Vicarious Lives: The Controlling Mother in Philippine and Japanese Fiction

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Abstract

This paper focuses on works that highlight the 'vicarious' mother. The female protagonists in the texts under consideration manipulate their children to carry out their selfish plans to achieve their own goals within the patriarchal dominance. Enchi's *A Tale of False Fortunes* and *Masks* together with Hirabayashi's "A Woman to Call Mother," Montaire's *Ikadubang Sugo* and Espina-Moore's *Inahan ni Mila* are five of the most representative works that narrate this kind of maternal control. These works are extremely complex, multi-layered novels exploring exploitation of children by mothers.

Keywords: motherhood, controlling mother, vicarious, *la madredominante*

In this study I compare selected literary texts by women writers from the Philippines and Japan in order to examine the figure of the *controlling* mother from a female perspective. In my analysis of the narrative construction of the controlling mother, specifically the vicarious mother, within these works of fiction, I resort to psychoanalytic feminist theories and a comparative framework of analysis to lend a deeper

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understanding of the maternal subjectivity and the gendered literary production in the countries involved. In a broader sense, this paper is intended to explore the viability of establishing a theoretical and thematic framework for the critical analysis of Asian women's literary works in general.

In its general understanding, the term "vicarious" means living through someone else's experience. The vicarious mother implies such an understanding, by living her life through her child. This type of maternal subjectivity acquiesces to the same patriarchal norms of what is considered the good mother: acting in the interest of the child although in different ways.

Karen Horney's psychoanalytic theory neatly dovetails the type of maternal subjectivity I discuss in this paper, since her scenarios, abridged and streamlined, are echoed in the narratives studied here, in "A Woman to Call Mother" by Taiko Hirabayashi, *A Tale of False Fortunes*, and *Masks* by Enchi Fumiko. Julia Kristeva's developments of such theory, in turn, illumine *Inahanni Mila* by Espina-Moore, which I will also compare to the other narratives. These four narratives together are representative of the many stories with "vicarious" mothers including those in *Ikaduhang Sugo*, *Tungod Kanimo*, *Dagsa*, all by Montaire.

Horney in "Maternal Conflicts" emphasizes the way in which the mother's relation to her own parents is reflected in her attitude toward her children. Acquiring for whatever reasons an aversion for her own female world, the mother "emotionally turns away from her innate sexual role and develops masculine tendencies and fantasies" (179). Such women are seen as frigid and dissatisfied and the masculine tendencies are reflected in their desire to be domineering (180). These masculine tendencies may result in the mother wanting to have total control over her children. Horney notes that such mothers often develop an over-attachment to their child and as a result cripple the child's capacity to establish normal relations with others (180). Such behavior leads to what Maxine Margolis has explained as "weak, dependent children with 'crippled personalities' who could never make it in the tough competitive world."[1] The collapse of the unconscious and the social is shown in the relationship between the mother's unconscious and the child's problems.

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[1] Maxine Margolis, *Mothers and Such*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

The common image of the vicarious mother reflects a certain duality in her nature; she has a good side that is coupled with weaknesses and her weaknesses are often moderated by her goodness. She is often portrayed as the other extreme of the good, self-sacrificing mother. A certain self-centeredness lies at the heart of this maternal figure although when she acts on it, she professes to be doing so in her child's best interests. She can be the mother whose negative influence emasculates a son, suffocates a daughter, or sends the child on a guilt trip. Her character may reveal a great deficiency in one or a combination of these qualities — sound judgment, compassion, honesty, moral principle, or liberalism, to mention a few of the common ones. Normally, it is a sense of justice that she lacks. Although one may not approve of or like her, it would seem difficult to despise her. This representation is literalized in some of the narratives under study here.

From Japan

Hirabayashi Taiko's "A Woman to call Mother" centers on a former dancer, ShidaRyusuke, who has been admitted to a hospital but does not have any responsible party to take care of her. Although she has three daughters, none of them consents to do so. The doctor speculates that Mrs. Shida is on bad terms with her daughters on such matters, perhaps, as dividing her husband's estate. The attending nurse corrects his notion by informing him that she is the founder of a school of Japanese dance. When the police are unable to persuade any responsible party to come forward, the nurse in charge of admissions visits the housing complex where one of Shida's daughters is believed to reside. She speaks to the daughter about the necessary arrangements but the daughter is non-concomittal. Finally, after the hospital exhausts every possible means, the daughter comes to visit bringing cream puffs for the hospital staff in gratitude for their kindness and then leaves. She does not even speak to her mother. On the surface, the plot centers on the question of strained relations between mother and daughter. Since it is evident from the start, that such relations will never be repaired, the story resonates more profoundly as a series of revelations on the part of Mrs. Shida regarding the tensions of the relationship: "You're worse than strangers," her fellow patient remarks (217).

That her relations with her daughters are cold and tense is something that is unravelled several times in the text. Shida's status as a mother has a controlling component. As a rising star in the Miyama dance school, so many hopes were pinned on her to become the foremost dancer in that tradition. She was instructed by Miyama Ryujaku, who later became her lover and the father of her first child, Aki. However, Ryujaku had many lovers and did not marry her. In revenge, Shida threw sulfuric acid into Ryujaku's face which left a deep scar he had to cover with make-up for public performances. Shida, with a child to care for, put every bit of the dancer in her to use in order to put up her own school, later known as the Shida Association. She had another child, with Yamakawa, who helped establish her reputation and of her school and attracted students away from the Miyama style. Later, she bore her third child with a store-owner in Kiba and continued to maintain her independence with a string of secret love affairs.

Shida planned to make her oldest daughter, Aki, successor of the Shida tradition. However, Aki fell in love with a law student and when Shida opposed the match, her daughter thought of eloping and marrying the man. Shida realized that she could not block their love and resigned herself to finding merit in her future son-in-law.

> The process of discovering went too far. She was in contact with him about various matters, and in so doing she gradually began to feel weighed down by guilt. It was the same "pain of life" that she felt so many times before. (221)

Shida's omnipresence speaks of the power she holds, as all decisions must go through her. Her cold, controlling nature has followed her about, ever since the affair with Ryujaku fell apart. The circumstances are described

> At the slightest encouragement from the student, Shida had a sudden change of heart and gave herself to him. She could not resist this weakness of hers, no matter what her age.

> It was already too late by the time she realized the horror of what she had done. Her oldest daughter left home and, with much ceremony, married a man who worked at the head office of the Miyama school. (221)

Shida is characterized as wanton and controlling. More significant than the nature of Shida's character, however, is the fact that she is a teacher, a position that reinforces the increased importance of authority. She acts along the lines of Horney's "masculine" mothers. She has her own ideas of how to handle the situation; although the encouragement might have come from the student, the final decision rests with Shida. Her controlling character, in this way, is not merely a function of her characterization as founder of a dance school but also her position of power within her family.

Shida's problems stem not only from her refusal to accept that there are limits to the acceptable behavior of a mother but also from the fact that she cannot envision her daughter's life as separate from hers. In her mind, Aki is supposed to be who Shida wants her to become. This desire extends back to the point where she was abandoned by Ryujaku and so takes what is not hers. The sad fact occurs when she tries to repair the damage and tries to ensure that her second daughter, Fuyu, will have a good wedding, but this too ends in yet another disaster. Shida buys a pair of hard-to-find formal silk trousers as a gift for Fuyu's husband-to-be but Fuyu fails to see her mother's good intentions. She fully believes that Shida has "begun to do the same shameful thing to her that had been done to her sister" (221). Her third daughter, Haru, also runs away from home and turns to Aki for support.

Shida's isolation reflects her reluctance to relinquish control, yet her past can be seen not as a foreshadowing of her inability to let her daughters live their own lives but as a symptom of it. The story halfheartedly privileges Shida's personal attempts to succeed, over her attempts to rectify the isolation and misunderstanding with her daughters. Yet, at the same time, the reader is made to understand that because Shida is unaware that she lives vicariously and is wholly dependent upon her daughters, none of her desires will materialize. Similarly, Shida's reluctance to see her daughters as anything else but an extension of herself, rather than independent individuals, is the source of her failure.

In *Masks*, the vicarious mother, Togano Mieko, is successful in living out her desires. A widow in her fifties, Mieko is a skilled poet who is interested in classical Japanese literature. She marries Togano Masatsugu who, however, has kept a concubine, Aguri, in the house and intends that this woman go on living there even when he was already married. Prior to Mieko's marriage, Aguri already had two abortions. When Mieko arrives at the house, the jealous Aguri plots to cause her to miscarry by planting a nail on the stairs. Mieko trips and falls, which results in a miscarriage. Mieko, however, does not exact revenge on Aguri. Rather, she takes it out on Masatsugu, her husband, by bearing fraternal twins by a secret lover who dies shortly thereafter in the war. The children, Akio and Harume, are believed to be Masatsugu's children.

Akio grows up to be a fine young man who later marries a woman named Yasuko. Akio's twin, Harume, however, is born intellectually disabled and, so, is raised in a temple in the countryside. Akio is killed in a mountain-climbing incident and leaves Yasuko childless. Yasuko helps out Mieko in her research on spirit possession and the Japanese classics. A married professor of Heian literature, Ibuki Tsuneo, becomes interested in Yasuko. So does a psychologist named MikameToyoki, a dabbler in folklore spirit possession. The theme of spirit possession is, as the reader will find out, significant in the novel.

Masks is divided into three parts each bearing the title of a female mask used in the performance of Noh.[2] The first part, *Ryo no onna* — meaning "spirit or ghost woman" — alludes to the mask for the rancorous spirit of a woman whose love is unrequited so she turns her energies inward.[3] The second part, *Masugami*, means a "young woman in desire"[4] and the last part, *Fukai*, means "deep woman", one who hides her secret well in the heart.[5]

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[2] The Noh theater is a highly stylized form of Japanese traditional drama, performed exclusively by male actors who often wear masks, that flourished in the 14th and 15th centuries. It was the official drama of the Tokugawa shogunate and is still popular today. Through restrained movements and careful manipulation of the masks, actors mean to express complex emotions. While each play has named characters in a specific plot, the number of mask-types is quite limited, and one mask is used in many different plays.

[3] The mask is associated with both Mieko and Aguri.

[4] The mask is associated with Yasuko.

[5] This mask is associated with Mieko.

The novel opens with Ibuki unexpectedly meeting Mikame in a coffee shop in Kyoto where they recall a séance they had attended with Yasuko. The séance, held on the anniversary of Akio's (her husband's) death, had traumatized Yasuko since an Akio-like spirit presented itself through the medium. Scared, Yasuko holds Ibuki's hand and mysterious vibrations begin to communicate through them.

Both Ibuki and Mikame vie for Yasuko's hand. They also recognize the strong bond between Yasuko and Mieko. Ibuki believes that Yasuko is under Mieko's influence while Mikame thinks otherwise. They all visit the Yakushiji home which showcases several Noh masks. Mieko and Yasuko are mesmerized by the *Zo no onna*[6] and *Ryo no onna*[7] masks which are the best in the collection. Mieko stays behind and Yasuko together with Ibuki take the train home to Tokyo. During the ride, Yasuko confesses how the *Zo no onna* mask terrified her because it resembled her dead husband's face. It is also during this time that she reveals to Ibuki the secret of Harume, whom he remembers seeing during the firefly garden party given by Mieko. Yasuko also discloses how she wants to sever ties with the Togano family and Ibuki takes her to a love hotel in Atami.

Masks also references the *Tale of Genji*[8] by featuring one of its important female characters, Lady Rokujo.[9] Mikame discovers that Mieko had written a scholarly essay in her younger days on Lady Rokujo where she tried to defend her vilified character by connecting her to shamanism. Mieko's essay re-evaluates Lady Rokujo's character but at the same time shows that she sympathizes with her unfortunate love. When Mikame shares this with Ibuki, the latter recalls seeing the *Ryo no onna* mask and how Yasuko associated it with Mieko.

The second part of the novel revolves around Harume. She has suffered brain damage caused by Akio's feet pushing against her head while they were still in the womb. Harume is born mentally disabled.

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[6]Zo-Onna which means "beautiful woman" is a mask from Japanese Noh theatre considered suitable for female roles that call for elegant refinement.

[7]Meaning 'ghost woman.'

[8]This 11th century masterpiece is written by Murasaki Shikibu.

[9]She was a high-ranking aristocrat who was jealous of Genji's relations with other women that her repressed emotions eventually caused her spirit to leave her body to torment Genji's other women, two of whom her spirit eventually killed.

After Akio's death, Mieko brings Harume back home and personally cares for her. Mieko and Yasuko plot to trick Ibuki into having sex with Harume while he is drunk so that Mieko can have her revenge on the house of Togano, after Akio's death. The plan is successful and Harume gets pregnant.

Yasuko continues to raise the two men's hopes of winning her hand. Ibuki's wife, suspicious of all the activities, hires a private eye to spy on her husband's affair and the evidence she gathers makes her conclude that Yasuko is a witch who manipulates men like puppets. Sadako advises Mikame to withdraw his proposal with Yasuko. While listening to Sadako the latter learns about Harume and sympathizes with Mieko who would be grandmother to a retard's baby suggesting an abortion. Mieko refuses to abort Harume's baby and this gets Yasuko excited to see one of Akio's blood. She says to Mieko

> You and I are accomplices, aren't we, in a dreadful crime – a crime that only women would commit. Having a part to play in this scheme of yours, Mother, means more to me than the love of any man. (126)

As she listens to Yasuko, Mieko feels that "a woman's love is quick to turn into a passion for revenge – an obsession that becomes an endless river of blood, flowing on from generation to generation" (127). Mieko's revenge is completed when Harume gives birth to a baby boy who is the spitting image of Akio and is the legitimate Togano heir who is totally unrelated to the Togano bloodline. Harume dies shortly after delivery and in the final scene of the novel Mieko sits alone gazing at the *Fukai* mask[10] which compares the heart of a woman beyond sensuality to a bottomless well (138-139).

> The pale yellowish cast of the mournful thin-cheeked mask in her hands was reflected on her face, the two countenances appearing faintly in the lingering daylight like twin blossoms on a single branch. The mask

[10]This refers to "grieving woman."

> seemed to know all the intensity of her grief at the loss of Akio and Harume – as well as the bitter woman's vengeance that she had planned so long, hiding it deep within her. (141)

The title of the novel reveals how its plot is anything but linear: rather it is one mask after another that is being used and then removed. The triangle between Yasuko, Ibuki and Mikame effectively masks the novel's real plot which is Mieko's vengeance on her philandering husband and the patriarchal structure. The focus on spirit possession is one layer and whether or not Yasuko is manipulator or manipulated is another layer in this palimpsest. The references to the Noh plays, to Lady Rokujo and Buddhist art have the same effect. But the heart of this complex layering is Mieko.

The bloodline is key to establishing kinship and maintaining inclusion from generation to generation. However the patrilineage is interrupted in the novel, violated, and replaced by Mieko's matrilineage. Harume's child actually becomes the fake heir to the Togano family while at the same time defrauding Ibuki of his own patrilineage.

Mieko evidently lives vicariously through Harume, also to a certain degree through her daughter-in-law, Yasuko. To see to the success of her plans, she performs a Lady Rokujo with the only difference of wreaking vengeance on men instead of women. Yasuko and Mieko, in creating a child, are mutually connected to the multiplicity of women's spirits in the past stories that are cited in the text.

Masks is an excellent text to showcase the vicarious mother and how her sense of control seeks to reclaim the matrilineal origins of bloodlines from their conventional subordination to the patriarchal thought. It is the reconstruction of maternal subjectivity and power that is important in this novel.

A close examination of *A Tale of False Fortunes*, also by Enchi, reveals a striking similarity to *Masks*. It is composed of a prologue and six chapters. In the prologue, the author tells the reader that she is the daughter of Ueda Kasutoshi and asserts that she is quoting from memory an ancient manuscript she read as a young girl about the rise of Fujiwara Michinaga in the court.

Chapter one presents the main characters beginning with the struggle for power in the regency after Fujiwara no Kaneie dies. Kaneie's elder son, Michitaka, the palace minister, installs his oldest daughter, Teishi, as the junior consort. Michinaga, his brother, is an ambitious man. He eyes the position of regent but keeps his ambitions hidden while he manipulates events to bring about the downfall of Empress Teishi who is loved dearly by Emperor Ichijo. Michinaga begins his plans by inviting Ayame, a medium, to become a lady-in-waiting to his wife Rishi, at his household. Ayame and Kureha are daughters of the famous Toyome, the greatest medium at that time, who served the god of Kasuga, the tutelary diety of the Fujiwara clan. The sisters have inherited their shamanistic powers from their mother. At this time, Michinaga has Kureha sent to an hermitage for nuns until he can call for her for a later purpose. While at court, Michinaga ensures he gets to know all the goings-on in the palace, from his old lover, Shosho, who serves Empress Teishi. He learns how Teishi is able to hold the affections of the Emperor. Shosho is unaware of Michinaga's real intentions: he wants to know everything about the empress in order to raise his own elder daughter, Shoshi, as an imperial consort. Three years later, Kureha, assuming the name Koben, comes to serve as personal attendant to Empress Teishi. She becomes devoted to the Empress and without her knowledge, is used by Michinaga to obtain detailed information of Teishi's daily routines.

In chapter two, the narrator details the main character of this study, Senshi, also known as the Higanshisanjo Empress, who is the sister of Michitaka and Michinaga by the same mother. It is through her influence that her father, Kaneie, became head of the Fujiwara clan before he passed away. This empress is very fond of her brother, Michinaga, whom she believes to be the more superior among her brothers. She also wishes that he become an advisor to her son, Emperor Ichijo. However, she is clever enough not to show her partiality toward Michinaga. Empress Senshi is jealous of her son's attention to the Empress Teishi and her growing popularity in court together with her brothers, Korechika and Takaie, who are also her niece and nephews. When Michitaka takes ill, he goes to visit Emperor Ichijo secretly to have his eldest son, Korechika, appointed acting regent. The emperor does as requested and this breeds displeasure in Empress Senshi.

> Through her feminine intuition, the empress dowager sensed that someone was pulling strings behind the scenes for the emperor to have made an immediate decision on such an important governmental affair without consulting her, his mother. (41)

She believes this "someone" to be Teishi who "bent the emperor's heart to herself" and who "was tearing the emperor away from his mother" (41). Empress Senshi tries to manipulate events with a gentle tone, as if there was never anything but the Emperor's interest in her heart. She puts the matter to him "tenderly" such that he cannot help but feel guilty for not having asked for her opinion in advance.

> When the empress dowager sensed his contrition, she thought it too cruel to scold him openly . . . she delivered a detailed lecture on governing, stressing the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between public and private, and reminding the emperor that those who are young and inexperienced must revere the opinions of their elders. (43)

What is interesting about Empress Senshi and Empress Teishi is that each embodies different qualities of an empress. Senshi has overbearing qualities in her desire to get Michinaga to the regency. Her driven nature is reflected in her warning, "When that happens, I shall very much resent it if you fail to discuss the matter with me" (43). Hence she "would not be pleased to see political power passed on to Michitaka's talented posterity" (43). So when Michitaka passes away, she hints to Emperor Ichijo that appointing Korechika will only bring disorder to the court. She also dissembles by promising that should Empress Teishi bear a male heir, the regency will be handed over to Korechika. Behind this magnanimity

> it occurred to her [secretly] that the possibility of the empress giving birth to a

> prince was all the more reason to hold Korechika's advancement in check now; otherwise, she would face irreversible setbacks. (49)

As stated previously, Empress Senshi schemes to realize her plans. Even when Ichijo does manage to get a word in edgewise, he is overpowered by her words conveying the calm reassurance of her many years of experience. In the end, he yields to her persuasiveness. Although Ichiko states he is making his own way in the court, his mother has the last word. If Ichijo is unaware of his mother's manipulations, the brothers of Empress Teishi are not, and so they too advise her not to fail to "manipulate" the emperor's feelings, stressing the fact that her child, especially if it is a prince, will be in danger. Here, Teishi shows that she is of a different mold: "I don't believe that sort of strength of character is in me. You are all unfortunate to have such a spineless sister" (51).

The fact that Empress Senshi could so effortlessly bully Ichijo speaks directly of his immaturity, in the sense that he has not learned the skills useful to defend his position. And it is not made any better by the fact that Empress Senshi's position is furthered by her ally, Michinaga. And when they are successful in having the proclamation for him to become regent

> he crawled up to her on his knees and, lacking the composure to utter a single word, buried his head in the hem of her robe and wept. She, too, seeing how her usually intrepid younger brother was deeply moved, pressed her face into her sleeve.(57)

Chapter three records Michinaga's manipulation of events in order to accelerate the collapse of Teishi's power and that of her brothers. To shore up his position as the head of the Fujiwara clan, he conspires with Ayame to stage a spirit possession showing Empress Teishi as a malignant spirit to destroy Emperor Ichijo's love for her. When word reaches Teishi through Takaie about the event, she realizes her uncle's intentions. He reveals his suspicion as

> Most likely, the lady-in-waiting who was the medium picked up your mannerisms and way of speaking from someone who is familiar with your daily deportment. You were just being imitated. (70)

Throughout the story and into chapter four, the flowering of Ichijo's and Teishi's love continues through the misfortune of scandal and forced separation. Teishi's brothers are each exiled to Harima and Tajima. Empress Teishi cuts off more than a foot of her hair and sends proof of her grief and her renunciation of the world to Emperor Ichijo. In the meantime, a love affair develops between Teishi's favorite lady-in-waiting, Kureha, and Yukikuni, the secretary of the Imperial Police.

A fire breaks out at the Nijo mansion where Empress Teishi was staying. Yukikuni saves the empress and falls in love with her even if such love would remain forever unrequited. After he brings the empress to the mansion of her maternal uncle, Yukikuni receives news that Kureha is alive and safe; however, when they meet again, Kureha turns bitter because of the change she sees in Yukikuni. Empress Teishi gives birth to a princess, much to the relief of Michinaga and Empress Senshi. She resolves to return to the palace after six months.

Chapter five portrays Michinaga's repeated machinations to dislodge the Empress Teishi's hold on Ichijo. He decides to use the empress' renunciation of the world as a barrier to her return to the palace. Empress Senshi, realizing what Michinaga's intentions are, also recommends that Empress Teishi remain where she is.

In the meeting between mother and son, the emperor expresses his wish to abdicate the throne. This elicits Empress Senshi's fear of losing her son to death and she summons Michinaga to have the Empress Teishi reinstated. Michinaga introduces his eldest daughter, Shoshi, to court. Upon their reunion, Empress Teishi soon is with child again and gives birth to the first imperial prince, Atsuyasu. Her brothers are pardoned from exile and are returned to court. Takaie is suspicious of Kureha when he comes to visit Teishi and discusses with his sister the sinister light he sees in the former's eyes. He tells her that she is the lover of the head of the Imperial Police, Yukikuni. Kureha later disappears and Takaie advises his sister not to check on her whereabouts.

At the close of the novel, Michinaga plots to have Kureha impersonate a vengeful spirit to torment the Fujitsubo empress, Shoshi. Evidently, this spirit is to be Empress Teishi wishing for her son to be established as crown prince.

> But now that she had become the mother of the First Prince, she showed herself to be like any mother: endowed with a strong, single-minded devotion that would lead her into tiger or wolf dens. (134)

Kureha has created the illusion that Empress Teishi had wished this. Michinaga's plans fail because Emperor Ichijo realizes the purity of Teishi's heart and Kureha is handed over to the imperial police for the crime of falsely imitating the ghost of a living person of royal blood and of deceiving the emperor and regent. Teishi dies and Shoshi becomes the mother of two emperors, Go-Ichijo and Go-Suzaku.

The ending is an interesting one. The reader will have seen that Empress Senshi preserves the concept of a mother who lives vicariously through her son Ichijo, and connives to make her brother Michinaga the most powerful man in court. By pairing these two master manipulators, Enchi suggests that the court is lured into a direction different from where it was originally headed.

Enchi's use of the vicarious mother evokes the contradiction between how the child in this story perceives his adulthood and what shape that adulthood will really take. By shifting away the emphasis on Ichijo and onto Empress Senshi, and by placing him on the opposite side of the mother's immorality, Enchi is able to use it as a trope to question the direction of nation in an extremely subtle but effective manner.

The Philippines

In *Ikaduhang Sugo*, Montaire takes on the sense of control that Shida and Akiko display, perhaps even to a greater degree, in the character of Dionisia. The novel casts Dionisia as the vicarious mother who causes her daughter's descent into immorality. Although there are only a couple of instances when we read about Dionisia in the novel, she is featured as the supreme controller of Rosemarie's life. Through the

narration of Iya Juliana, a neighbor who later "adopts" Rosemarie when her parents are killed by the Japanese, we follow Rosemarie's story:

> When Rosemarie was still five, she was already estranged from her parents because they had no means to support their children. The father was a drunk and a gambler and her mother could do nothing to raise five children. At that age, Rosemarie was forced to serve a wealthy family and learned to work while she was still young. (38)

Baristo, the father, is partly to blame for his daughter's servitude but it is the mother who is tasked with raising the children. We note how the expectation is structured: "The father is a drunk and a gambler and *there was nothing her mother could do to raise five kids*". Glossing over Baristo's vices appears to liberate him from familial responsibility. The *onus* is on Dionisia's shoulders. Society holds the mother accountable for the child. This is especially true in Dionisia's case since she is the one who directs Rosemarie's life. One may fault her for exploiting her child.

Siddiqi and Patrinos, in their study on child labor, offer an explanation for this behavior. They claim evidence suggesting that parents have children based on a cost-benefit perspective, to be of economic value and, as a result, become a desirable asset for struggling parents. Children can significantly contribute to family income so child labor is an intrinsic component of survival. Along this reasoning, Dionisia's command for Rosemarie to leave her first job is acceptable, because over a period of ten years she has been earning a pittance of a salary of five pesos a month, which is insufficient to feed the family. Rosemarie is then made to work for a Chinese-owned business:

> [in] a small restaurant where she received ten pesos a month. And this is where the hideous life of the young girl began especially when her employer noticed she had a certain attractiveness. At the Chinese restaurant, Rosemarie matured into a woman. To make a long story short, her parents were very happy

> because Rosemarie suddenly came into a fortune. Neighbors were surprised . . . According to her, it was her mother who personally found customers for her even when she was against it. She said that in the beginning, she cried hard because she was ashamed, and she would have wanted to work in a different job so long as it was honorable but her mother and father were against the idea because the pay was better this way. (39)

Any sympathy we may feel for Dionisia is removed when we see her as a hard-hearted, callous, and selfish mother. It is easy to condemn her as a bad mother and be repulsed by her control for what mother would sell her daughter into prostitution? It may be argued, however, that Dionisia is functioning vicariously from her oppressed position as destitute and illiterate. Children "are directed into or volunteered for this kind of work because it is more higher paying than any other".[11] It is implied, here, that saddled with five children and without any means to support them, the mother has decided to sacrifice one child for the sake of the others. It is easy to go into the humanist argument vilifying Dionisia because certainly, there are other means of support without resort to prostituting a child but when economic options for a woman are absent or when her options are among poorly remunerated occupations, it is easy to opt for prostitution.

On the other hand, to hold Dionisia's maternal behavior as totally selfish discounts how Rosemarie's siblings fit into the picture. Dionisia cannot be easily dismissed as an uncaring mother. Held up against the standard of the good mother, her maternal performance is found unacceptable even if she succeeds in feeding her family. On the other hand, it may be argued that it is as controlling mother that she actually succeeds in keeping five children alive. In the end, however, as controlling mother she fails because of the immoral means by which she resolves the issue of survival. Dionisia's failure to achieve the ideal is not volitional:

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[11] Elizabeth Uy Eviota, *The Political Economy of Gender: Women and the Sexual Division of Labour in the Philippines* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1992: 135.

rather, it is unavoidable in the structure of performativity. Rosemarie's labor provides them financial support but without Dionisia's direction they might all perish. This is not to exonerate Dionisia's vicarious behavior; rather, it is to problematize how society blames the mother when she fails to conform to its mores or moral standards.

Similarly, in *Dagsa*, support from her daughter is the concern of Iya Emang. When Lucila meets an accident that indisposes her from work, Iya Emang becomes distraught. She is blind and relies on Lucila for support. She is anxious about her daughter's condition but more so for herself:

> "Heavens, who hurt my daughter? The person is heartless! Who will support me now? My poor child!"IyaEmang sobbed. (36)

Broaching the question of support, discloses that Iya Emang's concern is not without self-interest. It fits in perfectly with the notion of bearing children "for profit" especially in this case where the mother is handicapped. In the context of Philippine familial structure, where children are expected to care for their parents, Iya Emang's concern does not seem unthinkable or selfish.

Ikaduhang Sugo explores several women's issues that usually involve the conflict in male and female discourses. While the novel touches on sociological questions significant to different sectors in society, it fails to seriously examine the sociocultural forces that specifically oppress the mother. For example, that Dionisia's reprehensible behavior may be attributed to the apathy of her lazy drunkard of a husband is not considered in the narrative, nor is her presumed illiteracy and poverty. The struggle between Donya Concha and Luis, in the earlier chapter, expresses maternal as well as female realities. The representations of whether or not a mother/woman is ideal, actually depict women's devaluation. If we note the situations of Donya Alicia, Donya Concha, and Rosemarie, they are all women rehabilitated to society through the generosity of men.

Economic and social systems not only dictate the kind of productive activities[12] women may engage in but also how these influence

[12] Productive activities are divided into the formal and informal sectors. The formal sector constitutes work in agriculture, manufacturing handicraft and garments,

their role within the family and the community. These systems shape family relationships. In *The Dialectic of Sex*, Shulamith Firestone critiques the family and the institution of motherhood as economic inventions of a capitalist system (45). Capitalists see women as workers, not as human beings being-efficient instruments that determine economic productivity.

Returning to the social forces shaping Dionisia's and Rosemarie's relationship, it is necessary to draw the connections between women (mothers and daughters), informal labor, and sexuality. As one writer has elaborated:

> In underdeveloped economies . . . [the] surplus worker becomes the unskilled domestic servant, the outworker, . . . [who] provides the formal sector with low cost goods and services which enable it to reproduce its own labour power at reduced cost. Thus the informal sector captures the surplus labour of women . . . [which] lays bare a development process that is exacerbating inequalities between classes and between the sexes." (Eviota 132-133)

In the past, the dominance of men in the home by virtue of economic power, made women dependent on men's wages but women's participation in the labor force, in turn, has affected such power. On the other hand, there are many women unable to find work that can support their needs and, often, their family's basic necessities. Waitresses, dancers, and nurses, for instance, have been known to engage in the sex trade after regular working hours. There are also those for whom prostitution is the sole source of income:

> [W]idespread prostitution is better explained in terms of women's options for adequately

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electronic assembly, clerical and administrative work. In the informal sector, embraces domestic service including as househelp overseas, subsistence commerce and prostitution.

> paid productive work. When economic options for women are not present, or even if options exist but are extremely low paying, and sexual behavior is directed towards the satisfaction of male sexual needs then women will continue to be drafted into or go into prostitution. Prostitutes of today are for the most part not volunteers to the work; rather they are more often seen as being drafted into prostitution . . . *forced into prostitution as 'innocents betrayed'* or through white slavery. (italics supplied 134-35)

Prostitutes generally have come from the economically depressed sectors and are exploited primarily by the tourist industry and military bases. The rise in their numbers suggests the lack of viable options for productive work.

Teresa, in Moore's *Ang Inahan ni Mila*, similarly reflects Dionisia's and Emang's ruthless projection of their own desires onto their children. While Teresa appears to love and care for Mila, her daughter, she also appears to want to control her daughter's life. This becomes obvious when Teresa learns of Mila's intention to marry Roberto (whom I will refer to as Bobby in the rest of the discussion). The first mention of Teresa in the novel, takes place during a conversation between Mila, her Aunt Hazel, and Bobby. Mila is on holiday in the USA. She meets Bobby, a fellow Filipino who is also on vacation. Their friendship develops as they spend more hours in each other's company on tours and outings. In one scene, Hazel calls her niece's attention — Mila is discernibly preoccupied and Hazel assumes this is owing to missing someone far away. Mila responds that it is her father she misses. The preference for the father is already set:

> "And Mommy?" The aunt continued. "Yes, Mommy too," Mila replied. Miss Graham, who was observing the young girl, smiled. "Aha, don't lie. I've caught you," the aunt teased. "You love your father more than your mother." (9)

In the narration of Johnny Eleazar, Bobby's father, the reader learns more about Teresa. Johnny used to date Teresa.

> "Teresa did many things then that showed the rottenness, the hunger, the greed in her character. I knew this not only from innuendos of others but also from what I observed. She would be jealous of other people's enjoyment and happiness. I noticed this. Like a lovely flower that proved poisonous when touched, Teresa was like that. The good thing was I wasn't blind or deaf. Perhaps the psychiatrist will say that Teresa's attitude originates from her situation because she grew up deprived; deprived not only of wealth but love. Just think about it; a pretty child growing in poverty, watching other *mestizas* like herself, who would not even look at her. Just think of a child growing up, watching classmates or playmates with toys, having the right clothes, the right car, and she had none of these things, could only have a taste [of these] when given attention or doled out by friends. Just think of a child growing up, being slapped suddenly and reminded whenever she made a small mistake how exactly she was like her mother. This I learned from others and from Teresa herself. It's a pity. (9)

The Eleazars discuss the implications of their son's marriage to Mila. Johnny discloses to Lourdes, his wife, how the break-up of his previous relationship with Teresa was caused by her manipulative and scheming character and not her poor background. Bobby's grandmother shares Johnny's concern regarding the matter.

In the narrative, the nagging issue that the daughter will be like the mother is immediately undermined by the unanimous decision of the

Eleazars to indemnify Mila. The daughter is considered a separate entity. It does not matter that Teresa has to be an influential figure in Mila's life considering how strong-willed and determined the latter is. Mila is portrayed as an autonomous figure.

Teresa attempts to exercise control over the marriage plans by demanding that the wedding be carried out in the American custom where the bride's family shoulders all the expense. She decides on this matter without securing her husband's consent. When Ken and Teresa finally talk about the matter, she gives the rationale for her decision as:

> "It's good to show the Eleazar clan we won't be outdone spending. Now's our chance. The wedding must be grand." Putting on his pyjamas, Ken paused. He sat by the edge of the bed. "What and how much is the cost of what you call grand, Teresa?"
>
> "I've listed everything down: the church, the invitations, the reception, the gowns of the maid of honor and the bride's maids and others."
>
> "So?"
>
> "We'll spend fifty thousand."
>
> Ken did not say a word. He continued putting on his pyjamas and said slowly, "I'll take you to the doctor as soon as possible tomorrow because you might have gone crazy."
>
> The woman flared up. "What? You won't agree to a big wedding for your beloved daughter?"
>
> "I love Mila. That's no lie. But fifty thousand for a wedding? What are you thinking; that I pick money from trees?"
>
> "Ken, Ken, this is necessary." Teresa's voice was heated.

> "Why is it necessary? Will the marriage be stronger with the cost of fifty thousand to a two-peso license? Didn't you know I have got many priest friends who would be only too happy to wed my child if I gave a donation to the church for the needy and the destitute?"
>
> "This time, Ken, we can show we have the means so people cannot say Mila is lucky to have hit the jackpot." (32 — 33)

Teresa's decision is a personal effort to finally suppress the issues of undesirability and class discrimination emerging from her own experience with the Eleazars. It is to level the playing field, so to speak, both for herself and for her daughter. She does not see her daughter as separate from her. She argues that as a good mother, she is protecting her child from the terrible experiences she herself went through.

Ken's argument is practical and logical but reflects a sentiment that is evidently not rooted in Filipino culture. It suggests more of the American take-it-or-leave-it individualistic attitude that is numb to Filipino social pressure.

The issue of maternal control has invited different opinions. In *Of Woman Born*, Adrienne Rich states that social structures are to blame for maternal control:

> [T]he power relations between mother and child are often simply a reflection of power relations in [a] patriarchal society: 'You will do this because I know what is good for you' is difficult to distinguish from 'You will do this because I can *make* you.' Powerless women have always used mothering as a channel — narrow but deep — for their own human will to power, their need to return upon the world what it has visited on them. (38)

Rich's analysis posits that patriarchal systems further maternal control because such systems render the mother helpless. Hence, she manipulates the child in an attempt to claim power of her own where she, herself, is rendered powerless. *It is a vicarious life.* In requiring a grand wedding for her daughter, Teresa is acting on past experience. It seems unfair of her to demand that Mila obey her considering that the times and circumstances have changed. Still, Teresa endeavors to perform her role as good mother. She plans a wedding that will be beyond reproach. Of course, it is quite excessive but necessary for her, who does not wish her daughter humiliated. To say that Teresa is just out to "redeem" herself, is to oversimplify matters. As Simone de Beauvoir has argued in *The Second Sex*: the social structure would view such a mother as looking for ways to compensate for frustrations, through her child and therefore perceived to threaten that child

> When it is realized how difficult woman's present situation makes her full self-realization, how many desires, rebellious feelings, just claims she nurses in secret, one is frightened at the thought that defenseless infants are abandoned to her care. Just as when she coddled and tortured her dolls by turns, her behavior is symbolic; but symbols become grim reality for her child. A mother who whips her child is not beating the child alone; in a sense she is not beating it at all: she is taking her vengeance on a man, on the world, or on herself. (513)

Usually these ways to compensate occur when a mother recognizes that her child is capable of fending for herself and no longer needs her. Mila confronts Teresa about the wedding plans when the latter displaces her feelings of helplessness onto her:

> Mila was aghast, speechless. Then she slowly asked, "Mommy, Mommy, why? But why? What is the reason for this? This isn't for me.

> What is your real motive for wanting to do this?" (34)

Like Donya Concha in *Ikaduhang Sugo*, Teresa experiences the maternal dilemma and refuses to simplify it. Teresa is pressured by family and society, yet at the same time, she sincerely believes she loves and cares for Mila. She is only acting to save Mila from the inevitable humiliation she herself has suffered in the past.

At the church, before the wedding vows are exchanged, Teresa reflects on how fortunate Mila is to have achieved so easily what she, herself, did not. She considers Mila fortunate and that her daughter should be grateful for her efforts to get out of poverty. For Teresa, poverty is a crime because no one respects the destitute and no one falls in love with the impoverished. She credits her life of ease to ambition and reflects that, otherwise, she would still be a salesgirl in Cebu and probably married to a 'scumbag':

> All this was possible because of my ambition — of my efforts; my own efforts. Even this husband beside me now who is a successful businessman . . . . Our situation is like this because, aside from my efforts, I also pushed this husband of mine to do his best. I drove away friends who would not be any good. What is the use of friends who cannot add to wealth? Isn't there truth to the saying that friends are treasures as well? For me, a friend is a treasure if s/he brings wealth. So now, with Mila's marriage to Johnny's son, it evens out everything. Society's crime against me is paid up. But only on that score. (42-43)

Teresa constructs a perfect life for Mila. She also resorts to being in command in order to maintain this perfection. However, the more she demands of Mila, the more Mila resents her. In a conversation, Teresa inquires if her daughter has really taken to heart the notion of a good wife with its corresponding duties. Mila is confused with the question and

makes a case for wanting to do her duties out of the sheer pleasure of it. Teresa disputes this by advocating that money is the most important factor in relationships:

> "So many theories in the world remain only theory, Mila. Listen to me. Only one thing ensures good living and that is money. You have been married to Bobby almost a year now. What have you saved for yourself?"
>
> "Am I not his wife, Mommy? He has not deprived me of money for household expense nor for myself. I also have a salary from school Bobby does not ask about. And not too long ago, we both took out insurance for ourselves, especially since we will be having a baby soon. What more can I ask for?"
>
> "Mila, you need to start keeping money Bobby does not know about. Take it from your private expense and what he allocates for your expense. Don't ever spend your earnings from teaching. Don't believe in the saying sweet is the gift to your husband when if it is from your own earnings."
>
> "But why Mommy? What good is that going to do?"
>
> "Just some precautionary measure for whatever may happen: if you're abandoned, or if you should leave, if the business goes bankrupt, if you want to buy something and Bobby will not agree and so many other reasons." (52 — 53)

Teresa's advice runs contrary to what is expected of the traditional wife and good mother. The myth of the mother as the person who holds the purse strings, and therefore rules the home, needs to be examined.

Whatever money is earned is supposed to constitute the family fund. A wife can keep and save money but this is also under the assumption that the husband knows about it. Savings are undertaken towards a common family goal. The wife and mother, as treasurer, is expected to consult with the husband before money can leave her hands. Whatever deviations there may be from this ground rule, such as that Teresa advocates, are perceived as selfish, motivated by greed, and contrary to family growth. What is also alluded to in these assumptions is that a husband and father is licensed to keep a portion of what he earns for himself for whatever purpose he deems it necessary. Delia Aguilar has written that while the wife is believed to have the authority in the home, in the Filipino family particularly, the husband has the right to override his wife's decisions at all levels (24-25). The partiality of such an act is never questioned in the same light as acts of the same nature when practiced by the wife or mother. Further, it glosses over the fact that mothers often have to make both ends meet with whatever money there is. Considering such a situation, Teresa's advice is not at all outlandish, as it is rooted in most maternal realities. To enact the good mother, a mother needs to secure some form of savings for contingencies and emergencies.

There are further theories on the myth of maternal power *vis-à-vis* the father. Mila's closeness/identification with her father rather than her mother registers what Rich observes as the splitting-off of daughters from their mothers as "a desire to become purged once and for all of our mother's bondage, to become individual and free" (194). Helene Wenzel explains this daughter's turning to the father as the outcome of being overstuffed by the mother's nurturing instead of what has been termed as lack: "The father who leaves her empty inside manages to give her space" (58). Mila can now be seen as being socialized into the authorized cultural role and taking on the qualities of a patriarchal feminine. Jane Flax posits that the mother's presence is an obstacle in this rational domain because she is experienced by both daughter and father as the embodiment of "that messy, contradictory, sexual, and sometimes terrifying unconscious world they both wish to escape" (33). Father and daughter conspire in prohibition of the mother from a position of power. Let us see how this applies to the daughters in our narratives.

Ang Inahan ni Mila is structured as an effort to articulate and control the fear of the mother. This is Mila's experience of love/hate in relation to Teresa, the binary where Mila loves her mother and yet fears

being controlled by her. Ken and Bobby take the role of the Law/Father: the site where the mother is vanquished. Ken does not want to give up any of his privilege or power to Teresa and will allow Mila entrance into his inner circle as long as she agrees to keep her mother in her place — not to lay claims on Teresa's behalf. According to this theory, refusal of the maternal and of the mother creates an unbridgeable divide between the private and public parts of life and permits men to maintain the basic division of the world according to gender. Bobby's role is to help Mila overcome her fear of Teresa who, unlike Donya Concha, is never reined in:

> "We will not talk of the past but I have to tell you that what holds our marriage isn't your beauty but Mila; only our daughter. I did not want her to be hurt especially if she were left under your care; care that is probably similar to those of animals in the jungle. So, push the world. Let us see if you can compel my love." (58)

Ken tries to protect Mila from the danger of the mother and ensures patriarchal order in ousting Teresa from her threatening position. He tells Mila:

> "Listen to me, dear. You said I had to declare everything. So, for a long time, I have wanted to leave but I could not do that with you there. I thought it would affect your growth, life, and studies if I entrusted you to your mother. And know that I learned her true nature only when we got married. But now that you are married, well settled, it is time for me to go. I have long dreamed of my freedom." (60)

The novel denies any acceptance of the relationship between mother and daughter in all its sentiments and difficulties for mothers as well as daughters. One purpose of these novels is to elucidate particular fears that dominated at certain historical points. In identification with

the protagonists and other characters like those in *Ikaduhang Sugo*,and *Ang Inahan ni Mila*, the novels can be considered harmless venues for expressing maternal anxieties that can be worked through. The elaboration of maternal fear is resolved by restraining the *controlling mother*.

Teresa's representation is difficult to categorize as "possessive" like Donya Concha's. She is more contradictory and we may hate and pity her at the same time especially as we read about her quashed hopes even as she ensures that her daughter will not be maligned as she was. It is challenging to resolve how we are to read her — such maternal issue cannot be adequately decided:

> "But I – I have experienced extreme difficulty. I have experienced censure because I was poor. And early in my life, I promised myself I would avoid destitution with all my strength and skill because I could not stand other people's scorn and snobbery." (79)

It is easy for Mila to respond that love cuts across poverty, glossing over the social forces that one reacts to as a consequence of living within society. Without referring to her mother's cultural and historical experience, she seeks to write her maternal subjectivity for her and relegates the mother to the discursive object that suppresses and silences the mother's voice. To speak for someone else is to silence them (Gallo 8). Again, as Rich writes, "other landscapes would be revealed" if the mother were allowed to tell her own story (221). Teresa seeks Mila's well-being and a good future. If she appears controlling, it is due to the circumstances in which she enacts the good mother. On the surface, Teresa's action is counter-patriarchal. At a deeper level, her actions make sense for they address unarticulated or silenced maternal realities that do not necessarily resolve themselves with strict adherence to the norm.

Another feature of the controlling mother that necessitates discussion is the issue of permissiveness or amorality, which is not surprising if we are to think in terms of her benefiting directly from either controlling her child's life or when allowing the child too much freedom, such that s/he becomes a moral hazard to society. In *Tungod Kanimo*, for instance, the antagonist's mother is indulgent – the plot juxtaposes this

mother's love for her child against her maternity and raises the question of whether or not Iya Candida, despite her noble intentions, has exposed her daughter to greater moral degradation than was good for her. Without considering the individual situation of most controlling mother characters, the permissiveness they exhibit is perceived as that of not being protective enough to safeguard their children from the hardship they might encounter and likewise inflict on other people.

Tungod Kanimo explores the indulgent in Iya Candida, who in a narrative about a lovers' engagement between Veronica and Rey, is perceived to encourage and play the role of accomplice to her daughter Loreta, in the latter's plot to pressure Rey into marrying her because she carries his child. Montaire figures permissiveness in Iya Candida who symbolizes the controlling mother as opposed to the good mother, in the characters of Iya Tomasa and Donya Victoria.

Veronica del Carmen walks with her sister by the seashore when she meets Reynaldo Mejia, a lawyer, who is trying to recuperate from an illness. They fall in love and not too long after, Rey proposes marriage. Veronica asks him to wait. She wishes to finish her teaching course as well as serve her parents to show gratitude for their sacrifices. Rey complies but after some time becomes impatient. Without the knowledge of his fiancée, Rey dates Veronica's co-teacher, Loreta. However, Veronica later suspects a relationship between the two and raises the matter to Rey. He denies the relationship and reassures Veronica that there is nothing between them. Veronica and Rey finally decide on their wedding. Preparations are made for the big day. During the ceremony, Loreta, together with Iya Candida, appears at the ceremony. Loreta voices her objection to the marriage and the wedding is stopped. Veronica faints. When she regains consciousness, she informs Rey that she no longer wishes to marry him.

In a confrontation with Veronica's mother, Iya Candida is portrayed as allowing Loreta to date Rey and even assist in her daughter's plans to entrap him:

> "Ma'am, I am sorry if I personally respond to your request," continued Iya Tomasa, Veronica's mother, scowling with great anger. "What does my daughter and what do we have to do with your problem? Why do you

> come to us for help? Weren't you clever enough in ensnaring Reynaldo, and now you don't know how to solve the problem that is visited you?" (53)

Iya Candida similarly fights to ensure that her daughter's health as well as her reputation will be restored:

> "Veronica, please forgive me and my daughter especially! Lo . . . Loreta is very sick and she has difficulty giving birth! I beg you, please help us to make Attorney Reynaldo Mejia understand, that he has to save my daughter who has become like this because of him!" as if Loreta's mother had not even the smallest hint of shame, and then . . . (52 — 53)

Iya Candida begs on behalf of Loreta who is suffering from a difficult condition. That Loreta has difficulty giving birth may be true. This piece of information may be twisted, however, to further pressure Rey into marrying Loreta. There is a superstitious belief that a person suffers from inflicting harm on another and therefore will die as a result of this bad act unless the aggrieved and innocent party forgives the transgressor. In Loreta's example, it would be through Veronica's forgiveness, which does not necessarily have to extend to Rey marrying Loreta. To not only be forgiven but likewise to pressure Rey into marrying Loreta seems to be the aim of Iya Candida's request, however.

Whether or not Iya Candida will succeed are questions that push us forward to discover the answer. Beginning in *medias res*, the novel introduces Veronica as a nun of the monastery of Santa Barbara, begging for alms outside Quiapo church. As the narrative develops, we suspect that Rey has married Loreta. Surprisingly, the reason is not due to Iya Candida's persistent pleas but at Veronica's insistence that he restore Loreta's honor and give their future child a name. To leave him no option to refuse, she joins the convent and dedicates the rest of her life to God.

Iya Candida is portrayed as coming from the lower class and as of dubious character:

> [T]hey heard news that mother and daughter were newcomers to that part of barangay Santa Cruz. They did not have many friends in the barangay, and indeed mother and daughter were known to behave mysteriously and it is also said, that the owner of the house they rented, did not want to take them in but because Loreta was supposedly a teacher, the house owner was forced to agree at the principal's request. (53)

These qualities mark her as different from the other mothers, Donya Victoria and Iya Tomasa, who are from the upper and middle classes respectively, and who are perceived to be morally upright since they behave in conformity with societal norms. When Rey separates from Loreta, it is most likely to the reader's satisfaction that Loreta and Iya Candida fade almost completely from the scene. The figure of the controlling mother, which has always been the "other" is completely silenced.

Iya Candida's permissiveness might be read as strategic, as it often is in crossing class borders, from either lower or middle, to the upper class, in order to transcend conditions of poverty or to elevate one's status. Having Rey as a son-in-law would be an excellent move towards financial and social mobility/capacity. This is suggested in the confrontation when Iya Candida pressures Rey to give more attention to Loreta:

> "Ma'am, don't hit me again, because you don't have any right over me . . . Shameless! I will leave this house right now that I have built for you because it is what you have been after, money!" (75)

Iya Candida's actions toward the goal of marrying Loreta to Rey would appear logical with the aforementioned premise. In the narrative, mother and daughter are dependent on his support. But then, this sort of logic is structured towards demonizing the mother who deviates from patriarchal norms. Moreover, that Loreta becomes pregnant prior to marriage, implies Iya Candida's moral shortcoming. She has failed to

guard her daughter's (as well as her own) honor and reputation diligently. This kind of logic though, liberates the man from being accountable for his actions and instead re-routes his responsibility onto the mother.

To give Iya Candida an unconventional reading would require us to view her as simply allowing her child to enjoy autonomy and independence. She is a good mother because she trusts her daughter to know and to do what is right. She expects no less from Rey who, in the narrative, is a lawyer and is supposed to be more knowledgeable about the law — to know what is right and what is wrong. Rey is portrayed to be a very good lawyer and to defend the poor. His actions cannot be seen as transgressing the law because of this premise.

In considering Iya Candida and other Philippine representations of the vicarious mother, we discover that the ideological resolution of the controlling mother takes into consideration only the standpoint from which mothers are perceived — either by the child or the husband as father of the child. Only one possibility is being explored in the perpetuation of the controlling mother, the permissive mother, the over-protective mother, who are, all, overthrown by father/lover saviors. It does not make room for wanting or needing the mother.

Conclusion: Remote Control

The vicarious mother not only problematizes the demonization of the mother but also how maternal discourse sustains itself through the mothers. Vicariousness and the issue of "control" is necessary to illuminate this. The good mother, inasmuch as she is the ideal and does not really exist, sustains the desire of society. The ideal plays a vital role insofar as an essential feature of the maternal experience is that mothers *desire* to be the 'good mother' but will always fall short of her. It is this failure that causes and sustains the economy of the good mother.

The good mother, embodying maternal sacrifice, and its extreme embodied in the *controlling* mother, are usually narrated from a male perspective. This feature, as discussed, reveals the good mother to be the ideal of motherhood. The good mother accepts her position and does not pose a threat to the patriarchal order. The controlling mother, on the other hand, although under the same paradigm, is often related from a child's perspective since the narrative is directed towards a censure of the controlling mother. What is excessive and transgressive is denounced

unproblematically as the narrative focuses on the mother's adverse influence on the child. However, the contradictions and resistance in the controlling mother's behavior, as previously elaborated, may be read as ruptures in the narratives especially since most of these are written from a mother's perspective. These moments are articulations of resentment against a mother's status within, outside, and even, against the family.

In this paper, I have illustrated how all the works tend to subscribe to the act of splitting the mother into opposing poles and the way in which the vicarious side of the mother is linked not to her idealization but to her manipulative nature. In this way, these works reveal this splitting of the mother figure in a more psychoanalytic light.

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