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Sociocultural Dimension of Translation: An Analysis of "Sa Pula, Sa Puti" by Francisco Rodrigo

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study attempts to identify the sociocultural issues and morals embedded in the play "Sa Pula, Sa Puti" by Francisco Rodrigo. It uses Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis to explore themes through the plot, main characters and readers' interpretation. Moralistic Theory and Sociological Theory guide the interpretation by emphasizing the moral issues along with the social context thereby enabling the study to examine the moral meanings and the social setting within which the play is situated. The research is expected to improve readers' understanding of literature as a reflection of society and also their understanding of the social moral values contained in literature which can enhance the reader's moral awareness.

Keywords: *Sa Pula, Sa Puti, sociocultural elements, moral values, gambling, family, faith, reflection of society*

INTRODUCTION

Language is not just a vehicle for communication but a carrier of a society's culture, views, and identity and influences how the society sees the world around itself. In literary writing, words shape people's experiences and beliefs and enable a work to expose aspects of the culture it comes from. Translation makes such culturally specific literature accessible to an audience outside of its own culture. Translation is one of the most important tools for disseminating knowledge, concepts and ideas between languages and cultures, as described by Zafra (2009). Translation connects societies and nations, fosters cultural exchange and makes cultural identity known to the rest of society for every ethnic group.

Rendering a work in another language is more than substituting words. The translator needs to communicate both the literal meanings of the text as well as the meanings that are suggested by the context. Both layers are important in the context of meaning transfer across languages to new readers. Attention to the culture, customs, and social structures of the target language is emphasized by Nuncio (2015). The source text provides some constraints in the interpretation, which restricts the translator from adding their personal ideas. A successful version retains the spirit, meaning and natural form of the original in the target language. This way, translation becomes a sort of social or cultural discourse that plays an important role in the perception of themes in Philippine literature.

"Sa Pula, Sa Puti" by Francisco Rodrigo was first published in 1952 and focused on the topic of cockfighting, together with beliefs and superstitions, marital relationship issues with vice and responsibility, poverty, hope and societal gender roles. Since these elements are embedded in Filipino culture, it is difficult to maintain the connotations of the language in the translation of the play. Cockfighting is one of the challenging examples because it has no direct western equivalent. Therefore, the study will explore the translation of beliefs, traditions, and social relationships as they are represented in the play, and how the way they are translated may influence the reader's understanding of the social themes in the play.

The study will seek to discover the sociocultural components that underlie "Sa Pula, Sa Puti" the difficulties of the preservation of the play's sociocultural context in translation, and the influence of translated versions on readers' understanding. It will also seek strategies for safeguarding the play's sociocultural significance. In addition to these objectives, the study will seek to contribute to the development of a more critical perspective on the social function of translation, particularly in terms of the transfer of sociocultural aspects from an original text to a different linguistic and cultural context for the readers.

The following questions will serve as guiding objectives:

1. Which sociocultural elements, such as gambling-related beliefs, religious faith, family relationships, and wider societal relationships, are embedded in the play Sa Pula, Sa Puti by Francisco Rodrigo?
2. What challenges does a translator face when preserving the play's social and cultural context?
3. How does translation influence readers' comprehension of the social and cultural themes within the translated text of Sa Pula, Sa Puti by Francisco Rodrigo?
4. Which translation strategies can effectively preserve the significance of the work's sociocultural dimension in translation?

Theoretical Framework- In Skopos theory, the purpose of translation is the guiding force behind the translator's decisions. For another linguistic and cultural context such as "Sa Pula, Sa Puti," decisions should be made based on the function of the translated work for the receiving culture. Therefore, "Sabong" or "Cockfight" should not be merely treated as a name of the fight. In Filipino culture, sabong is a social institution and has meanings that go beyond the actual event itself. The translator needs to convey the superstitions, religion, and family dynamics surrounding this to an audience who may not have the same background. Translation, in this way, brings the spirit of the original work into another society, maintaining its meaning and relevance while meeting the needs of the target society.

Domestication and foreignization are two different methods of negotiating cultural difference in translation, one of which adapts a text for the receiving culture, and the other which maintains the local character of the source culture. Domestication could be helpful to foreign readers for Sa Pula, Sa Puti as it allows them to make comparisons to other more familiar forms of entertainment. Such adaptation may improve the ease of understanding the text without detracting from its originality. Foreignization, on the other hand, may not require the translation of sabong itself, but merely the use of explanatory footnotes to make it comprehensible without losing its Filipino flavor. This theory involves the aim in balancing fidelity to the source text and readability for the readers in the target culture.

The Sociolinguistic Approach to the study of language takes into consideration the social and cultural contexts in which utterances occur. Sa Pula, Sa Puti dialogue communicates Filipino superstitions, beliefs, and gender roles. The characters' lines convey more than simply their speech; they convey their beliefs and social status. These social connotations might be overlooked in translation, which could cause a loss of meaning for readers in other languages. Consequently, they have to be preserved with consideration to the circumstances of each of the utterances. This theory demonstrates that language continues to be a part of society and helps to create a broader discourse on culture and identity.

The Sociocultural Theory of Lev Vygotsky describes human learning and development as socio-cultural phenomena. Knowledge is developed through social interaction, language and social environment. Other factors in the environment also impact behavior, beliefs and

understanding. Sa Pula, Sa Puti views the cockpit as a part of Filipino culture; the moral dimension is in the form of faith, and the core of the conflict is in the family relationship. The characters' experiences are therefore both individual and reflective of their social group. The play provides an introduction to Filipino beliefs and customs through individual lives and a shared cultural context.

The Moralist Approach assesses literature in terms of right and wrong, good and evil, and the kind of moral that a work might contain. Morality can be discussed in terms of characters and events in plays, novels, and stories. In Sa Pula, Sa Puti, Kulas symbolizes poor decision making that hurts family trust, while Celing symbolizes faith and morality. Their conflict shows that it is important to make sound decisions and illustrates the negative consequences that are associated with vices. A moralist reading, therefore, regards the play not only as mere entertainment. It can also be read as a source of lessons for the society and the readers to reflect on.

Realism emphasizes concrete social situations over imagination or fantasy; it uses actual everyday life and human experience. It aims to portray the common issues, traditions, and lifestyles of certain people in a way that appeals to readers or viewers. Sa Pula, Sa Puti examines Filipino experiences in the context of cockfighting, debt and poverty, which are aspects of everyday life for ordinary people. Its characters are not just "fictional" creations, separate from the everyday realities of ordinary people, but are human beings dealing with vice and poverty. In this sense, the play acquires a greater meaning in the context of familiar social situations. From a realist perspective, its meaning is not simply derived from an author's imagination, but also through its representation of the conditions and challenges found in society.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's Hermeneutics focuses on the ways people read a text, view a work of art, and experience something, as it involves the reader, the social context, and the shared cultural tradition. Interpretation is not just a static and definite act of assigning meaning; it is an evolving process of a dialogue between a work and its observer. In Sa Pula, Sa Puti, the terms red and white can be interpreted literally as the colors of a fighting cock, but they can also be interpreted figuratively as the struggle between faith and vice. The comprehension developed will vary depending on the social context and the experiences of the observer. Hermeneutics emphasizes, therefore, the dynamic nature of the play: its meaning can be reexperienced, restructured, and reworked as readers approach it across different eras.

Roland Barthes's Semiotic Theory is a set of principles that address how signs and symbols convey meaning. In art and literature, things, colors, actions and words can represent more complex ideas. In Sa Pula, Sa Puti, red is a sign of danger and vice, while white is a sign of faith and hope. The cockpit is also a cultural sign which is a social world based on Filipino life. These symbolic elements enable the play to be interpreted as more than just a literal description of the cockfighting environment. From a semotic point of view,

its signs work together to represent the Filipino lifestyle and convey meanings beyond the physical space, inviting the viewer to consider the cultural and moral content of the art.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to the play "Sa Pula, Sa Puti" by Francisco Rodrigo and examines the sociocultural dimensions embedded in it. It investigates gambling related beliefs, superstition, faith, and relationships with family and society as they occur through the characters' conflicts. In addition, the research examines the issues within the play's translation, focusing on the need to maintain the play's social and cultural meaning when it is represented in the target language for the target language readers.

The inquiry is limited to "Sa Pula and Sa Puti," not including other works by Francisco Rodrigo or other literary pieces by other authors. The play is regarded both as a reflection on Filipino culture and a linguistic challenge to the translators who need to be able to communicate the culturally grounded meanings of the play to foreign readers.

Methodology

This research is a qualitative research and employs both content analysis and textual analysis. Content analysis is an in-depth analysis of a written or spoken text in order to identify the themes, meanings, and patterns that emerge. It has been used successfully in diverse media, such as books, movies, songs and other communication media, as noted by Gustafson (1984). This approach is appropriate for the current inquiry as Sa Pula, Sa Puti has sociocultural elements in the games, superstitions, beliefs, and family relations. A content analysis of these themes can also be used to explore how these themes are presented in the translation and how this presentation might lead to a different understanding of the play. The systematic procedure aids in identifying reoccurring text patterns from isolated details and facilitates a careful reading of the cultural material in the play.

Textual analysis offers a detailed analysis of the source text and its translation, taking into account the exact text and meaning. It allows the selection of culturally relevant lines and investigation of the transfer of ideas, emotions, and views from the source language to the target language. A comparison of the two versions may uncover similarities and differences in the treatment of the subjects of gambling, superstition, faith, and family conflict. Thus, the method is not limited to substituting words by synonyms but also takes into account the social and cultural framework that gives the work its meaning. Both versions are held together in this comparison through an interpretation of the sociocultural themes.

The study is based on Sa Pula, Sa Puti written by Francisco Rodrigo and first published in Manila in 1952. The play depicts the role of cockfighting as an institution of Filipino society and the attitudes, superstitions, and marital tension concerning vice and

responsibility. The play remains relevant to the issues of vice, poverty and gender roles in the modern society and can be a valuable topic to consider in terms of its lessons and social relevance to Filipino families and community.

The data collection was carried out in several phases. The first step was for the researcher to read and analyze the play in its entirety and understand the context of the play. Passages representative of significant sociocultural features were then identified and chosen for analysis. The researcher also performed a thematic analysis to identify themes that were linked with gambling, faith, and family relations. Lastly, the collected data were analyzed and interpreted, leading to a meaningful analysis that supports the objectives of the study.

Result and Discussion

This section presents results from an analysis of Francisco Rodrigo's play "Sa Pula, Sa Puti." Selected passages are analyzed to expose sociocultural elements and moral values, providing lessons and reflecting Filipino society through literature.

4.1 Sociocultural Elements in Drama

Table I

Sociocultural Elements

Original line	English Translation	Content Analysis (Themes and Patterns)	Textual Analysis (Challenge and Meaning)	Impact on Readers	Related Theory
"Sa pula ako, siguradong panalo"	"I'll bet on red, I'm sure to win!"	Belief in gambling	There is no direct Western equivalent for "sabong" (cockfighting).	Serves as a warning against vices and poor decisions.	Skopos Theory – explains cockfighting as a social institution.
"Diyos na ang bahala"	"God will take care of it"	Superstition and faith	The word "bahala" carries a deeper connotation than the simple "take care."	Illustrates the religious dimension of society.	Sociolinguistic Approach – the relationship between language and society.
"Kung manalo tayo, may pera na tayo bukas"	"If we win, we'll have money tomorrow"	Family relationships	The cycle of poverty is specific to the Philippine context.	Emphasizes trust and responsibility.	Moralist Approach – right and wrong regarding the

					couple's decisions.
"Kulas, tigilan mo na ang sabong!"	"Kulas, stop gambling on cockfights!"	Gender roles	Gender roles in Filipino culture may not be immediately understood by foreign readers.	Depicts the role of women as family caretakers.	Sociocultural Theory – society and culture shape the roles of men and women.
"Kung matalo, wala na tayong pera"	"If we lose, we'll have no money left"	Poverty and hope	Poverty is a context specific to the Philippines.	Portrays the cycle of poverty in society.	Realism – the depiction of actual experiences.
"Ang sabungan ay parang simbahan ng mga lalaki"	"The cockpit is like a church for men"	Humor and local color	Local humor and metaphors may not be understood in other cultures.	Allows for varied interpretations depending on the context.	Hermeneutics – interpretation based on the reader's perspective.
"Sa puti ako, dahil sa Diyos"	"I'll bet on white, because of God"	Symbolism of red and white	Symbolic meanings associated with color may be lost in other cultures.	Shows the conflict between faith and vice.	Semiotics – the analysis of signs and symbols.

Table I presents the sociocultural elements of Sa Pula, Sa Puti, attributed to Francisco Balagtas. Several categories of beliefs are addressed in gambling, superstition and faith, family and societal relationships, gender roles, poverty and hope, humor and local color, and the symbolism of red and white.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Sa pula ako, siguradong panalo"	"I'll bet on red, I'm sure to win!"	Kulas

The chosen line depicting Kulas' wager to red is symbolic of how gambling can be a way of placing one's confidence in luck, as if it could bring what is desired. His wager is not only a personal choice; red is an astute illusion of assured success. This choice contributes to the play's main conflict; he is a man who has to rely on luck to alleviate his poverty. Such dependence will not solve his problems, but rather lead to his failure and further family strife. In Filipino society, cockfighting is a more than recreational act and can represent the false promise of guaranteed success. It is also meant to be a warning against vice and bad

judgment, showing the mentality of an individual who believes in luck rather than perseverance.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Diyos na ang bahala"	"God will take care of it"	Celing

The statement merges together two elements of Filipino culture: superstition and faith. In every decision that must be made, Celing turns to God as her last hope and last resort. Their answers indicate possibly overlapping ideas of belief and trust in fate but leave no doubt over the need to take concrete steps in everyday life instead of relying on destiny. "The word "bahala" is thus more than the English term "take care" because it conveys faith and superstition that influence decisions. It can mean trust in God, but it can also be an excuse for becoming passive when individuals use it to not take action and avoid effort.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Kung manalo tayo, may pera na tayo bukas"	"If we win, we'll have money tomorrow"	Kulas

The line shows how poverty can lead to desperation in family life. The husband, in hope of relieving the hardships of the family, resorts to cockfighting and puts the future of the family in the hands of gambling. This reliance on this poor solution is creating tensions between spouses, instead of meeting family needs. This situation reveals a misguided strategy, that of applying the inappropriate remedy to worsen the existing problems. Morally, the episode is a reminder that desperation is not a justification for vice, and that it can do more harm than good.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Kulas, tigilan mo na ang sabong!"	"Kulas, stop gambling on cockfights!"	Celing

The role of Celing is a reflection of the traditional roles of women in Filipino culture. She is the 'light of the home', and she attempts to curb her husband's vice and protect the family from destruction. Her behavior conforms with the norm of women to safeguard the family and act as guardians of morality. The line thus highlights a woman's perceived obligations to maintain the family bond and to set and maintain moral standards as part of her traditional role in society.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Kung matalo, wala na tayong pera"	"If we lose, we'll have no money left"	Celing

The line reflects the poor lives and aspirations of the Filipinos who rely on gambling for their survival. It is when an individual loses a bet that characters have to deal with even more hardships, a testament to how the need for relief can only bring in more deprivation.

There is a social cycle of poverty and hope. The line also underscores economic insecurity with vice, which cautions that relying on bets brings more problems than practical solutions.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Ang sabungan ay parang simbahan ng mga lalaki"	"The cockpit is like a church for men"	Kulas

The line captures the humor and local character surrounding cockfighting, and presents it as a mirror of society. In the play, the cockpit is the center of men's lives, adding to local color and humor. This is a criticism of a patriarchal society where vice has become ingrained. The scene can be read satirically, raising questions about the cultural normalization of vice, rather than its celebration.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Sa puti ako, dahil sa Diyos"	"I'll bet on white, because of God"	Celing

The red color in the play represents danger and the white color represents faith and hope. These colors make a clear distinction between right and wrong and present a clear moral choice between faith and vice, a moral meaning that helps the color imagery of the play.

4.2 Moral Values

Table 2

Moral Values

Original line	English Translation	Content Analysis (Themes and Patterns)	Textual Analysis (Challenge and Meaning)	Impact on Readers	Related Theory
"Ang sabong ay buhay ng tao"	"Cockfighting is the life of man!"	Reading and interpretation	Interpretation varies depending on the reader's context.	Presents different interpretations depending on the context.	Hermeneutics – Interpretation based on the reader's perspective.
"Kung manalo, gaganda ang buhay"	"If we win, life will be better"	Reliance on fate	The reliance on gambling is specific to Filipino culture.	Illustrates the cycle of gambling-fueled hope.	Skopos Theory – Explains the social context of the intended purpose.

"Ang sugal ay sisira sa pamilya"	"Gambling will destroy the family"	Moral values	Morality can vary depending on culture.	Imparts a lesson on making the right decisions.	Moralist Approach – Focuses on right and wrong.

Table 2 presents the moral values found in the play "Sa Pula, Sa Puti" by Francisco Balagtas, specifically on interpretation, reliance on fate, and moral values.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Ang sabong ay buhay ng tao"	"Cockfighting is the life of man!"	Kulas

The chosen line views cockfighting as a reflection of society, rather than an isolated pastime. For Kulas, it's not just a game; it's a social institution. This is also a form of satire that attacks the social acceptability of the vice as a routine practice in the community.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Kung manalo, gaganda ang buhay"	"If we win, life will be better"	Kulas

The line describes gambling as a false remedy to poverty. The man's character's reliance on chance, his mistaken belief that gambling brings wealth, and his criticism of the people's illusions of the irreplaceable power of money to solve all their problems.

Line in Filipino	Line in English	Who said the line
"Ang sugal ay sisira sa pamilya"	"Gambling will destroy the family"	Celing

The statement emphasizes ethical principles and the woman's right to be worried: gambling creates tensions on spouses, and can potentially destroy the family. The conflict highlights the importance of good judgment because gambling is not the solution to the problems and it can threaten family stability. Under the sociocultural point of view, this warning reinforces the family as the foundation of society and highlights the threats that gambling poses to the family.

Conclusion

The analysis of Sa Pula, Sa Puti by Francisco Rodrigo shows that gambling beliefs, superstition and faith, family dynamic, gender roles, poverty and local color are important sociocultural elements in the Filipino society and its conflict between vice and faith. Kulas

is the personification of luck and fortune, which he thinks is gained by gambling; Celing is the personification of morality, faith and the woman's role as the guardian of the family. In addition to its depiction of cock fighting, the play provides a valuable critique of the Filipino society. It carries a moral message focusing on the importance of trust in God, the dangers of vices, the need to keep the family together, and the need for good judgment. The analysis further emphasizes the need to abstain from the vice, cherish family ties and make right decisions over wrong ones to preserve social order and dignity. The themes and characters communicated in the work are interconnected and convey lessons concerning personal choice, family responsibility, and the moral values inherent in the society presented.

From these findings, future students and researchers are recommended to look into the sociocultural aspects of Philippine literature further. It is also recommended that more extensive training in play analysis be provided in order to further develop an understanding of the interaction between language, culture and morality. Students should also be encouraged to read texts such as Sa Pula, Sa Puti and reflect about the real-world implications of literature. Moreover, translators should employ Skopos Theory, the Sociolinguistic Approach, Semiotics and Domestication/Foreignization in maintaining the significance of the work in languages and cultural contexts. These strategies are designed to facilitate the understanding of the social and cultural themes of the play without loss of their meaning for the readers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

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