

## NTRA. SRA. DE LOS DESAMPARADOS AND POSTCOLONIAL RESISTANCES

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper exhibits narratives on Catholicism and Spanish colonialism in the Philippines – primarily executed by the state and political apparatuses of Spain. Accordingly, colonialism is only an accident to Catholicism and vice-versa due to the inevitability of resistance, which always exists in the dynamic network of power relations. Catholicism and colonialism are not absolutely and essentially inseparable with one another, since conflict between the two has been occurring since the colonial period and until today. There is a clear dynamic interconnectedness between Catholicism and colonialism, but Catholicism is not Spain as how colonialism is not Catholicism. More so, this paper used ethnography with a review of primary and secondary sources of historical data that argues the ‘emergence of consciousness to the socio-cultural and historical narrative of present-day downtown Santa Ana as a precolonial burial site called ‘Lamayan’ with its ancient mythology of ‘Diwata sa Bukal’. Furthermore, the Santa Ana Lao Ma is enshrined in the Taoist temple behind the Santa Ana Church; and the contemporary Filipinization of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados seen in Mandaluyong and Marikina are cases of post-colonial resistances that people find today.*

*Keywords: Post-colonial Resistances, Power Relations, Catholicism, Virgin Mary*

### INTRODUCTION

There are different layers of religious practice, one is the material and the other is the non-material dimension. In the case of the centuries-old Catholic church of Santa Ana in Manila, these invisible and visible degrees of religion exist together wherein time and space overlap with one another. Religion thrives when its tradition and practices are passed down through generations like what happened to the Catholic devotion to the Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados in Santa Ana – the oldest devotion under that Marian title in the Philippines. If not, it will become dormant. Its material culture, if fortunate, will turn to become historical artifacts. A street behind the Spanish colonial Church of Ntra.

Sra. de los Desamparados called ‘Lamayan’ is a contemporary remembrance of the rich precolonial burial tradition of an ancient religion practiced by communities along the banks of Pasig River. An image of the Blessed Virgin at the back of the Church called ‘Virgen del Pozo’ is guarding a well wherein its spring water is believed to be miraculous and can cure illnesses is facing directly an estimated early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese temple where small images of saints from Taoism and Sinicized images of Catholic saints are enshrined together.

The 300-year-old image of the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados represents a flourishing religious culture with the Virgen del Pozo as a



forgotten but revived religious practice, as opposed to the precolonial religious tradition in the area that turned to become extinct and with the Chinese temple dedicated to Taoist god Bao Zheng and Santa Ana Lao Mao that stands at the back of the Catholic Church. Located in a straight geographical arrangement (a north-south direction) the image of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados, the Virgen del Pozo with the 'miraculous' spring of water itself and the Taoist Temple exist all together in time and space across the forgotten pre-colonial burial site called 'Lamayan' that is now known as downtown Santa Ana demonstrate a dynamic interconnection of ancient and contemporary religious practices and beliefs. In this case of Filipino devotion to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados, researchers found religious cultural tradition as ambivalent, everchanging and transforming and is in a state of flux – which can also be defined as manifestation of postcolonial resistances. Primary and secondary sources of historical data were used in the context of postcolonial studies with literatures such as Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of 'colonial mimicry' and 'third space,' and Michel Foucault's discussion about power and resistance.

The devotion to the Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados is one of the oldest Marian devotions in the Philippines. The three cities of Marikina, Mandaluyong and Manila – which are all geographically situated along the major rivers of Metro Manila, are known to have their own beautiful images of Mary venerated in the Catholic Church under the Marian title Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados. In Mandaluyong, Ntra Sra. De los Desamparados is referred to by the local parish in Barangay Hulo as the 'Virgin of Pasig River' while in Santa Ana in Manila the 18<sup>th</sup> century image of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados is enshrined – the oldest in the Philippines, was given a Spanish colonial honorific reference as 'La Gobernadora de Manila' and a Chinese label as 'Santa Ana Lao Ma' or the mother of Santa Ana. While afar, in the northeast of Pasig River, along a hill beside the river of Marikina, Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados is popularly called by the local residents today as 'Mama Ola' from the abbreviation OLA of the English translation 'Our Lady of the Abandoned'.

This study revolves around Filipino devotion to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados and its venerated images in Metro Manila since it is a 'thick case' for several reasons. Firstly, it has a 300-year-old Catholic Marian image enshrined in one of the oldest Catholic churches in the Philippines that is the Santa Ana Church – having two national cultural treasures declared by the National Museum, namely, the 'Camarin de la Virgen' located at the second floor behind the main retablo and the 'Santa Ana Site Museum' located in the convent patio. This necessarily implicate the image and the devotion itself to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados to a rich socio-cultural and historical facet of precolonial, colonial and contemporary Philippines. Secondly, the Santa Ana image of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados has been adapted by a Chinese religious tradition inside a Taoist temple just located directly behind the old Church. A smaller image of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados referred to as by Chinese devotees as 'Santa Ana Lao Ma' or 'Mother of Santa Ana' has her own chapel inside the Taoist temple located just behind Santa Ana Church itself which turns to become an actual case of Catholic and traditional Chinese religious syncretism. And thirdly, the contemporary Filipinization of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados which has taken a local transformation manifested in the Mandaluyong devotion as the "Virgin of Pasig River" and in present-day Marikina as the beloved 'Mama Ola' of the local residents.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper aimed to argue the the 'emergence of consciousness' to the socio-cultural and historical narrative of present-day downtown Santa Ana as a precolonial burial site called 'Lamayan' with its ancient mythology of 'Diwata sa Bukal', the Santa Ana Lao Ma enshrined in the Taoist temple behind the Santa Ana Church; and the contemporary Filipinization of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados seen in Mandaluyong and Marikina are cases of post-colonial resistances that people find today.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper aimed to argue the the 'emergence of consciousness to the socio-cultural and historical narrative of present-day downtown Santa Ana as a precolonial burial site called 'Lamayan' with its ancient mythology of 'Diwata sa Bukal', the Santa Ana Lao Ma enshrined in the Taoist temple behind the Santa Ana Church; and the contemporary Filipinization of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados seen in Mandaluyong and Marikina are cases of post-colonial resistances that people find today. The Qualitative approach is used to analyze and interpret the data gathered through ethnography by actual visits to the location and interviews were utilized as methods in this research. Critical analysis of related literature is also employed in order to create a meaningful narrative to the issues raised in this paper.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The 'emergence of consciousness' of Precolonial Philippines as a counter-narrative

Through Spanish colonization, the devotion to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados arrived in the Philippines. Undeniably, this Catholic Marian devotion in the Philippines had its colonial beginnings. The Church of Santa Ana is the first Franciscan mission outside of Intramuros that began in 1578. The church that stands today was initially constructed in the 1720s under the supervision of the then Manila Archbishop and interim Governor General of the Philippines Francico dela Cuesta. The image of the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados was brought into the Philippines by Rev. Fr. Vicente Ingles, OFM in 1717. This almost 300-year-old replica image of the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados from Valencia, Spain actually 'touched' the original Spanish Marian image before it arrived in the Philippines, which, eventually turned to become the central material-physical symbol of the Filipino Marian devotion under this title of Ntra, Sra. de los Desamparados. The Church edifice with a baroque architectural design that used adobe stones create a feeling of structural massiveness and enshrines

this imported 18<sup>th</sup> century Marian image from Valencia, which has been venerated in the Roman Catholic religious traditions for centuries are altogether a case of material and non-material manifestations of colonial legacy in the Philippines.

Around half a century after the end of Spanish colonization in the country that a 'consciousness' to a precolonial burial tradition that existed in Santa Ana emerged significantly due to the archeological excavation done in the late 1960s in the Church patio and around its vicinity.

*"In October 1966, the inner patio and surrounding areas of this centuries-old church were excavated by the archaeologist team of the National Museum headed by archeologist Robert Fox. The project yielded rich materials on pre-Spanish Manila. The oldest artifact found in the inner patio of Santa Ana Church dates back to the late 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. – a beautiful blue and white Chinese bowl with floral designs. The rest are potteries and Chinese artifacts which date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D."* (The Pre-Spanish Manila through Archeology, 1967).

According to a report by archeologist Robert Fox in 1967, the National Museum recovered 'large quantities of late Sung potteries and graves within the Church convent yard and along the street behind the Church called 'Lamayan'

*"In 1966, a pre-Hispanic graveyard and an extensive array of Chinese ceramics and trade wares were unearthed in the inner patio of the church and surrounding areas by a team of archaeologists of the National Museum led by Robert Fox. It is not surprising that two large pieces of intact tombstones were uncovered in the area. One was dated 1744 (Qianlong 乾隆 9), the other piece had no reign of the emperor, only the cyclical characters xinhai nian 辛亥年 which may be equated to 1731 (Yongzheng 9) or 1791 (Qianlong 56). Whether it was 1731 or 1791, together with the 1744 piece, these two items are among the oldest existing tombstones in the Philippines."* (Chu and See, 2016).



These archeological discoveries during the 1966 archeological excavations in Santa Ana confirm the existence of an ancient polity called Namayan that flourished in the banks of Pasig River together with other independent polities namely Tondo and Maynilad prior to the arrival of the colonizers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Kingdom of Namayan is believed to be the oldest among the three confederations of balangay that includes Tundo and Maynilad. According to the article *The 11<sup>th</sup> Century Kingdom of Namayan "Long before the arrival of the Spaniards in the Kingdom of Manila or even before Rajah Soliman ruled in the 16th century, there already existed an ancient kingdom called Namayan. Established in the 11th century, the pre-colonial settlement in Santa Ana was the oldest along the Pasig River"*. (Juan, 2017) Another description narrates that *"Santa Ana was one of the oldest residential districts in Manila located at the banks of the Pasig River. It used to be a busy marketplace, where cascoes (small wooden boats) traversed the Pasig River to sail all the way to the Laguna de Bay."* (Chu and See, 2016)

*"The ancient Kingdom of Namayan in the Philippines (circa 800-1175 AD) – also referred as the Kingdom of Sapa, Maysapan or Nasapan after its capital, was one of three major kingdoms which dominated the upper eastern side of the Pasig River running along the coast of Laguna de Bay... It has been observed from records that the kings of Namayan ruled basically by organizing kinship groupings into mini-states intimately interwoven by the imperatives of blood. These political subdivisions were known by the archaic names of Meykatmon, Kalatong-dongan, Dongos, Dibag, Pinakawasan, Yamagtogon, and Meysapan... While there is continuing debate about the subject, it appears that Namayan is considered to be the older of three kingdoms, pre-dating the equally old kingdoms of Tondo and Maynila. It was formed as a confederation of 'barangays'... and is said to have achieved its peak in 1175."* (Quirino, 2010).

This Kingdom of Namayan is also referred to as 'Nasapan', 'Maysapan', and 'Sapa' which was the seat of power of the ancient polity located in the

present-day territory of Santa Ana in Manila. With regard to the name, I hypothesize that 'Namayan' probably came from 'Nasapan' or 'Maysapan' having the root word 'sapan' or simply 'sapa'. 'Sapa' is a Tagalog word that refers to a small body of running water. These names of the ancient Tagalog kingdom suggest a place surrounded by creeks as in equivalent to the Tagalog phrase 'may sapa diyan' (there is a creek out there) or 'nasa sapa diyan' (there in the creek out there), which probably turned to become Maysapan or Nasapan – then Namayan. It is noteworthy to mention that a present-day barangay in the banks of Pasig River in Mandaluyong City, located just opposite of Lamayan street across the river, is until today called as Barangay Namayan. Regarding the street name 'Lamayan' that still exist today it suggests that the hilly place where the present-day street is located including the present-day location of Santa Ana Church used to be a burial site of the ancient Kingdom of Namayan, which was confirmed by the 1966 archeological excavations together with the affirmation of the precolonial street name itself that is 'Lamayan' which in fact 'lamayan' is a Tagalog word that refer to 'a place of wake' or 'vigil for the dead'.

*"The Namayan kingdom is the confederation of barangays which began to peak in 1175. It stretches from Manila Bay to Laguna de Bai. Dayang-dayang Pasay inherited the lands now comprising the territories of Culi-culi, Pasay and Baclaran. The royal capital of the kingdom was built in Sapa, known today as Santa Ana. The natives brought their products to the capital of Namayan. Trading flourished during the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. Merchants from the China, Moluccas, Java, Borneo, Sumatra, India, Siam, and Cambodia came to trade with the natives."* (Kingdom of Namayan) .

Another interesting element in the precolonial Kingdom of Sapa is the mythology of the 'Diwata sa Bukal'. Located at the back of the Church of Santa Ana is a spring or 'bukal', popularly called today by to the locals as 'balon'. This 'balon' is now under the custody of the old Catholic Church of Santa Ana. The parish church turned it into a small chapel dedicated to the

'Virgen del Pozo' or 'Our Lady of the Well' as how it was translated by the parish – is also the same Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados is represented inside the Catholic Church of Santa Ana according to the parish. An image of the Virgin is erected as if 'she' is 'guarding' the well (Laya, 2011). The metal marker posted by the parish beside the gate of the chapel of the Virgen del Pozo declares:

*"...the title (Virgen del Pozo) is attributed to her by the early folks on account of the deep well that had existed since the construction of the church in 1720. Sick people of the town and those from neighboring districts started coming to this place to drink of its waters which was believed to have curative and miraculous powers. Those who were healed offered prayers, candles, flowers and fruits in the spirit of thanksgiving. The clear water from this well could be reached and gathered by going down the ten-step adobe stairway which was covered by wooded slots fastened to each other to serve as its entrance... Call it a legend or a tradition, the Virgen del Pozo and her shrine have a religious and historical value to the folks of Santa Ana. The water that once had sprung from the well will indeed become a symbol not only of their love and devotion to their patron but moreover it will be a testimony of their faith as God's people and Mary's children." (Our Lady of the Well)*

Interestingly a concept of so-called 'legend' was mentioned in the marker posted by the parish church itself. But the story of this 'legend' was not explored well and seemed to be silenced in this 'official' narrative of the Catholic devotion in Santa Ana. This is a case similar to the study conducted by Resil B. Mojares in the Cebuano Virgin of Guadalupe. In the study, Mojares implicated the religious image "... as dynamic, discontinuous and disjunctive, and involves symbolic slippages, contested meanings, and associations with antecedent symbols 'already there' even before the Spanish coming. (Mojares, 2000, p.8) In this context, we find here what Mojares describes as 'symbolic artifacts' that are 'suppressed, neglected or revered'.

Curiously, in an article by Jaime C. Laya about the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados of Santa Ana, he mentioned a legend or myth about the

'spring of the nymph' in the ancient historical Kingdom of Namayan – the present-day downtown Santa Ana.

*"Long before the Spanish arrival, a settlement called Namayan thrived along the Pasig River. Below a hill was a miraculous spring (bukal) believed to be tended by a nymph (diwata). The place was so revered that for generations, people laid their dead to rest on the hill and around the flowing spring... The bukal was enclosed in a stone well and the place became the shrine of Nuestra Señora del Pozo, with the image in a niche at the church's back wall, opposite of the shrine's entry on Lamayan street. The diwata had disappeared, Mary had become guardian of the miraculous spring. (Laya, 2011).*

Hundreds of years after the well was put under the 'guidance' of the Catholic 'Virgen del Pozo', in 1920, the Virgin's well was sealed by the sanitary inspectors of the City Health Department of Manila including all existing well at that time due to a typhoid epidemic. For almost a century that the well was sealed and hidden to the public, only in 2011 that the well was re-opened after the historical renovations and restoration done in the Catholic Church of Santa Ana. Today, there are some reports from the devotees of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados of 'miracles' due to the healing waters from the well. One story of 'miracle' or testimonial acknowledged by the parish is narrated on a frame posted inside the Camarin de la Virgen – a historically significant prayer room located at the second floor behind the main retablo of the Church of Santa Ana.

*"I am Lynch Kristoffer Balmes Flores and it is my honor to express my heartfelt gratitude and testimony to the greatness of the mother of God particularly in her title as Our Lady of the Abandoned (whose image truly has been chosen by Her for her miraculous intercession to anyone) as venerated in Sta. Ana- Manila... It was on February 2010 when I encountered a surprising serious and unexplainable ailment. With no apparent reason, my neck down had suddenly been paralyzed and had the imposing tendency ... to tilt sideways to the left. Thinking it was mere stiff neck at first, I just ignored the incident and went on*

*my studies at Our Lady of the Angels Seminary. But to my surprise, it persisted for not only the succeeding days but weeks! Thus, seeing no improvement at all, I decided to seek medical attention of which I was given medications for the suspicion of having the symptoms of 'torticollis'. Thinking this will end the agony at this trial, I placed all my hope in my medical treatment till I saw my hopes were just in vain. I decided to seek the opinion of another doctor who is an expert in Orthopedics. I was given these braces (as seen from the photo above) which were intended to 're-teach' my muscles on how it ought to be. But surprisingly, the said treatment had also been a disappointment because I have experienced no improvement at all rather increased pain and sufferings. Still ever hopeful, I had decided to seek another doctor who is a specialist in the Country in a famous hospital in Makati City. This time, I was told to undergo a series of physical therapies and in particular through the 'traction' device. I underwent the said series of treatment until the doctor exhaustingly recommended me to another doctor in a famous hospital in Alabang. All these doctors found the illness strange because whenever they would look at it on x-ray, they would find the bones perfect which my present posture does not manifest. All in all, I have been to 8 doctors whose efforts (although I am grateful to all of them) were all in vain. I was at this time that I decided to end all medications! Curiously and providentially enough, a friend of mine – himself a devotee of the Blessed Virgin and a recipient of her may favors through this title suggested a 9-day novena to her as Our Lady of the Abandoned and a visit to the Camarin de la Virgen as often as possible especially on her feast. I did this along with a novena to St. Filomena, VM, whom the Blessed Virgin describes 'To Filomena nothing is refused...' It was during these visits that I came to know more about the Our Lady's particular title as Desamparados and of the miraculous well below her shrine...I was able to obtain a bottle of water from the Our Lady's well and ... caress and be enveloped in the mantle of the Our Lady of the Abandoned. After making the novena which ended on my birthday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of May my conditions surprisingly and providentially improved! I could not believe that such pious acts would help my*

*cure. My conditions were improving daily little by little until Our Lady Blessed Mother finally restored me to my present condition... (signed) Lynch Kristoffer B. Flores." (Flores).*

In this case, researchers found that the spring of water below the Church is a common element in the supernatural stories both from the precolonial Tagalog mythology of 'Diwata sa Bukal' to the colonial and postcolonial present-day Catholic 'miracles' of the water from Virgin's well. The story of 'diwata sa bukal' almost disappeared and was dominated by the Catholic miracles of the Virgen del Pozo which is also a referent to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados of Santa Ana. Clearly, there has been an attempt to subvert the story of the precolonial 'diwata sa bukal' by the official and grand narrative of the Catholic Church of Santa Ana privileging the devotion to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados which arrived here in the Philippines due to Spanish colonialism – that is a manifestation of an exercise of power of the privileged devotion to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados over the subjugated precolonial and Tagalog folk beliefs to the 'diwata sa bukal'. In the context of postcolonial resistances, Michel Foucault once said that '*Where there is power, there is resistance...*' (Foucault, 1978)

There is an attempt to subvert the precolonial culture and tradition – the 'pagan' and 'non-Christian' spiritual tradition of the pre-Hispanic Tagalog Kingdom of Namayan, its 'Diwata sa Bukal' and its forgotten ancient 'Lamayan' or burial tradition in the area. Many Catholic Churches as sacred places of worship during Spanish colonial period in the Philippines allegedly, were strategically built above precolonial sacred spaces like burial sites, as what happened in the Church of Santa Ana, in order to erase the memories of the precolonial religion. Spanish colonization has been very effective because it is not just 'the physical and material attributes' that were colonized, but most importantly 'the unseen and invisible dimensions' that definitely last longer – primarily the traditional religious and cultural traditions were subjugated to the colonial power using religion and culture itself, together with its physical and non-physical components such as approved religious rituals, doctrines and material

paraphernalia like images, novena booklets and etc. But with this continuing existence of the ancient name of the street as 'Lamayan' and the existence of the contemporary Barangay in Mandaluyong called Namayan in reference to the old precolonial Kingdom in the banks of Pasig River and the continuous effort of the Parish Church of Santa Ana to control the use of the 'balon' or 'bukal' privileging the devotion to the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados (that is now heavily gated and proliferated with Catholic Marian prayers inside the chapel) – significantly manifests cases of postcolonial resistance.

These present-day cultural and historical 'consciousness' itself to a pre-colonial culture and tradition is a manifestation of postcolonial resistance – that is a resistance to the colonial experience in general and an attempt to create new experiences and truth as postcolonial Filipinos from these pre-colonial historical circumstances and reality. The present consciousness to the pre-colonial elements is an act of postcolonial resistance – that suggest dynamic interconnections between time and space in this case of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados of Santa Ana.

In anyway, according to David Jefferess, '*resistance does not only signify any opposition to or subversion of, colonial authority*' but moreover, he argues for a theory of postcolonial resistance '*that identifies the way in which acts and practices transform the discursive and material structures of colonial power...*'. (Jefferess, 2003) In this context, we can relate Foucault's discussion on the nature of resistance.

*"These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence, there is no single locus of great refusal... Instead, there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others far are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, violent; still, others that are quick to compromise, interested or sacrificial, by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations... Hence, they too are distributed in irregular fashion: the points, knots or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities..."* (Foucault, 1978).

## 2. The Santa Ana Lao Ma and other contemporary postcolonial resistances

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha suggested the concept of 'colonial mimicry' and 'Third Space'. He discussed 'colonial mimicry' as '*the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference...mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal.*' (Bhabha, 1994). How much the subjugated-colonized people mimic the powerful colonizer, the subject will never fully become the colonizer, rather, this mimicry produces another identity and culture – which is different and against the dominant culture. In this case mimicry turns to become resistance itself. This new cultural formation has become possible because of the 'Third Space' which Bhabha also proposed.

*"It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew..."* (Bhabha, 1994).

The book *Hybrid Tsinoys* discussed that "*Bhabha proposes a 'third space' theory for the diaspora discourse that I find fitting for these Chinese in the Philippines who find themselves unfit and unsettled in the land they hope to plant their roots. This 'third space' theory is to help to deconstruct the issue of unhomed and reconstruct their identity based on their circumstances*". (Uytanlet, 2016)

Within this context of 'mimicry' and 'third space' we find postcolonial resistance in the Chinese temple located just behind the Church of Santa Ana. This Taoist temple is dedicated to the Taoist god Judge Bao (others refer to him as Justice Pao or Lord Pao) and the Santa Ana Lao Ma (Mother of Santa Ana). The first chapel inside the temple prominently enshrines a small image of a traditional Chinese god Bao Zheng, a historical-

political figure during the time of Emperor Renzong of the Song Dynasty in 11<sup>th</sup> century, later deified by some rural Chinese under the Taoist belief. In the altar other Taoist gods are also venerated together with Judge Bao to whom the devotees pray for justice. These include Guanyin, the goddess of mercy, and Guan Kong, the god of war.

Much interesting in this research is the next chapel or shrine within the Taoist temple, immediately beside the chapel of Justice Pao – the shrine of Santa Ana Lao Ma, with a miniature image of the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados, the central material focal point of the mimicry of devotion to and to the 300-year-old image itself enshrined in the retablo of the Catholic Church of Santa. Since the Santa Ana image of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados is just a replica of the original image from Valencia Spain, the miniature image inside the Taoist temple has become a mimicry of a replica – third degree away from the original image-representation of Catholic Mary as the Mother of God, located at the other side of the globe in Valencia, Spain. But this Chinese mimicry in the Philippines turned the image of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados into a Chinese like idol, having her own Chinese altar and venerated by the Filipino-Chinese devotees in their own ways complete with Chinese incense and other paraphernalia of the traditional Taoist religious rituals. The Chinese devotees still refer to her as the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados but significantly associate both the Sinicized miniature image in the Taoist temple and the Catholic image inside the Church to the traditional Chinese goddess Mazu, the goddess of the sea.

*“The enshrined image is that of the Virgin Mary, but she is regarded by devotees as a manifestation of Guanyin (觀音 Chinese goddess of mercy) and Mazu. This is partly due to her Chinese name, Sta. Ana Lao Ma. While ma (媽) means mother, some devotees equate the ma with Mazu (媽祖) as evidenced by the holy card that the caretaker, Felix Go, gives away at the shrine. Go does not speak Chinese but he recalled that the Lady is at the same time called the Ma Cho Po (Mazupo). Though located in the vicinity of a Catholic church, the Church authorities have no*

*jurisdiction over this Chinese shrine where the Virgin Mary, identified with Mazu and Guanyin, is venerated using Chinese ritual forms, and stands beside other objects of Catholic devotion. Even Filipinos often refer to some images of Virgin Mary as Guanyin Mary or refer to them as the ‘Chinese Virgin Mary’.” (Ang See and Dy, 2019).*

### 3. Colonialism as accident to the Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados

In contrast to the ‘practical’ and ‘ancient rural Chinese’ Taoist devotion of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados as Santa Ana Lao Ma, the replica to the Valencian Marian image symbolizes another cultural-religious tradition in the context of Filipino socio-cultural studies – a cultural-religious tradition that is central, dominant and powerful. This Marian devotion, which is among the oldest Catholic devotion in the Philippines had its accidental colonial origins which has become central to the historically recent and contemporary narrative of Filipino society – which at times has been very influential and powerful in the shaping of the dominant Christianized Filipino consciousness.

The Spanish word ‘desamparados’ is translated in English as ‘abandoned’ or ‘forsaken’. The story of the origin of the Valencian image narrates this:

*“Even more interesting is the legend of the authors of the image that is venerated today. It is said that in 1414, three young men, dressed as pilgrims came to the brotherhood that looked after the hospital. The brother that lived there had a wife that was blind. The young men said that if they were given food and lodge for four days, they would build an image of the Virgin. Four days went by and nothing had been heard from the room where the young men were working so the door was forced open - there was no sign of the young men but the Virgin had been built and the brother’s wife recovered her sight: they knew then that the young men were angels sent from heaven. The statue was later copied by the Ribaltas, Orrente, Zariñena, and Espinosa and all of them said they recognized ‘something supernatural’ about the image.” (Our Lady of Forsaken).*



The replica image of the Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados in Santa Ana is described in this manner:

*“The image of the Virgen de los Desamparados is that of the typical Madonna and the Child model where the Blessed Virgen carries her Son Jesus in her right arm while she holds a sheaf of lilies and a bejeweled cane given by the interim Governor General Archbishop dela Cuesta as a form of thanksgiving. The Child Jesus on the other hand carries a bejeweled cross that signifies His upcoming crucifixion that will save mankind from eternal damnation. The image also features two infants, the Niños Inocentes (the Holy innocents who were killed by Herod) that are placed in the lower part of the image since the complete title of the image is Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados y los Inocentes. The Virgin kept a vast wardrobe made from different fabrics that are commissioned by her devotees as a form of thanksgiving to her miracles that she manifested to them. The richly crowned Virgin has this very unique posture that is characterized by a slight forward tilt, and hence, she is known affectionately as ‘La Geperudeta’ (The Hunchbacked Lady) which gives the impression that the Virgin listens attentively to her devoted children who are in dire need of help.” (Nuestra Señora, 2017).*

In relation to Mojares’ concept of ‘discontinuous and disjunctive’ narrative mentioned earlier, it is also applicable to the beginnings of Catholicism itself in the Philippines. That is why I argue that this Catholic Marian devotion under the title of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados is a case in Catholicism which was just implicated to colonialism. In fact, we may say that colonialism is just accidental to the Catholicism in the Philippines.

One interesting historical account, which we find this ‘discontinuous and disjunctive’ narrative is regarding the incident of Archbishop dela Cuesta of Manila and the concurrent interim Governor General of the Philippines at that time, who offered the ‘bejeweled cane’ or scepter, his ‘baston de la mando’ (which is still with the Image until today) to the Image and eventually proclaimed Mary under this title as ‘La Gobernadora de Manila’

in 1720. This Santa Ana image, the lone replica of the original Marian image of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados from Valencia, Spain was brought here in the Philippines in 1717 by Fray Ingles from Ordum Fratrum Minorum or Order of Friars Minor. The Image arrived here in the Philippines during a controversial period, wherein there were resistance between the colonial government and the Catholic Church.

*“The arrival of the Virgin was providential since at that time, there was an ongoing conflict between the Church and the state in the persons of the Governor General Fernando Manuel de Bustillo Bustamante and the Religious Orders of Intramuros. Governor Bustamante found that the treasury of government funds was empty and out of desperation, he ordered for the confiscation of the contents of the galleon Santo Cristo de Burgos, especially the silver and gold coins that are in the cargo, incidentally, Padre Ingels and the two images (the other image is the replica of Santo Cristo de Burgos, now in Sariaya in Quezon) were in the galleon. The religious orders and the Archbishop of Manila were outraged with this move and protested to the Governor General that led to the imprisonment of Archbishop Francisco dela Cuesta and other friars. The tension between two of the most powerful institutions in the country at that time led to the assassination of Governor General Bustamante and the release of Archbishop dela Cuesta and the Archbishop became the Interim Governor General of the Island.” (Nuestra Señora, 2017).*

In this case, researchers found that despite of the ‘union of Church and State’ during colonial Philippines, even within the ‘center’ and ‘power’ researchers found ‘discontinuity’ and ‘slippages’. They don’t just only find ‘resistances’ from the subjugated but we also find resistances ‘within those who subjugate’ in the network of power relations like what happened between the colonial government and the Catholic Church at that time of the arrival of the replica of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados in 1717. As how Foucault described the inevitability of resistances, which always exist in the dynamic network of power relations, one cannot generalize and have a grand



narrative of Catholicism and Spanish colonialism in the Philippines – primarily executed by the state and political apparatuses of Spain. Consequently, colonialism is only an accident to Catholicism and vice-versa. Catholicism and colonialism are not absolutely and essentially inseparable with one another, since conflict between the two has been occurring since colonial period and until today. Truly, there are clear dynamic interconnectedness between Catholicism and colonialism but Catholicism is not Spain as how colonialism is not Catholicism.

#### 4. The Marikina and Mandaluyong Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados

Today, people find variety of images of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados across Metro Manila. One is in Barangay Hulo in Mandaluyong. The Mandaluyong image is enshrined in a relatively new church built along JP Rizal Street facing Pasig River, hence was called with endearment by the Mandaluyong parishioners as 'the Virgin of Pasig'. Pasig river is a major body of water that runs across Metro Manila and has witnessed a social and cultural transformation since the precolonial period until today after colonization – the contemporary Filipino society. The river of Pasig is personified by 'Mutya ng Pasig' or the beautiful lady of Pasig. By calling the Hispanized Virgin of de los Desamparados as Virgin of Pasig River, it is as if localizing the Virgin and the faith itself. 'Virgen of Pasig River' is hybridized – an amalgamation of the Spanish and Catholic concept 'Virgin' and all the local socio-cultural-historical attributes attached to the river of Pasig. Addressing Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados as the 'Virgin of Pasig River' opposes the colonial and the dominant. It creates culture and transforms tradition.

It is the same as how the local residents of Marikina address with endearment their early 1900's image of Ntra. Sra. de Los Desamparados as 'Mama Ola' 'Ola' is the abbreviation of the English translation 'Our Lady of the Abandoned'. As to the Santa Ana reference 'Gobernadora de Manila' to the Image that definitely embraces everything that is colonial, the 'Mama Ola' of

Marikina, like the 'Virgin of Pasig' of Mandaluyong opposes the colonial mentality but manifests a creation and transformation of culture and some aspects of the colonially implicated Catholic religion to the own framework of those who were once subjugated and dominated – the Filipinos. Thus, the 'Virgin of Pasig' and 'Mama Ola' that does not necessarily contradict the Catholic teachings about the Virgin Mary as Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados, and that opposes 'colonial mentality' – definitely empowers the contemporary Filipino devotees of the Blessed Virgin in constructing their own unique Filipino Catholic faith.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The 'emergence of consciousness' to the socio-cultural and historical narrative of present-day downtown Santa Ana as a precolonial burial site called 'Lamayan' with its ancient mythology of 'Diwata sa Bukal', the Santa Ana Lao Ma enshrined in the Taoist temple behind the Santa Ana Church; and the contemporary Filipinization of Ntra. Sra. de los Desamparados seen in Mandaluyong and Marikina are cases of post-colonial resistances that people have today. In addition, the Filipino experience of Spanish colonialism is not monolithic rather it is dynamic which we still find until today. Hence, this dynamism in our postcolonial involvement wherein the past and the present are interconnected can be found meaningful through a critical analysis of power and resistance.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Researchers recommend further socio-cultural studies to many other colonial remnants in the society today. To unleash new and much relevant understanding to these available historical relics a critical analysis of the invisible power relations and the ever-dynamic concept of resistance must be utilized. Plain and simple ethnographic approaches of Anthropology is not enough but the lenses of politics through the concepts of power and resistance must always be present.

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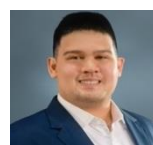
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