made to suffer the same fate. Ordinarily, Mistah's efforts would have been seen as an affront to the provincial government. Still, it had succeeded in making its point. In 2007, however, the provincial government entrusted to the Kapatiran oversight duties in regard to the Sunday *pugutan,* despite the fact it was Mistah, not the Kapatiran, that had lobbied hard to get it reinstated. All Mistah members could do was bristle over this slight on their initiative taking.

Boac as "Little Jerusalem" and the Maintenance of Heirarchies

Mrs. Reyes' ambitions for the Boac event were always more than modest. She recalls that back in the 1970s, "I wanted to make Boac like a little Jerusalem, with nobody using pants, and everybody using kaftans."[63] And when her friends saw her theatricalised version of the *pugutan* in 1979, they essentially "told me, go to Oberammergau." She was all set to live in Oberammergau for 120 days, from May to September, 1980. "Unfortunately, a few days before I was supposed to go, my mother had a heart attack." Mrs. Reyes tells me, "when [those who went] came back, they told me, 'you know Carmencita, you can do better than Oberammergau because your passion play is scheduled for the right time.'" She then tells me: "I think that it [the Boac *Sinakulo*] is much better than Oberammergau... because it plays at the right time [Holy Week]." "The only thing is to... get someone to translate it into English."[64]

Under Mrs. Reyes' watch, the wild, at times anarchic, energy of the *pugutan* has been tamed. To be sure, when she installed what had been a singular, stand-alone event, within the parameters of the concluding Saturday night *Sinakulo*, she was not being entirely resonant in relation to the tenor, tone, and content of the main events of Holy Week. On Black Saturday, Christ is *not yet* "risen." The promise of the Resurrection

[63]Reyes, Carmencita O., 2007, *op. cit.*
[64]*Ibid.*

has not yet been actualized. Yet what the *pugutan* is dramatizing is the conversion and martyrdom of the first Roman convert to Christianity. As Mandia flatly observes, "When we're celebrating, God's still dead."[65] The inference is that the celebratory tone of the final *Sinakulo*, with its grand dramatic concluding gesture, seems inappropriate before the celebration of the Resurrection. Sunday night is something else. Recently, the Moriones Festival closed with a "Battle of the Bands" taking place in the Boac covered court – an event that somehow provided a festive ending to a long period of penance, quiet vigil, ascetics, hardship. Occurring as it did on the heels of Easter Mass, the timing of the original *pugutan* provided people an opportunity to release in Easter song (now, of the rock music kind) the wild energy that had accumulated over Holy Week. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that as a result of tinkering with the time-assignment of the singular event for which the city had once been world renowned, Boac has not experienced an increase in the inflow into it of religious tourism, but instead the collapse of its culture into something like Mrs. Reyes' "mini-Jerusalem."

As an individual with a long history of involvement in the politics and arts in Marinduque, Mandia is highly critical of Mrs. Reyes, although he admits they "are working together right now."[66] Nevertheless, he makes a distinction between changes imposed upon it from the outside by personages such as Mrs. Reyes, and those more organic and internal to the tradition. When, for instance, Augustin Madrigal created in the 1960s the Order of the Moriones to compete with the barrio-based tradition of the *morion*, he instigated a shift away from the *panata* with its homespun practices, towards a slicker, more Hollywood-influenced visual aesthetic. Mandia emphasizes, however, that the shift took place internally to Boac. "Internal changes are more acceptable to me than external changes," Mandia asserts.[67] Yet in a country like the Philippines where religion and politics have traditionally been inseparable, there is an extent to which the external interferences to the tradition exemplified by Reyes' interventions is about as Filipino a practice as one can imagine.

[65]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, 2005, *op. cit.*
[66]*Ibid.*
[67]*Ibid.*

By way of conclusion, I would like to return to the model of cultural production Resil Mojares identifies as operational in colonial Cebu over a century ago. Mojares notes that on a superstructural level the conditions of production were controlled by the elite on top who wrote the scripts, controlled the staging, and acted in the key roles. He argues that this schema reinforces existing social hierarchies. What is striking about the Boac Moriones Festival is how the provincial government has essentially replicated that same process by controlling the staging, funding, script development, and by placing its own employees in key acting roles. Mojares' description of the superstructure underpinning the *linamby (komedya)* tradition in a Cebuano village mirrors, almost to the letter, current production practices in Marinduque:

Such ideological superstructure has its basis on two levels: (1) the organization of the *linambay* production and (2) the social organization of the village itself. On the first level, we see that the leading active functions in the tradition are commonly performed by members of the village elite. They are the deputies who compose the *kapunongan ni San Roque* and as such make decisions on the celebration of the fiesta and the staging of the *linambay.* They generally compose the scripts, assign the roles, direct the plays, pay for the costumes, and supply the food (or organize its supply). They often perform the leading roles themselves (Kings, princes, princesses) and have the most speaking lines and the richest costumes.[68]

He concludes, "[t]he *linambay*, then, may be viewed as a sanctification of social inequality. It is a feudal form both in its system of production as well as its order of symbolic values. It celebrates and perpetuates the existence of an elite and its vision of the world."[69]

By laying exclusive claim to the *Sinakulo* form in Boac, the provincial government in Marinduque under Reyes' leadership has been doing much the same thing, essentially "re-feudalizing" this area of the Philippines by controlling the production resources, staging, and content of what had been a folk tradition. Efforts to create performance work perceived as operating in opposition to the government's project, have been intimidated or marginalized.[70] What Geertz has termed

[68]Resil B. Mojares, 1985, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[69]*Ibid.*, p. 92.

[70]Instances of attempts to marginalize new works and intimidate theatre artists were recounted by Danilo Mandia, Rudy Maripusque, and Eli Obligacion in interviews.

"depeasantization," appears to have happened in Marinduque.[71] In this situation, mass culture and technology have combined with the hierarchies in the political order to prevent the old peasantry from maintaining and developing "locally based moral, political, or economic institutions of any real vigor."[72] Without the possibility of being able to contribute to the life of the community in a meaningful way through organizations that have a civic outlet and that reinforce a wider sense that the peasants (or the men from the barrios of Boac) constitute a meaningful part of the whole, there is nothing but their roles within the family in which to place themselves. As Mojares puts it, "there is no middle ground of community organizational life between family and nation."[73] One is an individual only within a family and increasingly without a place to stand in the world outside. It is the inability of the individual to find a place outside the family and within a larger civic community that continues to vex the Philippines and contribute to a political order that benefits the few and disempowers the masses. The election of the relatively populist Jose Antonio N. "Bong" Carrion as Marinduque's new Provincial Governor in 2007 may well bring about some dynamic changes to the *Moriones* Festival. Or perhaps nothing will change at all, as is too often the case when it comes to politics in the Philippines. After all, according to Mandia,[74] the new governor was elected promising to bring *huweteng*[75] to Marinduque, and gambling will only serve to further impoverish the poor and disenfranchised while enriching the powerful and well connected.

[71]Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion,* Michael Barton, ed. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1968), pp. 1-45.

[72]Resil B. Mojares, 1985, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

[73]*Ibid.*

[74]Danilo Ledesma Mandia, Email Correspondence, 6 February 2008.

[75]*Huweteng*, a word derived from Hokkien Chinese, is used to refer generically to gambling. Jueteng, related etymologically, is the illegal numbers racket popular with many Filipinos.