

Written by

Sunday, 09 January 2011 11:13 - Last Updated Sunday, 09 January 2011 11:24

By Jesse Jose

A Cup 'O Kapeng Barako

Unbelievable!

My story last week, [Did Jose Rizal "Plagiarize" Alexandre Dumas' Novel, "The Count Of Monte Cristo"?](#), generated a lot of responses and unfortunately, stirred a lot of animosity, too, and hostility from some of my colleagues.

I was even cursed, believe it or not. But I didn't take it laying down. I cursed back. So, a war of words ensued. Back and forth, back and forth, we threw on-line epithets at each other.

It was sad really. It was so degrading to lower myself like that. But I was sullied. I had no choice

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but to throw back their own trashy words at them. I felt so dirty afterwards. It was like dipping my fingers in dog's turf. And stupid of me, *pumatol ako*. My critics were so relentless. Their words stank to high heavens, well, like dog poop. What a horrible, obnoxious smell!

I was consoled somewhat though, when my publisher/editor of www.mabuhayradio.com told me this:

"Dear Ka Jesse ... If you Google "Rizal and Dumas," 208,000 RESULTS will appear in 0.14 seconds. Ka Jesse, your article is the number-one result in the Google Search Engine. Congratulations and Mabuhay ..."

Ain't that something, ha? No wonder my critics and detractors all came out en masse like "ghouls" trying with all their moronic might to shoot me down. I am this *daw* and I am that *kuno*. I laughed out loud and I cried, too, silently, at their antics. As LOLO Bobby Reyes said, "Nainggit lang sila sa 'yo, Ka Jesse."

Then, my good buddy, who is also a distinguished friend of the Philippines, Gerry Garrison, of Auburn

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Washington

, wrote a comment. It's a commentary, really, some beautiful, well-researched and well-written remarks. It was like soothing balm. So, I asked LOLO Bobby if I could use it as my next

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column. LOLO said "it's a

GEM

of a commentary, let's have it."

Gerry's comment is an open letter actually, as it CC'd all of my colleagues, the "friendlies" and the "unfriendlies." The friendlies responded intelligently with kind and gentle words. From the unfriendlies, their reaction at first was stunned silence. Then ... like clucking hens, the din of their curses began again.

Unbelievable, I tell ya. I think I'll just ignore them from now on, delete their names and their curses from my computer and "flush 'em down." Down there where it all belongs ...

GERRY GARRISON'S COMMENTARY: Dear Readers, here's my dear friend's comment. Enjoy. Please read it with an open mind. It was written from the heart of a good-and-honest man.

"Jesse ... After reading so many responses to your story, the first few were honest responses to what you were asking. But for some reason, this got off track and slowly got away from the questions you proposed: (I quote so not to be accused of plagiarism). **"But back to Rizal and Dumas. So, who copied who? Whose novel came out first? According to LOLO Bobby Reyes, Dumas lived from 1824 to 1895. Whereas Rizal was born on 1861, and**

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as we all know, he died by musketry and as a hero in the hands of the Spaniards on December 30, 1896 on charges of sedition and rebellion against Spain ."

"You clearly defined plagiarism in your original e-mail, but for some reason, many of the respondents ran out of intelligent responses to your story, and went off track as to the definition of plagiarism. Reminds of a certain politician who wanted to know, asked: "That depends on what the definition of is, is." (Once again I quote to prevent accusations of plagiarism).

"I was curious as to why so-called "journalists," who clearly ran out of intelligent and thoughtful replies to your story, began to curse you and threaten you. I don't believe this is how intelligent, thoughtful, educated men, especially journalists, should respond when thoughtful, friendly responses are what good journalists should do.

"But what do I know? I don't have a degree in journalism. But I am an educated man, only a bachelor's degree, but with years of world experiences, having spent most of my life (28 years), in the Navy, traveling much of my time throughout the Far East. But I digress.

"Back to my point. In answering JJ's questions, I felt I needed to do some required research, which didn't seem to be done by some of the respondents to his questions. But I must first qualify why I believe I can give some intelligent and thoughtful answers to JJ's original questions.

"I spent a lot of time in the Philippines while was in the Navy and was stationed there in the late 1970's for almost three years. I also have a minor in history, as I believe we must know our history to know our past. I am married to a wonderful, marvelous Filipina. We just celebrated our 31st anniversary. As she is not the history buff I am, I did some studying of history of the Philippines

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"I learned a little about Rizal and why he is such a hero of the Filipino people. I also know about the Spanish occupation of the Philippines and why Rizal became a martyr for the Filipino cause to be free of Spanish reign. Not until the U.S.

defeated

Spain

, did this happen. Then, finally after WWII, the

Philippines

became an independent nation.

"But back to the questions at hand. After some simple research, I believe I can answer one question: Did Jose Rizal plagiarize Dumas' *Count of Monte Cristo*, when he wrote *El Filibusterismo*

? My investigation shows that

El Filibusterismo

is a sequel to his first book,

Noli me Tangere,

written circa 1887.

Noli me Tangere

was written to let the world know of the sufferings of the Filipino people under Spanish rule. He made fun of the friar class and harshly denounced the immoral-and-decadent ruling society in the

Philippines

at that time. Because of this, his book was banned and anyone who read it was harshly dealt with.

"His second novel, *El Filibusterismo*, was written in 1891, because of the continuing unrestrained-and-frequent abuses by Spanish friars on his people. He went home in August of 1887, but to prevent possible harm to his relatives, he went back to

Europe

, six months later.

"Rizal's reasons for writing his novels was found in a letter he wrote to one of his friends, 'I have endeavored to answer the calumnies which for centuries had been heaped on us and our country; I have described the social condition, the life, our beliefs, our hopes, our desires, our grievances, our grief; I have unmasked hypocrisy

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which, under the
guise
of religion, came to
impoverish
and to brutalize us ... ' which mainly described why he wrote
Noli Me Tangere.□

"In *El Filibusterismo*, Rizal foretold what he believed would be a revolt of the 'peasant class, revealing a middle class hero of both novels, who was a result of the decadent society in which he grew up, who lives for his own wicked and cruel interests. Rizal revealed many of the contrasts of a feudal and caste society for the ills of his countrymen, especially those who lived in poverty, wrongly treated by an immoral friar class.

"Alexandre Dumas wrote the *Count of Monte Cristo* in 1845. It is a novel of a young man, falsely imprisoned by his enemies. He escapes from the island where he was imprisoned. He later poses as the Count of Monte Cristo, after which he takes revenge on those who imprisoned him. This answers the JJ's question as to whose novel came out first.

"In answering the significant question of plagiarism, it would be difficult to make a case that Jose Rizal plagiarized Alexandre Dumas, when Rizal wrote *El Filibusterismo*. Being a sequel to his first novel, and being educated in Europe, Rizal could have been influenced by the works of such novelists as Dumas.

"However, I believe it is highly unlikely that Rizal used any portion of *The Count of Monte Cristo* and tried to use it as his own. He was influenced by the abuses and injustices inflicted on the Filipino people, particularly by the friar class that eventually deported his father and three sisters. He sought relief for the poor of his country, thus the reason for both novels.

"I hope this answers your questions, Jesse. I am really sorry that some of your fellow journalists did not take the time to research this. Like I told you last night, I was really incensed by some of

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the abusive and gravest responses by some of the so called 'journalists' to some of your email. I found that you tried to be gracious to each. None of this seemed to matter.

"All they wanted to do is to ridicule you and curse you. As I said, that shows a poor lack of factual writing, which is what I believe journalists, and columnists, should be doing. It is a sad state of affairs when educated men must result in gutter and 'ghetto' language because they are unable to find an intelligent and factual way to respond to you.

"Take care, my friend. I felt I needed to do this. I believe you were treated unfairly. All you did was to ask a couple of questions. What you received was some unfair, unjust and surly response to an intelligent inquiry."

Gerry Garrison

(Life is short. Forgive quickly. Kiss slowly. Love truly. Laugh uncontrollably, and never regret anything that made you smile).

I wrote Gerry a short response and said this: "Dear Gerry, my dearest friend ... Thank you so much."

JJ

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