

*A Study on Societal Conflict of the Selected Short Stories of Antonio Reyes Enriquez*

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The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2017  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This study on the conflict of the short story, *The Unseen War and Other Tales of Mindanao* by Antonio Reyes Enriquez is descriptive-qualitative in nature. Sociological Criticism is used in critiquing the short story to determine how those conflicts contribute to the development of the story.

Philippine Literature shows how the Filipino differs from others. (Richard V. Croghan, S.J, *The Development Of Philippine Literature in English*). This study presents to you the different societal conflicts in the Philippines.

a. There are three conflicts depicted in the selected short stories. These are (1) Man vs. Man, (2) Man vs. Society, (3) Man vs. Himself;

b. there are also Filipino values projected in the short stories. These are (1) Obedience (2) Hard work, (3) Honesty, (4) Guilefulness, (5) Responsibility, (6) Respect, (7) Bravery.

Moreover, war conflict is the heaviest conflict among the examined conflict theories – which resulted to total devastation. These Filipino Values contribute to the sense of being, that should be emanated from each individual.

Generally, we can say that the study is relevant up to the present not only in the Philippines but also in the world for now nowadays everyone in the world is pushing through world peace for the unity of all. Thus, our sense of patriotism will be justifying our love to our country.

Studying literary composition among the youth had lessened due to the technological transformation advancements they may also as well learn to appreciate their or peoples' history and culture. Literature teachers should utilize local literature in the classroom instruction, so students could relate and be proud of their own culture's past.

Keywords: Antonio Reyes Enriquez, Societal Conflict, Filipino Values, Mindanao

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## **Introduction**

Throughout the years of discussing on literature, this research displays the group's textual analysis on literature particularly the short stories of Mr. Antonio Enriquez "*The Unseen War and the other Tales of Mindanao*" projects societal conflicts and cultural economic context of the Filipinos.

With this intention, creative writing is more than making a collection of statements worthy of belief. Thus, writing is intended to read by others, with the mind different from the author's mind. The readers do not make the mental connections that the author makes; readers do not see the word as exactly how the author sees it. A novel is flooded with thousands of statements demanding assent, which the readers believes to be false confused, or deceptive. If the writing is to get through on creating wonderful images in a clear and persuasive manner then reading is an interesting adventure.

We conducted this study for us to have a better appreciation of our own literary heritage. Through this kind of study, we will be able to trace the ideas handed down to us from our forefathers. By then, we will be able to understand ourselves better and take pride of being a Filipino. Generally, this study offers more literary learning acquisition in relevance of the quality of art which will be shared to others with a profound realization of a human experience - we may learn what we are and how we have become and may even wade through what we might be in the future.

## **Societal Conflict Analysis of Selected Short Stories**

Society refers to a group of people sharing their own culture (Saquilayan, 2011). It is a network of relationships between peoples. A society may be particular or distinct people. It is also a group of people who live within the same territory, share a common culture, perpetuate themselves through reproduction, and constitute a more or less self-sufficient unit (Zanden, 1993). All societies have social institutions exist in order to meet various social needs and objectives. These needs and objectives are to be met in order to survive. Family, political, economic, religious and educational systems that provide socialization of members of society, maintenance, and propagation of social and occupational roles order, establishment of norms and ethical principles.

In this study we examined the different conflicts as projected in the selected short stories of Antonio Reyes Enriquez. The society's social problem which is also called as social issue, social conflict, or social illness refers to an issue that influences and is opposed by considerable number of individuals within a society. It is often that the consequence of factors extending beyond an individual's social issue is the source of a conflicting opinion on the grounds of what is perceived as a morally personal life or societal order. Social issues are distinguished from economic issues.

We studied five short stories written by Antonio Enriquez are "Son", "Song of the Sea", "Ant Hill", "Surveyor", and "The Unseen War". We examined that the complications prevalent in the stories are: Man vs. Man, Man vs. Society, and Man vs. Himself.

## “Son”

The first story, “Son” showed a man vs. man conflict. The main character Tito had a conflict with his mother. Conflict was depicted through the mother’s opposition of Tito’s girlfriend. The mother is opposing his romantic relationship with his girlfriend. The over-protection of his mother created a complication between his want and his mother’s want. The following lines 3-7 are found in Enriquez (1996) p.12, to wit:

*“You must never see her again”, Tito said nothing. Talking would only hurt his mother. How can you tell your mother that you’re a man now”? No longer the little boy she used to spank.*

In these lines, the mother has showed her autocratic way of telling her son that he should never see the woman he is currently dating. In the story, the mother exercises more power in the family. Moreover, the conflict on the story was depicted through the mother’s opposition of her son’s romantic relationship of his girlfriend. The mother has over protected her son to the extent that the son can’t make his own choice and decisions as a full grown man.

## “A Song of the Sea”

The second story, “Song of the Sea” showed man vs. society. The main character Mang Tacio had a conflict with the society. Conflict was depicted when Mang Tacio told Mr. Cruz that 50 pesos is not enough as payment. Thus, he asked for One Hundred Fifty Pesos and more to cover including the lost fishing line. Thereby, Mang Tacio an innocent man from rural area has his own set of values while Mr. Cruz from Urban area has also his own set of values. It is common to our society that in order to have a fast and generous catch – it would be better for him if he will use the other way of fishing which is the dynamite fishing. Through this, societal conflict is projected in the story where in conflict results from purposeful interaction among two or more parties in a competitive setting. Therefore, the different views of the two men in the story resulted to the conflict of man vs. society. The following lines 18-22 are found in Enriquez (1996):

*“But when the old man left the store he was carrying a half can of gasoline. The boy who had waited outside on the steps, took the gasoline can from him and carried it himself; then the two of them walked down the beach to the open shed in front of one of the two stones beside the market.”*

The conflict between the main characters against the society reflected in the story where in Mang Tacio (the main character of the story) encountered a different opposing forces. First encounter, is that of Mr. Cruz where he did not pay the requested amount of Mang Tacio. Since he still have to pay for the 'Tansi' that was destroyed during their fishing. Second is the struggle of Mang Tacio on how to pay his kumpare; and with that, he decided to initiate dynamite fishing.

Complication has started when this city man Mr. Castro did not pay the required amount of Mang Tacio. After the fishing Mr. Castro paid only Fifty pesos for four days of fishing. Thus, the lines found in Enriquez (1996), “That’s Fifty pesos,” Castro told the Viejo—old man. “You may count it yourself.”

### **“Ant Hill”**

The third story, "The Ant Hill" showed man vs. himself. The main character, Tomasito had a conflict with his self. Conflict was depicted when Tomasito was confused and a little faint. He couldn't understand what had come over him, to do such an ugly thing with his hands, which seemed weren't his own nor compelling desire wrenching at his very soul to straddle Dulcita. The following lines 22-29 are found in Enriquez (69, 1996):

*"Quickly, confused and a little faint, Tomasito rose on his knees, stepping away from the fisherman's daughter and the mound of mud beside her. He couldn't understand what had come over him, to do such an ugly thing with his hands (it seemed the hard knob-like teats wear searing through the middle of his palms still), which seemed weren't his own, nor the compelling desire wrenching at his very own soul to straddle her".*

In these lines the main character is confused on such ugly thing he has done with the fisherman's daughter. These confusions explain the stage of psycho-social development of human personality. In these lines the main character was confused, he can't understand what had come over him. Tomasito is just 12 years old playing mud and marl in the river. The lines above describe the sudden feeling of tomasito whe he cupped son mud in his hands from mound of mud and marl and began to rub them on her. Tomasito moving his hands in a circular motion, up to her neck and down along her arms, and farther down on her legs. Tomasito gazed at her body, which with mud and slush all over her dress, looked just as if she had nothing on – was in fact lying on her back, naked. “It’s only a game anyway”, said the boys in the Aguada riverplaying mud with Dulcita. Then, she let the boys strip her muddy dress, while she remained lying in her back. Tomasito, on the brink of adolescence, commenced to splash her, and slosh her all over with mud and marl. Tomasito rubbing mud and marl on the girl; down to her firm, hard breasts his hands travelled searched. And under his cupped hands he felt the hard knob-like teats pierce his palms – at this moment something clutched at his heart, stirred it so violently his chest ached. Now he grasped his hands too, and he seemed to lose control over them: Next thing he knew, he was fiercely mashing her breasts. Rushing up the girls puerile throat was moaning, sound strange and animal –like, unheard of by either the two naked boys (through Tomasito remembered it only too well and truly, there on the carpet of leaves and dead twigs in the woods above the seashore) who, in their innocence and ignorance broke out in embarrassed laughter.

By this, the conflict of Tomasito with his self was clearly shown where in his innocence, he felt something that confused him and did not even understand his own feeling. He did not know that he is already in the stage of Adolescence wherein he is supposed to understand the feelings that had come over him. Tomasito’s confusions explain the stage of Psycho-social development of human personality.

### **“Surveyor”**

The fourth story, “Surveyor” showed man vs. man. Conflict was depicted when Costelo, the Surveyor’s best friend had insulted and shamed the laborer named

Alejandro by treating him as a man-servant, ordering him to buy his tooth paste, who now wished to defend his honor, who had none at all until he had acquired it by ceasing to be a menial laborer and becoming the enemy. Thus the lines found in Enriquez (1999):

*“The tower had collapsed and with it all the good feeling he had for that tower. He indeed was terribly disappointed, thinking, “Hijo de cabra--Son of a goat he himself, computed the tower, used a slide rule, even climbed the tower himself. And even hammered the wooden crossbars himself, not to speak of marking the exact spot for the guy-wire stakes which I could have driven into the ground myself, if only to be sure that the tower would be the strongest and most beautiful in Cotabato . . .” His mind, too detached now to stop, still thinking: “Yet all the computations and calculations and strong materials and the rolls of guy wires could not even keep that tower up for merely twenty-four hours, nor wait even a second for Engineer Morales to pass the tower before collapsing.”*

The tower had collapsed not because of the wind-swept, but its because of Alejandro, he stole the wires and intentionally work on his hands making the tower into devastation.

A man vs. man conflict revealed when Reynaldo Costelo, the surveyors' bestfriend (Alberto Gonzales) was on his way back to Pikit a six-hour ride from Tacurong, dropped in at the hotel. Costelo had a few men with him: three laborers who were the best triangulation-tower workers of the company. Costelo and his men were building a tower somewhere near Liguasan Marsh, where unidentified natives, bellies bloated and faces and limbs pockmarked by tiny fish teeth, were often found wedged underneath large water lily leaves along the banks. On that certain hour they walked to the carideria to eat their dinner, then suddenly one of the laborers exclaimed that Alejandro is following them, he saw him in the dark with an old dagger ready to kill someone. Costelo feel frightened that he did not let Alberto leave him in the room. But during midnight unnoticeable, he comes forth. Alejandro had a fight with the body guard of Costelo and that because of the noise of their fighting, muslims on the other partition, were armed with stones and sticks, clung to the top of the dividing walls. They swore and jeered at the top of their lungs, shouting down obscenities at the inert body, and waved and shook their arms wildly: like spider monkeys who would defecate into their hands and throw their excrement at the spectators below, flinging their own foul – smelling, excrement. Alejandro curled on the floor unmoved.

A man vs. man conflict is a societal conflict wherein a sociological perspective of conflict theory is dialectic whereby the tension or opposition between two interacting forces or elements. Such that Alejandro and Costelo has a knot of contradictions in personal relationships and an unceasing interplay between contrary of opposing tendencies.

### **“The Unseen War”**

The fifth story showed man vs. man. The main characters, the Subanons had a conflict with the Spaniards. The following lines 18-22 are found in Enriquez (1996) p., to wit:

*“So, when the swamp people emerged from their hiding the Samboangan Voluntarios with their arrows, Kampilans, and lances (the Sharp shooters with helms their fire, since the discharge might warm sitios friendly to Sultan Kudarat at the other end of the river Labangan. Now only two leguas away) were more than ready for them , and this time less than a dozen swamp people reached the Salisipans and Barotos, and those that did were not so successful in taking anything valuable away from the vessels.”*

The conflict between the main characters against the Spaniards reflected in the story where in Spaniards are apt of colonizing Mindanao way back 16th century when the Spanish colonizers arrived in the Archipelago which later, they called the Philippines, in honor of King Phillip II in Spain. The real and positive encounter between Muslims and Christians still remains a hope there. Often this term has carried a negative connotation, from the beginning to the present times.

The societal conflict of the story is revealed through the physical war with physical and natural enemies. Moreover, a man vs. man is a societal conflict which revealed the complete conflict theory of war. . Thus, the lines found in Enriquez (1999) to wit:

*“The first volley of some 80 heavy cannons from the Spanish Armada, pointed toward the stronghold of Sultan Kudarat in Ilihan, boomed: Brroomm! Boom! Boom!—frightening the seagulls and the surface fishes of the ocean, like the jumping jacks, matambaka, swordfish, and rompe-candao, an the giant turtles thrice older than the oldest warrior fighting that day, Christian and Islam, which haunted the sea of Islas Filipinas in packs and herds, so many you would think that even man, the wiliest predator of this earth, could ever in just over a decade drive them to near extinction, either because of his insatiable palate for their succulent meat, or implacable vanity for turtle bags, belts, and shoes”*

Through these lines, it emphasized the entire devastation of the story's setting. The story projected the unseen strategy of the Spaniards during the Spanish colonization which defeated the Subanons or the mud people.

*“They would have rushed up like soldiers do smelling certain victory but for the thick bushes, thickets, woody trees, and rough land; instead they marched or tramped quickly, fast, northeastward; the infidel Moros, however, were aware only of the Spanish Armada facing them at the bay, not of the forces behind them on land: which, meticulously and systematically, started burning everything in sight: cottas, sittios, and villages of the heathen Moros.*

*And, so, it was done”.*

So, the Spaniards smelled their sweet victory of colonizing Zamboaga, Mindanao. Then, warfare leaders, and Datus surrendered.

**Table 1. Types of Conflict reflected in the selected stories**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Conflict</b>	<b>How is it Depicted?</b>
Son	Man vs. Man	<i>The mother disapproved of Tito’s girlfriend. The mother is opposing his romantic relationship with his girlfriend. The over-protection of his mother created a complication between his want and his mother’s want.</i>
Song of the Sea	Man vs. Society	<i>Mang Tacio told Mr. Cruz that 50 pesos is not enough as payment. Thus, he asked for One Hundred Fifty Pesos and more to cover including the lost fishing line. Thereby, Mang Tacio an innocent man from rural area has his own set of values while Mr. Cruz from the city has also his own set of values. Therefore, the different views of the two men in the story resulted to the conflict.</i>
Ant Hill	Man vs. Himself	<i>Tomasito was going through a difficult transition from childhood to teenage. He was confused and a little faint about the sexual feelings he was experiencing for the first time. He couldn’t understand what had come over him, to do such an “ugly thing with his hands, which seemed weren’t his own nor compelling desire wrenching at his very soul to straddle Dulcita.”</i>
Surveyor	Man vs. Man	<i>Lostelo, the Surveyor’s best friend had insulted and shamed the laborer named Alejandro by treating him as a man-servant, ordering him to buy his tooth paste, who now wished to defend his honor, who had none at all until he had acquired it by ceasing to be a menial laborer and becoming the enemy.</i>
The Unseen War	Man vs. man	<i>Conflict was depicted and seen through the physical war between the Spaniards and the Subanon Tribe.</i>

### **Filipino Values in the Selected Short Stories**

Philippine values are defined by the way of people live their life as an influence of one’s culture. Philippines, having been an archipelago, has not become a hindrance towards having a single values system throughout the country. In whatever part of the country you may be, one will find the same hospitality that the Filipinos are known for as well as many other values that have originated from our forefathers. The values of Filipinos have been looked upon by foreigners as a weakness instead of strength due to the nature of how they may be abused and manipulated due to these values. But values are what make up a certain nation both in growth and unity. Some may see that

Filipino values as a hindrance to the growth of the country and yet others may say that his is what makes our country powerful.

**Table 2. Values depicted in the stories.**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Values</b>	<b>How is it shown?</b>
Son	Obedience	<i>The son's obedience to the mother was shown when the son (Tito) broke up his romantic relationship with Thelma</i>
Song of the Sea	Hard work	<i>Mag Tacio's four days of fishing, enduring the scorching heat of the sun.</i>
	Honesty	<i>That Mr. Cruz should be honest in his words.</i>
	Careful	<i>Mang Tacio should be wise and should be careful in terms of dealing an agreement</i>
Ant Hill	Responsible	The upbringing of the parents shows the parental responsibility.
Surveyor	Respect	<i>Costelo should respect Alejandro.</i>
The Unseen War	Bravery	<i>The war between the Spaniards and the Filipino shows the valorous act of the Filipinos</i>

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

In examining different societal conflict in the selected short stories, Philippines' economic, social disparity and disharmonious relationship among the Filipinos contribute to the conflict: Man vs. Man, Man vs. Society, and Man vs. Himself which are prevalent in the stories. Moreover, war conflict is the heaviest conflict among the examined conflict theories – which result to total devastation.

On the other hand, we also found out that from generating various conflict in Enriquez' short stories. There were Filipino values which were projected in the story such that: obedience, hard work, honesty, responsible, respect and bravery. So, these Filipino Values contribute to the sense of being, that should be emanate from each individual.

Literary appreciation can be done by anybody. It is simple to figure useful expository expression these days, yet the inquiry for the amount of individuals in the Philippines and throughout the world is challenging to answer in regards to their concern in appreciating regional literary work like reading. Further, this may lead to



troublesome response because of the proceeding mechanical advancements which moved those learners' concentration.

The paper recommends:

1. Reading of literary materials should be taught and practiced on children in school so that they will be able to appreciate literature better;
2. Students should be encouraged to read regional literature especially those that are written by writers from their own native land;
3. Lastly, educational researchers should conduct more researchers regarding historical short stories to determine the fundamental culture integrated within the history of a place, especially that nowadays, peoples' cultural background has been left behind due to the continuing mechanical advancements.

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