

Written by Bobby Reyes

Sunday, 04 November 2007 11:49 - Last Updated Sunday, 24 November 2013 12:15

Part Seven of the "Understanding the Filipino Psyche" Series

The column of former Board of Investments Gov. Ben Sanchez, "Life Now Begins at 60" is very timely insofar as this article is concerned.

Yes, Governor Sanchez is right when he said, "In this modern age, it is said that 'life now begins at 60.'" Due to the advances in medicine and the healthcare industry, many people, especially in the United States (including many Americans of Filipino descent), are living productive lives in their 70s and 80s or even in their 90s.

I wrote earlier that "[Alzheimer May Prove Deadlier than Al Qaeda](#)". It seems the same is true in the Philippines and even in the Filipino-American community.

Our columnist, Jesse Jose, wrote also about Alzheimer's disease. To read Mr. Jose's humorous column, please go to <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/564/90/>

It appears that many Filipinos, especially their political leaders, and Overseas Filipinos – even if they are not yet "Baby Boomers" and/or senior citizens – are suffering from pandemic-like amnesia and/or the Alzheimer's disease.

Is the favorite Filipino song not "Dahil sa Iyo" but "Am I that Easy to Forget," as sung by Debbie Reynolds?

Consider that suddenly even in the Filipino Internet world, nobody now talks of the supposed racial slur in the "Desperate Housewives" brouhaha. Especially so, after the pardon of former President Joseph Estrada and the explosion at the Glorietta Mall. (To read our columnist Ben Sanchez's account, please go to <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/672/90/> .)

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It seems that Filipinos have the inborn propensity to forget easily lessons from great calamities and even corruption cases of their national leaders and even community leaders, like those committed by the national executive officers (NEOs) of the National Federation of Filipino-American Associations (NaFFAA). Without my constant, year-in-year-out, never-say-die exposés of the NaFFAA rackets, perhaps the Filipino-American community would have forgotten too the NaFFAAGate scandals.

(Editor's Note: Please go to the NaFFAAGate section of this online magazine at <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/Sections/NafaaGate.html>

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At the height of the "Desperate Housewives" brouhaha, San Francisco-based Jay Caedo posted—upon hearing that the perrytale writer and NaFFAA NEO Jon Melegrito accepted the (illogical) promise of the ABC Network to hire more Filipino scriptwriters, actors and cast members—in several e-forums: "NaFFAA-ka-babaw, oops, napa-ka-babaw ng kaligayahan ng Filipino." ("The Filipino's threshold for happiness is that shallow.") In other words, borrowing also the words of Mr. Caedo, the Filipino's attention or concern is "always miles wide but only inches thick." (Editor's Note: To read how the perrytale writer and Mr. Melegrito became the ABC Network's suckers, please go to <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/590/90/> .)

The Filipino penchant for mediocrity, his fondness for forgetting easily natural calamities and man-made disasters like scandals and controversies and his being a sucker, if not a gullible person, could possibly be explained by Rolly Ecarma. He is Mr. Caedo's and my fellow Ateneo de Manila alumnus. Mr. Ecarma, a Pasadena, California-based artist and photographer, told the members of the Media Breakfast Club (MBC) in 1993 what was (and still is) wrong with the Philippines and even the Filipino-American community. He said that the main problem with the homeland is its people's subservience to the "doctrine of minimal compliance."

Yes, according to Mr. Ecarma's observation, the Filipino people and their leaders comply only with the bare minimum or the minimal requirement or threshold, i.e., "mababaw na kaligayahan" or the barest minimum to comply with a rule or regulation or law. This means that very few Filipinos go to the level of excellence unless pushed from behind or pressured by their kin or peers. Many just suck the barest of the minimal requirements. As they say in Tagalog, "parang maka-raos lang."

This means also those much-vaunted Filipino-American organizations such as the "Filipina (sic)

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Women's Network" (FWN) should not have the temerity to honor people whose reputation is tainted by financial scandals. The FWN should not have given any attention, much more the accolade, to the NaFFAA's national treasurer, Lourdes Corrales when she has been accused of being a member of the NaFFAA's clique of crooks. To see the tribute to Ms. Corrales as one of the "Hundred Most-Influential Filipina (sic) Women in the United States," please go to <http://ffwn.org/>

Is there hope that the Filipino youth and the second-to-the-third generations of Filipinos (who I dubbed the "ABER**" Filipinos) would not develop the social equivalent of amnesia and Alzheimer's? Perhaps our up-and-coming leaders would practice the "doctrine of optimal compliance" and pursue matters that are not only miles-wide and at least several feet deep. But then only time can tell. # # #

(* *Editor's Note: ABER, as Bobby Reyes has coined, means "American-Born, Educated or Raised.")

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