

The 62nd Street Forum Lectures And Other Selections - 1

by

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INTRODUCTION

How it all started

About fall of 2002, my wife Lisa and I attended a musical concert of Michael Dadap at the Philippine Consulate in NYC. We had recently moved in from Los Angeles, CA. In the reception that followed, we saw a familiar face: Dr. Amador Muriel, PhD, our physics professor in the early 60's back in UP, Diliman. We approached him, and sure enough, he remembered us. We were invited to his house, and over coffee, we reminisced about the good old college days.

Though we hadn't seen Amador in 40 years, we had heard much about him and actually were in email contact a few years earlier when he was running for the UP presidency, and though we still were based in CA, we helped launch a campaign among our UP friends via the UP email group we had, about 150 strong.

In the course of the evening, he mused that some years back, his place was the venue of many a meeting / forum / gathering of various groups, albeit mainly political. This was during the Marcos years. And then he suggested the idea of starting up again a regular meeting group mainly for intellectual growth and camaraderie. This we fully endorsed.

Thus was born the 62nd Street Forum, named after his address in midtown Manhattan. We started out by gathering our friends regularly on selected Saturday evenings at his place for social events that included meetings, lectures, but always ending up

with pot-luck dinner and drinks. The starting time was at 7:00 PM when free street parking was allowed.

I also started a YahooGroups cyber “Loop” of Tri-State (NY, NJ, CN) friends, and this accreted to over a hundred strong, and eventually extended to other out-of-state and -country participants, who joined in the discussions via email.

Over a period of 6 years, we had over 36 lectures or meetings spanning all sorts of topics by various speakers, locally and from the Philippines. Towards the latter part of the period, we had more social events, especially when some former member who moved out of the area, happened to come to town. Further below is such a list of events with Roman numeral designations.

We tried to keep records of the topics and content by making write-ups of each lecture, listing the attendees, photo ops, and then posting them on the internet.

We even started a Newsletter, but it only lasted two issues since email via the Loop was easier.

This where Johnny Reyes’ special talents came in very handily.

As an engineer, he apparently has a photographic memory. But another talent is his writing skills. After a lecture, he’d make a write-up and send it out to the Loop. Many of us often kidded him about hiding a wire or recorder some where, but that didn’t seem to be the case.

In any event, this book is a compilation of all those lectures that were reported on the Loop, plus many other selected email threads that were pertinent or of interest. One of the Forum members is Jobo Elizes, also a retired engineer who is an accredited

sub-contractor to the Amazon Book powerhouse, and it is through him that these books are possible.

The 62nd Street Forum's meetings started petering out in 2008 when a good number of us started leaving the tri-state area. The last article in the book gives all the interesting details.

But the cyber Loop still continues on, though perhaps not as active as before.

When first all complied, the contents made the book too thick. So the publisher decided to break it down into 2 books. This is the first book.

Referring to the Table of Contents, this Introduction, List of Lectures, Excerpts, Appendix and Publisher's Message are repeated in the second book.

Danny Gil
20 Oct 2016

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LIST OF LECTURES / MEETINGS / EVENTS

I	1-Mar-03	Amador Muriel - Retirement
II	22-Mar-03	Bert Floretino & Gene Pulmano - Life of Jose Garcia Villa
III	5-Apr-03	Johnny Reyes - Refinery Danny Gil - LEED
IV	19-Apr-03	Mang Rodriguez - Sculpture
V	17-May-03	Norman Madrid - Economics
VI	21-Jun-03	Carlos Esguerra - Photography
VII	19-Jul-03	Tony Nievera - Computers

VIII	29-Dec-03	Christmas party - Loida on GMA
IX	21-Feb-04	Cynthia de Leon - Filipino Song
X	7-Mar-04	Mars Custodio - Cancer
XI	27-Mar-04	Jane Orendain - Dance Erwin Gomez - Heart
XII	18-Apr-04	Jane Orendain - Flamenco Amador Muriel - Physics
XIII	17-Jul-04	Vic Vitug - Arbitration Jane Orendain - Malong Elizabeth Cuevas - Ballet
XIV	19-Sep-04	Johnny Reyes - Turbulence
XV	14-Oct-04	Joy Barrios - War, GMA
XVI	28-Nov-04	Gene Pulmano - Diabetes Louie Acosta - Santos Statues
XVII	26-Feb-05	Amador Muriel - Einstein's Loves Louie Acosta - Santos Statues 2
XVIII	26-Mar-05	Preview of Ma-Yi Play by Cast & Jorge Ortoll
XIX	9-Apr-05	Mayou Gonzalez - Meeting the Challenge
XX	20-May-05	Poch Macaranas - Fidel Ramos Years
XXI	4-Jun-05	Don O'Buckley - Immigration
XXII	25-Jun-05	Volt Contreras - Philippine News
XXIII	20-Aug-05	Lito Clemente - Ampalaya
XXIV	10-Sep-05	Cecille Guidote - on GMA (pro)
XXV	17-Sep-05	Dodong Nemenzo - on GMA (anti)
XXVI	16-Jul-06	Lenore Lim - Print Making Carlos Esguerra - Photo exhibits Amador Muriel - Forex
XXVII	29-Jul-06	Linda F. Hall - How to write a Play, Workshop
XXVIII	16-Sep-06	Jane Orendain - Hula

XXIX	30-Sep-06	Jose Guerrero & Alex Tiongco - Oil Spill In Guimaras
XXX	14-Oct-06	Antonio Oposa Jr - Marine Biodiversity in the Philippines
XXXI	18-Mar-07	Michael Dadap - The Philippine Bandurria
XXXII	26-Jan-08	Benny Quiñones - Microfinancing Amador Muriel - Turbulence
XXXIII	3-Mar-08	Carlos Esguerra - Photography Amador Muriel - Lissajous Curves
XXXIV	16-Sep-08	Bert Peronilla's Barbeque Party
XXXV	14-Aug-10	Hery Brillante's Party
XXXVI	13-Jun-12	Amador Muriel's Woodside Party

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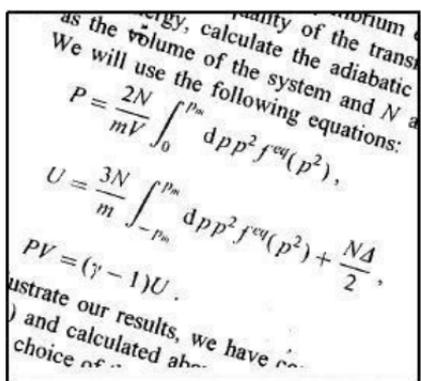
Excerpts from 62nd Street Newsletter Vol 1

**This covers more or less the first seven lectures,
sourced from Johnny Reyes' emails.**

The back-to-back talks at the Manhattan home of Dr. Amador Muriel and his wife Gloria (Merchan) last Saturday evening were the third in a series of informative lectures.

The first in the series was given in early March by Dr. Muriel himself, a former U.P. professor of physics who now runs a computer business in New York and Geneva. He talked about retirement, how some people can retire from their life's work and transition smoothly to do other things, while some others find it difficult. He then discussed all the ramifications.

In his spare time, he has been working on a theory which explains why turbulence occurs in nature. Every engineer knows that when the Reynolds Number of a fluid exceeds a certain threshold value, the type of flow changes from laminar to turbulent. But the reason for this change has never been understood.



Dr. Muriel says he has solved the problem mathematically, and it is now just a matter of getting his solution officially recognized by the international college of physicists (or some such body). It is said that until that happens, Dr. Muriel

prefers to remain a Filipino citizen, because he wants the honor to be rendered to the Philippines. Solving the turbulence problem is said to be of the same order of magnitude as formulating the special and the general theories of relativity, and could merit the Nobel Prize in Physics.

The second in the series comprised back-to-back talks about Philippine National Artist Jose Garcia Villa, given in late March by Bert Florentino, below, (playwright, Palanca awardee and friend of Garcia Villa) and Dr. Gene Pulmano (Garcia Villa's personal physician). Bert narrated Garcia Villa's biography to the group, how he moved from the Philippines to Greenwich Village in the 1930's and decided to stay there permanently, hobnobbing with other poets and artists.



Dr. Pulmano told how he provided Garcia Villa with medical care during the last few years of his life in the 1980's, while exchanging philosophical views with him at the same time. Bert and Gene said Garcia Villa became a National Artist, but the stipend he received from the Philippine Government was a pittance which was barely enough to pay for the rent of his Manhattan apartment. To the end, he refused to return to the Philippines.

After his death, his manuscripts and other Andy Warhol-like art work became the property of an American associate, and unless this person decides to release them, Jose Garcia Villa's heretofore unpublished works can never be published. Bert

Florentino then read us samples of Garcia Villa's few published verses, including his famous comma poems, (I tried very hard to understand them, but I've always had difficulty with poems that don't rhyme, so I had to give up.)

Bert said the only person who has fully understood Jose Garcia Villa's deepest poems is fellow poet Wilfrido Ma. Sanchez (our contemporary in U.P. Diliman and now a successful businessman in the Midwest). I asked whether Garcia Villa was a copycat of E.E. Cummings style, and Jorge Ortoll, one of the guests, emphatically replied no. He said Garcia Villa's style, while similar to that of Cummings, was not a copy, that was just the genre at the time. Bert Florentino added that Garcia Villa and Cummings became good friends and even wrote poems in tribute to each other.



As I said earlier, the third in the series also consisted of back-to-back lectures. The first talk, given by yours truly, was about Oil Refining in

Tabangao, Batangas, 31 years of my life. See photo on previous page.

I mentioned that it was an exciting and heady period for chemical engineers while it lasted (which explains why I didn't immigrate to the U.S. earlier). The subject covered the following topics: The justification for building crude oil refineries in the Philippines (and other third world countries) in the late 50's and early 60's.

The economies of scale.

The hydrocarbons family.

What Tabangao Refinery was designed to do.

Living near a petroleum refinery (risks; actual accidents; inconveniences; perks and conveniences; social life in a housing compound; British and Dutch expats; the local Batangas culture; Join Shell and see the world.)

Expansion in the 60's and early 70's. The 110-km product pipelines to Manila (commissioned in the late 60's). The Tabangao refrigerated LPG terminal built in the early 70's (justification; risks; environmental impact). Purchase by Shell of an existing luboil refinery in Pililla, Rizal (mid-80's). A new state-of-the-art oil refinery built in Tabangao (early 90's). The natural gas find in Palawan (early 90.s) and the undersea pipeline to Tabangao (late 90's).



Contraction and decline of the oil majors worldwide; downsizing, shutting down, and/or selling of refineries to small no-frills companies.

Deregulation in the Philippines; the future of Tabangao Refinery.

The second talk on the evening of April 12 was given by Danny Gil (left)

himself, and revealed a current U.S. Government initiative to persuade creators of buildings and equipment to incorporate more effective energy-saving ideas in their designs. Although compliance will be optional, points will be awarded for features that make use of innovative principles and that eliminate or reduce waste. An example of a points-rich idea is the geothermal pump. Mechanical engineers will tell you that a heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system is actually a heat pump.

The fourth lecture in the series will be given by Norman Madrid, shown below left.



So far, he hasn't revealed details of what his talk will cover, but he has hinted that it will deal with the well-worn topic of why the Philippines is still not a tiger economy, and fresh ideas on what can be done about it. Also, tips on the stock market.

A forthcoming lecture in the series will be given by IBMer Tony Nievera, shown above right. He will be

covering Computers and IBM. The following topics have been suggested: How a computer works (in layman's terms).

Who invented the first computer? When?

The UNIVAC computer

Computer languages (Fortran, Basic, etc.)

Why no one needs to learn them anymore today.

A comparison of computer sizes vs. capability from the first primitive ones to the latest supercomputers.

How computer cards worked.

How a typical laptop today compares in capability with the so-called mainframes of the 60's, the 70's, and the early 80's [Aside: When I took up MBA in La Salle between 1981 and 1985, one of my subjects was Computers. It was a hands-on course, with each student in the class provided with a workstation linked to the main school computer. But the workstation consisted merely of a keyboard (with a carriage return instead of an Enter key), a type writer-style printer, and rolls and rolls of newsprint paper, no monitor!]

Who invented the Internet and when. Minimum essential components of a simple Internet.

The distinction if any between the Internet and the World Wide Web. Is Deep Blue really smarter than Kasparov, or does it just calculate faster? How many moves ahead can Deep Blue (or Deep Junior) plan?

How many theoretical permutations are there of say the first ten moves of a chess game?

The effect of computers on the labor market (is it the main cause of downsizing?) Careers in computers (what do programmers, systems analysts, MCSEs, CCSEs do, and what are their prospects nowadays?)

How has IBM managed the competition from smaller manufacturers?

When buying a personal computer, what should one consider to get the best buy?

What parts of your car are now run by computers?

Ten thousand years from now, when futuremen dig up archeological artifacts of the 20th and 21st centuries, what will they find and how will they interpret them? Should we keep hard copies of everything in fireproof vaults?

Tony's response to the suggestions: "I can do all these topics, and I will start the talk by reading and answering your questions and I will add to make it more interesting "

A candidate for another speakership is Dr. Erwin Gomez, who commutes regularly between Indiana and New York, but like Norman he hasn't given the group an indication so far of what he would like to talk about. I have suggested that he discuss the possibility of brain transplants being carried out in the near future, which could enhance a human being's lifespan significantly (I wasn't thinking of a fresh brain being transferred into an existing body, more of a fresh body receiving an existing brain). This subject was featured at length in a scientific movie during the the late 50's, starring Peter Cushing.

Another possibility is a brain implant to enhance the IQ of intellectually challenged individuals somewhat like adding extra gigabytes to your CPU. Or a personal dialysis machine portable and compact. After all, look how computers and cell phones have shrunk over the years but gotten more powerful. What is to prevent technology from developing a kidney-sized dialysis machine in effect, an artificial kidney?

Dr. Amador Muriel, in whose 62nd Street apartment the lectures are being held, has remarked that the

group is expanding. We should make it an informal requirement for new attendees that he/she be willing to give a talk on a topic of general interest, so we can all grow intellectually.

Johnny Reyes

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**Email to the Loop on Loida Nicolas Visit
29 Dec 2003**

Folks,

We had an "open house", as Amador called it, at his place today. He has been back in NY for a week and will return to Geneva next week for an even longer stay. He will continue on his Physics research and undertake work on a new IT contract on database creation and management.

Gloria will stay for a while longer in NY to finish the house remodel.

And today's event could be classified as a mini lecture because it was graced by Loida Nicolas-Lewis, who talked about her support for Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and how it is important that us Filipino Americans should get involved in the forthcoming election by at least trying to influence whomever we can in voting for the candidate who would best lead the country out of it's malaise. She feels it should be GMA as she already is a known quantity and has done relatively much more positive things than the previous presidents. After Loida comes back from Manila in late February, she promises to meet with all of us and give an update.

Other newcomers to the group were Vic & Vicky Vitug, who are involved in setting up this YahooGroup; Ted Young, a builder and contractor for many years in Manila who is settling down in NY; and Bembo & Gela Dolorico, long time NY residents and one of the original members of Amador's earlier forums. My two children came later to join us.



Above is a group picture taken by my son Joey who is visiting from LA. Sitting L-R is Gloria, Vicky, Loida, Bembo, Vic and Ted. Standing are Danny, Gela, Lisa, Babette (our daughter), and Amador.

Gene and Cynthia, we haven't forgotten your offers to give the next lectures, and we will be contacting you soon after the holidays.

Danny Gil

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Cynthia Guerrero-de Leon, Lani Micenas - Music

Lecture IX

Feb 24, 2004

Write up by Johnny Reyes

I had the impression we were attending an informal sing-along at Amador and Gloria Muriel's 62nd Street brownstone in the City on Saturday evening the 21st. Since Gene Pulmano had postponed his scheduled lecture on Diabetes, there was to be no formal speaker that night. My only concern was how to get through the sing-along in one piece, because my voice is now missing three notes (used to be only two) right in the middle of the scale. Whenever I joined choirs in the past (both in Diliman and in Tabangao), my lips automatically switched to soundless mode whenever the conductor was hovering nearby. Before I learned to do this, the conductor always got the strange feeling that someone was out of tune in my section.

Anyway, the company and the Fundadors are always good at Amador's, so Mila and I eagerly went, taking along Mila's sister and her husband. With Erwin Gomez in town, there were too many of us to all fit inside Danny and Lisa's Nissan Quest or our Plymouth Voyager. So instead of passing by the Gils' place on Ogden Nash Avenue in Jersey City the Reyes Clan drove in a smaller car directly to 62nd Street, where happily the traffic and parking situation was light to moderate.

Thus we were totally unprepared for the special treat that awaited us in Manhattan: a highly professional and concise presentation on Filipino musical forms -- which turned out better than Amador's lecture on the physics of turbulence, better than Palanca awardee Bert Florentino's lecture on Jose Garcia Villa's poetry, better than Norman Madrid's lecture on economics, better than Carlos Esguerra's lecture on photography, better than Manny Rodriguez's demo on sculpture, better than Loida Nicolas-Lewis' short talk on GMA politics, better than Danny's lecture on environmental building designs, or Tony Nievera's talk on computers, and certainly better than my own lecture on oil refining in Tabangao.

The presenter was Cynthia Guerrero-De Leon, a summa cum laude double major in mathematics and



piano from Centro Escolar University (and daughter-in-law of the famous composer Felipe P. De Leon). She knew what she was talking about, as a colla-

borative pianist with professional artists (Evelyn Mandac, etc.) when performing in major U.S. concert halls and recording studios, and a composer in her own right. Now we know the differences between a kumintang and a kundiman, a harana and a balitaw, a balse and a polka.

Demonstrating the various Filipino musical forms was young coloratura soprano Lani Misenas -- with impressive credentials: a master's degree from the Juilliard School of Music, performances in the U.S. (Carnegie Hall) and Europe, awards in several international competitions, and glowing praise from critics about "her voice and her presence which demand from her audience, beyond applause, rapt attention." When Lani did "Awit ng Gabi ni Sisa," with only a shawl as a prop, Mila's sister was moved to tears.

Cynthia explained that Filipino music falls into three categories: ethnic, traditional western-influenced, and contemporary Pinoy jazz. Her presentation concentrated on the traditional forms influenced by western dance music such as the waltz and the tango, popular at the time in Spain and Mexico. With our Filipino love for sweetness and sentimentality, our composers slowed the waltz down considerably, producing the kumintang and the kundiman. Both are based on the 1-2-3 waltz beat, but the kumintang has some elaboration on the first beat. When you hear Lani singing familiar songs, however, you forget about what beat it is. Cynthia also pointed out the common misconception that all Filipino traditional songs are kundimans. Not true -- the kundiman is only one of

several types. The word itself is a contraction of "kung hindi man" -- in other words, "if I don't (win your love)." Cynthia didn't know the meaning of "kumintang." When I asked her whether it might have a connection with the barrios of Batangas City (Kumintang Itaas, Kumintang Ibaba), she confirmed that the word did originate from Batangas. It's not related to the Kuomintang of Taiwan, though.

Other traditional Filipino music forms described by Cynthia and demonstrated by Lani were the bal or balse, harana, balitaw, ballad, polka, and the aria, the last being the solo performance in a musical drama such as a zarzuela. "Awit ng Gabi ni Sisa" is the aria from Felipe De Leon's musical interpretation of "Noli Me Tangere," and as I mentioned earlier was Lani's piece de resistance, where she really got inside the character she was playing. Basilio! Crispin! Nasaan na kayo!!!? To lighten the mood after "Sisa," Cynthia added a Pinoy jazz song composed by Ryan Cayabyab, "Limang Dipang Tao," which Lani performed with verve.

Cynthia mentioned that the presentation was a benefit of the Felipe P. de Leon Foundation. They do this to promote Filipino performers in the arts and expose them to a wider audience. Amador encourages the group to support this endeavor generously.

In the open forum which followed, after the thunderous applause had died down, Mars Custodio asked what Cynthia thought was preventing Filipino music from breaking into the world stage, despite its

high quality. Is it the way we look? Danny pointed out that nightclubs all over Asia are dominated by Filipino performers. Cynthia replied that concert halls are a long way from nightclubs, but unfortunately only a very few of our musical artists have the discipline and the dedication required, but those that have are already world-class. I said that on a less sophisticated level -- popular music -- you can't get any better than the Mabuhay Singers. But is there something wrong with Filipino music which prevented them from penetrating the world market, in the same way that Harry Belafonte and the Trio Los Panchos made calypso and mariachi popular all over the United States (and the Philippines)? Lani said that our music is excellent and so are our artists, but because the promotion is inadequate nobody gets to hear about them. Carlos countered that the original Tagalog version of Freddy Aguilar's "Anak" was a number one world hit for quite some time. And so on the discussion went.

By the way, I asked Cynthia what category "Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit" falls into, and she replied polka. Then I said, I heard the tune was borrowed from a Visayan folk song. She said, no, it's an original composition by my father-in-law, and the family holds a copyright to the song. Wait till DILA hear this -- they are claiming different.

Aside from Cynthia and Lani and hosts Amador Muriel and Gloria Merchan, the other attendees numbered 15 -- a record, I guess. We were not really drinking Fundador -- instead, we were sipping more sophisticated riesling and merlot -- but although wine

is fine it does not rhyme with Amador. Award-winning photographer Carlos Esguerra was there with his wife Arlene. So were Linda Quial, American dentist Jeff Phillip, and Susan Rodriguez-Fagan. I asked Susan whether her husband was a character in *Oliver Twist*, and she replied no, that is a Jewish name while her husband's name is Irish, although the pronunciation is similar. Erwin Gomez was present, having just attended a convention in Philadelphia; he will stay overnight at Danny and Lisa's, then fly back to Indiana Sunday. Speaking of Indians, everybody thought Mila's brother-in-law was a silent Filipino until his wife Pilar Garcia (U.P.Ch.E.) introduced him as Javher Advani of the Food and Drug Administration. Also present were organizer Danny Gil and his wife Lisa Seneris, as well as regulars Mila Garcia-Reyes and myself. Three more persons who arrived just as the lecture was ending were my high school classmate Mars Custodio and his wife Cora Yabut my Math 1 classmate, and Lala Fernando-Reyes. Mars is an eminent oncologist, now retired, a gentleman of leisure and a patron of the arts. He will be the next lecturer at 2 pm on Sunday, March 7, same place, expounding on his area of expertise -- *Cancer and How Close We Are to Finding a Cure*. (With so many doctors in the 62nd Street Forum -- Amador, Mars, Erwin, Gene Pulmano, Lestrino Baquiran, Lisa's brother Ramon, and cousin Petra -- you can't get anybody to talk about brain transplants.) Lala, of younger vintage than most of us, said she is a Maryknoll graduate who taught English in U.P. during the activist 70's, when she hung out with radicals like Randy David.

She talked about meeting some ageing Maryknoll sisters in New York recently and how they seemed to have an inner glow. I then mentioned attending the ordination in Fordham of a former colleague in Shell who had joined the priesthood in his 40's and how the other Jesuits present at the ceremony all looked like octogenarians. But the room on 62nd Street was noisy with conversation and I was mumbling in my usual way, so Lala misheard me and thought I was talking about a nun who had become a priest. She explained afterwards that women priests are no longer uncommon nowadays, but the visual image of a nun miraculously being transformed into a priest had me in stitches for a while.

It was an enjoyable and educational evening for all. Those who were absent from tonight's forum definitely missed something. And I didn't have to sing along!

Johnny Reyes

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Mars Custodio - Cancer

Lecture X

March 8, 2004

Write up by Johnny Reyes

The standards at the 62nd Street Forum are being raised so high these days I'm afraid they'll become impossible to meet in future -- without excessive hard work and tremendous pre-paration. I'm glad I had

presented my own piece early on, when the audience was still unspoiled.

When retired oncologist Mars Custodio gave a lecture on his field of expertise last Sunday afternoon, he was a different person from the overgrown schoolboy with the cute beard I had known for many years. During his talk, Mars was authoritative, professional, professorial. He tried to make his talk as informal and non-technical as possible, but the subject matter was a serious one -- involving life and death. He held our rapt attention for two hours -- everybody is interested in cancer, particularly at our stage in life -- so you could say we were a captive audience (unlike those who listen to a lecture on say astronomy or Ancient Egypt, hoping they can apply the knowledge gained sometime in the future, when they find a free week-end). Mars obviously knew his material, and showed that he was up-to-date on the



latest developments. But the topic of cancer is a very broad one, and com-pressing 30 years of experience and knowledge into a two-hour nutshell of a talk is a formidable task. Although Mars answered all of our questions -- spontaneous, or submitted in advance -- by the end of his talk

we were still hungry for more information.

Mars followed a well-prepared outline, but he also provided snippets of interesting information in between. For example, he said that Filipina women have a long fertile period compared to other races.

They start menstruating as early as 9 in some cases, and continue to do so well past the age of 50. This makes them susceptible to breast cancer for a longer period. Bert asked why men don't get breast cancer, and Mars replied that we don't produce as much milk as women do. Mila said men don't produce any milk at all! Let me digress a bit here: Do you remember the cow-milking contest held in Texas a few years back? The contestants from Kansas, from New Mexico, from Mexico, were extracting milk by the 5-gallon pails from their heifers -- when the grand prize was awarded to a local who had produced only one teacupful. The visitors all cried Foul! Favoritism! Unfair! until the judge explained that the Texas champion had been milking a bull!

Mars also said that when a woman does get breast cancer, there are two options: remove the entire breast, or try to preserve it by going for an intensive treatment regimen instead. When the woman is young and conscious of her appearance, the second option is of course preferable. But when the woman is at that stage in life when comfort is more important than appearance, then it is advisable to just remove the whole thing. But Mars pointed out that the boundary when this change occurs is moving farther and farther back -- there are now many women in their 80's who are still fastidious about how they look.

In the prepared part of his talk, Mars said that we all harbor cancer cells in our bodies, but so long as they are dormant we're OK. A person is said to "have cancer" when the cells are stimulated and activated, and they start wreaking havoc on the body. An

example of a cancer stimulus is smoking. Mars then discussed the methods of diagnosing cancer -- a review of the patient's medical history, including that of his close relatives; a physical exam; lab tests; X-rays; CT scans; MRI's; ultrasound; biopsies. Next he explained the methods of treatment -- surgery (invasive; resection; palliation -- getting very technical here); radiation therapy (it seems the aim is not to burn out the cancer cells, but to disable their DNA and prevent them from multiplying); chemotherapy (Mars' specialty); biologic therapy; and supportive care.

He went into more detail on chemotherapy, explaining the kinetics of the cell cycle (something we were supposed to have learned in Bio 101); the principles of combination chemotherapy (where you try to kill as many cancer cells as possible without killing too many normal cells at the same time); the selection of the right drugs to use; observation of the patient's response; the strength of the dose; possible resistance by the cancer cells to the drugs; what kinds of drugs are available and how each functions. Mars also dealt at length on the most prevalent killer cancers (next to lung cancer) -- on the colon, the breast, and the prostate gland -- and the roles of prevention, screening, and treatment. Mars said that if a patient is "in remission" -- i.e., has no detectible symptoms of cancer -- for five years, then he is normally considered cured, but there are always exceptions. By the way, miraculous cures were outside the scope of Mars' lecture.

After the talk and the lively open forum which followed, 62nd Street Forum organizer Danny Gil,

who never stops making things happen, announced that the next presentation would be held at 7:00 pm on Saturday, March 27, same place. Jane Orendain, UP dance major, was scheduled to give a demonstration of Western-influenced Filipino folk dances. Should be another high-quality and fun-filled evening -- the more who attend, the better -- but RSVP, out of courtesy to the hosts.

Jorge Ortoll then made a pitch for Ma-Yi, the Asian-American dramatics group. He said a play written by a Korean-American, with a Filipino-American in the lead role, would be presented off-Broadway starting March 14. It's supposed to be very funny, with a Mr. Pnom Penh instead of Miss Saigon, etc. Amador Muriel said if the members of the 62nd Street Forum went as a group, we could get a 40% discount on the \$25 tickets -- a steal compared to regular Broadway tickets. The group agreed that the April 3 matinee performance would be considered another 62nd St Forum event, except this time it would be at a theatre, not at Amador's. Jorge also said there would be a fund-raising dinner for Ma-Yi on May 27 at the New York Hilton -- a rare chance for all of us to dress up and ballroom-dance. Again, Amador said we could all go as a group and have our own table. I said we were call if a critical mass were to go, but Mila overrode me and said that the Reyeses needed to do some fund-raising of our own before we could afford the stiff price tag (\$200 a plate). That also seemed to be the consensus of some others.

Mars' lecture was well-attended -- 15 in the audience, including Gloria Muriel who came home a

little late. Others who were present aside from the host Muriels: Cora Custodio; Eva and Bert Florentino; newcomer Thelma Reyes; Lisa and organizer Danny Gil; Lisa's brother Ramon Seneris, himself a doctor; Arlene and Carlos Esguerra; Jorge Ortoll; Mila's sister Pilar Garcia-Advani; and the Reyeses. According to Danny, there were others who had earlier indicated they would attend, but had other commitments, such as playwright Linda Faigao-Hall, who was attending a retreat; Jane Orendain, who was performing a hula demonstration; classic guitarist Michael Dadap; and Vic & Vicky Vitug. Nonong Pederero, who was visiting New York, had also told Danny he would come, but had to cancel at the last minute.

Johnny Reyes

--oo0oo--

**Email to the Loop on Theater Event
3 April 2004**

Folks,

The Sunday talk of Mars Custodio on cancer was very informative. And the company was very enjoyable, too.

The next event will be on March 27, Saturday, at the usual 7:00 pm at Amador's place. Jane Orendain will demonstrate, in her words: "Philippine dances relative to Spain indigenous/tribal dances as our very own? if so, I would love to give a talk a/o demo or both?!?!?!? "

Sunday's lecture was graced by Jorge Ortoll, who talked briefly about the Ma-yi, and the forthcoming event April 3. His subsequent email about it is excerpted further below, with the brackets.

The group agreed that Apr 3 will be a 62nd St Forum event, too. Instead of meeting at Amador's, we'll all meet at the theater. Please let me know if you're interested.

[Attached please find the information kit on Wave, the new Ma-Yi play by Korean American playwright Sung Rno, the guy with the Physics and Poetry background!

Hope to see you all at the Ohio Theater on April 3 Saturday for the Matinee performance, which starts promptly at 2:30 PM.

Group rates apply if there are more than ten people coming to the same performance. Please disseminate to the 62nd Street Forum people – hope everyone can come

Thanks

Sincerely,

Jorge Z. Ortoll
Executive Director
Ma-Yi Theater Company]

Danny Gil

--oo0oo—

**Jane Orendain - Dance
Erwin Gomez - Heart**

Lecture XI

March 27, 2004

Write up by Johnny Reyes

The program last Saturday night started promptly at seven. Jane Orendain, dance major and teacher from UP, PWU, and the Bayanihan Dance Company was very well-prepared, having come two hours early to lay out her literature handouts, musical instruments, trinkets, costume items, nose flute (Remember Gemma Cruz? This was her talent when she won Miss International. But Jane suggested to buy your own personal unit instead of sharing). Tonight's lecture would turn out to be another super-absorbing one. Not many persons can dance and give a talk at the same time, but it seems to be an ideal way to stay fit and maintain a slim figure while enjoying yourself

Jane's presentation was to comprise three parts, indigenous Filipino tribal dances, Spanish/Mexican-influenced Filipino folk dances, and Muslim. She would be glad to do two of the three tonight, and the concluding part on another occasion. She mentioned that Bayanihan dances were choreographed by Agnes B. De Mille (who never set foot in the Cordilleras in her life), were intended for an international audience, and were not authentic. This is not surprising, considering that even Strauss' waltzes had been modified by Mantovani to suit popular taste, and the flavors of original ethnic Chinese dishes are missing from the bland American

Chinatown versions. Jane demonstrated that genuine Filipino tribal dances are slower, less jerky, more graceful, less "magaslaw" than the Bayanihan versions.

Jane mentioned examples of what she called "oxymorons" -- redundant terms coined by ignorant Americans and perpetuated by us:

- Cordillera Mountains (Cordillera means mountain range);
- Hula dance (hula means dance in Hawaiian);
- Please RSVP (RSVP means respond if you please);
- Laguna de Bay pronounced with a long "a" ("Bay" is not a body of water, but the name of a town on the shore of the lake, which should be pronounced with a Filipino "a");
- Bilibid Prison.

She said there are five major tribal areas in the Cordilleras: the Benguet tribe (where Baguio is), Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao, and Kalinga (the farthest north and the most remote). The acronym is BIBAK, which makes the five easy to remember. Kalinga is pronounced Kalinga, not Kalingga (just like Angono is pronounced Angono, not Anggono). Igorot is the generic name for all the tribes inhabiting the Mountain Provinces (like "American Indian"), but the individual tribesmen don't like the term. Jane showed us distinctive dance moves of the different tribes, and explained that the musicians of most tribes are separate from the dancers, but the Bontoc enter the circle and join the dancers while banging their gongs at the same time. There is some similarity between

our tribal dances and those in other Asian countries, but the cross-pollination link has been severed eons ago, especially for very isolated tribes like the Kalinga.



Jane then switched to Spanish/Mexican-influenced Filipino folk dances and recounted historical vignettes from the Spanish colonial period. I wonder why Philippine history in high school and college was never as interesting and alive as this!!? She explained that from the late 1500's to the mid 1800's the galleons collected silks, spices, and other Oriental products brought to the Philippines from China, Japan, and India, and transported them to Acapulco and other ports on the American West Coast. One main reason the Spaniards established so many missions in those areas was to service the crewmen of the galleons, who suffered from scurvy during the long trans-Pacific voyage. On the trip back, the

galleons carried some gold and silver coins, but mainly passengers and not cargo, plus some basic supplies for the peninsulares stationed in the Philippines. The peninsulares (Spaniards born in the mother country) represented the highest social class, followed by the criollos (Spaniards born in the colony; creoles; insulares; "Filipinos"), the mestizos (half-breeds), and finally the indios (brown-skinned natives). For each class, aspiring to the next level was a major preoccupation. It still is for Michael. While the upper-class ladies wore vestidos, the indio women wore baro and saya instead ("saya" also was a Spanish word). Jane modeled each type of dress, and showed us what the terms "peyneta," "naguas de ojete," and "saya'ng de kola" (from "Paruparong Bukid") looked like. The whole time Jane was lecturing, with Danny Gil at the portable CD player controls, she was continuously moving around and doing the various Filipino folk dances, changing costumes in between numbers.

She started with a flamenco number from Seville, complete with clicking castanets, but she had to forego the standard metal-studded dancing shoes in favor of chinelas, to avoid ruining the fine hardwood floor of Amador and Gloria's living room. (In this part of the world, a wooden floor costs more than carpeting, because a carpet can conceal a cheap surface underneath.) Then Jane showed how the Sevillana dance influenced certain Filipino folk dances, which require similar costumes and even Philippine-style wooden castanets.

[An aside: During my years with Shell, every time a well-liked expat Refinery Manager or Company President was leaving at the end of his 3- to 4-year term, the residents of the Tabangao Compound would pick up the honoree couple at their home with a carabao-pulled cart, hold a torchlit procession all the way to the clubhouse, and then perform native folk dances in full costume at the farewell party. Mila and the other wives had no problem picking up the complicated dance steps, but us men -- except for a few young technologists and engineers who had aptitude -- had to have the steps simplified for us, and had to undergo intensive training every evening for weeks before the event, with a gay dance instructor from Batangas City who always showed up in tights. That's a lot of despedida parties over 32 years, but not long before Mila and I left Tabangao for good the tradition was finally killed when a wife who had connections with Batangas City had the bright idea of importing a high school folk dance troupe for the traditional party -- missing the point of the whole exercise, which was to provide a fun activity for the compound residents. After watching the slim young professionals perform, none of the residents wanted to dance again for a while.] But tonight, Jane made the folk dance steps look so easy.

Jane said that Spaniards were called "Kastila" by the Philippine indios, because the Castile region was where Madrid was located and where most of the colonial government officials probably came from, and the official language was the Castellano dialect. But the Spanish sailors who manned the galleons (many of whom may have settled in the Philippines) were

mainly Basques from the Pais Basco region of Northern Spain, with its Golfo de Vizcaya, and the Catalonians from Barcelona, and Jane added that she herself had both Basque and Catalanian ancestors. Danny and Lisa said that "Catalan" means a conceited show-off in Negros Oriental, while I mentioned that in the Philippines "catala" means an adjustable wrench (also called a "Crescent wrench," after the most popular brand -- but not a "monkey wrench," which is a pipe wrench -- a completely different tool). From the stairs above, the disembodied voice of host Amador Muriel (all seats were taken at floor level) argued that in researching Philippine history, our scholars should focus more on the libraries and archives of Catalanian Barcelona rather than those of Castilian Madrid. After all, that was where Rizal spent most of his time in Spain.

Plug: Jane offered to train anyone interested in learning Philippine folk dances. She said she would teach the steps, provide sheet music, and, when possible, even a tape or CD PLUS two or three free two-hour sessions. Just say where and when, and then either fetch her from her place in the Bronx, or from the bus or train station. Sunday afternoons are best for her.

It was really unfair to schedule Erwin's talk on such a serious topic as heart diseases after the spectacular presentation that Jane's lecture was, and on such short notice. But despite landing at Newark Airport only a couple of hours before the start of tonight's 62nd Street forum, Erwin grumbled a bit about what a tough act to follow what went just before -- and then

proceeded anyway to give a logically-organized, engaging, and erudite talk on his area of expertise. Before he was even midway into his presentation, Erwin was sandblasted with questions from Bert Florentino, Vic Vitug, and Carlos Esguerra, from the ladies -- Arlene Esguerra, Cora Custodio, Mutya Gener, Eva Florentino, Vicky Vitug, Lenore Lim, Lisa Gil, Mila Reyes, Jane Orendain -- as well as from his fellow doctors Mars Custodio and Gene Pulmano. Others who made up the firing line were hosts Amador & Gloria Muriel, Ramon Seneris, Johnny Reyes, Lenore's husband Joe Lim, Thelma Reyes, organizer Danny Gil, a handsome young couple who left early, and, with his wife Connie, former UP Physics Professor Al Albano who now lives along the Main Line in the suburbs of Philadelphia and teaches pretty young things at posh Bryn Mawr College.

[Aside: Bryn Mawr is one of the Seven Sisters (together with Barnard, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, Vassar, and Wellesley), female counterparts of the formerly all-male Ivy League schools (Princeton, Harvard, Yale, U of Penn, Cornell, Columbia, Brown, and Dartmouth). You know of course that the Ivy League universities have now been invaded by women, just like La Salle Taft and Ateneo de Manila were, after which they are no longer what they used to be. And men have been accepted into two of the Seven Sisters! A well-known example is Vassar graduate Rick Lazio who ran unsuccessfully against Hillary Clinton (herself a Wellesley grad) for the post of U.S. Senator from New York in 2002, after former NYC Mayor Rudy Juliano had dropped out of the race. Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania is where old-rich

Main Liner girls go, and features Grace Kelly and Katharine Hepburn among its more famous alumnae].

If you include the speaker and the hosts, that's 26 - - count them! Truly a record number. You wouldn't have thought we would all fit in the living room and still leave enough space for a dance floor, but we did.

Anyway, Erwin explained that heart diseases and, in particular, heart attacks are a leading cause of death in the world (outside Afghanistan and Iraq). Although first heart attacks are not necessarily fatal, a



depressingly large percentage of survivors die within a frighteningly short period after the attack. Erwin said that of course prevention is the primary defense, but that is easier said than done, because only a third of heart attacks exhibit the

traditional symptoms (chest pains, shortness of breath, numbness of the arms and neck). Another third show unexpected or unrelated symptoms (for example, a toothache), while the last third manifest no symptoms at all.

Fortunately, major progress has been made in the medical battle against heart disease, so that nowadays even the methods used by Christian

Barnard (who performed the first heart transplant) seem primitive. Erwin clarified that surgeons can now do so many things with a living heart (including stopping it temporarily) that death is no longer defined as the loss of one's heartbeat. Mars Custodio clarified that a person is considered dead only when his brain functions have stopped -- as indicated by the familiar electronic charts you see on TV.

By the way, suggestions had been made to videotape the lectures and/or do a teleconference. Unfortunately, nobody remembered to bring a video camera. Amador's telephone has a speakerphone feature and is conference call-ready, but it is positioned away from the lecturers and may not capture the sound faithfully enough to justify the high cost our more distant friends need to incur when they call in long-distance. For this reason, Danny didn't bother announcing Amador's number in advance or the timing of Erwin's talk (which was difficult to predict anyway).

Erwin clarified the difference between a heart attack (failure of the pump) and a stroke (blockage of the blood conduits to the brain), but explained that they have related causes and similar preventive measures. He dealt with the various means available to reduce or eliminate unwanted materials in the blood stream which hinder the normal flow of blood and strain the heart. Bert Florentino asked whether Erwin thought God's design of the circulatory system was optimal, or whether he could improve on it. Erwin said the human heart is a wonderful thing, designed to operate continuously, and guaranteed for life.

Erwin then explained the various methods available to mend a broken (down) heart, short of replacing it. He said that because cars are so much safer today, fewer people die in accidents. Accident victims with almost everything else damaged except the heart are the main donors for heart transplants. With fewer of them available, the result is a critical shortage of this vital organ, and candidates for transplants must undergo a long wait. Surgeons have experimented using baboon hearts, but the rejection problem has not yet been solved. Erwin clarified that the term "homograft" does not mean a gay marriage, but the implantation of an organ from a donor of the same species.

Carlos Esguerra asked where the best place to be was in case of a heart attack, and Gene Pulmano replied, in the ER! He said, if you suspect you are having a heart attack, don't bother analyzing the symptoms -- go immediately to the nearest hospital. Bert said that's not so easy in the Philippines. In the first place, you can't go anywhere fast because of the heavy traffic. Second, no hospital will admit you if you don't have cold cash -- not even money orders or cashier's cheques are honored. Jane said that's also true in the U.S. to a certain extent -- if you are an international visitor, Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York will require you to pay in advance (but they accept credit cards). Erwin also mentioned that surgeons in the Philippines are as competent as anywhere else in the world, but their main problem is the shortage of good equipment in Philippine hospitals.

Bert asked what the advantages were of a "rotary" heart (over the standard diaphragm-type model). He probably meant a centrifugal heart, which is ideal for a closed circulating system, pumping only as much as the backpressure allows. A rotary heart, on the other hand, is a positive-displacement pump which will move a fixed volume of blood regardless of the backpressure. If the blood conduits are constricted and the rotary heart keeps pumping, the blood pressure will keep increasing to infinity, and the walls of the arteries and veins will fail at their weakest point, resulting in hemorrhage.

I suggested a couple of silly ways to remediate clogged arteries and veins and reduce high blood pressure: (1) Reconnect the aorta to the suction of the heart, and the vena cava to the discharge, in order to reverse the direction of blood flow (this is a common method of removing blockages in circulating water systems); and/or (2) chemical-clean the circulatory system by injecting an inhibited solution of acetic acid into the bloodstream (the standard way of removing scale from boiler tubes). But it turned out nothing is too silly for doctors -- they've tried 'em all. Both Mars Erwin both said that acid-cleaning of the blood stream has already been done -- the procedure even has a technical name: chelation (pronounced with a hard "ch" and a long "e"). Sometimes the method works; if it doesn't, it chels (hard "ch," short "i") the patient. By the way, you are only allowed to chemical-clean a boiler when it's shut down. I don't know about patients.

The next session of the 62nd Street Forum will be announced by the organizer Danny Gil. Amador said he is leaving for Geneva during the third week of April but will be back in New York in early June.

Johnny Reyes

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Jane Orendain - Flamenco
Amador Muriel - Physics

Lecture XII

April 18, 2004

Write up by Johnny Reyes

The lectures scheduled for this Sunday afternoon 4/18 were (1) Jane Orendain's third of three modules on Philippine Traditional Dances -- this one focusing on Muslim Folk Dances -- and (2) host Amador Muriel's update on his Turbulence Theory and his quest for its formal unqualified acceptance. A good combination, the first showcasing the rhythmic movements of the human figure in tune with the music of primitive percussion instruments, and the second dealing with the dance of molecules as they obey the universal laws of physics.

Jane explained that contrary to common belief, Philippine Muslim dances are not completely free of Spanish influence -- many Muslims lived in the Maynila area before the Spaniards came, and brought

the Spanish flavor back with them when they returned to Mindanao. In turn, Spanish dances are not completely free of Muslim influence -- Southern Spain was dominated by the Moors of Africa until El Cid drove them out (posthumously, according to legend) during the decisive battle of Valencia. More interesting historical trivia from Jane: She said the inhabitants of Mindanao during the Spanish period



comprised three groups: Filipinos (Christians), Moros (Muslims), and Lumads (Outsiders). The Maranaw Muslims came from the Lanao area, while the Maguindanaws were from Cotabato. Jane again pointed out that authentic Philippine Muslim dances were languid (malumanay and mahinhin), as contrasted with the more energetic Bayanihan style. She demonstrated various dances, including one with a lot of waving and swishing of veils meant to swat evil spirits away, and showed how similar the Singkil moves were to that of the Tinikling. Finally, she demonstrated the multipurpose nature of the unisex

malong, which is shaped like a wide hollow cylinder -- it can be used as a skirt, sash, veil, dikin (pot-carrier-on-the-head), etc. -- while lamenting the fact that it is often portrayed wrongly in pictures. [In the same way, Colleen McCullough has always been pointing out that Hollywood movies never get the Roman toga right -- because they don't know the correct shape and cut of the cloth.]

An impressive conclusion to a great trilogy. Jane Orendain loves Philippine dance and culture so much that she is willing to teach it for free (without out-of-pocket costs for her, of course) to young Filipino children. She also hates it when other Filipinas circulating abroad mis-represent Philippine dance with substandard performances and shoddy costumes while claiming they know it all.

Now it was time for the mind-bending portion of the evening: Physical Theories.

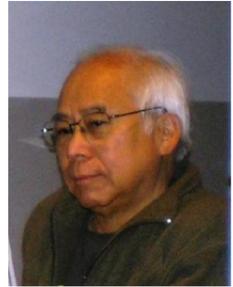
[Backgrounder: Contrary to what many people think, petroleum products are not made up of single pure substances but are blends of several components. In many cases, there are heavy components and light ones. The latter are used to dilute the heavy components and bring down the overall thickness of the mixture, in order to meet quality specifications. To ensure that every drop of product in a storage tank has the same composition as the rest of the mixture, the product must be stirred, either by propeller mixers or by jet nozzles.

Mixing is a reversible process. When the product is transported by pipeline over long distances (for example, Batangas City to Manila), if the flow is laminar (the opposite of turbulent) the components can separate from each other somewhere along the way and form layers, light components floating to the top and heavy components sinking to the bottom. If that happens, the customer at the other end will receive product of uneven quality, which is unacceptable. To prevent that, the pipelines and pumps are designed to keep the flow in the turbulent range at all times. In the oil industry, laminar flow and layering are bad words. But the opposite may well be true in aeronautics, and to a certain extent in automotive body design, because aircraft and cars move best and consume the least fuel when traveling smoothly through tranquil, non-turbulent air.]

How can designers predict whether a certain set of conditions will result in turbulent and not laminar flow? There is already an indicator well known to every chemical engineer: the Reynolds Number. In college, we learned that this number increases as the diameter of the pipeline, the flow velocity, and the density of the fluid increase, and decreases as the viscosity (thickness/stickiness) of the fluid increases. If those four variables are fixed, the Reynolds Number is also fixed, regardless of what the fluid is. We also learned a rule of thumb that if the Reynolds Number exceeds a certain critical figure (about 2000), the flow starts changing from laminar to turbulent. This is taught as gospel truth in engineering schools and is generally accepted in industry.

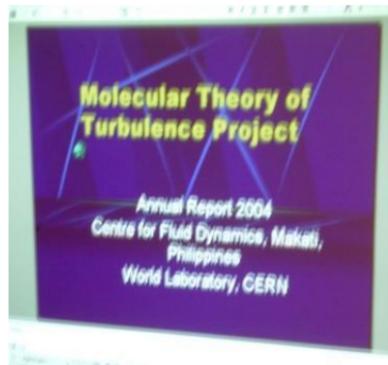
So, if there is already an existing indicator that can predict the onset of turbulence, what else can Muriel's Theory of Turbulence contribute?

Well, Amador starts out by debunking our basic assumptions. Firstly, he says the critical Reynolds Number is not universally constant, but varies from fluid to fluid by as much as 20%. Why was this substantial variation never observed before? Amador has an explanation: He says engineering measurements are so inaccurate that their margin of error is about 30%, which is greater than the variation of the Reynolds Number and masks it.



Secondly, Amador says ultrasound and radiation cause turbulence.

Thirdly, he says there is more than one critical Reynolds Number for each fluid. At some point above the first



critical Reynolds Number, the flow becomes laminar again; it then becomes turbulent again only after the second critical R.N. has been reached. There may be many such alternating bands of laminar and turbulent flows -- perhaps an infinite number.

[Aside: This third prediction seems amazingly analogous to the performance characteristics of a steam-driven turbine, which propels the generators that supply us with electricity. During start-up, the speed is brought up gradually from zero to the appropriate operating rpm (revolutions per minute). But each turbine has a critical speed (somewhat lower than its normal operating rpm) at which the turbine vibrates violently. Passing this critical speed must be done as quickly as possible, to avoid destroying the turbine. There are many such critical speeds for each turbine - - probably an infinite number -- but of course only the first (lowest) critical speed is attained in practice.]

Fourthly, Amador says when the flow of nitrogen is turbulent, it emits radiation in the far-infrared range. He mentioned that this phenomenon may have a practical military significance.

The above predictions are not Muriel's Theory itself -- just manifestations of it. The theory itself, which he arrived at by means of mathematical calculations, is too complex for me to understand and explain, but Amador says if his predictions are fulfilled by actual experiments, that proves his theory correct beyond a doubt. Actually, he sent me a copy of a monograph which lays out his theory in detail. If anybody wants to read it, I have Amador's tacit permission to forward

it to you. But I'd rather not quote extensively from his monograph (as another writer did: "PSHS Student Wins Award for Project on Turbulence"), thereby merely repeating what Amador has already written. Instead, I prefer to describe only the first-hand impressions I got as I listened to Amador lecturing.

One of the experiments Amador used to prove his hypotheses correct was demonstrated on the night of the lecture with the help of Jerry "Bong" Dadap (the nephew of composer/guitar virtuoso Michael). It involves the release of nitrogen gas through a valve into a length of tubing vented at the other end. The only variable here is the flow velocity through the tube, which is controlled by how much gas is released through the valve upstream, and is measurable. Amador sticks his neck out and predicts the velocity at which the flow will become turbulent, which can be observed by means of a frequency indicator. In the absence of such a meter, we were asked to listen to the change of frequency by ear. (In hindsight, since many of us are already hearing-challenged, I guess amplifying the faint beeps and gurgling noises with a loudspeaker would have made the demonstration more impressive.)

With his theoretical predictions borne out by practical experiments, Muriel's Theory of Turbulence is slowly gaining the legitimacy that it deserves. Amador says his theory has been around for some time, but acceptance by the scientific community was not the only concern. He said when he first discussed it with scientists who counted, they said the theory was beautiful but had no practical use. It is only now

that the potential applications are appearing on the horizon. For example, the Stealth warplane is invisible to radar because of its shape and material, and can therefore venture with impunity where other aircraft will be detected and shot down by the enemy. However, as it travels through the atmosphere (which is 79% nitrogen) and generates turbulence, the resulting radiation can be picked up by an infrared detector if the operator of the equipment knows what to look for. With its cloak of invisibility rendered irrelevant, the Stealth bomber will no longer be stealthy, and will lose its reason for being.

Muriel's Theory destroys many assumptions engineers have depended on for most of the 20th Century, and its implications may be important enough for Amador to win a major award for his work. The Nobel Prize in Physics? It will not be easy. There is always politics involved, and there are vested interests to protect. Amador says that when he tried to patent his device for demonstrating the onset of turbulence, his application was rejected because of a Military restriction -- the Top Brass didn't want their own experiments hamstrung by a lot of patents floating around (that's a nice cocktail metaphor).

Flashback: Before he started his lecture, Amador told us an anecdote of how he had pointed out an error in the published work of another physicist, Ilya Prigogine, who thereafter became his sworn mortal enemy. Years later, Prigogine went on to win the Nobel Prize in Physics (for an unrelated piece of work). This incident may have something to do with the subtle hostility with which Amador is regarded by

some members of the Physics intelligentsia. Amador says that his work trying to explain turbulence actually resonated more with the artistic community. At the turn of the Millennium (pronounced with a short "e" please), he was lionized as a cult figure by artists in Manila, and painters attempted to capture the essence of "Turbulence" on canvas. During this period, Amador was even written up in *StarWeek* (magazine of the *Philippine Star*) as the "Renaissance Man," by -- guess who -- Joan Orendain (Jane's sister).

Time for merienda (again).

In terms of the traffic situation, it was the worst I had ever experienced -- both into and out of Manhattan (unlike Danny, I don't know the side streets from Jersey City which allow you to cut in front of the queue just before the entrance to the Lincoln Tunnel). I left the house in Belle Mead NJ at 12 noon, picked Mila up from work in Elizabeth NJ at 1 pm, struggled through the Holland Tunnel, and collapsed at Amador and Gloria's front door at 3 pm -- one hour late. Jane was kind enough to wait for us before starting her presentation. After the lectures, we left Amador and Gloria's at 7 pm, but because of the multiple gridlocks along 11th Avenue and its intersecting streets, we didn't make the entrance of the Lincoln Tunnel until 8:30. From there, it was a smooth one hour's ride home back to Belle Mead.

Of course, Mila and I missed seeing the "Queen Mary II," which is visiting New York City for the first time, because we were a week too early. The biggest

ocean liner ever built, she is about the same dimensions as the Empire State Building, but horizontal instead of vertical. To avoid running aground, she could only pass under the Verazzano Narrows Bridge at high tide -- but then her superstructure, as tall as a 21-story building, barely cleared the center span of the bridge by 12 feet. Who said engineering designers have a margin of error of 30%? We heard that the baby aircraft carrier "Intrepid," permanently moored along the Hudson River as a floating museum, looked like a rowboat beside the "QM II."

By the way, Mila and I just became the proud grandpa and grandma of a third baby boy, Gonzo (Jaime Gonzalo) Cruz, kid brother of Diego and Sancho (Santiago) Cruz, all borne by my eldest daughter Maita in Alabang.

Regards. Johnny

--oo0oo--

Vic Vitug - Arbitration
Jane Orendain - Malong
Elizabeth Fernandez - Song

Lecture XIII

July 17, 2004

Write up by Johnny Reyes

The first presenter on this fine summer afternoon was Vic Vitug, who gave an engaging talk on a subject not many of us really know much about but thought we did: Arbitration. He said there are two options which are less formal than Arbitration proper: Conciliation and Media-tion. I don't really need to define the three words for you, because they are familiar terms and you probably already have a fairly



good idea of what each signifies. Of the three, only Arbitration involves a contract which is legally binding. Vic is not directly involved in the arbitration function of his employer (the American Arbitration Association) because he works in the Information Technology (IT) Department,

maintaining databases. But eager to learn everything he could, he kept his eyes and ears open and came up with a compact and informative 3-page lecture on the Arbitration Process.

Not many people are aware of arbitration as an alternative vs. litigation. Vic cited the following advantages:

1. You don't need a lawyer.

2. It's quicker -- you don't need to wait months for a judge to get around to hearing your case.

3. The Arbitrator is normally well-informed and qualified on the subject under dispute, being selected by mutual consent from a list of certified (non-government) persons.

4. The settlement is usually amicable.

Next time you are involved in a dispute, remember the Arbitration option. Some of us might even consider a second career as an arbitrator in our field of expertise. To apply, contact Vic. (Unfortunately, he wasn't able to provide standard income figures, but Vic did mention that fees of \$800 to \$1200+ a day for Neutrals are being paid in some arbitration cases.)

Next on stage was Jane Orendain. She said that exactly 100 years ago (six years after it purchased the Philippine Islands from Spain), the United States hosted the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis MO. This was before downsizing became fashionable, and a very large (1000-plus) contingent was imported from the new colony, including a Philippine Constabulary Band that impressed the crowd by playing without interruption during a power-failure blackout. Also part of the contingent were some 150 Igorots who were exhibited as primitive, topless, dog-eating savages. You will recall that Igorot is the generic term for the Mountain Province people of the Philippines, comprising the Bontoc, Ifugao, Benguet, Apayao, and Kalinga tribes. This was before 9/11, so immigration rules were still lax and a large number of the Igorots stayed on and settled in the U.S. after the Fair ended, while those who went back home to the Philippines did so wealthy, because the troupe was treated well

and paid well -- if you didn't mind the political incorrectness of the whole exercise.

Although she doesn't quite fit the stereotype, Jane claims she is part-Igorot (the rest Catalan, British, etc.), so out of curiosity she gate crashed the Centennial Reunion Conference of the descendants of the original 150, also held in St. Louis. She was the only attendee who wore her Igorot costume throughout the conference, which turned out not to have any cultural aspects. The proceedings were purely social, and Jane could sense a feeling of pride and exclusivity among the participants. I guess this is somewhat like Australia, where it is now considered a status symbol to be certified a descendant of the convicts shipped over from England in the late 1700's -- the first Australian colonists. Jane noticed too that when the Philippine and U.S. national anthems were being played, the Igorot chairman of the conference standing at the podium placed his hand on his breast during the latter but not during the former. Jane was dismayed. She said that regardless of her actual citizenship, if she had been in his place as the symbolic head of the conference, she would have automatically demonstrated allegiance to her country of birth (and perhaps to the other country too, if appropriate).

After her talk, Jane demonstrated how to use the unisex Southern Philippine malong for the following purposes:

1. As a nice cool pambahay;
2. As a rain hood;
3. To balance clay pots on one's head;

4. To swat away evil spirits;
5. As a dance costume;
6. To carry a baby no-hands.

Do not attempt to do the above in your own home. The demo was done by a trained professional in a closed course.

We had a third presenter/performer! A beautiful 24-year-old actress who appears off-Broadway in



theaters in the Battery Park area of New York City, Elizabeth Fernandez came with her mother Bonny, and listened to Vic and Jane. Then Elizabeth burst out with "I'm Only a Cock-eyed Optimist" and "Wouldn't It Be Lovely" in a Broadway-quality voice that filled the room. After a costume change, she came down the stairs in a black tutu and gave us two ballet selections, the first involving leaps four feet in the air (in Amador's living room!) and the second showing the fouette (360-degree turns), which Jane

said better than I would instinctively pronounce it. Elizabeth received enthusiastic "Bravo!"s from the audience. Jane explained to us afterwards that to execute the fouette without losing one's balance or getting disoriented, the dancer needs to focus on an object in the room at eye level and keep coming back to it after every turn. Also, the head snaps forward in 180-degree intervals instead of turning in step with the rest of the body. Danny remarked that Linda Blair (from "The Exorcist") would have an easy time as a prima ballerina, because she could hold her head fixed in one position while the rest of her body rotated continuously. By the way, Elizabeth and Bonny are neighbors of Thelma Reyes in Manhattan.

My greatest fear is that these great 62nd Street Forum presentations won't keep happening forever. Things could change -- you never know. Although Amador has gone back to Geneva for the next 2 months, Gloria is staying and has indicated their place still will be available. Other members of the group are gallantly offering to host future lectures if necessary, like Mars and Cora Custodio -- but then it would no longer be the 62nd Street Forum, would it? Or key people involved in organizing sessions might decide to move away from the East Coast. Bottom line is good things don't last long -- so we should enjoy the presentations as best we can and never miss a session.

Johnny Reyes

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FLUID TURBULENCE FROM AN ENGINEER'S POINT OF VIEW

By Juan M. Reyes

Lecture XIV

September 18, 2004

Before Amador tells you all about his revolutionary Theory of Turbulence, I will attempt to introduce you to the concept in terms of its everyday applications and implications. My presentation will be the appetizer to Amador's main entrée. Mine will be the opening overture to Amador's grand finale. I will be John the Baptist to Amador's – Salome. >Oops. Mali yata ang analogy.<

Hoping not to be too heavy, as Jane here is afraid I'll be, let me explain to you the Reynolds Number, which defines what turbulence is. See below.

Reynolds Number $R = d v L / u$

where d = density of the fluid

v = flow velocity

L = a characteristic dimension (for example,
outside diameter of submarine; inside
diameter of pipeline)

u = viscosity

When R is less than 2000, flow is **laminar**.

When R is greater than 2000, flow becomes **turbulent**.

Turbulence appears in many forms, and is sometimes called by different names. In my talk, I will concentrate on the turbulence that sometimes occurs when a solid object moves through a fluid. A fluid can either be a liquid, a gas, or a combination of the two. The most common liquid is of course water, while the most common gas is air.

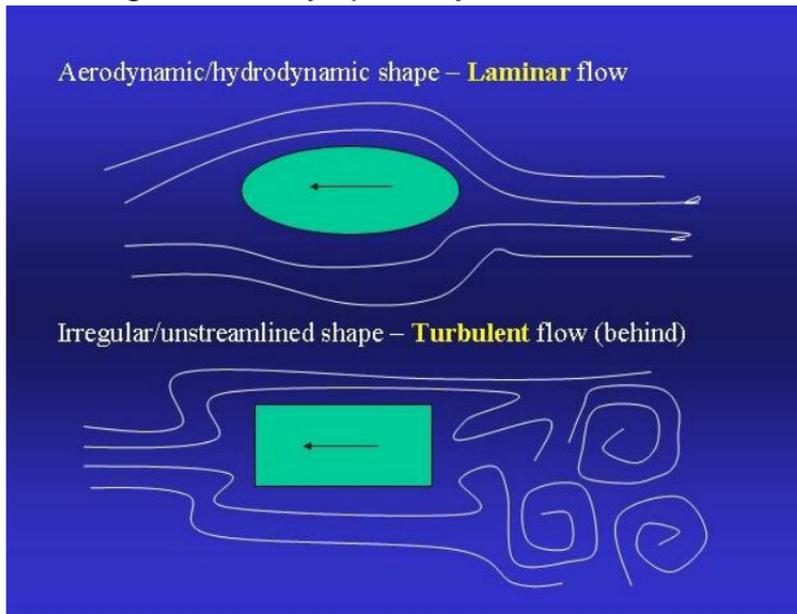
Whenever a solid object moves through a fluid, there is resistance to flow, which slows down its movement. The amount of resistance depends on many factors, such as how heavy the fluid is, how thick or sticky the fluid is, the speed at which the object (or the fluid) is moving, and the roughness of the skin of the object, and the shape of the object.

Obviously, the heavier and thicker the fluid, the greater the resistance to flow. You all know that a coin dropped into an empty well will reach the bottom faster than a coin dropped into a well which is full of water. Of course, the well is not really empty, but contains air. But air is so much lighter and less sticky than water.

The shape and the roughness of the object are also important. Have you noticed that Olympic swimmers either shave their heads or wear very tight Teflon caps? They also wear tiny goggles – almost like oversized contact lenses – that sink into their eye cavities. These are of course meant to reduce water resistance to the movement of the swimmer, which can mean the 0.1-of-a-second difference between a gold and a silver medal. If you have a sandpaper

complexion and a lot of pimples on your face, I guess you won't win many swimming championships.

Likewise, have you noticed the teardrop shape of the headgear worn by speed cyclists?



It is obvious that the most dynamic shape which generates the least resistance when an object moves through water or air is a teardrop – rounded in front and tapering to a point behind.

Raindrops, which are free to change their own shape because they are liquid, automatically assume this shape when they fall through the atmosphere.

Dolphins, octopuses (in swimming position), and most fish have evolved into this shape

Aircraft and submarines, the two types of vehicles which are completely submerged in the fluid through which they are traveling, are increasingly being designed in this form.

The fluid passing around the moving object does so in lamina (layers) which go over, under, and on each side of the object, and then join together again smoothly if the shape of the object is dynamically perfect. (The complete term is “aerodynamically” or “hydrodynamically” perfect.) If the shape deviates from the teardrop ideal, however, or if the surface of the object is rough, or the object moves too fast, or the object is too heavy, or the fluid is too thin and not sticky enough, the lamina will break up into eddies swirling behind the moving object. This is called turbulence, and its effect is to slow the object down.

The opposite of a teardrop shape – the least dynamic form, which generates the most drag – is a flat plate which is perpendicular to the flow of the fluid. Kites fall in this category, as well as parachutes. When you create any new vehicle, you have to design somewhere between the two extreme shapes, but you want to be as close as possible to the teardrop shape, and as far as possible from the flat perpendicular plate.

Obviously, you can't design a racecar which is completely teardrop-shaped, because the bottom has to be flat and parallel with the ground. But the rest of it needs to be as close as possible to the ideal shape.

Formula One racing cars – these are the ones that compete in Monte Carlo, Brands Hatch, Nurburgring, and other racetracks in Europe, North and South America, and Japan – travel at over 200 miles per hour. At those speeds, air resistance plays such a large role that the lead car is actually at a disadvantage because it must break through the air barrier to create a passage for itself. The trailing cars usually travel closely in its wake and are actually pulled along by the slight vacuum generated by the lead car. When they are getting close to the finish line, they put on a final burst of speed and try to overtake the lead car, which of course will do its best to block them. For these cars, air turbulence and the miles-per-hour penalty it costs them, can mean the difference between victory and defeat. Winning or not winning often decides whether the team gets millions of dollars in sponsorships and advertising contracts. The cars are redesigned after every season, or even after every race, to take advantage quickly of any new knowledge and experience gained. And the technology developed is applied in the design of production cars. Here's a Formula One car again. We've gone a long way from this, haven't we?

By the way, did you know that from the fuel consumption point of view the optimal speed for driving on the highway is about 40 miles per hour? If you drive below this speed, your car engine has not yet reached peak efficiency and is wasting gasoline – not burning it completely. On the other hand, if you drive above this speed you are generating too much air resistance, and your car engine needs to work harder – exert more force -- to achieve the speed you

want. I'm not saying you should drive at this speed on Route 287. It would actually be unsafe to do so, because other vehicles traveling at the normal 80 miles per hour would continually be trying to pass that idiot.

If you want your solid object to move as smoothly and as fast as possible through a fluid, you will obviously want to know when turbulence will occur, what will cause it to occur, and what you can do to prevent it from occurring or to minimize its occurrence. Let's have a few more examples where this knowledge results in significant savings – and profits – or could mean the difference between technical success or a disaster.

Ocean-going vessels travel on the surface of the sea. We cannot always move about in submarines because we human beings are air-breathing animals, and do not enjoy being too long underwater. You can't have a teardrop-shaped surface ship, but



obviously the part of the hull that will be submerged must be as streamlined as possible. Some crude oil tankers have what is called a bulbous bow. See photo

You don't normally see this unless the ship is completely empty, because otherwise it would be below the waterline.

But although the hull of a surface ship is not completely submerged like that of a submarine, its screw propellers are. Here's what the propellers of the Titanic looked like when the ship was still being constructed

Why did I mention screw propellers in connection with turbulence? Unfortunately, I can't go into the technical details because I have not worked in the shipbuilding industry like Danny here. But I can safely say that a ship's screws develop the most thrust if their shape allows them to pump the water back smoothly – without any turbulence. When there are eddy currents around the propellers area because their shape is poorly designed, some of the thrust is dissipated sideways or backwards instead of being concentrated where it should be: forward. Marine engineers and naval architects have a different name for this form of turbulence – they call it cavitation. The effects are to slow down the ship, increase its fuel consumption, and cause damage to the propeller blades and shaft.

In the 70's and 80's, a 200,000-ton crude oil tanker had a typical demurrage rate of \$10,000 per hour. This is the economic penalty when the ship is idled for some reason, and it is usually billed to the party responsible for the delay – it could be the loading terminal, the discharging terminal, or the ship itself. The usual causes of delay are slow product pumps onshore or aboard the ship, or overcrowded ports where ships are forced to lie at anchor awaiting their turn to occupy the berth. What is often taken for granted is the cruising speed of the tankers. It takes

about two weeks for a fully-laden tanker to travel from an oil-producing terminal in Kuwait to a refinery in Asia. If it takes a day to load and another day to discharge its product, its turnaround time without delays is $1 + 14 + 1 + 14 = 30$ days. But if its speed is reduced by only 3% because of turbulence generated around its propellers, that will add about a half day to each of the two 14-day voyages. The additional day will cost \$240,000 per return trip, or \$2.9 million per year in 1970's/1980's money. (This does not include the cost of extra fuel, nor the cost of drydocking the ship to repair its propellers.)

Another example is the pumping of petroleum products through a long pipeline. Let me refer specifically to the 110-kilometer (70-mile) Batangas/Manila White Oils Pipeline (BatMan Pipeline, for short), because it is something I was intimately familiar with. In this example, it is not a solid object moving through a fluid, but liquids (the oil products) flowing inside a solid container (the 14-inch-diameter pipeline). The principle is the same: If the inside walls of the pipeline are rough, if the liquid is heavy, if the liquid is not thick, if the pumping rate is high – all these factors will favor turbulent, rather than smooth layered flow.

But this time, we want the flow to be turbulent, not laminar, because contrary to what people may think, petroleum products are not pure substances but are mixtures. There must be a right mix of heavy and light components to meet the density specification, and the right mix of sticky and non-sticky components to meet the viscosity requirement. If the flow is

smooth and layered, the heavy components will sink to the bottom and the light will float to the top. When the batch reaches Manila, some portions will be too heavy and sticky, some will be too light, and everything will be off-specification and unacceptable to the customers.

This is the reason we want the flow to be turbulent throughout the entire length of the pipeline, because turbulence causes mixing and keeps the product homogeneous throughout its 70-mile journey. The oil companies must design the pipeline system so that the flow stays turbulent, but must not overdesign and waste precious dollars. The only factor that can be changed is the speed of pumping – in other words, the horsepower of the pumps. Put in too little horsepower, and there is a risk of the flow becoming laminar. Put in too much, and you end up with expensive oversized pumps that will eat up all your profits. It is therefore vitally important to be able to predict the conditions under which the product flow pattern is likely to change from turbulent to laminar and vice versa.

My last example is the ultimate one: the space shuttle. When it is orbiting in the vacuum of outer space, where there is zero fluid resistance, the shuttle is traveling at 17,500 miles per hour. When it returns to earth and reenters the atmosphere, it will suddenly encounter air resistance which becomes so great that the exposed surfaces of the shuttle become white hot. Here is what happened when the problem of turbulence and super-high Reynolds Numbers were not handled adequately. I'll bet you've never seen

these photos of the Columbia disaster before. They were taken by an Israeli spy satellite which happened to be in the right location at the right time

Bottom line of my heavy talk is that when you're dealing with turbulence, the money is in knowing why it will occur, when it will occur, and how to prevent or minimize it (except in product pipelines). Thank you for your attention.

Johnny Reyes

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Joy Barrios - War, GMA

Lecture XV

October 14, 2004

Write up by Johnny Reyes

A visiting Professor from U.P., Joy Barrios, Ph.D., presented a paper last Wednesday evening about "War, Women, and GMA" (as paraphrased by host Amador Muriel). She used Amador's state-of-the-art projector for her visual aids, a far cry from the earlier 62nd Street Forum lectures seemingly a century ago, when my own visual aids consisted of illustrations hand-drawn on whiteboards. Because of heavy traffic into the tunnels, I arrived an hour late and missed the start of Joy's presentation, so may have heard some items out of context. But I did read her paper after her talk.

Joy said Gloria's behavior in office shows a pattern of deception. She has cultivated the following roles in succession: Cinderella; Kababayan/Kababaryo; Tough Individual; Legitimate Leader; Ina'ng Bayan. (Elaboration of this idea made up the bulk of Joy's thesis.) She also spoke about the fantasy supposedly perpetrated by the Americans with Gloria's connivance, whereby the American Military are seen as supermen aiding the helpless Filipino soldiers defeat the Abu Sayyaf. Joy said this distortion of the truth is echoed in a novel currently on Oprah Winfrey's best-seller list, "When the Elephants Dance," written by Filipino-American Tess Uriza Holthe for an American audience. Joy said the story is set during the last days of World War II, when the GI's are presented as conquering heroes and the Filipino guerrillas who did all the work are completely ignored. All part of a vast conspiracy?

Joy added that the book also casts into the water a lot of inaccuracies about the Philippines, which people who don't know any better will swallow whole. For example, the title of the book supposedly refers to a Philippine expression derived from a Philippine myth: "When the elephants dance, it is best to keep out of the way," referring to the way the Filipinos got squeezed between two major powers at war with each other -- the US and Japan. Joy said we couldn't have any myths involving elephants, because the Philippines never had elephants. [My version of this expression, translated from the original Tagalog, is slightly different: Why is an elephant's reproductive organ in its foot? Answer: Because if an elephant steps on you, you're all f-d up!] Joy also said the

book has the protagonists fishing for bangus in Manila Bay, when everyone knows it is a fresh-water fish. But Amador pointed out that the Mother-of-All-Bangus (the Sabalo) does migrate to sea water after laying its eggs in fresh.

Vic Vitug asked Joy whether she thought the Filipino guerrillas could have evicted the Japanese by themselves, without the help of the Americans, and said he didn't think so himself. Joy said he had a right to his own opinion. Amador then asked Vic whether he thought the Filipino revolutionaries could have defeated the Spaniards by themselves, without the help of the Americans. Vic said yes, the Dewey naval victory was a farce, but that was a completely different situation from World War II and the war against the Muslim terrorists.

Others in the audience wanted to know what was wrong with a little image enhancement, if it would help Gloria govern better -- after all, the Philippine citizenry is a long way from being politically mature. Moreover, Gloria's image-building if any (it's only Joy's opinion that she makes use of it) is only a kiti-kiti in comparison to the elephants of other countries. For example, John Kerry's handlers had the brilliant idea of packaging their man as a Vietnam War hero (until they had to drop the idea when the Swift Boat veterans spoke up). There was also skepticism about the supposed connection between the supposed image-building at the end of World War II, Gloria's assisted war against the Abu Sayyaf, and Holthe's book, because they occurred in different eras, and the linkage among the perpetrators was as tenuous as

Kerry says the one between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda was at the time Bush Jr. invaded Iraq.

Besides, Tess Uriza Holthe probably was born in the US and never lived in the Philippines. She only learned about World War II from her Filipino father's recollections. If her knowledge of the Philippines is less than perfect, I believe that is to be expected. Why fault her for it? I haven't read the book myself, but if she is a good writer I believe we shouldn't crab about her inaccuracies, but should charge them instead to literary license.

About Gloria -- I asked Joy whether she had seen "Master and Commander -- the Far Side of the World." There was a scene at the Captain's table when the ship's officers were having dinner, and two worms crawled out of the mouldy bread -- not an unusual occurrence at the time on long voyages aboard his majesty's ships. They were not really worms of the ascaris type, but larvae of weevils, insects that normally fed on wood but had no problem switching to bread if it was available. The Master (Russell Crowe) asked the conscientious Ship's Doctor (Paul Bettany) which worm he would choose if he were to follow procedures recommended in the Mariner's Handbook of the Royal Navy. The doctor thought long and hard, then said he would select the bigger of the two worms. Gotcha! Wrong, Russell Crowe said, the Mariner's Handbook says in case of a difficult decision where neither of two options seems desirable, you must choose the lesser of two weevils.

My point was that Gloria was the lesser of two weevils (of many weevils, according to Vic -- there

were still Ping, Eddie, etc., aside from Ronnie). Besides, she had already won reelection, so I couldn't understand why we still needed to problemize things (bakit kailangan pa nating problemahin).

Joy said she was taking no political sides -- her thesis was intended to be objective, unbiased, and neutral -- she was just presenting her own observations. But if she had no political message, then what was the point of her paper? In the end, she betrayed her true sentiments when she said "it is up to the activists [in the Philippines] to unmask this pattern of deception."

The next number of the program for Wednesday night at the 62nd Street Forum was the Third Debate. Amador had a master TV set and several slave monitors, so you could watch the proceedings in different rooms. In Amador's study, I found myself clustered with all the solid Democrats -- Amador, Lisa and Danny Gil, Mars Custodio -- and John Kerry could say no wrong. Vic and Vicky had already left, and Joy was resting, but in the dining room with the food and the wine were grouped "All Others": Mr. & Mrs. Chit Inciong, Forum newcomers Ave Pimo and Angela Timtiman, Cora Custodio, Gloria Muriel, and Ramon Seneris. Unfortunately, I could not stay for the entire debate, because it was a weeknight and I had to work early the following morning, so had to leave midway. I also wanted to catch the Second Game on the radio as I drove my 45 miles home.

Johnny Reyes

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Gene Pulmano - Diabetes
Louie Acosta - Santos Statues

Lecture XVI

November 28, 2004

Write up by Johnny Reyes

The first speaker on this fine autumn afternoon was Dr. Gene Pulmano, internist, on the general topic of Diabetes. Knowing relatively little about the disease and hoping to mooch a free consultation, I expected just a few practical tips from Gene on how to avoid diabetes and how to manage it if one catches the ailment anyway. What we got instead was a scholarly two-hour technical dissertation on the mechanisms by which Type II Diabetes affects normal body functions, supported by dozens of neatly-organized slides, sufficient to earn a medical student 16 credits over one semester. When Gene started talking about "paradigm shifts," he completely lost me, but surprisingly, Jane Orendain didn't complain about the lecture being too "heavy." Others present were hosts Amador and Gloria Muriel, fellow MD Mars Custodio (who contributed his knowledge during the question-and-answer period afterwards), Bert and Eva Florentino, Lenore Raquel-Santos-Lim (whom I absent-mindedly called Lynn all evening but who just smiled), Louie Acosta, Danny Gil, my wife Mila, and myself.

Gene's talk was limited to Type 2 Diabetes, which, although less severe than Type 1 (whereby the body stops making insulin completely), is the more widespread of the two. He explained that the cells of

the body need to burn sugar as fuel, which is present in the bloodstream, absorbed from the food we eat. Movement of the sugar from the blood to the cells of the body is effected by insulin, a chemical secreted by specialized cells in the pancreas. Gene (center in



photo) said with Type 2 the body does not make enough insulin, the insulin does not function as well as it should, or both. The result is a double whammy: the cells are starved of sugar to burn, resulting in general body weakness, and too much sugar builds up in the blood, which has a toxic effect on certain organs. An excessively high blood sugar level situation is called hyperglycemia.

A pamphlet Gene distributed before his presentation ("The Diabetes Care Guide") listed the following effects of a high blood sugar level: tiredness; abnormal thirst; abnormal hunger; blurry vision. If the high blood sugar level persists, the following serious health problems can result: eye damage and blindness; numbness or tingling in hands, feet, or legs; heart and blood vessel problems;

wounds that won't heal; kidney problems; problems with sexual relations. The level of attention visibly perked up when the last topic was discussed by Gene.

Type 2 has an analogous effect on fatty acids, which the cells need as well. Insufficient or ineffective insulin also prevents the fatty acids from being transferred from the blood to the cells. An excessively high level of fatty acids in the circulatory system is called hyperlipidemia.

Gene said if you are a woman, are overweight, have diabetic relatives, do not exercise, eat the wrong foods, are African-American or Hispanic, are over 50, and/or smoke, you are more likely to get Type 2 Diabetes. If you want to avoid getting diabetes, it is best not to be any of the above.

The second speaker was Louie Acosta (below), Ilonggo-Ilocano product of Ateneo de Manila, expatriate arts student living in New York, with training and



experience as a museum curator under his belt. He sources his Philippine-made santos from his contacts in the Philippines and resells them at flea markets in Manhattan. According to Louie, someone once asked him why he was selling off the artifacts of his own country. His answer was how else could the world be made aware of them? How else could people who are unable to travel to the Philippines see and appreciate them? Louie believes what he is doing is different from what the 19th-century explorers or archaeologists did who took the Elgin Marbles (carved decorative panels) by force or deception from the Acropolis in Athens and brought them to the British Museum in London. This was an action which the Greeks are still protesting to this day and are seeking to reverse, because they maintain that the Marbles are the heritage of Greece and rightfully belong where they came from -- the facade of the Parthenon. I asked Louie whether the Philippines had any laws prohibiting the export of cultural artifacts. He replied yes, but he said these laws had been drawn up during the Marcos era and abused by those in power. One of the provisions of the law was that genuine artifacts had to be stamped by the tourism authorities (for a fee) before they can be classified as authentic -- this stamp was then widely used to authenticate dubious materials.

Louie explained that santos (also called rebultos, or bultos for short) were carved during the three-and-a-half centuries of Spanish rule by Filipino craftsmen (or Chinamen living in the Philippines). The more formal statues were used for churches, but many others were made for home altars. Louie defined a genuine

antique as being at least 100 years old. (Bert Florentino pointed out that the motive of the maker should also count. He argued that if a craftsman copied an icon from an original antique for the purpose of selling it for profit, and did it in 1904, if only Louie's criterion were applied the copy would now qualify as a genuine imitation antique.) Louie then showed us samples of very old genuine antique santos, relatively new fakes, and statuettes which had both original components and recently-added parts. How can one tell what is genuine and what is not, and how old a santo is? Well, Louie does not use carbon-dating, but he knows. Louie also said that different regions of the Philippines developed their own distinctive styles. He showed us a large collection of santos from the Iloilo area and pointed out how ornate they were. In contrast, icons from the Ilocos region looked very austere. By examining a statuette in detail -- the texture of the wood, the design of the costume, the workmanship of the body parts -- he said he could tell not only where the figurine was made, but approximately how old it was.

Unfortunately, Louie said none of the churches in the Philippines still have their original santos -- like the treasures of Ancient Egypt, they have been systematically and thoroughly plundered over the years. Likewise, none of the old ancestral houses still have their original figurines -- these have either been stolen or sold off by family members themselves in need of cash. This situation is a result of the boom in the buying and selling of artifacts, encouraged by the existence of a lucrative collectors' market abroad.

Louie also showed us antique jewelry and hand-woven blankets from the Philippines. The latter have patterns that create optical illusions when the cloth is shaken and allowed to ripple (autostereograms?). It was a wonder how Louie, albeit with some help from Jane Orendain, was able to transport the large number of items he exhibited to us -- statuettes, trinkets, blankets -- from his home to Amador's without the use of a van. Jane remarked that instead of limiting his sales to flea markets (where the likely customers are uninformed bargain hunters from the local neighborhood, rather than real connoisseurs), Louie should take advantage of the Internet and sell on eBay -- that way, the trafficking of santos can be done more efficiently.

Johnny Reyes

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Email regarding a vortex-like phenomenon near Bacolod

Bacolod is much bigger than Dumaguete, both in population and area. For one, the land is much flatter with the mountains way out in the distance. And it was the sugar industry that made Bacolod grow, perhaps just as much as how it also is a terminus for trade with Iloilo City across Guimaras Strait.

But the popularity of Bacolod (for our nephew, Rex, and his wife, Nenette) that causes them these frequent trips is for a totally different reason: the West

Negros School, an accredited institution for the degree of Nursing. Hundreds of students, many of whom are lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc., flock there to finish nursing - and with it, their hope of eventually getting to the US the easiest way, as nursing graduates. Of course there are good nursing schools in Dumaguete (Siliman, St Paul), but only West Negros School has an accelerated curriculum designed for working professionals that allow them to study only on weekends, and have their hospital hands-on credits done locally. And the tuition is much lower

However, the main reason we had made the trip was to verify the “bira-bira” phenomenon. The other mountain route back to Oriental is through Murcia, and according to local lore, a certain section of the obviously steep and long downgrade stretch of the twin lane concrete road is influenced either by anti-gravity or magnetic anomaly because one gets pulled back (bira – in Cebuano or Illongo). At exactly Km Post 34, you stop the vehicle, put it in neutral, and you’ll slowly but steadily be pulled backward up to a few hundred feet. Rex tested it a few times with his classmates; and 3 weeks earlier, Lisa witnessed the same thing and swears it’s true. This I had to see, and debunk. I insisted it was an optical illusion, and prompted Rex to research on it on the web, which he did and he gave back URLs for the “Oregon Vortex” and “Santa Cruz’ Mystery Spot”. So we came prepared. We brought a carpenter’s spirit level, and a steel can with a string. But that was all for tomorrow.

We settled at a new Hotel that was within walking distance from Rex's West Negros College. The Chinese owner apparently was much into Feng Shui as it's name, Circle Inn, was descriptive of all it's motifs: round windows, round lights, round ceiling cavities for it's electric fans, round handles on it's main glass doors. I'm sure that if the air cons hadn't been window types, but rather split types, the outdoor condensers would have been the round type too.

After a day and evening at the usual tourist trappings, we left Bacolod via the Murcia route where we'd pass the "bira-bira" spot at Km Post 34.

Rex advised us that we were approaching, and even as far back as Km Post 33, the road had a very obvious downhill grade. We stopped adjacent to Km 34, looked back, and verified that indeed the road behind was arching upwards to the crest. Then we put the engine in neutral, kept an eye for approaching traffic from behind (which was minimal), and lo, and behold, we started moving backward, first slowly, then faster and faster, then slower again until we stopped.

Aha, I knew the solution. An optical illusion. At Km 34, the road was not anymore going downhill, but uphill. It just wasn't apparent to the naked eye.

So out came the instruments. We went back to Km 34, took the spirit level out and carefully laid it on the road, and sure enough, the bubble was not centered. The road at that spot had an uphill slant. We moved back progressively to find the "low point" and it was a couple of hundred feet behind us, the spot where the

backward-moving jeep also came to rest. We got the can, and didn't bother about hanging it from the string, but merely let it run "downhill" and it did, in the same direction as the bira-bira force. Later on, I realized that an even more convincing proof was to have poured water on the road at Km 34 and note at what direction it would flow.

We all agreed to keep mum about this experiment so to keep the local lore alive.

Danny Gil, 18 Dec 2004

--oo0oo--

Amador Muriel - Einstein's Loves
Louie Acosta - Santos Statues

Lecture XVII

February 26, 2005

Write up by Danny Gil

There were a number of people glaringly missing in the Forum last Saturday. Master chronicler Johnny Reyes and purveyor of fine food Mila Reyes would have come, but called in their regrets that morning. Of course, I understood right away: being new grandparents to a fine baby right in Belle Mead NJ was reason enough.



Fortunately, to fill the gustatory gap, Lisa had brought in some eats that had come straight from the Philippines such as stuffed milkfish made-to-order from a special Makati source and Ilocano tupig (rice and coconut pastry wrapped in banana leaves) purchased in Pangasinan. We had run out of the Visayan version, bud-bud sa Tanjay. Then later, aside from the munchies and desserts brought by the others, Gloria made Pizza, topped off by the special dried fish sans all the salt, which we had given them earlier, but prepared ala European style - with olive oil, lightly baked.

Now, to fill the chronicler role of Johnny, I'm attempting to do just that. I still can't figure out if it is Johnny's photographic memory that enables him to silently sit through all these past forums, ask a few

questions then come out with detailed and interesting write ups of the events, in his so intriguing style. Or, if he is secretly wired, with a recorder.

Also missing was Bert & Eva Florentino, who actually had started it all, the second topic of the Forum, that is. In recent emails, Bert kept bombarding Amador with questions on Einstein, since this is the 100th year anniversary of Einstein's earthshaking publications on relativity. Bert was trying to convince Amador to enter a contest on explaining Relativity to the layman, to which Amador said he wasn't interested in doing, but would be willing to do a Q&A discourse on Einstein in the next Forum. So we scheduled it right away, with two of Jane's friends being the main speakers.

Well, it turns out that Bert forgot all about the Forum, and when we called his house, it was too late, but fortunately, that did not prevent Amador from going on with his discourse on Einstein.

As co-organizer Jane Orendain indicated, Louie Acosta would continue his talk on Antique and Philippine Collectables (that was one of the topics in the last Forum), and Marie Luarca-Reyes would give her spiel on the topic of Investments as the next back-to-back speaker. But Marie did not make it. Later, she emailed that she had forgotten the date as she was showing a bit of NY to a Basque priest who was coordinating their project in Ecuador.

So for the first topic, the "santos", or icons, it is far easier for me to just plagiarize, or better yet,

reproduce what Johnny wrote about in the last forum, since Louie's talk was basically an extension of what he had said 2 months earlier. The only departure is that Louie was the first speaker, and that we brought him home after the group broke up at nearly eleven that evening. Hereeeee's Johnny's old writeup, the next 4 paragraphs. [see second part of Lecture XVI above]

The talk of Amador was very much more intimate, in the sense that he perched himself up on a stool in our midst, and also in the sense it was more on the love life of Einstein. Within the past year I've read accounts of Einstein having had a love child named Lieserl; of having had other affairs; of possibly being a wife beater; and of other topics that definitely were not of the scientific nature. Well, Amador knew all about that years earlier, and had it not been for the Balkans war in 1991, he probably would have been a co-author of a book written and researched by him and Milena Vucuruvic, a pretty Serbian girl from the town where Einstein's love child Lieserl was allegedly left by Mileva Maric (whom he later married and begat two more boys - one of whom became a hydraulics engineer and died fairly recently in the US).

Amador had made many pilgrimages to the places where Einstein studied and worked. One of such trips in the mid seventies came about because he was stuck in Switzerland for a couple of weeks, and didn't have the visas to visit other adjoining countries. (Later, he discovered a way around it - take a night train and hand your passport to the conductor - no border inspector would like to disturb a sleeping

passenger at midnight. However, this scheme will not work anymore with the Pinoy's T&T reputation). Anyway, in the course of his peregrinations, Amador met this girl Milena, who was an employee of WHO. Her father had researched the life of Mileva. They were all set to team up on this research; even had set a date to meet in what was then Yugoslavia, but fate intervened and the Balkan war broke out. Amador said he was sort of relieved because he had a problem of how to explain all these proposed joint-venture research with Milena to his better half Gloria.

At this point of the discourse, Amador already had traced a kinship with colleagues of Einstein, through what he termed a mentor relationship. Amador's immediate mentor was Max Dresden, a physicist who guided him in the late 60s and collaborated with him in his first two seminal papers in the 60s. Dresden in turn was mentored by George Uhlenbeck, who in turn was also mentored by Paul Ehrenfest, a student of Ludwig Boltzmann, both of whom were friends of Einstein. Boltzmann's Vienna later produced the "Vienna Club", a group of intellectuals at early part of the century, many of whom settled in the US and influenced not just physics and math but also art and the theater.

Boltzmann had committed suicide, allegedly due to his running feud with Ernst Mach, but in fact he was a true depressive character. Ehrenfest also committed suicide. So we jokingly quipped that its a good thing Gloria didn't give Amador a hard time, otherwise he'd have gone the same way of Boltzman.

Amador said that among physicists, the wives always have a better grasp of the personal matters of their confraternity, and many of them are just as human as anybody else. He recounted how Madame Curie never made it to the Academy of Sciences in France, and how he wondered about it. Interestingly, when he visited the University of Paris, he discovered that two aulas, or lecture rooms, faced each other, each named after the two scientists Curie and Langevin, former lovers. Madame Curie was actually an avant-garde bohemian way ahead of her time.

All this juicy revelations made our collective mouths drool, and we asked Amador if he isn't going to write all about them. And he said yes, as a matter of fact he already partially has. He has a book that may either end up as fiction novel, or a factual biography, depending on which way his Theory of Turbulence is going.

According to Dresden, his theory is like the three movements by Brahms. The first two were written quickly together, and the last came many years later. This means that Brahms must have had such musical content percolating in his mind for that long. Well, among the numerous technical papers Amador has written, two of them not dealing with turbulence were written in the 60s, and the third portion, on turbulence, was written almost 25 years later, which prompted Dresden to bring the compositions of Brahms to mind. Amador told Dresden, that in fact that was true he never gave up on the third paper. The recent spate of events in the experimental fields appears to be giving much credence to Amador's theory. Unfortunately,

Dresden passed away 8 years ago, and cannot see the fruition of his mentoring.

There were many more juicy stories about Einstein. Amador's stint at the Princeton Institute of Advance Study let him meet many of those who had known Einstein. For instance, late in life Einstein did not wear socks, and went about in baggy pants without a belt, sporting a sweater. In other words, at least in manner of dress, he was an early hippie. And he had sweaty feet, which was one of the reasons for his deferment from military service in WW I.

Amador is now waiting for further development on a possible offer from George Washington University in DC to set up and head a turbulence lab on campus. If that becomes a reality, then he says there'll be another Forum Group Extension in DC.

With the wine and the food and the talk so beguiling, the Forum crowd of about 14 finally drifted off by 11:00 pm, with vows to return to the next scheduled meeting 2-3 weeks from now on the topic of Clinical Depression and Research on the Elderly by an authority MD in that field.

Watch for the next announcement.

Danny Gil

--oo0oo—

Sample presentation by cast of Ma-Yi play

Lecture XVIII
March 26, 2005

No detailed write
up

Picture of cast
reading script.



--oo0oo--

Mayou Gonzales - Meeting the Challenge

Lecture XIX
September 17, 2005
Write up by Johnny Reyes

I didn't know what to expect at Lecture XIX, with this menacing topic announced by Danny: "Meeting the Challenge - Developing Morality and Choice of Values." But often it's from talks with such seemingly esoteric titles that you get gems of information and interesting discussions, so I walked in optimistic. It turned out 15 other people had the same idea, because aside from myself the following good-sized crowd had come to hear Dr. Mayou Gonzales, child and adolescent psychiatrist, speak:

Her husband Abraham, known as Ham or Abe,
who works at the U.N.;
Hosts Amador and Gloria Muriel;
Danny and Lisa Gil;
Dr. Ramon Seneris (Lisa's brother);
Bert and Eva Florentino;
Carlos Esguerra;
Nora De la Serna;
Hazel Sala;
Susan Rodriguez-Fagan;
Mars and Cora Custodio; and
Thelma Reyes.

(The last three came in late and missed the bulk of the lecture.)

Mayou said the idea behind this talk was a discussion which took place at Mars and Cora's Manhattan apartment last New Year's Eve, wherein



the group present agonized about failed resolutions of years past and agreed to strive for the following goals:

1. Make things better;
2. Right old wrongs;
3. Be favorably remembered.

Mayou then prepared a presentation for the next gathering of the same group, to facilitate the discussion which she said might include any subject the members felt like bringing up, including such diverse fields as philosophy, psychiatry, anatomy, politics, religion, paleontology, and economics. She didn't say whether the second discussion ever took place, but tonight's lecture at 347 62nd Street was supposed to be a reprise, for a different audience.

The slides were very very technical. Gene Pulmano, who was absent, would have been at home -- his favorite word "paradigm" was used twice: Social Paradigm and Psychological Paradigm. In many training courses I have attended with my former employer, I slept through the lectures and just read the transcripts of the slide pre-presentations on the flight home. Tonight was the opposite: I found that if I ignored the intimidating slides and just listened to the discussion, I could pick up the thread and rhythm of the lecture better and enjoy it more. A lot of interesting questions also came up from the audience, only loosely related to the official topic, and as Mayou fielded them enthusiastically she made good on her promise that the discussion would be free-flowing. The evening was therefore a huge success.

Part of Mayou's presentation was a diagram of the human brain, showing the physical location of its various activities, for example, the area which automatically controls our body functions such as breathing. The area above it (which Terri Schiavo lost the use of) is where we do our conscious thinking. Amador mentioned that Einstein's brain is smaller than the average size. Mayou said the smallest physical unit which may contain a thought is called a neuron. I wanted to know if it were possible to tap into a person's memory if you could steal one of his neurons, but Mayou said it is still unknown whether the neurons can function independently of an integrated brain. I guess a brain transplant would still be the ultimate achievement.

Mayou also spoke about nature or nurture (the classic dichotomy, in Gene Pulmano's terms). Bert Florentino mentioned that in his family he had several daughters, and if you include his wife Eva, their varying styles of "mothering and smothering" their young children could be a formula for conflict. The consensus of the 62nd Forum group was that it was not necessarily so (a formula for conflict).

At this point, Amador came up with a thought, viz., that when a Filipino approaches old age and has the means, he has many more alternatives to entering an old folks' home than the typical American. One of these is to engage a needy but concerned relative to take care of him, and reimburse the relative in cash or kind. Both would benefit from the symbiotic arrangement. The thought reminded me of an idea proposed by columnist Hilarion Henares in the past:

He said every man should get hooked up twice in life - as a young man, with an older woman to benefit from her experience; and later as an older man, with a young girl to impart his own experience. When that young girl matures, she can be the "older woman" to some other young man, and everybody will be happy. But Mayou asked, what will you do with your own older woman if she is still around when it is time to change partners? Simple, I said, just disconnect the feeding tube. (Lest I be misconstrued, I'd like to mention that these exchanges were carried out in a tongue-intsik vein.)

I also volunteered a definition I had learned in a course recently: What is the difference between education and training? There is a long-winded technical answer to this question, which I will not reproduce here. Instead, I will proceed to the shortcut reply: If you have a daughter in elementary school, would you rather she be given sex education -- or sex training?

By the way, contrary to what Danny said in an earlier write up, I don't have a tape recorder hidden under my shirt whenever I attend the 62nd Street Forum lectures. Do you realize how foolhardy it would be to walk around Code-Orange New York City nowadays in full view of the cops with wires strapped to your chest? That would be suicide.

Regards. Johnny

--oo0oo--

Poch Macaranas - Fidel Ramos Years

Lecture XX

May 203, 2005

Write up by Johnny Reyes

Tonight's event had been arranged on short notice by Amador Muriel, so only 23 people were present at his 62nd Street apartment to hear Dr. Federico "Poch" Macaranas discuss the soon-to-be-published book, "Discipline and Democracy: The Presidency of Fidel V. Ramos," which he co-authored with an American Professor from Tufts University in Massachusetts. Since the speaker was a member of the Ramos Administration, and I myself consider FVR as probably the best President the Philippines ever had, I was wondering how I could ever produce an objective and balanced writeup of the evening's proceedings. (I know -- ask about the PEA-AMARI case!) During FVR's term in the euphoric 90's, when I was still working at Tabangao Refinery in Batangas City, Shell International gained so much confidence in the Philippines that it made a major twin investment -- (1) a natural gas undersea pipeline from Malampaya (Palawan) to power plants in Batangas; and (2) a new state-of-the-art crude oil refinery at Tabangao (replacing the old existing one built in 1962). Whenever I saw workaholic but fitness-buff Ramos in his signature blue vest helicoptering in to help celebrate milestones in the construction, I said to myself, that's what a President should look like! Everything was going well with the world. (Of course that was before the Asian economic collapse and Erap. Today, Tabangao's continued existence is in

jeopardy because of overcapacity among cheap refiners in the region, but Dr. Macaranas said Shell's Malampaya project was successful in reducing the Philippines' dependence on foreign fuels -- the consumption of imported energy has dropped from 80% to just over 50%). [By the way, here's a little quiz: Where does the Philippines get the rest of its home-grown energy (20%)? Not all of this comes from hydroelectric. We don't have any crude oil wells in the country, and windmills and solar generators are non-existent. If you were listening to Dr. Macaranas' talk, you would know the answer, which is appended at the end of this article.]

I never met UPSCAn Poch Macaranas in Diliman. Although we overlapped somewhat (he was three or four years behind me), he was one of those high-flyers in UP busy achieving important things like editing the *Philippinensian* '67 (which he proudly claims was released on time, one year ahead of the financially-troubled 1966 issue). I was a low treetop-level rider busy trying to corral a girl friend and graduate at the same time -- I must confess my own *Philippinensian* where I appear is the '64 issue (my proper batch); my university ring is '65 (same as my wife's); and my Ch.E. diploma is '66. Thus, our paths never crossed at U.P. Poch went on to public service, the impressive details of which (as Googled by Danny Gil) I attach at the end of this article. Suffice it to know, for the purpose of tonight's talk, that he was career Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs during the time of President Fidel Ramos, serving under three distinguished Secretaries: none other than Raul Manglapus himself; then Roberto Romulo (son of

CPR); and then Domingo Siazon. The "Doctor" in Dr. Macaranas' name comes from a Ph.D. in Economics. Tonight, he came across as a handsome Filipino mestizo with a resonant and well-modulated voice, who carries a business suit well.

I was late as usual, having come 50 miles from the southwest (not an excuse), so unfortunately I missed the first half hour of Poch's talk. But I caught enough to make the long trip worth-while. Dr. Macaranas was just saying that as far back as the early 90's President Ramos had already recognized the potential of China as the dominant power in our region and the world, overshadowing Japan, India, and Australia in importance, and he therefore carefully cultivated our ties with that awakening giant. FVR's foresight was validated by subsequent developments, whereby the 21st was recently declared by Newsweek to be "China's Century." Furthermore, although graduated from West Point and expected to be an American lackey, he kept the U.S. at arm's length and kept his policies as independent as possible. He reached out to the Europeans and skilfully balanced them against the Americans without offending the latter.

FVR realized that no matter how outstanding his performance was, after his term ended all his efforts would be for naught if he did not institutionalize his policies. He therefore worked to make local governments more fit-for-purpose. For example, he created Departments of Public Safety in cities and towns, a discipline given the importance it is due by developed countries but largely ignored in the Philippines because it does not involve glamorous or

lucrative activities, so much so that the Chinese shopkeepers need to buy and maintain their own firetrucks in order to protect their interests. But the institutionalizing which Ramos may have failed catastrophically at was the one that mattered most of all: Poch said FVR bitterly regretted not having endorsed a successor who would continue running the country as competently as he did. You will recall that at the end of Ramos' term, there were over a dozen "wishful-thinking" candidates. My wife and I fell in with the fantasy -- she voted for Lito Osmena and I voted for Alfredo Lim. I guess a million other Filipinos made the same mistake: they voted for the candidate they imagined would make an ideal President, instead of voting for the least evil candidate who had any chance of winning. As a result, Erap laughed all the way to Malacanang. The one candidate who could have put up a decent fight -- and although a trapo, was at least qualified and competent to be President - - was Joe De Venecia. If Ramos had backed him from the start, perhaps we and the million other Filipinos who wanted FVR's policies to be continued would have voted for him instead.

Fidel Ramos also realized the importance of the news media and maintained his rapport with them. He was open to the media because he was self-confident and had nothing to hide. But the media's problem was how to keep up with this extraordinary man's early starting times (pre-dawn), strenuous jogging sessions, and long working hours.

The last topic Poch touched on was the crab mentality of Filipinos [definition: whenever an

ambitious member of the bunch tries to break away in order to pursue success, the other crabs in the bunch pull him back down again]. Poch said FVR was well aware of this Filipino trait and tried his best to channel the energy of the crabs into something productive. At this point, the discussion wandered to the well-worn complaint that in the late 50's/early 60's the Philippine economy was second only to Japan's, and future tigers Taiwan, South Korea, Hongkong, and Singapore were just slum areas, far behind us in development. Soon they had overtaken us -- and how! The next group that passed us on the economic superhighway consisted of Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Then Vietnam. Who's next -- Bangladesh? But at least during FVR's term we were able to accelerate and catch up a bit, to the point of being classified as a "tiger cub." Remember those heady days? Unfortunately, the six-year term of Ramos went by too fast.

Some comments and questions from the audience, and Poch's responses:

* Was FVR a tragic figure (because his legacy was unraveled, undone, and squandered by his successor)?

-- Poch: It was a tragedy for the country, not for Ramos.

* What were FVR's intentions with regard to the "ChaCha" movement?

-- Poch: This was an initiative led by Chit Pedrosa to revise the Constitution, convert the Government to the parliamentary system, and extend Ramos' term indefinitely. Ramos, who was not power-hungry but

was a true statesman, was not interested in staying on by hook or by crook.

* From Rev Pascual: Converting to the parliamentary system will only make the situation worse, because it will allow politically-savvy but unscrupulous leaders to grab a stranglehold on the Government and stay in office legally for life. Perhaps what we need as a way out of the country's perennial doldrums is a drastic change in leadership. [JMR's aside: Note that we already had two such opportunities for a drastic change -- Martial Law and EDSA I.]

[At this point, Poch narrated an experience he had having dinner with a poor squatter family, who were sharing a single hotdog heated over a candle (the hotdog probably had some crushed cardboard as filler). As the father gave each of his children and his wife a bite and was left with a tiny piece for himself, Poch could see the gratification in the parents' eyes -- genuine happiness (mababaw ang kaligayahan)! Rev cracked that people with higher education acquire higher expectations, which cause frustration and unhappiness when they are not fulfilled -- to promote happiness, therefore, education should be suppressed. Danny Gil said this was consistent with the old saying, "Ignorance is bliss."]

* It's been seven years since FVR left office. Is he still as fit as before, and what is he doing nowadays?
-- Poch: He has developed a paunch, but as far as I know he is as physically active as when he was President. He does not have an official position, but he has recently led some delegations to China.

* From Danny: In view of dissatisfaction with the performance of the present Government and the lack of an acceptable alternative (Noli De Castro?), there are rumors of an impending coup by Gen. Angelo De Los Reyes, whereby the Philippines would be led by a junta, with FVR as the power behind it. What do you think of the rumors?

-- Poch: Not credible at all.

* Critics of FVR say he was as corrupt as all the other politicians. As proof, they cite the PEA-AMARI case. I never understood what this was all about. Can you comment?

-- Poch: [Apparently, he had already discussed this issue during the early part of his talk, which the questioner missed.] The PEA-AMARI case involved a piece of reclaimed land which was sold by the Government to an allegedly favored developer at well below market price, and Ramos was alleged to have profited from the deal. But the accuser (Ernesto Maceda) had ulterior motives and was not credible. The charges were never substantiated; no link to Ramos was ever proven; and the case was never filed in court.

Tonight's attendees comprised the following:

1,2,3. Poch's friends Elvie Tengco, Bong Nazareno, Rev Pascual;

4,5. Hosts Amador and Gloria Muriel;

6,7. Award-winning amateur photographer Carlos and Arlene Esguerra;

8,9,10. Ham and Mayu Gonzales and their 27-year-old daughter (Mayu's lookalike);

11. Geriatrics specialist Dr. Becky Magbag-Tagle;
- 12,13. Retired oncologist Mars and Cora Custodio;
14. Playwright Linda Faigao-Hall;
- 15,16. Writer/playwright/anthologist Bert and Eva Florentino;
17. Classic guitarist Michael Dadap;
- 18,19. Forum organizer Danny and Lisa Gil;
20. Dr. Ramon Seneris (Lisa's brother);
21. Myself.

The next two arrived after Poch's talk:

22. Michael's pretty and charming wife Yeou Cheng Ma;
23. A tall, beautiful lady in black with spectacles, chinky eyes, and a husky bedroom voice.

After the lecture, the guests gathered for snacks in Amador and Gloria's basement kitchen, and the espresso machine had to run at full debottlenecked capacity. No. 23 turned out to be the world-famous Filipina pianist Cecile Licad, looking better than in her newspaper photographs. I learned afterwards from



Danny Gil that #22 is the sister of the famous virtuoso cellist Yo-Yo Ma. Danny said further that Linda Faigao-Hall had written a play about the early aspiring careers of the Ma siblings, which was presented last year by the Ma-Yi Theater (no relation).

Anyway, it was Michael Dadap's birthday, and the celebration looked like it would go on till early morning. I was just thinking -- gathered in this tiny room were a world-class diplomat, a world-class guitarist, a world-class pianist, a world-class physicist, a world-class photographer, a world-class cancer specialist, world-class literary figures, and a world-class audience (the rest of us)! But it was time for me to go home.

Johnny Reyes

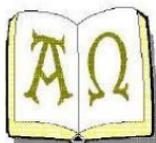
--oo0oo--

**Excerpts from the last joint UPSCA &
62nd Street Newsletter
14 Nov 2014**

Where are they now?

Early on, Lisa and I visited Amador & Gloria Muriel at their 62nd Street brownstone. They have taken over the top floors again, and their daughter Marie is running the place as a classy bed & breakfast. Amador still is doing his Physics.

Amador was enthusiastic about reviving the 62nd Forum. Below is a screen capture of the masthead of



Volume Num 2

Published by the NY 62nd Street Forum

April, 2007

the 2007 newsletter which featured many of the

writings of Johnny Reyes on the 36 or so lectures of the Forum. Since many of the 62nd Forum members also are Upscans, this issue might just as well be considered also a 62nd Forum newsletter, and most likely also the last. I told Amador it is too late to revive the Forum. Many of the active members have left town. Lisa and I have been retired in Tanjay for the past 8 years.

Vic & Vicky Vitug retired and moved to Indiana, but recently found the pull of NYC in their Flushing house as irresistible, and have moved back.

Tony & Bernie Nievera have been in Las Vegas since early on, and Tony is most active on the internet with both Upsca and 62nd cyber loops, relating his various hobbies on photography, astronomy, food, travel, and guns

The ever-interesting writer Chay Lumba also moved to Las Vegas, and maintains his postings to a number of cyber groups.

Gene & Violy Pulmano now are in Hawaii, and he is most prolific in his emails on economics and health.

Award winning photographer Carlos & Arlene Esguerra still are based in NY, but at the moment, Carlos is in the Philippines where he has another exhibit. But a good portion of his time is also spent in Belgium with one of his children and their family.

Economist Hery Brillantes and Mila now are in Arizona. Their waterfront house on the NJ side of the Hudson was the venue for many a small get-together of some Forum members such as, among others Mars & Cora Custodio, Frank Jimenez, Gene Pulmano, Ninotchka Rosca.

From what we gleam from Facebook postings, Mars and Cora travel a lot and spend the cold months

in the Philippines. Seems as if they recently were in Machu Picchu with Ham & Mayu Gonzales.

Frank Jimenez still is in NJ and occasionally joins the email threads on photography posted by Tony and Carlos. He of course comes out once in a while with postings that show his unique sense of humor.

Bert Peronilla & Maryann still also are in NJ, nearby to Frank, and Bert is the computer expert on any Yahoo problem regarding both cyber loops.

Bert & Eva Florentino are in Oregon, according to Amador. And Bert is quite not together up there, which is understandable at his age.

Nel Reformina, in NY, is also very visible in both loops, with his advocacies on education in the Bicol.

There are many other names that should be accounted for among those old friends we've had in the tri-state area during those 5 years we lived there, but we've lost touch.

For old times, sake, here is a 7 year old group photo *[omitted]* at a barbeque in Bert & Maryann Peronilla's house. IDs seem discernible. In a subsequent redo, I cloned in a number of other active members, but unfortunately, I don't have that pic file on my present laptop.

Linda Faigao-Hall, playwright, retired to Ireland with her husband, who soon passed away. Last we heard was that she would teach in Silliman in Dumaguete for a semester or two, in between her visits to hometown Cebu.

One transferee to Dumaguete is Thelma Ibañez-Teves, who moved from LA. Though from Luzon, she prefers the easy and slower provincial life there. Besides, her husband, Dennis Teves, has kin.

Mike Dadap is one we often see in Dumaguete. He visits at least once a year. But once there, he is busy in a whirlwind of activities from concerts to workshops, etc. We missed him last July when we were in Manila. Jane Orendain comes in often on the loop with her posts on little known but significant Philippine historical events. Though based in NY, she moves back and forth to the Philippines.

Ninotchka Rosca, also NY based, often posts about her advocacies. She co-authored a book with Amador.

Lenore Rachel Santos Lim occasionally posts schedules on her various print exhibits in the NY art scene.

Johnny Reyes in Belle Mead NJ (near Princeton) and Erwin Gomez in Indiana are of course up and about and doing well, (as the first 2 pages of this newsletter attests), Johnny from his brain implants (I kid you not), and Erwin from his second-hand kidney. But all these were discussed in previous loop postings.

I wish there were occasions to meet up with more of the UPSCA crowd, but time is short. Last year, the girls, spearheaded by Sari Valenzuela, Priscilla Bautista-Perez, and Cebu visitor Aissa Arambulo-Cruz (together with their UP college-mates) invited us to a posh restaurant in mid Manhattan.

Like the newsletters of old, forthcoming events are posted. On Dec 7, Ting Ong is having an inurnment rite in Manila, where a whole lot of the Upsca friends of JOng will be attending.

In February, some of the group plan on a local Lakbayan cruise or trek to some interesting place. We understand that Bernie from Switzerland, Erwin from

Indiana, TonyN from Las Vegas, and TonyE from LA will be in town, and are all gung ho for it.

Last week end, I was in Boston. This week end, I hope to see a close high school friend in NJ, then homeward I go mid week to Tanjay, Philippines.

Danny Gil, temporarily in NYC, 14 Nov 2014

[Addendum - Bert Peronilla passed away in June, 2016, in NJ]

--oo0oo--

Appendix
Partial list of members of the Forum
from the attendance sheets, when taken,
and those on the email Loop

Abastillas, Pam	Anover, Myrna
Abelarde, Lito & wife(??)	Aruego, Jose
Abenoja, Romeo & Henrietta	Avestruz, Mark
Acosta, Louie	Banogon, Petra
Advani, Javher & Pilar García-	Baquiran, Lestrino
Albano, Vic & Connie	Barrios, Joy
Alcido, Rose	Basubas, Mildred
Almendral, Jaja	Benitez-Brown, Lyca
Ancheta, Pem	Berman, Susan
Ángeles, Connie	Bhattacharya, Sanjay & Evelyn Mandac-
	Brillantes, Hery & Mila

Caillao, Reggie Cruz-
Castañeda, Ramón
Charenzel, Marla Yotoko
Cheung, Cindy
Christina ???
Concepción, Nilo & Frida
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 Sobreviñas-
Cuevas, Elizabeth
Custodio, Lauro
Custodio, Mars & Cora
 Yabut-
Dadap, Michael
De Jesús, Jojo
De La Serna, Nora
De León, Cynthia Guerrero
Dimaya, León & Celeste
Dolorico, Bembo & Gela
Dumláo, Nora
Dykes, Beatriz Uy
Entrada, John
Esguerra, Carlos & Arlene
Estanisláo, Bella
Evangelista, Liliosa
Fagan, Richard & Susan
 Rodriguez-
Fernandez, Elizabeth &
 Bonnie
Florendo, Phil
Florentino, Bert & Eva
Francisco, Gina Boncán
Genciana, Milan
Genciano, Josie
Genciano, Rommel
Gener, Mutyâ
Geraghty, Matt
Gil, Danny & Lisa Señeris-
Gomez, Erwin
Gonzalez, Abrahám and
 Mayu
Groot, Hans
Guerrero, José
Hall, Linda Faigáo
Javellana, Genny
Jimenez, Frank
Laguardia, Lexther
Laserna, Nora
Ledesma, Bambi
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Lewis, Loida Nicolás
Libay, Flora
Lim, Jose & Lenore Raquel-
 Santos
Licad, Cecille
Loanzon, Tristan
Lopez, ???
Lopez, Melvyn & Tenni
Ma, Yeou Cheng
Macaranas, Poch
Mack, Ernst
Madrid, Norman & Sandy
Magbag, Becky
Malabuyo, Diloy & Didi
Misenas, Lani
Moneda, Josefina
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