

# Pasyon: a factor that shaped the filipinos' identity

Government, Colonialism



Pasyon: A Factor That Shaped the Filipinos' Identity Anonymous October 7, 2011 \_\_\_\_\_ Table of Contents Chapter I: Research Problem/Topic A. Rationale..... 3-4 B. Review of Related Literature.....4-7 C. Statement of the Problem..... 7-8 D. Objectives of the Study.....8 E Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks.....9-10 F. Significance of the Study..... 10-11 Chapter II: Research methodology A. Research Design..... 11 B. Procedure.....12 C. Methods of Data Analysis.....12-13 Chapter III: Results and Discussion.....13-19 Chapter IV: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation..... 20 Chapter V: Bibliography.....21 A. Rationale

One of the major contributors of early Philippine Literature is the “ Pabasa”, or better known as “ Pasyon”- a verse narrative about the life and suffering of Jesus. It is one of the traditional beliefs and religious practice in the Philippines where people gather around to listen and reflect during Lent season. The said tradition of chanting the pasyon was originally rooted from the Spanish Language songs. The History of the Philippines includes the Spanish ruling and colonization for about three hundred and thirty-three years (1521-1898). Within these years, it is clear that the Spanish colonizers brought several changes that fundamentally shaped the societal growth of the natives living in our land. In this study we will determine the changes and influences brought by pasyon as one of the factors that shaped the

Filipinos identity. We will also show how the said reading affects the perception of the people. This study comprises four main chapters which includes the Research problem topic; Research methodology; Results and discussion; Summary and Conclusion. B. Review of related literature The review of the literature for this study focuses on the significance of the Pasyon as one of the popular forms of literature that seems to have fascinated people throughout the centuries. This focuses on a number of different studies and published articles that supports the former statement. Many writers have proclaimed that Pasyon was used by the Spanish as one of the factors to slowly conquer the Philippines, in which it created a big impact in the minds of every Filipinos. One of these is Reynaldo Ileto who alluded to this significance: " One of the principal ideas developed in this study is that the masses experience of Holy Week fundamentally shaped the style of peasant brother- hoods and uprisings during (the Spanish and early American colonial periods. Instead of glorifying the ancient rituals of the babaylane's (native priests) as evocative of the true native spirit, the fact has to be accepted that the majority of the lowland Filipinos were converted to Spanish Catholicism.[...] The various rituals of Holy week, particularly the reading of the story of Jesus Christ "(Pasyon and Revolution, 1840-1910) Paul Spickard in his work, Race and Nation, quoted that " Colonialism seem to always result in " racialized" hierarchies between conquering people and the conquered. Colonialism brought many common items to the places that were colonized and resulted into rapid decline of the native's culture, language, and traditions. Terms and Concepts Words matter. In this research, one finds several terms and concepts that are used in different chapters. Here are

their definitions that will guide and give us a little background about the study. Pabasa ng Pasyon The Pasyon is normally heard during Holy Week in the Philippines, where its recitation, known as the Pabási ( " Reading") can span several days over the course of the period, extending no later than Black Saturday. Readers will chant the verses of the Pasyon without pause from beginning to end in front of a specially-constructed shrine or altar. This non-stop reading of the Pasyon is facilitated by the chanters working in shifts. The reading of Pasyon must be finished before 3 pm of Good Friday (the time when Jesus died on the cross). Musical accompaniment to its recitation is practised by some though is by no means universal. (Pasyon, Wikipedia. org) Before evolving into the contemporary version of the reading and chanting ritual in the Philippines during the Lenten season, the early form of the pabasa was introduced to the indigenous people of the Philippine islands by Spanish friars. The Spaniards brought Catholicism to the Philippines. Gradually, over the period of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines (1521—1898), the ancient Filipinos adapted the religious chanting introduced by the Spanish priests and incorporated it to their own custom of singing epics during native celebrations. (Pabasa (ritual), Wikipedia. org) Race One finds the word " race" used to refer to particular group of people competing each other for power or control. Race is one of the factors that shape the relationship between peoples. According to the pseudoscientists, there are big races (perhaps four or five of them). In this view, race is about biology, genes, phenotype, and the body. It is physical, inherited, and immutable. The races are discrete from each other. Each race has not only specific distinguishing body features- skin color, hair texture,

nose shape, and so forth- but specific character qualities that cannot be erased; they may be suppressed, but eventually they will come out. These qualities are cultural aspects, such as language, citizen, religion, child rearing practices, food habits clothing, and so forth. (Paul Spickard, Race and Nation, 2005) Language One finds the word, " language" used to refer to a complex and dynamic system of conventional symbols that is used in various modes for thought and communication (qtd in COMA 104 notes). Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication. The scientific study of language in any of its senses is called linguistics (language, Wikipedia. org). Culture One finds the word, " culture" used to refer to the totality of group's thought, experience, and patterns of behaviour and its concepts values and assumptions about life that guide behaviour. (qtd. in COMA 104 notes) C. Statement of the Problem Looking now at the present context, many had claimed that the Filipino Language, culture, as well as history and identity were all distorted out of its original shape, its original civilization. Using the pasyon as one of the tools introduced by Spaniards to slowly conquer the Philippines, we focus on this main question, what are the impacts of the Pasyon and its influences that shaped the Filipinos identity? Here are some additional questions that help us determine the first question: What are the factors that affect the perception of both races in understanding the pasyon. Do both races have different understanding on the reading? How did the translation affect or create an impact to the people's perception? Moreover, what were the other Christianization Strategies employed by Spaniards to

successfully convert the Filipinos to Roman Catholicism given the fact that the both sides were having communication problems? To answer these queries, we are going to examine the content and the history of the pasyon particularly the Pasyon Mahal. And also, we will study both races (Spanish and Filipino) to determine how the pasyon influenced their culture, language, and values to what it is today.

**D. Objectives of the Study** The general objective of the study is to identify the changes and transformation of the Filipino society in terms of the influences brought by the Pasyon. We are also interested in the different custom, tradition, and ideas brought by the colonizers during their invasion. For the most part, Pasyon will be examined as one of the main reasons of how our culture, race and language in the Philippines evolve. We will also analyse and appreciate the content of the pasyon as a factor that shaped the Filipinos identity; and to be able to learn how the Filipino culture and language evolved and adjusted for many years so to understand also the current situation of Filipinos identity. Pasyon was used by the Spanish colonizers as one of their Christianization Strategies; therefore we will also look for the impacts employed by the said reading in Filipinos original customs and tradition. Lastly we will explain why both races have their own perception in understanding the Pasyon.

**E. Theoretical and Conceptual framework** Theoretical framework The following are the theories and concepts related to this study: Medium Theory -medium affects perception, also known as channel theory, or media formalism. McLuhan (1964) challenged conventional definitions when he claimed that the medium is the message. With this claim, he stressed how channels differ, not only in terms of their content, but also in regard to how they awaken and

alter thoughts and senses. He distinguished media by the cognitive processes each required. McLuhan popularized the idea that channels are a dominant force that must be understood to know how the media influence society and culture. (Medium theory, utwente. nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/)

Standpoint Theory A standpoint influences how the people adopting it socially construct the world. Social group membership affects people's standpoints. The inequalities of different social groups create differences in their standpoints (Standpoint Theory, Wikipedia. org). Conceptual framework

Sapir- Whorf hypothesis would help us understand the different perceptions of the different races with different language of an event with the same situation. Since it assumes that different language produce different way of behaviour, this could help solve our question: " Do both races have different understanding on the reading? ". This would help us understand that the impacts of the pasyon could have produced more than one In media theory, it is supposed that medium affects perception. This idea would help us lead to a conclusion on how the Pasyon was presented to the audience as the factor that affects their understanding. While the standpoint theory, could help us solve the problem by making social status as the main factor of the problem since it indicates that people with different social levels have different perceptions since they are affected by the hierarchies they are in.

F. Significance of the study As Communication Arts students, we believe that this study will help us deepen our understanding about language and culture, particularly in race and language where we can see the relation of how race, language and culture gradually changes. By this we will fully understand how these three elements are continuously shaping each other.

We will also learn to see how people in early times communicate and how they relate messages in to reality. In this case, we will have the idea on how people have varieties of notions and interpretations depending on the situation they are in. We are looking forward that our study will also contribute to the body of literature, specifically, to the history of Philippine literature. In terms of appreciation of our Philippine culture, this study aims to seek and value the early literatures written by our early writers here in the Philippines and how this writings awakened the minds of our early heroes. It would also make us understand that the religion of most Filipino today is not solely influenced by the colonizers but a religion gradually modified by our very own native Filipinos.

Chapter II Research methodology

A. Research design

Content analysis or textual analysis is a methodology in the social sciences for studying the content of communication. Earl Babbie defines it as " the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws." According to Dr. Farooq Joubish, content analysis is considered a scholarly methodology in the humanities by which texts are studied as to authorship, authenticity, or meaning. Harold Lasswell formulated the core questions of content analysis: " Who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?." Ole Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as " any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages." Procedure This introduction to case study research draws upon six processes:

B. Method of Analysing the Data

Since we are determined to seek for the history and analyse the content of the Pasyon, a certain descriptive data, must undergo the process of case study method to fully



understand its contents. We will access the existing information gathered from the past as well as to dissect the contents into different parts (preferably stanza by stanza) for us to comprehend its ideas and the meanings it imparted. By using the method of case study, we will see why the pasyon has two contradictory functions in the past society. To expand, we will determine and define the research questions, which are already stated in the former part of this paper; Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques; Prepare to collect the data, since we already have the existing datum, which is a copy of Reynaldo Ileto's pasyon and revolution book; Collect data in the field, collect records that are related to the making of the Pasyon and how it was used by the early people, considering also its impacts imparted to the society; Evaluate and analyze the data, scrutinized the contents of the said records, and relay it to explain the ideas imparted, say the stanzas of the pasyon and how the Filipino culture relate it to their way of life, next, we also need to compare these collected data and look for the similarities as well as the differences of the subjects, say the culture of the Spanish against the culture of the native Filipinos.

Chapter III Results and discussion In this study, we used the Pasyon Pilapil, since it is commonly used, actually the second, and the least-polished of three Church-approved pasyons. This popular name for the Casaysayan of 1814 originates from a traditional belief that it was written by a native priest named Mariano Pilapil, but recent scholarship has established that Pilapil merely edited the 1814 text, the author of which remains unknown (Ileto, 12). For the Content itself: In Reynaldo Ileto's textual analysis of Pasyon, he claimed that the existence of Jesus Christ was concurrent to the mass'

experiences where His sufferings are much closely understood by the peasant Filipinos, as if their agonies are much like His. Say for example, despite the fact that from the Spanish perspective, the more effective tool, to discourage Indios from enriching and educating themselves to the point where they might constitute a threat to colonial rule, is the pasyon, the perspective of the mass audience, the identification of the wealthy, educated Pharisees, magino<sup>3</sup> and pinunong bayan (local leaders) with Christ's tormentors could not fail to have radical implications in actual life. Take the following pasyon Stanzas in which the priests and gentry demand that Pilate sentence Jesus to death (Ileto, 15-16): At coming nagcacapisan dito sa iyong harapan (And we gathered here before your Excellency) Guinoo't, pinunorig bayan, (Are aristocrats and town chiefs) di mu pa paniualaan (So you have no reason to doubt) sa mga sumbong ng tanan. (all our accusations.) Coming naghahabla rito (We plaintiffs here) di sinungaling na tauo mayayama, t, maguinoo (Are truthful people gentlemen of rank and wealth) houag nang paniindimin mo (so away with your misgivings) hatulan mo nang totoo. (hand down the verdict.) (114: 6-7) The words were used as obviously boastful and vain that to the extent it imparted an idea of aggression against the weak and poor, making more the character of Christ as the opposite personality. As for the Filipinos, the pasyon carries a language that attracted them to become like the characters of Christ. It gave them a feeling of subversion, a feeling to oppose the " maguinoong" friars. Even if we, for the moment, limit our attention to the Pasyon Pilapil as a text, it's bearing on popular movements and social unrest can already be seen. For one thing, the inclusion of episodes relating to the Creation of the World, the Fall of Man,

and the Last Judgment makes the Pasyon Pilapil image of universal history, the beginning and end of time, rather than a simple gospel story. In its narration of Christ suffering, death, and resurrection, and of the Day of judgement it provides powerful images of transition from one state or era to another. " (Ileto, 14) The material contains encouragement of revolt against the abusive controls of those who are in power more than the Spanish's plan of taming and encouraging acceptance of the church since the characters encrypted have symbolism that is not far from the masses (Christ) and Spanish colonizers (Roman Friars) roles in reality. In terms of observing the context structure and word translations, it can be purely seen that errors in composition are highly persistent. " The Pasyon Pilapil was, in fact, soundly criticized in the late nineteenth century by Aniceto de la Merced, a native priest, in a pamphlet titled Manga Puna (critique). The account, writes De la Merced, will open your eyes to the errors, unnoticed hut rampant in that book called Pasong Mahal, which is really the work of an ignoramus.' The major criticisms of the Pasyon Pilapil are its incoherence, faulty scholarship, repetitiveness, and clumsy, inaccurate use of language. " (Ileto, 13)

However, in terms of the translation, we found out that the original Pasyon, which we discovered that it was really a Filipino who wrote the book. Gaspar Aquino de Belen, a bilingual poet and a translator made the first Pasyon under the order of the Spanish missionaries, the Encomienda System that orders the people to convert the people into Catholic religion. In this case, we found out that neither the Pasyon was modified from the Book of the Bible and was from Spanish nor from Roman origin thus it was a customization of the story of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. However, in

terms of the alteration of the meaning, though the text was converted and modified, we have observed that the sense that the reading wants to impart are still the same since both the Bible and The Pasyon contains the story and the life of Jesus Christ, though the latter is in poetic form. For Social Hierarchy It was said that the power dynamic that makes racial difference historically has been tied to colonialism. Some, incorporated fairly fully, forcing their national language (or atleast its writing system) (Paul Spickard, Race and Nation, 2005). In, Leslie E. Bauzon's work, " Influence of the Spanish Culture", she pointed out that Spaniards transplanted their social, economic, and political institutions for about 333 years of colonial sovereign (1565-1898). Moreover, in order to administer the Philippines, the Spaniards extended their royal government to the Filipinos. This highly centralized governmental system was theocratic. There was a union of Church and State. The Roman Catholic Church was equal to and coterminous with the State. In addition, when we look into the perspective of the colonizers, the use of the pasyon simply affirms prevailing social structure in which the virtue of meekness and resignation to suffering, rather than the confrontation of the oppression, seems to have been encouraged. Filipinos then, were isolated in the idea that a Christian must follow its duties because reward is forthcoming in heaven. Because of that it was obvious that the Spaniards take advantage of the situation that the natives will not rebel against them since they respect the Friars as a leader who teaches the gospel of the Lord. Meaning, having the thought of opposing the Catholic Church, suggests that you also oppose God. (Filipino Heritage. com)

Therefore, it could be the influenced of the colonizer's social status in which

they stand as the powerful and dominant in which the natives did not seem to see the idea of revolution. Since, the area where they view the framework is less viewable than the view of the others who sees it. However, on the side of those who were classified as low class, the native Filipino, the interpretations of the pasyon are more viewed as a social awakens and generator of revolution than just a pure passionate reading for the religion. Just like what the Standpoint theory tells, “. The inequalities of different social groups create differences in their standpoints. ” It was clear that there were functions in which the pasyon may alter popular consciousness. However, because of the social levels they are in, the interpretations of the meanings of the book were altered. For the Culture (in terms of religion) To understand this factor, it is good to look back the practices and behaviour they both (Spaniards and Filipino) had before the colonization take place. There, we must observe, and study their similarities and differences. For the Spanish: Spain, as it has been observed, is a nation-state born out of religious struggle mainly between Catholicism and Islam, but also against Judaism (site) The culture of Spain is a European culture based on a variety of influences. These include the pre-Roman cultures, mainly the Celts and the Iberians cultures; but mainly in the period of Roman influences. In the areas of language and religion, the Ancient Romans left a lasting legacy. The subsequent course of Spanish history also added elements to the country's cultural development. [...] Spain became an almost entirely Roman Catholic country and Catholicism became their state religion in 1851. (Culture of Spain, Wikipedia. org) For the Filipinos, their God, Bathala was the supreme god of the pre-Spanish Filipinos. They attributed to Bathala, the creator of

the heavens, Earth, and man. There were lesser gods and goddesses, like a god of death, a god of agriculture, a goddess of harvest, sea gods, river gods, and the like. It was also believed that things found in nature were full of spirits more powerful than man was. Spirits of dead relatives were also revered. Sacrifices were offered to all of them. The ancient Filipinos believed in the immortality of the soul and in life after death. Disease or illness was attributed to the whims of the environmental spirits and the soul-spirits of the dead relatives. The pre-Spanish Filipinos also revered idols, called anitos in Tagalog and diwata in Visayan. These seem to be the counterparts of the present saints, to whom Filipinos offer prayers and food, much like their ancestors did. (Philippine History, asiarecipe. com) Their likenesses of their religion are much likely far from each other. As we observe, Spanish religion is purely an influence from Roman civilization and Filipino religion is a culture that blooms naturally as their civilization grows. The Spanish believes in one God hence, Filipinos were animists. That is why, when the colonization took over, majority of the Filipinos rejected their own religion. Moreover, considering some factors that give difficulties to penetrate the areas, colonizer almost failed their mission. However, in 1599, negotiation began between a number of chieftains, their freemen, and the Spaniards. The natives agreed to submit to the rule of a Castilian king and in return, the natives were indoctrinated into Christianity and were protected from their enemies, mostly Japanese, Chinese, and Muslim pirates. However, the conquest and conversion efforts were neither as easy nor as negotiable as this contract. The missionaries faced many obstacles and successes along the path to Christianization.[...] When, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi set up the

colonial system beginning 1565, he implemented an encomienda system where a native could acquire land if he underwent baptism and registered as a Catholic. Massive conversion occurred at this time. Many of which have, since then, adopted the same values of Catholics. It was clear to understand that they accepted the conversion only for protection and not as a pure religion. (Roman Catholic, Wikipedia. org) The pasyon is a Tagalog prayer book introduced by the missionaries and one of the tactics used for evangelism. Because of that, there is be a possibility that if natives refuse to follow the Spaniards, it could be an act of revolt of their new religion since they still have the faith of the former beliefs and since the conversion was only forced. However, these evidences are not strong enough to support the culture as the main factor that triggers different understanding on the reading. Moreover, as the colonization took place, and the catholic religion was introduced, the religious culture was slowly evolving and modified by several aspects, one of these is the Pasyon. " But like other regions of Southeast Asia which " domesticated" Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and Islamic influences, the Philippines, despite the fact that Catholicism was more often than not imposed on it by Spanish missionaries, creatively evolved its own brand of folk Christianity from which was drawn much of the language of anticolonialism in the late nineteenth century" (Ileto, 11-12)

Chapter IV: Summary, Conclusion and recommendation The Pabasa or Pasyon have become a part of the Filipinos religious life ever since the colonization begun. As what history tells, it was used to tame and convert the native Filipino from being pagans to Christian. But, unfortunately the function did not worked accordingly to the Spanish since it had caused the

Filipino people to revolt against them. It had become a tool that helped the Filipinos awaken their minds and thought about their present standing. We will try to determine the major factor that contribute to this event by gathering data, analyze and evaluate the data collected. Our findings lead us to this conclusion, according to the numbers of reliable data and by deep analyzing of the three supposed factors, the content of the pasyon and the social hierarchies are the main roots why the revolts of the mass have ascended. Though we consider the culture in terms of religious aspects as an undersized contributor, it is likely stands more on the fact that the culture is the one modified by the Pasyon since the beliefs of the Philippine culture eventually changed in time colonization. Bibliography Iletto, Reynaldo. Pasyon and Revolution; Popular Movements in the Philippines. Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979 Spickard, Paul. Race and Nation: ethnic systems in the modern world. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005 Language Definitions. 26 September 2011. Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia. 26 September 2011. < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>>. Medium Theory. 7 Sep 2010. University of Twente. 7 Sep 2010. < <http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/>> Pabasa (ritual). 11 July 2011. Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia. 11 July 2011. < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>>. Pasyon. 19 July 2011. Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia. 19 July 2011. < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>>. Roman Catholicism in the Philippines. 26 September 2011. Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia. 26September 2011. < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>>. Standpoint theory. 29 April 2011. Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia. 29 April 2011. < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>>. Vanzi, Sol Jose. " FIRST TAGALOG 'PASYON' A BESTSELLER. " PHILIPPINE



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