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Directing Destinies: Narratives of Mothers and Manipulation in Cebuano and Japanese Literature

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For a long time, mother figures in fiction received little attention except in relation to their children. Writers and critics often focused on the child's development, the mother simply being instrumental in the child's evolving sense of self. But, as more women began to write, they also began to explore, more fully, women's experiences and reflected on a rich range of the maternal experience.

In order to understand the complex, ambivalent, often contradictory portrayal of mothers in Philippine and Japanese women's texts over the last century, it is necessary to acknowledge that although motherhood is a universal institution, the study of the maternal has not yet been made, that is, apart from its child-rearing capacities, particularly as represented in the medical disciplines and the social sciences. Understanding the mother's positioning or the social role she plays from within the maternal discourse has still not been adequately studied. This tension is evident in how controlling mothers, specifically the all-knowing mother, are portrayed in the literature considered in this study. The fiction produced by Philippine and Japanese women writers takes on the home as its main setting with a range of upper, middle, and lower class families as actors. Mothers are prominent in the narratives and the roles assigned to them over the years do not vary much — from the good mother to the scheming, manipulative, mother. Taken at face value, these portraits may reveal nothing more than accepted forms of characterization. What is problematic, however, about these portraits is that these mothers are often depicted as uncomplicated. Attempts to explain ambivalent maternal behavior have generally been hampered by the inexact nature of our understanding of the Philippine and Japanese social structures during the last couple of centuries. Of course, in real life, there are mothers whose lives not only fit the either/or models but still as a sweeping indictment of an entire group of women, it is distorted.

While representations of mothers have often reflected the male perspective, there are women writers who have wrestled with the romanticized male view and have taken responsibility for defining themselves differently. In the Philippines, these writers have had to counteract stereotypes of the mother — usually the "venerated Madonna," a modern-day incarnation of the virgin archetype, "innocent, humble and meek," who is the image of love, kindness, passivity, and nurturing (Peczon-Fernandez 3).[1]

If the mother has been idealized she has also been held hostage by societal expectations of her as the ideal. In a culture that idealizes motherhood but holds real mothers in contempt, women know only too well, how near impossible it is to enact motherhood. While male authors have characterized women either by idolizing or sometimes vilifying them, in the real world women as mothers, career women, artists, academics, and scholars have, both accepted and rejected motherhood.

In Japan, motherhood was traditionally influenced by the Confucian paragon of womanhood, the ryosai kenbo (good wife, wise mother), which added complexity to its image. The *ie seido* (family roles or household system) established an hierarchy subordinating women by legally defining the role and status of women within the household.[2] The woman's role was established as motherhood and management of the domestic sphere, with the goal of strengthening the moral foundations of male society by helping the nation in raising obedient children for a strong army (Nishikawa 31).[3]

This paper focuses on the controlling maternal paradigm, one representation of which is, the all-knowing mother, which was popular in the twentieth century and continues to be popular in contemporary literature. In the selected texts, the all-knowing mother is conceived as the mother who believes she knows what is best for her child. She is depicted as the mother who places her own views and beliefs above everything else. She is intensely protective of her child and ensures that it will be unharmed.

A close study of maternal representations and their pre-Symbolic tendencies in the selected texts helps us comprehend how cultural gender ideology highlights unconscious desires and the inconsistencies in female and male fantasies.

The women writers I will discuss and compare are Tomioka Taeko (1935-), Hilda Montaire (1922-2004) and Austregelina Espina-Moore (1919-2000), who feature the all-knowing mother. In each narrative the maternal figure attempts, sometimes successfully, to control her child's life; each narrate a dramatic plot with a clear depiction that is intended to subvert the "good" mother paradigm. While the controlling mother in Montaire's and Espina-Moore's narrative is driven by providing what she believes is best for her child, Taeko's story of maternal control exposes the self-indulgent nature of the mother in a shockingly sanguine way. The appeal for amae indulgence is inappropriate, as it presumes on and takes advantage of the child's generosity and benevolence. Despite the fact that these women's works feature the same all-knowing maternal theme, they cannot be simply read as female fantasy of control, but, rather, as an undisguised representation of the oppressiveness found within patriarchal institutions. The writers highlight the ways patriarchal institutions affect maternal subjectivity and each narrates the possible result of the effects of patriarchy.

The characterization of the all-knowing mother in the Philippines can be traced back to the pre-war novel. Rosalia Aguinaldo's mothers, for example, show the all-knowing mother in the manipulative

interference of Kapitang Ikang of *Mutyang Itinapon*[4] (Thrown-away Treasure) (1922) to Virginia's confused choice between keeping and abandoning her child in *Ang Pag-ibig ng Isang Ina*[5] (The Love of a Mother) (1935) to the controlling and stereotypical racial prejudice of Mrs. Nolan in Felicidad Ocampo's *The Brown Maiden*[6] (1932). Such characterizations were evident in the Tagalog serialized novel as well as women's novels in English written as early as 1922. They faithfully served as antagonistic influences in the narratives throughout the end of the 20th century. *Apdo sa Kagul-anan*[7] (The Bitterness of Sorrow) (1929) by Angel Enemecio, reveals:

> *Ang inahan ni Rosas Pandan nakaamgo sa tinguha ni Antonio sa iyang anak. Iyang gikalipay ug giuyonan sa dakong kahinangop. Kon mahimo pa, buut na lang niyang ipakasal si Rosas Pandan aron aduna nay makaatiman pag-ayo sa ilang patigayon ug kayutaan. Siya nagkatigulang na ug maoy iyang gipangandoy nga una mapawong ang kahayag sa iyang mga mata, makita niya nga si Rosas Pandan nahiluna sa kaminyoon.*
>
> [. . .]
>
> *Pila may sugilon, tungud sa gahum sa inahan ug mga pagpanglimbasog ni Antonio ug tungud kay si Rosas Pandan matinahuron uyamot ug matinamdanon nga anak, miuyon sa kabubut-on sa iyang inahan, nakighigugmaay kang Antonio.*[8]
>
> Rosas Pandan's mother understood Antonio's intentions towards her daughter. She found happiness and agreed with this with so much anticipation. If it were possible, she would have married Rosas off so someone who could manage their business and properties well. She was growing old and it was her dream that before the light was extinguished from her eyes, she would see Rosas settled down in marriage.
>
> [. . .]
>
> To make a long story short, because of the mother's power and because of Antonio's efforts and because Rosas Pandan was a respectful and obedient daughter, she agreed to the wishes of her mother and decided to love Antonio. (translation is mine)

Although it would seem most natural for a mother to want to see her child settle down, the implication in this narrative is that the mother has a vested interest in the objective: "so someone could manage their business and properties well." Despite her power to persuade or influence her daughter, Rosas's mother was basically a sympathetic character, one we are expected to like as well as criticize. They lived relatively comfortable lives and money was of less consequence to the mother than having someone to manage the business. When Antonio signified his marriage intentions, Rosas's mother perceived her daughter's avoidance. In subsequent acts, she illustrates just how controlling a mother can be. Ignorant of Rosas's lie concealing an ongoing relationship with Luis, she persuades her daughter to marry Antonio. Whether or not it is good for Rosas holds no significance for her. She imposes her will.

Rosas's devotion towards her mother urges her obedience although it is not an unproblematic task for her. Rosas appears without desire to be freed of the burden her mother represents.

The controlling mother is often the source of immense psychological conflict whether with her children, her husband, herself, or society. She controls her child with demands and, more often than not, structures such demands in a manner that will elicit guilt when these are not followed. The elaborations of her psychological struggles are interesting and quite credible because they acknowledge the unique demands and the great, often terrible, implications of the mother's role.

I compare the all-knowing mothers in Montaire's *Ang Karaang Krusipiho*[9] (The Old Crucifix) and *Ikaduhang Sugo*[10] (The Second Commandment) together with Espina-*Moore's Bunga*[11] (Fruit) and Taeko's "Family in Hell"[12] at length in this study. I begin with the following short excerpt from Felicidad Ocampo's *The Brown Maiden* however to show that children can be tied to conflicting relations with their partner, mother or within themselves. In this story, Harvey marries Carmen Gonzales. They return to the United States after Harvey's stint in the Philippines. Carmen meets Mrs. Nolan, Harvey's mother, who is racially prejudiced. It is not enough for Mrs. Nolan to exhibit hostility towards Carmen, through actions. She openly states

> "Harvey could have married here instead of going to that place to look for a wife. We have plenty of girls here but the boy must have been out of his mind. He could have married any one of a number of our attractive girls." (38)

When Carmen raises the matter to Harvey, he refuses to deal with it, underscoring how the mother's claim appears to be stronger: "You must not feel hurt,' he said. "Mother is always like that; after all she is my mother and your mother, too" (38). Like Rosas, in Apdo sa Kagul-anan, mentioned above, separation from his mother is not easy for Harvey much as it is necessary for complete independence. He defends her controlling actions as natural and normal. Here lies the complexity of the figure of the all-knowing mother.

In *Ang Karaang Krusipiho*, Montaire narrates the difficult life of Don Gerardo. Orphaned at the age of five, he is raised by Iyo Anselmo's parents, a servant-couple to whom his care is entrusted. Gerardo grows up to be a fine young man. He meets and falls in love with Maria Teresa whose parents, particularly her mother, do not favor him. When Maria Teresa's mother notices the development of their relationship, she is sent away to Spain, never to return to the Philippines.

In this situation the all-knowing mother interferes, believing it to be detrimental for Maria Teresa to associate with Gerardo. She changes Maria Teresa's name to Josefa (but I will continue to refer to her as Maria Teresa for consistency) and marries her off to Luis, the son-in-law of her choice. Contrary to how the good mother would have given in to her daughter's wishes, the all-knowing mother instead decides for her daughter. It is not because she does not wish for Maria Teresa's happiness but a certain practical

consideration enters her estimation of the future relationship. Instead of self-sacrifice and fulfilling the norm of the good mother by allowing her child autonomy, her judgment emerges from such traditions as parents deciding on their children's lifetime partners as well as implications of a familial alliance of their choice. Of course, this practice harks back to as far back as the pre-colonial Philippines and was only deemed questionable with the ascendancy of the rights of the child to autonomy. Also, the notion of romantic love is a modern development turned monolithic; it seems impossible to view the *raison d'etre* of relationships between men and women, otherwise.

Several years later, Maria Teresa would repeat her mother's controlling actions with her own daughter, Leonor Gracia, but for a different reason. Maria Teresa was afraid that her past with Gerardo would be revealed. When Leonor befriends Gerardo, Maria Teresa attempts to break the relationship by encouraging Leonor to believe he is cruel and mad.

> K*on mahimo pa lamang niya pagtug-an ngadto sa iyang anak apan kini dili ug dili niya mahimo. Wala siya mosupak nga ang iyang anak dalaga nakighigala kang Gerardo, apan mao lamay iyang gikahadlokan nga hiilhan unya kini sa kadugayan nga diay si Leonor Gracia anak niya. Dili ba gikaligutgotan man kini sa iyang inahan? Oo, kinahanglan nga mangita siyag paagi karon nga mahilayo si Leonor Gracia niining usa ka tigulang nga natunog sa lungsod nga mangtas kuno. Kinahanglan nga iyang sultihan ang iyang anak nga batan-on sa kamangtas ni Gerardo, aron kini molikay ug dili na motagad sa maong binuhat.* (45)
>
> If only she could reveal this to her daughter but she could never do that. She was not against her young daughter befriending Gerardo but her only fear was that in the long run Leonor Gracia would be recognized as her daughter. Didn't her own mother abhor him? Yes, she needed to find a way now so Leonor Gracia would be far from the old man reputed in town to be a fierce beast. She needed to tell her adolescent daughter of Gerardo's cruelty, so that she should avoid and not pay any attention to this creature.

When Maria Teresa was exiled to Spain, Gerardo was heartbroken and miserable. He avoided women altogether and concentrated on his education. At the exclusive boys' school he attended, he was alienated from his peers. Brutal physical attacks and abusive insults resulted in his illness. At the hospital, Cynthia, a nurse, ministers to his needs. Before a relationship could develop from their amiable friendship and warm rapport, Cynthia is unexpectedly found dead beside him. A doctor, secretly enamored with Cynthia for a long time, accuses him of murder. Unable to defend himself, Gerardo spends four years in prison. Due to good behavior, he is given an early release.

Gerardo is unable to enjoy his newfound freedom. Shortly after his release, the doctor is found dead. Gerardo's defense attorney fails to secure a court ruling in his favor and Gerardo is remanded back to prison for another ten years where he languishes and questions the nature of God and his

existence. His loss of faith leads to insufferable behavior when he gets out of prison. He whips servants for no obvious reason and rapes his servant, Venancia. He carries out a daily public ritual of stomping on a golden cross every time the mass begins. The townspeople complain about this blasphemous spectacle. Iyo Anselmo begs the parish priest's indulgence explaining the circumstances surrounding his employer's reprehensible behavior. Padre Jorge's Christian duty requires him to be tolerant and persistently try to convert Gerardo.

It is to these circumstances that Don Luis, Maria Teresa, and their two young daughters, arrive in town. They, too, witness Gerardo's sacrilege. Maria Teresa recognizes such depravity as something she has caused:

> *Wala ikalimod sa sulod sa kasingkasing ni Donya Josefa nga mas dako kaayo ang iyang kaikag nga ikasulti kining tigulanga aron siya makapangayo sa iyang pasaylo, kay nasayod siyang daan nga siya gayod ang nakaingon sa kaalaot niini.* (45)
>
> It could not be denied that in Donya Josefa's heart, talking with this old man so that she could ask for forgiveness, was of greater concern, because she already knew that she was the cause of his wretchedness.

Gerardo's friendship with Leonor seems to change his life for the better. Donya Josefa's vested interest in seeing the friendship broken sends her scheming. Manipulating others to achieve her ends is not surprising with the all-knowing mother. She will deceive, just as Maria Teresa deceives her daughter. She rationalizes her actions as in keeping with her own mother's tradition even if they are self-willed and transparently vested interests.:

> *Kinahanglan nga mosunod siya karon sa pamatasan sa iyang inahan nga mapintas sa mga tawo nga wala nila hiuyoni. Kinahanglan gayod.* (46)
>
> It was now necessary to follow the tradition of her mother who was critical with people she did not like. It was necessary.

Leonor rebels against the idea of being sent back to Spain. She explains to her mother that she enjoys Gerardo's company and wishes to help him return to the faith. Leonor is able to express opposition to her mother's wishes whereas in Maria Teresa's case, she passively accepted the decision her mother made together with the effacement of her original identity.

The juxtaposition of Leonor Gracia's articulation alongside Maria Teresa's own inability to oppose her all-knowing mother puts into dialogue two generations of daughters and how each responds to her mother's power. It shows how the daughter of latter generation tries to negotiate her position with her mother's wishes rather than simply accede to these. The novel also illuminates inner maternal conflict and how it affects a mother's decisions. Instead of the conventional one-dimensional portrayal of the mother, Maria Teresa's situation is disclosed to the reader as being complicated by her feelings for

Gerardo. She loves Gerardo and, so, wants to keep him and her daughter apart. But she also loves her daughter. How does a woman decide? We are given access to the complexity of the situation a mother is in. Between herself and her daughter, the controlling mother's desires have priority. Maria Teresa rationalizes her decisions as made for her daughter, when they are really for her.

The subtext of the mother-daughter rivalry in the narrative also necessitates an examination of how mothers and daughters are often set against each other as rivals. It is usually depicted as a bid for the affection of a husband/father more than for a lover's. In this case, however, it is the latter. In the patriarchal discourse, Maria Teresa's jealous behavior is unbecoming of a good mother. Her actions become aberrant primarily because she has desires of her own that override her daughter's and because she acts on these desires illicitly and under the justification of the daughter's better future. Her secret yearning for Gerardo is repressed while Luis, her husband, is still alive. When he passes away, she begins entertaining the idea of renewing her relations with Gerardo. She is shown not even to mourn her husband's death

> *Human masayod si Donya Josefa, nga bisan sa pag-ilis sa iyang ngalan, nga pagbuot sa iya kanhing inahan, wa gihapon siyay mahimo, nakahunahuna siya sa pagpadala kang Leonor Gracia balik sa Espanya. Dili mahimo nga tugotan niya ang iyang anak sa paghigugma sa usa ka tawo nga hangtod niining mga gutloa iya pang gimahal kay wala man gayod mawala diha kaniya ang gugma niining tawo nga iyang nakita nga dako na gayod kaayog kausaban ang iyang kinabuhi.* (49)
>
> After Donya Josefa realized that even with her name change, which was her late mother's wish, there was nothing that could be done. She thought of sending Leonor Gracia back to Spain. She could not allow her daughter to love a man whom until this very moment she continued to love, not really having lost her feelings for him, whose life she now saw as having changed so much.

When their father dies, Leonor Gracia and Maria Bonita return from Spain to pay their final respects. Despite her mother's watchfulness, Leonor manages to escape and visit Gerardo while she is in town. She solicits help from Padre Jorge to take her to see Gerardo. The friends are happily reunited. They catch up on each other's news. In the meantime, Maria Teresa is restless. She later resolves her dilemma to disclose the truth of the situation to Leonor. Assisting Maria Teresa in reconciling with Gerardo, Leonor reveals the secret to Gerardo and takes him to visit her mother who has been sick for some time. Maria Teresa begs his forgiveness. She is reunited with Gerardo. Later, they get married and the girls fly back to Spain.

One may sympathize with Maria Teresa since her daughter's compliance seals off questions arising from her bid to win back Gerardo. Unfinished business is resolved. The star-crossed lovers finally end

up together. However, a few considerations remain unexplored such as the issue of grief. Maria Teresa hardly mourns for Luis and seems to be in a hurry to attend to the matter of Gerardo. It also seems questionable how she is able to recruit Leonor to do as she wishes in the light of the developments following her father's recent death. Leonor's actions contradict her earlier portrayal as someone who can think for herself. It appears unnatural for her not to question her mother's illicit feelings. But then, with the controlling mother, how the daughter feels does not matter — only hers does.

In *Ikaduhang Sugo*, Montaire takes up the same all-knowing behavior that Maria Teresa exhibits, perhaps even to a worse degree, in Donya Concha. A more vigorous personality, Donya Concha exhibits a strong will, one that will not bend easily to either husband or son. Her entire life has been no less than an endeavor towards perfection. She strives to be a good mother but her concept of 'good' is nowhere near the idea of self-sacrifice of the good mother:

"*Uy, Luis, tug-an sa tinuod, diin ka gikan?*" *sikmat sa inahang nasuko kaayo.* "*Mama, pasayloa ako*! . . .

Mama, ang pagduaw sa usa ka higala?" *ni Luis pa nga gikuyawan . .*

"*Dili mangil-ad ang pagbisitag dalaga kon kanang dalagaha anak sa usa ka banayng dungganan. Walay sapayan, anak, kon siya kabos basta buotan lamang ug ikabilin mo siya sa usa ka puluy-anan malinis. Ang dungog, anak, maoy bahandi sa tawo nga dili mapalit sa tinumping bulawan, busa, anak, hala sultihi ako kon kinsang babayhana ang mitubag sa pangandoy namong Papa mo nga makabaton na ug mga apo karong pipila ka adlaw.*" (22-23)

"Uy, Luis, tell the truth, where have you been?" snarled the angry mother.

"Mama, I'm sorry! . . . Mama, visiting a friend?" said Luis who was scared.

"It isn't bad to visit a lady if she comes from a respectable family. It does not matter, son, if she is poor so long as she is good and you can leave her home without reproach. Honor, son, is a man's possession that can't be purchased with heaps of jewels; so, child, tell me who this woman is who has answered your father's and my dream to have grandchildren one of these days soon."

As expected, Donya Concha reminds her son of the importance of honor. It is therefore reasonable for her to be angry upon learning that Luis has been consorting with a dancer:

"*Mangasawa kang kinsa? Sa usa ka baylerina! Walay ulaw! Nasayod ako sa imong nabuangan ug babagan ko gayod ikaw, mahitabo ang bisan unsa pa niining atong panimalay! Nakasabot ka ba?*" *singka sa iyang inahan nga nasuko kaayo.* (30)

"Marry who? A dancer! You're shameless! I know who you are crazy about and I will stop you, come what may, in this house! Do you understand?" shouted his mother who was furious.

To make matters worse, Rosemarie is a prostituted woman.

Donya Concha's rejection of Rosemarie, her disgust for the woman's commonness and low morality cannot be faulted. Faithful to what she taught her son, it was necessary to avoid dubious characters for not only would he be dishonored by association, he was also likely to be influenced by their amorality. Donya Concha forgot, however, that her son was privileged within the patriarchal order. What she believed to be morally right, the principles of which she imposed on her son, collided head-on with the double standard that existed in society. Instead of censure, men were applauded for the many women they could have; it hardly mattered what the woman's class or profession was. Whether or not he was married was insignificant since the double standard found not only legal support but also women's complicity in tolerating this pervasive practice.

> *Mosupak ako sa inyong kangil-ad, Mama, kay dili tinuod nga daotan si Rosemarie. Kon naingon siya niana, kana nagagikan sa maot nga katilingban nga dili mohatag ug higayon sa iyang isigkatawo aron siya magbag-o sa iyang kinabuhi.* (30)
>
> I will oppose your heartlessness, Mama, because it is not true that Rosemarie is depraved. If she has become so, it is because of a severe society that will not give a fellow-being a chance to transform her life. .

Here, Luis's defense of Rosemarie may be commendable since it appears he does not replicate the widespread prejudice against prostitutes in society. However, his succeeding actions belie such defense. One becomes suspicious of his intention to rehabilitate a fallen woman. He continuously patronizes the bar. While waiting for Rosemarie, he becomes an unwilling witness to the parade of men who exploit her but he does not stop her engagement in the sex trade.

As mentioned earlier, Donya Concha inhibits the opportunities for her son to come in contact with bad influence. A passage from her own husband, Don Paterno's recollection, is resonant of the very same opposition voiced by his father, reveals and clarifies to us the grounds of Donya Concha's contestation:

> "*Uy, Paterno, nalisoan na ba ikaw sa maayong pangisip? Unsa ka buang? Unsay makuha mo nianang Concha, kanang babayeng anak sa koral ug wala gani hibaw-i kon kinsang amahan niana niya? Tunto ka gayod!*" *nagkanayon ang iyang ginikanan sa tumang kapungot . . . .* "*Uy, salbahis, kon magtuman ka sa imong gusto, ikaw lang, basta kay sa usa ka pulong dili ug dili gayod hinuon ako makadawat ug mga bastarda! Kinsa pa kaha ang iyang kaliwat? Sus, tingali unyag kaliwat ug mga kawatan o kaha mga criminal ba o mga masakiton sa mga sakit nga mananakod, unsa man unyay imong mahimo kon human na ang tanan? Paterno, hibaw-i baya ang ginaingon ug sandig sa kaliwat kay dili mo kini malalis sanglit karaang sanglitanan.*" (73)
>
> "Uy, Paterno, have you lost your mind? Are you mad? What will you get with Concha, that woman who is the daughter of a fence and no one even knows who her father is? You are

> really a fool!" continued his father in total frustration . . . "Uy, beast, if you do what you want, do it yourself, but in short, I'll never accept bastards! Who might her relatives be? Sus, they might be thieves or criminals or suffering from some contagious illness, and what will we be able to do when all's done? Paterno, know what is said about trusting family for you will not be able to argue with an old saying."

Ironically, this insight into the selfishness and controlling behavior of Donya Concha may allow us to feel pity for her, although only at this juncture, because it is evident that her anger with Luis and even with her husband is a result of her own rejection as suitable wife and its consequent projection onto her son.

Luis's separation from Donya Concha successfully alienates her by depicting the negative aspects of her behavior towards him. Following a third-person omniscient narrator positioning himself from Luis's point of view, the all-knowing mother is securely situated as monstrous in the elaboration of her controlling conduct. Luis stands firm in his decision to continue seeing Rosemarie. Such challenge to his mother's authority is strengthened with his father's assistance, which eventually reduces Donya Concha to a defeated adversary.

Arguing for Donya Concha, the good mother would naturally look out for her son and this may take the form of "screening" his associations with other people. Donya Concha is simply enacting the norm. However, juxtaposed with discourses of individualism and autonomy, her maternal behavior smacks of transgression because it does not consider the boundaries of self and the other, and it is provincial, because she closes off associations without giving them the benefit of a doubt. As the narrative portrays, Rosemarie is a woman with a golden heart.

Donya Concha and Don Paterno plan that the latter meet with Rosemarie to ensure that their son's relationship with her is terminated. Don Paterno later reneges on his plans to abet his wife's scheme following a poignant recollection of his own mother, Donya Alicia, who passionately lobbied for him and Concha against his father in the matter of their marriage.

> "[*A*]*yaw pagtiwasa ang buot mong isulti bahin sa iyang pagkabastarda kay dili kana mahinungdanon. Si Concha walay labot sa sala sa iyang ginikanan ug labi pang wala siya magsugo sa iyang inahan nga siya ipakatawo ning kalibotan nga timawa ug walay amahan, nakasabot ka ba, Ricardo*? *Katilingban*? *Unsay labot sa katilingban sa gugma sa atong anak, ug kon kini mapakyas man ugaling makatabang ba ang katilingban, Ricardo*? *Dili*! *Ang katilingban motabang hinuon pagnudnod kanimo ngadto sa impiyerno*! *Ug mao kana ang katilingban giingon mo, maot, himantayon ug tigpakaaron-ingnon*! *Ngano, Ricardo, nagtuo ka ba nga ang tanang anaa nianang gitawag mo ug katilingban, mabuot ug dungganan*? *Ayaw akog pakataw-a, Ricardo*! *Dili kita mga tawo nga karon lamang matawo ning kalibotan*! *Dili.*

Ako . . . ako, Ricardo, sumala diin mo ako kuhaa, sa katilingban ba?" *mihilak ang iyang buotang inahan sa kahiubos*. (74-75)

"Don't finish what you wish to say about her illegitimacy because it is not important. Concha doesn't have anything to do with the sins of her parents and more, she did not ask her mother to be born into this world free and without a father, do you understand, Ricardo? Society? What does society have to do with our child's love, and if this fails, can society help, Ricardo? No! Society instead will drive you to hell! And that is the society you talk about, corrupt, vigilant, and pretentious! Why, Ricardo, do you believe all that is in what you call society, is good and honorable? Don't make me laugh, Ricardo! You and I weren't born yesterday! No. Me . . . me, Ricardo, where did you get me from? Was it from society?" his good mother wept with disappointment.

Donya Alicia as intercessor, as the good mother, requires her to function as the patriarchal mother. In the novel, it is she who is meant to triumph against the all-knowing mother.

In *Bunga*, Alan is frustrated with the same all-knowing maternal behavior that Donya Concha shows towards Luis. Isabel Brizas only has her son's interest at heart. Widowed after several years of marriage, Isabel does not remarry and raises Alan on her own. When not busy with redecorating their house, she attends to other domestic matters and leaves most of the implementation with the household help. At times she visits her girlfriends who are eager for her artistic suggestions especially in terms of fashion. However, they are also critical of the sentimentality and idealization that she demonstrates for her late husband, Major Ernesto Brizas, which permeates all her conversations with them. For them, Isabel needs to get over and done with the past and move on. She needs to find herself a new love.

In the novel, disagreement between Isabel and Alan first erupts during Carmen's visit to the latter's home. After a light-hearted discussion where Carmen and Alan both praise Isabel for her creative talent and encourage her to paint more, Isabel reminds her son, having just come in from the rain, to shower in order to avoid catching a cold.

Mikalit ug hunong si Alan ug miatubang kaniya ug sa kalit namulong, "*Mammy, mahimo bag pasagdan lang ako nimo bisan lag pipila ka gutlo*? *Bisag sa makadiyot lang kaayo*!" (10)

Alan suddenly stopped, faced her, and said unexpectedly, "Mammy, can you leave me alone for just a few seconds? Even for just a moment?"

Isabel is surprised and hurt by the protest. From the ensuing conversation with her friend, Carmen, we realize this outburst is not the first. Carmen explains that Alan most likely resents being treated like a child and rebels against Isabel's over-protectiveness. From her response, Isabel appears not to realize her son is already an adult. Even in a later dialogue with Commander Harriman, she still manifests surprise that an 18-year old is considered old enough to be independent in America. As a result, she does not

recognize that Alan can decide for himself.

The current discourse on the all-knowing mother raising a child is quite predictable — she is more often than not the person who has kept the child from developing normally. The example of *Bunga or Ikaduhang Sugo*, for instance, is paradigmatic of this all-knowing mother in general. It silences her and assumes she is omnipotent and capable of doing great harm to her child. She is shown to be incapable of understanding and addressing her child's condition. Although, in Bunga, the narrative describes Isabel's efforts to understand Alan, Espina-Moore does not explore the maternal experience in depth.

In many ways, Isabel is secure and privileged. She has achieved many things such being a wife and a mother and she has spare time to pursue her aesthetic inclinations. Even when she loses her husband, the world she continues to live in is portrayed as comfortable. However, there are interferences in this sheltered existence and Bunga begins to confront and challenge many of the Filipino middle-class values prevailing in literature at the time.

When Isabel suggests that Alan join the army like his late father because a course in fine arts will not provide him with his daily bread, his response is:

> "*Naa ra kana kanimo, Mammy, kay ikaw gidaog man ang imong talento sa imong ubang damgo. Ako dili gayod maingon niana,*" *tubag ni Alan sa paagi nga daw naglitok usab si Alan nga kadtong iyang gibuhat ni Isabel dili husto.* (81)
>
> "It is really up to you, Mammy, because your talents were over-powered by your other dreams. I will not be so," replied Alan in a manner that implied that Isabel's actions were not right.

Indirectly, Alan criticizes his mother for not pursuing her dream to be an artist, not realizing that he is judging her through his standards of individualism. She has prioritized her family and for this, she does not measure up to his standard of selfhood.

Later, when Isabel finds him at work on a painting in his room she discovers, both, as mother and as an artist, that Alan indeed has promise. Still, she demands to know why he has not informed her of his activities. Alan's frustration leads to one of the most serious conflicts between them.

> "*Kana, Mammy, dili ko ikalimod. Apan wala ka ba usab maghuna — huna nga kon nananghid pa ako kanimo niining tanan ko karong gibuhat, dili ka gayod mosugot? Nga kon dili ka man ugaling makapugong, imo man akong utasan ug samok aron ako dili makasugod niining akong gustong buhaton? Makaabot kaha ako niini karong akong gikat — onan kon sa matag lihok mananghid pa ako kanimo? Dili ba ang imong ipahimo kanako mao da gayod kadtong mga butang nga pagahimoon sa akong amahan?*" (111)
>
> "I can't lie about that, Mammy. But haven't you thought that had I asked permission from you for everything I am doing now, you would never have agreed? That if you could not stop me, you would never cease pestering me such that I would not be able to start this thing I enjoy

doing? Would I have learned what I have learnt now, if I sought your consent every step of the way? Would you not have asked me to do the things my father did?"

Because Alan feels that Isabel does not really understand him, he does not tell her what he wants to do in life — to paint. He categorizes Isabel as being a counter-creative force, constricting him in his endeavor.

Alan leaves the house and heads for the park. Reflecting on his situation, Alan falls asleep and is roused by a police officer who takes him to the station for questioning. When asked to notify his family, he gives the number of his father's friend, Colonel Roque Mercado, who comes to the station to identify him and to take him home.

While they eat at the Aristocrat Restaurant, Alan relates to Roque the problem Isabel poses having him come up to the standard of his father in everything he does. What is taking place in this scene is a clash of desires arising from two different generations. As the good mother, Isabel wishes to inculcate in Alan the values of the father. Viewing his mother from what appears to be a "modern" perspective, Alan misunderstands what his mother values as the ideal. He sees it instead as restricting his autonomy. By perpetuating the all-knowing maternal paradigm, Isabel falls short. Consequently, Alan disregards the ideal as a sign of maternal backwardness and inflexibility from which he should dissociate himself. He resolves to become independent, to see the world, which he equates with individuality and modernity.

Alan makes many equations that set up Isabel as the controlling mother, as the Other, whom he can reject. He believes he is rebuffing control, direction, and sentimentality. Out of ignorance, if not a shift of values, Alan is cutting himself off from a tradition of love, care, and respect, in favor of autonomy and independence.

The issue of "control" posed by the all-knowing mother is fundamental to a feminist reappraisal of the literature on mothering. Let us then, examine some cultural beliefs about good mothering and the mother-child relationship. For instance, Isabel's belief is dated or backward, only from a modern perspective in which "progress" is grounded in the Western trend, propagated in societal beliefs. In the Philippines, children, whether or not they reach the age of majority — eighteen years, under the law, as culled from the American influence — still largely live with their parents, sometimes even with families of their own. In such extended households, the centrality of the mother is maintained. Mothers are deemed to know best. If the case were reversed however, and it is the mother who later joins the child's household because of financial dependence, the child is most likely to make the decisions but, more often than not, will still defer to the mother's wishes out of respect and a debt of gratitude.

Yet another aspect of the mother-child relationship suggested in the narrative, is that the mother follow the patriarchal expectation. It is strongly suggested when Greg articulates this idea

"*Nasayop ka, Isabel. Ang inahan nga husto ug panimuot gikan gayod sa pagkatawo sa iyang*

> *anak, gikan sa unang paghikay niya sa hapin nakahibalo nga sa madugay ug sa madali kining pagdumala sa iyang anak matapos. Apan ang pagpangga dili gayud. Bisan ug ang anak molayas sa labing layong dapit, dili gayod mominos ang pagpangga sa usa ka inahan.* (176)
>
> "You are wrong, Isabel. A sane mother will, from the very moment of her child's birth, from when she first prepares the cover, know that sooner or later this caring for her child will end. But never the loving. Even if the child runs away to somewhere distant, the love of a mother will never diminish.

which in effect, excuses the child's behavior and positions the mother to likewise be all-forgiving even and especially when the child's desire is to break free from the mother's apron strings. A mother's overwhelming concern usually becomes a hindrance to autonomy. The stories about Alan's father and Isabel's over-protectiveness are a case in point. Alan does not wish to know the reason why his mother believes in his father's valor or greatness. Alan chooses to interrogate his father's infidelity but only with respect to what is expected of him. The narrative diverts the focus from the issue of the father's philandering to center on a critique of a mother's over-protectiveness. By promoting the father, she becomes the controlling mother. By monitoring her child's activities, she is deemed suffocating. Isabel does not realize the double-life her husband led for many years. When she learns of her husband's extramarital affair, she does not question the infidelity. Like a good wife, she lets sleeping dogs lie.

It is also necessary to bear in mind that the all-knowing figure in Bunga and other novels extends insights into how knowledge is socially constructed. The maternal examples given usually emerge from middle-class assumptions regarding children in the most advantageous conditions and on their privileged experiences. Children like Rosemarie who come from the lower classes seldom question the mother's authority.

During the conversation Alan has with Roque, we learn of the existence of Lydia, Alan's half-sister. The late Ernesto Brizas had an affair with a Cebuano schoolteacher during the war. Before he passed away, Ernie revealed his secret to Roque who now discloses it to Alan so that he can establish relations with his sister, as well as to understand and forgive his mother. Isabel's controlling behavior appears to be excusable since it arises from a sincere albeit mistaken belief of providing her child with a good example, although unwittingly, misrepresented, in the case of the late husband. She was unaware of Ernie's infidelity, which makes her a blameless victim, nevertheless responsible for whatever she proposes.

In a manner of speaking, Alan's resentment may be read as a critique of maternal blindness and complicity in perpetuating the myth of the good father. We may account for this strong reaction as possible in the absence of the paternal figure. Isabel is the last to learn about her husband's extramarital affair and the news had to come from her girlfriend Carmen, who is Roque's wife. Roque did not even

consider telling Isabel who had every right to know about it.

Alan's is an unsettling new consciousness. Not only does he disturb his mother's safe world but he brings her in touch with many experiences — he speaks as though he is her friend — encouraging her to move on when he talks about the death of her illusion. The sympathy Isabel experiences from Alan is one of the things that keeps her from suffering bitterness which leads her to accept her son who, though instrumental to her humiliation, does not deride her. Isabel, is humbled by his love and affection and by her desire to believe and idealize her husband's goodness.

Mothers are believed to invest their own ideals in their children, and also to project their hopes onto them, seeing children as second opportunities at achieving what they wished and failed to realize. Children are second possibilities at life. This will be discussed in depth in the succeeding chapter. A mother who realizes her child wants something different from what she wants will experience the demise of her expectations. She will be called to reconsider what she strongly most believes in. In Bunga, social criticism is the foreground even as husband and child fade into the background. However, a closer reading reveals that society's expectations are still the same — "women are the nurturers, the caretakers of personal relationships, the self — they sacrifice. However glamorous their work, they remain on the periphery of the larger power structure".[13]

"Family in Hell" tells the story of Nahoko, who together with her live-in partner, Sho, goes through several domestic problems. In the opening of the story, the reader realizes that Sho's mother makes the mistake of calling Nahoko as Shinako, who is the name of Sho's wife and who has refused to divorce him despite several repeated pleas from Sho's mother and father on his behalf to end the marriage. The unstable live-in situation is exacerbated by the presence of two conflicting maternal figures: the happy-go-lucky figure exemplified by Sho's mother and the all-knowing mother represented by Nahoko's mother. It is through the encounters of the couple, specifically Nahoko's, that the reader understands Taeko's narrative of maternity fundamentally challenging the institution of motherhood as *ikigai* (reason for living).

When Sho's mother comes to visit, the reader is treated to a surprise glimpse into her motivation for making the long trip

> This was mostly because she liked to go on trips, or, perhaps more accurately, because she liked to go on rides. What others took to be devotion on her part actually involved not the least devotion or hardship for the mother herself. Besides, she found herself getting bored out in the country, and what better antidote to boredom could there be in taking one of her beloved rides into Tokyo? (143)

She arrives at a time when Nahoko is sick. Anyone looking at the situation would think that Sho's mother would cook dinner for her son who was inconvenienced with a sick wife.

> But the mother did no such thing! Come what may, she had taken this trip to enjoy herself. So what if it was her son's house? No one was going to catch her on a trip heading resignedly out to the kitchen, where she would be a good mother and fix something to eat. (144)

From Nahoko's perspective, the reader is made to see that Sho's mother's behavior is strange since she is expected to resign herself to "the inevitable and for a day or two at least taken care of the chores piling up around the house. But this mother was really happy-go-lucky" (145) and does not meet such expectation. She consumes a liberal amount of salty food despite the fact that she suffers from high blood pressure and sleeps in the same room with the couple unconcerned about the fact that this might embarrass Nahoko. To further worsen matters, Sho's mother is reluctant to tackle the "unpleasant business" of having to persuade Shinako to divorce Sho. The failure to carry out her mission is no worry to her explaining to Nahoko that "I want Sho to do as he likes . . . Whatever Shinako may say, it's you who's here with Sho. She'll give in before long, you'll see" (148). Over time, Nahoko learns that Sho's expressions and manners were exactly like those of his mother the way he quickly forgot his troubles and regained good spirits of living for the moment.

These contestations of *ryosai kenbo* which cites motherhood as the locus of female identity, present the maternal body as a contested field crossed by multiple and often conflicting ideologies. Taeko's maternal representation of Sho's mother as self-indulgent and sell-willed is a site of resistance as she turns motherhood, and more specifically, its institutionalization into an arena within which the mother stakes her claim to personhood, challenging the social norms and expectations that restrict her existence as a woman.[14]

Another interesting aspect of "Family in Hell" is its comprehensive representation of the all-knowing mother. From Nahoko's perspective, the reader is initiated into an insider's assessment. If Nahoko was ill, her mother would have fixed her rice gruel from the Yukihira earthenware pot and nursed her back to good health. This caring attitude however encompasses an all-knowing attitude which discloses itself to be very irritating to Nahoko. When she is expecting, Nahoko informs her mother of the pregnancy and she receives a letter in return berating her for her willfulness. As a consequence of not listening to her all-knowing mother's advice, Nahoko suffers from maternal rejection.

> Let me tell you, I didn't raise any girl of mine to be having the grandchild of a bunch of country bumpkins. I thought you knew better! What can be going through your head, girl, anyway?. . . don't be expecting me to be telling your congratulations or such, 'cause I'd sooner my mouth rotted off first. . . It's not as if I had you marry the fellow. You're the one who had to have your way, running away from home and chasing after a man who's already got himself a wife. You're no daughter of mine anymore, so it's pretty selfish your thinking that now you're pregnant you'd like your mama to say it's just fine. . . You're nobody to me

anymore. (156)

The act of rejection is regarded as representative of a mother's resistance against the *ryosai kenbo* who would accept her daughter's faults no matter what. Through her actions she articulates the unique struggle of mothers against whom children can do whatever they wish and still expect to be forgiven.

Nahoko's appeals for *amae* were to elicit a caring maternal response from her mother. Nahoko is not really helpless but is in a position to use the expected response as leverage for Sho's parents who cannot seem to make Sho's divorce from Shinako successful.

Nahoko's mother's act of disowning her daughter is by no means an unproblematic act of defiance against the patriarchal order. For the purposes of this study, I will briefly explore maternal subjectivity as a corollary to Grosz's theory of embodied subjectivity engendered in the bond between mother and child. When Nahoko's mother disowns her, it is an ironic movement of the maternal body. She is so invested in the life of her daughter that she extends the rights over her own body to her daughter's, folding it back into the maternal body in order to symbolically "preserve" life. The boundaries between mother and daughter are supposedly infinitely permeable. But when Nahoko refuses to do as her mother sees fit, she insists on her own way. The mother's rejection then is a symbolic act of infanticide since by cutting off ties, Nahoko's mother insists on the superiority of her own all-knowing subjectivity. Taeko establishes Nahoko's mother as the site of reclamation of patriarchal right, subverting the definitions of maternity as a passive and purely biological state: "'Gentle as a mother, strict as a father' did not fit her mother at all. . . But was this obstinate mother of hers not casting her child away?" (157). It is significant that in this narrative, Nahoko is not regarded as the property of the patriarch. She is unequivocally her mother's daughter.

When Nahoko miscarries and is ill for a long time, she resolves to return to her mother. She is reluctant to return in defeat but her need to be babied and to recuperate under her mother's care is greater. Sho accompanies her home. Although Nahoko's mother meets them at the station, it is not a guarantee of the prodigal daughter's welcome. Nahoko's mother explains to Sho

> "This here's no child of mine, you hear," she said to Sho. "I'm not taking care of her because she's my daughter. It's like some stranger's child took sick and collapsed on my step. A person can't very well send her away, so in she comes and I put her to bed." (166)

The story elucidates the ironies inherent in the controlling mother's world. Even as Nahoko's mother "rejects" her, Nahoko receives amazingly good care for anyone who was to have been treated like a passerby. As a matter of fact, Nahoko was treated like a princess, "waited on hand and foot. Three times each and every day she was fed the nourishing meals her mother believed essential for the ailing" (166). Nahoko was privy to the fact that her mother had her "own special variety of kindness" (167). Such kindness is suffocating for Nahoko

> [I]t served only to block off her own, and presumably any child's, avenue of escape. *It took more than average strength to loosen the grip with which her mother embraced her children. Nahoko had been forced to set dynamite.* (167 italics are mine)

Like in the previous narratives on the all-knowing mother, "Family in Hell" addresses the topic of the controlling mother who can be suffocating that it is necessary to get away from her. The narrative symbolically evokes this imagery of Nahoko setting up dynamite to free herself from her mother's control. It also portrays the rifts between mothers and daughters; as daughters grow older, they become their mother's alter-egos.

Together with *Ang Karaang Krusipiho*, *Ikaduhang Sugo*, *Bunga*, and "Family in Hell," the women writers' narratives form a quadrad of works which explicitly address the issue of control in the all-knowing mother. It provides a characteristic example of the ways in which Philippine and Japanese women's texts contravene conventional notions of motherhood and maternity and disturb the limits conventionally delimiting bonds. In each work, the all-knowing mother is described not merely as a mother who knows what is best for her child, but as an act of pure control, is as unreasonable and perhaps irrational that both disturbs and unsettles the patriarchy. Narratives like the ones mentioned poignantly sidetrack the structures of patriarchal control and order: rejection becomes the only rational choice for these mothers who are unhappy with their children's disobedience.

The texts demonstrate their ability to unsettle readers and to challenge notions of motherhood, normative female roles in society and social conventions. Particularly for their time, these women's works refuse to conform to conventional notions of how maternity should or should not be portrayed in literature. Moreover, such fiction demonstrates the complex and contradictory relationship between maternal subjectivity and maternal control. It marks a resistance to the exclusion of maternal subjectivity from the patriarchal order, but also represents the negation of the very identity of normative motherhood.

Endnotes

1 Peczon-Fernandez, Albina. "Why Women are Invisible in History." UP University Center for Women's Studies 1 – 21.

2 The government enacted Family Registration Act of 1871 which established the household system wherein each household became a unit of society with men at the head and bestowed inheritance rights to them.

3 The new system identified the women as socially incompetent and also banned them from public affairs. In 1890, the cabinet legislated an Assembly Ordinance prohibiting them from participating in political meetings (Duus 131). In 1900, Article 5 of the Public Police Law reinforced the

prohibition of women from political activities (Mackie 5). The Meiji Civil Code reformed the legal framework of family relations in 1898. This code strengthened the patriarchal structure which empowered men in decision-making. In Nishikawa, Yuko. “Sumai no hensen to ‘katei’ no seiritsu.” *Kindai* 4 *Nihon josei seikatsushi*. Ed. Joseishi sogo kenkyukai. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1990.

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12 Taeko, Tomioka. “Family in Hell.” *This Kind of Woman: Ten Stories by Japanese Women Writers, 1960-1976*. Eds. Yukiko Tanaka and Elizabeth Hanson. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982. 141-178.

13 Mary Jane Elkins; “Facing the Gorgon: Good and Bad Mothers in the Late Novels of Margaret Drabble.” *Narrating Mothers: Theorizing Maternal Subjectivities*. Eds. Brenda O. Daly and Maureen T. Reddy. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991); 111.

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Directing Destinies: Narratives of Mothers and Manipulation in Cebuano and Japanese Literature

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本稿では，20世紀文学で人気を博した，そして現代文学でも依然としてポピュラーな登場人物である,「全知の母」（all-knowing mother）について論じる。ここで扱うテクスト中の「全知の母」とは，我が子にとって何が最善か，自分には分かっていると確信する母のことである。彼女は己の意見や信念を何よりも優先する母親として描かれており，我が子が傷つかぬよう徹底して守ろうとする。

本稿で論じる，富岡多恵子，ヒルダ・モンテア，オーストレゲリーナ・エスピーナ－ムーアといった女性作家たちは，「全知の母」を主人公として描いている。彼女たちの作品に登場する母とは，我が子の人生を支配しようと試み，時にはそれを首尾よく果たす人物である。これらの作品は,「善き」母というパラダイムを覆すための鮮やかな描写を伴う劇的なものであり，また，それぞれが「全知の母」という主題を共有しているにもかかわらず，それは女性による単なる支配幻想ではなく，むしろ家父長的制度の内部に見出される，剥き出しの抑圧の表現だと解釈できる。作者たちは，家父長的制度が母という主体に影響を及ぼす様態に光を当て，家父長制の影響のあり得べき結末を，それぞれに物語っているのである。

キーワード：全知の母，母という主体，支配