

NARRATIVIZING INTRAMUROS: A COUNTERDISCOURSE TO NEOCOLONIALISM

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Abstract

This article is a textual analysis of two short stories of Pedro S. Dandan who has articulated for Filipinos their political unconscious against the onslaught of colonial domination. In his works we read how Filipinos confront socio-political problems of war, squatting, poverty in everyday lives. Since most of his stories depict Manila in its early phase of urbanization, it is interesting to note how such stories offer a crucial perspective to the real socio-political problems we are still experiencing today. Reading his works in light of our contemporary problems will reveal the various interplay of forces of control and resistance. Dandan's short stories narrativize these forces and allow us to see how problems are assessed and reassessed. Conveniently, Dandan's stories are narrativization of our roles as subjects in a continued effort for improvement and further emancipation. In the works of Dandan, we pose also the question of who we are in relation to this domination and how we can recognize ourselves as agents of transformation in our society. These articulations have generative resonances to our own real situation and condition. In this paper, Intramuros is not only a convenient setting in Dandan's stories, rather Intramuros becomes the narrative of Filipinos' colonial experience and counter-colonial sentiments.

Keywords

city, colonial discourse, Manila, Pedro S. Dandan

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The dual city is not simply the urban social structure resulting from the juxtaposition of the rich and the poor, the yuppies and the homeless, but the result of simultaneous and articulated processes of growth and decline.

—Manuel Castells

INTRAMUROS LOST, INTRAMUROS REGAINED

Recently, the September 11 incident has shown that architecture bears the brunt of terrorism. Both New York and Washington DC being sites of terrorist activities indicate that terrorism is more than just the destruction of lives and properties; it is also about undermining symbolic powers. The terrorists have made their point (and indeed at a very high price) by destroying the World Trade Center and attacking the Pentagon, symbols of US economic and military power. Cognizant of the fact that architecture played an important role in accentuating imperial power in the past, it is not surprising therefore, that architecture today is also subjected to various resistive forces, not excluding destructive ones. Buildings are destroyed, spaces are reclaimed, and places are cleared. As to what all these changes in space amount to is a paramount aspect of discourse analysis. One has to resort to a discourse analysis to understand the interplay of forces of control and resistance.

Michel Foucault defines discourse as “unnoticed” power-producing systems that legitimize and support each other for purposes of control of and resistance to domination. Discourse is unnoticed because it passes off as commonsensical and natural for someone subjected to it. Apparently, this naturalness is only an impression of power that simultaneously re/produces this effect on other agents within the systems.¹ Put simply, terrorists today are engaged in discourse analysis in as much as anyone else. But one need not be a terrorist to study the conflicting terrain of any discourse. If there’s one thing we learned about terrorism on September 11, terrorism can be traced back to the most intimate roots of our speech and signification. Discourse analysis therefore is about power relations. Like ideology, discourse questions power. However, unlike ideology, discourse is not false consciousness in which agency or subjectivity is located outside its ambit. There is no way a subject or an agent can stand outside discourse. In discourse, the subject experiences both material subjection in relations of production and signification, consciously and unconsciously, in various institutional disciplines and practices.

Subjectivity is crucial in discourse analysis. A discursive reading eschews the reductive historicism on the one hand and the essentialist project of hermeneutical phenomenology on the other. Without considering the complexity of the subject’s role, analysis tends to be romanticized and idealized. This is quite evident in phenomenology, where the individual’s projection of meaning assumes an essential and universal character.² Thus, in phenomenology, historical and socio-economic forces are bracketed in an individual’s attempt to understand a particular phenomenon. Consequently, such bracketing accentuates the role of individuals, a privileging of the subject that negates the social dimension of discourse. Fredric Jameson argues that apolitical texts are symptoms of

reification and privatization of contemporary life, and these texts reconfirm:

that structural, experiential, and conceptual gap between the public and the private, between the social and psychological, or the political and the poetic, between history or society and the “individual”, which—the tendential law of social life under capitalism—maims our existence as individual subjects and paralyzes our thinking about time and change just as surely as it alienates us from our speech itself. (20)

In a discursive reading, the subject may be seen as an agency and a victim at the same time. However, instead of overemphasizing subjectivity or completely annihilating it, a realistic approach to subjectivity necessitates a critical assessment of the subjects’ relations to systems of ideas or *epistemes* and their concomitant practices and disciplines. Foucault cautions against projecting power as a monopoly and he believes that this is a facile tendency that one should combat. One must abandon the idea that there is always a principal form of oppression from which one has to liberate oneself. Such a simplistic approach to subjectivity and power results in an inclination to seek out some cheap form of archaism or some imaginary past forms of happiness that people did not, in fact, have (153-4). To be critical is to locate subjectivity in various relations of power.

Perhaps, we may not be able to relate totally to the events of September 11. We have enough problems of our own. But like the terrorists’ attack against US, we, too, experience terrorism in various guises and forms. Sometimes we even act complicitly with these acts of terrorism without knowing how we are also subjected in the same logic of power. Terrorism or the acts of terrorists spin out from other aspects of our lives although there is no reason one power relation cannot be considered as fundamental. Power is both assumed to be something that is identical with the terror of colonialism and its more benign form of institutional practices. Using discourse analysis, one can see these power operations. In this paper, *Intramuros*³ becomes an interesting point of departure for understanding the interplay of power because the place evokes a kind of sentimental feeling about the colonial past of the Philippines. At the same time, it provides a venue for critical reflection regarding how we relate to past and present problems. For example, *Intramuros*, as a testimony to the subjection of Filipinos as a people, allows us to see how the present problem of squatting becomes a symptom of problems of identity and nationhood. It is not surprising that a lot of Filipino writers use Manila, if not *Intramuros*, as their setting to bring these problems to our attention.

Discourse analysis is needed not only to situate our subjectivity but also to provide

a more transparent view of our condition. Oftentimes, Filipino writers bemoan the loss of Intramuros by romanticizing the place inordinately in their works and hence they succeed only in obscuring the real conditions of oppressions. However there are writers today in Philippine literature who take seriously the problems of colonialism in their work. Pedro S. Dandan⁴ is one of those who, I believe, has articulated for us our political unconscious against the onslaught of colonial domination. Dandan wrote short stories and it is quite evident in his works how Filipinos confront socio-political problems of war, squatting, and poverty in everyday lives. Most of his stories depict Manila in its early phase of urbanization and thus it is interesting to note how such stories offer a crucial perspective to the real socio-political problems we are still experiencing today. Reading his works in light of our contemporary problems will reveal the various interplay of forces of control and resistance. Dandan's short stories narrativize these forces and allow us to see how problems are assessed and reassessed. Conveniently, Dandan's stories are narrativizations of Intramuros, where we reassess also our roles as subjects in a continued effort for improvement and further emancipation. In the works of Dandan, we pose also the question of who we are in relation to this domination and how we can recognize ourselves as agents of transformation in our society. These articulations have generative resonances in our own real situation and condition. In this paper, Intramuros is both narrativized as colonial and counter-colonial.

This paper aims to discuss two things: first, to describe Intramuros not as a phenomenology of a place but as surface relations of power and subjects, and second, to offer a counterdiscourse to colonial power. As surface relations, borders and lines are re/drawn and territories remapped. Intramuros read as surface relations then becomes a discursive site of contestation. Accordingly, the subjects too reassess their linkages and alignments and in their bid to power they naturally question and reclaim spaces. Thus, in Intramuros we see a formation of colonial discourse, but Dandan's stories contradict this formation of colonial power. Although we mourn the loss of a heritage, perhaps something is regained in terms of our experience of colonial space. Sometimes, our loss is an occasion for celebration.

INTRAMUROS AS A COLONIAL DISCOURSE

The historic Intramuros dubbed as the *noble and ever loyal city* of Spain typifies a spatial discourse that links practices to forms of knowledge. Intramuros is important to us not because of its residual significance as an artifact or relic but as an institution and a

system of practices that continue to inform and affect our everyday living. Intramuros is very much within us in terms of how we conduct our everyday political, socio-economic lives both on the micro and macro level. We still see some vestiges of Intramuros practices in the way we exclude people and how we constitute our political agenda. Hence, Intramuros is a continuing positive present, more of a strategic manipulation than a deviation and less of a symptom than a singular politico-juridical operator.

Intramuros was the seat of the Spanish colonial government in the 16th and 19th centuries. Naturally, it was imbued with the aura of a romantic and monumental past, as memorialized by Nick Joaquin in his play, *Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*. As a colonial discourse, Intramuros was the very apparatus for deploying colonial relations that were hierarchical and phallogocentric. It was hierarchical because of the division between the residents and the outsiders. The walls divided the colonizers from the subjects. Intramuros which literally means “within the walls,” conveyed this dichotomy by privileging the people inside against the people/s outside. The ambit of power is well defined by the concentric relations of subject within these walls and distance to the church bells, known as *bajo las campanas*. The farther away from the church vicinity, the least accessible one is to power. In fact, the remote outsiders were known as *brutus salvajes* or brute savages, people without culture and bereft of any dignity. Intramuros clearly demarcated this line of accessibility and provided, architectonically a lifestyle both for the colonizers and the colonized.

The walls of Intramuros did not just divide or exclude. As a concomitant of difference and a continual reminder of separation, the walls became permeable for the interpenetration between the colonizers and the colonized. The walls virtually vaporized for the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services of the outsiders. The early visitors of Intramuros noted that there was no market inside Intramuros. The *Parian*, which was located outside Intramuros, served as the market and its residents, known to Spaniards as *Sangleys*, as the source of skilled manpower.

The relationship of the insiders to the outsiders is parasitic in so far as only the insiders benefited from the transactions while the outsiders remained subservient to satisfying their masters’ greed and appetite for power. It is interesting to note that the dynamics of this relationship reached the level of connivance with the outsiders. Some outsiders, if not all of them, acted complicitously to preserve the status quo. For Gramsci, an Italian Marxist critic, the outsiders exercise subaltern functions of social hegemony in which “spontaneous” consent is given by outsiders to the general direction imposed on social life by the status quo. Such consent is historically caused by the prestige which the

status quo enjoys due to their privileged position and function in world production (12). Thus, even if the walls are just demarcations, the walls protected the powerful by way of quarantine or decontaminating them from the outsiders. Both the insiders and outsiders set up the wall and reinforced this division in their day to day living. In addition, the walls prevented contamination also by regulating the drawbridges and manning the traffic flow.

The transaction between insiders and outsiders is just one facet of this colonial discourse. The colonial domination of our people cannot be transacted without the master narratives and tropes that shape our way of thinking about the colonials. Thus, Intramuros is part of the historical movement that employs engendered tropes to justify the colonialists' expansion program. Joaquin's veneration of Spain in all his works is an example of such engendering. For Joaquin, the Philippines is the virgin who lost her innocence and splendor with the coming of Americans. Virginity as a trope for colonized lands enhances the logic of domination by characterizing land as uncultivated, undomesticated and thereby demanding foreign intervention in conquering the desolation and penetration by way of fecundating the wilderness. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam believed that the revivification of a wasted soil evokes a quasi-divine process of endowing life and meaning *ex nihilo*, a Promethean production of order premised from chaos, plenitude from lack (141). The foreigners are justified in conquering any lands. They can now disseminate their seeds; they have divine rights to rape these "virgin" lands.

The insignia of the "noble and ever loyal city" is an apt metonymy of the nation's servitude. The imaginary empire allows us to see ourselves as the loyal subjects of Spain. We are hailed, using an Althusserian term, in this drama and we try to live this out by simply acting as state apparatuses. Our subjection to colonial rule manifests in our regionalism and elitism and the violence inflicted on each other is a symptom of malaise that we experience collectively against our oppressors. Since we cannot attack the colonizers, we then replicate their violence against our own people especially those marginalized by gender, belief and ethnicity. It is stereotypical of our culture to promote elitism at the risk of marginalizing others and no wonder the very few who act as mediums of colonization, tend to overact and bemoan the loss of such colonial heritage. It is an understatement to say that until now we still experience subjugation in various forms. Our experience of colonization today is complicated by the capitalists who have replaced our oppressors. Competition brought about by capitalism has resulted in our further subjugation not only to neocolonial rule but also to extreme poverty. Thus, lines and demarcations are not only drawn between cities and provinces but also between states and among nations. In effect, the walls of Intramuros were extended and we continue to

discriminate or are continually being discriminated against people of another belief, sexual preference, and ethnic affiliation. Intramuros as the “walling in” of colonial discourse is very much operative today and we see only of ourselves as interpellated or literally “walled in”, in other words, victims. However, we also see ourselves in the short stories written by Pedro S. Dandan. Reading Dandan’s stories, we see ourselves as resisting the systemic oppression of the powerful. Hence, Intramuros as a lived space becomes a continual process of reclamation. Its cultural reality is both posited and reclaimed.

INTRAMUROS AS A COUNTERDISCOURSE TO NEOCOLONIALISM

Language always negotiates a kind of gap between the word and its signification. Our words elude us no matter how we pin down their meanings. Place, like language, is also elusive, such that if Intramuros can be lost, it can also be reclaimed. Little narratives, like short stories, that deal with the plight of the people living in Intramuros articulate this political unconscious of reclaiming the space denied them. Two stories are instructive for this purpose, *May Buhay sa Looban* and *May Kalmen at Batumbuhay*. Both stories written by Pedro S. Dandan use Intramuros as the setting.

May Buhay sa Looban is the story of a young boy, Popoy, who does not want to leave Looban,⁵ the place of his birth and where his family lives. His father wants to compete in the annual Commonwealth Literary Contest and move to Dampalit. Popoy spurns the idea of moving out because he loves Looban. But for the father, Looban is unsuited for his work as a writer, and the place threatens their security. Popoy remains adamant.

Popoy tries to understand his father and his father’s work. He first blames his father’s literature and thinks of concealing his pen so that he will never be able to write. He knows that deep inside he cannot do anything. While waiting for the truck that would carry their loads, Popoy tells his friends and playmates what it means to live in Looban. His friends understand him but Popoy is disappointed that his father, of all people, can never understand his loneliness. Popoy leaves and joins his family in Dampalit.

The story, like any initiation story, is about a boy who will confront manhood. But unlike any other story, this is more than just the conflict of the boy against his father because the conflict alludes and becomes homologous to the complex struggle in the Filipino psyche. We see the story as part of the grand narrative of the oppressed versus the oppressors. It is only in subjecting this story in such a grand narrative that our understanding of the present condition of Filipinos makes sense and becomes intelligible. The fictionalization, or more appropriately, the narrativization of our psyche becomes

the symbolic intervention of a true society. The experience of dislocation as hinted and dramatized in the story becomes the perennial condition of Filipinos within the context of development of technology and the expansion of the market. In such cases, Filipinos respond by migrating to other places. Filipinos everywhere look for home and this story of Popoy, his story of coming to terms with one's space, is the dilemma of every Filipino today.

The Filipinos' sense of space is fraught with conflicting values and paradigms. He is torn between staying and moving. He postpones decisions of moving on. Everything for him is transient. His ambiguous relation with his own space indicates a psychic split just like the irreconcilable differences of Popoy and his father in this story. A Filipino is like Popoy, the free-spirited, primeval consciousness, or the Archaic Man. On the other hand also, he is the father, the logical, rational consciousness, the Civilized Man (Jung 130). Since Philippine history is a history of repression, the Civilized Man subdues the Archaic Man. What we see when the father berates Popoy for his ignorance of literature and the arts, or when Popoy suffers quietly is a symptom of this repression. Popoy has to be silenced and his way of looking at things must be changed and oriented towards the father's more pragmatic view of life. The violence committed against Popoy is another aspect of this suppression. The father cannot see and feel Looban just as so many Filipinos today who have migrated elsewhere in the US see the Philippines or Manila as a despicable place. The father, in fact, condemns the place,

Ano ang masusulat mo rito ... ano! Wala! Maliban sa mga kalapating mababa ang lipad na ari ni Mang Lino, maliban sa dagundong ng mga bola ng boling at bilyar hanggang sa madaling-araw sa palaruan ni Mang Tino, maliban sa mga sabungerong nagkakahig ng kanilang mga tinali sa harapan ng pagupitan ni Mang Tote, maliban sa mga kasibulang maghapunang nakatayo sa panulukan sa may tindahan ni Beho ... Ano nga ang makukuha mong paksa sa mga kapangitang iyan, anong pag-ibig, anong kagandahan ... anong buhay? (Dandan 7)

[What can you write about this place? Nothing! Except those prostitutes in Lino's whorehouse, or those who play billiards and bowling till dawn in Tino's place, or those cockfighting addicts near Tote's barbershop, or those bystanders at Beho's store ... How can you even write in this despicable place, what kind of love, what form of beauty...what kind of life is this?]

This condemnation of Looban resonates in Ernard Berner's description of Looban; although residents, according to him, had already adjusted to the place and reclaimed it as their own. In one interview, a resident says

Looban may be dirty but it is far from unfit to live in. It is noisy but which neighborhood in the city is not? ... Looban is a peaceful and pleasant place to live in. No one in his right mind will ever exchange this place for, say, Tondo—what a place to live in! (125)

Interestingly, the family moves to Dampalit, a flower's name. Dampalit is different from Looban in the way that it signifies the conflict between two societies. The gap between Dampalit and Looban is the gap between the rich and the poor, between the powerful and the oppressed. The father thinks only of his profits and winning is his only goal. The father indeed belongs to Dampalit and is completely estranged from Looban. It is not surprising therefore that the father acts as an agent of this oppressive system. He is, like most of the Filipinos today, interpellated and coopted by the oppressive regime to work for a system that feeds on unfair practice of competition. *May Buhay sa Looban* therefore, dramatizes the Filipinos' conflict against a neocolonialist/imperialist order in which capitalism is the main driving force. The Commonwealth Literary Competition that the father will join alludes to the Commonwealth, the interim government of the Filipinos during the US military occupation. It is not unexpected to read the story therefore as an allegory of the oppressors versus the oppressed. The story shows how this intrusion is destructive for us. It unmasks this unjust encroachment of our space. The benevolent mission of civilizing becomes a pretext for US colonialism.

Since the family must relocate, the Archaic Man has indeed been displaced. The Archaic man in Popoy knows the painful process of dislocation. As he grows he learns to forget his childhood. Dislocation happens not only in real space but also in time. Alienation is not only a personal experience of relocation but a transit happening in the collective consciousness. The Archaic gives way to the Civilized Man. This psychoanalytic reading of the story reveals the inner/outer, inside/outside, center/periphery, powerful/oppressed conflict. The father as a writer is an apparatus of the status quo to disseminate the ruling class ideology. He affirms life only in the ruling class. Looban as the binary opposite threatening the hegemonic ideology brings out the same inner/outer conflict. Unfortunately for the father, he believes that Looban is deprived of any decent life form.

Taking into account the history of city-building in Manila, interestingly, this Looban took actually an inversion of meaning after Manila was devastated by war. Prior to war, Intramuros which was the Looban then was power. Colonials lived in Intramuros, and the natives who worked as their maids and servants lived outside (*labas*) or in the surrounding area. After the war, instead of restoring Intramuros, officials looked for other places. Erhard Berner accounts for this competition between the cities and municipalities:

[I]ts objective being nothing less than centrality itself. The center of city and country under colonial rule, the walled city of Intramuros, was destroyed in World War II, and subsequently occupied by squatters for decades: "The city's oldest material testimonies, the sensually perceptible continuity of four centuries of life in this place, were literally thrown onto the garbage heap of history." Instead of clearing the rubble, the new masters made the first in what became the series of attempts to leave the problems of one place behind and make a fresh start in another. (12)

Quezon City, Makati, San Juan were some of the cities competing for the power center and this resulted in an influx of migration of people in the surrounding area. In turn, the peripheries of these centers became the Looban. The dramatic shift of *labas* (the outside) to *loob* is a shift in powerplay. The people who are now in Looban become the potent source of manpower needed by the community living in the centers. As part of the machinery in labor production, these people form the excess who degenerated into squatter dwellers and urban poor residents. In an article by Neferti Xina M Tadiar, the city seems to suffer from "bulimia," absorbing a surplus of workers to maintain cheap labor, and disgorging them in squatter areas when there is no need for them (299). This excess provides the manpower needed to maintain the fluid transaction of business in the center. They must also be shunned from sight because they are also eyesores, a defect that cannot be reconciled with the "beauty" of the center. This defect in city planning and management was also discussed by Glenda M. Gloria. She describes Makati as two worlds torn apart by the yawning gap between its posh villages and its squalid *barangays*:

Driving around this commercial and financial center, one negotiates different life zones, as exclusive subdivisions give way to a sudden maze of narrow dirt roads, makeshift houses, and sidewalks full of jobless men, gambling and drinking their worries away. (qtd. in Lacaba 68)

Looban is the space in which Popoy, and many like him, identifies in this vie for power. Popoy is a metonym for the million Filipinos who are dis/relocated, constantly looking for greener pastures, leaving the land of their birth, forever searching for the life “out there.” In this parting scene, where Popoy tries to understand the meaning of his life, he suddenly reveals his innermost conflict:

Diyan na kayo ... Minsan pang inilibot niya ang kanyang paningin sa kanyang mga kalaro at sa buong paligid ng Looban, saka inihimpil nang matagal kay Lina. Lumakad na ang trak at unti-unting nawala sa likuran ang kanyang mga kapwa bata. Ngunit nahabilin sa kanyang balintataw ang malulungkot na anyo ng mga mukha at ang mga kamay na ikinakawal. Naramdaman ni Popoy sa kanyang pisngi ang pag-agos ng maiinit na butil ng luha, at nalasap ng kanyang bibig. Sa kaunahang pagkakataon, sapul nang mamulat siya sa kahalagahan ng kanyang sarili, ay noon lamang siya napaiyak. Hindi niya madalumat kung paano nakakakilala ng luha ang walang gulat na “hari” ng Looban. (Dandan 13-4)

[Bye ... He tried to look around once again and bid Lina goodbye. As they leave, the scene of his friends bidding him goodbye slowly disappeared. Yet in his innermost sense, he could still see the lonely faces and hand waves. For the first time, Popoy was not sure of his feelings, until he cried. He could not understand how a “king” like him suddenly felt the loneliness within.]

Ironically, Looban is also a constant reminder of their “otherness” or estrangement from their own country. It reminds them of the home they can never have. Thus, our subjectivity as represented by Popoy in this story may be construed as a form of alienation. We may be helpless and yet we see ourselves capable of articulating the problem. Our obedience and subservience may not be interpreted only as absolute subjection but rather, as an act of silent defiance. Popoy cries in the end of the story and this moment becomes the symbolic first step towards rectifying visions. Looban, which is now Intramuros, is the alienated space, the dreamscape and the mythical place, as Popoy, the alienated self, identifies with it:

Si Popoy ang kanilang matapang na prinsipeng lumaban sa dragong pito ang ulo; siya ang pumatay sa malaking higante; siya ang nakahuli sa ibong Adarna; at siya ang nakaisang palad ng magandang prinsesa ... Ang Looban ay kinilala ng mga

taga-Tambakan at Tabing-Ilog dahil sa kanya. Siya ay sa Looban at ang Looban ay sa kanya. (4)

[Popoy is the brave prince who slew the dragon with seven heads, killed the ogre, had the mythical bird called Adarna, and married a beautiful princess...Looban was famous because of him. He belongs to Looban and Looban belongs to him.]

Here, we see Looban as invested with mythical themes that only unfurl its generative relation to the collective unconscious towards an articulation of the genuine subjectivity. Popoy recognizes the Looban just as one should see oneself in relation to the whole. Looban becomes the very site of this articulation towards a counter-consciousness—something imminent and waiting to be fulfilled. One day, Popoy will wake up just as all the dreams invested in Looban will come true. Looban offers Popoy and us a counterdiscourse to neocolonialism.

Another story that resonates with the same theme of oppression is the story of Mang Simo in *May Kalmen at Batumbuhay ... sa Isang Estero*. Mang Simo is a squatter in Intramuros. He is evicted and becomes a vagrant in Divisoria until he settles down in Daambakal (railway) and Pepot, an orphan and a vagrant also, accompanies him. He sits near the railway and contemplates the past 80 years. Unfortunately, a passing train runs him over. No one helps him and the people cannot identify him. Instead of helping, they rob him of belongings while others take advantage of the situation by blackmailing the railway company. Pepot is disappointed to see how cruel others are to Mang Simo. Pepot eventually learns from the amulet given to him by Mang Simo that Mang Simo himself is a veteran of the revolution.

May Kalmen like *May Buhay sa Looban*, situates the binary conflict of loob and labas in the personal narrative of Mang Simo. As a war veteran, he definitely represents resistance against colonizers but as a squatter in Intramuros he is an outsider (taga-labas) trying to reclaim Looban, the space unjustly occupied by the colonials. People like Mang Simo were told that power will be brought back to them. Our history says otherwise. These people continue to suffer in the hands of another colonial power, the United States. The wandering of Mang Simo seems to be the endless wandering also of the Filipinos in their colonial history:

Walumpu't siyam na siya. Buhat sa Intramuros ... hanggang sa Tundo. Napilit siyang umasa sa mga kapalagayang iskuwater sa Intramuros. Hanggang sa ligaligin

sila ng mga makinang panggiba at saklawin ng mga proyekto ng siyudad ang kanilang mga tirahan at itaboy sila nang walang pakundangan. Pinapangit daw nila ang Makiring Menila at kahiya-hiya sila sa mga dayuhang puti. (36)

[He's {Mang Simo} eighty-nine years old. He came from Intramuros and then he settled in Tondo. His fellow squatters in Intramuros used to support him until they were all evicted from their settlements because of city planning and government projects. They were accused of turning the place into a "harlot" Manila. They are the eyesores for foreigners.]

His exploitation is the same dehumanization that a captive people endures and suffers. It is not surprising that Looban here functions as a counterdiscourse by which they, the likes of Popoy and Mang Simo, can reclaim the space denied to them. Looban is our response to this systemic oppression.

It is interesting to note that Looban offers an interim bliss for Mang Simo and Popoy. Looban reterritorializes subjects like Mang Simo and Popoy. Looban challenges the legitimacy of power structures and oppressive institutions. Looban reconfigures a trope by which these people can identify with. Thus, Looban as a space promises to give them back whatever has been forcibly taken from them. They regain in Looban what was denied from them by unfair practices of capitalism. In Looban, they can become kings again, they can regain their memories, they can speak with their own voices. Looban as a space gives Mang Simo and Popoy their identity: Popoy through his playmates and Mang Simo through Pepot discovers who he really is. In as much as Looban may appear as an abnormality, it continues to be the site of struggle for the marginalized.

May Kalmen ends in the tragic death of Mang Simo. Death and total destruction are the ultimate ends of this obtrusion. Unlike *May Buhay sa Looban*, *May Kalmen* articulates an ambiguous possibility for liberation within the context of the development of technology, the equivocal relationship between ritual and politics, the expansion of market to all areas of modern urban life, and the fate of the art under conditions of commodifications. The experience of Looban in the stories is ambiguous, porous, with joy succeeded by sudden misery. These stories are not romantic celebrations of poverty; they only show that poverty does not only deprive its victims of initiative, but can also provide a spur for innovation (Caygill 122) and thus, articulating a valid sense of self that has been eroded by dislocation.

Narrativizing Intramuros by way of Dandan's stories enunciates the problematics of space in the context of burgeoning urbanism and discriminatory modes of transnational

corporations which subject individuals and society into different forms and levels of oppression. We narrativize Intramuros as a subversive space that should be naturally defended and controlled especially at times when the homogenizing tendency of US cultural imperialism is in full force and threatens our existence. Finally, we should address space as it was narrativized, localized, and collectivized in the past as it is being narrativized also now. Indeed, one cannot deny the imperial concerns as constitutively significant of our colonial culture.

Dandan's works as cultural artifacts definitely expounded on these themes of colonialism. It is quite difficult not to see the themes of uneven development and often disadvantaged histories of the captive people that give rise to issues of social and political discrimination in our literature. Dandan's works give us not only an account of these issues but a panoramic view of oppression in Intramuros, the Looban, the squatters area, mental hospital, drenched streets of Tundo, and railway communities of Divisoria. Through his works, he gives us a picture of life as lived in the marginal sector of our society. Edward Said believes that we cannot escape the question posed by our colonial experience because all allusions point to the facts of the empire (*Culture* 66). It is paramount that any discourse analysis takes an oppositional stance against the powerful and other forms of affiliations. Dandan's works are not just narratives of social ills at that time but also an articulation of political consciousness and emancipatory insight against neocolonialism.

NOTES

1 Discourse in the Foucauldian sense is the transindividual and multi-institutional archive of images and statements providing a common language for representing knowledge about a given theme. This archive of images and statements becomes regimes of truth which are encased in institutional practices. An example of this discourse formation is Orientalism, or the phenomenon of producing knowledge about the “East” and “its peoples” as discussed by Edward Said in his outstanding book, *Orientalism* (1978). For further discussion on the subject matter, see also Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972-1977*, translated by Colin Gordon, (1980).

2 Christian Norberg-Schulz, Norwegian architect drawing from the theories of Gestalt and Heidegger, advocates for a phenomenology of place. What is missing in his advocacy is an immanent criticism that uncovers the operative ideology in his work. In the case of a phenomenology of place, place is, first and foremost, an ideological construct, and the experience of place of Third World people differs with that of their oppressors in the First World. Schulz’s inability to tackle this problem is a symptom of privatization and reification of contemporary life. Thus, Terry Eagleton, in his book, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1996) discusses the disputable project of phenomenology. He says that oftentimes such projection of meanings is typically bourgeois in orientation.

3 Intramuros is the name of the walled city built by the early Spanish colonials in Manila, Philippines in 1571. It is a city within a city, separated from the rest of Manila by its crumbling walls. This ancient capital had well-planned streets, plazas, the Governor’s Palace and churches. However, many buildings were reduced to shambles in World War II. To date, despite government projects of Intramuros renovation, people continue to squat within its periphery.

4 Pedro S. Dandan is one of the obscure short story writers writing in Filipino. Although he won various literary awards and most of his stories have been anthologized in various textbooks for high school and college, his collection of short stories was published only after his death, an indication that he was barely acknowledged during his time.

5 *Looban* is a piece of fenced land or yard around the house planted with a variety of trees and plants; an orchard. However, with the growth of population and rapid changes brought by industrialization, Manila was urbanized and Looban gradually disappeared. Looban became the squatter areas and urban poor housing. Looban has rich semantic connotations in the Tagalog idiom because Looban comes from the word *Loob* which means the interior, the internal part or the inside. Albert Alejo, S.J., discusses the various historical, and philosophical codes of this word, Loob, in his book, *Tao po! Tuloy!: Isang Landas ng Pag-Unawa sa Loob ng Tao*, 1990.

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