

Commentary

[Countries](#), [Philippines](#)



Commentary “Jeepney” by Gemino H. Abad “Jeepney” is a free verse poem written by Gemino H. Abad. It revolves around the principal metaphor of the jeepney, the Philippines’s symbol of culture, which is developed all throughout the poem and analogized to the nation itself. At first, it is an allusive rendition of the Filipino people, the impoverished Filipinos in particular, and a generalization of their traits. The handling of metaphors, juxtaposition, allusions, and form throughout the poem then stirs allegorical descriptions of our struggles, and nation as a whole, all in comparison to the jeepney. The first verse begins with an ultimatum — “Consider honestly”. This proposes that it is essential to be truthful, when it comes to considering the jeepney, which is equated to the Filipino people. They (the jeepney/Filipinos) are not found superior, but rather considered to be, “this piece of storm/in our city’s entrails./Incarnation of scrap,/what genius of salvage! “. The adjacent placement of words such as “incarnation” and “scrap”, and “genius” and “salvage” juxtapose, thus projecting the honesty of the speaker even more. In the second verse, the speaker, “sense[s] our truth laughing/in our guts...”, which is a metaphor applied to the prominent trait that Filipinos have the ability to laugh at their problems. The weight of frankness in thought, within the first two stanzas, is narrowed to a realm of observations and notions. The transformation in the speaker’s attitude corresponds to a change in structure, specifically the span of enjambments. Just like a jeepney, the poem starts with a forceful lurch, staggers as it begins to travel, then explores with more ease as it progresses. Continuing on with the poem, the speaker now acknowledges the jeepney as our country, and the passengers within it as citizens, and that it is referring to our, “...breakdowns and

survivals", a metaphor for our past and future. Our fate is also likened to the allusions of "...our Book of Revelation. ", the bible, which scriptures put forward Judgement Day: the trial by God to take place at the end of time. This idea is parallel to the task of driving a jeepney: the driver " collects us where the weathers/of our feet strand us. ", or rather from the past, and takes us to our future (trial by the superior power) — forgetting " No one's fare. Nor anyone's destiny. ". In the course of the ride however, the passengers " feed on proximity, ", a metaphor that unveils how the Filipino community tend to relish the wholeness of each other's difficulties. Some even need to " cling/to this trapeze against all hazards. ", or hold on to the outer brim at the back of the jeepney because it is too crowded inside. The juxtaposed detail impels the thought into view; passengers don't want to have to take the risk of holding onto the brim, but rather need to in order to " patiently survive. ". These concepts continue to deepen onto the last two versus of the poem. " Here is our heartland still. ", may be confused as a metaphor for the jeepney, as we've considered it to be in the previous stanzas, but can no longer be perceived so because " jeepneys carom through it,/our long country of patience. ". This shift in interpretation allows the reader to acknowledge our nation overall. " Nights I lie awake, I hear/a far-off tectonic rumble. " — in this case the jeepney is symbolic for pressure; pressure between the positive and proportionate negative traits of Filipinos, such as endurance, and surviving through improvising against over-endurance, and our desire to survive. The difficulty Filipinos endure is described to be " a slow hoard of thunder", and their willingness to survive depends on their strength to persist, which at times can be doubtful, thus

the poem ends in a question — is it worth living through difficulty “ from underground spirit of endurance? “. This certain form in the poem is once again parallel to the task of driving a jeepney. The driver forgets history (where he has picked up passengers), but fails not to forget our payments. Once he drops us off, where will he go next? The poem started off with a certainty, and ended with a question as a query of what lies ahead. Abad’s poem, “ Jeepney”, draws attention to the reasons why the Philippines is immersed in varying difficulties. It is because we have forgotten our past due to how engrossed we are with the country’s economic constraints, and how we Filipinos take satisfaction in our traits that may, in the end, turn into our defeat. “ Jeepney” expresses concern as well as annoyance we have come to recognize at this cognitive age. The speaker takes the reader through an emotional and intelligent outlook on Philippines — its people, and its circumstances. [word count = 722]