

The "Moro-Moro" (AKA EDSA-type of a Revolt) Again Is the National Pastime of the Philippines - Mabuhay

Written by Bobby Reyes (as updated on Feb. 15, 2008)

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The Philippines is still struggling to develop the rule of law and governmental institutions, instead of the whimsical rule of men (and women). The country's personalized form of government and moral indebtedness to friends (the "utang na loob") are factors that compel many Filipinos to continue their corrupting patron-client habits. Meanwhile, Philippine society is retrogressing. More-than 3,000 Filipinos leave daily for foreign destinations where they try to find the Promised Land or at least the promise of decent-paying jobs. Almost half of the population of 85 million is below the official poverty line. The annual birth rate averages a whopping 2.3% and it negates the country's low-to-modest economic-growth rate. While the Philippines is inching to reach the bottom in Asia, the present crop of leaders behaves as if nobody among them realizes where the country is headed . . . more so since there is (again) another Moro-Moro being orchestrated for another EDSA-type of a people-powered revolution.

What is happening is that the "Moro-Moro" (or the "Comedia") -- or at least its political version -- is back as the country's national pastime.

Let us examine some of the political events in the Philippines that this writer and other serious students of Philippine history believe were not necessarily "the best of times" but rather "the worst of times:"

EDSA I (Moro-Moro Uno): President Marcos was replaced by President Aquino, who became Wonder Woman (because Filipinos wondered whether she knew what she was doing). Records now prove that the Aquino Administration was even more corrupt than the previous Dispensation. Proof? Please read, [Not Getting Mad at, But Getting Even With, Tita Cory](#)

EDSA II (Moro-Moro Dos): Again another Wonder Woman replaced an aging movie actor of a President. More of the same resulted from the Comedia of a revolution.

The Comedia's Brief Historical Background

According to my limited knowledge, the Spanish colonial authorities introduced the "comedia" to their Filipino-Indio subjects. When the Philippines was a colony of Spain, the colonizers brought the "comedia" as a form of entertainment for the masses. People had to be entertained because

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idle minds might start to think of revolution. The "comedia" started as a musical skit done mostly by amateur actors that often depicted the fictionalized clash between the Christians and the Moors (Moros) of Spain. Eventually many of the Christian Filipinos called it the "Moro-Moro," as the country also had quite a sizable Muslim population on the Island of Mindanao. In the olden days, when movies were not yet invented, the "comedia" was the major form of entertainment in the Philippine archipelago, especially in the rural areas.

In the metropolitan areas of Manila and other big cities such as Cebu, there was another form of a stage play. It was known as the "Zarzuela," which often involved budding or professional thespians. It was more or less the organized and more-sophisticated version of the "comedia."

Then the Americans replaced the Spaniards as the colonial masters of the Philippines. Under Uncle Sam, the vogue became the "Vaudeville" and slowly Broadway-style plays and musicals came into the cities and even in the provinces where there were colleges or universities.

In the United States there is one Filipino-American association that has kept alive the tradition that is the "comedia." It appears that only the "San Dionisio sa America" (SDSA) association does an annual "comedia" in the entire country.

The SDSA is a civic club of Filipino Americans who hail from the barrio of San Dionisio in the City of Parañaque in Metro Manila. To my recollection, it has been doing the "comedia" as a fundraising event for more than nine years now. The event is held in the City of West Covina in the Los Angeles County at the Social Hall of a Protestant church. Proceeds of the "comedia" are used to bring medical supplies and Christmas gifts to Barrio San Dionisio every December.

The presentation includes some Muslim folk dances and a virtual fashion show of the Filipino traditional women's gowns and ternos. The same SDSA crew and cast have performed the "comedia" also in Canada a few years back.

Perhaps some of the Filipino politicians may someday join the cast of the SDSA "comedia" in West Covina and teach these Filipino-American amateur thespians how to do rightly the national version of the "comedy of errors." # # #

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