

Written by

Friday, 09 October 2009 18:50 - Last Updated Saturday, 17 October 2009 07:48

My column last week, the first part of this story, generated a lot of comments. Surprisingly, most were positive comments, agreeing with my observations and on what I wrote.

The comments were from several Fil-Am community leaders, such as Ting Joven and Bart Tubalinal, Jr., of Chicago, Dr. Tom Bonson of Virginia, Perry Diaz of California, and several others.

They said they, too, have seen the extreme destitution there and the chaos and the filth . . . and smelled the stench, when they visited the Motherland a few years ago.

My Erapok, Bart T., asked about my son, Jonathan’s reaction to his “exposure” to those “Philippine truths” that I wrote about. My son, who grew up here in America and visited the Philippines for the first time, said: “There’s so much poverty there.

And everything seems to be too small.

And there are so many malls . . . malls after malls everywhere and they’re always crowded.”

A reader, named Sito Serate, said the Catholic Church is to be blamed partly for the poverty in the Philippines, a Catholic nation, for it preaches the sins of birth control and, therefore, condones the “population explosion” and that compounds the extreme poverty there.

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There were “hate mails,” too, of course, that I received, and a couple of the letters have even cursed me out with words that are unprintable here. Mac Flores, a reader from California, angrily said: “

No need to emphasize the dirt, noise, heat, unwelcome sights and other bad comments about RP.

We knew it already.

These bad images do not sell to the tourists.

Every country in this world has its own unwelcome sights. Why comment about it, especially if it is your own country?

***Why not strain your eyes to the beautiful spots in the Philippines
?***

Badmouthing about the country is not good

”

I wrote him back:

“Mr. Flores . . . Thank you so much for your feedback. But I don’t work for the Philippine Tourism Industry. I am a reporter/columnist and I merely reported on what I’ve seen of the Motherland, while on a visit there. It wasn’t my intention at all to ‘badmouth’ the country, but to write what I’ve seen and how it affected me personally.

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"I agree with you that there are many 'beautiful spots' in the Philippines to see and get agog about. □ But unfortunately, they are only for tourists and balikbayans and for the moneyed people of the Philippines to go to and enjoy

"What I wrote about were 'spots' where the multitudes, the majority, perhaps, of our kababayans , live.

If that's 'badmouthing' a country, then so be it.

As I said, I am a reporter and I merely wrote of what I've seen of the Motherland.

If those truths have offended you, I am so sorry

."

And so with that, let me continue on what I've seen of the “WaWa We” Land.

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LUNETA, MAKATI AND TAGAYTAY: Luneta Park, which used to be one of the world’s most beautiful parks and a tourists’ attraction, is no longer that way.

In the 80’s, when I was still courting my wife, we used to make *pasyal* there on some evenings and ride the Motor-Co, back and forth, along Roxas Boulevard, just to enjoy the sea breeze . . . and eat *balut*. It used to be a lively, enjoyable park, and a place for lovers, like me, to make *ligaw*.

It’s poorly-maintained now, trashy and muddy and a melancholy place at night.

The monument of Jose Rizal, our national hero, which used to be guarded by smart-uniformed Philippine Marines, where at all times, two marines marched smartly back and forth and cut corners sharply around the perimeter of the monument . . . well, the marines are no longer there.

We strolled inside the historical Intramuros. That, I am happy to say, is well-preserved and well-maintained. There are flowers everywhere. The armed guards at the gate are garbed in Katipunan-like outfit. We took a lot of pictures there.

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We also went to see Makati and walked around in that plaza-like square, where the two five-star hotels, InterCon and Shangri-La, face each other, and which I heard from the locals, are now the “watering holes of “foreigners and the moneyed class of the Philippines.” My wife and I used to go disco dancing at “Where Else” of InterCon, so we went in there to check the place out. “Where

Else” no longer exists.

It was day time when we went there, so we went into the coffee shop.

For almost like half an hour, we waited for a waiter to approach our table. But nobody came. Then a foreigner, a white American dude, came in and sat a couple of tables away from us . . . and immediately, out of nowhere, a waiter materialized to wait on the white dude.

I went to the front desk of the hotel and demanded that someone wait on us, too. Soon, a pretty young woman, wearing a native costume and a wide, FAKE smile approached our table and apologized.

She said the hotel didn’t have enough wait staff to serve guests.

Of course that was a lot of B.S., for I saw a couple of waiters standing idly at a corner but both of them disappeared when we came in . . . and magically popped out of nowhere, when that foreign dude walked in.

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WaWa We!

We also went up to Tagaytay to look at the mountains there. We stopped at the famous Taal Vista Lodge. We went out at the hotel's back patio to look at the panoramic view of Taal volcano and the outlying mountains.

It was a sight to behold! It was breathtaking and I felt the presence of God, like when I saw the Grand Canyon

.

I uttered a prayer . . . and then, we did the usual *picturan*

.

We went inside the dining area that overlooks the mountains for our merienda. I asked if they have brewed *apeng Barako* K

.

Our waiter said it's the only kind of coffee that they serve there. I had two freshly-brewed cups one after the other. I gulped the brew thirstily.

I tell ya,
Kapeng Barako
is coffee for the gods.

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I asked our waiter why is it that this Batangas-grown coffee is served only in big, flashy, expensive hotels. Why won't they make it available to the common *tao*?

“*Kasi*, sir,” our waiter said, “the people would rather drink Starbucks coffee.”

Starbucks coffee shops have mushroomed all over Metro Manila, as well as Jollibee and MacDonald's . . . and Shoe Mart malls, where they sell, mostly foreign-made clothes and shoes.

And the decorative posters on walls of those stores are of beautiful boys and girls of good, old USA

.

Where are the Philippine-made products? *Bakit hindi tinatangkilik ng mga Pilipino 'to?*

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Wawa We!

By the way, do you know how the words, “Wawa We” came about? It was derived from the word, “Wowowee.” That’s right, that very popular and IDIOTIC and *bakya* program, hosted by Willie Revillame, that is watched globally *daw* by Filipinos.

When Willie said that he might run as VP for Manny Villar in the presidential election of 2010 . . . and boasted that if he does that, he’ll surely win, Filipino political and opinion writers joked and scornfully laughed at Willie and coined the words . . .

Wawa We!

Hey, those writers can laugh as much as they want, but I bet ya, that if Governor Vilma Santos runs as a presidential candidate in 2010, with Willie, the Wowowee, as her VP, the people will vote for them and they will win . . .

Y’all remember FPJ, right? He won, didn’t he? *Kaya nga lang, dinaya nila GMA, aka, Pandak at ni Garci si FPJ, ‘di ba?* □ *Hello Garci . . .*

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WaWa We!

I talk too much. I’ve run out of space, again. *Marami pa akong ikukwento tungkol sa Pinas.* K
aya

,
may
sequel
pa ‘to.

Abangan po ninyo sa susunod na linggo

JJ

(To be continued . . .)

To read the first part of this series, please click on this link, [Philippines, my Philippines, the Land of “Wawa We”](#)

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To read the concluding part of this series, please go to

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[Final Chapter: “Philippines, my Philippines, the Land of ‘WaWa We’”](#)

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Philippines, my Philippines . . . the Land of “WaWa We” (Part II) - MabuhayRadio

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