

CREATIVE LITERATURE
IN
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION:
THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIMENT

Workshop Proceedings by
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and
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MENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND EMPLOYMENT

THE PLAN OF THE WORKSHOP

In Manila in August 1971, Dr. Frances Maria Yasas, UN Regional Adviser on Training in Social Work and Community Development and Mr. David Drucker, a UNICEF consultant, presented the idea of the use of creative literature in teaching and in-service training in social work to the Schools of Social Work Association of the Philippines (SSWAP). The SSWAP ventured to experiment on the idea and a two day workshop on August 14 and 15, 1971, was held.

The Workshop was held in the Training Center of the Bureau of Training, Research and Special Projects of the Philippine Department of Social Welfare, whose facilities were provided by Mrs. Guillerma Batto, Director of said Bureau and member of the SSWAP.

Participation in the Workshop was entirely on a voluntary basis with the following requirements for participants:

(a) must have either done something in the use of creative literature in teaching social work or they are very interested in and willing to involve themselves in learning how to use creative literature in teaching social work;

(b) must be willing to give at least two hours during the week for a meeting to plan the Workshop and at least two days in the following week to participate in the Workshop; and

(c) must be present full-time at both the first meeting and phase two of the Workshop.

There were eleven participants, mostly faculty members of the different schools of social work, and six observers who are training officers of the Bureau of Training, Research and Special Projects. The list of participants is in Appendix A.

RT II

PERIMENT

Teaching Notes*

"draught" the non-productivity, the barrenness of so much talking, when a valley of non-communication comes between people.

Can be effectively used to introduce, heighten and describe a discussion on: elements that can block effective communication between people.

- 5) Some thoughts, projects, ideas of students and social workers lack courage to be born. No "flower" for those, that don't have courage to be born. Can be used as a slogan when stimulus or motivation for action is needed.

- 6) This poem describes different kinds of ineffective words or communication.

Can be used in classes on how to write for different publics in social work and the kinds of words to avoid using.

Participant: Mr. David Drucker

Type of Creative Literature: Short Story

Title of Short Story: "A Harvest of Humble Folk"

Author: Gilda Cordero-Fernando

Synopsis:

Gilda Cordero-Fernando's "A Harvest of Humble Folk" is a beautifully written story. It is full of the realism and brutalities of everyday village life with its folk knowledge and superstitions. The telling of the tale is dramatic and strange with multifaceted echos rich and complex in texture and depth. It is *ongoing* in the sense that it leaves the reader thinking and musing about the people, the place and the situations, yet the story is complete in itself, thereby good reading in its own right and excellent for teaching and learning.

Pugad Lawin is a Model Barrio.

"The BAE, FANCOMA, and other rural improvement organizations often singled out Pugad Lawin for emulation by its neighbors, for although it was only a nest of humble folk, their energies were boundless and their goals were high."

Miss Noel, the schoolteacher, is a major character in the story (as she is also in the same author's "The Visitation of the Gods"). She and her role in the village are introduced thus:

"Miss Noel was a BSE *magna cum laude* graduate who believed in vaccination, self-help and septic tanks. She taught reading, health, arithmetic, religion and mat weaving, ran the PTA, and since the death of the barrio lieutenant, settled small land disputes. When the roof of the schoolhouse collapsed during the typhoon, Miss Noel climbed a ladder and was seen hammering away in the driving rain.

Miss Noel was also the moving spirit behind the creation of the Reading Center in front of the school. Although it never received a replenishment to its initial stock of 1954 *Posts*, *Reader's Digests* and *Free Press*, and its woe-begone copies of Dostoyevsky and Tolstoi (those imponderable leavings of rich men's shelves) and the carabaos and the goats meandered freely in and out of it, still the men-folk had developed a habit of gathering around it at night, sitting on their haunches under the stars and talking about the feeder road that had been promised them by the government, and the new strain of sugar cane with its strange long tassels that had lately been introduced at the experimental farm, which promised more piculs per hectare and the dawning of a brighter tomorrow for all of them." (p. 132/3)

"My dear ignorant barrio folk", she said, like the beginnings of the speeches she made to the elders. "We are saddled with so much superstition." (p. 135)

Lazaro, the stranger, comes to Pugad Lawin.

"Down the far side of the mountain, they saw a tall thin stranger walking with a sack of wood on his back. The breeze ruffled the sparse chin. The tattered clothes flapped about his bony shanks like the cloak of an apostle." (p. 135)

"As the man bent down, a black crucifix dangled from his neck, twisting back and forth on its grimy string, the tortured silver figure impaled on it catching the sun's rays like tiny lances. It seemed they had seen his face before, the grave sorrowing eyes, the gentle bearded mouth, the nose tall like a Jew's, aroused in them an uneasy sense of familiarity, and they waited for the impact of recognition like the coming of a great wave." (p. 136)

He says he is neither farmer nor fisherman, but a carpenter.

Lazaro, seeking work, as the landlord, *Don Saturnino*.

"Don Saturnino would be the Mass or the *fiesta*. He had a town where he could hear *Ma* nino was a pious man. Two y cover that his tenants were liv of sacrament, he had invited visit to Pugad Lawin during t son. In front of his great w adults up, parents and their and their husbands together, mass marriage." (p. 137/138)

Lazaro's impact on the

"When he went to was river, he flattered the young with garlands of fragrant *cha* amidst much giggling. He en wives by soldering their lea always a ready hand with a

He had an instinct for le their placid lives an ordered The men were organized into the glowing afternoons kicking over a taut fishnet. As they store for a final drink, he slowly stole his way into t around the neat rows of the sadly among them, a tall an dle of the canefield, with no the blowing wind, he spoke want amid plenty. His straly into the unruffled seas of darting silver fish, until the of thinking had always been

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Lazaro, seeking work, asks his way to the home of the landlord, *Don Saturnino*.

"Don Saturnino would be home. He never attended the Mass or the *fiesta*. He had his horses to take him to town where he could hear Mass on Sundays. Don Saturnino was a pious man. Two years before, shocked to discover that his tenants were living together without benefit of sacrament, he had invited the priest to make a special visit to Pugad Lawin during the middle of the milling season. In front of his great white house, he lined all the adults up, parents and their sons and wives, daughters and their husbands together, and had them joined in a mass marriage." (p. 137/138)

Lazaro's impact on the village is profound.

"When he went to wash his few garments in the river, he flattered the young women by presenting them with garlands of fragrant *champaca* he had strung himself, amidst much giggling. He endeared himself to the housewives by soldering their leaking pots and pans. He was always a ready hand with a broken plow or a sick animal.

He had an instinct for leadership and introduced into their placid lives an ordered sequence of work and play. The men were organized into a sipa team and they spent the glowing afternoons kicking a reed ball back and forth over a taut fishnet. As they gathered around the barrio store for a final drink, he listened to their stories and slowly stole his way into their hearts. They took him around the neat rows of the cane plantation and he walked sadly among them, a tall and weary martyr. In the middle of the canefield, with none but the crows to hear, in the blowing wind, he spoke of poverty amid luxury, of want amid plenty. His strange new ideas swam resistlessly into the unruffled seas of their simple minds, like quick darting silver fish, until they felt that these positive ways of thinking had always been their own and a part of them,

and they felt a little wiser and a little bit of prouder." (p. 140)

"Yet sometimes the people could not tell with whom Lazaro sided—he worked for Don Saturnino yet talked against him, he whispered darkly about sacks of rice rotting in the landlord's bodega; yet in disputes he pretended to favor the plantation owner, praising the farmers' labors but laying bare before him their sins of negligence and procrastination. But Lazaro assured them that he always was where right was, and he did not care who got trampled. Where the wind blows is where he leans, said Miss Noel, but nobody listened to her." (p. 140)

The village becomes increasingly unsettled and

"Somewhere a rumor started that the owner of the Central, their landlord, would shrewdly sit back and do nothing about repairing the mill, for he planned to starve the outlying smaller haciendas who depended on it, in order to buy them all out. It was only a little rumor but it had the mouth and the horns of an ugly toad." (p. 142)

Argument ferments, Miss Noel strongly resisting the disturbing ideas fed by Lazaro.

"He talks of a world where everybody will have work and nobody will want. He promises you justice, security in old age, equality for your children. (Arise, unite, progress—he cries, noble words, if used in the right spirit. But how true is he to these ideals? Did he ever tell you how he aimed to arrived at these goals?"

"Progress cannot held back!" countered Mang Caloy, "and let him who is slow and lily-livered he crushed by its wheels!"

"This," said Miss Noel, bringing a stinging palm down on the textbook she was carrying, "is progress! Only when these words have shown you the truth and you have learned to think for yourselves will there be true progress!"

But the villagers bitterly

"Why should Don Saturnino
"....he cannot make a single
It is our sweat that has wat
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"What has his father or
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The tensions and events
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(p. 148)

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The farmers stared at their
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But the villagers bitterly countered:

"Why should Don Saturnino own the land we till...?";
"...he cannot make a single stalk of sugar cane grow!
It is our sweat that has watered the furrows, it is our
callouses that have coaxed the cane to grow!

"What has his father or his grandfather before him
done to deserve this land?"... "He washed a friar's gar-
ments and the Spaniard said: Take my horse, old Satur-
nino, and ride across the plain, and as far as you can
reach by sundown, that land is yours.

"Don Saturnino has more than he needs—we do not
even own the soil in our flowerpots!" (p. 143)

The tensions and events in the village build to a
bizarre climax.

"Before the boys realized what he was doing, Lazaro
had struck the match and touched it to the drenched coat
of the animal. The fawn leapt with startled cry and bound-
ed into the canefield like a ball of fire.

Everywhere the animal streaked, the dry stalks crack-
led and ignited. The fire spread fanwise, to the reaches
of the barbed wire fences, till the whole field roared with
it. A thick sugary smoke billowed to the night sky."
(p. 148)

"At dusk the fire died down. Pugad Lawin had not a
single stalk of sugar cane left standing, and the once
model houses and gardens, the clean paths lined with sea-
shell, the chapel and the schoolhouse and the pen of the
Berkshire boar, lay in black smouldering ruins. Even the
artesian well refused to pump water, and whatever drop-
lets still clung to its mouth had already turned brackish
The farmers stared at their hands and brooded dismally
about the future.

Three days after the fire, which would be recounted
down the generations of Pugad Lawin, a crude, a sideless

nipa hut was up on its four legs by the river bank. The salvaged blackboard hung on the hole of a coconut tree and the children sat on beached boats, laboring over their lessons, for who could put Miss Noel down?" (p. 149)

Lazaro leaves and

"...although Andres remembered with nostalgia the feats of magic, the carabao races and the serenades, and the moving eloquence of the speeches, he decided that he had been mistaken, the carpenter did not look much like Jesus Christ after all. (p. 149)

Miss Noel has the last word:

"Let no one deceive you in any way, for the day of the Lord will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God and gives himself out as if he were God. For out of all the humble folk Miss Noel knew, she had known from the very beginning, she would always know if the world should end tomorrow." (p. 150)

Teaching Points:

The story suggests a whole range of fruitful questions around which much content can be usefully assembled. Here are a few:

1. On model institutions

- a) What seemed to be) the criteria for the designation
- b) What should be) Model barrio?

Can we distinguish, and show the relationship between, the criteria that derive from:

- a) the policy and expectations of administrative organizations?

- b) the observable extent
- c) the quality of the processes involved in setting of priorities

From the above, can we neighboring villages seek to en

2. On Values (and Poli

Can we list the values each of the characters (Miss no)?

To which of these value classify in rough order of im

Is there a rough correlation of the values held by each a characters?

What can we therefore between values expressed, hel tive (or otherwise) "person: cerned?

Which values are shared characters?

Which important conflicts reconciled? Explain and in community might set about

Which values are irreconcilable possible likely outcomes?

3. On Leadership (and

From what base did strength in the community (turnino)?

Can we spell out the no had as "leaders" in this cor

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- b) the observable external physical improvements?
- c) the quality of the social relationships and processes involved in problem identification, setting of priorities and problem solving?

From the above, can we conclude what exactly *should* neighboring villages seek to emulate from a model village?

2. On *Values* (and Politics?)

Can we list the values represented or expressed by each of the characters (Miss Noel, Lazaro, Don Saturnino)?

To which of these values do *you* most subscribe?—classify in rough order of importance.

Is there a rough correlation between the importance of the values held by each and their "attractiveness" as characters?

What can we therefore state about the relationship between values expressed, held, acted upon, and the attractive (or otherwise) "personalities" of the persons concerned?

Which values are shared by two or more of the three characters?

Which important conflict of values could possibly be reconciled? Explain and indicate how a worker in the community might set about this.

Which values are irreconcilable and what are the possible likely outcomes?

3. On *Leadership* (and personalities?)

From what *base* did the characters derive their *strength* in the community (Miss Noel; Lazaro; Don Saturnino)?

Can we spell out the *nature* of the appeal that each had as "leaders" in this community?

4. *A learning Analysis of the Story*

What statements and questions in respect of this story can be spelled out regarding the following:

e.g.

- a) the economics of the village
- b) the role of the Land Reform
- c) the role of Religion
- d) the role and limitations of school teachers in Community Development programs
- e) the role and limitations of landlords in Community Development programs
- f) the role and limitations of outsiders in Community Development programs
- g) distribution of wealth and social justice
- h) the place of participation of the people
- i) the relationship of true participation and leadership
- j) the relationship of villagers to the "young masters" and its implications
- k) the nature and problems of "new" kinds of servility
- l) the role and limitations of colourful and inspirational leadership
- m) the nature and problems of "new" kinds of servility (demagogic and ideological)
- n) the place of acceptance (conservation) and change in development

Any other questions or statements not included above?

5. *Plans of Action*

Who needs *casework* help? For what? (diagnostic formulation)

How could this be offered
Who needs *group work* help (formulation)

How could this be offered

From all of the above, can we

- a) make an analysis of
- b) establish a range of
- c) identify the range and activity within the overall
- d) estimate specific manpower identify who will have
- e) sketch some kind of

SOME SUGGESTED THEMES

1. *General Discussion*

Some of the above questions as a preliminary exploration, e.g.

Does the story ring true?

If not, why not?

To make it more realistic (rewrite) it?

(The overall range of questions as a scheme of discussion, but selected for simple and sophisticated purposes).

2. *Essays and Seminars*

Some of the questions could be used as seminar papers for discussion.

Such approaches should be used as usual elements in the story site perhaps elaborating upon) them in many situations.

of the Story

Questions in respect of this story
the following:

village

Reform

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programs

of landlords in Commun-
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nts not included above?

? For what? (diagnostic

How could this be offered?

Who needs *group work* help? For what? (diagnostic
formulation)

How could this be offered?

From all of the above, can we now:

- a) make an analysis of *problems* in this village?
- b) establish a range of *targets* for "development"?
- c) identify the range and specifics of *social work*
activity within the overall plan?
- d) estimate specific manpower and resources needed?
identify who will have to do what?)
- e) sketch some kind of timetable?

SOME SUGGESTED TEACHING METHODS

1. General Discussion

Some of the above questions could be explored after
a preliminary exploration, e.g.:

Does the story ring true?

If not, why not?

To make it more real, how would we modify
(rewrite) it?

(The overall range of questions suggests an elaborate
scheme of discussion, but selection will serve less ambitious
and sophisticated purposes).

2. Essays and Seminars

Some of the questions could be set as essay subjects
or as seminar papers for discussion.

Such approaches should aim at separating out the un-
usual elements in the story situation, and identifying (and
perhaps elaborating upon) the general points that apply
to many situations.

3. *More Specific Examination and Discussion*

All teachers in the school, irrespective of subject, should be asked to examine the story and consider what specifically it could illustrate in their own teaching,—what take-off point into their teaching the story might provide. Teachers could be asked to compile the teaching points, make a short bibliography and identify quotations which relate concretely to certain aspects of the story. Each teacher might then present this material for a discussion period.

4. *Projects*

e.g. The class could be designated as a multi-purpose social welfare team drafted into the village to help deal with the disaster following the fire.

After a general discussion of the story and a consideration of the first-aid relief efforts (to be carefully explored, planned and worked out—perhaps by a “disaster relief” sub-group in the class), the questions should be explored regarding what information would we need to get from whom? How would we get it? Would we get to know, from our efforts, all the story has told us? If not, what are the difficulties we would have that the storyteller does not? Not knowing some of these things would make what difference? What else would we need to know? How would we set about finding out?

Where necessary, additional information should be invented for the class, but only where such information can be shown to be reasonably available to the usual methods of information-getting.

The class should then be divided into sub-groups to examine a whole range of questions (such as these outlined in the Teaching Notes), each sub-group having as its adviser an appropriate member of the staff (who will

have done some of the preparation 3 above.)

And or sub-groups could do the tasks of various agencies such as Education, Community Development, Community Services for Women and Y

Each sub-group should have ample documentation and (oral literature) to be presented. The group jointly would engage in projects

- an analysis of the project
- an assessment of resources
- a plan of action (see above)

The class eventually might make a synopsis (or a series of synopses) or a series of scenes oriented *sequel* to the story

5. *Fieldwork*

At each stage of using the story, the class is expected to spell out the story under discussion and examine the situations and experiences.

Examination and Discussion

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have done some of the preparatory work outlined in Method 3 above.)

And or sub-groups could undertake examination of the tasks of various agencies and organizations, e.g. Education, Community Development, Agricultural Extension, Services for Women and Youth, etc.

Each sub-group should prepare a position paper (with ample documentation and quotations from the professional literature) to be presented to the class group which jointly would engage in producing:

- an analysis of the problems (diagnosis)
- an assessment of resources and possibilities
- a plan of action (see Teaching Notes 5)

The class eventually might produce an outline sketch or synopsis (or a series of alternatives) of a development-oriented *sequel* to the story.

5. Fieldwork

At each stage of using this story, students should be expected to spell out the specific relevance of the matter under discussion and examination for their own fieldwork situations and experiences.